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Ollscoil na hÉireann Má Nuad

**NURTURING UTOPIA: JEFFERSONIAN EXPANSIONISM IN
CONTEXTS, 1760-1810**

by

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Introduction

This work is a study of what I call the Jeffersonian ideology of westward territorial expansion. It consists of five chapters, all looking at a different aspect of this ideology, and it focuses on the years 1780-1810, a period when (from a broad perspective) Jefferson can be considered to have been at the height of his political and intellectual career. As the study progresses, its scope expands to incorporate European historical parallels, and eventually folds back into itself at the end of Chapter 5.

Jefferson is the ‘main character’ of this story in the sense that he is the main architect of the *discourse* which is analysed according to a range of features in the thesis. This introduction aims not so much to discuss the historical context of my study – this is done later – but to specify the details of my methodology and my vocabulary, before presenting the literature review and introducing the five chapters by outlining their broad contours.

The geographical context of this study is difficult to define, because it tends to expand and contract depending on which aspect(s) of Jeffersonian expansionism is being considered in each of the five chapters. Even though each of these has its own contextualising sections, it could be said that the overall context encompassed by the study is physically and socially North American; culturally Euro-American (in opposition to what Jeffersonians usually essentialised as ‘Indian’ culture); diplomatically global; and intellectually and economically transatlantic. Although I endeavour to discuss Jeffersonian expansionism in all of its incarnations as I identify them, there is little doubt that the greatest emphasis is placed on the transnational scientific network from which it drew its intellectual authority and historical legitimacy

– what has become customarily called the ‘Republic of Science’. At the time, perhaps the two European institutions most representative of this unofficial network were the Royal Society of London and the Parisian Académie des Sciences, to both of which Jefferson soon gained membership. (The notion of a ‘Republic of Science’ is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3, which marks the moment in this thesis where the context broadens beyond North American borders.) Suffice it to state here that the works of Bruno Latour, particularly *La science en action*, have been influential in shaping my interpretation of the geopolitical scope of the Republic of Science in the eighteenth century, particularly as its logistical mechanism is illustrated by Latour’s ‘centers of calculation’ model.¹

Before proceeding to review the existing literature on this subject, a number of terminological details need to be clarified. Most conspicuously, the word ‘ideology’ recurs throughout the thesis. What exactly do I mean by it? Certainly not something inherently negative or over-politicised. I mean by it a system of ideas that develops a relatively wide influence over a specific time and place. It consists of a ‘system’ not in the sense of working through mechanical laws bearing systematic analysis (although many groups and movements of thinkers since the eighteenth century have attempted to systematise ideology, beginning with the appropriately named *Idéologues*)² but rather in the sense that its variegated expressions (political, cultural, scientific, aesthetic) display analogies in method and reasoning, and ultimately tend to concern themselves with domestic and international political practice. Unlike a doctrine, which can be viewed as a formulated ramification of it, an ideology often does not have an identifiable architect.

¹ Bruno Latour, *Science in action: how to follow scientists and engineers through society* (Milton Keynes, 1987), especially pp 215-57.

² The leader of the *Idéologues* was the French philosopher and politician Antoine Destutt de Tracy, a good friend and regular correspondent of Jefferson’s. See Gilbert Chinard, *Jefferson et les Idéologues d’après une correspondance inédite avec Destutt de Tracy, Cabanis, J.-B. Say et Auguste Comte* (Baltimore and Paris, 1925).

However, it is just as often possible to single out the one figure (usually a politician in high places with interests extending beyond the political realm) who is most adept and skilful at articulating its spirit in his discourse.³ Usually, this figure has access to logistical resources beyond his own intellect – newspapers, ordinances, presidential speeches, scientific reviews, domestic and international treatises, scholarly monographs, museum displays, botanic gardens, etc. – in his undertaking. He is not always fully conscious of thus giving a form and an expression to a burgeoning ideology, which is either named by him or a follower of his (for example, Manifest Destiny and Jacksonian Democrats like John O’Sullivan) or eventually after him (‘Jeffersonian expansionism’).

The form and expression of an ideology refer to two used just as widely in this work: ‘discourse’ and ‘rhetoric.’ Here again I am partly following other authors, notably Michel Foucault’s *Archéologie du savoir*, but ultimately my definition is idiosyncratic; hence the need to explain briefly my use of the words.⁴ Broadly speaking, by discourse I mean the *form* of an ideology and by rhetoric the *expression* of that form. Discourse, in our context(s), consists of all the speeches, extracts of correspondence, books, maps, visual objects, landscapes, scientific treatises, exploring instructions, and day-to-day federal conversations through which the central convictions of Jeffersonian expansionism extended their reach. Discourse lacks an identifiable point of origin outside of the ideology which it embodies in speech, acts, texts, and visuals. Since it reaches out to a given society in such tangible forms, however, it can penetrate deep layers of consciousness within that society and even gather more or less half-conscious ‘users’. Usually, the most conscious among these ‘users’ tend to be disciples or friends

³ For a related remark on the Hegelian notion of ‘Spirit’ in human history, see the conclusion of this thesis.

⁴ Michel Foucault, *L’archéologie du savoir* (Paris, 1969), pp 1-106. It will be noticed that Foucault advises against using terms like ‘ideology’ and ‘rhetoric’ unless these are clearly defined in one’s own peculiar interpretation of them, and also heavily contextualised. This is what I try to do here. Foucault’s definition of ‘discourse’ also differs from mine insofar as he denies the possibility of formalising it, even as part of a heuristic method of interpretation (like mine).

(often both) of the most prominent fathering figure of the ideology to which they – on their part – only half-deliberately give shape in their rhetoric.

Rhetoric consists of the various idiomatic expressions of a given discourse. For that reason, it may concern every person to whom the discourse has appealed at any level of appreciation. It can be analysed most easily because it remains at the surface. It does not hide behind yet more layers of discursive logic. The rhetoric of Jeffersonian expansionism could be ‘spoken’ in various strands by scientific surveyors, armchair politicians and frontier settlers alike using idioms with recognisable elements leading back to a number of core convictions. A particular set of rhetorical strategies, discussed in Chapter 4, may be identified and classified to point out the formal analogies between these variegated idioms – and, by the same token, their ultimate appurtenance to a proto-system of ideas sketched by Jefferson and his colleagues in federal office and in scientific institutions. It is redundant to pretend to talk about an ‘ideology’ without also referring to its accompanying discourse and its surfacing, more popularising rhetoric.

One last notion to be addressed before moving to this introduction’s second section is that of Utopia. (Although this may later seem redundant, as I return to it in Chapter 1 and more exhaustively in Chapter 3, it seems necessary nonetheless to make a few preliminary remarks.) By ‘Utopia’ I do not mean a fable or a mythical allegory of Paradise but instead a thoroughly rational pictorialisation of what a *human* replication of Paradise may hope to resemble through diligent organisational and social work. From this perspective, Utopia embodies the ‘no place’ only in the rhetorical sense that Paradise indeed cannot be attained, except a replication of it which may turn out to be ephemeral. The only human guarantee against this sense of ephemerality comes from the humanist-born belief in the power of man’s reason to tame a designated and

essentialised ‘wilderness’ space by bounding it (literally putting boundaries on it) and instilling in its now socio-cultural and architectural matrices the momentum of mathematical coherence and predictability. In this sense Utopia is above all a spatial entity. It embodies the reified space to be occupied by a nascent teleology.⁵ Throughout this thesis, I develop the argument that Jefferson’s ‘West’ (that is, his idealised conception of western territory as first the Old Northwest, then Upper Louisiana, and finally, in the wake of Lewis and Clark, the entire swath of land between the Mississippi River and the Pacific Ocean) embodied that reified utopian space which his vision of expansion, itself a teleology, invested.

These opening paragraphs may have introduced the thesis as a thematically focused work influenced by critical theory. This is both correct and misleading. The approach remains historical. The lenses of critical theory are used only as tools for the interpretation of specifically conceptual aspects of this subject, and they are used for this study as freely as they are sparingly. The overwhelming majority of the sources used consist of history monographs and extracts of correspondence – hardly a critical theorist’s core data. I do discuss some ‘literary’ works, but these are often close to scientific treatises in their central premises and methods of investigation. Jefferson and his *Notes on Virginia* offer a perfect illustration of this. Nevertheless, because the thesis deliberately oscillates between a history of ideas, history of science, literary history, political history, and environmental history, it does not fully correspond to any one of these categories in its analytical and narrative bias and in its use of the sources.

⁵ On Utopia as geographical space, see Thomas More, *Utopia*, ed. George M. Logan and Robert M. Adams (2nd ed., Cambridge, 2002), pp 41-4; Gibson Burrell and Karen Dale, ‘Utopiary: utopias, gardens and organization,’ in Martin Parker (ed.), *Utopia and organization* (Oxford, 2002), pp 108-09; and Michel Foucault, *The order of things: an archaeology of the human sciences* (3rd ed., New York, 1997), p. xviii.

However precise my chosen theme(s), the subject as a whole is enormously vast, and therefore the actual scope of my ‘factual’ secondary sources virtually impossible to fully encompass. Although it is not possible to cite the works individually here, I quote generously from a wide array of sources in all of the five chapters. Because I work initially from a conviction that I then proceed to detail and demonstrate with recourse to historical documents, my methodology is more deductive than constructive. I do not reconstruct the story of the intellectual unfolding of ‘Jeffersonian expansionism’ from the sources; I wish instead to make a modest number of new suggestions about it. Inevitably this entails a lot of contextualisation, and it is mostly to this end that my ‘factual’ sources are used. In footnotes I sometimes engage with a previous author’s arguments about Jeffersonian expansionism, either to complement or to counter them, and I always acknowledge the author’s influence and his merits. I make explicit references in footnotes to any author who has made an identifiable factual mistake if I realise that this author has otherwise made some illuminating points about a particular aspect of Jefferson’s career that is pertinent in this study. In short, this thesis is neither a straightforward historical narrative nor a polemic. Rather, it is intended as an argument.

Historical monographs and articles do not necessarily recur in the work with a frequency proportional to their acknowledged importance to the field of historical studies; rather they appear according to how close they get to the broad lines of my argument. Reference is also made to a number of non-historical or at least interdisciplinary works, usually with a clear historical grounding but with varying interpretive methods. These are classified as ‘conceptual’ rather than ‘factual’ sources, and are discussed below. As for primary sources, these appear mostly in printed form: correspondence, scientific works, travel accounts, political and diplomatic treatises, legal

documents, literary pieces, survey accounts, natural historical drawings (insofar as they featured in books) and descriptions, Indian vocabularies, city and country magazines, etc. I include landscape paintings in encrypted form, although some of these also exist in printed form in illustrated book collections. Because my research incorporates some critical and cultural theory, and leans towards intellectual history, my methodology for sourcing follows a similar trajectory.

The absence of micro-historical reconstruction in my investigation means that documents in manuscript form only appear in very specific cases, for example when they uncover something about the personality or politico-ideological convictions of a recurrent figure associated in some way or other with Jeffersonianism. But this turns out to be rare, as the enhanced political agency of Jeffersonians in the years 1790 to 1810 usually means that their written documents are now available in print. Naturally, print also indicates something about the potential historical import of a document in conveying (through its own rhetorical idiom) elements of the discourse of a specific ideology to a lay or non-lay audience. This is rarely, if ever, the case with manuscript documents. This means that if I had deliberately and arbitrarily chosen to augment the number of manuscript sources consulted – potentially at the detriment of printed ones – this might actually have weakened the overall argument advanced in this thesis.

Therefore, this subject matter logically justifies my constant reliance on printed sources. I seek novelty in the interpretation of a familiar problem. For that reason, even my way of using secondary and printed works does not reflect a search for absolute originality as long as my use of ‘conceptual’ sources among more ‘factual’ ones comes across as what I hope it is – unusual, and for that reason also more likely to raise critical remarks on the part of fellow historians suspicious of all forms of theory, often for

perfectly legitimate reasons.

Among such legitimate reasons, one could list: historical reductionism, distortions of the facts, uneven use of the documentation to avoid the possibility of contradictory evidence, overuse of jargon, an impenetrable language that hides its own hollowness, etc. There is also the question of *hypothesis* which some historians might conceive (if expanded beyond strict definitional limits) as antithetical to historiography. All these scruples exist, and the excesses of theoretical speculation sometimes justify them. This does not warrant returning to the old debate between the ‘human’ and ‘social’ sciences. At the same time, postmodernism’s signalling of metanarratives’ loss of relevance can hardly be ignored, and neither can structuralism and poststructuralism’s analytical emphasis on structure (of a society, an idea, a book, a political system, a myth, etc.) over narrative in the modern theory of historiography.⁶ Often historians take these movements into account, but they rarely mention them openly. I feel the need to do so because some of these works have decidedly impacted my thinking.

On the notion of discursive legitimation (to which I refer extensively in regard to the question of the continental territorial legitimacy of the United States) I am indebted to Jean-François Lyotard’s *La condition postmoderne*. On discourse, epistemes, and the politics and architectonics of scientific thought and practice, I have been influenced by Michel Foucault’s *Les mots et les choses* and *L’archéologie du savoir*. On the concept of a discourse of science, Gaston Bachelard’s *Le nouvel esprit scientifique* and *La formation de l’esprit scientifique* deserve mention. On the ‘centers of calculation’ and ‘actor-network’ models, Bruno Latour’s *La science en action* is a reference work. On

⁶ On this, see for instance Jean-François Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne* (Paris, 1979), pp 35-53; Willie Thompson, *Postmodernism and history* (New York, 2004), pp 109-14; Hayden White, *Tropics of discourse: essays in cultural criticism* (Baltimore and London, 1985), pp 29-47; and idem, *Figural realism: studies in the mimesis effect* (Baltimore and London, 1999), p. 19.

mythology, totemism, historical dialectic and cultural relativism in modern ethnographic study, Claude Lévi-Strauss's *La pensée sauvage* is particularly important. On the reifying colonial rhetorical strategies essentialising cultural Others for the safeguard of imperial Selves' challenged identities, Edward Said's *Culture and imperialism* and Homi Bhabha's *The location of culture* have had an influence on the thesis argument. On the imperialising proclivities of certain traits of Enlightenment rhetoric, particularly as this rhetoric attempted to encompass the world beyond Europe (most strikingly Pacific island settings) and rationalise its exoticised inhabitants, I am indebted to Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's *Dialectic of enlightenment*; and on the notion of (literary and artistic) genre as arbitrary, misleading and ultimately a construction, by Jacques Derrida's 'The law of genre'. Finally, on the broader question of the incorporation by historiography of the recent currents in critical and cultural theory, I all the works of Hayden White ought to be acknowledged – in particular *Metahistory*, *The content of the form* and *The fiction of narrative*.⁷

This list remains far from exhaustive, but I will stop here for two reasons: first, because I believe the above paragraph does justice to my main conceptual influences; second, because as a single paragraph it is legible. I also would like to return briefly to examples of books which, like this thesis, maintain a predominantly historical lens while assimilating (or at least discussing) some theoretical issues, with overall benefit to their argument. In a sense, such works parallel my own. They are not necessarily the

⁷ Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne*; Foucault, *The order of things*; idem, *L'archéologie du savoir*; Gaston Bachelard, *Le nouvel esprit scientifique* (7th ed., Paris, 2006), pp 5-22; idem, *La formation de l'esprit scientifique* (3rd ed., Paris, 2004); Latour, *Science in action*, pp 215-57; Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The savage mind*, trans. George Weidenfeld (Letchworth, 1966), pp 11-22, 246-63; Edward Said, *Culture and imperialism* (New York, 1993), p. xiii; Homi Bhabha, *The location of culture* (London and New York, 1994), pp 33-50; Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of enlightenment*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, 2002), pp 8-31; Jacques Derrida, 'The law of genre,' in *Critical Inquiry*, vii, no. 1 (Autumn, 1980), pp 55-81; Hayden White, *Metahistory: the historical imagination in nineteenth-century Europe* (Baltimore, 1973); idem, *The content of the form: narrative discourse and historical representation* (Baltimore and London, 1987), pp 5-14, 30-54, 109-30, 209-11; and idem, *The fiction of narrative: essays on history, literature, and theory, 1957-2007* (Baltimore, 2010), pp 81-93.

most quoted in the thesis, because they do not always belong to the category of what I call ‘factual’ sources. But they have subtly influenced my approach to cross-disciplinary analysis by featuring themes relevant to my own, and by exemplifying the opportunities offered by a cross-disciplinary historical approach. In the realm of political history, I would cite Peter Onuf’s *Jefferson’s empire: the language of American nationhood*; in philosophical history, Adrienne Koch’s *The philosophy of Thomas Jefferson*; in cultural history, Eve Kornfeld’s ‘Encountering the Other’. In the field of environmental history, Clarence J. Glacken’s classic *Traces on the Rhodian shore* and J. R. McNeill’s ‘Observations on the nature and culture of environmental history’ in particular are acknowledged. In intellectual history, Daniel J. Boorstin’s *The lost world of Thomas Jefferson*, Richard White’s ‘The nationalization of nature,’ Ian Tyrrell’s ‘Making nations/making states,’ and Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined communities* have been inspirations for this thesis. In the field of Native American history and criticism, Philip Deloria’s *Playing Indian* and Arnold Krupat’s *Red matters* have also been inspirations. In western history, I would refer to Richard Etulain’s edited collection of essays *Writing western history*, and to William Cronon, George Miles and Jay Gitlin’s other influential collection *Under an open sky: rethinking America’s western past*, as well as Bernard DeVoto’s classic *The course of empire*. Finally, as regards the theory of historiography, I would refer again to all the works of Hayden White.⁸

⁸ Peter S. Onuf, *Jefferson’s empire: the language of American nationhood* (Charlottesville, 2000), pp 2-15, 57-8, 119-29; Adrienne Koch, *The philosophy of Thomas Jefferson* (New York, 1943), especially pp 57-63; Eve Kornfeld, ‘Encountering “the Other”’: American intellectuals and Indians in the 1790s,’ in *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, lii, no. 2 (Apr., 1995), pp 287-314; Clarence J. Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian shore: nature and culture in Western thought from ancient times to the end of the eighteenth century* (Berkeley and London, 1967), especially pp 657-703; J. R. McNeill, ‘Observations on the nature and culture of environmental history,’ in *History and Theory*, xlii, no. 4 (Dec., 2003), pp 5-43; Daniel J. Boorstin, *The lost world of Thomas Jefferson* (2nd ed., Chicago, 1993), pp 3-23, 53-83, 179-233; Richard White, ‘The nationalization of nature,’ in *Journal of American History*, lxxxvi, no. 3 (Dec., 1999), pp 976-86; Ian Tyrrell, ‘Making nations/making states: American historians in the context of empire,’ in *Journal of American History*, lxxxvi, no. 3 (Dec., 1999), pp 1015-44; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism* (3rd ed., New York, 2006), pp 69-70, 166-74; Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian*

This second list proves even less exhaustive than the first. It leaves out a significant number of other works paralleling my own; but these appear in the footnotes to the chapters. It must suffice to give a sample here, as long as it shows that historiography can indeed encompass a number of pertinent theoretical issues if these are clearly delineated and their relevance to their subject seriously and coherently established. Also (and this is becoming a common feature of contemporary historiography) these studies tend to forgo a conventional narrative framework and to function instead as groups of intertwined essays, arranged according to the particular aspects of a more general theme they discuss. I proceed in a similar manner in the thesis. This thesis' chapters can almost be read (but not quite) in a different order, though not independently of each other. In the second section of this introduction, I detail – through a summary of my chapters' contents – why I have made the choice to order them as I have. I do believe it to be a coherent choice. Now that the terminology and the sources I use have been clarified, I may provide a brief and contextualised summary of the five essays. At this stage I stress that I do not claim that this work explores *all* the features of Jeffersonian expansionism as an ideology. My only claim is that this study tries to open up a path towards new methodologies to build and new questions to ask about Jeffersonian expansionism, from a research viewpoint inspired by the history of ideas.

Chapter 1 serves as a broad thematic introduction to the central argument. It isolates the Louisiana Purchase as a diplomatic starting point, to look back in time at the earliest of Jefferson's conceptions of the 'West', (I often use the inverted commas to

(New Haven, 1998), pp 7-8, 78-92; Arnold Krupat, *Red matters: Native American studies* (Philadelphia, 2002), pp 61-4; Richard W. Etulain (ed.), *Writing western history: essays on major western historians* (Albuquerque, NM, 1991); William Cronon, George A. Miles, and Jay Gitlin (eds), *Under an open sky: rethinking America's western past* (New York, 1993); and Bernard DeVoto, *The course of empire* (2nd ed., Boston and New York, 1980), pp xxxi-xxiv. On Hayden White, see n 7 above.

remind the reader of the essentially hypothetical relationship Jefferson had with the various geographical and diplomatic Wests of his career.) Jefferson started documenting himself on Louisiana from the 1780s, right at the time when the ‘West’ in eastern American eyes was the Old Northwest turned Northwest Territory. Viewed in perspective, the legal, political, and administrative mechanisms that contributed to the organisation of the Northwest Territory in 1787 (by the mutual efforts of Congress and the federal government) provided an early blueprint for the administrative handling of the Louisiana Territory in the 1800s, and for the accession of Louisiana to statehood in 1812. It has usually been accepted as fact that James Monroe and Robert R. Livingston (Jefferson’s two envoys in Paris for the negotiation of the Purchase with Napoleon and his ministers in 1803) bypassed their orders and caused a global surprise by agreeing to pay for the entire territory of French Louisiana instead of simply New Orleans. It has also become an established fact that Jefferson sent Lewis and Clark across the continent to the Pacific Ocean *in advance* of the confirmation of the Purchase. In Chapter 1, I seek another perspective on those twin processes by showing that, at the time, they already fit within a political context (articulated federally from the early 1790s) of so-called U.S. ‘continentalism’.

From a broad historical viewpoint, the Purchase encapsulated the diplomatic confirmation and territorial promise of the blossoming of the idiosyncratically U.S. republican identity Jefferson envisioned. The originality of this new (white) American experiment was to make a novel brand of republican political conviction progress through territorial space rather than through historical time, which was so achingly lacking in the post-revolutionary era. Jefferson began arranging for voyages of discovery across the continent when he realised that this process could only be envisaged

if that portion of North American territory west of the Mississippi River was invested and surveyed by U.S. agents, sponsored by the federal government. These agents arguably had a vital role to play in defining the scientific and diplomatic lines of the practice of U.S. territorial legitimation over trans-Mississippi western ground. Lewis and Clark represented the first climax of this type of enterprise. Chapter 1 articulates the diplomatic, geopolitical and exploratory canvas of the birth of the Jeffersonian teleology of United States destiny as both politically republican and territorially continental. I also explore the first stage of its discursive ‘silencing’ of western tribal populations – a ‘silencing’ carried by U.S. agents, that had an ontological dimension beyond the merely political, social or cultural.

Chapter 2 follows on rather closely chronologically from Chapter 1, inasmuch as it discusses the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The literature on the Expedition has no bounds, but here, and perhaps unlike most other studies, I afford considerable interpretive space to the Corps of Discovery *without* making it my main research theme. Beyond their politico-economic purposes, successes and failures (already well covered by the current historiography) Lewis and Clark helped to actuate the Jeffersonian idea of the ‘West’ as the geographical half of a future U.S. continental republic by going there, living there, meeting tribal inhabitants, and thoroughly measuring and bounding the land with their landscape descriptions, astronomical observations and mapmaking activities. Clark’s celebrated maps resulted from this process, in addition to the literate crewmen’s travel journals. These two types of documents, which the Corps meticulously brought back to the East Coast to be processed and analysed in such early American scientific centers as the American Philosophical Society (A.P.S.) and Monticello’s ‘Indian Hall’, contained the seeds of a terminological and syntactical redefinition of the

Upper Missouri region in the idiom of Jeffersonian republicanism. Natural features were renamed, tribal contributions to Clark's mapmaking rarely received a mention in the captains' logs, and the journals *as texts* displayed several rhetorical strategies which I link back to the principle of 'nurturing Utopia' (see below). The Corps infantilised the western tribes they met and assimilated them to their organic western environment by making use of what I call the techniques of 'natural historicising' and 'environmentalising'. Most importantly, they reified (like they did the 'wilderness') the autochthonous feature in what they categorised as Indian identity. Citizens' political consciousness progressed in the Jeffersonian era, and so did their preoccupation with their fractured lineage back east and across the Atlantic.

The West of the Lewis and Clark journals may then be pictured as a Utopia (in the definition provided above) given shape by the captains' consistent recourse to a type of utopian idiom. The neatness and safety of boundaries, the straightness of parallels and perpendiculars in a new landscape promised a smooth process of political appropriation by the forces of a rational 'civilisation' – a word essentialised in rhetoric just as often as the term 'wilderness', as my discussion of imperial travellers' accounts in the period 1760-1806 will show. The autochthonous population of a space described in the utopian idiom stops no longer matters as an object of discourse since it becomes depicted as merely a natural outgrowth of the environment under scrutiny. That population thus loses its human agency. When Lewis and Clark returned to St Louis in 1806, they laid claim to the trans-Mississippi West that reached beyond the shorter-term diplomatic successes of the Purchase, and that touched the heart of what may be termed a blooming U.S. national consciousness. Despite the considerable criticism levelled at that time at the Corps's supposed lack of concrete achievements from their three-year journey

(economic as much as scientific, diplomatic, etc.), Jefferson showed in his speeches to Congress that he was satisfied. His satisfaction might have exhibited too abstract a dimension to be expressed articulately to a wider public at that time. Nonetheless, he knew what the stakes were for the credibility of American national identity as the product of a practical, Enlightened experiment in a geographical receptacle which he always sought to portray as empty (by a rhetorical nurturing of the ‘no place’).

Chapter 3 features a broadening of the geographical and intellectual backdrop of the analysis. I consider American scientific institutions like the A.P.S. (which still houses the Lewis and Clark journals) and their gradual, if tacit, adoption into the Republic of Science through Jefferson’s agency. The Republic of Science consisted of a transatlantic network of scientific institutions bent on promoting the exchange of data of various types, often gleaned from previous imperial voyages of exploration such as James Cook’s – botanical data, natural historical data, cartographical data, astronomical data, ethnographical data, etc. Latour’s ‘centers of calculation’ model is utilised to highlight the scientific and proto-colonial relationship between the Corps of Discovery and the A.P.S. This relationship followed a pattern already well-tried in Britain with the Royal Society’s sponsorship of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century voyages of exploration (always with half-hidden geopolitical purposes inscribed into their instructions) and in France with the Académie des Sciences. But the Jeffersonian replication of these relationships can be probed deeper, to show that Jefferson’s articulation of a ‘middle way’ discourse for his country halfway between the overcivilisation of Europe and the ‘savagery’ of American Indians (which found a very concrete territorial expression in his picturing of Upper Louisiana as the western half of an envisioned ‘yeoman republic’) also depended intellectually on his own connections

to the Republic of Science. Indeed, sometimes it even depended on figures whose opinions Jefferson might openly challenge in his books – Buffon in the *Notes on Virginia*, for example. Jefferson took issue with the French naturalist's theory of American degeneracy, but he took for granted the organic association in Buffonian rhetoric of Amerindians with the American environment.

The reputation and widespread influence of Buffon's organicist anti-system of natural history enabled Jefferson to promote his exploratory agents' rhetorical methods of textual reification of Indian features (especially of Indians' rootedness in American soil) as *natural* processes according to the rules of international scientific discourse. Earlier, the Swedish systematiser Carolus Linnaeus had brought to his natural historical works the appropriate degree of rationalisation and simplification to allow the rhetorical strategies of 'natural historicising' and 'environmentalising' to function as additional, genuine-looking modalities of exported scientific discourse. Jefferson's flexible adaptation of Buffon's and Linnaeus's very different conceptions of natural history had a contemporary echo (though under different guises) in the careers of Sir Joseph Banks and Alexander von Humboldt.

While Banks, as an explorer turned armchair planner of Pacific voyages of exploration, seemed to parallel Jefferson in almost every respect (a fact which seems to deny the supposedly peculiar character of Jeffersonian expansionism) Humboldt appeared also to be using the utopian idiom in his South American writings, and to show, in his apprehension of foreign lands, an intellectual proximity to the principle of 'nurturing Utopia'. At the same time, Humboldt's career featured a transition to a more organically-focused Romantic naturalism, which makes him arguably the last of the 'enlightened expansionists'. A lesson that arises from the intellectual comparative

perspective of Chapter 3 is that Jeffersonian expansionism had sources and parallels elsewhere than in North America, and that it cannot therefore be legitimately borrowed as the historical background for attempts at sustaining myths of U.S. exceptionalism at any level.

In Chapter 4, this comparative perspective is maintained to explore the other side of Latour's 'actor-network' model: not just the network, but the actor. In Chapter 2 I do that too, but only at a North American or 'domestic' level, while Chapter 4 goes global, exploring the layers beneath the utopian rhetoric spoken by many international predecessors to Lewis and Clark. Jefferson had read about them, and sometimes he expressed fears of the threat they could pose as colonial competitors: James Cook, Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, Jean François Galaup de Lapérouse, and George Vancouver. These captains enjoyed the sponsorship and often the funding of either the Royal Society or the Académie des Sciences. All were circumnavigators. By looking at their writings on Tahiti, St Helena (for Banks) and the Pacific Northwest Coast, I uncover the rhetorical analogies in theirs and Lewis and Clark's travel accounts of their western tribulations. Whilst recognising, of course, the difficulties involved in comparing so-called 'oceanic' with 'territorial' expeditions, I argue that the West of Jefferson's time was a very peculiar geographical entity by virtue of its still largely theoretical topography. In terms of specific textual devices of rhetoric, I return in more detail to the recurring strategies of 'natural historicising' and 'environmentalising', but also to cultural custody, the voidance effect, etc. Those European explorers' unvoiced agendas turned out to be quite similar to the Corps's in that they sought to make their targeted (is)lands look empty and welcoming of the civilised momentum they were keeping alive in the 'wilderness'.

The supposed idiosyncrasy of the Jeffersonian ‘middle way’ is thrashed by the realisation that the pastoral idiom existed already in a different form in the exploratory accounts (which Jefferson read or at least possessed) of James Cook and Joseph Banks during the 1760s and 1770s. What seems to remain truly idiosyncratic, on the other hand, is the Jeffersonian derivation of the principle of ‘nurturing Utopia’. The trans-Mississippi western Utopia could and would be nurtured *as such* (that is, never officially invested administratively as a colonial possession) because of the reality of territorial contiguity on the North American continent. This powerful visual reality sustained the myth of ‘continentality,’ and made it easier for Jeffersonian discourse than for its predecessors to disguise its sponsored western trips as mere voyages of exploration. I argue that this Jeffersonian derivation was originally a derivation from Rousseauist primitivism, from Diderot’s update of it in the *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville*, and from St. John de Crèvecoeur’s attempt at synthesising the two into a novel form of American idiom in the *Letters from an American Farmer*. Rousseau’s idealisation of a civilisational ‘middle stage’ allowed the Eurocentric re-centering of the notion of a pastoral ‘middle *state*’ which Rousseau himself had imagined. Diderot questioned it but failed to overcome it. Crèvecoeur’s effort at synthesis looks particularly vivid when considered a rough draft of what Jefferson’s pastoral discourse would evolve towards in the 1790s and 1800s.

The final chapter maintains a theoretical scope, but from a practical viewpoint it returns to a more domestic, North American level, with a discussion of the aesthetics of Jeffersonian expansionism. The decision to discuss aesthetics arises from a double realisation: first, that Jeffersonian discourse obviously had a visual expression and even a visual rhetoric; second, that this theoretical necessity of linkage had a practical and

pre-institutional reality in the connections between the Corps of Discovery, the A.P.S., and Charles Willson Peale's Museum in Philadelphia. Peale's Museum received generous amounts of natural historical specimens and Indian artefacts from the Lewis and Clark Expedition, with Jefferson acting as a medium between the museum and the Corps. Peale himself had obtained membership to the A.P.S. in 1786 and was one of Jefferson's closest friends. He was also an inveterate amateur naturalist. His vast correspondence helps historians retrace his repeated efforts throughout the 1790s to have his museum institutionalised on two fronts: politically, with funding from the Pennsylvania Legislature which he deemed deserved but never obtained; and scientifically, with his sporadically successful attempts at entering into long-term correspondences with such heavyweight figures of the Republic of Science as the natural history professors at the Académie des Sciences, Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire and Jean-Baptiste Lamarck. Peale's Museum may thus be seen as the artistic organ of the young but fast-growing 'center of calculation' network of late eighteenth-century eastern North America. It performed the visual tasks that the more scientifically inclined A.P.S. could not handle. Through displays of North American fauna and flora (particularly of the Louisianan region) the Museum made the trans-Mississippi West and its imminent political and administrative integration by the Union seem more of a day-to-day reality for its audience.

Peale's audience, of course, included more popular social strata than the much more selective audience of the A.P.S. But an ideology always has a lay outlet. Peale, originally a portraitist, took up landscape painting during his time at Belfield Farm in the period 1810-20. We can recognise in his Belfield landscapes the broad brushstrokes of the Jeffersonian republican take on neoclassical aesthetics: domes, statues, gardens,

straight walks, and a bounded environment, the staple visual rendition of Utopia. Housed in the museum in the shape of ordered natural history and artefact displays following Linnean methods of classification, the trans-Mississippi West also looked like a bounded environment, in the same way that early modern botanic gardens made foreign ‘wildernesses’ look tame by the practice of transplantation (Kew Gardens, the Jardin des Plantes, etc.) Not surprisingly, there were several botanic gardens emerging in Philadelphia at that time, and even the A.P.S. attempted to develop its own. The neoclassical aesthetic that Peale gradually embraced had other practitioners, also often disciples of Jefferson and part of the growing ‘actor-network’ framework between Philadelphia and Upper Louisiana. Among them we find William Clark of the Corps of Discovery, especially because of his ‘master map’ of North America (finished in 1810 but only published in 1814) which is discussed at length in a sub-section of Chapter 5.

Finally, I suggest that it is in the domain of aesthetics that the first tremors of the slow and uneven transition from the ideology of Jeffersonian expansionism to that of Manifest Destiny can be found. We find them in the geographical treatises of Jedidiah Morse; in the Romantic and deeply ambivalent painted criticisms of the burgeoning American empire by Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School; and in Alexander von Humboldt’s attempts at shaping a picture of a world globally and organically integrated, with recourse to the rhetorical staples of the scientific discourse he spoke so fluently – stressing rationality and organicity, separate functioning parts but overall integration. Humboldt put man at the center of this process, like the Romantics would do, but he would never return to the problem (of which he was conscious) of the now commonplace discursive association of Native American populations with their environment, and their attendant dehumanisation. In North America, the Manifest Destiny teleology of the

period 1820-50 not only failed to return to this problem but considered it settled. The American neoclassical aesthetic had served to visualise the boundaries of Utopia and, from this very instant, the question of U.S. possession of the continent was solved. The need for legitimation disappeared, and with this disappearance came a prophetic tone that began to shout the premises of a near-religion of territorial aggrandisement. My conclusion will offer further thoughts on the question of Manifest Destiny.

1. The Louisiana Purchase and American ‘unfolding’

In the first visit, after receiving the [Louisiana Purchase] treaty, which I paid to Monticello, which was in August, I availed myself of what I have there to investigate the limits. While I was in Europe I had purchased every thing I could lay my hands on which related to any part of America, and particularly had a pretty full collection of the English, French & Spanish authors on the subject of Louisiana. The information I got from these was entirely satisfactory, and I threw it into a shape which would easily take the form of a Memorial.

Thomas Jefferson to William Dunbar, 13 March 1804¹

My purpose in this preliminary chapter is to set the stage for a discussion of Thomas Jefferson’s evolving articulation of his ideology of (westward) expansion in the period broadly defined as 1780-1810, which circumscribes his post-revolutionary political activity in both domestic and international affairs. The intention is not to present a history of Louisiana or even of early American Louisiana, but rather to discuss Jeffersonian conceptions of Louisiana, and how these affected the early American idea of expansion taken from a wider perspective, that is, at a continental level.

I propose to divide Jeffersonian approaches to Louisiana into four stages: the conceptual (up to the Louisiana Purchase in 1803), the diplomatic and legal (embodied in the Purchase itself, 1803-04), the exploratory (post-Purchase) and the administrative (post-statehood, from the year 1812). Each stage, of course, was deeply ‘political’ in its own way. Considering the time period chosen, the compass of my research does not

¹ Thomas Jefferson to William Dunbar, 13 Mar. 1804, in Henry A. Washington (ed.), *The writings of Thomas Jefferson* (12 vols, Washington, D.C., 1853-4), iv, 539-40. See also Donald D. Jackson, *Thomas Jefferson and the Rocky Mountains: exploring the West from Monticello* (2nd ed., Norman, 1993); and John L. Allen, ‘Imagining the West: the view from Monticello,’ in James P. Ronda (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson and the changing West: from conquest to conservation* (Albuquerque and St Louis, 1997), p. 10.

fully include the administrative stage, although it partly does so in connection with the other stages, since they all remain intertwined.² What is of interest here is Louisiana as a *vision*, at times an invention and a myth, that fed into a larger-scale ideology. Within this interpretive framework, the successive yet interlinked stages from conceptualisation to diplomacy to exploration each represent a portion of a larger, vital web. This chapter proposes to discuss them with a focus on Jefferson and specific Jeffersonian figures involved in each stage, some of whom remained active over the thirty-year period, such as Robert R. Livingston and James Madison.

If we can arrive at a tolerably rich and balanced picture of Jefferson's mind's evolving conception of Louisiana, it is hoped that the following chapters will make sense in their combination and subject matter. This chapter only claims to open the way for showing that there still exist other ways, at least partially novel, for looking at the Louisiana Purchase, at Lewis and Clark, and at Jeffersonian expansionism in general. I argue that the latter should in fact be called, for the sake of maximum accuracy with reference to doctrine, Jeffersonian *unfolding* or *unfolding ideology*. The main reasons for this proposed deviation in terminology may be summarised succinctly in this introduction. The fundamental idea behind 'unfolding' is that, unlike expansion, it implies the recovering of natural, original boundaries. It represents a recovery, a return to plenitude, fed by territorial contiguity. In other words, it carries within it the seeds of its own legitimisation.³

² A valuable study of the Louisiana Purchase from the legal, political and administrative points of view is Peter J. Kastor, *The nation's crucible: the Louisiana Purchase and the creation of America* (New Haven and London, 2004). See *idem*, "What are the advantages of the acquisition?" Inventing expansion in the early American Republic,' in *American Quarterly*, lx, no. 4 (Dec., 2008), pp 1003-35; David A. Carson, 'The role of Congress in the acquisition of the Louisiana Territory,' in *Louisiana History*, xxvi, no. 4 (Autumn, 1985), pp 369-83; *idem*, 'Blank paper of the Constitution: the Louisiana Purchase debates,' in *Historian*, liv, no. 3 (Spring, 1992), pp 477-90; and Sean M. Theriault, 'Party politics during the Louisiana Purchase,' in *Social Science History*, xxx, no. 2 (2006), pp 293-323.

³ Hence the essential role played by naturalists in the formation of an early U.S. identity and, parallel to that, in the exploration and assessment of western territory in conjunction with the discursive process of legitimisation of territorial

If the myth of original, continental boundaries could be made to penetrate early American consciousness, however long it took, white Euro-Americans might then be able to envisage the possibility, even the virtual reality, of their conversion into the continent's original – 'native' – inhabitants. This, in turn, necessitated the erasure or 'silencing' of extensive indigenous populations in their enormous and potentially incommensurable variety. Let us make this clear from the beginning: Jeffersonians, and Jefferson the first among them, rarely if ever insisted on the importance of differentiating between Native American tribes, be they 'eastern' or 'western.' Jefferson, and other early proto-ethnographers like Southeast Indian agent Benjamin Hawkins, certainly showed an avid interest (not always politically motivated) in the ethnological study of Indian culture, a legacy continued with celebrated brilliance and foresight by Jefferson's former secretary of the Treasury, Albert Gallatin.⁴ Indeed Jeffersonians, acting as they were in the midst of an Enlightenment revolution throughout the western world of which they always knew they remained a part, could not have ignored that there existed a prodigious cultural diversity among North American tribes. But they simply never took the time to properly look into this diversity. Why not?

They did not do so because they delved into it deep enough to perceive in it a genuine threat, of an almost ontological nature, to the new and still fledgling post-revolutionary American identity. Conversely, ignoring or rather subverting this presence (the thesis as a whole examines precisely how this process of subversion worked out) allowed, in Euro-American eyes at least, the perpetration of what we may call the 'myth

appropriation. I explore these themes further in the subsequent essays, especially in chapters 3 and 4.

⁴ Gallatin, who has been called the 'father of American ethnology,' composed the celebrated *A synopsis of the Indian tribes of North America within the United States east of the Rocky Mountains, and in the British and Russian possessions in North America* (Cambridge, 1836). Benjamin Hawkins, as I remark later in the chapter, took advantage of his position as Indian agent in Georgia to arrange and collect Indian vocabularies, often (if not systematically) transmitting them to a very eager Jefferson. He also wrote journals and sketches of his wanderings in Indian country. See Thomas Foster (ed.), *The collected works of Benjamin Hawkins, 1796-1810* (Tuscaloosa, 2003); and Merritt B. Pound, *Benjamin Hawkins: Indian agent* (2nd ed., Athens, GA, 2009).

of continentality' of Jeffersonian republicans, to which Federalists, despite occasional lapses into criticism voiced with the necessity for factional resistance in mind, were actually far from impervious. Later chapters analyse the main aspects of this myth in more detail. Here, I aim to explain in what sense the acquisition of Louisiana, including the anticipation thereof and the (not always sound) theorising it sparked, triggered the concrete, if never systematically arranged, formulation of the myth.

I begin in this essay at the regional level. Here, qualification might be warranted because early America, and even the early U.S., remains extremely hard to reduce to anything recognizably 'domestic' until the nineteenth century. The Spanish in Louisiana, Britain in Canada, and the remaining French populations and remnants of institutions both in Louisiana and Canada (not to mention Spain's eventual retrocession of Louisiana to France in 1802, a source of major concerns for Jeffersonians at the time it happened) formed a maddeningly entangled web of imperial rivalries and occasional alliances and counter-alliances, which perhaps no historian has yet managed to encompass in the fullness of its breadth.⁵ This might take another few decades, and it is certainly not within the remit of this study. My focus remains on Jefferson's own world of ideas, a world informed and influenced by imperial rivalries around him but ultimately – or was it perhaps an inevitable consequence? – seeking, in the interest of his country, an idiosyncratic form of imperial expansion for the new Republic.

Early but solid outlines of this idiosyncratic form can be observed legally in the Land Ordinances of 1784, 1785 and 1787. Those are discussed in later chapters. Jefferson took a leading part in the drafting of the first, and exerted a considerable influence on the drafting of the other two. The Ordinances contributed, of course, to the

⁵ Nevertheless, there are instances of major works related more or less closely to that area of research. See especially Richard White, *The middle ground: Indians, empires, and republics in the Great Lakes region* (Cambridge, 1991); and Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through violence: the mythology of the American frontier* (Middletown, 1973).

delineation and subsequent administration of the Northwest Territory. Historians have claimed, and with reason, that such a form of American ‘colonialism’ hardly qualified as colonialism (at least not in the then prevalent European definition of the term) because it ultimately led to the formation of independent states on an equal footing with the original thirteen.⁶ But what remains fascinatingly obscured (or downplayed) in such an argument is the objective condition of the autochthonous tribes inhabiting the areas encompassed by the Northwest Territory, and later by the Louisiana Territory. Many books have advanced persuasive arguments suggesting the very much *colonised* condition of such purposely undifferentiated tribes in all spheres, from the political to the economic and legal.⁷ How did Jefferson, the enlightened republican scholar and politician, manage to solve (or give the impression of solving) this contradiction? How did his discourse, both in his correspondence, speeches to Congress, ordinances, and more directly in such intellectual undertakings as the *Notes of Virginia*, contribute to the reconciliation of early American identity and the physical expansion – unfolding – of the frontier to the point of making expansion a *si ne qua non* of the survival and well-being of the said identity?

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section considers the growing awareness in Jefferson’s mind of the land west of the Alleghenies (post-Independence) according to a vision slowly moving west until it embraced ‘Louisiana’, still a foreign possession, but one that, in the Jeffersonian vocabulary, seemed promised to the United States in a not so distant future. Jefferson’s relevant correspondence features an active search for historical and geographical data on Louisiana either already acquired (or at

⁶ See Drew R. McCoy, *The elusive republic: political economy in Jeffersonian America* (Chapel Hill, 1980); and Reginald Horsman, *The frontier in the formative years, 1783-1815* (New York, 1970).

⁷ See Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians: the tragic fate of the first Americans* (Cambridge, 1999); and Robert J. Miller, *Native America, discovered and conquered: Thomas Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, and Manifest Destiny* (Lincoln and London, 2008).

least claimed to be) or on the verge of being acquired through the sponsorship of U.S. western exploration. Throughout this initial period, which effectively ends with the Louisiana Purchase Treaty, one also perceives at the intellectual level an attempt on Jefferson's part, again not systematically organised, to 'Americanise' the targeted Louisianan territory by the combination of two factors. First was the blueprint granted by the earlier organization the Northwest Territory. Second came the progressively evident significance of Louisiana as the embodiment of Jefferson's professed 'Empire of Liberty', in the sense that it announced the diffusion of democratic-republican institutions through a territory formerly occupied either by decadent European empires or by primitive tribes still bound to the hunting and gathering stage of civilisation.⁸ Neither the former's overly refined society, conducive to corruption, nor the latter's dangerously uncivilised 'savagery' could resist the ineluctable spread of American Enlightenment as applied by zealously westward-looking Jeffersonians.

Jefferson recognised the contradictions of such a position at an early point of his political career, in embryo at least, but only in the late 1790s and the early 1800s did he fully articulate his principle of the legitimization of 'unfolding'.⁹ In the second section, which deals with the diplomatic period leading to the Purchase in 1803, I scrutinise Jeffersonian anticipations of the acquisition as they were originally set on New Orleans and the Floridas. In particular, I suggest how Monroe and Livingston's negotiation for the entirety of Louisiana cannot be viewed as a total surprise or diplomatic *coup d'éclat* (even though the two commissioners did undoubtedly cross the line set by Jefferson's

⁸ For Jefferson's first use of the phrase, see Jefferson to George Rogers Clark, 25 Dec. 1780, in Barbara B. Oberg (ed.), *The papers of Thomas Jefferson* (36 vols, Princeton, 1950-), iv, 237-8. Not coincidentally, George Rogers Clark is a recurring character in this chapter. We shall see why. See also Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson, *Empire of Liberty: the statecraft of Thomas Jefferson* (Oxford, 1992), especially pp 161-2.

⁹ I look at the main features of this articulation in each chapter of the thesis, every time from a different perspective. See also the suggestive argument offered in Michael J. Hostetler, 'David Ramsay and Louisiana: time and space in the adolescent rhetoric of America,' in *Western Journal of Communication*, lxx, no. 2 (Apr., 2006) pp 134-46.

directives) when one keeps in mind the conceptual and always innately geopolitical framework given to the ‘affair of Louisiana’ by Jefferson in the first period.¹⁰ It will be argued that Monroe and Livingston’s disregard for Jefferson’s avocations, which ultimately satisfied the overwhelming majority of the American population and not only the higher strata of political authority, proved that the ‘myth of continentality’ was already in place by that stage.¹¹ The two diplomats were, consciously or unconsciously, subscribing to this myth. Earlier signs had appeared in the previous negotiations with Spain about the U.S. rights of navigation on the Mississippi and of deposit at New Orleans, which culminated in the Treaty of San Lorenzo through the agency of commissioners William Short, William Carmichael, and Thomas Pinckney. All of them acted as informal Jeffersonian agents, read literature on the topic suggested by the then secretary of state, and served to reinforce the notion of a future acquisition of Louisiana as a historico-geographical necessity for the United States.

Lastly, the focus will be a discussion of those Jeffersonian enterprises of exploration of the trans-Mississippi West, sponsored directly or indirectly by the Virginian politician, which necessarily involved the reconnaissance of a large portion of Louisiana even during the period of Spanish possession.¹² The subject of exploration is

¹⁰ Jefferson to Robert R. Livingston, 18 Apr. 1802, in Paul L. Ford (ed.), *The works of Thomas Jefferson* (Federal Edition, 12 vols, New York and London, 1905), ix, 363-8. See also Alexander DeConde, *This affair of Louisiana* (New York, 1976), p. 114; and Thomas J. Fleming, *The Louisiana Purchase* (New York, 2003), p. 38.

¹¹ James E. Lewis, *The Louisiana Purchase: Jefferson’s noble bargain?* (Monticello, 2003), pp 72-3; and Karen S. Hoffman, *Popular leadership in the presidency: origins and practice* (Lanham, 2010), pp 74-6.

¹² Expectedly, this created many diplomatic and geopolitical complications between the two countries. Out of the four western expeditions planned by Jefferson after he became president, only Lewis and Clark’s (the first) escaped Spanish intervention in one form or another. The Red River Expedition of 1804 led by George Hunter and William Dunbar got shortened as a result of frictions with Indians and Spanish officials. The Red River Expedition of 1806, under the direction of Thomas Freeman and Peter Custis, was intercepted by the Spanish as a result of James Wilkinson’s relentless scheming between Spain and the United States. As for the Pike Expedition of 1806-07, it produced many findings but also resulted in Zebulon Pike’s capture and transfer to Santa Fe before his release the following year. See Trey Berry, Pam Beasley, and Jeanne Clements (eds), *The forgotten expedition, 1804-1805: the Louisiana Purchase journals of Dunbar and Hunter* (Baton Rouge, 2006); Dan L. Flores, ‘Rendezvous at Spanish Bluff: Jefferson’s Red River exploration,’ in *Red River Valley Historical Review*, iv (Spring, 1979), pp 4-26; idem, *Jefferson and southwestern exploration: the Freeman and Custis accounts of the Red River expedition of 1806* (Norman, 1984); Frank L. Owsley

not studied for its own sake, since an abundant literature is already available on the subject.¹³ Rather, I interpret early United States western exploration as the logical follow-on to the two initial stages of conceptualisation and diplomacy (in keeping with the Jeffersonian framework of intellectual circumscription of Louisiana as the physical and geographical embodiment of what an ‘Empire of Liberty’ ought to represent). The proof is that Lewis and Clark, who were the only ones among Jefferson-promoted adventurers to actually succeed in exploring the West to the Pacific Ocean and back, acted both as diplomats and as concrete ‘appliers’ of typically Jeffersonian concepts, which shall be analysed elsewhere in more depth.¹⁴

It is not the purpose of this study to celebrate the Corps of Discovery. Rather, I seek to show that Lewis and Clark turned out to be vital agents in Jefferson’s enterprise of legitimation of American expansion over the continent as a potential *actuated and crystallised* by the acquisition of Louisiana. Perhaps Lewis and Clark did not quite qualify as ‘agents of empire’, as has often been asserted, but they certainly did qualify as agents of the legitimation of expansion.¹⁵ Their whole mission gave not only an intellectual but a physical and geographical reality to the myth of ‘continentality’. Even prior to the question being raised about its concrete results at scientific, diplomatic, and economic levels, the very *existence* of the Corps of Discovery in the American West (that is, in the western portion of the continent from the Mississippi to the Pacific Coast)

and Gene A. Smith, *Filibusters and expansionists: Jeffersonian Manifest Destiny, 1800-1821* (Tuscaloosa, 1997); and Robert V. Haynes, *The Mississippi Territory and the southwest frontier, 1795-1817* (Lexington, 2010).

¹³ I cited some examples above, but scholarly attention has been nearly monopolised by the Lewis and Clark Expedition until fairly recently. I will not quote important works within this vast literature here, but rather in Chapter 2, where I concentrate almost exclusively on the Corps of Discovery.

¹⁴ I broach this matter in several chapters, but particularly in Chapter 2.

¹⁵ James P. Ronda and William H. Goetzmann are two prestigious proponents of the ‘agents of empire’ interpretation. Their works have undoubtedly influenced my own. For instance, see James P. Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians* (Lincoln, 1984); William H. Goetzmann, *Exploration and empire: the explorer and the scientist in the winning of the American West* (New York, 1966); and idem, *New lands, new men: America and the second Great Age of discovery* (New York, 1986).

and its successful return with only one man down symbolically demonstrated the inherent justifiability of U.S. physical, scientific, diplomatic and political involvement over the entire continental stretch.

If Jefferson conceptualised the West (through Louisiana) as a Utopia, as will be suggested, Lewis and Clark ‘confirmed’ Utopia with the added sanction of having literally lived through it. They gave a body to the myth of ‘continentality’. After the Corps’s return, in the fledgling U.S. consciousness from the top down of American society, the inevitability of a continental republic became more and more conspicuous, and it was continuously promoted by Jefferson himself, who although soon retired remained far from unaware of that still boiling ‘affair of Louisiana’.¹⁶ If Bernard DeVoto’s affirmation that ‘the American teleology is geographical’ numbers among the most crucial statements ever made by a historian of the early western United States, as I would contend, then its veracity is evidenced by Jefferson’s planning for western exploration, and in his first authentic success in that domain with the Lewis and Clark Expedition.¹⁷

A. The conceptual stage: Louisiana and the concept of ‘unfolding’, 1780-1803

Jefferson’s evolving relationship with the West, and the reality of the West beyond the Alleghenies familiar to him as a Virginian, was replete with paradoxes. Even though he would acquire Louisiana in 1803, and ensure by all means the constitutional validity of

¹⁶ Evidence of Jefferson’s continuing interest in Louisiana after he retired from the presidency abounds in his edited correspondence. See William Roscoe to Jefferson, 25 Apr. 1809, in J. Jefferson Looney (ed.), *The papers of Thomas Jefferson: retirement series* (6 vols, Princeton, 2004-), i, 163-4; William C. C. Claiborne to Jefferson, 7 May 1809, in *ibid.*, i, 202-03; Antoine François Tardieu to Jefferson, 30 May 1809, in *ibid.*, i, 247-8; Jefferson to Meriwether Lewis, 16 Aug. 1809, in *ibid.*, i, 435-7; Jefferson to William Pinckney, 15 July 1810, in *ibid.*, i, 533-4; John Wayles Eppes to Jefferson, 14 Dec. 1810, in *ibid.*, iii, 254-6; Jefferson to Eppes, 5 Jan. 1811, in *ibid.*, iii, 281-2; Jefferson to John Graham, 5 Jan. 1811, in *ibid.*, iii, 282-3; Jefferson to Amos Stoddard, 10 Jan. 1811, in *ibid.*, iii, 291-2; David Bailie Warden to Jefferson, 16 Jan. 1811, in *ibid.*, iii, 308-10; Robert Walsh to Jefferson, 1 Mar. 1811, in *ibid.*, iii, 418; Jefferson to Robert Walsh, 11 May 1811, in *ibid.*, iii, 616; Walsh to Jefferson, 20 June 1811, in *ibid.*, iv, 7-8; and Jefferson to John Bradbury, 5 Mar. 1812, in *ibid.*, iv, 535-6.

¹⁷ DeVoto, *Course of empire*, p. 404.

the transaction made between his country and Napoleonic France, in the year 1787 he had written a letter to James Madison from Paris stating that

I never had any interest Westward of the Alleghaney; and I never will have any. But I have had great opportunities of knowing the character of the people who inhabit that country. And I will venture to say that the act which abandons the navigation of the Missisipi is an act of separation between the Eastern and Western country. It is a relinquishment of five parts out of eight of the territory of the United States, an abandonment of the fairest subject for the paiment of our public debts, and the chaining those debts on our own necks in perpetuum.¹⁸

The hypothesis of separation voiced in this letter would find echoes in the later correspondence of Jefferson. This leads the historian to question, given the actual turn of events leading to the Purchase, the purposes or assumptions behind such assertions. At the same time, we observe a Jefferson never too tired to seek all types of information about the country ‘Westward of the Alleghaney.’ Two years earlier, in 1785, the American merchant John Bondfield (then based in Bordeaux) had informed him that the ‘province of Louisiana yeilds very rich produce. The two Cargoes arrived here will amount to two Millions Livres in furr and Indigo. Their population in Spaniards, french and English amounts to Twenty eight Thousand. Considerable Imports of Negros have been made this year.’ Further still, Bondfield fixed ‘the boundaries of the United States at Point Coupée or 31° degres ...’¹⁹ Shortly after he became president of the United States, Jefferson welcomed additional information on Louisiana (specifically on

¹⁸ Jefferson to James Madison, 30 Jan. 1787, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xi, 92-7. See also Francis D. Cogliano and Kirsten E. Phimister (eds), *Revolutionary America, 1763-1815: a sourcebook* (New York, 2011), pp 159-60; and Jenry Morsman, ‘Securing America: Jefferson’s fluid plans for the western frontier,’ in Douglas Seefeldt, Jeffrey L. Hantman, and Peter S. Onuf (eds), *Across the continent: Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, and the making of America* (Charlottesville, 2005), pp 76-7.

¹⁹ John Bondfield to Jefferson, 20 Aug. 1785, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, viii, 412-13.

population, the military, commerce, imports and exports, specie, taxes, trade, and the cultivation of sugar) from the then governor of Mississippi Territory, Winthrop Sargent.²⁰ By then, of course, the Treaty of San Lorenzo (1795) had been secured, though Spain would revoke it in practice in 1802, leading to the crisis that officially ended with the Louisiana Purchase. Louisiana was then to become a more immediate reality. Territorial contiguity with United States territory resulted from previous western acquisitions and their now budding administrations, in the Northwest Territory but also in Kentucky and Tennessee, the Mississippi Territory, etc.²¹

Louisiana had the peculiar attribute, contrary to these former acquisitions, of representing to a large extent a near-complete unknown – in what would become Upper Louisiana in particular – that, in effect, could be molded to accommodate a new type of expansionist ideology. Jefferson found himself in a position (of which he was, I would contend, fully aware) in which Louisiana seemed to him promised to the United States, *albeit* at some distant future. It was a future both certain and vague, exactly like the anticipation of a complete(d) continental unfolding. What mattered was precisely that it would happen but *not yet*, leaving enough room for myth-building in the meantime. (A case could even be made, in fact, for the American West as still very much a repository for myth creation, although this does not encompass my argument here).²² The main peculiarity of Louisiana as a massive western territorial entity resided in its tendency to stand, in Jefferson's conception of it, for the entirety of the American continent *not yet* appropriated by the federal state. Keeping this notion in mind helps us differentiate

²⁰ Winthrop Sargent to Jefferson, 31 May 1801, in *ibid.*, xxxiv, 216-18.

²¹ See Horsman, *Frontier in the formative years*, *passim*. Kentucky, formerly a part of Virginia, became a state in 1792; Tennessee, previously integrated to North Carolina, achieved statehood 1796. These two territories-turned-states occupied a crucial geographical position since they shared borders with both the Northwest and Louisiana Territories.

²² See Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The legacy of conquest: the unbroken past of the American West* (New York, 1987); and Cronon *et al.*, *Under an open sky*.

Louisiana from the Northwest Territory (despite many parallels, both mythical and real, which are addressed at a later stage in this study), and opens space for a new perspective on Jefferson's quest for intelligence on Louisiana's every aspect until the day of the Purchase.

Soon after he became president, Jefferson intimated that the United States' true northern and southern boundaries were not with New Spain and British Canada but in fact with the Arctic and Antarctic oceans. He wrote to James Monroe in 1801 that 'However our present interests may restrain us within our own limits, it is impossible not to look forward to distant times, when our rapid multiplication will expand itself beyond those limits and cover the whole northern, if not the southern, continent, with a people speaking the same language, governed in similar forms and by similar laws ...'²³ The expression 'look forward to distant times' deserves specific attention here, since it encapsulates so perfectly the notion of a *certain* acquisition bound for an undetermined future. It was just what Jefferson contemplated in Louisiana: a territorial metaphor for his own continental view.

A crucial figure in early Jeffersonian dealings with the reality of Louisiana as a western territorial entity was George Rogers Clark, the elder brother of William Clark of the Corps of Discovery. The Clark family's history was grounded in the West. George Rogers Clark had fought Indians in Ohio (and in many other places, to be sure) and had helped make the Old Northwest a more secure ground for the setting up of a territorial administration relatively unimpeded by the revolts of those tribes whose lands had been

²³ Jefferson to James Monroe, 24 Nov. 1801, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxxv, 718-21. See also Alan Taylor, 'A northern revolution of 1800? Upper Canada and Thomas Jefferson,' in James P. Horn, Jan Lewis, and Peter S. Onuf (eds), *The revolution of 1800: democracy, race, and the new Republic* (Charlottesville, 2002), p. 401; and Gordon S. Wood, *Empire of Liberty: a history of the early Republic, 1789-1815* (Oxford, 2009).

taken away by treaties not always sound.²⁴ Often seen as an Indian hater, the older Clark knew the West like few could pretend to in North America at the time.²⁵ And he enjoyed trekking through vast ‘wilderness’ areas. In November 1782, Jefferson wrote to him and insisted that he record ‘Descriptions of animals, vegetables, minerals, or other curious things, notes as to the Indians, information of the country between the Missisipi and waters of the South sea &c.’²⁶ In the year 1782, then, Jefferson was already contemplating the ‘waters of the South sea’ as part of a still ill-defined American environment. But better definitions would soon come.

The correspondence between the two men, initiated with the prospect of obtaining from Clark natural historical information and specimens as well as fossil bones from the Ohio Valley, progressively turned into a more geopolitically oriented conversation. We must remember that, when Jefferson first enquired into the possibility of Clark getting him fossil bones, there was no Northwest Territory as of yet, while Congress still had to face the recalcitrance of those Union states (Virginia among them) claiming possession of western lands to relinquish their claims.²⁷ At any rate, Jefferson surmised: ‘Perhaps you know some careful person at Fort Pitt with whom they [fossil teeth] might be safely lodged till our Mathematicians go out in the spring to settle the Pennsylvania boundary ...’²⁸ Clark replied within two months that, although he had not been able to procure the teeth, he still hoped to be considered ‘worthy of a correspondence’ and continued by

²⁴ The best book on the subject remains White, *The middle ground*.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 391-5. See also Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians*, pp 69-70; R. Douglas Hurt, *The Ohio frontier: crucible of the Old Northwest, 1720-1830* (Bloomington, 1996); and Armstrong Starkey, *European and Native American warfare, 1675-1815* (Norman, 1998), especially pp 111-66.

²⁶ Jefferson to George Rogers Clark, 26 Nov. 1782, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, vi, 204-05. Significantly, little or no literature on this relationship has been produced since the early twentieth century. See Joseph Schafer, *A history of the Pacific Northwest* (London, 1918), p. 34; and Dorothy O. Johansen and Charles M. Gates, *Empire of the Columbia: a history of the Pacific Northwest* (New York, 1957), p. 89.

²⁷ The literature on the Northwest Territory, and particularly of the land cessions that made its organisation possible, is too big to list here. But see especially the magisterial work by Peter S. Onuf, *Statehood and union: a history of the Northwest Ordinance* (Bloomington, 1987).

²⁸ Jefferson to George Rogers Clark, 19 Dec. 1781, in Oberg, *Jefferson Papers*, vi, 139.

stressing the importance of the knowledge of ‘Geografy’ as a prologue to appropriation and settlement of new land.²⁹ In March 1784, the year of Jefferson’s chairing of the committee for the drafting of the Ordinance of 1784, he informed Clark of the latter’s appointment as Indian commissioner in the Northwest Territory: ‘I am in hopes it will be convenient to you to act in this appointment, because you can render essential service in it, and because too it will bring you forward on the Continental stage.’³⁰

What exactly did this reference to the ‘Continental stage’ mean? It would be an exaggeration, of course, to interpret the phrase as evidence of imminent continental expansion become federal policy. But it meant that Jefferson was thinking continentally by the 1780s. The agency of Jeffersonians in recently acquired territories was ‘Continental’ with a capital c: it sought to express and support the true vision of a United States of America in all its fullness, not one of a republic born in the east and gradually pursuing expansionist policies in order to satisfy its hunger for land, but instead a vision seeking to be one again throughout the whole expanse of the continent, to retrieve its original and natural boundaries from sea to sea. Unfolding, not expansion, already existed in the Jeffersonian mind at that early, barely post-revolutionary stage. This comes as no surprise, since it corresponded with the issue of the acquisition and territorial (then state) administration of the Old Northwest.³¹

Another important character in this story is François Barbé-Marbois, the colourful *Américaniste* and French chargé d’affaires to the United States at the time.³² It was at

²⁹ George Rogers Clark to Jefferson, 20 Feb. 1782, in *ibid.*, vi, 159-60. See also Silvio A. Bedini, *Thomas Jefferson: statesman of science* (New York and London, 1990), p. 99.

³⁰ Jefferson to George Rogers Clark, 4 Mar. 1784, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, vii, 8-9.

³¹ See Onuf, *Statehood and union*.

³² Elizabeth Carlo, *The Louisiana Purchase and the historians* (Manchester, 1995), *passim*. See also Jean-François Potton, *Barbé-Marbois: la justice et les comptes* (Paris, 2006). Marbois later composed his *Histoire de la Louisiane et de la cession de cette colonie par la France aux Etats-Unis de l’Amérique Septentrionale* (Paris, 1829).

his instigation that Jefferson composed the *Notes on Virginia*.³³ There exists, in that regard, a suggestive parallel between the drafting of the *Notes* in 1781 at Marbois's request (in fact a short list of queries about the state of Virginia and the other twelve states) and the Frenchman's gift to Jefferson of John Filson's *Discovery, Settlement, and Present State of Kentucke* in 1784, 'which will certainly interest you and only augments the desire we have to go form settlements west of the mountains.'³⁴ The comparison between the two works needs not be too crudely about the degree to which they encouraged westward expansion, notwithstanding their essential differences. Filson's *Discovery* followed a much more narrative pattern than Jefferson's *Notes*, itself a work of self-consciously scientific investigation. However, both books contributed to a form of epistemological *rapprochement* between the idea of a federal United States and the possession of Louisiana, one through a development on Kentucky (and Boone's frontier agency within it), the second by depicting Virginia in such a way that its legal boundaries could not withstand a surge outward, that is (for our purposes) westward.³⁵

The wilderness of Kentucky and that of western Virginia, even perhaps of the entirety of Virginia, symbolically blended with the utopian wilderness incarnated by the fledgling Jeffersonian vision of Louisiana, which would take its final shape with the publication of the *Account of Louisiana* in 1803.³⁶ Marbois's excitement about the *Notes* only reflected the marquis de Chastellux's equal enchantment at the picturesque wildness of Virginia scenery, best showcased in his eyes by the so-called Natural

³³ Jefferson, *Notes on the state of Virginia* (London, 1787). I will have many opportunities to return to this crucial work throughout the thesis.

³⁴ François Barbé-Marbois to Jefferson, 11 Dec. 1784, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, vii, 568-9. The translation is mine.

³⁵ A cursory reading of the *Notes* quickly indicates that Jefferson deals with a much broader territory than Virginia in the book. I will come back to this notion at a later stage in the thesis.

³⁶ Jefferson, *An account of Louisiana: being an abstract of documents, in the offices of the department of state and of the treasury* (Philadelphia, 1803). I analyse the *Account* in the first section of Chapter 3.

Bridge.³⁷ One can already notice here the regular intrusion of foreign commentators on the Jeffersonian western vision, especially citizens of France (a monarchy, then republic, then empire).³⁸ This underlying and gradual ‘globalisation’ of Jefferson’s vision presents other important features, oftentimes transformed into instruments of rhetoric in official Jeffersonian discourse, which are discussed in later chapters.³⁹ This explains why, almost at the same time that Jefferson was criticising the Comte de Buffon’s thesis of American degeneracy in the *Notes*, he could also advise in all innocence Indian agent Benjamin Hawkins, who worked among southeastern tribes, to document himself on ‘Buffon’s character of Indians’⁴⁰ – a curious move, when one remembers that in the *Histoire naturelle* Buffon used Indians broadly categorized as primary evidence for American degeneracy.⁴¹ This schizophrenia, in fact a controlled one, helps retrace the conditions for the survival envisioned by Jefferson of U.S. identity as a middle way between European overcivilisation and Indian savagery.⁴²

Louis-Guillaume Otto, the new French chargé d’affaires to the United States, soon counted (as early as 1786) as another of Jefferson’s tacit ‘informants’ about the West beyond the Alleghenies. In particular, he updated Jefferson on the activities of British-born cartographer-surveyor and military officer Thomas Hutchins in the Old Northwest.

³⁷ Marbois to Jefferson, 22 Apr. 1782, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, vi, 177-8. See also François Jean de Chastellux to Jefferson, 10 June 1782, in *ibid.*, vi, 190-1; Chastellux to Jefferson, 30 June 1782, in *ibid.*, vi, 193-4; and Chastellux, *Voyages de M. le Marquis de Chastellux dans l’Amérique Septentrionale dans les années 1780, 1781 & 1782* (2 vols, Paris, 1786).

³⁸ Another exhilarated critic of the *Notes of Virginia* was the French Girondin Brissot de Warville, who always cited the United States as an inspiration for the expression of his own republican aspirations. See Jacques Pierre Brissot de Warville to Jefferson, 10 Nov. 1786, in *ibid.*, x, 514-15; Brissot, *Nouveau voyage dans les États-Unis de l’Amérique septentrionale, fait en 1788* (3 vols, Paris, 1791); and Eloise Ellery, *Brissot de Warville: a study in the history of the French Revolution* (New York, 1915).

³⁹ My argument ‘globalises’ itself, so to speak, in chapters 3 to 5.

⁴⁰ Jefferson to Benjamin Hawkins, 28 Dec. 1783, in Oberg, *Thomas Jefferson papers*, vi, p. 427.

⁴¹ Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière* (36 vols, Paris, 1761), ix, 84-129. See also Lee A. Dugatkin, *Mr. Jefferson and the giant moose: natural history in early America* (Chicago, 2009). Buffon, and his influence on early American natural history, will be discussed at some length in Chapter 3.

⁴² I will expand on this notion of ‘controlled schizophrenia’ in later chapters, especially Chapter 3.

Otto stressed Hutchins's difficulties with Native American tribes living in the region.⁴³ Hutchins, who had been appointed Geographer of the United States in 1781 and who would be the first to survey the Seven Ranges of Ohio, was already working on maps of the Old Northwest at that early time, as Jefferson's correspondence with another distinguished French *Américaniste*, J. Hector St John de Crèvecoeur, testifies.⁴⁴ Earlier still, Jefferson had asked the same Hutchins directly about obtaining vocabularies 'for any Indian tribes.'⁴⁵ Notwithstanding the evidence this affords of the correlation between surveying, mapping, and policies of expansion and integration at that time, it is remarkable that Jefferson, then serving as Benjamin Franklin's successor as ambassador to France, should have kept himself posted so dedicatedly on the matter. It looked almost as though the long process of territorial assimilation and administrative integration of the Old Northwest into the Union had provided him with a model which he could use for the projected, though distant, acquisition and institutional integration of Louisiana. The essential difference between the two cases, which consisted of the existence in Louisiana of already sturdy Spanish (and remnants of French) institutions, did not seem to matter to him too much at that time. It would come to the fore in the late 1790s and early 1800s, as diplomacy superseded data-gathering and utopian conceptualisations of the 'West.'⁴⁶

The activity of surveying was geopolitically crucial to the United States at that early time, because it contributed to the definition of *boundaries* on which the young,

⁴³ Louis-Guillaume Otto to Jefferson, 15 Jan. 1786, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, ix, 176-7. I discuss Thomas Hutchins further below and in Chapter 5. On Otto and the United States, see Margaret M. O'Dwyer, *Louis-Guillaume Otto in America* (Evanston, IL, 1954).

⁴⁴ Jefferson to St John de Crèvecoeur, 22 Apr. 1784, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, vii, 113-14.

⁴⁵ Jefferson to Thomas Hutchins, 29 Dec. 1783, in *ibid.*, vi, 427. See also John Hoffman, 'Queries regarding the western rivers: an unpublished letter from Thomas Jefferson to the Geographer of the United States,' in *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, lxxv, no. 1 (Spring, 1982), p. 26.

⁴⁶ I discuss the eighteenth-century Euro-America concept of Utopia at much greater length in the subsequent chapters, especially in Chapter 4.

expanding country could base its territorial progress. Throughout the 1790s, Jefferson maintained a correspondence with David Rittenhouse and Andrew Ellicott, both prominent members of the A.P.S., mathematicians, astronomers, and surveyors. In accordance with the now familiar parallel, Rittenhouse ‘acted upon’ the Old Northwest and Ellicott upon Louisiana. The first was particularly involved in the settling of the western boundary of Pennsylvania, which corresponded to the eastern boundary of the Northwest Territory, and of what would become the state of Ohio in 1803. Jefferson asked him, ‘how far is the western boundary beyond the Meridian of Pittsburgh? This is necessary to enable me to trace that boundary on my map. I shall be much gratified also with a communication of your observations on the curiosities of the Western country.’⁴⁷ Rittenhouse, who would soon succeed the ubiquitous Franklin as president of the A.P.S. in 1791 until his death in 1796 (when Jefferson himself became its president) acted in effect as yet another Jeffersonian agent on the western frontier.

As will be clear by now, Jefferson favoured contact with potential relays of his geopolitical outlook rather than with the frontiersmen who shaped the day-to-day life of the frontier. He took up the role of an architect and planner of expansion, as will be explained in more detail in later parts of the work.⁴⁸ This role appears with equal clarity in Andrew Ellicott’s numerous communications to Jefferson over the second half of the 1790s and early 1800s. Ellicott’s broader output (both material and ideological) is examined elsewhere. But it is important to consider his intellectual relationship with Jefferson in this period following the Treaty of San Lorenzo with Spain and the need, accordingly, to define the southwestern boundary of the U.S. with that country – with Louisiana and Western Florida, in practical terms. Ellicott’s surveying mission reflected

⁴⁷ Jefferson to David Rittenhouse, 25 Jan. 1786, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, ix, 215-17. See also I. Bernard Cohen, *Thomas Jefferson and the sciences* (New York, 1980), *passim*.

⁴⁸ In Chapters 2 to 5, again with varying perspectives.

under an official guise (he was employed by Congress) Rittenhouse's own task in western Pennsylvania.

The zealous Philadelphian surveyor kept Jefferson, then vice-president to the United States, very well-informed about his route, astronomical observations, and measurements. Insisting that it was 'necessary for Congress to take some effective measures for securing this country [the Mississippi Territory], and quieting the minds of the inhabitants,' Ellicott went on to provide astronomical data on the mouth of the Ohio and on the town of Natchez, officially ceded to the U.S. after Pinckney's Treaty but still occupied by a Spanish garrison at that time, and soon to become the first capital of Mississippi Territory.⁴⁹ Eight months later, Ellicott wrote to Jefferson again with further observations and stressed that his utmost priority remained 'the determination of the boundary.'⁵⁰ Such herculean work produced a journal, *The journal of Andrew Ellicott* (published in 1803) which the surveyor did not fail to announce to his sponsor, now busily involved in the elections for presidency of the United States.⁵¹

This sequence of events makes sense. Once he occupied the foremost political office in the country, Jefferson would be able to utilise the data gathered and recorded by the likes of Rittenhouse and Ellicott, and to synthesise it for geopolitical and diplomatic purposes never separated from his conception of Louisiana as 'that distant and vague but ultimately securable West.' And meanwhile the scientific network, with its hub located in Philadelphia, expanded as well. William Dunbar, the Scottish-born

⁴⁹ Andrew Ellicott to Jefferson, 25 Sept. 1797, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxix, 534-5. See also Catharine V. C. Mathews, *Andrew Ellicott: his life and letters* (New York, 1908), pp 149-58.

⁵⁰ Ellicott to Jefferson, 28 May 1800, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxxi, 592-3.

⁵¹ Ellicott to Jefferson, 17 Oct. 1800, in *ibid.*, xxxii, 224. The literature on Ellicott is microscopic and his bountiful correspondence with Jefferson in the 1790s and early 1800s has been completely overlooked by historians, if we except brief mentions of his contribution to the training of Meriwether Lewis in astronomy. I certainly take advantage of this gap here and also in Chapter 4, where I offer a discussion (as well as a full reference) of Ellicott's *Journal*, and argue for its significance in relation to the ideology of Jeffersonian expansionism which resulted in the legitimization of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.

naturalist and astronomer later to be employed by Jefferson on the Red River Expedition of 1804, who then lived in Natchez, helped Ellicott finalise his calculations prior to their publication.⁵² Ellicott praised Dunbar's 'uncommon talents' and admitted that the Scotsman had contributed in no small measure to the observations since he had lent Ellicott his own journal of measurements. Ellicott added: 'government should by all means ... deal out the material of information to the public ... I am happy to see that the location of the boundary has been so scientifically executed.'⁵³ This partnership in research also produced a map which Ellicott first mentioned to Jefferson in December 1800, and declared completed in October 1801: 'it comprehends the Mississippi from the mouth of the Ohio down to the Gulf of Mexico, the province of West Florida and the whole southern boundary of the United States accompanied with thirty two pages, (in folio), of manuscript remarks on the navigation of the rivers, proper positions for military works &c.—I have endeavoured to make it interesting both as a geographical, and national document.'⁵⁴

William Dunbar was first introduced to Jefferson in 1799 by the still obscure and understudied Daniel Clark, an Irish-born and English-educated inhabitant of New Orleans since 1786, who engaged in business activities in Louisiana as variegated as land speculation and banking.⁵⁵ Clark informed the 'Philosopher & Politician' Jefferson

⁵² See the recent book by Arthur H. DeRosier, Jr., *William Dunbar, scientific pioneer of the Old Southwest* (Lexington, 2007), which is an admirable start towards giving Dunbar full justice as a historical character in the surveying and exploration of the Southwest. I have had occasion above to suggest the partial failure of the Red River Expedition of 1804 due to Spanish interference. Nevertheless, Dunbar performed useful observations during the journey. See Berry *et al.*, *The forgotten expedition*. Significantly, Dunbar brought the data back to Jefferson in systematic fashion (as far as possible) like Lewis and Clark, according to what I propose to call the 'center of calculation' principle in Chapter 3.

⁵³ Ellicott to Jefferson, 20 Mar. 1801, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxxiii, 371-2; and Ellicott to Jefferson, 18 Dec. 1800, in *ibid.*, xxxii, 321. See Silvio A. Bedini, *The Jefferson Stone: demarcation of the first meridian of the United States* (Frederick, MD, 1999), p. 8.

⁵⁴ Ellicott to Jefferson, 21 Dec. 1800, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxxii, 335-6; Ellicott to Jefferson, 10 Oct. 1801, in *ibid.*, xxxv, 423-4; and Ellicott to Jefferson, 2 Nov. 1801, in *ibid.*, xxxv, 548-9.

⁵⁵ Michael S. Wohl, 'A man in the shadow: the life of Daniel Clark' (Ph.D. thesis, Tulane University, 1984). See also Junius P. Rodriguez (ed.), *The Louisiana Purchase: a historical and geographical encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, 2002), pp 71-2; Merrill D. Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson and the new nation: a biography* (Oxford, 1970), pp 779-80; and

that ‘Mr William Dunbar a Citizen of Natchez in the Mississippi territory [is] a person worthy of being consulted by you on subjects relating to this country its productions, or any philosophical Question connected with them. He was for some time employed by the Spanish Government as her Astronomer on the Line of demarcation, but has retired to his Estate ...’⁵⁶

Dunbar had indeed worked as surveyor general for West Florida in 1798, where he probably caught Daniel Clark’s attention. Despite his late appearance on the scene, Dunbar was soon to encapsulate the Jeffersonian desire to treat Louisiana as an unknown destined to be marked out by the luminaries of Philadelphian science for eventual demarcation and incorporation into the Union along lines not dissimilar to those of the Northwest Territory, albeit on a bigger and less systematic level. Almost immediately after becoming acquainted with Dunbar, Jefferson wrote the anatomist and A.P.S. member Caspar Wistar: ‘I have received from mr Wm. Dunbar, who is settled near the Natchez sundry communications, which I think worthy of being made to the society ... so learned a correspondent, planted a thousand miles off, on the very verge of the great terra incognita of our western continent, is worthy of being cherished.’⁵⁷ Jefferson repeated the phrase ‘on the verge of the terra incognita of our continent’ in a letter to Dunbar, in which he also called him a ‘Philosophical vedette’ and praised ‘the benefit of your communications.’ Dunbar had effectively been pushed into the network of the A.P.S., of which he quite logically became a member in 1800.

Jackson, *Jefferson and the Rocky Mountains*, pp 101-02.

⁵⁶ Daniel Clark to Jefferson, 12 Feb. 1799, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxxi, 27-9; and Daniel Clark to Jefferson, 29 May 1800, in *ibid.*, xxxi, 593-5. See also John L. Allen, *Lewis and Clark and the image of the American Northwest* (2nd ed., New York, 1991), p. 68; and Franklin L. Riley, *Sir William Dunbar: the pioneer scientist of Mississippi* (Jackson, MS, 1899), p. 94.

⁵⁷ Jefferson to Caspar Wistar, 16 Dec. 1800, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxxii, 312.

‘Terra incognita’, an expression clearly reminiscent of the ‘Terra Australis Incognita’ of the Cook expeditions that named Australia, meant at the most basic level that Jefferson did not envisage Louisiana as merely a Spanish possession.⁵⁸ The Spanish, of course, controlled what would become (in the wake of the Purchase) the Territory of Orleans, but that gigantic other part, Upper Louisiana, was at best nominally occupied by Spain, and Jefferson knew it. He knew, from correspondence and from the books he read on the history of Louisiana, that in Upper Louisiana – let us call it that for practical purposes, while keeping in mind the slight anachronism – the population consisted of isolated Spanish and French (especially French) settlements in an ocean of native tribal villages.⁵⁹ As will be suggested later in this study, if Jefferson only targeted New Orleans in the initial negotiations with Bonaparte, this did not necessarily imply that the other section of the territory would remain impervious to American expansionist designs in a very near future, when the geopolitical ascendancy gained from the acquisition of the capital city guaranteed a position of much greater leverage for the U.S. and even more pressure on an already waning Spanish North American empire. This may explain why, in the few years immediately preceding the ‘diplomatic period’ (to follow the terminology laid out in this essay’s introduction) Jefferson moved to strengthen the republican texture of territorial administrations contiguous to Louisiana

⁵⁸ I look into the first Cook expedition (1768-71) in Chapters 3 and 4. See David Mackay, *In the wake of Cook: exploration, science, and empire, 1780-1801* (Wellington, 1985), p. 29; and J. C. Beaglehole, *The life of Captain James Cook* (Stanford, 1974), p. 120.

⁵⁹ As a result of his readings, Jefferson produced a list of queries on Louisiana. Jefferson, ‘Queries as to Louisiana,’ 15 July 1803, in Ford, *Works of Jefferson*, x, 17-19. The list reminds us directly of Marbois’ questions about Virginia. It contains entries on boundaries, the military, commerce, religion, population, land titles, public property, law, agriculture, and cartography. See Jackson, *Jefferson and the Rocky Mountains*, pp 106-10; Peter J. Kastor, ‘Lewis and Clark and the Louisiana Purchase,’ in James P. Ronda and Nancy T. Koupal (eds), *Finding Lewis and Clark: old trails, new directions* (Pierre, 2004), p. 31; and Richard O. Ulibárrí, *American interest in the Spanish-Mexican Southwest, 1803-1848* (San Francisco, 1974), p. 27.

and appointed Daniel Clark, perhaps as a reward for the latter's earlier reference to the qualities and survey skill of William Dunbar, U.S. consul at the city of New Orleans.⁶⁰

Jefferson announced Clark's appointment to W.C.C. Claiborne in the same letter that confirmed Claiborne's own appointment as governor of Mississippi Territory: 'You will receive from the Secretary of state a commission as Governor of the Mississippi territory, an office which I consider as of primary importance, inasmuch as that country is the principal point of contact between Spain & us, and also as it is the embryo of a very great state.'⁶¹ The letter also introduced Dunbar to Claiborne, 'a person of great worth & wealth there, and one of the most distinguished citizens of the US', a rather dithyrambic and rapid assessment if we remember that the two men had only known each other for three years. What stands out in the document is not the phrase 'embryo of a very great state' alone, but the fact that it was conveyed to the governor of Mississippi Territory, and future governor of Louisiana Territory. Intimate doctrinal convictions, from the 'architectural' viewpoint of a Jefferson located in his eastern center, appeared between Claiborne, Daniel Clark, Dunbar, and even Ellicott.⁶² In a subsequent letter to Jefferson, Ellicott explicitly utilised his own observations on the boundary line between Spain and the U.S. (post-San Lorenzo) to define the official boundaries of Louisiana. The data thus provided was being federally absorbed and analysed with a degree of precision that could not have been innocent.⁶³

A slightly earlier example of Jefferson's careful weaving of a network of surveyors and natural scientists to give a face to the 'West' may be observed in his

⁶⁰ Jefferson to Claiborne, 13 July 1801, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxxiv, 560-2. See also Richard Skolnik, *1803, Jefferson's decision: the United States purchases Louisiana* (New York, 1969), p. 6.

⁶¹ Jefferson to Claiborne, 13 July 1801, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxxiv, 560.

⁶² Claiborne to Jefferson, 4 Aug. 1801, in *ibid.*, xxxv, 17-19.

⁶³ Ellicott to Jefferson, 18 Aug. 1801; in *ibid.*, xxxv, 106-07.

correspondence with the Comte de Volney.⁶⁴ Having gone to visit the United States in the latter half of the 1790s, Volney produced a *Tableau du climat et du sol des États-Unis d'Amérique* in two volumes (1803) in which he rendered on paper the topography of the new country, including the Old Northwest.⁶⁵ Of course the territory had already been well integrated by then, but Volney's descriptions could accompany, as could Lewis and Clark's depictions of Louisiana less than a decade later, the process of 'unification' (taken literally) of the Ohio Valley once the data he had gathered was processed and transferred to Jefferson, whom he openly admired. Most significant in Volney's textual production as a parallel and echo to later descriptions of Louisiana (pre and post-acquisition) was the distinctively utopian element in his discourse: 'In a hundred years all this vast forest will be cleared and the soil dried, it will be a rich plain like our Flanders and Holland, a nursery of cattle for *the whole continent*, and a habitation richer maybe than Kentucky: But at the moment It is a dull and Savage solitude of wood and prairie.'⁶⁶ As the thesis shows, this type of idiom, sometimes based on facts deliberately exaggerated, sometimes not at all true, always went with (as a kind of rhetorical preliminary) the discourses of legitimation of European and Euro-American imperial expansion in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

If this essential feature of Jeffersonian expansionism was shared with the imperial discourses of Old World empires, France and Great Britain in particular, it had to base its idiosyncrasy on the myth of 'continentality'. It is interesting to point out that in the passage above, Volney speaks of 'the whole continent', a sign (complex, to be sure) that

⁶⁴ I look at Volney in more depth in Chapter 3.

⁶⁵ Constantin-François Chassebœuf de La Giraudais, Comte de Volney, *Tableau du climat et du sol des États-Unis d'Amérique* (2 vols, Paris, 1803). On the relatively overlooked Volney, see for instance Nicole Hafid-Martin, *Volney* (Paris and Roma, 1999); and Jean Roussel (ed.), *Volney et les Idéologues* (Angers, 1988).

⁶⁶ Volney to Jefferson, 12 Dec. 1796, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxix, 220-2. The translation and the emphases are mine. See also Gilbert Chinard (ed.), *Volney et l'Amérique d'après des documents inédits et sa correspondance avec Jefferson* (Paris, 1923).

this American republican striving for idiosyncrasy had been grasped by some European *Américanistes*. The observation actually generates little surprise from a transatlantic perspective, since this so-called idiosyncrasy depended for its very self-definition on a contrast with Old World imperialism and therefore implicitly with an acknowledgement of it. In his response to Volney, the future president of the United States approached the subject of American Indians, and admitted almost candidly that ‘We wish much to know what impression it makes on an enlightened European to whom their peculiarities will be new and therefore more readily observed. Within a shade of the Indian, you have seen *our own race with the habits of the Indian*.’⁶⁷ In this letter, in a nutshell, Jefferson had articulated to one of his most regular foreign correspondents the core conception of a U.S. republican identity steeped in a flexible ‘middle way’.

It is an argument sustained throughout the thesis that, after the integration of the Old Northwest, the prospected integration of Louisiana (projected then effected) represented a next step in the definition of that ‘middle way’, borne out of necessity for the political survival of the Union but contributing in the end to its reinforcement. In that early, purely ‘Americano-centric’ effort, Native Americans served as mythical instruments for the reinforcement of a contemplated cohesive U.S. identity, a development which I consider in more depth elsewhere.⁶⁸ This explains partly why Jefferson, already from the 1780s, showed much more interest in ethnography and the study of Indian languages than in Native Americans themselves as human beings, and why he rarely encountered any in a non-official situation throughout his lifetime.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Jefferson to Volney, 17 Dec. 1796, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxix, 224-5. The emphases are mine. In the same letter Jefferson predicted a contrast between Volney’s observations of Native Americans and Crèvecoeur’s earlier ones, thereby displaying his familiarity with the *Letters from an American farmer*. See Chinard, *Volney et l’Amérique*, p. 51.

⁶⁸ In Chapters 2 and 3, in particular.

⁶⁹ He did, of course, meet Indian delegations who visited Washington and made speeches, especially in the wake of Lewis and Clark. But these were official encounters with a set power relationship, as I explain in the next chapter.

What mattered was their *image* in the blooming republican consciousness, and how that image could be moulded, exactly like the ‘West’ itself could be moulded as an environment. This study shows that, in practice, the western environment and its aboriginal inhabitants were often blended together through what I call the technique of ‘natural historicising’,⁷⁰ – hence Jefferson’s continuous correspondence on natural history and ethnography with A.P.S. member Benjamin Smith Barton, and with Indian agent Benjamin Hawkins.⁷¹ In each case, the ultimate question was about the destiny of the United States, not of the American Indian. The latter’s role as a foil has been adequately documented in the literature.⁷²

But it must be kept in mind that the search for the best method of circumscribing the Indian as ‘foil’ became interdependent with the course of westward expansion. Each new territorial acquisition produced new republican qualms, induced no doubt by the still prevalent notion conveyed by Montesquieu that a republic could only thrive within a limited geographical extent, as taught by the experiences of Greece and Rome. At the same time, each acquisition produced tangible new depictions of the contemplated land and its indigenous inhabitants, which helped define with greater and greater clarity, precision and assertiveness the limits of the new (white) American identity. This projected identity, an intense Jeffersonian concern from the 1780s to the 1820s, was built on a negative proposition: neither European nor Indian, but capable of assessing both so as to integrate the productive and virtuous (that is, *republican*) qualities of each.

⁷⁰ See Chapters 2 to 4, *passim*, for several examples of that technique. I use the word ‘technique’ for lack of a better term. ‘Natural historicising,’ of course, was rhetorical strategy often unconsciously or half-consciously resorted to.

⁷¹ Jefferson to Hawkins, 14 Mar. 1800, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxxi, 435-7; Hawkins to Jefferson, 1 Feb. 1802, in *ibid.*, xxxvi, 486-7. As regards Barton, see Benjamin Smith Barton to Jefferson, 25 Oct. 1796, in *ibid.*, xxix, 201-02; and Barton to Jefferson, 26 Oct. 1798, in *ibid.*, xxx, 564. See also Bedini, *Statesman of science*, pp 291, 358; C. L. Grant (ed.), *Letters, journals, and writings of Benjamin Hawkins: 1802-1816* (New York, 1980), p. 432; and Martin R. Clagett, *Scientific Jefferson revealed* (Charlottesville, 2009), p. 29.

⁷² The three best examples remain Slotkin, *Regeneration through violence*; Bernard W. Sheehan, *Seeds of extinction: Jeffersonian philanthropy and the American Indian* (Chapel Hill, 1973); and Richard Drinnon, *Facing west: the metaphysics of Indian-hating and empire-building* (3rd ed., Norman, 1997).

Those Europeans who (like Volney) took an active and self-conscious part in that process did so, I believe, out of genuine sympathy for the Euro-American cause and excitement at the hope it embodied for the establishment of a truly republican order on the lines that the French Revolution had earlier failed to sustain.

Last but not least among the layers of interpretation in Jefferson's conceptualisation of Louisiana was its most idealised dimension. Historians have perhaps tended to overlook or neglect it too fast as quaint and innocent wanderings of the mind caused by Jefferson's confrontation with the 'unknown'. There will be occasion in later sections to probe deeper into the potential ideological stakes behind such intentional utopian exaggerations (as I would maintain they *were* intentional) as those found in Jefferson's *Account of Louisiana* (1803).⁷³ For the moment, let us consider the captivating exchange (not really an exchange, in fact) between Jefferson and John Devereux DeLacy, an Irish-born emigrant to America who was acting as a business agent in the Bahamas from West Florida and challenged the domination of Panton, Leslie & Company over the trade there.⁷⁴ Alienating himself from Spanish officials who had strong connections with the firm, DeLacy was seized by the Spanish and kept imprisoned in New Orleans until Claiborne himself, newly appointed governor of Louisiana Territory, set him free in 1804. In the process, DeLacy became part of the network of Jefferson's westward-looking correspondents and informal agents outlined above.⁷⁵

The main letter on which this discussion focuses is rather lengthy and laborious, and the first half of it deals too much with DeLacy's own problems to interest us here.

⁷³ As mentioned in a previous note, I tackle this issue with a case study of Jefferson's *Account of Louisiana* in Chapter 3.

⁷⁴ Not really an exchange, because Jefferson seems to have ignored all of DeLacy's communications until 1813. For the biographical bit on DeLacy I have used, see Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxxv, 559-60.

⁷⁵ DeLacy is a dramatically understudied figure in American historiography. Next to nothing has been written on him or even coincidentally about him. Nevertheless, he was an intimate acquaintance of architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe and of engineer and father of the steamboat Robert Fulton. He fitfully appears in the literature devoted to these two men. See John E. Semmes, *John H. B. Latrobe and his times, 1803-1891* (Baltimore, 1917), p. 26; Talbot Hamlin, *Benjamin Henry Latrobe* (Oxford, 1955), p. 379; and Cynthia O. Philip, *Robert Fulton: a biography* (Lincoln, 1985), p. 335.

However, the second part includes a discussion of Louisiana, and especially the trans-Mississippi section of it, which proves enlightening. DeLacy certainly does not record otherworldly ramblings; rather, he provides Jefferson with a wealth of data on the province. What must be pointed out (because this feature reappears on numerous occasions in the literature of the ‘pre-unfolding’ U.S. at each period when ‘unfolding’ eventually took place – the Northwest, the Mississippi, Louisiana, Oregon, etc.) is that large chunks of information sound enough by the standards of the time (even Ellicott could not pretend to absolute accuracy) found themselves mixed invariably with such bizarre affirmations as the existence of a salt mountain.⁷⁶ The following passage is worth quoting at some length:

Having travelled through the greater part of the province of Louisiana up to near the frontiers of Mexico I submit the following Remarks to you sir that I have made, first to speak of the soil S.W. of the Missouri and the salt Mountain and Plains it is rich, the Missouri divides and the S.W Branch runs a long way into New Leon—the Misso’ runs through or rather is precipitated through immense large plains of Sand strongly impregnated with Saline particles which it carries down with it with incredible velocity to the Mississippi and mingling with its waters thus discolours them. there are volcanos on the Margin of the Missouri or in its neighbourhood for though I could not ascertain precisely where yet the quantity of lava on its Banks which is generally but erroneously taken for pumice ... One of the finest countries in the world probably presents itself from St. Geneveivre all the way back as far as I have been or could hear of with any certainty, but to speak of, what I have seen The ground is broken at a distance from the Mississippi Bank Westward across the Head Waters of the Rivers St. Francis which interlock with some small Branches that empty into the Missouri on the S. Side, and from thence all the way to the Sea, The Indians here near and on the Missouri are quite uncivilised some had never seen a white before, but they are all hospitable ... indeed an excursion up the Missouri well

⁷⁶ TJ actually took up the ‘salt mountain’ myth in the *Account of Louisiana*, proving that he took the information seriously. See Chapter 3 for more details on this story.

planned would more than Repay every charge attending it and leave the adventurers a very great reward for their labour—No Country in the World is better Watered and several fine Navigable Rivers intersect the way downwards the cheif of which are the St. Francis, the White River the Osark which has an inland communication with the white River, The Red River, which by means of the Black River that empties into it and which is formed by the Junction of the Tennesaw, the Ouachita and the Catahoola 20 Leagues above its confluence with the Red River.⁷⁷

In this letter, DeLacy explicitly combined serious research with the utopian idiom, as well as pronounced encouragement towards the fuller, federally supported exploration of the trans-Mississippi region. This is exactly what Jefferson would proceed to do with the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and indeed he already had a few ‘drafts’ to start with – a sizeable number of failed attempts which are examined in the last section below. But, of course, what singles out the Corps of Discovery is that its mission took place almost simultaneously with the acquisition of Louisiana. True, Jefferson had planned for it prior to the transaction, and therefore the Corps cannot be said to have been mustered *as a result* of the Purchase. Yet the two events remain inextricably connected and, I would maintain, connected in a way that is crucial to the understanding of each other. The next section will examine some of the diplomatic exchanges that eventually led up to the Purchase, suggesting that exploration of the trans-Mississippi West, if not envisaged by Jefferson as a consequence of the acquisition of Louisiana, still partook of a wider process of territorial appropriation at levels that a mere diplomatic *coup* could not have recognized. This began with the question of geography.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ John Devereux DeLacy to Jefferson, 3 Nov. 1801, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxxv, 549-62. I believe it may be the first time that this letter is quoted in a work of historical scholarship, which truly comes as a surprise to me.

⁷⁸ I think it is a fair point to make that most literature on the Purchase and on the Corps of Discovery, never mind its voluminous size and occasional great contributions, often fails to look at both events in perspective. There is a general patchiness about the Lewis and Clark Expedition literature due to its popularity, and one of the difficulties involved in a comparative perspective may well be that too often the Corps of Discovery eats up the Purchase in the degree of

B. The diplomatic stage: legalizing U.S. ‘unfolding’ as a process, 1795-1803

The danger here is to recount an old story using a method already mastered by several authors.⁷⁹ My scope must remain limited to the Jeffersonians’ conception of their evolving relationship with Louisiana, and how this transpired in their letters until the announcement of the official acquisition of the whole territory. This section is thus a logical follow-on from the previous one. It keeps the same focus, and only some of the correspondents change. The main pattern of the argument here is that of continuity.

It was continuity in the sense that Jeffersonians now ‘familiar’ with Louisiana as a contiguous territory (in addition, of course, to being a Spanish possession with its own history pre-1780) could see it as the logical territorial successor in the chain of events to the Old Northwest.⁸⁰ The issue that gradually began to manifest itself to the likes of Monroe and Livingston was how to secure a hold on Louisiana for good, in such a way that there could be no going back diplomatically. One could argue that Pinckney’s Treaty had ensured just that. Of course, its main purpose had been to secure the navigation of the Mississippi to New Orleans and the right of deposit in the coastal city, but once Spain accepted these measures – for a complex assortment of reasons long examined by diplomatic historians – did it not also confirm the westward geographical

scrutiny both popular and scholarly, a phenomenon that can only evolve towards more balance in the future. Lewis and Clark historiography has become objectively saturated. Another complication that may arise for a study of the two events in comparison is simply the fact that Lewis and Clark cannot be conceived as a straightforward consequence of the Purchase, since it would make no sense chronologically. There must be a dimension of conceptualisation involved, which is what I propose here.

⁷⁹ See Jon Kukla, *A wilderness so immense: the Louisiana Purchase and the destiny of America* (New York, 2003); Bartholomew H. Sparrow, Sanford Levinson (ed.), *The Louisiana Purchase and American expansion, 1803-1898* (Lanham, 2005); Peter J. Kastor (ed.), *The Louisiana Purchase: emergence of an American nation* (Washington, D.C., 2002); Peter J. Kastor and François Weil (eds), *Empires of the imagination: transatlantic histories of the Louisiana Purchase* (Charlottesville, 2009); and Patrick G. Williams, S. Charles Bolton, Jeannie M. Whyne (eds), *A whole country in commotion: the Louisiana Purchase and the American Southwest* (Fayetteville, 2005).

⁸⁰ On the history of Louisiana (and especially of the trans-Mississippi West) pre-1780, see A. P. Nasatir (ed.), *Before Lewis and Clark: documents illustrating the history of the Missouri, 1785-1804* (2nd ed., 2 vols, Norman, 2002). I make wise use of this particularly important work in Chapter 2.

course of American teleology?⁸¹ Notwithstanding rather sterile debates about the weakness of the Spanish empire in late eighteenth-century North America, what cannot be denied is that the United States effectively stopped perceiving Spain as a dangerous threat on the continent after the ratification of Pinckney's Treaty. Instead, the main threat became France.

Spain's relative diplomatic pliability had enabled the Americans to pave the way towards the appropriation of Louisiana on lines inspired by that of the Northwest Territory. It should not surprise us, then, that in the summer of 1792 Jefferson had asked New York merchant Henry Remsen to 'purchase two copies of Hutchins's historical narrative of Louisiana and West-Florida immediately. They are for Mr. Short and Mr. Carmichael ... He will thank him [Remsen] for a 3d. copy which he will pay for himself.'⁸² Hutchins, it will be recalled, had acted as surveyor of the Seven Ranges in Ohio. Previous to this, in 1778, he had written the *Topographical description of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and North Carolina*, a book in which most of the discussion actually centers around the Old Northwest.⁸³ In 1784 Hutchins composed the *Historical narrative and topographical description of Louisiana, and West-Florida*, which Jefferson decided to procure for William Short and William Carmichael, the two commissioners (with Thomas Pinckney) charged to secure the Treaty of San Lorenzo.⁸⁴

Such a striking intersection of interests between topography, surveying, and diplomacy,

⁸¹ On the Treaty of San Lorenzo, see Lewis, *Jefferson's noble bargain*, p. 28; Rodriguez, *The Louisiana Purchase*; John C. Miller, *Towards a more perfect union: the American Republic, 1783-1815* (Glenview, IL, 1970), p. 129; Gilbert C. Din (ed.), *The Spanish presence in Louisiana, 1763-1803* (Lafayette, LA, 1996), pp 44, 51, 227; and José Montero de Pedro, *The Spanish in New Orleans and Louisiana*, trans. Richard E. Chandler (Gretna, LA, 2000), pp 71-81.

⁸² Jefferson to Henry Remsen, 10 Aug. 1792, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxiv, 285-6.

⁸³ Thomas Hutchins, *A topographical description of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and North Carolina* (Cleveland, 1778). I look at Hutchins's work more in detail in Chapter 5.

⁸⁴ Hutchins, *An historical narrative and topographical description of Louisiana, and West-Florida* (Philadelphia, 1784). See also Dale V. Every, *Ark of empire: the American frontier, 1784-1803* (New York, 1963), pp 105, 133, 165; and Ray A. Billington and Martin Ridge, *Westward expansion: a history of the American frontier* (6th ed., Albuquerque, 2001), p. 740.

mainly borne out of the anticipated geopolitical leverage that could be gained from being the one to determine boundaries in dealings between colonial empires, provides a first measure of the continuity between the intellectual and diplomatic processes of the U.S. integration of Louisiana, and of the impossibility to look at these separately. It also powerfully suggests the essential historical continuity (diplomatic, of course, but at bottom epistemological, and teleological in the Jeffersonian vision) between Pinckney's Treaty and the Louisiana Purchase.

After the relative neutralisation of Spain and the broad confinement of imperial tensions with Great Britain on the Canadian border, only France was left as a potential colonial contender for possession of Louisiana. By the late 1790s, the aggressively expansion-minded Bonaparte had taken the reins of power in that country, and the prospect for France of regaining Louisiana as a supply colony for Saint Domingue loomed large in the background of the Jeffersonians' expansionistic computations.⁸⁵ All this has been well scrutinised. But in targeting France as the main continental contender as soon as the first suspicions of a retrocession from Spain appeared in the late 1790s, the U.S. was implicitly staking its own right to the whole of Louisiana. It was a right that had, in fact, acquired a distinctly teleological texture through the original process of conceptualised appropriation discussed in the first section of the chapter. Both processes formed part of a coherent, fluid and westward-moving whole.

Hence Jefferson's expressions of concern to his future vice-president Aaron Burr in 1797, two years after the first American diplomatic achievement regarding Louisiana:

⁸⁵ Rodriguez, *The Louisiana Purchase*, p. xxiii; Thomas Fiehrer, 'Saint-Domingue/Haiti: Louisiana's Caribbean connection,' in *Louisiana History*, xxx no. 4 (Autumn, 1989), pp 419-37; Sarah Russell, 'Ethnicity, commerce, and community on Lower Louisiana's plantation frontier, 1803-1828,' in *Louisiana History*, xl, no. 4 (Autumn, 1999), pp 389-405; Paul Lachance, 'Repercussions of the Haitian Revolution in Louisiana,' in David P. Geggus (ed.), *The impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic world* (Columbia, SC, 2001), pp 210-11; Richard Campanella, *Bienville's dilemma: a historical geography of New Orleans* (Lafayette, LA, 2008), p. 200; and Laurent Dubois, 'The Haitian Revolution and the sale of Louisiana; or, Thomas Jefferson's (unpaid) debt to Jean-Jacques Dessalines,' in Kastor and Weil, *Empires of the imagination*, pp 93-116.

‘I consider the future character of our republic as in the air; indeed it’s future fortunes will be in the air if war is made on us by France, and if Louisiana becomes a Gallo-American colony.’⁸⁶ In other words, taken in the reverse, the American Republic would *remain* a coherent political whole if France stepped out of the issue altogether, or lost the battle – but who would take her place, then? Spain to begin with, of course, but only so far as it could withstand American penetration of its borders and aggressive treaty-making. The tone of Jefferson’s diplomatic correspondence in the years that led up to the Purchase suggests that Spain was hardly construed by then as a powerful enemy. France, on the contrary, clearly was one, as Jefferson’s fellow Virginian and consul-general in Paris Fulwar Skipwith explained to his distant cousin in early 1798:

France with almost the whole of the Continent of Europe at her feet, will soon reduce to the same humble posture the Power who alone supports life in her enemies in America ... she may gratify herself with the prospect of doing it with great commercial advantages, and aggrandizement, or even that she may league with the very Power that now caresses us ... Already the language of planting new Colonies upon the borders of the Missipi is the language of frenchmen here, and if I had not been apprised of the fact, I should without any claim to foresight know, that Spain is disposed to cede her possessions upon that river whenever the Directory shall require it.⁸⁷

While Skipwith spoke of Spain as ‘caressing’ the United States (the term speaks for itself) he warned about French designs of ‘aggrandizement’ and ‘planting new colonies upon the borders of the Mississippi’, precisely what Jeffersonian expansionists

⁸⁶ Jefferson to Aaron Burr, 17 June 1797, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxix, 437-40. See also Matthew Q. Dawson, *Partisanship and the birth of America’s second party, 1796-1800: ‘Stop the wheels of government’* (Westport, CT, 2000), p. 56.

⁸⁷ Fulwar Skipwith to Jefferson, 17 Mar. 1798, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxx, 183-7. The literature on Skipwith is scarce. See Henry B. Cox, *Fulwar Skipwith: Virginia diplomat* (Washington, D.C., 1962); and the controversial book by Robert G. Kennedy, *Mr. Jefferson’s lost cause: land, farmers, slavery, and the Louisiana Purchase* (New York, 2003), *passim*.

contemplated for themselves at the core of their cognitive apprehension of the ‘West’. France, who in the end would do nothing in Louisiana but sell the entirety of the territory to the U.S., had come to play the role of a mirror of American imperial designs in Jeffersonian discourse.

Skipwith, three years later and one year before the retrocession took place (1802) as part of the Treaty of San Ildefonso signed earlier between France and Spain in 1800, stayed very much on the watch: ‘the possession of that Country, by this Government [France], is among its most favorite objects. Already, I have reason to believe, is a plan formed of peupling that Colony to an amazing extent ...’.⁸⁸ The mirror image is tempting to evoke once again, but we find an additional disturbing element patent in the fact that such U.S. rhetoric had been tacitly sanctioned by numerous French intellectuals and political figures: Volney, Dupont de Nemours, Marbois, Brissot, but also the renowned Parisian naturalist and former traveller to the United States, Palisot de Beauvois.⁸⁹ In 1801, Jefferson was even elected to the National Institute of Sciences and Arts as an *associé étranger* to the class of ‘moral and political science.’⁹⁰ There is something paradoxical about Jefferson’s progressive anticipation of a diplomatic showdown with France and his simultaneous consecration by the French scientific community, especially if we keep in mind that numerous Jeffersonian diplomatic arguments were based on scientific observations to define boundaries, establish censuses, describe the environment and climate, the resources, etc. In short, French intellectuals, and scientists

⁸⁸ Skipwith to Jefferson, 30 Oct. 1801, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxxv, 526-8. See also Henry B. Cox, *The Parisian American: Fulwar Skipwith of Virginia* (Washington, D.C., 1964), p. 72.

⁸⁹ Palisot de Beauvois to Jefferson, 4 Sept. 1798, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxx, 515-16; and Dupont de Nemours to Jefferson, 27 Aug. 1798, in *ibid.*, xxx, 501-02. See also Gilbert Chinard (ed.), *The correspondence of Jefferson and Du Pont de Nemours* (2nd ed., New York, 1979), p. 7. I discuss Beauvois’s work with Charles Willson Peale in the latter’s Philadelphia Museum in Chapter 5. Beauvois notably helped acquaint Peale with many renowned French scientists.

⁹⁰ National Institute of France to Jefferson, 26 Dec. 1801, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxxvi, 206-08.

in particular, took part in the development of the U.S. sense of teleology that ultimately led to the purchase of Louisiana from their ‘own’ Napoleonic France.⁹¹

The explanation of this paradox may lie in the development, in the late eighteenth century, of a transnational (‘transatlantic’ might be more accurate) type of imperial discourse, grounded in the dichotomies of *civilised versus savage* and *enlightened versus unenlightened*, independently of diplomatic disputes between the colonial empires themselves.⁹² This would amount to saying that, within the intellectual elites of these empires (including the United States, provided that we allow ourselves here the luxury to consider it a republican empire) there existed a sense of tacit solidarity not always obvious in the more official transactions between heads of state. But even this sense of solidarity could become confusing because of its heterogeneity. Robert R. Livingston, the ‘Chancellor’ of New York and a staunch Jeffersonian republican, was informed of his election to A.P.S. only eight days before another vital communication reached him: ‘It has occurred to me that possibly you might be willing to undertake the mission as Minister Plenipotentiary to France,’ said Jefferson. Livingston accepted, and barely two years later found himself negotiating the Purchase with James Monroe in Paris.⁹³ Interestingly, Livingston also shared an interest with Jefferson in fossil bones, which implied a form of implication (intellectual at least) in the Ohio region. And he

⁹¹ Lawrence S. Kaplan, ‘Jefferson’s foreign policy and Napoleon’s idéologues,’ in *William and Mary Quarterly*, third series, xix, no. 3 (July, 1962), pp 344-59.

⁹² I explore these dichotomies in greater depth in Chapters 3 and 4.

⁹³ On Livingston’s election to the A.P.S., see Jefferson to Robert R. Livingston, 16 Feb. 1801, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxxii, 596-7. On Jefferson’s suggestion that Livingston might accept a position as minister to France, see Jefferson to Livingston, 24 Feb. 1801, in *ibid.*, xxxiii, 61. Robert R. Livingston suffers from a fate not dissimilar to Fulwar Skipwith’s in U.S. historiography. Nevertheless, see George Dangefield, *Chancellor Robert R. Livingston of New York, 1746-1813* (New York, 1960); and Frank W Brecher, *Negotiating the Louisiana Purchase: Robert Livingston’s mission to France, 1801-1804* (Jefferson, NC, 2006).

knew Sir Joseph Banks, a man who could be seen as Jefferson's British alter-ego as an architect of imperial science in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁹⁴

Monroe, who wrote ominously in May 1801 that 'we have great reason to fear that Spain is to cede Louisiana & the Floridas to France,' numbered among the few of Jefferson's close friends who did not have a direct interest in science.⁹⁵ We may also include in that list Tench Coxe, the political economist and former Pennsylvania delegate to the Continental Congress, a former associate of Hamilton at the Treasury under Washington's presidency. Coxe had only recently turned Republican when he wrote to Jefferson (who would 'reward' him with a position as a purveyor of public supplies in 1803) about his colonising plans for the region west of the Alleghenies: 'I have good reason to believe it has not been viewed heretofore with out any eye to great & numerous colonial acquisitions—We have colonized 20,000 taxable inhabitants ... to our country West of the Allegeny Mountains since 1782. I prefer this to a sugar colony keeping up the slave system.'⁹⁶ But if Monroe and Coxe were not scientists at heart, they still (as their respective letters indicate) had 'reasonable' views in keeping with the Jeffersonian republican expansionist vocabulary. In any case, this drew them closer to the ideological convictions of the French, whom they might criticize, than to those of their tribal neighbours, to which they paid little attention.

In December 1801, Livingston spoke of the 'well founded conjecture relative to Luissania [sic]' and indirectly revealed what probably had become obvious to the observer of the U.S. course of diplomatic negotiations with Spain since the early 1790s:

⁹⁴ Livingston to Jefferson, 6 Mar. 1801, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxxiii, 200-01. A comparison between Jefferson and Banks occupies a large section of Chapter 3.

⁹⁵ Monroe to Jefferson, 29 May 1801, in *ibid.*, xxxiv, 205-06. See also Lawrence S. Kaplan, *Thomas Jefferson: westward the course of empire* (Denver, 1998), p. 133.

⁹⁶ Tench Coxe to Jefferson, 10 Jan. 1801, in *ibid.*, xxxii, 421-27. On Coxe see the recent book by Jacob E. Cooke, *Tench Coxe and the early Republic* (Chapel Hill, 2011); and the old study by Harold Hutcheson, *Tench Coxe: a study in American economic development* (Baltimore, 1938).

that navigation of the Mississippi River and possession of Louisiana were inseparable diplomatic objectives. ‘The possession of Luissania is a favorite object under an idea that french manufactures may pass thro’ that channel into our western territory. They know little of the navigation of the Missisipi & that so far from forwarding the sale of their manufactures they will only afford another market for British goods, which will be sent down the Ohio in spite of all their vigilance.’⁹⁷ Characteristically, Livingston used his scientific and commercial familiarity with the Ohio valley to challenge French ambitions at the level of diplomacy. At that stage, it was a hardly new phenomenon.

If Americans like Jefferson and Livingston ‘knew better’, it was because they had long shown a pronounced scientifico-commercial interest in the Ohio, Mississippi and Louisiana regions. This afforded them not only arguments in debates and self-confidence in negotiations, but a surer and surer sense of the inevitability of American expansion over Louisiana. When General James Wilkinson, himself hardly an ardent patriot, sent Jefferson some of Dunbar’s observations and sketches ‘of the settled parts of the Mississippi Territory,’ and mentioned his intention to ‘publish a correct Map of that & the adjacent Spanish Territory,’ he was (perhaps unconsciously) resorting to a similar frame of interpretation, whereby the notion of ‘unfolding’ could be asserted gradually by circumscribing and defining those wild, western environments which only contiguous U.S. citizens could properly define.⁹⁸ Europeans did not have the envisioned continental legitimacy to do so. Only those who, like Volney, transferred their collected data back to Philadelphia or Washington received a measure of recognition, but this did

⁹⁷ Livingston to Jefferson, 26 Dec. 1801, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxxvi, 206-08.

⁹⁸ James Wilkinson to Jefferson, 29 Nov. 1800, in *ibid.*, xxxii, 262. On Wilkinson and his intrigues in and around Spanish Louisiana, see John F. McDermott, *The Spanish in the Mississippi Valley, 1762-1804* (Urbana, 1974), *passim*; Gilbert C. Din, ‘Spanish control over a multiethnic society: Louisiana, 1763-1803,’ in Jesús F. de la Teja and Ross Frank (eds), *Choice, persuasion, and coercion: social control on Spain’s North American frontiers* (Albuquerque, 2005), p. 64; and Din, “‘For defense of country and the glory of arms’”: Army officers in Spanish Louisiana, 1766-1803,’ in *Louisiana History*, xliii, no. 1 (Winter, 2002), pp 5-40.

not amount to a form of political naturalisation which, in any case, may not have looked particularly attractive to Old World intellectuals. As for Native Americans, they lacked the epistemological foundations for performing tasks that would equally have denied them anything more than a rhetorical form of acknowledgement by the federal state. With measurements of the western land made by white Euro-Americans there developed a tacit claim to that land, in a not always precisely defined but nevertheless certain future.

The myth of ‘continentality’ was inextricably tied to scientific observations. This pivotal element in the U.S. search for territorial legitimacy appears in the correspondence surrounding the diplomatic period that preceded the acquisition of Louisiana. It found a further, literally ‘embodying’ echo in the period of intense exploration that followed, and which culminated with Lewis and Clark’s departure for the trans-Mississippi West in 1803. The purpose of the following section is not to discuss the Corps of Discovery as such, but to examine how, through a complex and protracted process beginning in the early 1780s and tightly bound up with the two other processes of conceptualisation and diplomacy, the very *idea* of a Corps of Discovery came to be. It is suggested that Lewis and Clark’s mission did not happen at all by chance or even half by chance, but instead represented the logical final step of the intellectual integration of Louisiana before the Territory could accede to a larger measure of political autonomy with its passage to statehood in 1812, with the same William C. C. Claiborne as its first governor.⁹⁹

C. The exploring stage: materializing the process of ‘unfolding,’ 1783-1806

⁹⁹ On Claiborne as governor of pre- and post-statehood Louisiana, see John D. Winters, ‘William C. C. Claiborne: profile of a democrat,’ in *Louisiana History*, x, no. 3 (Summer, 1969), pp 189-209; Jared W. Bradley, ‘W.C.C. Claiborne and Spain: foreign affairs under Jefferson and Madison,’ in *Louisiana History*, xii, no. 4 (Autumn, 1971), pp 287-314; and idem, ‘William C. C. Claiborne, the Old Southwest and the development of American Indian policy,’ in *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, xxxiii, no. 3 (Autumn, 1974), pp 265-78.

Although Jefferson himself never travelled beyond the western Virginian border, from the early 1780s he started planning for western exploring journeys. And by these he clearly meant the reconnaissance of territory extending beyond the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean.¹⁰⁰ There is no need to repeat here the story of Jefferson's evolving conceptions of western geography, for it has already been splendidly analysed by historical geographer John L. Allen.¹⁰¹ There is no need either to give a straightforward narrative of the events that led to the organisation of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, for this subject too enjoys a generously sized literature.¹⁰² Instead, it is proposed to examine how that sequence of exploration fit in with its earlier conceptualised counterpart, and how it displayed an international texture (similarly to its diplomatic counterpart) intimating that the Corps of Discovery, if it be considered as the 'final product' of Jeffersonian exploration, belonged in a vast transnational web of political, intellectual and diplomatic relationships.¹⁰³

Before Lewis and Clark, Jefferson had sponsored three major figures in western exploration: George Rogers Clark (American army officer), John Ledyard (American-born, but really a cosmopolitan citizen and hard-headed adventurer) and André Michaux (a French botanist of international reputation and part-time secret agent). Jefferson first contacted Clark, by then already a renowned captain and Indian-hater, in December

¹⁰⁰ Recall Jefferson's early letter to the elder Clark, when he mentioned the 'country between the Missisipi and the waters of the South Sea.' Jefferson to George Rogers Clark, 26 Nov. 1782, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, vi, 204-05.

¹⁰¹ Among Allen's numerous scholarly productions on the topic, we may cite: 'Geographical knowledge and American images of the Louisiana Territory,' in James P. Ronda (ed.), *Voyages of discovery: essays on the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Helena, 1998), pp 39-52; 'Imagining the West: the view from Monticello,' in Ronda, *Jefferson and the Changing West*, pp 3-20; *Passage through the garden: Lewis and Clark and the image of the American Northwest* (Urbana, 1975); and its following edition, *Image of the American Northwest*.

¹⁰² As I mentioned earlier, there is no need to give a non-exhaustive list here since that list appears gradually throughout Chapter 2, which takes the Corps of Discovery as its main locus of research.

¹⁰³ It seems that the voluminous historiography devoted to Lewis and Clark has often left this 'transnational' aspect in the background, or has taken it for granted. One finds it difficult to cite even one instance of a book on Lewis and Clark taking an international perspective. The closest that gets to it is perhaps James P. Ronda, *Finding the West: explorations with Lewis and Clark* (Albuquerque, 2001), especially pp 17-28. On the Louisiana Purchase, but from the interpretive viewpoint of a political scientist, see Colin Elman, 'Extending offensive realism: the Louisiana Purchase and America's rise to regional hegemony,' in *American Political Science Review*, xcvi, no. 4 (Nov., 2004), pp 563-76.

1783. The tone of his letter was clearly more subdued and uncertain than in those he addressed to the later correspondents: ‘I find they have subscribed a very large sum of money in England for exploring the country from the Missisipi to California. They pretend it is only to promote knolege. I am afraid they have thoughts of colonising in that quarter. Some of us have been talking here in a feeble way of making the attempt to search that country. But I doubt whether we have enough of that kind of spirit to raise the money. How would you like to lead such a party?’¹⁰⁴ The hesitancy palpable in Jefferson’s tone undoubtedly stemmed in part from the fact that he held no important political office at the time. When he wrote his instructions to Michaux as secretary of state, and those to Lewis as president of the United States, he would appear infinitely firmer about their explicit objectives. We cannot fail to notice, nevertheless, that by 1783 Jefferson himself was already equating the promotion of ‘knowledge’ with ‘thoughts of colonising.’ This element of constant self-consciousness in the discursively science-based American geographical teleology can hardly be denied.

Clark could not answer satisfactorily to Jefferson’s request, due to financial problems he had to settle. Maybe he also found Jefferson’s words less exciting than he had expected.¹⁰⁵ In any event, there remains something suggestive in Jefferson’s choice of a soldier thoroughly familiar with the environment of the Old Northwest for the role of first explorer of the ‘West’ of the 1780s. Of course that vast area of land, part of which would become organized into the Northwest Territory later in the decade, had not yet been politically integrated. But the grants of land from the Union states concerned,

¹⁰⁴ Jefferson to George Rogers Clark, 4 Dec. 1783, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, vi, 371. See also Jackson, *Jefferson and the Rocky Mountains*, pp 42-3; Bedini, *Statesman of science*, p. 118; Bedini, *Jefferson Stone*, p. 16; John Bakeless, *Lewis and Clark: partners in discovery* (3rd ed., New York, 1997), p. 83; and David S. Lavender, *Westward vision: the story of the Oregon Trail* (2nd ed., Lincoln, 1985), pp 89-90.

¹⁰⁵ Allen, *Image of the American Northwest*, p. 65; and Elin Woodger and Brandon Toropov (eds), *Encyclopedia of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (New York, 2004), pp 84-5.

Virginia among them, had been all secured by that stage; and Clark had already ‘explored’ broad swaths of the land contained in those grants. Further political and administrative integration of the region would occur in 1784 (with the Land Ordinance of that year, produced by a committee chaired by Jefferson) and was completed with the Northwest Ordinance of 1787.¹⁰⁶ In a sense, by offering Clark the mission of exploring lands *beyond* the territory defined by the Ordinances, Jefferson implicitly aimed to extend the scope of the envisioned acquisition. The British would then play the role that the French ended up playing twenty years later during the Louisiana affair. Equally, the choice of Clark seemed to indicate that Jefferson did not perceive Indian relations as a primary matter at the time, whereas for Lewis and Clark the pursuit of Indian diplomacy would clearly count among the Corps’ primary objectives.¹⁰⁷ The patient Virginian took his time with the matter of early U.S. western exploration, although he never lost sight of it either. He was probably all too aware that, in order to prepare the best possible planning, he would have to reach a position of higher political authority. When the supervision of the Corps of Discovery became an issue of central importance, this was the case. The Louisiana Purchase became a reality shortly after.

Three years after his timid offer to Clark, Jefferson, now ambassador to France and based in Paris, made the acquaintance of the intrepid American adventurer John Ledyard, and quickly entered into a correspondence with him. This time, as a diplomat, he could only express vocal sponsorship of Ledyard’s anticipated schemes. Ledyard unveiled his ambition of crossing Russia eastward through Siberia, then sailing through the Pacific to the American Northwest Coast, and on across the continent all the way to

¹⁰⁶ I return to the significance of the Ordinances of 1784, 1785 and 1787 in later chapters. On Jefferson’s chairing of the committee for the 1784 Ordinance, see ‘Plan for Government of the Western Territory’, 3 Feb. to 23 Apr. 1784, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, vi, 571-617. See also Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive empires: constructing colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 230.

¹⁰⁷ I consider Lewis and Clark’s relations with Indian tribes in detail in Chapter 2.

Washington. Ledyard also considered the advantages of building a trading post on the Northwest Coast, ideally in Nootka Sound (he had failed at that twice, in 1784 and 1785, either due to delays, poor financial backing, or Spanish objections).¹⁰⁸ Cautious about the magnitude of his encouragements, Jefferson still informed his friend the Marquis de Lafayette of Ledyard's intentions, with the aim of procuring a passport for his new informal *protégé*.¹⁰⁹ He stated that Ledyard possessed 'a talent for useful and interesting observation' and had 'accompanied Capt. Cook in his last voyage to the North-western parts of America,' the second piece of information indicating a parallel in methods and motives between American and British voyages of discovery in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries which I shall discuss in a later chapter.¹¹⁰

Ledyard had an interest in natural history, shown by his brief exchange with Jefferson on Buffon's theory of American degeneracy.¹¹¹ Earlier, he had composed and published a journal of his journey with James Cook, *A journal of Captain Cook's last voyage to the Pacific Ocean* (1783), which he had forwarded to his new American sponsor shortly after the latter's arrival to France.¹¹² In supporting Ledyard, Jefferson knew he was supporting a man formerly enlisted on the most advanced crew of British imperial exploration of the eighteenth century. Sir Joseph Banks himself had organised

¹⁰⁸ Edward G. Gray, *The making of John Ledyard: empire and ambition in the life of an early American traveler* (New Haven, 2007), pp 124-35; Rodriguez, *The Louisiana Purchase*, pp 183-84; James K. Munford, *John Ledyard: an American Marco Polo* (Hillsboro, OR, 1939), pp 201-03; and Jackson, *Jefferson and the Rocky Mountains*, pp 45-56.

¹⁰⁹ Munford, *American Marco Polo*, p. 203; Richard O'Connor, *Pacific destiny: an informal history of the U.S. in the Far East, 1776-1968* (New York, 1969), p. 18; James Zug, *American traveler: the life and adventures of John Ledyard, the man who dreamed of walking the world* (New York, 2005), pp 163-7; Jackson, *Jefferson and the Rocky Mountains*, p. 50; and Gray, *The making of John Ledyard*, p. 132.

¹¹⁰ Jefferson to Lafayette, 9 Feb. 1786, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, ix, 273-4. See also Stephen D. Watrous (ed.), *John Ledyard's journey through Russia and Siberia, 1787-1788: the journal and selected letters* (2nd ed., Madison, 2011), p. 92. As I mentioned in an earlier note, the comparison between British and American exploration which I propose in Chapter 3 is centered on the characters of Jefferson and Banks.

¹¹¹ Ledyard to Jefferson, 7 Feb. 1786, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, ix, 260-1. See James Zug, *The last voyage of Captain Cook: the collected writings of John Ledyard* (Washington, D.C., 2005), p. 133.

¹¹² Jefferson to John Ledyard, 27 July 1786, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, x, 170-1. In this letter Jefferson apologised to Ledyard for not being able to return his travel journal as yet, as he had lent it to Madame de Lafayette. See Watrous, *Ledyard's journey*, p. 99; and James K. Munford (ed.), *John Ledyard's journal of Captain Cook's last voyage* (Corvallis, OR, 1964), p. xxxvii.

a 'small subscription' to support Ledyard's voyage through Siberia, and would later fund Ledyard's fatal travels to Egypt.¹¹³ In a sphere of transnational solidarity, Ledyard's cosmopolitanism was clearly more an advantage than a hindrance.

As is well-known, Ledyard's plans never fully materialised. He did attempt the crossing of Russia but was stopped by authorities at Yakutsk, as Jefferson had predicted in an earlier letter: 'I saw Baron de Grimm yesterday at Versailles, and he told me he had received an answer from the Empress [Catherine] who declines the proposition made on your account. She thinks it chimerical. I am in hopes your execution of it from our side of the continent will prove the contrary. I thought it necessary to give you this information that you might suffer no response from expectations from that quarter.'¹¹⁴ Chimerical it may well have been, but the evidence remains that Jefferson believed in the plan and backed it up. Why? This question may never find a definite answer. But the second half of the 1780s certainly featured a period of increased research on Louisiana history and geography on Jefferson's part. He could take advantage of his location (and its archives, libraries, bookshops, and 'philosophic' friends) to garner useful and broad, if not always reliable, sources of information on his subject.¹¹⁵

Complete reliability did not necessarily have to become a primary matter, since forms of mythification, once adapted to the new American idiom (and Jefferson was well-placed to 'supervise' this process of adaptation) could ultimately serve to enrich and reinforce the idiosyncrasy of the early U.S. discourse of imperial self-legitimation,

¹¹³ Ledyard to Jefferson, 25 Nov. 1786, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, x, 548-9. See Zug, *Last voyage of Captain Cook*, p. 145; Watrous, *Ledyard's journey*, p. 115; and Helen Augur, *Passage to glory: John Ledyard's America* (New York, 1946), p. 196.

¹¹⁴ Jefferson to Ledyard, 16 Aug. 1786, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, x, 258. See Bedini, *Statesman of science*, p. 161; Jackson, *Jefferson and the Rocky Mountains*, pp 50-1; Watrous, *Ledyard's journal*, p. 108; and Marie G. Kimball, *Jefferson: the scene of Europe, 1784 to 1789* (London, 1950), p. 261.

¹¹⁵ See Jackson, *Jefferson and the Rocky Mountains*, especially pp 86-97; Allen, *Image of the American Northwest*, pp 91-7; Woodger and Toropov, *Encyclopedia of Lewis and Clark*, p. 57; and James Gilreath and Douglas L. Wilson (eds), *Thomas Jefferson's library: a catalog with the entries in his own order* (Washington, D.C., 1989), pp 141-7.

and with it U.S. foreign as well as domestic interests. Recourse to the utopian idiom traversed as many national boundaries as did the intellectual societies that contributed to its definition, as a subsequent chapter will show.¹¹⁶ If there existed a Jeffersonian type of ‘intelligence,’ it was perhaps in the Virginian’s ability to assimilate this idiom into his political and diplomatic rhetoric in order then to reject the two main opposing pillars which supposedly kept it standing (civilisation and wilderness) to achieve the definition of a new, ‘middle way’ U.S. identity. By his implicit acknowledgement of the U.S. sponsorship of his travels, Ledyard would have inscribed himself in that process of adaptation and redefinition while exploring the trans-Mississippi West, no matter which cardinal direction he eventually chose to follow. Jefferson certainly recognised that. The plan failed mainly for diplomatic reasons, as would Michaux’s. It was only when Jefferson admitted that diplomacy must be integrated as a sequence *within* the process of westward exploration (sanctified into such ‘events’ as Pinckney’s Treaty and the Louisiana Purchase) that he succeeded in organising the first United States expedition to the Pacific, and to give his conceptualisation a true body. With it came a rhetoric, too.

The story of André Michaux’s aborted exploration of the trans-Mississippi West in 1793 resembles in no way Ledyard’s, at least at first glance. Michaux, unlike Ledyard, was a thoroughly institutionalised naturalist sanctioned by Jefferson, Barton, Washington, the French ambassador to the United States Edmond-Charles Genêt, and the A.P.S, who arranged a small subscription for the botanist.¹¹⁷ Michaux provided a good illustration of the budding sense of transnational solidarity between European and North American scientific networks in the late eighteenth century. Two major lessons

¹¹⁶ Chapter 4, in which I look at the voyages of Bougainville, Lapérouse, Cook, and Vancouver.

¹¹⁷ American Philosophical Society’s subscription agreement for André Michaux’s western expedition, ca. 22 Jan. 1793, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxv, 81-4. See also Barton to Jefferson, 4 Jan. 1793, in *ibid.*, xxv, 17-18; David Rittenhouse to Jefferson, 10 Apr. 1793, in *ibid.*, xxv, p. 527; Jefferson to George Washington, 22 Jan. 1793, in *ibid.*, xxv, 85; and Washington to Jefferson, 22 Jan. 1793, in *ibid.*, xxv, 85. See Kukla, *A wilderness so immense*, p. 386.

must then be drawn: that he failed (and the reasons why) and that his instructions were in fact kept as a 'rough draft' for Jefferson's more detailed directions to Meriwether Lewis in 1803. Both elements, perhaps seemingly unrelated ones, relate to the same pattern of definition of American expansionism *contra* France, first of all, but also *contra* the other European empires still involved in North America at that time.

The mission aborted because Michaux, who had raised American suspicions about his motives due to his incomprehensible procrastination first in Philadelphia and then in Kentucky, turned into something of a secret agent for the French government. Minister Genêt suggested to Michaux in Philadelphia that he join a Franco-American expedition against Spanish Louisiana, with the indefatigable George Rogers Clark acting as the military leader of the U.S. side of the coalition.¹¹⁸ The story is well-known: Genêt was recalled in 1794 due to a petition sent to the French government by the Washington administration, and Michaux, who still took his prospective venture to the west coast of America seriously but only as a matter second in importance to the eventually abortive filibustering scheme against Spanish possessions, found himself without purpose and returned to France in 1796. Jefferson had cautiously supported (or failed to indict) the initiative against Spanish Louisiana at first, but he eventually extricated himself from the potential drama by not agreeing to endorse Michaux's consulship to Kentucky. The elder Clark's reputation suffered grievously from his participation in the scheme.¹¹⁹

Such a turn of events is significant for the historian of ideas, because it brings several truths into the open. Diplomacy remained intertwined both with natural

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 166; Thomas P. Abernethy, *The South and the new nation, 1789-1819* (2nd ed., Baton Rouge, 1989), pp 110-11; and Stanley M. Elkins and Eric McKittrick, *The age of federalism: the early American Republic, 1788-1800* (Oxford, 1993), pp 349-50.

¹¹⁹ On the whole affair, see the editorial note, 'Jefferson and André Michaux's proposed western exploration,' in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxv, 75-80. On Clark, see Temple Bodley, *George Rogers Clark: his life and public services* (Boston, 1926), p. 338; and Marcus Cunliffe, *The nation takes shape, 1789-1837* (Chicago, 1959), p. 139.

historical exploration and with early imperial views. Characters active since the 1780s in the Old Northwest, like Clark, re-emerged on the issue of the possession of Louisiana. Even the transatlantic collaboration between French and American science for the exploration of the American West, willed at first by Jefferson, ended in disaster because of the persistence of diplomatic rivalries about Louisiana between the two countries, notwithstanding Spain. Lastly, a scientific institution like the A.P.S. became actively involved in the planning of western exploration, and helped Jefferson draft instructions (from Michaux's mission onwards) much more scientifically accurate than in the past, which took into account geopolitics and Indian diplomacy.¹²⁰ The two latter realizations deserve further discussion as I conclude.

When Jefferson decided to sponsor Michaux, he probably expected to find in him a competent and zealous *Américaniste* on the model of Volney, Dupont de Nemours or even Crèvecoeur; that is, a French naturalist who could actually contribute to the reinforcement of a unique American identity predicated on the notion of 'unfolding'. Michaux had first visited the United States in 1785, and he had clearly voiced his fascination with its environment and his wish to study it.¹²¹ When Michaux's ardently *French* republicanism came to the fore with his decision to prioritise French interests in Lower Louisiana against the farther-sighted U.S. interest in the territory extending beyond the Mississippi to the Pacific (almost all encompassed by the word 'Louisiana' in Jefferson's mind), he quite simply became an anomaly in American geopolitics. Michaux lost his legitimacy, his prestige, becoming almost ontologically alien to the

¹²⁰ Geopolitics and Indian diplomacy are two major themes of Chapter 2.

¹²¹ 'Jefferson and André Michaux's proposed western exploration,' in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxv, 76. See also Nasatir, *Before Lewis and Clark*, i, 164-7; Flores, *Jefferson and southwestern exploration*, p. 6; and James P. Ronda, *Jefferson's West: a journey with Lewis and Clark* (Charlottesville, 2000), pp 23-6.

continent's future. This is the light in which I propose to view Michaux's ultimate failure: as a reinforcement, not a weakening, of the blossoming exceptionalist strand in Jeffersonian expansionism, and as evidence that western scientific discourse (taken in its 'globality,' that is, both Old and New Worlds) served as an instrument of territorial legitimation only as long as it could be safely translated into U.S. terms by eastern intellectual societies like the A.P.S. without too much actual foreign interference on American soil.

This is exactly what happened as a consequence of the Michaux débâcle. Instructions were supplied to Michaux by Jefferson and his institutionalised group of Philadelphia intellectuals. A few months previously, Michaux had announced that 'All the Geographical Knowledge, Observations and Information [I gather] will be communicated to the Philosophical Society.'¹²² The following is an excerpt from the actual directives supplied to the French botanist as they were discussed by Jefferson and David Rittenhouse prior to their final communication to Michaux:¹²³

You will, in the course of your journey, take notice of the country you pass through, it's general face, soil, rivers, mountains, it's productions animal, vegetable, & mineral so far as they may be new to us & may also be useful or very curious; the latitude of places or materials for calculating it by such simple methods as your situation may admit you to practice, the names, numbers, & dwellings of the inhabitants, and such particularities as you can learn of their history, connection with each other, languages, manners, state of society & of the arts & commerce among them.¹²⁴

¹²² 'André Michaux's observations on his proposed western expedition,' in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxv, 71-72. The translation (from the French) is mine.

¹²³ Rittenhouse to Jefferson, 10 Apr. 1793, in *ibid.*, xxv, 527; and Jefferson to Rittenhouse, 11 Apr. 1793, in *ibid.*, xxv, 530-1. See also Donald D. Jackson (ed.), *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (2nd ed., 2 vols, Chicago, 1978), ii, 669. On Rittenhouse and Michaux, see Brooke Hindle, *David Rittenhouse* (2nd ed., New York, 1980), pp 341-2; Edward Ford, *David Rittenhouse: astronomer-patriot, 1723-1796* (Philadelphia, 1946), p. 188; Allen, *Image of the American Northwest*, p. 66; and Jackson, *Jefferson and the Rocky Mountains*, p. 78.

¹²⁴ 'American Philosophical Society's instructions to André Michaux,' ca. 30 Apr. 1793, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxv, 624-6. See also Jackson, *Jefferson and the Rocky Mountains*, p. 76; Nasatir, *Before Lewis and Clark*, i, 165;

Here is not the right place for an analysis of the ideological and geopolitical stakes implicit in these directives, as I present it elsewhere.¹²⁵ But even the faintest familiarity with Jefferson's letter to Meriwether Lewis in 1803 will indicate that Michaux's instructions served as an embryo for Lewis's. Similarly, the A.P.S.'s original supervision of Michaux only foreshadowed an even deeper commitment in the planning for the Corps of Discovery in the year 1803. Rittenhouse had died by that point, but numerous other Society members would soon manifest themselves.¹²⁶

The ultimate point to infer, I believe, is not that Michaux's abortive enterprise led Lewis and Clark's later mission to be framed as a 'corrective' of it. In the ten-year gap that separated the two undertakings, Jefferson and other prominent Jeffersonians either in the federal cabinet, in Congress or in eastern scientific societies had many other matters to deal with. But the Michaux expedition did make clear, once and for all, that the vindication of American identity had to base itself on a discourse of legitimation of expansion that feigned complete insularity. This insularity, present in the conception of the United States as a prospective republican *continental* empire, in fact needed to borrow from Old World (not to say Buffonian) scientific rhetoric to justify expropriation of Indian land and the transfer of 'native' legitimacy of identity from the 'red' to the 'white' (Euro-)American man. This realisation, and its self-conscious application in the trans-Mississippi West by the soldiers-turned-agents of the Corps of

Richard Dillon, *Meriwether Lewis: a biography* (3rd ed., Lafayette, CA, 2003), p. 4; Stephen E. Ambrose, *Undaunted courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the opening of the American West* (New York, 2002), p. 71; A. Hunter Dupr e, *Science in the federal government: a history of policies and activities to 1940* (2nd ed., New York, 1980), pp. 25-6; Charles A. Browne, *Thomas Jefferson and the scientific trends of his time* (Waltham, MA, 1943), p. 389; and Deborah J. Allen, 'To measure and describe "the whole globe of the Earth": eighteenth-century geographical writing and imperial enterprise in western North America' (Ph.D. thesis, Rutgers, State University of New Jersey, 2006), p. 150.

¹²⁵ In Chapters 2 and 3, respectively. In Chapter 2 I focus on the Corps of Discovery, while in Chapter 3 I extend the sphere of the discussion to the more 'global' scene of late-eighteenth-century European and American exploration.

¹²⁶ See Chapter 2 for a discussion of these members.

Discovery, as well as Lewis and Clark's hidden dependence on a 'dialectic of reason' of European Enlightenment origin that only the harnessing of an idiosyncratic aesthetics of Jeffersonian republicanism could partially cover, is what will be explored in the next chapters.

2. Surveyors of Utopia: the politics of the Lewis and Clark Expedition

The determined resolute character, however, of the corps, and the confidence which pervaded all ranks dispelled every emotion of fear and anxiety for the present; while a sense of duty, and of the honour which would attend the completion of the object of the expedition; a wish to gratify the expectations of the government, and of our fellow citizens, with the feelings which novelty and discovery invariably inspire, seemed to insure to us ample support in our future toils, suffering and dangers.

Patrick Gass, 14 May 1804¹

The Lewis and Clark Expedition, Jefferson's brainchild, was also to become his first successful enterprise of legitimation in the 'West.' Debates about the extent of this success have pervaded the literature (itself enormous). Some contend that Lewis and Clark cannot be considered to have achieved much in concrete terms, as they failed to discover the 'practical route' across the Rockies envisioned by Jefferson, much less the Northwest Passage. Others argue that Lewis and Clark have achieved much, especially in scientific terms, and in the broader spectrum of American history their journey along the Missouri, across the Rockies and on to the Pacific has provided a vital methodological blueprint for western exploration dutifully assimilated by the likes of Stephen Long and the Army Corps of Topographical Engineers.² Of these two

¹ Patrick Gass, 14 May 1804, in Carol L. MacGregor (ed.), *The journals of Patrick Gass, member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (2nd ed., Missoula, MT, 1997), pp 39-40. See also David W. Richmond, *A nation moving west: readings in the history of the American frontier* (Lincoln, 1966), p. 134. My reason for choosing this opening quote will be made clear, I hope, as the chapter develops. I believe it encapsulates the nature of the Corps of Discovery as an obedient, task-driven, politically and commercially aware military crew.

² For a relatively recent instance of the first opinion, see Andrew J. Lewis, 'Nineteenth-century scientific opinion of Lewis and Clark,' in Robert S. Cox (ed.), *The shortest and most convenient route: Lewis and Clark in context* (Philadelphia,

viewpoints, the first seems the more biased, because it refuses to acknowledge the *ideological* importance of the Expedition at the time of its happening. Based purely on practical results, Lewis and Clark can be judged to have achieved little of direct value in the eyes of the federal government. But does such an excessively sharp focus make sense?

I would argue that it does not, and probably never does, although there is little room here for going much further into this historiographical issue. Suffice it to say that Paul Cutright's *Lewis and Clark: pioneering naturalists* long ago undermined the argument that the Corps of Discovery achieved little.³ Botanical and zoological observations, descriptions, collections, cartographical data, ethnographical information about the numerous tribes of the trans-Mississippi West (on the Missouri, the Great Plains, the Continental Divide, the Great Basin, and the Pacific Coast), all this data is recorded in the Lewis and Clark journals, and at the time it certainly offered much that was new to scientists and intellectuals on the East Coast. The American Philosophical Society and Charles Willson's Peale Museum showed an early interest in gathering some of its specimens and artifacts.⁴ Jefferson proudly announced the return of the crew

2004), pp 236-50. The collection as a whole is one of the most critically stimulating to have come out on the Expedition in recent years, and I must add that Lewis's essay is measured in tone as well as rich in primary material. I maintain, however, that he tightens his scope to such an extent that he runs the risk of misleading the reader about the venture's achievements. For examples of the contrary opinion, keeping in mind that all this is not so black and white, see Paul L. Cutright, *Lewis and Clark: pioneering naturalists* (2nd ed., Lincoln, 1989); William L. Lang, 'Describing a new environment: Lewis and Clark and Enlightenment science in the Columbia River basin,' in *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, cv, no. 3 (Autumn, 2004), pp 360-89; and Robert M. Peck, "'To acquire what knolege you can": the scientific contributions of Lewis and Clark,' in *South Dakota History*, xxxiv, no. 1 (Spring, 2004), pp 5-27.

³ Cutright, *Pioneering naturalists*. Interestingly, Cutright's minor masterpiece has proven somewhat intimidating to subsequent generations of Lewis and Clark historians. Nobody has since taken up the subject on the same scale, despite the book being over forty years old at this stage. For a recent effort, see Daniel Botkin, *Our natural history: the lessons of Lewis and Clark* (Oxford, 2004).

⁴ This is a rather well-known fact, but on the subject see the article by Earle E. Spamer and Richard M. McCourt, 'The Lewis and Clark herbarium of the Academy of Natural Sciences,' in *Notulae Naturae*, cdlxxv (Dec., 2002), p. 4. See also Edward C. Carton II, 'Living with Lewis & Clark: the American Philosophical Society's continuing relationship with the Corps of Discovery from the Michaux expedition to the present,' in Kris Fresonke and Mark Spence (eds), *Lewis and Clark: legacies, memories, and new perspectives* (Berkeley, 2004), pp 21-8; and Simon Baatz, 'Philadelphia patronage: the institutional structure of natural history in the new Republic, 1800-1833,' in *Journal of the Early*

to Congress in 1806, and argued for its success.⁵ In a sense, the very breadth of Lewis and Clark historiography at the present day is a testimony to the Corps's accomplishments. Although partly fed by the myth of U.S. exceptionalism and by the desire to re-encounter a glorious past as a reinforcing factor for the cohesiveness of today's society, this historiography gathers a sizeable amount of notable works. And these works often rely extensively on the expedition's journals as a primary source, which gives an indication of the accounts' extraordinary scope in relation to the topics listed above.⁶

But at present there is little enthusiasm for vindicating the merits of Lewis and Clark. Such merits have been thoroughly acknowledged and accepted by most historians of the early Republic. If there is any interest, it is rather to discover new insight into an over-scrutinised story. This episode of U.S. history, though exhausted, is still meaningful, well-trodden yet still mysterious; and it remains very attractive to scholars. This attractiveness is not solely due to the potential the Lewis and Clark story has been known to open for grand narratives of U.S. westward progress, usually grounded in the historical uniqueness of the 'frontier' in the exceptionalist interpretation of it.⁷ The Corps of Discovery deserves to be seen as part of a wider network of Euro-American

Republic, viii, no. 2 (Summer, 1988), pp 111-38.

⁵ Jefferson, Sixth annual message, 2 Dec. 1806, in Ford, *Works of Thomas Jefferson*, x, 314-15. Jefferson stated: 'The expedition of Messrs. Lewis and Clarke, for exploring the Missouri, and the best communication from that to the Pacific ocean, has had all the success which could have been expected.' This could hardly have been more explicit.

⁶ See, for instance: Albert Furtwangler, *Acts of discovery: visions of America in the Lewis and Clark journals* (Urbana, 1993); Elijah Criswell, *Lewis and Clark: linguistic pioneers* (Columbia, MO, 1940); Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*; Ned Blackhawk, *Violence over the land: Indians and empires in the early American West* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 2008); Thomas P. Slaughter, *Exploring Lewis and Clark: reflections on men and wilderness* (New York, 2004); John Seelye, 'Beyond the Shiny Mountains: the Lewis and Clark Expedition as an Enlightenment epic,' in *Virginia Quarterly Review*, lxiii, no. 1 (Winter, 1987), pp 36-53; and Gary E. Moulton, 'The specialized journals of Lewis and Clark,' in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, cxxvii, no. 3 (June, 1983), pp 194-201. This list is far from exhaustive. I have tried to highlight the variety of the sources involved.

⁷ Despite the advent of postmodernism in the latter half of the twentieth century, the 'frontier thesis' initially formulated by Frederick Jackson Turner in the 1920s has retained some scholarly appeal, even though this appeal is no longer voiced explicitly. Ambrose's *Undaunted courage* illustrates this surviving trend to some extent with a focus on Lewis and Clark's westward journey. To be fair, it is also its 'best' representative in terms of the quality of its narration.

science, through its association with Jefferson, the A.P.S., and Peale's Museum. It also needs to be integrated quite centrally to the notion of the discursive legitimization of westward expansion and to the debate about the integrity of the young American Republic, as discussed in the previous chapter. Itself the concrete culmination of Jefferson's earlier efforts to organise a journey to the trans-Mississippi western region, the Expedition has sustained a historical significance that stems not just from its purposes, but from its peculiar place in Jefferson's career. To understand its role fully as the reifying vessel of Jefferson's conceptualisations of the 'West' (part of a discourse then mainly aimed at addressing the question of the country's domestic situation), we need to conceive of the Expedition as a holistic enterprise involving both a politics and a 'geographics.'

I suggested earlier that there was no *real* urgency in Jefferson's discourse to 'possess' the West – if the 'West' was understood then as the huge and rather vague expanse of land west of the Mississippi. Yet, at the same time, there existed an almost prophetic certainty in his mind and words that the West *would* ultimately become part of the Union. This undoubtedly illustrates Jefferson's own teleology, but a teleology that becomes blended with a fascinatingly tangible and urgent purpose: that of safeguarding the Republic. It is important to emphasise that point. Jefferson is too often seen either as an overenthusiastic visionary of empire or as a political realist devoid of delusions of grandeur, for himself or for his country (these terms risk defeating their respective truths). In fact, Jefferson cared most about the political survival of the American Republic, which he perceived as an epoch-breaking but dangerous experiment in the application of Enlightenment doctrine to nation-making. It was dangerous because its conception was both novel and indebted to Old World thinkers; these opposed aspects

are discussed in subsequent chapters.⁸ This explains his concern with legitimacy and legitimation, and his realisation that these could only find efficient vindication in the territorial embrace of an entire continent. Therefore Montesquieu, the Frenchman, was acknowledged and then refuted, with recourse to the wonderfully adequate features of ‘native’ American geography.

Nature itself, in that sense, vindicated the ontological integrity of the Republic. And in Jefferson’s discourse American ‘nature’ physically unfolded from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans. Maps powerfully conveyed that early feeling of natural (and hence national) contiguity. This is the light in which I propose to depict the Lewis and Clark Expedition, since it will refute once and for all the arguments for the failure of Lewis and Clark’s mission. According to this interpretation, the captains’ main purpose was not at all economic or commercial, perhaps not even scientific. Indeed, one wonders if the Corps had an identifiable ‘purpose’ as such. The word ‘purpose’ poses complications because it implies mono-causality, and therefore would seem to demand a specific answer where there might in fact be no such specificity. Rather, the Lewis and Clark Expedition represented a prolonged encounter of eastern American man with western American nature, his teleologically proclaimed home of the future.⁹ By assessing new territory beyond the Mississippi in a proto-systematic fashion, as it is hoped further sections of the essay will show, the men of the Corps of Discovery asserted a federal claim (distant or not, it did not matter) to the trans-Mississippi West and, by the same token, a sense of ‘continentality’ that made (in Jefferson’s mind) quite a strong case for the cohesiveness of the notion of an American *republic*. This process may justifiably be seen as an endless flight forward to avoid the reality of the young

⁸ I look at Jefferson’s indebtedness to Europe, but also at the genuine originality of his own derivation of republicanism, in Chapters 3 and 4.

⁹ See Charles A. Miller, *Jefferson and nature: an interpretation* (Baltimore and London, 1988), pp 221-43.

country's Old World politico-cultural heritage. Yet, flight forward or not, with Lewis and Clark it assumed distinct and varied strategies with Old-World characteristics which will be now be scrutinised.

Politics can be considered to represent applied ideology, and it is because Lewis and Clark gave a practical turn to Jefferson's conceptualisation of the 'West' that I refer to the Corps's 'politics.' It does not necessarily deal with the decisions taken within the Corps, and its occasional dissensions, which for reasons of space cannot be addressed appropriately here. Also, I consider these dissensions to have been much smaller in degree and influence than the Corps's meticulous application of Jefferson's tasks as set out in his 1803 letter to Meriwether Lewis.¹⁰ The crew's discipline still remains of its most impressive traits.

In the first part of this chapter, Lewis and Clark's preparatory period (both physical and intellectual) will be discussed on three different scales: local, national, and transnational. The last of these scales is by far the least emphasized in the current historiography. The preparatory period consisted first of all in Jefferson's readings on Louisiana, prior to his drafting of the Corps's instructions. Jefferson had read from French, English, and American sources on Louisiana – Le Page du Pratz, Jonathan Carver, Jean-Baptiste Truteau, James Mackay, among others. Some of these works he would even add to the expedition's informal library, a telling fact for an undertaking of explicit *U.S.* legitimation, which stresses the adaptability of myth and Jefferson's precocious understanding of that adaptability. Another aspect of the Corps's diplomatic intersections with the international scene was Jefferson's need to procure appropriate passports for the crew, since the Louisiana Purchase had not yet been secured from

¹⁰ Jefferson's instructions to Lewis, 20 June 1803, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 61-6. I will have many occasions to quote from these famous directives in subsequent sections of the chapter.

Napoleonic France. The passports were obtained, but the letters of update which the French, Spanish and British ambassadors had to send to their ministers at home exuded a sense of the threat posed by the United States to the trans-Mississippi West both ideologically and geopolitically. On a completely different plane, the international *scientific* community was uniformly excited about the Lewis and Clark Expedition. This seems a revealing contrast.¹¹

Another crucial aspect of the Corps's preparation was the tutoring offered to Lewis by A.P.S. members in the fields of astronomy, natural history, medicine, and anatomy. Lewis relied on the qualifications of (respectively) Andrew Ellicott, Robert Patterson, Benjamin Smith Barton, Benjamin Rush, and Caspar Wistar. By 1803 Jefferson had served as A.P.S. president for six years, since 1797. The Society's imprint on the Expedition was deep and went beyond mere practical training. As a scientific institution, the A.P.S. embodied the means by which the Corps's western venture could become an integral part of the agenda of the 'Republic of Science' internationally, while at the same time representing the United States within that transatlantic community.¹² To complete the preparation, Lewis purchased a number of items (coins, medals, flags, food, weapons, clothes, scientific instruments, and various utensils) which will be worth examining in a subsection for what they reveal about the Corps's idiosyncratic approach to diplomacy.¹³

The theme of diplomacy dominates the chapter's second section, which delves into the politics of the Expedition as a *form* of Jeffersonian expansionist ideology

¹¹ See Chapter 3, *passim*. On the symbolic dimensions of the Corps's 'transnationality' as a scientific crew, see Ronda, *Finding the West*, pp 17-27.

¹² More of this specific aspect is discussed in Chapter 3.

¹³ Lewis's estimate of expenses, 1803, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 8-9. See also Frank Bergon (ed.), *The journals of Lewis and Clark* (Hawthorn, 1995), p. xxxvi; and Thomas C. Danisi and John C. Jackson, *Meriwether Lewis* (Amherst, 2009), pp 63-85. On the intimate relationship between trade and diplomacy in eighteenth-century America, with a focus on the Southeast and an anthropological bent, see William L. Ramsey, "Something cloudy in their looks": the origins of the Yamasee War reconsidered,' in *Journal of American History*, xc, no. 1 (June, 2003), p. 46.

applied to the western environment. (The third section deals with that too, but from a different viewpoint.) Some encounters with native tribes, and especially the phenomena of what I call the infantilising and the ‘natural historicising’ of western Indians, are considered. I am interested in how Lewis and Clark strove to depict trans-Mississippi western tribes as an inherent feature of their land. To the captains, the tribes they met were actors in the geopolitical western drama only insofar as the environment was an actor in it, too. This strategy of ‘silencing’ offered possibilities for legitimisation without bloodshed which is explored below. Along similar lines, it is interesting to point out situations where Indians failed to conform to such Eurocentric lines of conceptualisation, like the Sioux and the Blackfeet. Invariably, tribal resistance led to more open violence on the Corps’s part.¹⁴

Of course, one cannot pretend to deal with the Corps’s ‘politics’ without reviewing the suggestions the captains made about potential sites for western settlements; the conduct and form of trade with tribes of the Missouri, Rocky Mountains, Columbia and Pacific Coast regions; and the prospects for more regulated commercial relations with those tribes. These were very important matters, but they did not supersede the Corps’s other objectives. They had their own given place in the larger mechanism of the scientifically driven assessment of the trans-Mississippi West by Jeffersonian agents. By pinpointing certain areas that might prove propitious for

¹⁴ On that matter, see Craig Howe, ‘Lewis and Clark among the Tetons: smoking out what really happened,’ in *Wicazo Sa Review*, xix, no. 1 (Spring, 2004), pp 47-72; and Clarissa Confer, ‘The beginning and the end: Lewis and Clark among the Upper Missouri River people,’ in *ibid.*, xix, no. 1 (Spring, 2004), pp 11-19. Native resistance to Eurocentric textual conceptualisation is also discussed in Chapter 4, with the example of Lapérouse’s visit to Samoa. In that chapter, I open up a comparative perspective between Lewis and Clark and earlier European expeditions to the Pacific. For an a historian’s analysis close in spirit to my notion of ‘natural historicising’ but mainly focused on the American colonial period, see Gregory H. Nobles, *American frontiers: cultural encounters and continental conquest* (London, 1988), p. 31: ‘European writers identified Indians with the environment, but not in the way Indian people understood their reciprocal relationship with nature. Rather, because Indians lived lightly on the land, without ‘ordering’ it, they seemed as transient as animals, having no more claim to permanence, much less possession, than the ‘foxes and wild beasts’ that roamed the forests. Thus the land across the Atlantic seemed empty and unused, just waiting to be inhabited and improved by European settlers.’

settlement in the future, members of the Corps thought about this future in the same way that Jefferson did. They saw the promise of a distant but inescapable and undeniable U.S. territorial claim, safeguarded by Nature herself. This notion of ‘safeguarding’ appears to apply well to the Expedition as a whole. The Corps defined the contours of western territory (sometimes arbitrarily) by textually circumscribing an idealised conception of what the ‘West’ represented for Jefferson and would represent for the journal’s prospective readers (The notion of the ‘West as idea’ is discussed below.) Lewis and Clark did so mainly to stake U.S. claims of territorial legitimacy against possible imperial rivals in the future. Their more concrete search for ways of regulating commerce with tribes drew upon the same logic of safeguarding.¹⁵

Lastly, the Corps’s relationship with the ‘West’ had a self-conscious and reifying geographical side to it, as the crew imposed its own eastern preconceptions over the trans-Mississippi western landscape. These preconceptions had certainly been (and were still) informed by Jefferson’s writings, and readings of books authored mainly by European colonials. This remains a fruitful contradiction to exploit, and is done below. In addition, Lewis and Clark depended heavily on Indian intelligence for the safety of their travels, especially across the Rockies; yet at the same time they suppressed such intelligence in their journal entries, in what I call the strategy of ‘civilised renaming’ of rivers, terrain, fauna and flora. Clark produced a number of sketches and maps, some of which became of great geopolitical value, where he took for granted this strategy of renaming and rarely acknowledged the Native sources of the data he had obtained.¹⁶

¹⁵ It is of course a commonplace that commerce can play a vital role not only in stimulating a region’s economy but also in maintaining peace with the entities conducting transactions. For the specific case of Lewis and Clark see William H. Goetzmann, *When the eagle screamed: the Romantic horizon in American diplomacy, 1800-1860* (2nd ed., New York, 2000), pp 4-5; and Bill Yellowtail, ‘Meriwether and Billy and the Indian business,’ in Alvin M. Joseph, Jr. (ed.), *Lewis and Clark through Indian eyes* (New York, 2006), pp 69-84.

¹⁶ In Chapter 5 I explore at length his most significant creation, the ‘master map’ of 1814. See also Jerome O. Steffen,

Why? How can we interpret the meaning of Clark's decisions without running the risk of over-interpretation? These questions are addressed in the last part of the chapter, which hinges on the main theme of the next chapter: the 'centre of calculation' principle. Lewis and Clark regularly sent back their data (maps, sketches, journals, artifacts, and natural historical specimens) to Jefferson, who then communicated them to the A.P.S., Peale's Museum, or 'Indian Hall' at Monticello. These institutions were 'centres of calculation' inasmuch as they worked as complementary repositories that housed, processed and displayed the Corps's collected western specimens and artefacts. They then worked towards arranging the data compiled in more systematic fashion and to make it available to the prospective western expeditions of the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁷

A. The preparation of the Corps of Discovery

1. Local level: Jefferson's readings and A.P.S. training

Lewis and Clark were born in the United States, but they conducted most of their epoch-making journey on non-American ground. This has made it tempting for scholars to look at their effort in somewhat linear fashion, calling it the symbol of the 'westward course of empire,' following Frederick Jackson Turner's still seductive but faulty thesis.¹⁸ It would be too risky, and not supported enough by facts, to argue that all the

William Clark: Jeffersonian man on the frontier (Norman, 1977), p. 6. On the geopolitical value of maps, see Nobles, *American frontiers*, pp 61-62.

¹⁷ The 'centre of calculation' principle is one of the main themes of Chapters 3 and 4, but it makes its appearance here as the logical conclusion to be drawn from the relationship of Lewis and Clark's mission to the A.P.S. Here it is necessary to acknowledge again the authorship of the 'center of calculation' model to Bruno Latour, in his book *Science in action*, pp 215-57.

¹⁸ The so-called 'Frontier thesis' is fully developed in Frederick Jackson Turner, *The frontier in American History* (New York, 1921). For an ardent refutation of it by a leading New Western historian, see Patrick Nelson Limerick, 'Turnerians all: the dream of a helpful history in an intelligible world,' in *American Historical Review*, c, no. 3 (June, 2005), pp 697-716. See also John L. Larson, 'Grasping for the significance of the Turner legacy: an afterword,' in *Journal of the Early Republic*, xiii, no. 2 (Summer, 1993), p. 244; and John M. Faragher, 'The frontier trail: rethinking Turner and reimagining the American West,' in *American Historical Review*, xcvi, no. 1 (Feb., 1993), pp 116-17. Larson shows Turner's selective handling of the evidence to diminish the influence of Old World ideological baggage in

crewmen were aware of their mission's political nature.¹⁹ But if we forget about the two captains for a moment, Sergeant Patrick Gass may have summed up a widely shared notion among the men when he talked about 'a wish to gratify the expectations of the government, and of our fellow citizens.' A sense of military duty pervades those lines, as well as Gass's awareness that he was part of a government-sponsored expedition for which Congress had appropriated the sum of 2,500 dollars, certainly not a trivial matter.²⁰ The 'agency' of the Corps of Discovery obeyed a pattern of order-making along these lines: the crew heeded the captains' command, who themselves were heeding Jefferson's directions from the top of the federal government. What can be said, in view of this hierarchy, about Lewis and Clark's respective mind-sets?²¹

Having served as Jefferson's private secretary for two years before the start of the journey, Lewis obviously knew the most. He was the one chosen for special training by the A.P.S., the only soldier with the official rank of captain, and the only one to be elected to the Society in the Expedition's aftermath – a revealing scientific reward and part of a more globalised ritual, as later chapters will suggest.²² Lewis was also, and by far, the most literate member of the crew. Writing was a necessary skill in an expedition so directly associated with carrying a Jeffersonian republican mindset over the rugged grounds of the trans-Mississippi West. Lewis's ease with writing paralleled Clark's

Turner's Frontier Thesis. Faragher, on the other hand, reminds us of 'the loose regional boundaries of today's West as from the contingency of the term "West" itself. Moving back through the American past, it refers to ever more eastward regions of the continent: to Arkansas, Missouri, and Iowa before the Civil War, when Americans considered the West of today to be 'the Far West': to the old Northwest and old Southwest territories at the end of the eighteenth century; to Kentucky and Tennessee during the American Revolution. Turner used the phrase "the Great West" to encompass them all. But the western regionalists have no patience with such historically mobile definitions.'

¹⁹ 'Political' in the sense I have given of it, p. 5.

²⁰ See the introductory quotation above; and Tamra Orr, *The Lewis and Clark Expedition: a primary source history of the journey of the Corps of Discovery* (New York, 2004), p. 21.

²¹ On 'agency' as an inherently western (i.e. Euro-American) construction, see Walter Johnson, 'On agency,' in *Journal of Social History*, xxxvii, no. 1 (Autumn, 2003), p. 119.

²² On the notion of ritual in the 'Republic of Science,' see Chapters 3 to 5. Clark never obtained membership to the APS, although he more than deserved it. On the difference of treatment between the two captains by the A.P.S., see Edward C. Carter II, 'Living with Lewis and Clark,' in Fresonke and Spence, *Lewis and Clark*, pp 27-8; Richard Dillon, *Meriwether Lewis*, p. 92; and William E. Hill, *The Lewis and Clark trail yesterday and today* (Caldwell, ID, 2004), p. 19.

talent at mapmaking. The two captains' complementarity of skill made their strength.

As he was nearing the end of the trip, Lewis related his desire that

it may be made known to the informed world, that the party consisting of the persons whose names are hereunto annexed, and who were sent out by the government of the U' States in May 1804 to explore the interior of the Continent of North America, did penetrate the same by way of the Missouri and Columbia Rivers, to the discharge of the latter into the Pacific Ocean, where they arrived on the 14th November 1805, and from whence they departed the [blank] day of March 1806 on their return to the United States by the same rout they had come out.²³

It would be helpful to find out what Lewis meant precisely by 'informed world', though this proves difficult to assess. Did he mean simply the East Coast of the United States, or did he have more global pretensions, as the term 'world' would suggest? An answer to this question might appear piecemeal if we survey international reactions to the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Even closer to the end of the journey, William Clark wrote in his characteristically rough-hewn prose: 'our first enquirey was after the President of our country and then our friends and the State of the politicks of our country &c. and the State Indian affairs.'²⁴ The 'informed world,' 'the President of our country,' politics and 'Indian affairs': all these were concerns of an official nature, whereas a reader may have expected more numerous references the crew's family and friends after three and a half years of successive hardships. But Clark's insistence on 'politicks' also points towards

²³ Meriwether Lewis, 18 Mar. 1806, in Gary E. Moulton (ed.), *The journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (13 vols, Lincoln, 1983-2001), vi, 431. See also Allen, *Image of the American Northwest*, p. 329; Miller, *Native America, Discovered and Conquered*, p. 113; idem, 'The doctrine of discovery in United States history,' in idem, Jacinta Ruru, Larissa Behrendt, and Tracey Lindberg (eds), *Discovering indigenous lands: the doctrine of discovery in the English colonies* (Oxford, 2010), p. 73; Colin G. Calloway, *One vast winter count: the Native American West before Lewis and Clark* (Lincoln, 2003), p. 427; Jay H. Buckley, *William Clark: Indian diplomat* (Norman, 2008), pp 56-7; and David J. Peck, *Or perish in the attempt: wilderness medicine in the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Helena, MT, 2002), p. 230.

²⁴ William Clark, September 3, 1806; in Moulton, *Journals*, viii, 346. See also Ambrose, *Undaunted courage*, p. 391; and Henry I. Eide, *American odyssey: the journey of Lewis and Clark* (Chicago, 1969), p. 221.

the possibility to study the Expedition without falling into the trap of sentimentalism.

To understand how the captains were able to remain so meticulously (indeed almost mechanically) focused on their mission directives even when they faced nearly complete isolation in an unknown and always potentially hostile environment, it is necessary to consider in what political mould the venture was cast during the preparations. The aborted Michaux mission provided an early 'draft' for it, but paled in comparison and scale. It had once been the scheme of an ambitious and versatile secretary of state, benefiting from the measured support of the A.P.S. But by 1803 Jefferson had become president of his country, and not only the A.P.S. but all the members of his cabinet were involved to some degree in the new plan. This fact is crucial because it proves Washington's full interest in the Expedition, both from its legislative (through Congress's small but highly symbolic financial support) and executive branches. These two branches did not always work together, and indeed still do not. Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin occupied himself with cartographical planning. He secured from the renowned British cartographer Nicholas King 'a blank map to extend from 88 to 126° West longitude from Greenwich & from 30° to 55° north latitude.'²⁵ Notwithstanding Gallatin's reliance on Old World networks of scientific expertise and craftsmanship, which in itself is revealing, the secretary's commission of a blank map echoed the Jeffersonian vision of the trans-Mississippi West as a blank territory where Lewis and Clark could inscribe their own (Jeffersonian republican) message.

²⁵ Albert Gallatin to Jefferson, 14 Mar. 1803, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 27-8. See Bedini, *Jefferson Stone*, p. 18; Woodger and Toropov, *Encyclopedia of Lewis and Clark*, p. 196; and Brian W. Blouet and Merlin P. Lawson (eds), *Images of the Plains: the role of human nature in settlement* (Lincoln, 1975), p. 60. As influences on his prospective work on the blank map, Gallatin mentions the names of George Vancouver, James Cook, and Alexander Mackenzie. He thereby displayed his familiarity with the three Pacific Northwest explorers. Gallatin also mentions the notable French cartographers Jean Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville and Guillaume Delisle, as well as British cartographer Aaron Arrowsmith. Arrowsmith also produced maps of Canada, India, and Africa, which is evidence of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century cartography's complicity with imperial (and thus globalising) discourse.

Secretary of War Henry Dearborn took an equally active role in the project, as his regular correspondence with Jefferson between 1803 and 1806 reveals.²⁶ Only a few weeks after Lewis received his detailed directions from Jefferson, Lewis also obtained appropriate logistical and manpower-related intelligence from Dearborn: ‘You will call on the Commanding Officers at Massac and Kaskaskais for such Non-Commissioned Officers & privates as will be necessary to accompany you on your tour to the Westward ... The paymaster of the Army will be directed to furnish you with money for paying the Bounties to said Recruits. The whole number of non-commissioned officers and privates should not exceed twelve.’²⁷ Dearborn’s orders were clear and concise, and they confirmed the official military nature of the Expedition. Every relevant section of the administrative apparatus of the federal government would be used to help make its preparation more efficient. Another perspective on Dearborn suggests that the military, though present throughout in the westward-moving world of the Corps, did not overshadow the Corps’s intellectual and political interests. Lewis and Clark’s crew had an overwhelmingly military background, and no doubt the men had been recruited for that reason. But the guarantee of a strong sense of discipline (that is, following Jefferson’s orders to a t) justified this selection, rather than a military bias in interpreting how the Corps’s tasks were to be performed. Jefferson needed reliable ‘agents’ who could do the work without necessarily being aware of its more intricate ideological ramifications.

These ramifications extended to the institutionalised scientific sphere of such

²⁶ Jackson, *Letters*, i, *passim*. Dearborn kept in contact with Clark about the Missouri watershed region after the return of the Corps. See Richard A. Emey, *The public life of Henry Dearborn* (New York, 1979), pp 136-43; and Ann Rogers, *Lewis and Clark in Missouri* (Columbia, MO, 2002), pp 114-15.

²⁷ Henry Dearborn to Lewis, 2 July 1803, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 102-03. See also Donald L. Carr, *Into the unknown: the logistics preparation of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Fort Leavenworth, 2004), pp 56-7.

Philadelphia institutions as the A.P.S. and (later) Peale's Museum.²⁸ As intimated in the first chapter, the unbroken link between the Expedition and the Society provides a vital clue to the Corps's agency in carrying the notion of the safeguarding of the young American Republic to the trans-Mississippi West during the decades following independence. The A.P.S.'s former sponsorship of André Michaux found new momentum in 1803, albeit on a broader scale and in a more inclusive manner. Thanks to the efforts of a decidedly omnipresent Jefferson, several of the Society's key members undertook to train Lewis in disciplines in which he would need considerable competence if he was ultimately to satisfy his sponsors' quest for scientific information. Knowing this, Jefferson's letter to the renowned anatomist Caspar Wistar deserves to be quoted at some length, for it uncovers the kernel of the hopes placed in Lewis as literally an *agent* working between Philadelphia and Upper Louisiana:

We cannot in the U.S. Find a person who to courage, prudence, habits & health adapted to the woods, & some familiarity with the Indian character, joins a perfect knowledge of botany, natural history, mineralogy & astronomy, all of which would be desirable. To the first qualifications Capt. Lewis my secretary adds a great mass of accurate observation made on the different subjects of the three kingdoms as existing in these states, not under their scientific forms, but so as that he will readily seize whatever is new in the country he passes thro, and give us accounts of new things only.²⁹

Besides Jefferson's confidence in Lewis's ability to learn quickly and widely, his stress on 'accounts of new things only' fits perfectly the notion of a blank page tackled earlier in Gallatin's commission of a blank map from Arrowsmith. The 'new' embodied that

²⁸ For the sake of thematic coherence, in Chapters 3 to 5 the thesis moves towards a discussion of these eastern U.S. institutions in relation to the wider intellectual world – the 'Republics of Letters and Science' – of which they became a part, with Jefferson and Peale ever striving for more complete integration.

²⁹ Jefferson to Caspar Wistar, 27 Feb. 1803, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, pp 17-18. See also Bakeless, *Partners in discovery*, p. 95; and H. Wayne Phillips, *Plants of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Missoula, MT, 2003), p. 1.

aspect of American nature which could validate the legitimacy of the American Republic. Yet it waited to be uncovered by U.S. agents self-consciously engaged in the fulfilment of their nation's destiny beyond the Mississippi. Along similar lines, Jefferson asked naturalist Benjamin Smith Barton to 'prepare for him [Lewis] a note of those in the lines of botany, zoology, or of Indian history which you think most worthy of inquiry & observation.'³⁰ Barton was an accomplished linguist with an interest in Indian languages. He gave advice to Lewis in the field of ethnographical observation and description, so that the captain could *log* the various tribes (together with their living environments) that the Corps of Discovery would encounter on its way westward in his journal account.

Anatomy, botany, zoology, linguistics: when applied to appropriate contexts, these disciplines had the power to 'circumscribe' western animals, plants, and indigenous people. This process of scientific circumscribing depended heavily on the recording of all the relevant data on paper, an activity which the captains would conscientiously sustain throughout the trip. They ordered their sergeants to share in the effort, too: 'The sergts. in addition to those duties are directed each to keep a seperate journal from day today of all passing occurences, and such other observations on the country &c. as shall appear to them worthy of notice.'³¹ The 'passing occurences' Lewis mentioned here were recorded with painstaking care and entered into journals, with the objective of having them subsequently published. (Revealingly, the original journals now rest in the A.P.S. Library.)³² If Lewis had been the only member of the crew to enjoy scientific training, he nevertheless shared his basic knowledge with his crewmates.

³⁰ Jefferson to Benjamin Smith Barton, 27 Feb. 1803, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, p. 17. See also Dillon, *Meriwether Lewis*, p. 32; Eide, *American odyssey*, p. 3; and Cohen, *Jefferson and the sciences*, p. 32.

³¹ Lewis, 26 May 1804, in Moulton, *Journals*, ii, 257-8. See also Eide, *American odyssey*, p. 25; Ambrose, *Undaunted courage*, p. 141; Cutright, *Pioneering naturalists*, p. 44; and John W. Hoganson and Edward C. Murphy, *Geology of the Lewis and Clark Trail in North Dakota* (Missoula, MT, 2003), p. 17.

³² Luckily, I was able to access the original Lewis and Clark journals in the Society's repository, in Philadelphia.

This helped produce the journals of John Ordway, George Whitehouse, Patrick Gass, and Charles Floyd. Later sections will show that these men followed Lewis's directions as well as they could. There is little doubt that A.P.S. members expected this, and let Lewis know about it.

Another important contributor to Lewis's training was the physician and professor of medicine Benjamin Rush, who was also a close friend of Jefferson's, pioneer abolitionist and Founding Father of the United States. (Rush is especially known for having supplied the Corps with the infamous 'Rushe's pills', but this episode is not relevant here.)³³ Following explicit requests from Jefferson, Rush forwarded a list of queries to Lewis that sought to make the Corps's venture an ethnographic one as well.³⁴ The list, which Clark would title 'Inquire relative to the *Indians* of Louisiana,' covered everything from Native American ritual, religion, disease, sexual practices, cosmology, and diet, to kin, treatment of women, art of war, conduct of trade, etc. Combining well with Barton's penchant for Indian vocabularies, this list equated to a survey of the mostly unknown tribes of the trans-Mississippi West.³⁵ The survey would certainly be valuable in itself, but it would also carry the weight of the promise of fruitful commercial relations with Missouri and Pacific region tribes in the future.

Ideologically, it carried with it the implication that American Indians were to be treated

³³ However, for a stimulating essay on the relationship between medicine and diplomacy in Lewis and Clark's relationship with western Indian tribes, see Diane J. Pearson, 'Medical diplomacy and the American Indian: Thomas Jefferson, the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and the subsequent effects on American Indian health and public policy,' in *Wicazo Sa Review*, xix, no. 1 (Spring, 2004), pp 105-30. I think Pearson might be slightly exaggerating the role of medical expertise in fostering the Corps's sense of civilisational superiority over their hosts, but she is right to emphasise that medicine did not escape from ideology.

³⁴ Benjamin Rush to Lewis, 17 May 1803, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 50-1; and Jefferson to Rush, 28 Feb. 1803, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 19: 'It would be very useful to state for him the objects on which it is most desirable he should bring us information. For this purpose I ask the favor of you to prepare some notes of such particulars as may occur in his journey & which you think should draw his attention & enquiry.' See also John Moring, *Early American naturalists: exploring the American West, 1804-1900* (Lanham, MD, 2002), p. 17; and Eldon G. Chuinard, *Only one man died: the medical aspects of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Glendale, CA, 1979), p. 122.

³⁵ Clark's list of questions, 1804, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 157-61. The list (as referenced by Clark) gathers such topics as 'physical history and medicine,' 'morals' and 'religion,' which is absolute evidence of Rush's influence on Clark on his daily ethnological study, not only at the start but throughout the journey.

like any other type of *scientific* subjects, thereby dehumanising them in discourse and making possible (by this strategy of silencing) the appropriation of certain ontological Native features targeted by U.S. rhetoricians of expansion for the doctrinal reinforcement of U.S. republican identity. The most recurrent of those traits was American Indians' supposed *a priori* sense of belonging to American nature.³⁶ Jeffersonian teleology surmised that continental American nature represented the ultimate geographical receptacle of the American Republic – its first, vital, organic environment. Autochthonous inhabitants therefore had to be replaced, but not through extermination, which reeked too much of the denounced methods of pre-Enlightenment European colonialism (reputedly at least). The Indian presence could instead be stifled in a socio-political sense by being depicted as existing in symbiosis with the natural environment the Republic coveted as its natural mould. This process of 'natural historicisation', as I propose to call it, is a staple of Jeffersonian discourse in the Lewis and Clark journals, and concrete examples of it will be discussed below.³⁷

From the perspective of the planned takeover of western American nature in federal ideology, astronomical observations played perhaps the most decisive role. It was from the help of astronomical coordinates that a figure like Clark was able to draw his remarkably accurate maps of formerly uncharted territories, and to retrace the course

³⁶ In the last chapter of the thesis I discuss the aesthetics that nurtured this conceptual 'transfer' of identity.

³⁷ See the second section of the chapter, which deals more specifically with Indian diplomacy and trade. But my development on the strategy of 'natural historicisation' continues throughout the thesis. At the same time, I am aware of Pekka Hämäläinen's fair warning that 'the big-picture ecohistorical models tend to suffuse history with biological determinism: 'European colonisation becomes a mere corollary of an undeclared biological warfare, and Indians, their immunologically naive bodies but soft fodder for aggressive Old World pathogens, seem naturally selected for dispossession ... History is reduced to a Darwinian process where biological encounters inexorably lead to colonial conquests, undisturbed by instances where European biota – animals, plants, pathogens – did not trigger immediate aboriginal decline and where Europeans were not the primary beneficiaries of transoceanic exchanges ... Such deterministic, flattening tendencies of macroscale biohistories have come under increasing criticism, or been sidelined, as historians have produced more complex and nuanced narratives that show how indigenous decline in the face of Europe's biological onslaught was neither immediate nor inevitable.' Pekka Hämäläinen, 'The politics of grass: European expansion, ecological change, and indigenous power in the Southwest borderlands,' in *William and Mary Quarterly*, lxxvii, no. 2 (Apr., 2010), pp 174-5. Working at the level of discourse allows me to avoid the trap of biological determinism.

of the Missouri River from its mouth. Here, space prevents a detailed discussion of the earlier developing relationship between the science of astronomy, the method and activity of cartography, and the assertion of late-eighteenth-century European intellectual authority or ‘empire’ on foreign lands, particularly Pacific islands, and the peculiar Jeffersonian interpretations and replications of this relationship. Old-World ‘models’ such as those provided by French and British scientific societies’ support of the voyages of James Cook, Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, Jean-François Galaup de Lapérouse, and George Vancouver are examined in later chapters.³⁸ What I wish to underline here is that the training provided by the A.P.S. was quite in tune with this pattern of relationships. Very little was left to chance, as the more celebratory narratives of the Expedition have often tended to imply.³⁹ Two men provided Lewis with training in astronomy, and gave their advice on which instruments would be the most practical to carry en route: Robert Patterson and Andrew Ellicott. They worked, respectively, as professor of mathematics at the University of Pennsylvania (Patterson) and as professional surveyor (Ellicott).⁴⁰ Ellicott in particular had foreshadowed Lewis and Clark somewhat when he had delineated the survey line between Spanish America and U.S. territory at the thirty-first parallel, in the wake of Pinckney’s Treaty (1795). As

³⁸ Chapters 4 and 5. For the notion of ‘intellectual empire,’ see Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, p. 4; and Anne Godlewska, ‘Napoleon’s geographers (1797-1815): imperialists and soldiers of modernity,’ in Anne Godlewska and Neil Smith (eds), *Geography and empire* (Oxford, 1994), p. 49.

³⁹ Such works, like Ambrose’s, opt for a focus on the adventure itself which tends to downplay the care taken in its planning. Planning is mentioned, with citations provided, but it does not govern the perspective chosen for the narrative.

⁴⁰ Jefferson to Patterson, 2 Mar. 1803, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 21; and Ellicott to Jefferson, 6 Mar. 1803, in *ibid.*, i, 23-4. Ellicott wrote: ‘Mr. Lewis’s first object must be, to acquire a facility, and dexterity, in making the observations; which can only be attained by practice; in this he shall have the assistance I can give him with aid of my apparatus. It is not to be expected that the calculations can be made till after his return, because the transportation of the books, and tables, necessarily for that purpose, would be found inconvenient on such a journey. The observations on which Arrowsmith has constructed his map of the northern part of this country, were all calculated in England.’ I discuss Ellicott at greater length in Chapter 4. On the scientific instruments used by the Corps, see Silvio A. Bedini, ‘The scientific instruments of the Lewis and Clark Expedition,’ in *Great Plains Quarterly*, iv, no. 1 (Winter, 1984), pp 54-69; Cutright, *Pioneering naturalists*, pp 20-1; Carr, *Into the unknown*, p. 27; Jackson, *Jefferson and the Rocky Mountains*, p. 137; and Dan L. Flores, *The natural West: environmental history in the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains* (Norman, 2004), p. 34.

mentioned earlier, Ellicott had also written a *Journal* recording his long survey trip.⁴¹

Both captains would acknowledge the tutoring of both Ellicott and Patterson in their journals. Recourse to astronomical observations enabled them to assess the extent of the targeted ‘western Utopia’ by giving it boundaries. Before the Expedition started properly, Jefferson had written to Lewis: ‘As the boundaries of interior Louisiana are the high lands inclosing all the waters which run into the Mississippi or Missouri directly or indirectly, with a greater breadth on the gulph of Mexico, it becomes interesting to fix with precision by celestial observations the longitude & latitude of the sources of these rivers, and furnishing points in the contour of our new limits.’⁴² The advice did not go unheeded, and to this end survey instruments came in handy. On 22 July 1804 Lewis described an ‘Artificial Horizon constructed in the manner recommended by Mr. Patterson of Philadelphia; glass is here used as the reflecting surface.’⁴³ At Fort Mandan several months later, he recorded: ‘Observed Equal altitudes with Sextant and artificial Horizon on the construction recommended by Mr. Andrew Ellicott, in which sperits were substituted for water, it being to could to use the latter.’⁴⁴ Western historian Donald Jackson’s branding of the Expedition as ‘an enterprise of many aims and a product of many minds’ seems corroborated by journal entries like these.⁴⁵

Lewis came out of his training literally more ‘enlightened.’ The expedition of which he was a part would constitute the first American Enlightenment venture in the

⁴¹ Ellicott’s rich *Journal* is discussed in the first section of Chapter 4, where I also provide the appropriate references. Ellicott’s trip to the Southwest for the definition of the thirty-first parallel lasted four years.

⁴² Jefferson to Lewis, 16 Nov. 1803, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 137. See also Dan L. Flores (ed.), *Southern counterpart to Lewis and Clark: the Freeman and Custis expedition of 1806* (Norman, 1984), p. 8; and Ronda & Koupal, *Finding Lewis and Clark*, p. 26.

⁴³ Lewis, 22 July 1804, in Moulton, *Journals*, ii, 412.

⁴⁴ Lewis, 28 Jan. 1805, in *ibid.*, iii, 279. See also Richard S. Preston, ‘The accuracy of the astronomical observations of Lewis and Clark,’ in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, cxliv, no. 2 (June, 2000), pp 168-91.

⁴⁵ Jackson, *Letters*, i, p. vii. Jackson’s words have been acknowledged and quoted ever since. Nevertheless, apart from his own work (brilliant but limited in interpretative scope by virtue of its nature as a collection of letters) there has never been a full-length study to do honour to his definition. See James P. Ronda, ‘Passion and imagination in the exploration of the American West,’ in William Devereil (ed.), *A companion to the American West* (Malden, 2004), p. 53.

western ‘wilderness’, designed to promote and ground the idea of a novel, native, continental, U.S. republicanism that could forever seal the *raison d’être* of the young nation in the North American ground. It was to this purpose that Jefferson had been gathering vast amounts of data on colonial Louisiana in the years 1790 to 1803. The Corps’s self-consciously enlightened ‘agency’ made it dreaded by foreign colonial authorities like no U.S. enterprise of the kind before it.

2. Continental level: the reactions of France, Spain, and Great Britain

Because Louisiana had not yet been transferred to the United States as the Corps started its way up the Missouri, Lewis and Clark had needed to secure passports from the ambassadors of France, Spain, and Great Britain on the continent. The passports were safely obtained, but the correspondence that covered the whole process deserves further probing for what it reveals about Jefferson’s political and intellectual reputation in Europe. Behind each letter, we find an underlying sense of imperial rivalry, most conspicuous in the case of Britain, which remained firmly entrenched in Canada and monopolised a large part of the interior fur trade. Secretary Gallatin wrote about the British situation: ‘The present aspect of affairs may, ere long, render it necessary that we should, by taking immediate possession, prevent G. B. from doing the same. Hence a perfect knowledge of the posts, establishments & force kept by Spain in upper Louisiana, and also of the most proper station to occupy, for the purpose of preventing effectually the occupying of any part of the Missouri country by G. B., seems

important.⁴⁶ Gallatin's is arguably one of the most blatantly imperialistic statements in the whole of Jefferson's correspondence. No doubt it had been sparked by Britain's peculiar situation as both a progenitor and a competitor of the United States in North America. Britain's claim as progenitor transpired in the realms of scientific activity and imperialising discourses, too. Lewis and Clark often referred to James Cook and George Vancouver in their journals.⁴⁷ This sense of competing with one's own model, without being able to acknowledge that legacy for fear of jeopardising the promised territorial integrity of the Republic, helps to explain why there was so much animosity towards the British.

Conversely, Spanish America, by that time severely weakened and in fact not far removed chronologically from implosion, represented less of a threat. The U.S. and Spain's diplomatic relations proved less stormy. Despite this, Carlos Martínez de Yrujo, Spanish minister to the United States from 1796 to 1806, had peculiar words to qualify Jefferson in a letter to his minister of foreign affairs: 'The President has been all his life a man of letters, very speculative and a lover of glory, and it would be possible he might attempt to perpetuate the fame of his administration not only by the measures of frugality and economy which characterise him, but also by discovering or attempting at least to discover the way by which the Americans may some day extend their population and their influence up to the coasts of the South Sea.'⁴⁸ In describing Jefferson as 'all

⁴⁶ Gallatin to Jefferson, 13 Apr. 1803, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 32-3. See also Johansen and Gates, *Empire of the Columbia*, p. 74; and Arthur B. Darling, *Our rising empire, 1763-1803* (Hamden, CT, 1962), p. 465.

⁴⁷ See, for instance: Lewis, 7 Apr. 1805, in Moulton, *Journals*, iv, 9-10; Clark, 15 Nov. 1805, in *ibid.*, vi, 50; Clark, March 24, 1806, in *ibid.*, vii, 10-11. See also Frank Bergon, 'Wilderness aesthetics,' in Fresonke and Spence, *Lewis and Clark*, pp 44-45; Bergon, *The wilderness reader*, p. 45; William T. Allison and Susan J. Matt, *Dreams, myths, and reality: Utah and the American West* (Salt Lake City, 2008), p. 7; Norman K. Denzin, *Searching for Yellowstone: race, gender, family, and memory in the postmodern West* (Walnut Creek, CA, 2008), p. 97; Eide, *American odyssey*, p. 145; and Ellis Lucia, *This land around us: a treasury of Pacific Northwest writing* (New York, 1969), p. 83.

⁴⁸ Carlos Martínez de Yrujo to Pedro Cevallos, 2 Dec. 1802, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 5. See also Dillon, *Meriwether Lewis*, p. 75; Jackson, *Jefferson and the Rocky Mountains*, p. 125; Kukla, *A wilderness so immense*, p. 260; and David Holloway, *Lewis and Clark and the crossing of North America* (New York, 1976), p. 18.

his life a man of letters' and 'very speculative', Yrujo had just epitomised the relationship between the Jefferson's conception of the integrity of the American Republic, his intellectualism, his ability give concepts a practical outlet, and his vision of continental territorial expansion. The French chargé d'affaires in Washington, Louis André Pichon, did not sound quite as concerned in his report to Talleyrand:

For a long time Mr. Jefferson has been concerned with the means of exploring the sources of the Missouri beyond which he supposes must be found those of the river Origan which flows into the Pacific Ocean, and of which only the mouth is known; I believe that is the river named, if I am not mistaken, the river Colombia by the explorer McKenzie. As a result he has planned an expedition destined to this discovery and for which he has obtained from Congress a small sum of money; this appropriation, however, could not be made directly for this purpose on account of the scruples they have over the right of the general Government to do anything which might tend toward the general encouragement of the Sciences. The thing was voted through with the indefinite end of encouraging foreign trade, and they even assure me that the President's personal influence was necessary to obtain this small appropriation which I believe [does not amount to] 5000 Dollars.⁴⁹

This relative lack of alarm, despite fairly accurate information on the Expedition's resources, may have stemmed simply from his awareness that France would not hold on to Louisiana much longer.⁵⁰ More interesting was one of Pichon's remarks about the relationship between the U.S. government and its 'encouragement of the sciences' at that time: was it a critique, an expression of regret and concern, or simply a statement of fact? Whatever the answer, Pichon's comment implied that in Old World countries the relationship between government (politics) and the promotion of science (as a necessary

⁴⁹ Louis André Pichon to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 14 Mar. 1803, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, p. 22. For further information in Pichon, see Lawrence S. Kaplan, 'Jefferson's foreign policy and Napoleon's idéologues,' pp 344-59; and idem, *Entangling alliances with none: American foreign policy in the Age of Jefferson* (Kent, OH, 1987), pp 79-126.

⁵⁰ This will remain a matter of conjecture. The best overall account is in Kukla, *A wilderness so immense, passim*.

precondition for the discovery of new lands and for colonial expansion, which we will find explicit in the Lapérouse accounts)⁵¹ had attained a much higher degree of integration than in the United States. But the U.S. was a young country, still in search of a secure national identity which Jefferson hoped to strengthen by his own brand of republicanism. And Jefferson was working precisely towards a tighter integration of government and the sciences. These were a means to an end, national self-affirmation. In a sense, Pichon had commented only from a partially informed position, and expectedly he failed to see that the ‘small sum’ secured from Congress was precisely what, in the end, changed everything.

Jefferson had effectively secured from Congress a momentous gesture, opening the path of the institutionalisation of exploratory science in the United States, something towards which Peale would work relentlessly for his Philadelphian museum throughout the 1790s. By the same token, Jefferson had turned Congress’s gesture into a nationally symbolic one by making enough noise on the international scene for the Corps of Discovery to be singled out as a peculiarly ‘U.S.’ expedition.

The various ministers and *chargés d’affaires* in Washington failed to notice that Jefferson’s documentation on Louisiana, compiled over a period of fifteen years and having given birth to the *Account of Louisiana* (1803), had been pursued with Lewis and Clark and their several hapless precursors in mind. With the exception of Jonathan Carver’s *Travels through the interior parts of North-America* (1778), all these works were by foreign writers.⁵² Le Page du Pratz, author of the *Histoire de la Louisiane*

⁵¹ Chapter 4, *passim*.

⁵² Jonathan Carver, *Three years travels through the interior parts of North-America* (Dublin, 1779). Carver’s work was first published in London in 1778. See also Woodger and Toropov, *Encyclopedia of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, p. 132; and Wayne Franklin, *Discoverers, explorers, settlers: the diligent writers of early America* (Chicago, 1979), p. 46.

(1758), was French.⁵³ Jean-Baptiste Truteau, an early explorer of the Upper Missouri region in Spanish employ, composed the ‘Journal de voyage sur le haut Missouri’, which Jefferson communicated to Lewis just before the captain’s departure.⁵⁴ So did James Mackay and John Evans, also Spanish subjects.⁵⁵ As for Alexander Mackenzie, the first European man to reach the Pacific Ocean from the Canadian interior, he was a British agent in Northwest Company employ.⁵⁶ It is not possible here to address how Jefferson exploited the information provided in those accounts (factual as well as mythical, on geography, history, tribal populations, commerce, natural history, navigation, etc.) and adapted the data into an new U.S. idiom in his attempt to ‘de-historicise’ Louisiana, and make it a receptacle of federal territorial integration and of the extension of republican

⁵³ Antoine Simon Le Page du Pratz, *The history of Louisiana* (London, 1774). The original edition dates from 1758, but Jefferson possessed the English version. On Jefferson’s regard for Du Pratz’ *History*, see Shannon Lee Dawdy, ‘Proper caresses and prudent distance: a how-to-do manual from colonial Louisiana,’ in Ann L. Stoler (ed.), *Haunted by empire: geographies of intimacy in North American history* (Durham, NC, 2006), pp 153-7. Proof that the book belonged to Jefferson’s library is given in James Gilreath and Douglas L. Wilson (eds), *Thomas Jefferson’s library: a catalog with the entries in his own order* (Clark, NJ, 2010), p. 143. For reference to Du Pratz in the Lewis and Clark journals, see Clark, 5 July 1804, in Moulton, *Journals*, iv, 351.

⁵⁴ Jean-Baptiste Truteau, ‘Journal de voyage sur le haut Missouri, 1794-1796,’ in Fernand Grenier and Nilma Saint-Gelais (eds), *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau sur le haut Missouri* (Québec City, 2006). In that same edition, see also Truteau’s ‘Description du haut Missouri,’ pp 97-160. I have used the ‘Truteau’ version of the name here, which makes it somewhat confusing because Grenier and Saint-Gelais use the other one – with a d. For Jefferson’s correspondence with Lewis about the Truteau materials, see Jefferson to Lewis, 16 Nov. 1803, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 136; and Jefferson to Lewis, 22 Jan. 1804, in *ibid.*, i, 165. See ‘Introduction,’ in Grenier and Saint-Gelais, *Trudeau sur le haut Missouri*, pp 10-11; Ronda, *Jefferson’s West*, pp 42-4; idem, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, pp 12-13; Pierre Lagayette, *Thomas Jefferson et l’Ouest: l’expédition de Lewis et Clark* (Paris, 2005), p. 114; and Michel Chaoult, *Les ‘Canadiens’ de l’expédition Lewis et Clark, 1804-1806: La traversée d’un continent* (Québec City, 2003), pp 58-9.

⁵⁵ See James Mackay to John Evans, 28 Jan. 1796, in Nasatir, *Before Lewis & Clark*, ii, 410-14; and extracts from Mackay’s journal, 14 Oct. 1795 to 18 Jan. 1796, in *ibid.*, i, 354-66. See also Nasatir, ‘Anglo-Spanish rivalry on the Upper Missouri,’ in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, xvi, no. 4 (Mar., 1930), pp 507-28; Kevin C. Witte, ‘In the footsteps of the Third Spanish Expedition: James Mackay and John T. Evans’s impact on the Lewis and Clark Expedition,’ in *Great Plains Quarterly*, xxvi, no. 2 (Spring, 2006), pp 85-98; and Thomas C. Danisi and W. Raymond Wood, ‘Lewis and Clark’s route map: James Mackay’s map of the Missouri River,’ in *Western Historical Quarterly*, xxxv, no. 1 (Spring, 2004), pp 53-72.

⁵⁶ Alexander Mackenzie, *Voyages from Montreal* (London, 1801). For proof of Jefferson’s ordering the book, see Jefferson to James Cheatham, 17 June 1803, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 55-6: ‘I have understood there is to be had in New York an 8vo edition of McKenzie’s travels with the same maps which are in the 4to edition: I will thank you to procure it for me. The American 8vo edition is defective in it’s maps, and the English 4to edition is too large & cumbersome.’ Jackson surmises that the president’s desire for a copy not ‘too large & cumbersome’ may have meant that he was ordering the book for Lewis. See Ronda, *Finding the West*, p. 26; Jackson, *Jefferson and the Rocky Mountains*, p. xv; Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians*, pp 106-07; John B. Severance, *Thomas Jefferson: architect of democracy* (Boston, 2001), p. 143; and Carlos A. Schwantes, *The Pacific Northwest: an interpretive history* (2nd ed., Lincoln, 1996), pp 54-5.

institutions into it.⁵⁷ Suffice it to say that Jefferson showed a keen awareness of the weight of his colonial literary influences, and of the potential danger that his adaptation of them posed for the credibility and historico-geographical legitimacy of U.S. continental expansionism in his discourse. This was a time when he did not know yet about the imminent Louisiana Purchase. The event itself took him aback.

To secure recognition from Congress, and then to manage and supervise the Corps of Discovery with the help of the A.P.S., were preparative turning points in Jefferson's wider scheme. This scheme went over the foreign ambassadors' heads, and perhaps understandably so. Still, its final object was total 'continentalism', which meant in the long run the expulsion of waning European empires from the North American continent altogether. In any event, once their passports had been secured the men of the Corps started on their epic journey. From the crossing of the Mississippi River, they became engrossed in their mission: to imprint the roots of the Jeffersonian republican mindset on western ground. This mindset's blossoming would only become obvious later, as a rhetorical accompaniment to the process of physical expansion into the trans-Mississippi environment which was bound to happen a few decades after Lewis and Clark. The captains' westward movement followed the trajectory imposed by the notion of 'unfolding.'⁵⁸ Let us now consider how they interpreted and respected their directives.

⁵⁷ This is the subject of a future article. Renaud Contini, 'Harmonizing the "West": Jefferson's *Account of Louisiana* and American identity,' in Tom J. Hillard and Amy T. Hamilton (eds), *Before the West was West: pre-1800 Western American Literature* (forthcoming, University of Nebraska Press).

⁵⁸ For a discussion of 'unfolding' versus expansion, see Chapter 1, *passim*. For an exploration of the rhetorical strategies employed by Jefferson in his instructions to Lewis, see James L. Golden and Alan L. Golden, *Thomas Jefferson and the rhetoric of virtue* (New York and Oxford, 2002), p. 65.

B. The politics of the Corps of Discovery

1. Diplomacy and Indian relations

The Corps of Discovery's actions in the trans-Mississippi West will hereafter be divided into two categories: politics, and 'geographics.' In each instance, careful consideration will be given to gauging how closely they followed Jefferson's written instructions.

In the trans-Mississippi western environment, continentally-minded Jeffersonians knew that one could find a multitude of Native tribes that European man had only rarely met. Those tribes (encountered earlier by colonial explorers like Truteau, Mackay, and Evans) lived near the Missouri River: Otos, Osages, Omahas, Sioux, Mandans, etc. Jefferson knew of them from his readings. More distant were the Snakes of the Rocky Mountain region, the Blackfeet to the Snakes's northeast in present-day Montana, the Nez Perces of the Columbia River plateau, the Clatsops on the Pacific Coast, and many smaller tribes. Acknowledging their immense variety is the utmost that can be done here, as well as suggesting that such variety did not matter to the Corps of Discovery, because it did not matter to Jefferson. This section does not focus on the relationship between Lewis and Clark and the tribes they met throughout their journey, as this has already been investigated admirably elsewhere.⁵⁹ Rather, the focus is on the image that U.S. politicians and scientists held of the 'red' man as foil to the American 'white' man's thirst for self-affirmation over the North American continent (at that time an *image* too), and how the Expedition enacted the ritual beginning of the transfer of identity in territorial ownership.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ I shall provide here only a few examples: Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*; Blackhawk, *Violence over the land*; Joseph, *Lewis and Clark through Indian eyes*; Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, 'The Lewis and Clark story, the captive narrative, and the pitfalls of Indian history,' in *Wicazo Sa Review*, xix, no. 1 (Spring, 2004), pp 21-33; and Lydia W. Soldier, 'Lewis and Clark journey: the renaming of a nation,' in *ibid.*, xix, no. 1 (Spring, 2004), pp 131-43.

⁶⁰ I hope that such an approach makes sense in view of the lines of analysis I announced earlier in Chapter 1.

In his instructions to Lewis, Jefferson had pronounced these meaningful words: ‘And, considering the interest which every nation has in extending & strengthening the authority of reason & justice among the people around them, it will be useful to acquire what knowledge you can of the state of morality, religion, & information among them; as it may better enable those who may endeavor to civilize & instruct them, to adapt their measures to the existing notions & practices of those on whom they are to operate.’⁶¹ To put it another way, Jefferson had asked his former secretary to go ‘half-Indian’ in order to speak a language, figuratively speaking, that western tribes could understand. This would be the language of ‘civilisation’, articulated in such a way that supposed ‘toddlers in progress’ like American Indians could understand it, and begin to speak in their turn. The interpretation has usually been that Jefferson hoped to pave the way for the assimilation of the western tribes (of his *conception* of the tribes, at any rate).⁶² And Lewis and Clark certainly thought they were sowing the seeds of civilisation in Indian territory, by such acts as giving the Mandans ‘the blacksmith’s tools, supposing they might be useful to the nation,’ as Gass observed with apparent satisfaction on the return route.⁶³ However, a year after his return to St Louis and much acquired fame, Governor Lewis expressed complaints about the difficulty of teaching the tribes agriculture when Indians realised they were actually surrounded by U.S. settlers on the hunt.⁶⁴ Few

⁶¹ Jefferson’s instructions to Lewis, 20 June 1803, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 62-3. See also Frank Shuffelton, ‘Thomas Jefferson: race, culture, and the failure of anthropological method,’ in idem (ed.) *A mixed race: ethnicity in early America* (Oxford, 1993), p. 265; James W. Tuttleton, *The primate’s dream: literature, race, and ethnicity in America* (Chicago, 1999), p. 118; and James G. Wilson, *The imperial republic: a structural history of American constitutionalism from the colonial era to the beginning of the twentieth Century* (Aldershot, 2002), p. 105.

⁶² On this, see Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians*; and Sheehan, *Seeds of extinction*.

⁶³ Gass, 16 Aug. 1806, in Moulton, *Journals*, x, 268. See also McGregor, *Journals of Patrick Gass*, p. 215; and Grace R. Hebard, *Sacajawea: a guide and interpreter of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Norman, 1957), p. 81.

⁶⁴ Lewis, ‘Observations and reflections on the present and future state of Upper Louisiana, in relation to the government of the Indian nations inhabiting that country, and the trade and intercourse with the same,’ in Reuben G. Thwaites (ed.), *Original journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (2nd ed., 8 vols, New York, 1969), vii, 384. See also Jackson, *Letters*, ii, 697; and Coues, *History of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, i, p. cxxiv. Of course, Lewis’s perplexity might have stemmed from the fact that many Missouri region tribes already practiced agriculture, and were less influenced by horse ownership than Great Plains tribes like the Comanches. See Pekka Hämäläinen, ‘The rise and fall of plains Indian

efforts at organisation and supervision were produced by the federal government at that time, either. This meant that there had been a clear ideological side to Jefferson's earlier affirmations on Indian policy in the West from the start, in the sense that assimilation was actually never pursued as a concrete, overarching federal goal but rather invoked as a rhetorical accompaniment to the formulation of early expansionistic policies.

By claiming the mission to teach tribes the ways of 'civilised' life, Jefferson and his western agents were engaged, I believe, purely and solely in the affirmation of nominal then physical U.S. authority over Upper Louisiana. The concrete outcome of such vague 'civilisational' policies did not really matter. They might have genuinely mattered to Jefferson when he congratulated the Georgia-based Cherokees on 'becoming farmers, learning the use of the plough and the hoe, enclosing your grounds and employing that labor in their cultivation which you formerly employed in hunting and war.'⁶⁵ But of the same Cherokees, Jefferson later stated: 'The chastisement they then received closed the history of their wars, prepared them for receiving the elements of civilisation which zealously inculcated by the present government of the U.S. have rendered them an industrious, peaceable and happy people.'⁶⁶ Jefferson regarded the Cherokees as already silenced politically, or 'chastised', as he then called it. This was not the case of the trans-Mississippi western tribes. Federal executives had only really heard about them. This lack of knowledge proved threatening, and it explained why lists of queries like Benjamin Rush's and Barton's suggestions for compiling vocabularies had been imposed on Lewis with so much urgency. Behind the A.P.S. intellectuals'

horse cultures,' in *Journal of American History*, xc, no. 3 (Dec., 2003), pp 855-6.

⁶⁵ 'To the chiefs of the Cherokee nation,' 1806, in Merrill D. Peterson (ed.), *The political writings of Thomas Jefferson* (Chapel Hill, 1993), p. 154. See also Grant Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes: Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, Seminole* (Norman, 1934), p. 353.

⁶⁶ Jefferson to Paul Allen, 18 Aug. 1813, in Jackson, *Letters*, ii, 587. Paul Allen, based in Baltimore, was by then taking over Nicholas Biddle's job as editor of the journals. See David W. Miller, *The taking of American Indian lands in the Southeast: a history of territorial cessions and forced relocations, 1607-1840* (Jefferson, NC, 2011), p. 48; Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians*, p. 58; and Coues, *History of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, i, p. xvii.

professed interest in little-known tribes was concealed an unquenchable desire (perhaps not fully conscious) to push the tribes out of their shade and to verify that they, too, remained infants in civilisation, incapable of withstanding the gradual assertion of U.S. federal authority over Louisiana. This desire originated partly from geopolitical motivations.

The Jeffersonian idea of civilisation was an ‘enlightened’ European idea with its Europeanness concealed, but it carefully preserved the notion of a ‘civilised’ exploring country’s legal claim of right of discovery (inherited from the Roman legal doctrine of *terra nullius*, or *res nullius*) of ‘empty land’ in the syntax of transatlantic diplomacy. Land did not have to be literally empty (although sometimes it was, e.g. St Helena at the time of its discovery by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century) but made to *seem* so in the language of international diplomacy, which was the language of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European empires. In purely practical terms, the depiction of Indians as ‘infants in civilisation’ by U.S. exploratory agents in Jefferson’s time would have subscribed to the logic of philanthropy only if subsequent, concrete federal policies had been duly formulated and applied on a specific geographical scale in the months or years that followed such diplomatic forays as the Purchase or Lewis and Clark’s carefully recorded diplomatic exchanges with western tribes. But this was hardly the case, because infantilization in U.S. agents’ rhetoric represented a means and not an end. First, it was the means towards the confirmation of the legal claim of U.S. sovereignty over Louisiana sanctioned by the Purchase, whereby the ascendancy conferred by *terra nullius* doctrine was effectively transferred from France to the U.S.; second, it was a means towards the more ontological, historical, and ideological end of legitimation.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Miller, *Native America, discovered and conquered, passim*; and Anthony Pagden, *Lords of all the world: ideologies of empire in Spain, Britain and France, c. 1500-1800* (New Haven and London, 1995), pp 76-7. Pagden explores in

Diplomacy served an initial, basic need for national self-affirmation. It is easy to see how Indian ‘nations’ ended up playing the role of foils in such a scheme. Of course, Lewis and Clark’s diplomacy involved more concrete matters, especially after the Louisiana Purchase Treaty was voted: communicating Jefferson’s discourses to the tribes; inviting them to visit him in Washington; and more generally having them accept United States territorial sovereignty. All these aspects are reasonably well-known.⁶⁸ At the same time, however, they seem to have been scrutinised with a degree of accuracy inversely proportional to their rate of occurrence. In diplomatic encounters, and especially in the discourses that gave an official form to these encounters, the wording of every sentence mattered. Viewed this way, Jefferson’s and the Corps’s declarations around the notion of the civilising mission seem suffused with ideology. Jefferson referred consistently to Native Americans as ‘children’ or ‘my children’ and Lewis and Clark called Jefferson the ‘Great father’ and the ‘great chief of the Seventeen great nations of America, who could consume you as the fire consumes the grass of the plains.’⁶⁹ In the realm of international diplomatic language, this was of course nothing new. French, Spanish and British colonials had resorted to this terminology without moderation.⁷⁰

great detail the Roman origins of the *res nullius* doctrine and its various legal applications by France, Spain, and Great Britain during the era of colonisation of North America.

⁶⁸ See Jefferson to Lewis, 24 Jan. 1804, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 166; Jefferson to the Osages, 16 July 1804, in *ibid.*, i, 201; Jefferson to William Eustis, 25 Jun. 1805, in *ibid.*, i, 249; and Levi Lincoln to Jefferson, 17 Apr. 1803, in *ibid.*, i, 35. Levi Lincoln encouraged his president to include more queries about Native Americans in his instructions to Lewis. See Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, p. 2; Ben Kiernan, *Blood and soil: a world history of genocide and extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven, 2007), pp 324-9; Francis P. Prucha, *American Indian treaties: the history of a political anomaly* (Berkeley, 1994), p. 227; and David H. Thomas, ‘Thomas Jefferson’s conflicted legacy in American archaeology,’ in Seefeldt *et al.*, *Across the continent*, p. 116.

⁶⁹ Jefferson to the Indian Delegation, 4 Jan. 1806, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 281-2; John Ordway, 30 Aug. 1804, in Moulton, *Journals*, ix, 48; and Lewis and Clark to the Oto Indians, 4 Aug. 1804, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 204-06. See also Dayton Duncan, *Scenes of visionary enchantment: reflections on Lewis and Clark* (Lincoln, 2004), p. 110; and Ambrose, *Undaunted courage*, p. 157. On the context of the Louisiana Purchase Treaty and the question of its constitutionality, see Robert M. Johnstone, Jr., *Jefferson and the presidency: leadership in the young Republic* (Ithaca, 1978), pp 71-2.

⁷⁰ Anthony Pagden, *European encounters with the New World* (London, 1993), pp 117-31; and Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of possession in Europe’s conquest of the New World, 1492-1640* (Cambridge, 1995), pp 1-99. For a similar argument with a clear thematic focus on eighteenth-century America, see Pekka Hämäläinen, ‘The western Comanche trade center: rethinking the Plains Indian trade system,’ in *Western Historical Quarterly*, xxix, no. 4 (Winter, 1998), p. 497.

But such borrowings from or adaptations of a familiar eighteenth-century colonial vocabulary were never acknowledged, and indeed have tended to be equally looked over or (worse) taken for granted by historians of the early United States. And if they really were taken for granted, and somehow still are, this would only confirm the former status of Jeffersonian expansionism as an *ideology*.

The practice of infantilising western tribes in discourse inscribed itself well within the pattern of civilisation defined as a ‘four-stage theory’ by such prominent eighteenth-century authors as Montesquieu, Adam Ferguson and William Robertson. All were very familiar names to Jefferson.⁷¹ More urgently for U.S. interest, this practice implied that Euro-Americans could play the role of tutors to Native Americans. By not only teaching the child but displaying to him the learning curve (or ‘habituation,’ to use an Aristotelian term), the parent (or father, or ‘Great father’) asserted himself as a legitimate authority.⁷² If the continental element in U.S. republican discourse was to be vindicated in the West and *by* the West, then the legitimacy of the announced harbingers of republicanism in Philadelphia and their agents along the Missouri River had to be vindicated, too. The dialectic between ‘wilderness’ and ‘civilisation’ involved environments *and* their settlers; hence the dualism inherent in Jefferson’s and the Corps’s discursive approaches, and hence my choice for two distinct sections in the discussion.

The dialectic entailed that since republican institutions and their defenders

⁷¹ Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, ed. Anne M. Cohler, Basia C. Miller and Harold S. Stone (Cambridge, 1989), pp 285-307; Adam Ferguson, *An essay on the history of civil society* (London, 1768); and William Robertson, *The history of America* (3 vols, London, 1777). See also Michael Rosen, *On voluntary servitude: false consciousness and the theory of ideology* (Cambridge, 1996), pp 118-19; and Jan Golinski, ‘American climate and the civilization of nature,’ in James Delbourgo and Nicholas Dew (eds), *Science and empire in the Atlantic world* (New York, 2008), pp 153-74.

⁷² Aristotle, *The Nicomachean ethics*, trans. David Ross (Oxford and New York, 1980), pp 15, 23, 58, 199. Needless to say that Jefferson was thoroughly trained in the classics. His familiarity with Aristotle (especially on the topic of natural history) was not innocent. Jefferson sought to visualise the full panorama of republicanism throughout history in order to devise his own version of it, which would then be made to fit the mould of the North American environment. See Jefferson to John Adams, 10 Aug. 1815, in Ford, *Works of Thomas Jefferson*, xi, 484.

ultimately were part of the same picture, so shall it be for Native Americans and their ‘wilderness’. This was the other side of Rush’s list. On the one hand, it opened the possibility for the gradual acculturation of American Indians by proclaiming to aim to discover more about Indians’ mental attributes and to facilitate their learning process. On the other, the list *as a list* signified something much more essential. It conveyed the sense that the ethnographical study of western tribes belonged to a world of categories and analyses to which the study of plants and animals equally belonged. In fact, astronomy and cartography belonged to it, too. No explicit hierarchy organised these categories. There were few attempts at differentiating between anthropology, the natural sciences, and the physical sciences. Of course, clear delineations among the scientific disciplines did not exist then in the sense that we understand them today.⁷³ But they did exist to some degree, especially by the turn of the century and at least since Linnaeus and Buffon’s *Histoire naturelle*.⁷⁴ This seems all the more ironic since, in his *Notes on Virginia*, Jefferson had taken issue vehemently with Buffon for his false claims about the degenerating state of North American nature. Looking into the Buffon-Jefferson dispute allows us to uncover the more subtle elements of the contradiction at the heart of Jefferson’s teleology. It deserves an extended examination, which is undertaken in the next chapter.⁷⁵

Lewis and Clark dutifully sought to identify western tribes as groups of childlike human beings in need of tutoring and ‘habituation.’ In the end, they viewed their Native counterparts as broadly scientific subjects. This did not mean that the captains neglected courtesy, and even a certain sense of developing friendship, with such tribes as the

⁷³ The most important work on this topic to date remains Michel Foucault, *The order of things*, especially pp 29-75.

⁷⁴ I return to these two towering figures of eighteenth-century natural history in Chapter 3.

⁷⁵ Chapter 3, section 2, part 1. As I argue in that chapter, the strength Jefferson put in his rebuttal of Buffon also indicated the extent of his intellectual esteem for the French naturalist.

Mandans. Sexual interest in Indian women often explained moments of temporary closeness, but these were temporary only, faithful to the military and scientific discipline imposed by Jefferson's directions almost to the point of seeming robotic. Throughout the previous century, intermarriage had been common for French traders and tribal women in the *pays d'en haut*, leading to the development of strong French-Algonquian kin networks where women 'incorporated their French husbands into a society structured by native custom and tradition ... French authority over the North American interior rested on the hegemony of these kin networks. The French traders living among native people were central to New France's highly effective communications network that linked distant western outposts. French traders relayed messages, solicited warriors, and mediated potentially disruptive disputes.'⁷⁶ Lewis and Clark's militaro-scientific approach made them relatively impervious to these traits of the 'middle ground' because Jeffersonian discourse was impervious to them, too. Its ambition was not to promote blending with Indians physically (unless under a short-term 'contract') but to blend with objectified Natives so as to steal, as it were, their native features from their identity. This perspective was clinical enough to differentiate little, in terms of serious discourse, between Indian women and men. If Sacagawea's fame nowadays is so much the product of myth, it is also because she had become objectified during the trip as soon as she had joined the crew – as guide, as interpreter, as organic human outgrowth of American soil under U.S. tutelage, and indeed as Native woman, but more for her 'Indianness' and the image of motherly 'integrativeness' she embodied than for her actual woman-ness.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ The quotation is from Susan Sleeper-Smith, 'Women, kin, and Catholicism: new perspectives on the fur trade,' in *Ethnohistory*, xl, no. 2 (Spring, 2000), pp 424-36. For a more culturally oriented perspective looking at the relationship between politics and spirituality in French-Indian kin networks, see Tracy N. Leavelle, 'The Catholic rosary, gendered practice, and female power in French-Indian spiritual encounter,' in Joel W. Martin and Mark A. Nicholas (eds), *Native Americans, Christianity, and the reshaping of the American religious landscape* (Chapel Hill, 2010), pp 159-79.

⁷⁷ See Juliana Barr, 'From captives to slaves: commodifying Indian women in the borderlands,' in *Journal of American*

The Corps's imperviousness to all but temporary integration into Native American society, and its scrupulous adherence to its ascribed tasks, proved that Jefferson's choice of zealous military men with scientific proclivities had been a judicious one. These men's ability to 'switch on and off,' as it were, remains impressive even to a modern reader as it pervades the thousands of pages of the Lewis and Clark journals. Many readers have found the journals cold and terse because of it, at times almost inhumanly machine-like, with the exceptions of those rare moments of exaltation like the discovery of the Great Falls of the Missouri and of the Pacific Ocean.⁷⁸ This apparent coldness of tone shows, in fact, the measure of the Corps's disciplinary genius.

The military nature of the crew also made it reasonable for their equipment to include more than just food, clothes, bags, camping equipment, specie, and scientific instruments. They carried U.S. flags and medals. In Lewis's first estimate of expenses, Indian presents culminated at 696 dollars. 'Arms & Accoutrements extraordinary' lagged behind, at 81 dollars, still a substantial sum in view of the petty amount gathered by Congress to fund the trip.⁷⁹

This triptych of items (gifts, medals and flags, and weapons) had a concrete role to play in Jefferson's tacit policy of Indian infantilisation. A child is offered gifts, and sometimes such 'offerings' can be textured with heavy symbolism; the child may have

History, xcii, no. 1 (June, 2005), p. 20. This question is fascinating, though too broad for me to address properly here. See also Kerry Wynn, "'Miss Indian Territory' and 'Mr. Oklahoma Territory': marriage, settlement, and citizenship in the Cherokee nation and the United States," in Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (eds), *Moving subjects: gender, mobility, and intimacy in an age of global empire* (Chicago, 2009), pp 172-89.

⁷⁸ See the famous entry in Lewis, 13 Jun. 1805, in Moulton, *Journals*, iv, 285: 'I wished for the pencil of Salvator Rosa ... that I might be enabled to give to the enlightened world some just idea of this truly magnificent and sublimely grand object, which has from the commencement of time been concealed from the view of civilized man.' See also Furtwangler, *Acts of discovery*, p. 26; Elizabeth Stevenson, *Figures in a western landscape: men and women of the Northern Rockies* (Baltimore, 1994), p. 7; Arne Neset, *Arcadian waters and wanton seas: the iconology of waterscapes in nineteenth-century transatlantic culture* (New York, 2009), p. 60; Michael P. Branch (ed.), *Reading the roots: American nature writing before Walden* (Athens and London, 2004); Kris Fresonke, *West of Emerson: the design of Manifest Destiny* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2003), p. 51; Robert Thacker, *The great prairie fact and literary imagination* (Albuquerque, 1989), p. 25; and Ronda and Koupal, *Finding Lewis and Clark*, p. 85.

⁷⁹ Lewis's estimate of expenses, 1803, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 8-9. See also Thwaites, *Original journals*, vii 1-2; and Danisi and Jackson, *Meriwether Lewis*, p. 145.

no choice but to accept the gifts. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century gift-giving, as a ritual of the ‘middle ground’ between Indian tribes of the Great Lakes region and French and British traders posted there, reflected a tenuous but reciprocal relationship of mutual cultural adaptation. Richard White and other historians in his wake (Pekka Hämäläinen, William Ramsey, Eric Hinderaker, and Andrew Cayton, to name but a few) have progressively refined this notion of a ‘middle ground,’ and applied it to regions other than the Great Lakes, such as the Great Plains and the Southeast.⁸⁰ But this was not the case, or at least not to the same degree of tacit, contract-based solidarity, for Jeffersonian discourse’s ideal ‘neo-native’ U.S. agents and those white settlers who would supplant tribal villages in the American frontier regions of the nineteenth century (bringing about the end of the ‘middle ground’).⁸¹ For Jefferson and his cabinet, who were busy constructing a national identity in discourse through the political medium of territorial expansion/unfolding as the pictured materialisation of their country’s ‘continentality’, medals and flags were geopolitically loaded gifts, symbols of both military superiority and political integrity. Lewis and Clark, who accepted gifts (mostly clothes) in exchange from their western autochthonous hosts according to custom but would have hardly felt impelled to do so, did not always wish

⁸⁰ On this vast subject, which still very much agitates the current historiography of early America, see Richard White, *The roots of dependency: subsistence, environment, and social change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln and London, 1983), pp 63-76; White, *The middle ground*, passim; Andrew R. L. Cayton and Fredericka J. Teute (eds), *Contact points: American frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750-1830* (Chapel Hill, 1998), pp 1-15; Eric Hinderaker and Peter C. Mancall, *At the edge of empire: the backcountry in British North America* (Baltimore, 2003), p. 134 and passim; Gordon M. Sayre, *The Indian chief as tragic hero: Native resistance and the literatures of America, from Moctezuma to Tecumseh* (Chapel Hill, 2005), pp 132-3; Arnaud Balvay, *L'épée et la plume: Amérindiens et soldats des troupes de la marine en Louisiane et au Pays d'en Haut, 1683-1763* (Québec City, 2006), pp 15-16; Gilles Havard, *Empire et métissages: Indiens et Français dans le Pays d'en Haut, 1660-1715* (Paris, 2003), pp 15-16; Ramsey, “‘Something cloudy in their looks,’ pp 58-9; idem, *The Yamasee War: a study of culture, economy, and conflict in the colonial South* (Lincoln and London, 2008), p. 194; Hämäläinen, ‘The western Comanche trade center,’ pp 497, 510; and idem, *The Comanche empire* (New Haven, 2008), p. 8 and passim.

⁸¹ Richard White, *It's your Misfortune and none of my own: a new history of the American West* (Norman, 1991), pp 55-178; White, *The roots of dependency*, pp 90-9; Nobles, *American frontiers*, p. 131; Jeffrey Ostler, *The Plain Sioux and U.S. colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee* (Cambridge, 2004), pp 3-5, 13-39; Hämäläinen, ‘The rise and fall of plains Indian horse cultures,’ pp 856-62; and idem, ‘The politics of grass,’ pp 194-206.

to conceal this twofold symbolism to the tribes. But a contemporary reader would rather wonder whether the Indians' response was as smooth as the captains usually made it out to be in their textual renditions of those events.⁸² As a general rule, reports of Indian pliability (rather than resistance) suffuse the accounts. To modern eyes, these recorded instances look too casually linear, indeed too complacent (Lewis and Clark will not strike the reader as complacent individuals except in those cases) to be just taken at face value. However, they were not blatant lies, only deformations and exaggerations.⁸³

Reports of Indian resistance, on the other hand, were rare enough to be given full credit. Within the same symbolic frame of reference, weapons came to fill the role left vacant by gifts. As signifiers, they echoed the stick used to punish a child when he has failed to comply (except that death could ensue, the educators being soldiers).⁸⁴ On the return trip, some men of the Corps encountered a group of Blackfoot Indians, who resorted to stealing weapons from them. There is no evidence that the Blackfoot intended to fire at the targeted crew members; indeed it is more likely that they coveted foreign weapons for symbolic or commercial reasons, or even perhaps as a preventive

⁸² See Clark, 23 Sept. 1805, in Moulton, *Journals*, v, 231. Upon encountering a Nez Perce tribe near present-day Weippe, Idaho, Clark recorded: 'We assembled the principal Men as well as the Chiefs and by Signs informed them where we came from where bound our wish to inculcate peace and good understanding between all the red people &c. which appeared to Satisfy them much, we then gave 2 other Medals to other Chefs of bands, a flag to the twisted hare, left a flag & Handkerchief to the grand Chief gave, a Shirt to the Twisted hare & a knife & Handkerchif with a Small pece of Tobacco to each.' See Zoa L. Swayne, *Do them no harm! Lewis and Clark among the Nez Perce* (Orofino, ID, 1990), p. 43.

⁸³ For instance, see Ordway, 26 Aug. 1805, in Moulton, *Journals*, ix, 211. This entry recounts the Corps's arrival at Lehmi Pass in the presence of Shoshones. Ordway has another interesting entry for 28 Apr. 1806, pp 299-300. It features a description of the Nez Percés: 'the dance continued untill about midnight then the most of them went away peaceable & have behaved verry clever and honest with us as yet, and appear to have a Sincere wish to be at peace and to git acquaintance with us &C &C.' In addition, see the sergeant's entry for September 24, 1804, pp 64-6, where he refers to the Teton Sioux, a tribe known for posing serious problems to all Missouri adventurers at the time. See also: Federal Writers Project, *The Oregon Trail: the Missouri to the Pacific Ocean* (New York, 1939), p. 133; and Frederick E. Hoxie and Jay T. Nelson (eds), *Lewis and Clark and the Indian country: the Native American perspective* (Chicago, 2007).

⁸⁴ I understand that this interpretation of the Corps's use (or mere possession) of weapons may seem less plausible than one emphasising the sheer need for defensive arms in an unknown and always potentially dangerous environment. But the two interpretations are in fact complementary. If Lewis and Clark had had to defend themselves in a preventive manner, as it must have been envisaged but did not happen, this would have equated to Indian lack of pliability all the same, except in a more extreme manner, i.e. Indians being against the Corps of Discovery's penetration into the territory unwarranted. I see no logical fallacy in combining these strategies. James V. Fenelon and Mary L. Defender-Wilson, 'Voyage of domination, "purchase" as conquest, Sakakawea for savagery: distorted icons from misrepresentations of the Lewis and Clark Expedition,' in *Wicazo Sa Review*, xix, no. 1 (Spring, 2004), pp 85-104.

measure. Besides, the Blackfeet probably did not conceive of 'theft' in the same manner as did Lewis and Clark, as studies of this particular tribe have since suggested.⁸⁵ They suffered from their reputation, no doubt (and yet this 'bad' reputation, like the Sioux's, probably originated either from a longer history of resistance than other tribes or from more efficient tactics) but also from the very fact of their insubordination. Because this instance of reversed aggressiveness is so unusual in the journals, its violence emerges fully from the text. Lewis's recounting of the event is worth quoting at some length:

This morning at day light the indians got up and crouded around the fire, J. Fields who was on post had carelessly laid his gun down behind him near where his brother was sleeping, one of the indians the fellow to whom I had given the medal last evening slipped behind him and took his gun and that of his brothers unperceived by him, at the same instant two others advanced and seized the guns of Drewyer and myself, J. Fields seeing this turned about to look for his gun and saw the fellow just running off with her and his brothers he called to his brother who instantly jumped up and pursued the indian with him whom they overtook at the distance of 50 or 60 paces from the camp seized their guns and rested them from him and R Fields as he seized his gun stabbed the indian to the heart with his knife the fellow ran about 15 steps and fell dead.⁸⁶

So it was a knife that killed the culprit, yet another irony in the history of the Expedition. However lurid the passage, though, especially in view of what has been discussed before, it must be stressed that the Corps's relations with the tribes over the three years that spanned their travels remained mostly peaceful in practice. Very few men died. It

⁸⁵ Theresa J. Lacey, *The Blackfeet* (Broomall, PA, 1995), pp 39-49; John C. Ewers, *The Blackfeet, raiders on the Northwestern Plains* (Norman, 1958), p. 274; R. G. Robertson, *Rotting face: smallpox and the American Indian* (Caldwell, ID, 2001), p. 120; Ruby H. Happel-Holtz, *On wings of change: a return to the unconquered hearts* (Victoria, BC, 2009), p. ix; Furtwangler, *Acts of discovery*, pp 89-90; and Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, pp 238-44.

⁸⁶ Lewis, 27 July 1806, in Moulton, *Journals*, viii, 133-7. See also Cutright, *Pioneering naturalists*, p. 317; Chuinard, *Only one man died*, p. 382; Slaughter, *Exploring Lewis and Clark*, p. 181; Denzin, *Searching for Yellowstone*, p. 69; Verne Huser, *On the river with Lewis and Clark* (College Station, TX, 2004), pp 105-06; and William Nichols, 'Lewis and Clark probe the heart of darkness,' in *American Scholar*, xlix, no. 1 (Winter, 1979-80), pp 94-101.

was the *symbolic* confrontation between the two cultures (or rather between one culture and the other ‘culture’ which the first had essentialised) that proved especially brutal. The invading force, if we take ‘invading’ here in a purely objective sense, was prey to self-doubt about its origins, history, and identity. As a matter of fact, it was the Corps of Discovery’s role as the vessel of an ideology bent to question its *own* enlightenment that explained the captains’ obsession with being ‘enlightened’ in contrast to western tribes, whom they depicted as wading in pristine obscurity. But this is the very logic of the foil.

2. Commerce and settlement

A fuller survey of the symbolic relationship and *rapport de force* between the men of the Expedition and their unwitting tribal hosts requires an exploration of Lewis and Clark’s more grounded prospects for commerce, which they perceived as a further measure of safety, and settlement. It would not lead very far to search for hard evidence of some imperial plans. Any argument in that direction is bound to veer into over-interpretation, because the proofs are lacking.⁸⁷ The Jeffersonian conception the ‘West’ remained too much of an *idea* at that time for Congress or the A.P.S. to contemplate the possibility of Louisiana’s administrative integration into the Union as a constellation of new territories. Jefferson’s prescience, however, was to grasp just how exhilarating a role an intellectualised and mythified ‘West’ could play on the notion of the United States as both an increasingly cohesive and expansive national unit. Commerce and especially settlement in the trans-Mississippi West, as broached in the captain’s

⁸⁷ See, for instance, W. Raymond Wood, *Prologue to Lewis and Clark: the Mackay and Evans expedition* (Norman, 2003), p. xii. Robert J. Miller’s argument in *Native America* illustrates my statement. Doubtless it provides numerous new insights, particularly from a legal point of view, which often lacks in discussions of ideologies of expansionism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But Miller’s use of the evidence seems one-sided at times. To my knowledge, the most measured voice in this thorny field remains Anthony Pagden’s.

accounts, belonged in the intricate mechanism of that wider *idea*.⁸⁸

Tribes played a major role in that discursive domain, since they represented the inescapable other side of the commercial relationship, and more often than not they occupied the land that Lewis had marked down as ripe for future U.S. settlement. This was only a temporary relationship, however, and as such it cannot be compared with the flexible fur trade relations formerly established between American Indians and colonial traders and trappers in the Great Lakes region and (later) the Great Plains.⁸⁹ In that sense, the Corps's need to rely on tribes for trade or as hosts did not run counter to their notion of Indians as the foils and silenced bystanders of the slow federal appropriation of Upper Louisiana. Once the expansion of the frontier became a physical reality, with U.S. settlers swarming over the vast territory beyond the Mississippi, it was expected that tribes would become a superfluous presence. U.S. citizens (that is, white Americans) could take care of it all. One might say that this was a partnership of circumstance, and evidence from the captains' journals abounds in that direction. Tribes rarely received a mention in the text, despite the vast amount of intelligence about the region's geography they must have supplied to the crew. This intelligence, often cartographical, conveyed either through the spoken word or via 'crude' maps drawn with sticks on the ground, helped Lewis and Clark survive their trek through the Continental Divide as much as did the equipment, foodstuffs, and horses that commerce with the same western tribes supplied. This type of trade was essential, to be sure, but one of circumstance nonetheless.

Shoshone chief Cameahwait contributed largely towards Clark's better

⁸⁸ The nature of the Jeffersonian West as primarily an idea is, I believe, an original contribution to the ongoing scholarly discussion of Jeffersonian expansionism. See Chapter 1, *passim*; and Nobles, *American frontiers*, p. 131. Nobles says of early U.S. frontier settlers: 'To Jefferson, of course, they had always been something of an abstraction, idealized images to inhabit future frontiers.'

⁸⁹ White, *The middle ground*; Paul W. Mapp, *The elusive West and the conquest for empire, 1713-1763* (Chapel Hill, 2011); Daniel K. Richter, *Facing east from Indian country: a Native history of early America* (Cambridge, MA, 2001); Blackhawk, *Violence over the land*; and Hämäläinen, 'The western Comanche trade center,' p. 495.

acquaintance with the Salmon River region, offering fragments of data which Clark would later materialise into a map.⁹⁰ Clark's 'Connection of the countrey' sketch and Lewis's 'Summary view of the rivers and creeks which discharge themselves into the Missouri', two documents with potentially crucial geopolitical value within them, contained much of the geographical knowledge of Indian leaders whom the captains then neglected to mention.⁹¹ And yet, it was the combined use of these two types of sources that could equip Lewis with enough added expertise to be able to make the following observation to Jefferson about the Yellowstone River country, just before his return in St Louis: 'We examined the country minutely in the vicinity of the entrance of the River Rochejone [Yellowstone] and found it possessed of every natural advantage necessary for an establishment, it's position in a geographical point of view has destined it for one of the most important establishments both as it regards the fur trade and the government of the natives in that quarter of the continent.'⁹²

Does this entry not say it all? On the subject of future commercial prospects in Louisiana, Lewis stressed to Jefferson two days later that 'a thorough knowledge of the geography of the country is absolutely necessary to their being unde[r]stood.'⁹³ Exploration-related commerce with western tribes secured victuals, clothes, peace, and the sharing of important data about the country (matters of circumstance); in turn, the

⁹⁰ Lewis, 20 Aug. 1805, in Thwaites, *Original journals*, ii, 380. See also Charles G. Clarke (ed.), *The men of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Lincoln, 2002), pp 192-3; and James H. Maguire (ed.), *The literature of Idaho: an anthology* (Boise, ID, 1986), p. 46.

⁹¹ Clark, 5 Jan. 1805, in Moulton, *Journals*, iii, 268; and Lewis, 'A summary view of the rivers and creeks which discharge themselves into the Missouri,' undated, winter 1804-05, in *ibid.*, iii, 336-69. See also Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, pp 123-32; Cutright, *Pioneering naturalists*, p. 55; Allen, *Image of the American Northwest*, p. 231; John S. Bowman and Maurice Isserman (eds), *Across America: the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Broomall, PA, 2010), p. 53; Rick van Noy, *Surveying the interior: literary cartographers and the sense of place* (Reno, NV, 2003), p. 175; and Nobles, *American frontiers*, pp 61-2.

⁹² Lewis to Jefferson, 21 Sept. 1806, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 318. See Thwaites, *Original journals*, vii, 332; and Duncan, *Scenes of visionary enchantment*, p. 69.

⁹³ Lewis to Jefferson, 23 Sept. 1806, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 322-3. See also Dillon, *Meriwether Lewis*, p. 161; and Harry W. Fritz, *The Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Westport, CT, 2004), p. 116.

data gathered allowed astute observers like Lewis and Clark to determine the best spots for future U.S. settlement, where ‘the fur trade and the government of the natives in that quarter of the continent’ would be best taken care of. In combination with the information transmitted by such traders as Auguste Chouteau in St Louis (who covered as best he could the topics of Upper Louisianan population, immigration history, slavery, land grants, wealth, extent and growth of settlements, agriculture, import and export, Indian trade, mines and minerals, etc.),⁹⁴ this was the kind of geographical intelligence that not just President Jefferson but a territorial governor would need. Meriwether Lewis was appointed governor of the Louisiana Territory in 1807.⁹⁵

The point here is that, if all the actions performed by the Corps cannot be said to have fit within an already well-articulated Jeffersonian ‘scheme’ at that time, still the captains never lost sight of the doctrinal implications of their mission. To (literally) sow the seeds of future Congress-backed U.S. expansion across the trans-Mississippi West required at least a broad awareness of the territory’s geographical features, natural productions, and animal and vegetable life (I return to these in the chapter’s last section). The data were either determined by Lewis and Clark’s own observations, with the help of scientific instruments, or supplied by others, be they Indian chiefs, guides, or white colonial traders. The traders’ contributions could not extend much beyond the Mandan

⁹⁴ Lewis to Auguste Chouteau, 4 Jan. 1804, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 161-3. The list forwarded to Chouteau was titled ‘Mixed questions relating to Upper Louisiana.’ See also Lewis to Jefferson, 28 Dec. 1803, in *ibid*, i, 148. In this letter, Lewis uncovered his ready acquiescence in Jefferson’s envisaged Indian removal: ‘The advantages of such a policy has ever struck me as being of primary importance to the future prosperity of the Union, and therefore I gave it my earliest and best attention.’ On this subject see John F. McDermott, *The early histories of St Louis* (St Louis, MO, 1952), p. 8.

⁹⁵ Elliott Coues (ed.), *The history of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (2nd ed., 4 vols, New York, 1979), i, p. xxxviii. Coues explains that ‘It is extraordinary that the date of Governor Lewis’s appointment is left out from every place where it might confidently be expected to appear in print, for it is of official record in the Bureau of Commissions of the State Department, being of almost equal date with his resignation from the Army. Captain Lewis was nominated as Governor of the Louisiana Territory, by President Jefferson, Feb. 28th, 1807, confirmed by the senate Mar. 2d, and commissioned Mar. 3d.’ In fact, even before the official start of the Expedition, one notices in Lewis’s comments a political sensitivity to the question of how to organise Louisiana as a territorial government. See Lewis to Jefferson, 28 Dec. 1803, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 154.

villages, however, and that represented not even half of the entire way to the Pacific.⁹⁶

In the numerous instances where recourse to Indian intelligence was conspicuous, because inescapable, there was also an awareness on the crew's part that they could not properly verify their facts, at least not according to the conventional methods. The deep epistemological gap between the explorers' and their native hosts' respective conceptual worlds prevented such verification. Nevertheless, the data were recorded and used. They turned out to be quite accurate, even measured against the captains' criteria, but truly the explorers could not predict that. They knew, though, that in the *idea* of the 'West' which they were engaged in defining for a U.S. audience, complete accuracy did not count as a primary feature. This point has been made earlier. It was mostly a question of diplomatic authority and territorial legitimacy. Being part of a government-sponsored expedition supervised from above and charged with the drafting of *de facto* official journals, Lewis and Clark knew that the act of writing itself (that is, of processing Indian information into their own alphabet) would confer on them a sense of authority regardless of the veracity of their statements. Accuracy could be verified by time and by the expeditions following in their wake, for whose existence Lewis and Clark would be in a sense responsible. What remained clear, though, was that recognition of Indian participation in the gathering of scientific data ought not to disturb the tenor of journal entries' statements on behalf of U.S. agents' legitimacy as competent assessors of the western territories.⁹⁷

Because of the nature of the 'West' featured in the Lewis and Clark journals as an

⁹⁶ A look at Clark's 'master map' of 1810 would suggest the Mandan villages' location to be approximately midway through the Corps's outbound route, but this did not take into account the challenge posed by the Rockies. In an interesting contrast, Indian cartographers took calculated time into account in their mapmaking practice. This provoked Clark's confusion and occasional scorn. I return to this question of epistemological incommensurability in Chapter 5.

⁹⁷ On the postmodern interpretation of the relationship between science and legitimation, see Foucault, *The order of things*; Latour, *Science in action*; and Jean-François Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne*. Lyotard accords little importance to conventional historical perspective, unlike Foucault and Latour, whose books feature large sections on the historical context(s) of eighteenth-century Europe.

idea circumscribed textually, those entries that discuss prospects for settlement are often tinged with the utopian idiom. What I call the ‘utopian idiom’ is developed further in the three next chapters, where the international (in reality Euro-American) use of this idiom and the imagery it fed upon are considered.⁹⁸ It has been suggested earlier that Utopia implies an environment that is bounded, or circumscribed. In that sense, Utopia differs from the fable because it has a spatial dimension. The other use of the word ‘utopian’ in everyday language should not blind us to this fact.⁹⁹ Thomas More’s *Utopia* and Francis Bacon’s *Atlantis* had their own political agendas.¹⁰⁰ So it was with Jefferson’s ‘West’: recourse to utopian imagery in spoken discourse and in various forms of text (including the Corps of Discovery’s own accounts) allowed for the emergence of a teleological interpretation of the notion of territorial possession. From a purely logistical point of view, this could not quite materialise in the United States of 1803, but it would happen someday. In 1803 Lewis and Clark were charged with investigating the prospects. In a sense, they were engaged as surveyors of Utopia.

There are, of course, elements of the fable in the articulation of Utopia, and we encounter some of these in the crewmen’s journal entries. The bounded nature of the landscapes described never receives an explicit mention, but it is constantly implied throughout by the everyday astronomical observations the captains performed. If a landscape is described and a map results, it thereby becomes a bounded landscape. If it consciously retains elements of fable in its cartographical rendition, it also qualifies as utopian. But let us consider more prosaic observations from the journals, such as Clark’s

⁹⁸ The longest discussion I offer of the utopian idiom (in a globalised perspective) is in Chapter 4, part 2, sections 1 to 5.

⁹⁹ It is indeed often used as meaning ‘fable’, quite indiscriminately. See also the introduction to this thesis, pp 4-5.

¹⁰⁰ More, *Utopia*; and Francis Bacon, *The New Atlantis* (London, 1627). The literature on these two works is too extensive to be listed here, and I trust the point made here has become somewhat of a commonplace. For enlightening discussions of the multiple meanings of the adjective ‘utopian,’ especially in relation to early American history, see Timothy Sweet, *American georgics: economy and environment in early American literature* (Philadelphia, 2001), p. 15; and Robert Lawson-Peebles, *Landscape and written expression in revolutionary America: the world turned upside down* (Cambridge UK, 1988), p. 3.

at Camp Chopunnish in 1806: ‘the grass and maney plants are now upwards of Knee high. I have no doubt that this tract of Country if Cultivated would produce in great abundance every article esentially necessary to the comfort and Subsistence of civilised man.’¹⁰¹ Almost a year before, at Canoe Camp, Sergeant Ordway had observed a ‘Soil verry rich and lays delightful for cultivation.’¹⁰² Lewis, always the most gifted at textual descriptions, later noted that

The country along the rocky mountains for several hundred miles in length and about 50 in width is level extreemly fertile and in many parts covered with a tall and open growth of the longleafed pine ... the bottom lands on the watercourses are reather narrow and confined tho’ fertile & seldom inundated. this country would form an extensive settlement; the climate appears quite as mild as that of similar latitude on the Atlantic coast if not more so and it cannot be otherwise than healthy; it possesses a fine dry pure air.¹⁰³

The exploring writers’ appropriative eyes both noted the potential richness of western lands ‘for cultivation’ and magnified it. Could Clark really be so certain that the tracts around Camp Chopunnish ‘would produce in great abundance every article esentially necessary to the comfort and Subsistence of civilised man’? The proclivity of late-eighteenth and early nineteenth-century exploration draughtsmen for utopian exaggerations in their accounts may be explained by their sympathetic stance towards ‘enlightened’ imperial ideologies (whose transnational quality is considered at length in Chapter 3). The Corps’s tribulations in the American West only manifested, in the end,

¹⁰¹ Clark, 28 May 1806, in Moulton, *Journals*, vii, 300; and Whitehouse, 27 May 1805, in *ibid.* xi, 171-5. See also Donald W. Meinig, *The great Columbian plain: a historical geography, 1805-1910* (Seattle, 1968), p. 31; and Keith Petersen, *River of life, channel of death, fish and dams on the Lower Snake* (Lewiston, ID, 1995), p. 57.

¹⁰² Ordway, 24 Sept. 1805, in Moulton, *Journals*, ix, 229.

¹⁰³ Lewis, 9 May 1806, in Moulton, *Journals*, vii, 299-300. See also Allen, *Image of the American Northwest*, p. 343; Meinig, *The great Columbian plain*, p. 31; Patrick Lee (ed.), *Mosquitoes, gnats and prickly pear cactus* (Ashland, MO, 2005), p. 190; and Clifford E. Trafzer and Richard D. Scheuerman, *Renegade tribe: the Palouse Indians and the invasion of the inland Pacific Northwest* (Seattle, 1986), p. 9.

the domestic aspect of a globalised phenomenon. But just how far it went in its enterprise of intellectual appropriation of western American geography along Jeffersonian lines needs to be assessed first.

C. The ‘geographics’ of the Corps of Discovery

1. Writing the West

The relationship between Lewis and Clark and a western environment devoid of Indians (not because they did not exist but because they had been rhetorically silenced) must be understood as the actuation of the Jeffersonian concept of unfolding – the recovery of original, continental boundaries. As surveyors of Utopia, the captains acted implicitly as its retrievers. This explained the scientific instruments, the diplomatic strategies with Missouri region tribes, the geopolitico-military imagery, the daily astronomical measurements, and the descriptions of variegated features of the western environment. In sum, this explained everything. Jefferson had summarised earlier that whole process with a wonderful sense of the urgency of recovery in a letter to William Dunbar: ‘The work we are now doing is, I trust, done for posterity, in such a way that they need not repeat it ... We shall delineate with correctness the great arteries of this great country: those who come after us will extend the ramifications as they become acquainted with them, and fill up the canvas we begin.’¹⁰⁴

It seems important to pause for a moment on this assertion. It summarised in broad metaphorical contours the long-term design behind the Expedition. In it, the

¹⁰⁴ Jefferson to William Dunbar, 25 May 1805, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 245; James Ronda, *Beyond Lewis and Clark: the army explores the West* (Tacoma, WA, 2003), p. 93; Peterson, *Jefferson and the new nation*, p. 765; Gary A. Wood, *After Lewis and Clark: the forces of change, 1806-1871* (Norman, 2006), p. 85; and Silvio A. Bedini, *Jefferson and Science* (Charlottesville, 2002), p. 67. On the correspondence between Jefferson and Dunbar, see Milford F. Allen, ‘Thomas Jefferson and the Louisiana-Arkansas frontier,’ in *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, xx (Spring, 1961), pp 39-64.

Corps of Discovery comes across as a collective, indeed a proto-national undertaking ('we are doing') carried for posterity and asserting a claim that later expeditions shall be able to build upon. Delineation, correctness, and the extension of 'ramifications' are all ideals that remind us of Jefferson's picture of an essential link between the two halves of the American continent east and west of the Mississippi. The phrase 'filling up the canvas' speaks for itself. If the canvas needs to be filled, it means that it is currently empty; yet the idea of filling – rather than, say, painting – probes deep into the conviction one ought to have of the naturalness of Jefferson's entire exploratory gesture. A 'filling up' equates to a recovery of volume. Lewis and Clark acted as agents of a doctrine that purported to return the American continent to its original *volume* by instituting U.S. republicanism all over it. By the same token, U.S. republicanism would become whole, too, ready to face the future with confidence both domestically and internationally.

Jefferson had used the 'filling up' metaphor in an earlier correspondence with Dunbar, which shows proof of his deliberateness: 'These several surveys [Lewis and Clark's, but also the projected journeys to the Red River of Freeman and Custis, Hunter and Dunbar, and even perhaps Zebulon Pike's own travels from 1806] will enable us to prepare a map of Louisiana, which in it's contour and main waters will be perfectly correct, & will give us a skeleton to be filled up with details hereafter.'¹⁰⁵ We find in Jefferson's words here a similar obsession with contours, and with rivers as natural borders ('main waters', a notion to which I return in later chapters).¹⁰⁶ Most importantly, we encounter once more the pivotal idea of vital recovery, here in the

¹⁰⁵ Jefferson to Dunbar, 13 Mar. 1804, in Andrew A. Lipscomb and Albert E. Bergh, *The writings of Thomas Jefferson* (20 vols, Washington, D.C., 1903-04), xi, 22. See also Bedini, *Statesman of science*, p. 356; Jackson, *Jefferson and the Rocky Mountains*, p. 223; and Merrill D. Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson: a reference biography* (New York, 1986), p. 377.

¹⁰⁶ Chapters 4 and 5, where I consider the depiction of rivers in texts and maps, respectively.

form of a metaphor with the image of the ‘skeleton’, which has the bones but lacks the organs and the skin tissue. How deliberate were Jefferson’s stylistic explorations? The question is a difficult one, but in any case such experiments with style revealed something profound about his relation to rhetoric, and by extension about the discourse of expansion to which he sought to give practical form in Upper Louisiana (and of which the Corps of Discovery was the offspring).

2. Drawing the West

To a greater degree than ever before, this quest for practical form involved the production of maps. Exhortation to cartographical activity pervades the lines of Jefferson’s instructions to Lewis, especially where the president insists that ‘Your observations are to be taken with great pains and accuracy, to be entered distinctly & intelligibly for others as well as yourself.’¹⁰⁷ Jefferson knew that maps were the stuff of all respectable scientific expeditions, including those earlier colonial trips up the Missouri River sponsored by Spain and on which he had documented himself so thoroughly. He had personally advised Lewis to inquire into James Mackay’s maps and to try to meet the explorer, which Lewis did some time before his departure from Camp Dubois.¹⁰⁸ But Jefferson’s hope was not for Lewis and Clark to produce mere copies of earlier maps. Despite his affirmations to the contrary, his injunctions towards

¹⁰⁷ Jefferson’s instructions to Lewis, 30 June 1803, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 62. For an instance of other material issues related to this particular passage, see Jefferson to Lewis, 30 Apr. 1803, in *ibid.*, i, 44-45. See also Jennifer New, *Drawing from life: the journal as art* (New York, 2006), p. 16; Martin Brückner, *The geographic revolution in early America: maps, literacy, and national identity* (Chapel Hill, 2006), p. 214; Bruce Greenfield, *Narrating discovery: the Romantic explorer in American literature, 1790-1855* (New York and Oxford, 1992), p. 79; and Kristie C. Wolferman, *The Osage in Missouri* (Columbia, MO, 1997), p. 52.

¹⁰⁸ Clark, 10 Jan. 1804, in Moulton, *Journals*, ii, 154-5; and Clark, 14 Sept. 1804, in *ibid.*, iii, 69-70. See also Danisi and Wood, ‘Lewis and Clark’s route map,’ pp 53-72; Witte, ‘In the footsteps of the Third Spanish Expedition,’ pp 90-91; Allen, *Passage through the garden*, p. 155; and Paul R. Cutright, *A history of the Lewis and Clark journals* (Norman, 1976), p. 167.

‘correctness’ did not equate to demands for more accurate mapping. How could he claim to measure it? From his readings he evidently knew that the likes of Mackay and Truteau, experienced traders based in St Louis on a permanent basis (outside of their own exploratory endeavours westward), were ten times more familiar with the Missouri region that Lewis and Clark could ever hope to be during their journey. More than accuracy, Jefferson aimed to supervise the drawing of the sheer U.S. *presence* in the trans-Mississippi West of his own time. His injunctions sought the literal inscription of the American republican idiom into trans-Mississippi western ground.¹⁰⁹

Historian of exploration William Goetzmann has made an astute observation about the relationship between the professionalisation of U.S. mapmaking and the promotion of a ‘continental consciousness’ in official discourse, but Jefferson’s own continental consciousness carried him even farther since he had to find ways of excluding colonial competitors from his envisioned North American picture. He confronted the need, indeed the obligation, to start ‘from scratch’. This obligation was embodied in Gallatin’s commissioning of a blank map of the Northwest prior to the Corps’ departure.¹¹⁰ All the ramifications of the expedition’s planning complemented each other, supplying the canvas for a U.S. method of visualising the ‘West’ ostensibly uninfluenced either by the cartography of French and Spanish traders in St Louis or by the cartography practiced by western tribes. This ‘idiosyncratic’ visualisation, and the degree to which it stayed faithful to Jefferson’s vision, materialised in the Corps’s (and especially Clark’s) cartographical activity.

¹⁰⁹ Chapter 5 deals with the aesthetics of this process of ‘inscription.’

¹¹⁰ William H. Goetzmann, *New lands, new men*, p. 149. According to Goetzmann, ‘The story of the mountain man’s hard-won and gradually accumulated knowledge thus becomes an integral part, not only of the emergence of a continental consciousness, but also of the nonelitist aspect of the way in which geography itself developed in the United States.’ I will expand on this observation in Chapters 4 and 5. See also Gallatin to Jefferson, 15 Mar. 1803, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 27-8.

Although he did not benefit directly from A.P.S. training like Lewis did, Clark turned out to be remarkably skilled at astronomical observation and mapmaking. From the panorama he had gathered using the numerous sketches and charts made throughout his travels, Clark composed in 1810 what has become known as his ‘master map’ of the American West, which was indeed perhaps the closest he ever got to responding in visual terms to Jefferson’s vision. The ‘master map’ is a watershed document in U.S. history, and is analysed in a later chapter.¹¹¹ Suffice it to say here that Clark (and Lewis) made wise use of the octant, sextant, artificial horizon, and timekeeper recommended prior to the trip by the likes of Ellicott and Patterson.

One instance deserves particular mention for it illustrates the geopolitical weight astronomical observations could have from the purely practical viewpoint of the crew’s physical progress along the Missouri River. On the return trip, Lewis reconnoitered the Marias River over a twelve-day period. He and his men had got very close to mixing up the Marias and the Missouri on their outbound journey.¹¹² Later in the year, when the Expedition was one month over, Lewis wrote a letter to an unknown correspondent where he recalled: ‘I had in conformity to my plan to undertake another enterprise which was to explore the River Maria completely ... The entrance of the River Maria I had previously ascertained to be 27° 25’ 17’’ N & from the rise of that River as well as the direction it first takes, there were good grounds to hope that it extended to Lat 49° 37’ N believing it of the highest national importance as It respects our Treaty of 1783 with Great Britain.’¹¹³ Of course, Lewis was referring to more than Great Britain as

¹¹¹ Chapter 5, section 2, part 2. For a long and detailed introductory discussion of the map, see Allen, *Image of the American Northwest*, pp 375-94. More analytical references are provided in Chapter 5.

¹¹² Lewis, 3 June 1805, in Moulton, *Journals*, iv, 245-50. The episode is well-known, and summarised in John L. Allen, ‘Lewis and Clark on the Upper Missouri: decision at the Marias,’ in Ronda, *Voyages of discovery*, pp 119-42.

¹¹³ Lewis to an unknown correspondent, 14 Oct. 1806, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 341. Donald Jackson suggests John Hay as Lewis’s most likely correspondent, with William Henry Harrison coming second. See M. R. Montgomery, *Jefferson*

the United States' former mother country and current commercial competitor in the Northwest. The statement he makes in this letter amounts to an assertion of boundaries. Jefferson must have found a way to inform Lewis about the Louisiana Purchase Treaty, which clearly stipulated that all land watered by the Missouri and its tributaries now belonged to the United States.¹¹⁴ Far from being neutral tools of disinterested science, the Corps's astronomical instruments wielded diplomatic and ideological import for the protection (in the form of scientific nurturing, so to speak) of Jefferson's cut-out Utopia. In the process, they helped to define further Utopia's image. Clark's 1810 'master map' encapsulates this idea.

In late 1806 Jefferson seized the occasion of the Corps's safe return to St Louis to express his satisfaction to Congress: 'In the course of their journey they acquired a knowledge of numerous tribes of Indians hitherto unknown; they ... are enabled to give with accuracy the geography of the line they pursued, fixing it in all its parts by observations of latitude & longitude. The desideratum therefore of the interior of our continent along this important channel of communication with the Pacific, is now obtained.'¹¹⁵ (Note the mention of 'our continent.')

A full decade later, he could still find time to complain about the absence of a scientific volume on the accomplishments of 'his' expedition, as he termed it in an impassioned letter to his scientific colleague José Corrèa da Serra. In this letter, the position of 'geographics' as *the* top priority of the Corps is actually recognised: 'I hope my anxieties and interference in his matter will be excused, when my agency in the enterprise is considered, and that the most important justification of it, still due to the public depends on these astronomical

and the gun-men: how the West was almost lost (New York, 2000), p. 227.

¹¹⁴ Johnstone, *Jefferson and the presidency*, pp 70-4.

¹¹⁵ Jefferson's annual message to Congress, 2 Dec. 1806, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 352. See Ambrose, *Undaunted courage*, p. 408; and Jenry Morsman, 'Securing America: Jefferson's fluid plans for the western perimeter,' in Seefeldt *et al.*, *Across the continent*, p. 76.

observations, as from them alone can be obtained the correct geography of the country, *which was the main object of the expedition.*¹¹⁶ The Sage's insistence that Lewis and Clark's astronomical publications were due to the wider public showed that as an intellectual and political enterprise the Expedition (and its legacy) concerned not just A.P.S. 'architects' or the more practical-minded officials of the federal executive and Congress, but the blooming national consciousness of every U.S. citizen.

In the grand scheme of things, Jefferson's annoyance of 1816 remains all relative. Corrèa da Serra, a member of the A.P.S. and a Portuguese citizen, might not have been able to comprehend fully the stakes of the Expedition and the national-scale importance Jefferson invested in the journey's transformation into an object-signifier with the publication of its scientific journals. Jefferson knew that if the Corps had had concrete goals at all, the achievement of these goals would only become clear over the course of the nineteenth century. When he wrote to Corrèa da Serra, Jefferson could not yet foresee Stephen Long, the Wilkes Expedition of 1838-42, and even less the Army Corps of Topographical Engineers. Yet in a sense, he remains the architect of all the exploring expeditions following in the wake of Lewis and Clark that carried on the process of delineation of the trans-Mississippi West with ever-growing accuracy.¹¹⁷

Physical science delineated concretely the boundaries of Utopia. If the selected boundaries were not natural features (what did 'natural' exactly mean anyway?) maps had the power, by the inherent visual authority they exuded, to make them look so.¹¹⁸

But *natural* science also played a decisive role in this larger enterprise of definition.

Quite literally, it put flesh on the 'skeleton' of the West by identifying and categorizing

¹¹⁶ Jefferson to José Corrèa da Serra, 20 July 1816, in Jackson, *Letters*, ii, 618. The emphases are mine. See also Richard B. Davis, *The Abbé Corrêa in America, 1812-1820* (Providence, RI, 1955), p. 206.

¹¹⁷ James P. Ronda, "'To acquire what knowledge you can': Thomas Jefferson as exploration patron and planner," in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, cl, no. 3 (Sept., 2006), pp 409-13.

¹¹⁸ I return to this idea in Chapter 5.

new plants, animals, minerals, and western American tribes under the rubric of ‘North American nature.’

Early nineteenth-century U.S. natural science meant natural history. Even a cursory reading of the Lewis and Clark journals reveals that the Expedition’s journal-keepers were skilled in it, even though Lewis, thanks to his A.P.S. training, comes across as the only trained naturalist. This status transpires in those of his journal entries that describe the western lands’ natural riches. Private Joseph Whitehouse knew comparatively little of the appropriate terminology, yet at the Three Forks of the Missouri he produced a roughly utopian description of the land and trees dotting the banks of the river: ‘the land extremely rich & fertile; and the bottoms large and well timbered, and to all appearance must be healthy, and may be called the Paradise of the Mesouri River.’¹¹⁹ Whitehouse’s use of the word ‘Paradise’ is important here, since it recalls the image of the fable. However, by the very nature of his proto-scientific description Whitehouse makes a plea for a specific form of paradise, one that is available and measurable. The Missouri River worked as one of its boundaries; the trees served as its markers; it may be even implicit that the Rocky Mountains, not so distant from the Three Forks in large-scale cartographical terms, served as other distant borders.¹²⁰ It is revealing that such intentional ‘utopian’ aggrandisements as the recourse to the paradisaical metaphor did not feature in Jefferson’s instructions to Lewis. From a purely logical viewpoint, they represented a trespassing of orders. But this would be ignoring the fact that Jefferson’s *Account of Louisiana*, published in 1803,

¹¹⁹ Whitehouse, 27 July 1805, in Moulton, *Journals*, xi, 244. Thus far, Whitehouse’s entries have barely received mention in the Lewis and Clark literature, hence my difficulty to provide appropriate references except my own.

¹²⁰ I discuss further the role of rivers and mountains as natural boundaries in Chapter 5. For a fascinating work on the subject, with which I engage in greater depth later, see John Seelye, *Beautiful machine: rivers and the republican plan, 1755-1825* (Oxford, 1991). As a literary critic, Seelye has tended to get overlooked by historians of the early United States. I hope that my study will do him justice, as he has influenced some of my analyses significantly.

shows precisely the same uneasy blend of scientific-looking depiction and wanderings into reveries and fable. (The *Account* is discussed at some length in a later chapter).¹²¹

In fact, the entirety of the crew's corpus of natural historical observations, from the most 'rustic' (Whitehouse and Ordway) to the most polished (Lewis), recall to various degrees Jefferson's style of nature writing. In Lewis's derivation of this style, the charm of simplicity is less apparent and the utopian idiom often more contained. Consider, nevertheless, the first description of the Rockies under his pen: 'I do not believe that the clouds which prevail at this season of the year reach the summits of those lofty mountains; and if they do the probability is that they deposit snow only for there has been no perceptible diminution of the snow which they contain since we first saw them. I have thought it probable that these mountains might have derived their appellation of shining Mountains, from their glittering appearance when the sun shines in certain directions on the snow which covers them.'¹²² The passage, and the use of the phrase 'shining Mountains' in particular, will remind a careful reader of Jefferson's *Notes of Virginia*.¹²³ The extent of Lewis's familiarity with the *Notes* has long been a matter of debate; but in moments like this, it burst out into the open. Lewis's own work in the Expedition journals might indeed be called the 'Notes on Louisiana', not in contrast to Jefferson's *Account*, but complementing it.¹²⁴ Lewis's

¹²¹ Jefferson, *An account of Louisiana: being an abstract of documents, in the offices of the department of state and of the treasury* (Philadelphia, 1803), especially pp 10-11. See Chapter 3, section 1, part 1.

¹²² Lewis, 4 July 1805, in Moulton, *Journals*, iv, 361. See Dayton Duncan and Ken Burns (eds), *Lewis and Clark: the journey of the Corps of Discovery* (New York, 1999), p. 106.

¹²³ 'Query IV: Mountains,' in Jefferson, *Notes on the state of Virginia*, ed. William Peden (2nd ed., Chapel Hill, 1982), pp 18-20. See also Leo Marx, *The machine in the garden: technology and the pastoral ideal in America* (2nd ed., Oxford, 2000), pp 116-44.

¹²⁴ The expression 'Notes on Louisiana', which I shall use again to define Jefferson's *Account*, is borrowed from John W. Jengo, 'Mineral productions of every kind,' in Cox, *Shortest and most convenient route*, p. 185. As Jengo says, 'it's likely that Lewis was familiar with both the concept and focus of the *Notes*, either from an extensive review of it or from many one-on-one discussions with its author. Perhaps both men envisioned that Lewis's publication of the expedition journals upon his return, essentially a "Notes on Louisiana", would have mirrored the sweeping, eclectic scope of the original.' However, Jengo neglects to make a parallel with Jefferson's *Account*.

natural historical entry is not exactly a politically neutral one. There will be more occasions in the course of this study to suggest that Jefferson's *Notes* were an attempt, through scientific analysis, to impose a republican mindset over not just the state of Virginia but the whole territory of the Republic, including the Old Northwest.¹²⁵

Jefferson often pointed out that he could not cover the topic of the state of Virginia on its own. The strategy of 'undifferentiation' of American nature worked through an acute differentiation of nature's constituent parts (divided into 'Queries') and through Jefferson's well-known opposition to Buffonian theory. This position further conveyed a sense of the environmental 'continentality' of North America, and pointed to the necessity of imposing a novel type of political ideology over it. This new type would integrate a scientific syntax, a neo-classical (that is, 'neo-republican') aesthetic, and aggressive territorial pretensions into the process of enlargement of U.S. republican institutions. Defending the vigorousness of North American fauna and flora (in 'Query VI,' for example) presupposed that *all* species of the continent had to be examined, including species thriving in undiscovered regions which were still awaiting actual description. This mirrored the same sense of Jeffersonian teleology that viewed the Pacific Ocean as the American Republic's promised western boundary.¹²⁶

The Pacific Ocean features in many of the captains' journal entries. Once again, Lewis stands out as the most skilful natural historian of the group. While Clark gazed 'with astonishment [at] the high waves dashing against the rocks & this immense ocean,' and Gass talked about 'the waves, like small mountains, rolling out in the ocean, and pretty bad in the sky'; while Ordway contemplated the 'high towers of

¹²⁵ Chapter 3, section 1, part 2. See also Chapter 5, section 3, part 1, on the geographical output of Jedidiah Morse.

¹²⁶ 'Query VI: Productions mineral, vegetable and animal,' in Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, pp 26-72. In subsequent chapters, I probe deeper into this three-sided aspect of the gradual Jeffersonian assertion of authority over western land: republican politics and institutions, scientific language, and neoclassical aesthetics.

rocks Standing out in the edge of the ocean’ and Whitehouse noted ‘the waves rolling, & the surf roaring very loud,’ Lewis offered a much cooler, accurate description: ‘The coast in the neighbourhood of Clarks Mountain is slipping off & falling into the Ocean in immense masses; fifty or a hundred Acres at a time give way and a great proportion in an instant precipitated into the Ocean. these hills and mountains are principally composed of a yellow clay; there slipping off or splitting assunder at this time is no doubt caused by the incessant rains which have fallen within the last two months.’¹²⁷ Given the adverse climatic circumstances, nobody was expecting a report of the precision of a Linnaeus or even a Pehr Kalm. In the context of this unknown western region, uncovered day after day in its further recesses, Lewis’s words showed nonetheless a descriptive authority not equalled for a long time in trans-Rockies exploration. As such, these vivid words and phrases tacitly paved the way for the more exhaustive depictions of later Army Corps reconnaissances of the Pacific coast.¹²⁸

Early natural historical and physical historical sketches of the Pacific Ocean by U.S. agents painted it as a natural boundary, whose properties could be assessed by Jeffersonian travellers. Even in the more naïve dialects of the other journal-keepers, expressions such as Ordway’s ‘high towers of rock’ pointed to a familiar aesthetic with distinct eighteenth-century European origins, which I propose to term ‘neoclassical’.¹²⁹ Without going into too much detail here, we can still perceive that

¹²⁷ Clark, 18 Nov. 1805, in Moulton, *Journals*, vi, 67; Gass, 16 Nov. 1805, in *ibid.*, x, 171; Ordway, 19 Nov. 1805, in *ibid.*, ix, 255; Whitehouse, 16 Nov. 1805, in *ibid.*, xi, 394; Lewis, 10 Jan. 1806, in *ibid.*, vi, 194; Clark, 7 Nov. 1805, in *ibid.*, vi, 33; and Clark, 8 Jan. 1806, in *ibid.*, vi, 182. See also McGregor, *Journals of Patrick Gass*, p. 150; Jengo, ‘Mineral productions of every kind,’ p. 167; Charles J. McMillan, *Eminent islanders: Prince Edward Island from French colony to the cradle of confederation* (Bloomington, IN, 2009), p. 16; and Peter Neill, *American sea writing: a literary anthology* (New York, 2000), p. 50.

¹²⁸ Ronda, “‘To acquire what knowlege you can,’” pp 409-13; and idem, *Astoria and empire* (Lincoln, 1990), especially p. 133, where botanists John Bradbury and Thomas Nuttall (both indirectly sponsored by Jefferson and the A.P.S.) are discussed in the context of Wilson Price Hunt’s trek across the trans-Mississippi West to join Fort Astoria in 1811.

¹²⁹ I discuss the U.S. (and more specifically Jeffersonian) adaptation of the neoclassical aesthetic in Chapter 5, *passim*. Chapter 4, section 2, considers the literary side of the question.

ascribing to Pacific Ocean cliffs the appearance of ‘high towers’ showed an attempt to render the boundary-environment epistemologically compatible with a Euro-American pattern of nature study. Such terminology was often used when the exploring observer, intent on making a foreign landscape comprehensible to himself and his future readers, had too little skill to resort to the powerful neutralising effect of proto-professional natural historical observations. In dealing with the plant life of the Snake River region, Lewis’s appropriative eye showed the full measure of this neutralising effect:

... at this place I met with a plant the root of which the shoshones eat. it is a small knob root a good deal in flavor an consistency like the Jerusalem Artichoke. it has two small oval smooth leaves placed opposite on either side of the peduncle just above the root. the scape is only about 4 inches long is round and smooth. the roots of this plant formed one of those collections of roots which Drewyer took from the Shoshones last summer on the head of Jefferson’s river.¹³⁰

Lewis had effectively recorded the first description of the western spring beauty (*Claytonia lanceolata* Pursh). More than any other type of scientific activity, botanical description epitomised the process of so-called ‘civilised renaming’: to grant an alien environment a set of new, A.P.S.-friendly names. The universal language of natural history which Linnaeus had defended so ferociously helped normalise the renaming.

Renaming involved a set of textual sub-strategies (first developed by European imperial travellers to the Pacific Ocean, like Cook, Lapérouse, and Bougainville) which I consider in greater detail in Chapter 4.¹³¹ The marvellous duplicity of Lewis’s botanical entries came from the fact that his scientific language made every one of his

¹³⁰ Lewis, 25 June 1806, in Moulton, *Journals*, viii, 50-2. Moulton provides a helpful accompanying note. See also Abraham L. A. Himmelwright, *In the heart of the Bitter-root Mountains* (New York, 1894), p. 254; and Phillips, *Plants of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, p. 168.

¹³¹ Chapter 4, section 2. I lack space to tackle these textual strategies here.

assertions look grounded in experience, even if the so-called ‘Jefferson’s River’ (present-day Jefferson River, Montana) had only gotten its name at the Three Forks on 28 July 1805: ‘In pursuance of this resolution we called the S. W. fork, that which we meant to ascend, Jefferson’s River in honor of (that illustrious personage) Thomas Jefferson.’¹³² In passages like this, the practical consequences of Lewis’s textual choices become conspicuous. By giving the river the name ‘Jefferson’s River’, Lewis was attempting to tie East and West Coasts together, the Rockies to Washington, promoting a sense of symbiosis reinforced by the quality of rivers as natural lines of connection.¹³³ Jefferson’s figure as the architect of the Expedition constantly hovered over the Corps’s physical and intellectual wanderings, and over the western landscape.

This leads to a last important point, and to this chapter’s conclusion. The men of the Corps’s semi-explicit recourse to an Enlightenment system of values and practices contributed to sustain their intellectual ties with Philadelphia. But in practical terms, they went further than that. At specific intervals throughout their outbound and inbound trips, they kept Jefferson updated about their activities by sending back extracts from their journals, sketches, maps, Indian artifacts, and natural history specimens (plants and animals, sometimes alive). On 2 April 1805 Clark recorded the day’s transfers: ‘we are writeing and prepareing dispatches all day — I conclude to Send my journal to the President of the United States in its original State for his own

¹³² Lewis, 27 July 1805, in Moulton, *Journals*, vii, 7. See also Woodger and Toropov, *Encyclopedia of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, p. 188; Eide, *American odyssey*, p. 87; Ambrose, *Undaunted courage*, p. 259; Sarah F. Bates, David H. Getches, Lawrence J. MacDonnell, and Charles F. Wilkinson, *Searching out the headwaters: change and rediscovery in western water policy* (Washington, D.C., 1993), p. 28; and Raymond D. Burroughs and Robert C. Carriker, *The natural history of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (East Lansing, MI, 1995), p. 18.

¹³³ Seelye, *Beautiful machine*; Donald Worster, *Rivers of empire: water, aridity, and the growth of the American West* (Oxford, 1992); Mark Fiege, *Irrigated Eden: the making of an agricultural landscape in the American West* (Seattle, 1999); and Lawrence Buell, *The environmental imagination: Thoreau, nature writing, and the formation of American culture* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 1995), p. 144.

perusal, until I call for it or Some friend if I should not return, an[d] this journal is from the 13th of May 1804 until the 3rd of April 1805.’¹³⁴ Even more revealingly, perhaps, given Clark’s role as the crew’s cartographer and the reifying power of maps processed in eastern centres like the A.P.S.: ‘I commenced Copping my [Missouri route] map of the river to Send to the Presdt. of U S. by the Return of a pty of Soldiers, from Illinois.’¹³⁵ These transmissions of information under variegated forms made practical sense, for who could safely predict that the Corps would return at all? There was more involved in this practice than the mere drive (on Jefferson’s part) to ‘see the West happen,’ although this mattered, too. It enabled the president to enrich his republican discourse at home by referring to the prospective swaths of western virgin land lying open to federal integration. Here ‘virgin’ must be taken as meaning *blank* – demographically, culturally, and of course politically. In Jefferson’s conceptual articulations, nature, science, politics, and even art blended together into a discourse. The ideal of the enlightened polymath contained within it the kernel of lasting and credible political arguments, provided that these could be properly harnessed.¹³⁶

The notion of a near-unbreakable link between explorers and the institutions that sponsored them dates back to an era of discovery that preceded Lewis and Clark by three decades, either a considerable or a minor gap depending on one’s perspective.

We first find the relationship of imperial agent to imperial centre as a blatant feature of

¹³⁴ Clark, 2 Apr. 1805, in Moulton, *Journals*, iii, 328; and Clark, 3 Apr. 1805, in *ibid.*, iii, 329: ‘we are all day engaged packing up Sundery articles to be Sent to the President of the U. S.’ See also Lee, *Mosquitoes, gnats, and prickly pears*, p. 113; Rogers, *Lewis and Clark in Missouri*, p. 66; Moulton, ‘Specialized journals of Lewis and Clark,’ pp. 194-201; and Gunther Barth, ‘Timeless journals: reading Lewis and Clark with Nicholas Biddle’s help,’ in *Pacific Historical Review*, lx, no. 4 (Nov., 1994), pp 499-519.

¹³⁵ Clark, 23 July 1804, in Moulton, *Journals*, ii, 415-17. In an accompanying note, Moulton adds that ‘There are no extant Clark route maps of the Missouri to Camp White Catfish, except for a few sketch maps in the Field Notes ... It seems likely that there were twelve maps of the river that are now lost.’

¹³⁶ Marie-Jeanne Rossignol, ‘La Louisiane en 1803: terre d’expansion, terre d’exploration, ou comment les sciences naturelles et la diplomatie se mêlent,’ in *Revue Française d’Etudes Américaines*, xvi, nos 48-49 (1991), pp 125-35; and William A. Koelsh, ‘Thomas Jefferson, American geographers, and the uses of geography,’ in *Geographical Review*, xcvi, no. 2 (Apr., 2008), pp 260-79.

James Cook's three circumnavigations (1768 to 1780).¹³⁷ In France and Spain, too, this relationship became commonplace before Jefferson even started to think about the United States as a continental unit (indeed, probably before he even thought of the possibility of a United States of America.) Yet Jefferson gradually became aware of these imperial oceanic undertakings. I show in subsequent chapters that it was only after grasping their ideological and geopolitical weight (with the Pacific Northwest as a territorial target, as the Nootka Sound crisis soon exemplified) that Jefferson decided to lay the groundwork for an idiosyncratically U.S. exploratory equivalent.¹³⁸ His efforts eventually bore fruit. Lewis and Clark proved it. But this means that the relationship between 'centre' and 'periphery', between eastern architects and their western agents, becomes an important aspect to consider for a historical perspective on early U.S. expansionism. Only the comparative method seems analytically adequate since Jefferson's exploratory model had been supplied by European empires prior to American independence.

Jefferson communicated most of the items he received from the Corps either to the A.P.S. or to Peale's Museum. These two organs of Philadelphian intellectual society exhibited perfect complementarity, inasmuch as they each corresponded to a branch of applied science: physical science (A.P.S.) and natural history (museum). I propose to call them 'centres of calculation', borrowing from Bruno Latour's actor-network model.¹³⁹ These two 'centres' supervised Lewis and Clark, and systematised their material into collections and classificatory systems for the better understanding

¹³⁷ This is the subject of Chapter 4, section 2, part 2. On Lewis's and Clark's references to Cook (and Vancouver) in several of their journal entries, see n44 above. See also Ronda, *Finding the West*, p. 23; Allen, *Image of the American Northwest*, p. 76; Carr, *Into the unknown*, p. 5; and Wood, *Prologue to Lewis and Clark*, p. 4.

¹³⁸ On the Nootka Sound crisis, see Jackson, *Jefferson and the Rocky Mountains*, p. 66; Kaplan, *Entangling alliances with none*, p. 57; Gordon S. Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, p. 366; Robert H. Ruby and John A. Brown, *The Chinook Indians: traders of the Lower Columbia River* (Norman, 1976), p. 61; and James R. Gibson, *Otter skins, Boston ships, and China goods: the maritime fur trade of the Northwest Coast, 1785-1841* (Montreal, 1999), p. 164.

¹³⁹ Latour, *Science in action*, pp 215-57.

of an audience both lay and scholarly. Peale's public represented, of course, the more popular side of the picture, but natural history partook of his approach too. Both the A.P.S. and the museum strove to assert their place within the transnational 'Republic of Science', conform to its rituals, and thereby participate in a globalised dichotomy in exploratory scientific discourse between the 'enlightened' and 'unenlightened' realms. It was a discursive dichotomy whose practical implications justified European colonial expansion until the twentieth century.¹⁴⁰ The subject is vast, but it suggests a useful way to envisage Lewis and Clark as part and parcel of an international mechanism. It is probably a necessary alternative interpretation to consider, given that the 'Republic of Science' spoke a language from which Jefferson's rhetoric could borrow without acknowledgment, for fear of spotlighting its distinct Old World origins. The next three chapters are grounded in various historical, geographical and epistemological contexts. They scrutinise that language, and the extent of Jeffersonian borrowings from it.

¹⁴⁰ As I hope the next chapters will make clear, this dichotomy was bound to lose its momentum once the sciences became organised into stricter disciplines, as it meant the end of 'science' as a unitary discursive entity. But the implications of this position go beyond the scope of my present research. See Foucault, *The order of things*, pp 375-420.

3. ‘Centers of calculation’: Jefferson’s scientific idiom in transnational perspective

Knowledge is of little use, when confined to mere speculation: But when speculative truths are reduced to practice, when theories, grounded upon experiments, are applied to the common purposes of life; and when, by these, agriculture is improved, trade enlarged, the arts of living more easy and comfortable, and, of course, the increase and happiness of mankind promoted; knowledge then becomes really useful. That this Society, therefore, may, in some degree, answer the ends of its institution, the members propose to confine their disquisitions, principally, to such objects as tend to the improvement of their country, and advancement of its interest and prosperity.¹

My focus on the American Philosophical Society as a starting point for a broadening of this study’s context, with the inclusion of European intellectual influences on the discourse of Jeffersonian expansionism, leads to an exploration of other significant A.P.S. members. The role played by such men as Benjamin Rush, Caspar Wistar, and Benjamin Smith Barton on the planning of the Lewis and Clark Expedition has already been noted.² But the A.P.S. (founded by Franklin in 1743, on the model of its British sibling, the Royal Society of London) also included a large number of foreign correspondents by 1800.³ Each of these correspondents exerted various degrees of influence on the Society’s affairs. Whether their impact was concrete or symbolic, most them established contact with Jefferson, and brought their own conceptual biases to bear

¹ ‘Preface,’ in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, i (Jan 1769 - Jan. 1771), p. i.

² Chapter 2, pp 13-16.

³ Gilbert Chinard, ‘The American Philosophical Society and the world of science (1768-1800),’ in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, lxxxvii, no. 1 (July, 1943), pp 1-11.

on his vision of a western ‘wilderness’ from the early 1780s to the end of the Virginian’s political career.

By the time Jefferson became president of the A.P.S. in 1797, committee members had already been busy strengthening the Society’s ties to the so-called ‘Republic of Science’, this informal, transnational association of scientific groups and academies charged with the explicit goal of promoting global scientific progress, even in time of war between two or more countries with members in the ‘Republic’.⁴ Jefferson summarised this goal of transnational peace in an 1809 letter to John Hollins: ‘These societies are always in peace, however their nations may be at war. Like the republic of letters, they form a great fraternity spreading over the whole earth, and their correspondence is never interrupted by any civilized nation.’⁵ Such an expression of purpose provides a suitable starting point for this chapter’s central argument: far from embodying an exclusively ‘New World’ phenomenon, the ideology of Jeffersonian expansionism had inherited its doctrinal core from the central tenets of European Enlightenment. These tenets were: order, reason, and improvement, suitably encompassed by the Eurocentric notion of ‘civilisation’. At the twilight of his life, Jefferson maintained that ‘Science is more important in a republic than in any other government. And in an infant country like ours we must depend for improvement on the science of other countries, longer established, possessing better means, and more advanced than we are. To prohibit us from the benefit of foreign light, is to consign us to

⁴ See Darren M. Staloff, ‘The learned class of the eighteenth century,’ in *William and Mary Quarterly*, lviii, no. 2 (Apr., 2001), pp 463-72; and Lorraine Datson, ‘The ideal and reality of the Republic of Letters in the Enlightenment,’ in *Science in Context*, iv, no. 2 (1991), pp 367-86.

⁵ Jefferson to John Hollins, 19 Feb. 1809, in Edwin M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson’s Garden Book* (2nd ed., Chapel Hill, 1999), pp 407-08. See also Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson and the new nation*, p. 590; Bedini, *Jefferson and science*, p. 41; and Hans L. Eicholz, *Harmonizing sentiments: the Declaration of Independence and the Jeffersonian idea of self-government* (New York, 2001), p. 90.

long darkness.’⁶ By this statement, Jefferson fostered the idea of the necessary (if preliminary) scientific tutelage of the United States by Western European countries. At that time, none of the latter countries was a republic. Science clearly transcended political boundaries.

The subsuming of the struggle ‘American versus Indian’ within that of ‘self-professed enlightened versus unenlightened’, a familiar trope, indicates that Jeffersonian expansionist doctrine was perhaps the most articulate starting point of this trope in U.S history and policy. To adopt this broader perspective makes it easier to understand the utopian texture of Jefferson’s intellectual relationship with Louisianan territory. In the ideal of abstraction (and Jefferson *did* conceive the trans-Mississippi West as a potentially ideal space, at least insofar as it promised the actualisation of his ‘Empire of Liberty’) Utopia is the anti-wilderness, its polar opposite in definition.⁷ Utopia has boundaries, and presents an ordered environment which requires virtue and industriousness of its inhabitants in order to thrive. If these conditions were respected, then theoretically any western ‘utopian space’ could apply for integration as U.S. territory with good prospects of successful political incorporation, since all the defined historico-geographical features of that space would allow for smooth translation into a Euro-American discourse of ‘enlightened’ values. The expansive republic of independent yeomen-farmers idealised by Jefferson as the future of his ‘West’ qualified, in that sense, as a utopian formulation.⁸

However, my purpose here is not to approach the idea of an early U.S. notion of Utopia in purely symbolic terms. Rather, I examine how this notion became politicised as a discursive instrument for the spread of Euro-American ‘enlightened’ values over

⁶ Jefferson to unknown correspondent, 28 Sept. 1821, in Washington, *Writings of Jefferson*, vii, 221. See also Bedini, *Jefferson and science*, p. 106.

⁷ Burrell & Dale, ‘Utopiary: utopias, gardens and organization,’ in Parker, *Utopia and organization*, pp 108-09.

⁸ See also Richard Grove, ‘Colonial conservation, ecological hegemony and popular resistance: toward and global synthesis,’ in John M. Mackenzie (ed.), *Imperialism and the natural world* (Manchester, 1990), pp 17-22.

the seemingly endless (yet crucially *bounded*) land of the ‘unenlightened’. Inevitably, this intellectual process demanded that the trans-Mississippi West be made physically (prior to politically and administratively) suitable for U.S. integration. To this purpose, the region needed the reconnoitring of explorers, who, like Lewis and Clark, were ultimately agents of the federal state. Yet a question arises: how would the two captains have fared without the preparation and supervision of the A.P.S.? To suggest a parallel with the European sponsoring of similar expeditions, what would have been the fate of early British exploration in Australia without the thorough involvement of the Royal Society, and its president Joseph Banks, in their successive efforts to give Australia proper politico-geographical ‘contours’ before it could become a full-fledged colony? In both cases, science and politics were engaged in a dialectical relationship. The move from exploration to expansion only reinforced this sense of dialectic.⁹

Sociologist of science Bruno Latour has developed the so-called model of ‘centers of calculation,’ intellectual hubs implanted at the administrative center of imperial states dedicated to the processing and analysis of data on ‘exotic’ environments (including artefacts from these environments’ native populations) with the ultimate, unnamed purpose of placing the empire’s exploring agents in a position of strength for subsequent expeditions to those same locations.¹⁰ Such ‘centers’ (like Banks’s Soho Square,¹¹ the Parisian Jardin du Roi, and later the Muséum d’Histoire Naturelle)¹² were intricate organs of the ideological supervision of imperial domination. They were largely informed by scientific collection, analysis and processing. In this chapter, I suggest that

⁹ Alan Frost, ‘The planting of New South Wales: Sir Joseph Banks and the creation of an antipodean Europe,’ in R.E.R. Banks (ed.), *Sir Joseph Banks: a global perspective* (London, 1994), pp 133-45.

¹⁰ Latour, *Science in action*, pp 215-57.

¹¹ David P. Miller, ‘Joseph Banks, empire, and “centers of calculation” in late Hanoverian London,’ in idem and Peter H. Reill (eds), *Visions of empire: voyages, botany, and representations of nature* (New York, 1996), pp 22-33.

¹² Emma C. Spary, *Utopia’s garden: French natural history from Old Regime to revolution* (Chicago and London, 2000), p. 51.

late eighteenth-century Philadelphia became home to a ‘center of calculation’ network first with the establishment (and progressive blossoming) of the A.P.S.¹³

The Lewis and Clark Expedition first comes to mind as the archetypal U.S. voyage of exploration from which natural historical collections, observations and drawings were expected to be made and then sent back to Philadelphia in written and visual form. This chapter scrutinises the Euro-American intellectual and political developments that made this type of undertaking possible in the post-revolutionary United States. Proceeding on a loosely chronological basis, the intellectual circumstances in which the driving motive of the A.P.S. came to reflect a proto-systematic framework of study already noticeable since the 1760s in London and Paris are explored. The discussion begins with an examination of the Jeffersonian ‘architectural’ delineation of the trans-Mississippi western ‘wilderness,’ largely premised on Jefferson’s articulation of a reified utopian space and its inhabitants. The theoretical sources for this process of delineation were contained in the quintessentially rationalist works of Carolus Linnaeus, the Comte de Buffon, and the ‘great federator’ Benjamin Franklin. In their works, these three contemporaries of Jefferson contributed to the systematisation of natural history as a discipline, and by extension of exploratory science as a state-supervised activity, providing the framework for Jeffersonian

¹³ The argument, which properly begins here, will be articulated in the two next chapters as well, albeit with different focuses. While this chapter concentrates on earlier and contemporaneous European influences to the discourse (as theorised in Philadelphia and Washington and then applied in the trans-Mississippi West) of Jeffersonian expansion, Chapter 4 will centre on various explorers at the periphery of Britain and France’s imperial domains, in a comparative perspective with Lewis and Clark. Chapter 5 will consist of an analysis of the sending back of scientific data (including visual data like maps and natural historical drawings) to their relevant ‘centers of calculation’ in Paris, London or Philadelphia. The time of ‘full blossom’ for the A.P.S. may be considered to have been the year 1797, with Jefferson’s election to its presidency. See John C. Greene, ‘Science and the public in the age of Jefferson,’ in *Isis*, xlix, no. 1 (Mar., 1958), pp 13-25.

westward planning through their insistence on criteria of observation, measurement, collection, comparison, and organisation of scientific data.¹⁴

Historian James Ronda has made the following observation about Lewis and Clark: ‘We need to focus our attention on [Joseph] Banks.’¹⁵ The last section of the chapter sketches out a comparison between Jefferson and the great eighteenth-century British patron of science. Banks presided over the Royal Society at the same time that Jefferson began to shape the A.P.S.-supported exploration of the trans-Mississippi West. The two men were forerunners of what may be termed ‘enlightened expansionism’, a doctrine with practical applications grounded in the minutiae of eighteenth-century scientific exploration which emerged first at a theoretical level in the writings of Linnaeus and the Comte de Buffon. It reached its full extent with the South American travels of another of Jefferson’s lifelong correspondents, the German polymath Alexander von Humboldt.

A. Jefferson’s ‘architectural’ delineation of the trans-Mississippi West

1. Articulating the West as utopian space

Jefferson’s scientific articulation of geographical space as ‘utopian’ can be considered to have first formally taken shape in the *Notes on Virginia* (1782).¹⁶ The main topic of the book is the author’s native state, but from the first paragraph a critical reader will recognise Jefferson’s peculiar insistence on the linked notions of boundary and cartography as the prime definers of American (pre-United States) space on the

¹⁴ Clive Bush, *Dreams of reason: American consciousness and cultural achievements from Independence to the Civil War* (London, 1977), pp 197-203.

¹⁵ Ronda, *Finding the West*, p. 23.

¹⁶ On Jefferson’s proto-positivistic insistence on the ‘laws of nature’ as scientific laws in the *Notes of Virginia*, see I. Bernard Cohen, *Science and the Founding Fathers: science in the political thought of Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, and Madison* (New York, 1995), p. 115; and idem, *Jefferson and the sciences*, p. 323, n10.

continent. At that time, the American Revolution had not yet officially ended in victory for the colonists. Republicanism in the idiosyncratically American brand wanted by Jefferson could only be envisaged and, indeed, geographically delimited. In ‘Query I: Boundaries,’ Jefferson thus states the following facts:

Virginia is bounded on the East by the Atlantic; on the North by a line of latitude, crossing the Eastern shore through Watkins’s Point, being about 37° 57’ North latitude; from thence by a straight line to Cinquac, near the mouth of Patowmac; thence by the Patowmac, which is common to Virginia and Maryland, to the first fountain of its Northern branch; thence by a meridian line, passing through that fountain till it intersects a line running East and West, in latitude 39° 43’ 42.4’’, which divides Maryland from Pennsylvania . . . thence by that line, a continuation of it westwardly to the completion of 5 degrees of longitude from the Eastern boundary of Pennsylvania, in the same latitude, and thence by a meridian line to the Ohio: on the West by the Ohio and Mississippi, to latitude 36° 30’ North; and on the South by the line of latitude last mentioned.¹⁷

Jefferson treated Virginia’s boundaries with excruciating precision, by an amalgamation of what may be called ‘absolute’ and ‘particular’ geographical features: particular in the East and West (Atlantic Ocean and Mississippi River), absolute in the South (line of latitude), and a combination of both in the North (line of latitude, meridian, and particular natural features like the Potomac River). The extract reads like a written map. Once defined by using the proper cartographical terminology (note Jefferson’s consistent use of astronomical observations), Virginia *as a landscape* could be pre-administratively envisaged as national territory. Simultaneously, the taming power of scientific delineation suppressed Virginia’s parallel potential ‘as wilderness.’¹⁸

¹⁷ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p. 80. See Roy, *Surveying the interior*, p. 14; and Rick Rodriguez, ‘Rethinking Manifest Destiny and the cultures of early U.S. empire’ (Ph.D. thesis, Loyola University, Chicago, 2008), p. 30.

¹⁸ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p. 81. Jefferson even stated the obvious: ‘An inspection of a map of Virginia, will give a

In 'Query II, Rivers', Jefferson continued in the same theoretical vein: 'The country watered by the Missisipi and its Eastern branches, constitutes five-eighths of the United States, two of which five-eighths are occupied by the Ohio and its waters; the residuary streams which run into the Gulf of Mexico, the Atlantic, and the St Laurence, water the remaining three-eighths.'¹⁹ The passage showcases Jefferson's view of rivers as the ideal type of boundary, precisely because rivers looked so naturally suitable for the function.²⁰ Putting the emphasis on the naturalness of U.S. borders helped reinforce the legitimacy of an American republican enterprise on the continent that remained largely political. It was accompanied by the growth of an early national vocabulary, in reaction to the territorial threat posed by the colonial oppressor, Great Britain.²¹

Three years after the publication of *Notes on Virginia*, Congress produced the Land Ordinance of 1785. This Ordinance adopted the framework of addition to the Union of Old Northwest territories-turned-into-states defined by the Ordinance of 1784 a year earlier.²² Jefferson had chaired this former committee. Logically, his influence on the drafting of the 1785 Ordinance was immense.²³ Because the now-baptised Northwest Territory remained a much more opaque geographical entity than Virginia in the 1780s, the delineation of its extent relied more heavily on abstract calculations. An excerpt from the official report of the 1785 committee illustrates the Jeffersonian texture of the proposals: 'The Surveyors, as they are respectively qualified, shall proceed to divide the said territory into townships of six miles square, by lines running due north and south, and others crossing these at right angles, as near as may be, unless where the

better idea of the geography of its rivers than any description in writing.'

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 90. See Jennifer R. Greeson, *Our South: geographic fantasy and the rise of national literature* (Cambridge, MA, 2010), p. 52.

²⁰ Ronda, *Finding the West*, pp 1-13; and Frank E. Smith, *Conservation in the United States: land and water, 1492-1900* (New York, 1971), p. 27.

²¹ Miller, *Jefferson & nature*, p. 3.

²² 'Plan for government of the Western Territory,' 3 Feb. to 23 Apr. 1784, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, vi, 582-616.

²³ Miller, *Jefferson & nature*, pp 225-7.

boundaries of the late Indian purchases may render the same impracticable.²⁴ Highly technical though it may seem, this sentence would frame the federal administrative organisation of western territories from 1785 onwards.²⁵ It provided a ‘skeleton’ for apprehending the continental West, as Jefferson might have said. The 1785 Ordinance’s craving for a rational terminology is striking, especially when put in contrast with the topographical reality of the Northwest Territory. It sought to impose ‘townships of six miles square,’ ‘lines running de north and south,’ and ‘right angles’ on a vast expanse of land that certainly could not harmoniously absorb the dogmatism of those measures. But these technical details ultimately mattered less than the doctrine of which they were the by-products: the enforcement of a rational vocabulary over a circumscribed ‘wild.’

Nearly twenty years passed between the various Northwest Ordinances and the Louisiana Purchase. In this period, Jefferson became involved in several short-lived schemes for the exploration of the trans-Mississippi West.²⁶ He extended the breadth of his contacts to include politicians and intellectuals interested not only in the political maturing of the American Republic but also in the Republic’s territorial organisation and development. In September 1790 Delaware Justice Thomas Rodney wrote Jefferson: ‘The Revolution of America, by recognising those rights which every Man is Entitled to by the laws of God and Nature, Seems to have broken off all those devious Tramels of Ignorance, prejudice and Superstition which have long depressed the Human Mind. Every door is now Open to the Sons of genius and Science to enquire after Truth. Hence we may expect the darkning clouds of error will vanish fast before the light of reason ...

²⁴ Worthington C. Ford (ed.), *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789* (34 vols, Washington, D.C., 1904-37), xxviii, 375-6; and Jack R. Pole (ed.), *The Revolution in America, 1754-1788: documents and commentaries* (Stanford, 1970), p. 378.

²⁵ Note the similarities in phrasing with the 1787 Northwest Ordinance: ‘An act to provide for the government of the territory northwest of the river Ohio,’ 7 Aug. 1789, in Salmon P. Chase (ed.), *The statutes of Ohio and of the Northwestern territory, adopted or enacted from 1788 to 1833 inclusive, together with the Ordinance of 1787, the constitutions of Ohio and the United States, and various public instruments and acts of Congress* (3 vols, Cincinnati, 1833-5), i, 70.

²⁶ See Chapter 1, *passim*.

when the Truth will enlighten the whole world.’²⁷ This tendency to associate the event of the Revolution with the expansive power of scientific progress recurs throughout Jefferson’s correspondence. Dupont de Nemours, whom Jefferson had befriended in Paris while minister to France, declared with confidence that U.S. citizens ‘regard themselves, themselves and their posterity, as collateral heirs to all the magnificent portion of land which God has created from the Cumberland and Ohio to the Pacific Ocean.’²⁸

In 1801 Jefferson continued in this tone when he explained to the English physicist and theologian Joseph Priestley, who would soon move to Philadelphia: ‘For this whole chapter in the history of man is new. The great extent of our Republic is new. Its sparse habitation is new... But the most pleasing novelty is, it’s so quickly subsiding over such an extent of surface to it’s true level again. The order & good sense displayed in this recovery from delusion, and in the momentous crisis which lately arose, really bespeak a strength of character in our nation which augurs well for the duration of our Republic.’²⁹ An adequate reflection of Rodney’s and Nemours’s rhetorics, Jefferson’s line of reasoning here integrates the challenge of homogenisation of the North American continent according to the Enlightenment tenets of ‘order & good sense.’ In an earlier letter to Harvard academic Joseph Willard, Jefferson had formulated high hopes about this potential homogenising strength of (Euro-)American science: ‘What a feild have we at our doors to signalize ourselves in! The botany of America is far from being

²⁷ Thomas Rodney to Jefferson, September 1790, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xvii, 548. See also Henry F. May, *The Revolution in America* (Oxford, 1978), p. 164.

²⁸ Dupont de Nemours to Jefferson, 17 Dec. 1801, in Dumas Malone (ed.), *Correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours, 1798-1817* (Boston and New York, 1930), p. 31. See Ward Churchill, *Struggle for the land: Native North American resistance to genocide, ecocide and colonization* (San Francisco, 2002), p. 93.

²⁹ Jefferson to Joseph Priestley, 21 Mar. 1801, in Joyce O. Appleby and Terence Ball (eds), *Jefferson: political writings* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 572. The emphases are mine. See also Adrienne Koch, *The American Enlightenment: the shaping of the American experiment and a free society* (New York, 1965), p. 342; Thomas M. Allen, *A republic in time: temporality and social imagination in nineteenth-century America* (Chapel Hill, 2008), p. 38; Luigi M. Bassani, *Liberty, state and union: the political theory of Thomas Jefferson* (Macon, GA, 2010), p. 17; and Morton J. Frisch and Richard G. Stevens (eds), *American political thought: the philosophic dimension of American statesmanship* (3rd ed., New Brunswick, NJ, 2011), pp 72-3.

exhausted: it's Mineralogy is untouched, and it's Natural history or Zoology totally mistaken and misrepresented ... It is for such institutions as that over which you preside so worthily, Sir, to do justice to our country, it's productions, and it's genius.'³⁰

Jefferson's little-known *Account of Louisiana* (1803) is an invaluable document when examined from this perspective of an envisaged political and geographical homogenisation of trans-Mississippi western territory by the federal state. It was drafted and published in the boiling period between the confirmation of the Purchase as a land transaction and the legal validation of the Louisiana Purchase Treaty by Congress. In the book, what Jefferson conceives as 'wilderness' is consistently suppressed by recourse to a combination of scientific (or scientific-looking) assertions and utopian wanderings bordering on the mythical. Typical instances of this 'utopian idiom' abound in the text:

Some of the heights exhibit a scene truly picturesque. They rise to a height of at least 300 feet, faced with perpendicular lime and free-stone, carved into various shapes and figures by the hand of nature, and afford the appearance of a multitude of antique towers. From the tops of these elevations, the land gradually slopes back from the river, without gravel or rock, and is covered with valuable timber. It may be said with truth that for fertility of soil, no part of the world exceeds the borders of Mississippi; the land yields an abundance of all the necessaries of life, and almost spontaneously...³¹

³⁰ Jefferson to Joseph Willard, 24 Mar. 1789, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xiv, 699. Note that Jefferson was led to this vocal celebration by a previous remark on the circumnavigation of Lapérouse and its potential results: 'The return of la Peyrouse (whenever that shall happen) will probably add to our knowlege in Geography, botany and natural history.' The Lapérouse expedition vanished off the Vanuatu archipelago in the South Pacific; but the sheer fact that Jefferson referred to it as an inspiration for American exploration and natural historical activity is suggestive. See Antonello Gerbi, *The dispute of the New World: the history of a polemic, 1750-1900*, trans. Jeremy Moyle (Pittsburgh, PA, 2010), p. 258; and Furtwangler, *Acts of discovery*, p. 261.

³¹ Thomas Jefferson, *Account of Louisiana*, p. 10. See also Kevin J. Hayes, *The road to Monticello: the life and mind of Thomas Jefferson* (Oxford, 2008), p. 488.

An equally fanciful rumour directly follows: that of an ‘extraordinary fact ... There exists about 1000 miles up the Missouri, and not far from the river, a *Salt Mountain!*’³² Yet Jefferson had begun his *Account* with the stylistic coolness of the scientist: ‘Of the province of Louisiana no general map, sufficiently correct to be depended upon, has been published ... It is indeed probable, that surveys have never been made upon so extensive a scale as to afford the means of laying down the various regions of a country, which, in some of its parts, appears to have been but imperfectly explored.’³³ This implicit call for U.S. cartographical activity inserted itself smoothly within the *Account*’s introductory chapter’s broader discussion of Louisianan boundaries. Jefferson acknowledged the role of maps in legitimising the new Louisianan possession ‘as American,’ making it a half-blank map which Lewis and Clark would presently set to fill up with unfailing diligence.³⁴ In that specific sense the *Account of Louisiana* contains the ideological kernel of Jeffersonian expansionism: pleas for exploration, controlled utopian exaggerations, self-conscious reliance on scientific methods and (as shall be discussed next) a meticulous textual strategy of suppression of the native voice.

2. Defining the inhabitants of utopian space

A comprehensive picture of Louisiana that conformed to the aforementioned ideological criteria demanded two (intertwined) stages of definition. First, in the manner of the *Notes of Virginia*, the space occupied by Louisiana and its limits had to be defined as precisely as possible, keeping in mind that the trans-Mississippi section of this ‘space’ had thus far undergone little, if any, official surveying. At the same time, the inhabitants

³² Jefferson, *Account of Louisiana*, p. 11.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³⁴ On this, see Chapter 2.

of this 'space' had to be acknowledged and discussed. On this subject of Louisianan population, Jefferson could not avoid mentioning the aboriginal settlers, who seemed to him (or seems to the reader to have seemed to him) an incoherent multitude of native tribes at the frontier and beyond it. In the *Account* Jefferson begins by stating, rather tersely, that along the Missouri River 'are many and numerous nations, the best known of which are: The Osages, situated on the river of same name on the right bank of Missouri ... They are of a gigantic stature and well proportioned, are enemies of the whites and of all other Indians ... They are a cruel and ferocious race, and are hated and feared by all the other Indians.'³⁵ The phrase 'all the other Indians' is intentionally vague, as if 'Indians' represented a single sprawling entity that occupied Upper Louisiana from its eastern to its less certain western borders. Perhaps the most striking feature of the passage is not its depiction of the Osages as 'a cruel and ferocious race' but rather the assumption, implicit throughout, that 'Indians' and 'whites' could be essentialised as *the* two separable categories of Louisianan population.

Historians have well documented the paradox of Native Americans' resistance to what Jefferson conceived as the civilising impulse inherent in agricultural and 'propertied' expansion.³⁶ In 1801, two years before he and James Monroe secured the Louisiana Purchase in Paris, Robert R. Livingston had asked Jefferson whether 'the gradual but certain anihilation of those very red Children [is] something like a similar dispensation of providence ... in less than 1000 years the existance of an Aboriginal American will not be less problematical than that of the Mammoth.'³⁷ More light needs to be cast on Jefferson's peculiar attempt to incorporate American Indians *within* the

³⁵ Jefferson, *Account of Louisiana*, pp 23-5.

³⁶ For the most influential intellectual histories of Jeffersonian philanthropy and its inherent paradoxes (which ultimately led to Indian removal) see Sheehan, *Seeds of extinction*; and Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians*.

³⁷ Robert R. Livingston to Jefferson, 17 Mar. 1801, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxxiii, 326.

natural history of such western territories as Upper Louisiana – to turn them, as it were, into the subject of scientific inquiry according to the same categories of analysis as western plants and animals.³⁸ This process of ‘natural historicisation,’ mentioned in the two previous chapters, afforded numerous advantages from a discursive point of view to the federal architect of expansion. It silenced native tribes, associating them with their environment, and thereby maintained the integrity of federal expansion as a policy by focussing legitimacy on the measuring and surveying agent. In the *Notes*, Jefferson had complained that ‘though for a century and a half we have had under our eyes the races of black and red men, they have never yet been viewed by us as subjects of natural history.’³⁹ Already in the *Notes*, especially in ‘Query XI: Aborigines,’ he had undertaken to redeem this seeming gap in scientific study.⁴⁰ The act of gradually circumscribing western Indian tribes within natural historical inquiry represented the conceptual backdrop of many of Jefferson’s later teleological affirmations in favour of white American cultural supremacy over the continent, as can be observed in this 1803 letter to Indian agent Benjamin Hawkins: ‘I have little doubt but that your reflections must have led you to view the various ways in which their [human, not natural] history may terminate, and to see that this is the one most for their happiness.’⁴¹

³⁸ On a similar subject (but looking at the case of New France and the writings of St John de Crèvecoeur) see the excellent article by François Furet, ‘De l’homme sauvage à l’homme historique: l’expérience américaine dans la culture française,’ in *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, xxxiii, no. 4 (1978), pp 729-39.

³⁹ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p. 180. See Dana D. Nelson, ‘Consolidating national masculinity: scientific discourse and race in the post-revolutionary United States,’ in Robert Blair St George (ed.), *Possible pasts: becoming colonial in Early America* (Ithaca, 2000), p. 206.

⁴⁰ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, 144-51. Note the textual strategy of ‘natural historicisation’ in the following passage: ‘It is to be lamented then, very much to be lamented, that we have suffered so many of the Indian tribes already to extinguish, without our having previously collected and deposited in the records of literature the general rudiments at least of the languages they spoke. Were vocabularies formed of all the languages spoken in North and South America, preserving their appellations of the most common objects in nature, of those which must present to every nation, barbarous of civilized, with the inflections of their nouns and verbs, their principles of regimen and concord, and these deposited in all the public libraries, it would furnish opportunities to those skilled in the languages of the old world to compare them with these, now, or at any future time, and hence to construct the best evidence of the derivation of this part of the human race.’

⁴¹ Jefferson to Hawkins, 18 Feb. 1803, in Ford, *Works of Jefferson*, ix, 447-8. See Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians*, p.

In theory, this environmentally imbued conception of American Indians' organic relationship to their physical surroundings allowed a degree of interpretive flexibility in the implicit opening for a Native embrace of the notion of 'improving' the land – which would, by the same process, accomplish a gradual separation of that organic relationship. If he refused it, Jefferson's idealised American Indian would simply remain part of his environment, in a raw state of nature and essentially static, an offshoot of the European construct of the 'noble savage'.⁴² Conversely, if this idealised Indian *did* embrace the notion of improvement, Jefferson would see no reason not to welcome this impending process of acculturation since it would contribute to ease the political and administrative incorporation of newly appropriated western territories, following white penetration and frontier settlement. This approach had already been hinted at in the Land Ordinance of 1785 with the issue of the Christian Indians, who had been allotted land on the condition that they cultivate it and manage it as private property, in addition to converting to Christianity.⁴³ In the draft for his fifth annual message to Congress, Jefferson summarised what had (by then) become a well-established rationale:

Our Indian neighbors are advancing, many of them, with spirit ... in the pursuits of agriculture & household manufacture. They are becoming sensible that the earth yields subsistence with less labor & more of certainty than the forest: and find it their interest from time to time to dispose of parts of their surplus & waste lands for the means of improving those they occupy, and of subsisting their families while they are preparing their farms.⁴⁴

223.

⁴² Bernard W. Sheehan, 'Paradise and the noble savage in Jeffersonian thought,' in *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, xvi, no. 3 (July, 1969), pp 327-8.

⁴³ Ford, *Journals of the Continental Congress*, xxviii, p. 381.

⁴⁴ Draft of fifth annual message, 3 Dec. 1805, in Ford, *Works of Jefferson*, x, 194; Jefferson to Hawkins, 18 Feb. 1803, in *ibid.*, x, 447; and Jefferson's second inaugural address, 4 Mar. 1805, in *ibid.*, x, 131-2. See also R. Douglas Hurt, *Indian agriculture in America: prehistory to the present* (Lawrence, KS, 1987), p. 86.

The president sometimes spoke directly to a Native American audience, though usually within the eastern confines of Washington. For instance, he famously advised Seneca chief Handsome Lake to consider ‘going into a state of agriculture, [as] it may be as advantageous to a society, as it is to an individual, who has more land than he can improve, to sell a part, and lay out the money in stocks and implements ... for the better improvement of the residue. A little land well stocked and improved, will yield more than a great deal without stock or improvement.’⁴⁵ Such an injunction illustrates the basic solidity of Jefferson’s doctrine: either American Indians left the (idealised) unmeasured ‘wilderness’ zone and its opaque values, and integrated white society, or they would remain part of this ‘wilderness’ zone, but not for long, since the territory encompassed by the Purchase would sooner or later become the target of rational measurements by official or unofficial federal agents like Lewis and Clark. In practice, of course, the two alternatives could never be so coherently sundered. Jefferson knew this. But it should be remembered that, as far as the ‘West’ as concerned, to Jefferson this ‘West’ remained predominantly and most attractively an *idea*. It was a concept, at best a spatialised one, that could prove lethally efficient as an instrument of teleological justification of expansionist doctrine. If it sometimes involved exaggerated optimism (in contemplating Indian acculturation) or pessimism (in contemplating their extermination) these two extremes served as specific markers of discourse, not of fact.⁴⁶

In 1796 Jefferson wrote his friend the *idéologue* Constantin François de Chassebœuf Volney: ‘You have now seen, in the aboriginals of America, another

⁴⁵ Jefferson to Handsome Lake, 3 Nov. 1802, in Appleby & Ball, *Jefferson: political writings*, pp 520-1. See also Anthony F. C. Wallace, *The death and rebirth of the Seneca* (New York, 1970), p. 271.

⁴⁶ For a similar argument but with a broader focus, see James D. Drake, *The nation’s nature: how continental Presumptions gave rise to the United States of America* (Charlottesville, 2011), pp 231-42; and idem, ‘Appropriating a continent: geographical categories, scientific metaphors, and the construction of nationalism in British North America and Mexico,’ in *Journal of World History*, xv, no. 3 (Sept., 2004), pp 323-57.

edition of man. We wish much to know what impression it makes on an enlightened European to whom their peculiarities will be new and therefore more readily observed ... [It] must have afforded much matter for the contemplation of a philosophic observer.⁴⁷ With the Northwest Territory now organised and administered federally for almost ten years, Jefferson equated Volney's scientific enterprise as a French intellectual in Ohio country with a truly new departure, which involved ethnographical observations on native tribal populations qualitatively different from those encountered in past centuries in New France and French Louisiana. This was because, following the underlying logic of Jeffersonian discourse, U.S. citizens (and especially frontiersmen) embodied the 'new natives' of the continent, while American Indians were bound to remain living artefacts of sorts until they made a clear decision (clear to federal ears at least) about their future. Jefferson assumed in his letter to Volney that this new order of things was shared tacitly by Europeans, since it based its legitimacy on a derivation of the Enlightenment rhetoric of improvement of both man and nature.⁴⁸ Volney studied the Ohio region's environment and climate carefully, exactly along the lines which Jefferson had adapted for his own idiosyncratic republican discourse.⁴⁹ Volney's resulting *Tableau du climat et du sol des États-Unis d'Amérique* (1803) contained a section with detailed ethnographic observations on tribal societies of the Ohio valley so marked by the backwardness of these tribal cultures (described as dirty, rude, drunk, and uncivil) that it implicitly confirmed the stakes of Jefferson's enterprise of domestication of the American

⁴⁷ Jefferson to Constantin François de Chassebœuf, Comte de Volney, 17 Dec. 1796, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxix, 225; and Gilbert Chinard, *Volney et l'Amérique d'après des documents inédits et sa correspondance avec Jefferson* (Baltimore and Paris, 1923), p. 51.

⁴⁸ On this (with extensive discussions of Volney) see Jacqueline Duvernay-Bolens, 'De la sensibilité des sauvages à l'époque romantique,' in *L'Homme*, xxxviii, no. 145 (Mar., 1998), pp 143-68; Anne Godlewska, *Geography unbound: French geographic science from Cassini to Humboldt* (Chicago, 1999), pp 204-05; and Furet, 'De l'homme sauvage à l'homme historique,' pp 736-8.

⁴⁹ Volney to Jefferson, 12 Dec. 1796, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxix, 220-1. On the parallels in rhetoric between the two men, see Jean Gaulmier, 'Volney et ses leçons d'histoire,' in *History and Theory*, ii, no. 1 (1962), p. 65; Furet, 'De l'homme sauvage à l'homme historique,' pp 736-8; and Duvernay-Bolens, 'De la sensibilité des sauvages,' pp 155-6.

‘wilderness’ using the tenets of European-inherited ‘useful knowledge.’⁵⁰ Jefferson’s extensive correspondence with Nemours on the subject of the Louisiana Purchase provides another good example of the transnational texture of the approach.⁵¹

The production of books such as Volney’s *Tableau* or Jefferson’s *Notes* materialised the piecemeal process of putting on paper the unsurveyed parts of North America, and made the published data available to a wider public, lay or official.⁵² Postcolonial critic Gayatri Spivak has talked about the Enlightenment’s ‘textualising of the world’ as one of the core intellectual processes of the legitimation of European imperialism up until the twenty-first century. She has taken the example of James Cook’s successive and much-advertised circumnavigations during the period 1768-80, with an exploring crew that included botanists, landscape painters, and journal keepers (all of them by definition literate).⁵³ Lewis and Clark, trekking as they did in the footsteps of other writers on American natural history but armed with the significant advantage of federal backing, military training, A.P.S. supervision, and direct physical contact with the trans-Mississippi West, stood in a sense as the first Cooks of the American West.⁵⁴ They participated in the cataloguing and ‘natural historicising’ of Louisiana and its tribal inhabitants, not just in their journals, but also as a result of the number of specimens and artefacts that they sent back to Washington, Philadelphia, and

⁵⁰ Volney, *Tableau*, i, 424-32. See also Jean Gaulmier, *Un grand témoin de la révolution et de l’empire: Volney* (Paris, 1959), pp 264-85. More valuable works about Volney include Jean Ehrard, ‘L’histoire revisitée par la Révolution. Condorcet et Volney,’ in *Mélanges de l’Ecole française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, cviii, no. 2 (1996), pp 445-56; Robert Damien, ‘Expertise et état: l’exemple de Volney l’idéologue/voyageur (1757-1820),’ in *Politique et Management Public*, ix, no. 2 (1991), pp 81-100; and Martin S. Staum, ‘The Class of Moral and Political Sciences, 1795-1803,’ in *French Historical Studies*, xi, no. 3 (Spring, 1980), pp 371-97.

⁵¹ Malone, *Correspondence between Jefferson and Nemours*, pp 50-79.

⁵² Greene, ‘Science and the public,’ pp 13-25.

⁵³ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *The post-colonial critic: interviews, strategies, dialogues* (London, 1990), pp 1-16. See also Charles W. J. Withers, ‘Geography, natural history and the eighteenth-century enlightenment: putting the world in place,’ in *History Workshop Journal*, xxxix (Spring, 1995), p. 142.

⁵⁴ Consider Lewis’s journal entry for 7 Apr. 1805, in Moulton, *Journals*, iv, 9: ‘Our vessels consisted of six small canoes, and two large perogues. This little fleet altho’ not quite so respectable as those of Columbus or Capt. Cook were still viewed by us with as much pleasure as those deservedly famed adventurers ever beheld theirs; and I dare say with quite as much anxiety for their safety and preservation.’ I expand on this comparative perspective in Chapter 4.

Monticello. One of these, a species of pronghorn, would be put on display at Charles Willson Peale's Museum.⁵⁵ Others went to enrich Jefferson's 'Indian Hall' at Monticello, where western artefacts were painstakingly arranged and made visibly coherent to the visitor.⁵⁶

Within that developing interpretive and logistical framework of cataloguing Indian cultures, language became another important focus of study for U.S. scientists. Language appeared as an analysable and (crucially) 'conservable' trait of such cultures. Euro-American scientists knew that languages could, if carefully preserved, survive the tribes that spoke them.⁵⁷ Eager to profit from Lewis and Clark's linguistic observations in the West, Benjamin Smith Barton articulated his interest to Jefferson in 1809: 'I have ... in the press a new edition of my work on the dialects of the American Indians. This edition will be, in many respects, much more correct and satisfactory, as well as more ample, than the former, which you have seen. I am extremely anxious to possess specimens – no matter how small, – of the languages which Mr. Lewis met with beyond the Mississippi.'⁵⁸ The work in question was Barton's *New views of the origin of the tribes and nations of America*, published first in 1797 and an influential enough book to have been read by Jefferson.⁵⁹ A botanist at heart, Barton had developed an interest in Indian dialects early in his life. In 1803 he had given detailed directions to Lewis about the compiling of lists of vocabularies. It was, therefore, only natural for him to ask for the results after the Corps's return.⁶⁰ These results, in turn, would enrich the second

⁵⁵ Charles Willson Peale to Jefferson, 22 Oct. 1805, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, 177. 'I am very thankful for these additions to the Museum, every thing that comes from Louisiana must be interesting to the Public.' Peale's Museum will be one of the main thematic focuses of Chapter 5. See Ronda, *Finding the West*, p. 120.

⁵⁶ Castle McLaughlin, *Objects of diplomacy: Lewis & Clark's Indian collection* (Seattle and London, 2003).

⁵⁷ Laura J. Murray, 'Vocabularies of Native American languages: a literary and historical approach to an elusive genre,' in *American Quarterly*, liii, no. 4 (Dec., 2001), pp 590-623; and Greene, 'Science and the public,' p. 23.

⁵⁸ Barton to Jefferson, 14 Sept. 1809, in Jackson, *Letters*, ii, 463.

⁵⁹ Benjamin Smith Barton, *New views of the origin of the tribes and nations of America* (Philadelphia, 1797).

⁶⁰ See Chapter 2, pp 13-16. The secondary literature on Barton remains very sparse. See the recent effort by Joseph Ewan

edition of the *New views*, in a circular pattern typically illustrative of the working logic of a ‘center of calculation.’

Barton’s preface to *New views* takes the shape of an open letter to Jefferson:

I regret, with you, Sir, the evanishment of so many of the tribes and nations of America. I regret, with you, the want of a zeal among our countrymen for collecting materials concerning the history of these people. I regret the want of the necessary endeavours to introduce among those of them who have escaped the ravages of time ... the true principles of social order; the arts which conduce to the dignity and the happiness of mankind, and a rational and lasting system of morals and religion. Let it not be said, that they are incapable of improvement.⁶¹

From Barton’s perspective, for those tribes who deliberately chose to remain culturally ‘static’, the collection of vocabularies would soon become an antiquarian’s duty. The reader will recognise in the passage above the now familiar trope of the ‘civilisation’ of Native Americans, made all the more pressing for Barton because of the rapid ‘evanishment of so many of the tribes.’ Barton adds later, without seeming to believe entirely in the credibility of his own words, that ‘it is surely worthy the attention of the good and wise to endeavour to extend the *empire of civility* and knowledge among the numerous nations who are scattered over the countries of America.’⁶² The ‘empire of civility’ metaphor echoed the Jefferson-coined ‘Empire of Liberty’. Both thrived on a rather heavy-handed oxymoron (‘empire’ versus liberty and civility) made effective solely by the stark contrast already established in Jeffersonian expansionist discourse between the notions of an improving versus a static mind.

and Nesta Ewan, *Benjamin Smith Barton: naturalist and physician in Jeffersonian America* (St Louis, MO, 2007).

⁶¹ Barton, *New views*, pp iv-v. I must be mentioned here that Barton’s *New views* has received practically no scholarly attention, whether it be historical, scientific or linguistic.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. vi. The emphases are mine.

Barton finished his preface by adding a theological layer to his argumentation on U.S. hopes and fears about the prospective supervised federal acculturation of Native Americans: ‘But nations who are fast passing to destruction must be contented to wrap themselves up ... in reflections of a serious kind ... and acknowledge the existence and the power of a creator, who formed all nations, and scatters them abroad; who preserves and increases them; who diminishes or crumbles them to nought. Thy power, O God! has no limits; and are we worthy of thy preserving care when we ... refuse to cultivate the arts of social life?’⁶³ The notion of an omniscient creator in and of Nature amalgamated the staple religious vision of revelation with a proto-systematic worldview that emphasised just how perfectly rational the world (God’s creation) was. In eighteenth-century scientific discourse, this worldview had been articulated most compellingly by Carolus Linnaeus, to whom I return in a later section of the chapter.⁶⁴ Such a mixed notion presented the advantage of not having to acknowledge Nature’s perpetual unpredictability, which, in the case of the American Indians, resounded most powerfully to U.S. ears in the tribes’ refusal to abandon their traditional relationship to their land. Besides, recourse to theology (whatever its practical application by Barton to suit his own rhetorical purposes) acted as a legitimising tool in itself. It sanctioned both the Euro-American presence in the New World, U.S. expansionism, and the model of the federal state. In 1812 Benjamin Rush opined that American Indians had turned into barbarians ‘in consequence of their having lost the use of letters of written characters and the knowledge and habits of religion ... without both of which nations seldom or perhaps never become civilized or preserve their civilization.’⁶⁵ The white man

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp li-lii.

⁶⁴ Carolus Linnaeus, *Systema naturae* (10th ed., Leiden, 1759). On this, see Lisbet Koerner, *Linnaeus: nature and nation* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), pp 84-6.

⁶⁵ Benjamin Rush to David Hosack, 25 Sept. 1812, in Lyman H. Butterfield (ed.), *Letters of Benjamin Rush* (2 vols,

possessed what his 'red' counterpart stubbornly refused to adopt: mathematical rationality, the art of cultivation, and the deistic belief in a creator who had made nature intricate, to be sure, but ultimately comprehensible.

In Jefferson's discourse, the process of 'natural historicisation' of the native populations of Louisiana matured dialectically alongside another phenomenon, that of the naturalisation of the territory's (relative) newcomers, the whites. Jefferson was very anxious to depict U.S. citizens as springing from the North American soil, not least because they had just emerged victorious from a long and bloody war of independence. The young Republic was still awaiting the articulation of a cohesive political and cultural (if not social) identity, officially sanctioned, in order to survive at all. Agriculture, both practically and idealistically the active safeguard of the 'garden' area between city and 'wilderness,' seemed (as a cultural, political and economic pursuit) to offer the most convincing contrast with the vices of European urbanity. In Britain and France, these vices had admittedly grown worse with the accumulation of wealth resulting from decades of imperial expansion.⁶⁶

Agriculture, however, seemed to concentrate efforts on the necessities of life and to naturally repel the thirst for luxuries. At the same time, agriculture could remain a thoroughly 'rational' activity. Jefferson kept a written journal during his trip to the south of France and Italy in 1787, and in it he liked to contrast rural France with Paris: 'Hitherto my journey has been a continued feast on objects of agriculture, new to me, and, some of them at least, susceptible of adoption in America. Nothing can be ruder or more savage than the country I am in, as it must have come from the hands of nature;

Princeton, 1951), ii, 1163. See also Sheehan, *Seeds of extinction*, p. 53.

⁶⁶ Miller, *Jefferson & nature*, pp 155-216. On the Jeffersonian conception of the garden as middle ground between city and 'wilderness,' see Andrea Wulf, *Founding gardeners: the revolutionary generation, nature, and the shaping of the American nation* (New York, 2011), pp 173-93.

and nothing more rich and variegated in the productions with which art has covered it.’⁶⁷ Around the same time, Jefferson remarked to Lafayette that he was ‘never satiated with rambling through the fields and farms, examining the culture and cultivators, with a degree of curiosity which makes some take me to be a fool, and others to be much wiser than I am.’⁶⁸ Comparisons of the southern French landscape with Virginian landscape abound in the text, as if Jefferson had been attempting (consciously or not) to appropriate European rural features for his native country around the time of another event vital to American nation-building, the drafting and ratification of the U.S. Constitution in 1787.⁶⁹ Whether incidental or not, this recorded gesture (and Jefferson customarily recorded everything that he considered in any way significant) announced a fundamental trait of the discursive construction of a post-revolutionary republican identity: the selective adaptation of certain features of European culture *and* Indian culture, as seen through the eyes of Euro-Americans. It was not the French rural landscape itself (and its complex cultural, social, and economic particularities) that interested Jefferson most, but the potential this landscape showed for improvement. If it was not yet ‘governed’ by a republican ideology in France, it was still *bounded*, and its nature as a bounded environment represented half of the effort. In republican America, such a landscape would – with federal and state-based authorization – quickly become invested and nurtured with to the rational principles and practices of ‘useful knowledge.’

⁶⁷ Jefferson to William Short, 7 Apr. 1787, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xi, 280. See also Frank Shuffleton, ‘Thomas Jefferson: travelling in the Republic of Letters,’ in Michel Baridon and Bernard Cheignard (eds), *Voyage et tourisme en Bourgogne à l’époque de Jefferson* (Dijon, 1988), pp 1-16.

⁶⁸ Jefferson to Lafayette, 11 Apr. 1787, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xi, 280. See also Hayes, *The road to Monticello*, p. 348; and Peterson, *Jefferson and the new nation*, p. 350.

⁶⁹ Jefferson, ‘Notes of a tour into the southern parts of France, &c.,’ 3 Mar. – 10 June 1787, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xi, 415-27. See especially pp 415 (‘The face of the country ... somewhat resembling the Elk hill and Beverdam hills of Virginia’), 420 (‘the hills come in precipices to the river, resembling then very much our Susquehanna and it’s hills’), and 427 (‘On the road I saw one of those little whirlwinds which we have in Virginia.’) These vivid comparisons between the Virginian and French rural landscapes have been overlooked by historians. They can only be found in collections of Jefferson’s writings, of which Boyd remains by far the most reliable.

The workers of the soil who surrounded Jefferson in France thus became idealised and transposed to his own notion of the American yeoman-farmer: independent, virtuous, strong-minded, and especially prone to improving and cultivating his allotted ground. Like Crèvecoeur's, Jefferson's farmer gathered in his character and work ethic the archetypal 'enlightened' values.⁷⁰ The yeoman-farmer's rural inclinations naturally suited him for life at the border of the wilderness, while the gift of civilisation, kept in his bosom, ensured his potential as a future master of that wilderness. Environmentally, this meant cutting down trees and laying paths and roads; in human terms, this equated to meeting native tribes and teaching them the Euro-American conception of agriculture, as well as (ideally) informing those tribes of the federal government's integration of their territories with recourse to a terminology that harked back to the European law of nations. That Jefferson saw the figure of the farmer as the apostle of Americanism from the 1780s onward indicates that his western policy (beginning in the 1780s with the organisation of the Northwest Territory, and culminating in the 1800s in the wake of the Louisiana Purchase) combined expansionism with a blossoming form of nationalism, still looking across the Atlantic for the assertion of its innermost cultural integrity but already looking for an idiosyncratic 'middle way.' This duality of purpose was sharpened by the need to vindicate the American climate and environment against those European intellectuals who doubted its salubrity (Buffon, the Abbé Raynal, and the Scottish historian William Robertson were among the most prominent of such

⁷⁰ J. Hector St John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*, ed. Warren B. Blake (New York and London, 1912), p. 40. Crèvecoeur says: 'Some few towns excepted, we are all tillers of the earth, from Nova Scotia to West Florida. We are a people of cultivators, scattered over an immense territory, communicating with each other by means of good roads and navigable rivers, united by the silken bands of mild government, all respecting the laws, without dreading their power, because they are equitable. We are all animated with the spirit of an industry which is unfettered and unrestrained, because each person works for himself.' I return to Crèvecoeur at greater length in Chapter 4, but see Bush, *Dreams of reason*, pp 202-04.

critics).⁷¹ Historian Gilbert Chinard, and more recently Jan Golinski, have argued that such European sources of criticism of the North American climate in fact provided an ideal opportunity for able U.S. rhetoricians like Jefferson and Franklin to reinforce, by deconstructing the essential fallacy of the accusations, the image of Euro-Americans as the new authentic children of 'their' land.⁷² Jefferson's line of defense of the 'Indian' against Buffon's accusations carried within it the underlying affirmation of white Americans' newfound republican coherence with their environment.

This self-interested defense of Native Americans summed up the rationale behind Jefferson's envisioned policy of acculturation: to take from the 'red man,' so to speak, his aura of American naturalness while at the same time cultivating the Enlightenment values inherent in white Americans' European ancestry. As we saw in the previous chapter, when Lewis and Clark put on native dress and smoke the calumet of peace, they were self-consciously involved in a cross-cultural performance that remained circumscribed in time.⁷³ On the other hand, when the Corps supplied their native hosts with the 'blacksmith's tools', their gesture carried the implicit assumption that the tools could (and were intended to) transform the very nature of Indian labour.⁷⁴ Lewis and Clark sought to give a concrete form to the ideal reconciliation between nature and culture envisioned by Jeffersonian expansionism.⁷⁵ By essentialising the 'Indian' and

⁷¹ Gilbert Chinard, 'Eighteenth-century theories on America as a human habitat,' in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, xli, no. 1 (Feb., 1947), pp 32-50; and Drake, 'Appropriating a continent,' p. 326.

⁷² Jan Golinski, 'American climate,' pp 154-70; and Chinard, 'Eighteenth century theories,' pp 40-57.

⁷³ Clark, 31 Oct. 1804, in Moulton, *Journals*, iii, 217-19. The Corps was then staying among the Mandans. Clark narrated the event thus: '[we] met the principal Chief finished of the 3d Village and the Little Crow both of which I invited into the Cabin and *Smoked & talked* with for about one hour. Soon after those Chiefs left us the Grand Chief of the Mandans Came Dressed in the Clothes we had given with his 2 Small Suns.' At a later point, Clark added: 'black Cat or Pose-cop-sa-he 1st Chief of the Mandans & 2d Village ... he believed the roade was open; and he would go and See his great father - he Delivered up 2 Traps which had been taken from the french, & *gave me a roabe* & about 12 bushels of Corn - & smoked &c.' The emphases are mine. See Russell Reid, *Lewis and Clark in North Dakota* (Bismarck, ND, 1988), p. 55; and Furet, 'De l'homme sauvage à l'homme historique,' p. 234.

⁷⁴ Gass, 16 Aug. 1806, in Moulton, *Journals*, x, 268. See also Chapter 2, *passim*.

⁷⁵ Jefferson to Volney, 11 Feb. 1806, in Ford, *Works of Jefferson*, x, 227-8. Note that Jefferson was already conscious of the nature of Lewis and Clark's mission as precursors to later professional expeditions in the trans-Mississippi West:

categorising him as either a natural historical artefact or a direct foil to the white man's struggle for continental territorial legitimacy, Jefferson could justify that his approach was not based on the subjection of the autochthonous American population by Euro-American expansionists, but rather on supervising North America's move to the next civilisational stage, one dependent on agriculture, private property, and practical reasoning.⁷⁶ But this discursive strategy, which was intended to function as the backbone to the articulation of a 'post-Indian' national identity, was so reliant on intellectual, moral, and economic values inherited from eighteenth-century European Enlightenment thought that its credibility remained fragile in the period of the early Republic. This makes it especially important to discuss the main European influences on Jefferson's conceived notion of a U.S. 'middle way'.

B. The influence of European Enlightenment on Jefferson's scientific thought

1. Buffon, the 'great naturaliser'

Jefferson's intellectual relationship with the Comte de Buffon (1707-88) is pivotal here, because the way it evolved allowed for the definition of a new American (U.S.) identity, especially in the wake of Buffon's arguments on degeneracy and the methods Jefferson used to refute them. Indeed, the most interesting aspect of this relationship from our perspective is not the question of Jefferson's success in proving that Buffon was wrong about the issue of degeneracy, but instead the clear underlying conceptual convergence

'When the route shall be once open and known, scientific men will undertake, & verify & class it's subjects. Our emigration to the western country from these states the last year is estimated at about 100,000. I conjecture that about one-half the number of our increase will emigrate westwardly annually.' See Gilbert Chinard, *Volney et l'Amérique*, p. 179.

⁷⁶ Jefferson to the Brothers of the Choctaw Nation, 17 Dec. 1803, in Appleby & Ball, *Jefferson: political writings*, p. 529. Jefferson played the careful adviser: 'Compared with you, we are but as of yesterday in this land. Yet see how much more we have multiplied by industry, and the exercise of that reason which you possess in common with us. Follow then our example, brethren, and we will aid you with great pleasure.' See also Maurizio Valsania, *The limits of optimism: Thomas Jefferson's dualistic Enlightenment* (Charlottesville, 2011), p. 44.

between the Frenchman's arguments and the Virginian's counter-arguments on the subject of the need for 'improving' the New World environment.

Buffon was the most prominent French naturalist of the eighteenth century.⁷⁷ His life spanned the century almost entirely, and he was never at rest. Because of his credentials as Intendant of the Jardin des Plantes from 1739 and member of the Académie des Sciences and Académie française, Buffon gained A.P.S. membership in 1768.⁷⁸ His great 36-volume work, the *Histoire naturelle* (1749-88), influenced profoundly the practice of natural history across the world. In fact, the sheer strength and depth of detail of Jefferson's rebuttal of some of Buffon's theories in the *Notes on Virginia* testify to the seriousness with which Jefferson took those theories.⁷⁹ Jefferson also seized the first opportunity of his arrival in France as ambassador to procure the *Histoire naturelle*.⁸⁰

The bulk of Buffon's critique of the (eastern) North American environment is contained in the ninth volume of the *Histoire naturelle*.⁸¹ He saw the region's humidity, its abundance of swamps and thick forests as well as its cold temperatures, as factors in weakening the autochthonous inhabitants. Notorious passages include comments on the comparatively small size of native American animals and the feebleness, mental as well as physical, of the American Indians.⁸² Both points, of course, were refuted at length in Jefferson's *Notes*.⁸³ But Buffon also depicted North America in more nuanced terms, as a very young continent still predominantly in a 'wilderness' state that required the

⁷⁷ The best biography remains Jacques Roger, *Buffon: un philosophe au Jardin du Roi* (Paris, 1989).

⁷⁸ J. G. Rosengarten, 'The early French members of the American Philosophical Society,' in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, xlvii, no. 185 (Apr., 1907), p. 87; and Staum, 'Class of Moral and Political Sciences,' pp 371-97.

⁷⁹ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, pp 107-28. See Greene, 'Science and the public,' pp 22-3.

⁸⁰ Jefferson to Walker Maury, with a list of books, 19 Aug. 1785, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, viii, 411.

⁸¹ Buffon, *Histoire naturelle*, ix, 84-129. See also Spary, *Utopia's garden*, p. 114; and Jackson, *Jefferson and the Rocky Mountains*, p. 27.

⁸² Buffon, *Histoire naturelle*, ix, 102-11. There is no need to provide secondary material on this famous debate.

⁸³ For Jefferson's refutation of the degeneracy argument, see Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, pp 113-25.

husbandry of 'civilised' cultivators to attain a higher degree of maturity. This would then physically translate into healthier climatic conditions. When Buffon portrayed American Indians as static organisms of the 'wilderness,' incapable of progress (that is, towards the next civilisational stage of propertied agriculture) by themselves,⁸⁴ his implicit conclusion was that only Euro-American settlers could qualify as improvers of the land:

Every observation seems to prove that the greater part of the American continent is new, still untouched by the hand of man, and in which Nature has not yet found the time to establish all her plans, nor to develop in all its breadth; that the men there are cold and the animals small, because the one's ardour and the other's size depend on the warmth and salubrity of the air; and that in a few centuries, when the earth is tilled, the forests felled and the rivers controlled ... this very earth will become the most fecund, the healthiest and the richest of all, as she now appears to be in the parts already worked by man.⁸⁵

Only time, not North American space and its essential attributes, was the problem. And, by definition, it was a problem that could be solved:

Every observation seems to prove that the greater part of the American continent is new, still untouched by the hand of man, and in which Nature has not yet found the time to establish all her plans, nor to develop in all its breadth; that the men there are cold and the animals small, because the one's ardour and the other's size depend on the warmth and salubrity of the air; and that in a few centuries, when the earth is tilled, the forests felled and the rivers controlled ... this very earth will become the most fecund, the healthiest and the richest of all, as she now appears to be in the parts already worked by man.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Clarence J. Glacken, 'Count Buffon on cultural changes of the physical environment,' in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 1, no. 1 (Mar., 1960), p. 19.

⁸⁵ Buffon, *Histoire naturelle*, ix, 103-04. The translations are mine for all quotations from Buffon.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, ix, 114.

Jefferson never contradicted these two latter propositions. He passed them over in silence, which equated to a nod. In effect, Buffon had sketched a framework of civilisational dualism in North American identity that Jefferson would later adapt for the purposes of U.S. national discourse. It was safe and opportune to challenge Buffon's woefully unsubstantiated attacks on Native American incapacity, since these attacks targeted an *acquired* state (due to an unhealthy environment) that, in reality, did not discriminate between the red and white skins. On the other hand, Jefferson did not underline Buffon's obvious temptation to view American Indians, not Euro-Americans, as *innately* incapable of improving their environment. If, from Buffon's point of view, both Native and Euro-Americans were 'natives' of North America insofar as they both suffered from its adverse climatic conditions, only the latter could effect meaningful environmental change. Better still: effecting change would, at the end of it, benefit Native Americans. This line of reasoning became the rationale of Jeffersonian expansionism in a nutshell.

Buffon's propositions also had a useful didactic aspect, in the shape of an informal blueprint for the practice of natural history that advocated the extensive domestication of foreign environments through scientific scrutiny while simultaneously vindicating the 'naturalness' of natural history as a method.⁸⁷ This blueprint appears early, in Buffon's *Premier discours* (1749), which introduced the first volume of the *Histoire naturelle*.⁸⁸ In it, Buffon argued in favour of what he called 'relative order', a perspective informed by a strong anthropocentrism: 'the initial causes will remain

⁸⁷ Robert Wohl, 'Buffon and his project for a new science,' in *Isis*, li, no. 2 (June, 1960), pp 187-91. See also the excellent treatment of this question in Peter H. Reill, *Vitalizing nature in the Enlightenment* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2005), pp 45-52.

⁸⁸ Buffon, 'Premier discours: de la manière d'étudier l'histoire naturelle,' in *Histoire naturelle*, i, 3-62. See Benoît de Baere, *La pensée cosmogonique de Buffon: percer la nuit des temps* (Paris, 2004), p. 241; and Thierry Hocquet, *Buffon: histoire naturelle et philosophie* (Paris, 2005), pp 179-80.

forever hidden ... all that is possible for us is to perceive some particular processes, to compare and combine them in order to recognise *an order relative to our own nature*, rather than an order fitting the existence of the objects under scrutiny.’⁸⁹ He concluded that ‘we believe this simple and natural way of studying things is preferable to the more complicated and systematic methods, because ... it is easier, more pleasant and more useful to consider things in relation to ourselves than to any other viewpoint.’⁹⁰ Leaving aside the obvious blow to Linnean systematics that transpires through this last statement, the anthropocentrism of Buffon’s method would come to have a decisive impact on Jefferson’s relationship with the ‘West’ as an idealised geographical and cultural entity. Jefferson’s instructions to Lewis, the enterprise of large-scale measurement that followed, the strategies of ‘natural historicising’ of trans-Mississippi tribes visible in the Corps of Discovery’s journals, but also the concept in reverse (the Corps’s flexible adoption of native dress, its sporadic celebrations of western ‘wilderness’ beauty, and the process of renaming western natural features with eastern names)⁹¹ all amounted to physico-political expressions of an environmental dialectic profoundly influenced by the *Histoire naturelle*.

When Jefferson met Buffon at the Jardin du Roi in the early stages of his five-year stint as ambassador to France (1784-9), the two men must have debated at length the issue of American degeneracy. In appearance, Jefferson took the matter so seriously that he ordered skins, antlers and bones of the American moose to be shipped across the Atlantic to get his point across to the French naturalist.⁹² Yet, despite such efforts and Buffon’s promise to amend his sections on the New World in subsequent editions of the

⁸⁹ Buffon, ‘Premier discours,’ pp 11-12. The emphases are mine.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 33-4.

⁹¹ On Lewis and Clark’s practice of ‘civilized renaming’ of western landscape features, see Chapter 2, *passim*.

⁹² Sheehan, *Seeds of extinction*, pp 74-5; and Dugatkin, *Jefferson and the giant moose*.

Histoire, the latter's position on the question seemed to hardly shift and his reputation to suffer little, even on the western side of the Atlantic. In 1786 David Ramsay observed to Jefferson: 'You have given M. Buffon a decent but a merited correction. Europeans affect to under value Americans. *I acknowledge an inferiority* but this is chargeable on the state of society. Less industry, less perseverance and less knowledge will answer the purposes of our country than in old established countries but human nature is certainly radically the same in both.'⁹³ More was at stake in Ramsay's letter than a vindication of the New World environment. Like never before, scientific discourse had become a powerful instrument for affirming the political and historical legitimacy of the Republic. Despite himself, Buffon had played the role of a catalyst for a 'United States' national consciousness, and he had done so strictly as a natural scientist and historian.

An appropriate title for Buffon would be that of the 'great naturaliser' of the practice of natural history. His method was organicist. He had a counterpart (and rival) in the figure of Carolus Linnaeus, who promoted a more systematic method. Linnaeus exercised an equally considerable intellectual influence on Jefferson.⁹⁴ In a sense, Jefferson's conception of a possible 'middle way' for (Euro-)Americans' relationship with North American nature was reflected in his attempt to conciliate between Buffon's and Linnaeus's diverging conceptions of nature's relationship to man.

2. Linnaeus, the 'great naturaliser'

Linnaeus (1707-78) was an exact contemporary of Buffon. A distinguished professor of botany at University of Uppsala for most of his career, he is now especially remembered

⁹³ David Ramsay to Jefferson, 4 May 1786, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, ix, p. 441. The emphases are mine. See Gerbi, *Dispute of the New World*, p. 261.

⁹⁴ Philip R. Sloan, 'The Buffon-Linnaeus controversy,' in *Isis*, lxxvii, no. 3 (Sept., 1976), pp 356-75; Roger, *Buffon*, pp 81-2; and Bush, *Dreams of reason*, p. 197.

as the father of systematic binomial nomenclature.⁹⁵ His impact on eighteenth-century European exploration, natural historical observation and data gathering was boundless, though mostly theoretical outside of Sweden, and therefore hard to assess factually.⁹⁶ Linnaeus's emphasis on arbitrary classification and naming was particularly anathema to Buffon, and has usually been defined as a 'thorough break with tradition.'⁹⁷ Though unquestionably modern in its conception of scientific method, Linnaeus's break with tradition can be assessed through other lenses, which highlight the complicity between arbitrary botanical classification and the question of the scientific disciplining of foreign wildernesses by state-backed exploring crews. Rather than thoroughly 'breaking' with tradition, Linnaeus brought his nomenclatural system to such a degree of abstraction that any natural feature, like those of North America, could be named according to a wholly Eurocentric vocabulary. This thirst for the imposition of an idealised scientific order on a global scale was partly driven by a deistic concept of God as the force behind the plenitude and coherence found in nature, an approach that clearly echoes that of Benjamin Rush.⁹⁸ In Linnaeus's own words, 'He [the omniscient Creator] has settled an œconomy in this globe, that is truly admirable by means of an infinite number of bodies, and all necessary, which bear some resemblance to one another, so that they are linked together like a chain.'⁹⁹

The near-compulsory use of Latin in eighteenth-century European botanical works enforced a tacit level of solidarity between naturalists across the whole area covered by

⁹⁵ Frans A. Stafleu, *Linnaeus and the Linneans: the spreading of their ideas in systematic botany, 1735-1789* (Utrecht, 1971); and Wilfrid Blunt, *Linnaeus: the compleat naturalist* (3rd ed., London, 2004), p. 9.

⁹⁶ Lisbet Koerner, *Linnaeus: nature and nation* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), pp 15-51; Mackay, *In the wake of Cook*, pp 6-12.

⁹⁷ James L. Larson, *Reason and experience: the representation of natural order in the work of Carl von Linné* (Berkeley, 1971), p. 140; and Blunt, *Linnaeus*, p. 112.

⁹⁸ Carolus Linnaeus, *Philosophia botanica*, ed. Stephen Freer (Oxford, 2003), especially pp xx-xxii; and Koerner, *Nature & nation*, pp 14-16.

⁹⁹ Quoted in Larson, *Reason & experience*, p. 143.

the Republic of Science, including eastern North America.¹⁰⁰ From a more practical viewpoint, Linnaeus laid the basis for the habit of naming specimens and natural features according to proper names (e.g. *Banksia* for a type of Australian wildflower, after Joseph Banks). Although never systematised, the practice virtually became an institutional one and contributed to strengthen the notion of a limitless and readily available Eurocentric terminology for natural historians. In 1792 Barton named a species of twinleaf *Jeffersonian diphylla*. Barton commented: ‘I beg leave to observe ... that in imposing upon this genus the name of Mr. Jefferson, I have had no reference to his political character, or to his reputation for general science, and for literature. My business was with his knowledge of natural history. In the various departments of this science, but especially in botany and in zoology, the information of this gentleman is equalled by that of few persons in the United-States.’¹⁰¹ A decade later, Lewis and Clark set out on a mission to ‘rewrite’ the trans-Mississippi West with recourse to the same Eurocentric vocabulary that had been sanctioned by Linnaeus fifty years earlier.

Jefferson made every effort to gather the entire collection of Linnaeus’s works.¹⁰² Barely a decade before his own death, he wrote an enthusiastic letter on the subject of taxonomy to New Jersey physician and politician John Manners:

Nature has, in truth, produced units only through all of her work. Classes, orders, genera, species, are not of her work. Her creation is of individuals. No two animals are exactly alike; no two plants, nor even two leaves or blades of grass; no two crystallizations ... This infinitude of units or individuals being far beyond the capacity of our memory, we are obliged, in aid of that, to distribute them into

¹⁰⁰ Withers, ‘Geography, natural history & the eighteenth-century Enlightenment,’ p. 146; and Datson, ‘Ideal & reality of the Republic of Letters,’ pp 367-86.

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Betts, *Jefferson’s Garden Book*, p. 172. See also William H. Adams (ed.), *The eye of Thomas Jefferson* (Washington, DC, 1976), p. 314; and Browne, *Scientific trends*, p. 381.

¹⁰² Jefferson to Richard Cary, 4 May 1786, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, ix, 444; Jefferson to John Stockdale, 10 Oct. 1787, in *ibid.*, xii, 227; Invoice of books and articles to be bought in Dublin and London, 11 Oct. 1792, in *ibid.*, xxiv, 469; Jefferson to Thomas Mann Randolph, 19 Ap.1798, in *ibid.*, xxx, 283.

masses, throwing into each of these all the individuals which have a certain degree of resemblance; to subdivide these again into smaller groups, according to certain points of dissimilitude observable in them, and so on until we have formed what we call a system of classes, orders, genera and species. In doing this, we fix arbitrarily on such characteristic resemblances and differences as seem to us most prominent and invariable in the several subjects, and most likely to take a strong hold in our memories ... In what I have said on the method of classing, I have not at all meant to insinuate that that of Linnaeus is intrinsically preferable to those of Blumenbach and Cuvier. I adhere to the Linnean because it is sufficient as a groundwork, admits of supplementary insertions as new productions are discovered, and mainly because it has got into so general use that it will not be easy to displace it, and still less to find another which shall have the same singular fortune of obtaining the general consent.¹⁰³

Jefferson here expresses a utilitarian conception of natural history quite in tune with the motto ‘useful knowledge’ of the A.P.S. Linnean taxonomy served primarily as groundwork, the ‘skeleton’ of a vast system of scientific assessment of unexplored territories. By providing a common language to natural historians, and because of this language’s flexibility that ‘admits of supplementary insertions as new productions are discovered’, Linnean taxonomy offered a reliable formula for a system of supervised scientific appropriation of new land features.

Jefferson was by no means Linnaeus’s only follower in the United States.¹⁰⁴ As early as 1744, the British botanist and gardener Peter Collinson, a lifetime sponsor of John Bartram’s botanical excursions in Pennsylvanian country, confided to the Swede: ‘I am glad you have the correspondence of Dr. [Cadwallader] Colden and Mr. [John] Bartram. They are both very indefatigable ingenious men. Your system is much admired

¹⁰³ Jefferson to John Manners, 22 Feb. 1814, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, vii, 207-11. See also Koch, *Philosophy of Jefferson*, p. 111; and Boorstin, *Lost world of Jefferson*, p. 137.

¹⁰⁴ Christopher Looby, ‘The constitution of nature: taxonomy as politics in Jefferson, Peale and Bartram,’ in *Early American Literature*, xxii, no. 3 (Dec., 1987), pp 252-73; and Blunt, *Linnaeus*, p. 112.

in North America.’¹⁰⁵ As it happened, John Bartram and Benjamin Franklin had founded the ‘Philosophical Society’ (the A.P.S.) only a year before.¹⁰⁶

Linnaeus’s scientific base at Uppsala, a place he rarely got out of, functioned as a ‘center of calculation’ in its own right. Linnaeus broadened its scope and turned Uppsala into a pole of scientific training, supervised by him, from which his most promising students were sent to all corners of the globe: North America (Pehr Kalm), South America (Pehr Löfling), Japan and South Africa (Carl Peter Thunberg), India (Johann König), James Cook’s first circumnavigation (Daniel Solander) and even Joseph Banks’s office in Soho Square (the same Solander and Jonas Dryander). Excited by the knowledge that Linnaeus’s students were instructed to write accounts and make drawings of their discoveries, Peter Collinson exulted: ‘It is by you, my dear friend, that the learned and curious Naturalist is so amply gratified, from every part of the world, with new and rare discoveries. Your agents bring you tribute from every quarter; we are to thank them for their observations on the Nile, and at Brazil.’¹⁰⁷ Linnaeus himself delighted in the global reach that his scientific method had achieved, as he confided to British merchant and naturalist John Ellis.¹⁰⁸ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the Swiss philosopher associated (rightly or wrongly) with the ‘noble savage’ concept, admitted to being influenced by the Swede’s oeuvre.¹⁰⁹ Even the Lewis and Clark journals made

¹⁰⁵ Peter Collinson to Linnaeus, 12 Mar. 1744-5, in James E. Smith (ed.), *A selection of the correspondence of Linnaeus, and other naturalists, from the original manuscripts* (2 vols, London, 1821), i, 12. See also A. L. A. Fée, *Vie de Linné, rédigée sur les documents autographes laissés par ce grand homme et suivie de l'analyse de sa correspondance avec les principaux naturalistes de son époque* (Paris, 1832), p. 144. On the relationship between Linnaeus and Collinson, see Andrea Wulf, *The brother gardeners: botany, empire, and the birth of an obsession* (Oxford, 2008), pp 24-5.

¹⁰⁶ Later, in 1747, Collinson admitted to Linnaeus that he favoured the use of Latin to that of the English vernacular in scientific treatises, simply because Latin was ‘more universally read.’ Collinson to Linnaeus, 26 Oct. 1747, in Smith, *Correspondence of Linnaeus*, i, 19.

¹⁰⁷ Collinson to Linnaeus, 10 Apr. 1755, in *ibid.*, i, 34.

¹⁰⁸ Linnaeus to John Ellis, 20 Dec. 1771, in *ibid.*, i, 275.

¹⁰⁹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Linnaeus, 21 Sept. 1771, in *ibid.*, ii, 552. On Linnaeus’s influence on Rousseau, particularly through the *Philosophical botanica*, see Blunt, *Linnaeus*, pp 221-2; and Koerner, *Nature and nation*, p. 25. It is revealing that Rousseau professed to have been also inspired by Buffon. See Roger, *Buffon*, pp 456-58. On Rousseau and the question of the paternity of the ‘noble savage’ concept, see Chapter 4.

open references to Linnean taxonomy.¹¹⁰ Linnaeus's systematic method contained the fundamental presupposition of rational man's ascendancy over his environment. As such, it quickly became inseparable from broader and more concrete Euro-American discourses of colonial expansion in their exploratory (i.e. scientific) phase.

If the dominant arbitrariness of Linnean systematics contrasted with the more inclusive approach to natural history articulated in Buffon's *Histoire naturelle*, in Jefferson's western vision this opposition could be turned into a fruitful combination. In the wake of the Louisiana Purchase, recourse to the Linnean method could subjugate (by measurement and arbitrary, 'civilised' renaming) the Upper Louisianan landscape, while Buffon's historicised, organic method could smoothen the inclusion of Louisiana in the historiography of U.S. nation-building. The only problem was that these two great figures were foreigners. In the formulation of his mythology, Jefferson needed another scientist of renown, of U.S. citizenship, but sufficiently cosmopolitan to maintain the connection between the European and American poles of the Republic of Science. Only Benjamin Franklin could fit that role. Franklin's career as colonial agent to Great Britain (1757-75) had been followed by a successful stint as ambassador to France. He had been elected to the Royal Society (in whose *Transactions* he then published widely) and the Académie des sciences.¹¹¹ Earlier, he had founded the A.P.S. with John Bartram and had served as its first president from 1769 to 1790. Franklin ticked all the boxes.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ For instance, see Clark, 12 June 1804, in Moulton, *Journals*, ii, 313.

¹¹¹ Frank R. Freemon, 'American colonial scientists who published in the "Philosophical Transactions" of the Royal Society,' in *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, xxxix, no. 2 (Apr., 1985), p. 194.

¹¹² Peter S. Du Ponceau, *An historical account of the origin of the American Philosophical Society* (Philadelphia, 1914), pp 3-51; and Gilbert Chinard, *L'apothéose de Benjamin Franklin* (Washington, D.C., 1955), p. 56. The career of another cosmopolitan scientist, the Portuguese naturalist José Correia da Serra, resembles Franklin's in many ways. Correia was a well-travelled friend of Jefferson's, a member the A.P.S., the Académie des sciences and the Royal Society, and another frequent contributor to the latter's *Transactions*. His credentials make him an ideal candidate to illustrate the typical profile of a 'Republic of Science' figure, but I lack space to discuss him here as much as I would like to. See Maria P. Diogo, Ana Carneiro, and Ana Simões, 'The Portuguese naturalist Correia da Serra (1751-1823) and his impact on early nineteenth-century botany,' in *Journal of the History of Biology*, xxxiv, no. 2 (Summer, 2001), pp 353-93.

3. Franklin, the ‘great systematiser’

Franklin owned several of Linnaeus’s works.¹¹³ Throughout his scientific career, he maintained a correspondence with most of the prominent actors of the Republic of Science, including Joseph Banks, Joseph Priestley, Peter Collinson, and Buffon. An open admirer of Franklin, Buffon wrote his Philadelphian counterpart in 1787: ‘I hope you will sustain the happiness of your newly created empire; share your works, and continue to enlighten the new world like you enlightened the old.’¹¹⁴ Implied in Buffon’s praise was the recognition of Franklin’s special position at the crossroads between the Old and the New Worlds of science. Franklin seemed to shift effortlessly from ‘center’ to ‘periphery’ to ‘center’ again. His successive Gulf Stream charts, completed before the American Revolution, had challenged the very notions of ‘center’ and ‘periphery’ in Britain’s relationship to the American mainland.¹¹⁵ Franklin’s line of defense of the New World against Buffon’s accusations reflected Jefferson’s, and, like his successor as ambassador to France, his relationship to the great French naturalist was never seriously affected.

A year after his departure from France, Franklin wrote Jefferson on the subject of the looming U.S. Constitution: ‘The Disposition to furnish Congress with ample Powers, augments daily, as People become more enlightened ... the Cultivators of the Earth who make the Bulk of our Nation, having had good Crops, which are paid for at high Prices with ready Money, the Artisans too receive high Wages, and the Value of all real

¹¹³ Franklin to Joseph Morris, 20 Feb. 1761, in Barbara B. Oberg (ed.), *The papers of Benjamin Franklin* (39 vols, New Haven, 1959-), ix, 274.

¹¹⁴ Buffon to Benjamin Franklin, 1 Jan. 1787, unpublished, in ‘The papers of Benjamin Franklin: digital edition’ (<http://franklinpapers.org/franklin/framedVolumes.jsp?vol=44&page=493>) (21 May 2010). The translation is mine.

¹¹⁵ The best discussion of Franklin’s Gulf Stream charts is in Joyce E. Chaplin, ‘Knowing the ocean: Benjamin Franklin and the circulation of Atlantic knowledge,’ in Delbourgo & Dew, *Science & empire*, pp 73-92.

Estates is augmented greatly.’¹¹⁶ That Franklin placed agriculture at the very centre of a discussion on nation-building recalled Jefferson’s *Notes*: ‘those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God.’¹¹⁷ Franklin’s and Jefferson’s farmers were thus one and the same, the physical embodiment of a ‘middle way’ in man’s relationship to nature, poised between the extremes of Buffon’s naturalism and Linnaeus’s rationalism. In 1780 Franklin had shared his hopes with Priestley about the ‘rapid Progress true Science now makes ... O that moral Science were in as fair a Way of Improvement, that Men would cease to be Wolves to one another, and that human Beings would at length learn what they now improperly call Humanity.’¹¹⁸ The emphasis on improvement and the moralisation of ‘true Science’ represented more than mere rhetorical staples in a humanitarian discourse to which Priestley, as a dissenting clergyman, could relate. In the post-1776 North American context, the notion of a ‘true Science’ preserved the civilisational link between the revolutionaries and the imperial motherland which they were otherwise rejecting on political grounds.

Because his own ideological commitment to ‘Progress’ was as tied as Jefferson’s to the question of a post-revolutionary American identity, Franklin was bound to write at some length on the other central preoccupation of would-be U.S. identity makers: the question of the American Indians. It is probably not a coincidence that Franklin waited until 1784 (after the war was won) to compose his well-known ‘Remarks concerning the savages of North America’, a series of anecdotes pointing to the lack of enough common cultural ground between Euro-Americans and geographically proximate tribes

¹¹⁶ Franklin to Jefferson, 20 Mar. 1786, in Albert H. Smyth, *The writings of Benjamin Franklin* (New York, 1905-07), ix, 499. See also Edward E. Hale, *Franklin in France* (2nd ed., 2 vols, New York, 1969), i, 354.

¹¹⁷ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, pp 196-7.

¹¹⁸ Franklin to Priestley, 8 Feb. 1780, in Oberg, *Franklin papers*, xxxi, 455. On Priestley, and more particularly on Joseph Banks’ attempt to have Priestley appointed scientific advisor to James Cook’s second voyage around the globe, see Henry S. Commager, *The empire of reason: how Europe imagined and America realized the Enlightenment* (Garden City, 1977), p. 30.

(Franklin spoke mostly of the Iroquois) as the primary reason for tension and conflict.¹¹⁹

However, Franklin's culturally relativistic tone in the 'Remarks' contrasted somewhat with his earlier, pre-revolutionary thoughts on the matter, which he had expressed in their most coherent form to his friend and scientific colleague Peter Collinson in 1753:

The proneness of human Nature to a life of ease, of freedom from care and labour appears strongly in the little success that has hitherto attended every attempt to civilize our American Indians, in their present way of living, almost all their Wants are supplied by the spontaneous Productions of Nature, with the addition of very little labour, if hunting and fishing may indeed be called labour when Game is so plenty, they visit us frequently, and see the advantages that Arts, Sciences, and compact Society procure us, they are not deficient in natural understanding and yet they have never shewn any Inclination to change their manner of life for ours, or to learn any of our Arts ...¹²⁰

Twenty years before the Revolution, a visionary Franklin seems to have envisioned the root obstacle that would confront Jeffersonian expansionist discourse: to face tribal populations who lived in western territories but were neither sedentary, nor numerous, nor 'civilised' (in the Euro-American standard of espousing agriculture and private property as well as a regulated code of law) and proved, by and large, reluctant to espouse a radically different mode of living.¹²¹ How to bypass this obstacle? Jefferson espoused the idea of 'going native' in order to emphasise the historico-geographical

¹¹⁹ Franklin, 'Remarks concerning the savages of North America,' in idem, *Autobiography and other writings*, ed. Ormond Seavey (New York, 1993), pp 311-18. See also Ralph Ketcham (ed.), *The political thought of Benjamin Franklin* (2nd ed., Indianapolis, IN, 2003), pp 368-73; and Jessica Narloch, *White men or Native Americans: who are the real savages? A research based on the texts of Benjamin Franklin and John Smith* (Munich, 2007), pp 7-9.

¹²⁰ Franklin to Collinson, 9 May 1753, in Oberg, *Franklin Papers*, iv, 477. See also Lorraine S. Pangle, *The political philosophy of Benjamin Franklin* (Baltimore, 2007), p. 26; and Alan Houston, *Benjamin Franklin and the politics of improvement* (New Haven, 2008), pp 126-7.

¹²¹ John Jay to Jefferson, 14 Dec. 1786, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, x, 599. See also Ralph Lerner, *The thinking revolutionary: principle and practice in the new Republic* (Ithaca, 1987), p. 150; Albert J. Beveridge, *The life of John Marshall: frontiersman, soldier, lawmaker* (2nd ed., Washington, D.C., 2000), p. 236; and Victor G. Kiernan, *America, the new imperialism: from white settlement to world hegemony* (2nd ed., New York and London, 2005), p. 34.

legitimacy of the Republic as springing from North American soil, while simultaneously promoting ‘Arts, Sciences, and compact Society’ as political instruments of acculturation. Jefferson hoped, at had Franklin before him, that this uneasy blend could fuel a process of territorial aggrandisement that (rhetorically at least) *looked* natural.

From the broader viewpoint of the globalisation of the ‘civilised versus wild’ dialectic, Franklin’s instinctive role as a federator logically led him to defend the integrity of the Republic of Science, on which Jefferson later depended so heavily for both his intellectual and institutional connections in the effort of elaborating his own ‘U.S. middle way’ brand of the dialectic. Franklin’s correspondence with Joseph Banks illustrates his ties with the Republic of Science. When Franklin convinced French authorities not to interfere with James Cook’s third circumnavigation (1776-80), he eagerly acknowledged Banks’s gratitude: ‘Be assured that I long earnestly for a Return of those peaceful Times, when I could sit down in sweet Society with my English philosophic Friends, communicating to each other new Discoveries, and proposing Improvements of old ones, all tending to extend the Power of Man over Matter.’¹²² And in 1783: ‘I join with you most cordially in rejoicing at the Return of Peace ... What vast Additions to the Conveniences and Comforts of Living might Mankind have acquired, if the Money spent in Wars had been employ’d in Works of public Utility. What an Extention of Agriculture even to the Tops of our Mountains; What Rivers render’d navigable, or join’d by Canals; what Bridges, Acqueducts, new Roads and other public Works, Edifices and Improvements.’¹²³ A war of knowledge for the takeover of ‘Matter’ became the substitute for military conflict. By the same process, former war enemies

¹²² Franklin to Joseph Banks, 9 Sept. 1782, in John Bigelow (ed.), *The works of Benjamin Franklin* (12 vols, New York, 1904), ix, 429. See John Gascoigne, *Science in the service of empire: Joseph Banks, the British state and the uses of science in the age of revolution* (Cambridge, 1998), pp 151-2.

¹²³ Franklin to Banks, 27 July 1783, in Bigelow, *Works of Franklin*, x, 147. See Ketcham, *Political thought of Franklin*, p. 335; and Houston, *Politics of improvement*, p. 152.

now turned into allies against a new adversary, in the shape of the creeping, reified ‘wilderness’ that still reigned in yet so many unexplored world territories. On this, Banks could only agree with Franklin.¹²⁴

Because Buffon, Linnaeus and Franklin happened to be the most emblematic figures of the Republic of Science in the eighteenth century, it is no real surprise that Jefferson should have engaged so much with their respective *oeuvres*. As the self-conscious architect of the new U.S. ‘middle way’, Jefferson envisioned his country’s increase in prestige within the informal Republic as a paramount condition of the parallel rise of a U.S. national consciousness. Buffon, Linnaeus, and Franklin were all affiliated in some way to prominent ‘centers of calculation’ (Philadelphia, London, Paris, Uppsala) and worked throughout their lives to thicken their intellectual and doctrinal ties with the other great ‘centers’ of their time. While Linnaeus sponsored his students’ botanising trips around the world, Buffon gave his advice on the selection of astronomers, naturalists, and geographers for Jean François de Galaup de Lapérouse’s crew in advance of the captain’s anticipated Crown-backed circumnavigation (1785-8). Buffon also encouraged Lapérouse to have specimens collected for study and later display at the Jardin du Roi.¹²⁵ As for Franklin, with John Bartram he had founded the A.P.S., who supervised the first U.S. expedition to the Pacific Northwest Coast.

From the 1780s, Jefferson showed a growing interest in the Northwest Coast (a region that, at the time, encompassed the present-day states of Oregon, Washington, and

¹²⁴ Banks to Franklin, 29 Mar. 1780, in Neil Chambers (ed.), *The scientific correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks, 1765-1820* (6 vols, London, 2007-), i, 228-9: ‘Permit me also as President of the Royal Society to thank you in the name of many of our most valuable members who Abstracting themselves from all less generous considerations fix their whole attention upon the great Object of Science & would take the most publick method of conveying to you their acknowledgements were they not sensible that such an act might be wilfully misunderstood.’ See also John Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment: useful knowledge and polite culture* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 2003), p. 13; and Harold B. Carter, *Sir Joseph Banks, 1743-1820* (London, 1988), p. 183.

¹²⁵ Richard Drayton, *Nature’s government: science, imperial Britain, and the ‘improvement’ of the world* (Yale University Press, 2000), pp 48, 109; and Spary, *Utopia’s garden*, p. 78.

the southern half of British Columbia). He knew of Spanish, British, and Russian interest in the area, as is indicated by this letter communicated in 1790 to William Carmichael, chargé d'affaires to the Spanish Crown: 'the North West coast of our continent, of which such wonders had been published in Capt. Cook's voyages that it excited similar expeditions from other countries also: and that the American vessels were expressly forbidden to touch at any Spanish port but in cases of extreme distress.'¹²⁶ The 'two vessels' mentioned here were John Kendrick's *Columbia* and Robert Gray's *Lady Washington*.¹²⁷ But the quoted passage especially reveals the extent of Jefferson's familiarity with James Cook. Perhaps Cook's third voyage, and the journals it produced, had brought Jefferson to another important realisation. The Pacific Northwest belonged vitally to the North American continent. In the aftermath of the Revolution, exploring the region and laying claim to it ought not to be considered a dream but a necessary parameter of the growth of a U.S. national consciousness. It represented the embryo of a continental teleology that would later justify the Louisiana Purchase.¹²⁸

Jefferson sharpened his understanding of the geopolitical motivations behind Cook's voyages first by his acquaintance with John Ledyard, who had served as a crew member on Cook's third circumnavigation.¹²⁹ There is undoubtedly a causal link between Ledyard's experience on board Cook's ship and Jefferson's subsequent support of Ledyard's abortive plan to access the Northwest Coast via Russia and the Pacific Ocean.¹³⁰ But Ledyard had received the blessing of another important figure of the scientific community, in the person of Sir Joseph Banks. Jefferson's and Banks's shared

¹²⁶ Jefferson to William Carmichael, 11 Apr. 1790, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xvi, 329. See also K. M. Dallas, *Trading posts or penal colonies: the commercial significance of Cook's New Holland route to the Pacific* (Hobart, 1969), p. 50.

¹²⁷ During his second voyage to the Pacific Northwest Coast in 1792, Robert Gray gave the Columbia River its name.

¹²⁸ Dunbar to Jefferson, 30 June 1800, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxxii, 37.

¹²⁹ Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and his time* (6 vols, Boston, 1948-81), ii, *passim*; and Augur, *Passage to glory*, pp 167-70, 173-7, 180-2. For biographical information about Ledyard, see Chapter 1 of this thesis, *passim*.

¹³⁰ Ledyard to Jefferson, 16 Aug. 1786, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, x, 259. See also Chapter 1 of this thesis.

connection to Ledyard marks the starting point of remarkably similar careers in the supervision of voyages of exploration. Although evidence has never shown that they corresponded directly, Banks and Jefferson were regularly made aware of the other's activities through other people. In 1789 it was Thomas Paine who informed Jefferson of Ledyard's whereabouts: 'On the receipt of your last I went to Sir Joseph Banks to inform him of your having heard from Lediard from Grand Cairo ... Sir Joseph is one of the Society for promoting that undertaking. He has an high opinion of Lediard, and thinks him the only man fitted for such an exploration. As you may probably hear of Lediard by accounts that may not reach here Sir Joseph will be obliged to you to communicate to him any matters respecting him that may arrive to you.'¹³¹

Unlike Jefferson, Banks was particularly interested in Ledyard's (equally vague and overambitious) next scheme, that of exploring the African continent horizontally from the Red Sea to the Atlantic Ocean. The plan fitted well with the inception of the London-based African Association, of which Banks was a founder. This led Banks to informally recruit Ledyard.¹³² The mission ended in failure, just like the one Jefferson had mildly encouraged a few years earlier. But neither man lost faith in the geopolitical potential of voyages of discovery. Born in the same year, both of them presidents of their countries' foremost scientific society, they had strictly no equals as administrators of exploration in the period 1780-1810. Within the family circle of 'Reason's children', Jefferson and Banks were more closely related than with anybody else.¹³³

¹³¹ Thomas Paine to Jefferson, 16 Feb. 1789, in *ibid.*, xiv, 568; and Jefferson to Paine, 19 May 1789, in *ibid.*, xv, 137. See also Moncure D. Conway, *The life of Thomas Paine: with a history of his literary, political and religious career in America, France, and England* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 2012), pp 263-4.

¹³² Dorothy Middleton, 'Banks and African exploration,' in Banks, *Banks: a global perspective*, pp 173-4. Ledyard died of poisoning in Cairo in early 1789, before he could even start on his trip.

¹³³ The phrase 'Reason's children' is from Ronda, *Finding the West*, p. xvi.

C. Historical parallels to Jeffersonian ‘enlightened expansionism’

1. Joseph Banks

Historian James Ronda has voiced the urgency for some comparative work on Jefferson and Banks: ‘If Lewis sought identification with Cook, Jefferson would have surely chosen Banks as his model ... Banks was a patron of global exploration and an explorer of the South Pacific in his own right. Captain James Cook made three epic voyages of exploration in the Pacific before his death in 1779. But it was Banks who provided the intellectual foundation for those journeys.’¹³⁴ Banks embodied the image of the patron of science, and his presidency of the Royal Society (1778-1820) assured him strong political connections. Among those was King George III, who loved botany and made Banks the first informal director of Kew Gardens.¹³⁵ Banks’s growing influence as an advisor to the British executive in the field of economic botany opened him the gates of the Privy Council in 1797, where he advised on matters of trade and coin. He also became a member of the Board of Longitude.¹³⁶

Banks was probably more of a scientist with political inclinations, and Jefferson more of a politician with a strong scientific bent.¹³⁷ The first important divergence in the direction of the two men’s respective careers occurred in the late 1760s. While Jefferson was still practicing law and becoming involved in Virginian politics via his election to the House of Burgesses in 1769,¹³⁸ Banks, the heir to a sizable fortune and already a solid amateur botanist, joined the *Endeavour* expedition at his own expense.¹³⁹ He did

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹³⁵ Patrick O’Brian, *Joseph Banks: a life* (London, 1987), pp 177-8.

¹³⁶ Gascoigne, *Banks & the Enlightenment*, p. 14; and O’Brian, *Joseph Banks*, p. 239.

¹³⁷ Jefferson later claimed that he prized his presidency of the A.P.S. above that of the United States. Ronda, “‘To acquire what knowledge you can,’” pp 409-13.

¹³⁸ Malone, *Jefferson & his time*, ii, 128-42.

¹³⁹ Banks to William Francis Perrin, 16 Aug. 1768, in Neil Chambers (ed.), *The Indian and Pacific correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks, 1768-1820* (3 vols, London, 2010-), i, 26-8.

not travel on his own. Instead, he went on board with Linnaeus's former student Daniel Solander as his associate, whom he had met in London a few years earlier.

Cook's first circumnavigation had an affiliated 'center of calculation' at the Royal Society of London.¹⁴⁰ While Cook provided leadership and decided where to anchor at throughout the voyage, Banks, Solander, and a crew of draughtsmen that included young Sydney Parkinson were engaged in the meticulous collecting, drawing, and naming of the unfamiliar natural features they encountered, using the Linnean method.¹⁴¹ These men were involved in a process of textual and visual expansion. Banks observed that 'The South Sea at least has never been visited by any man of Science in any Branch of Literature', thus spreading the application of discursive 'silencing' even to his European competitors.¹⁴² The expedition produced journals, botanical and landscape drawings, and a wealth of natural historical descriptions. It brought back countless new specimens for study, either at Banks's Soho Square headquarters, at the British Museum (where Solander worked part-time), or at Kew Gardens, where attempts at transplantation were then becoming common practice.¹⁴³

The *Endeavour* journey was paradoxically the only Cook circumnavigation in which Banks got involved as a crew member. Having imposed too many conditions for his participation in the second (*Resolution*) circumnavigation, he got frustrated and never joined the crew. Incidentally, his letter of complaint to John Montagu, fourth Earl of

¹⁴⁰ Chapter 4 discusses the *Endeavour* expedition in greater detail.

¹⁴¹ Banks to James Douglas, fourteenth Earl of Morton, 1 Dec. 1768, in *ibid.*, i, 33-5. Giving an account of the first leg of the trip between Plymouth and Madeira, Banks explained: 'we hop'd to make great additions to natural history, as probably nobody but ourselves ever had so good an opportunity of taking & preserving them. Nor were we mistaken, for our first Essay produced an animal whom we could not refer to any known genus ... Of these we have already taken twelve species, & made Drawings & descriptions of all, as well as preserv'd in spirit as many as we could.'

¹⁴² Banks to Perrin, 16 Aug. 1768, in *ibid.*, i, 26. See Anne Salmond, *The trial of the cannibal dog: the remarkable story of Captain Cook's encounters in the South Seas* (New Haven, 2003), p. 30.

¹⁴³ Neil Chambers, 'Letters from the president: the correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks,' in *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, liii, no. 1 (Jan., 1999), p. 42.

Sandwich and First Lord of the Admiralty at the time, reveals Banks's own peculiar conception of the 'center of calculation' principle:

When it was first proposed to me by your Lordship to go to the South Seas again, if His Majesty should think proper to send Ships to perfect the Discoveries that had been begun in the last Voyage, I joyfully embrac'd a proposal of all others the best suited to my Disposition and Pursuits. I pleg'd myself then to your Lordship, and have since, by the whole tenor of my Conversation and Correspondence, pleg'd myself to all Europe, not only to go [on] the Voyage, but to take with me as many able Artists as the Income of my Fortune would allow me to pay, by whose means the learned world in general might reap as much benefit as possible from those Discoveries which my good Fortune or Industry might enable me to make.¹⁴⁴

This statement of purpose clearly shows that Banks conceived of exploratory science as a transnational enterprise. The 'many able Artists' under his wing would each contribute a picture of some unknown parts of the world, like pieces of a jigsaw. Once completed and made available to the broader scientific community, these 'pictures' could become of such geopolitical import that for Banks they justified increased financial backing of exploring expeditions by the British government. Other European countries might benefit from the accumulated data, but never as much as the country where the 'center of calculation' was geographically located.

After a last botanising trip to Iceland in 1772, Banks turned into an armchair naturalist. We cannot underestimate the impact of his former exploring experiences on Banks's subsequent career as an expedition planner.¹⁴⁵ They certainly added weight to

¹⁴⁴ Banks to John Montagu, fourth Earl of Sandwich, 30 May 1772, in Chambers, *Indian and Pacific correspondence of Banks*, i, 116-21. On Banks's career with a decent treatment of the *Resolution* conflict, see Hector C. Cameron, *Sir Joseph Banks, K.B., P.R.S.: the autocrat of the philosophers* (London, 1952).

¹⁴⁵ Harold Carter, 'Introduction,' in Neil Chambers (ed.), *The letters of Sir Joseph Banks: a selection, 1768-1820* (London, 2000), p. xiii.

his candidacy for the presidency of the Royal Society in 1778. From that date onwards, Banks would become the most influential scientific administrator in Europe. The British government consulted him regularly on matters of colonial science.¹⁴⁶ Crucially, Banks guaranteed the sponsorship of the Royal Society for the numerous voyages of discovery that he organised in the period 1780-1800. Like Jefferson he maintained a correspondence of global proportions, comprising over three thousand people, which promised to keep him abreast of the slightest tremors felt within the Republic of Science.¹⁴⁷

Like Jefferson, Banks admired Linnaeus, whom he called ‘that God of my adoration.’ (Linnaeus had celebrated Banks, in Latin, as early as 1771.)¹⁴⁸ In 1778 the Englishman reminded the Swede’s son that he had ‘invariably studied by the Rules of his System, under your Learned Friend Dr. Solander, So that the Plants in my intended Publication will be arrangd according to his Strictest rules. Such as are of Genera describd by him will have his names. The new ones, which I think will almost outnumber them, will be

¹⁴⁶ The examples abound. I shall only provide a few of them. On the transplanted of the breadfruit to the West Indian Islands, see Banks to Charles Jenkinson, first Baron Hawkesbury and first Earl of Liverpool, 30 Mar. 1787, in Chambers, *Indian & Pacific correspondence*, ii, 171-73. On the establishment of a botanic garden at Calcutta, see Banks to Sir George Yonge, 15 May 1787, in *ibid.*, ii, 190-91. In this particular instance, Banks described Bengal as ‘a vast blank in the book of information, which no one hitherto has attempted to fill up.’ Still in relation to colonial transplanted, see Banks to William Wyndham Grenville, first Baron Grenville, 20 July 1796, in Chambers, *Letters of Banks*, p. 174. On the colonisation of western Africa, see Banks to Jenkinson, 8 June 1799, in *ibid.*, p. 209. See also Tim Fulford, Debbie Lee, and Peter J. Kitson (eds), *Literature, science and exploration in the Romantic era: bodies of knowledge* (Cambridge, 2004), pp 73-4.

¹⁴⁷ David Maberley, ‘Foreword,’ in Chambers, *Letters of Banks*, p. xi. Banks often supported the pacifism inherent in the very notion of a Republic of Science, and this transpires in his letters to Franklin (see above). See Banks to Jacques Julien Houttou de La Billardière, 9 June 1796, in *ibid.*, p. 171. Banks’s argumentation is illuminating: ‘That the science of two Nations may be at Peace while their Politics are at war is an axiom we have Learned from your Protection to Capt. Cook, & surely nothing is so likely to Abate the unjustifiable Rancour that Politicians frequently entertain against Each other as to See Harmony and good will Prevail Among their Brethren who Cultivate Science.’ See also Roger L. Williams, *French botany in the Enlightenment: the ill-fated voyages of La Pérouse and his rescuers* (Dordrecht, 2003), p. 211; and Harry Liebersohn, *The travelers’ world: Europe to the Pacific* (Cambridge, MA, 2006), pp 106-07.

¹⁴⁸ Banks to Jean Florimond Boudon de Saint-Amans, 27 Feb. 1792, in Chambers, *Scientific correspondence*, iv, 109; and Carl Linnaeus to Banks, 8 Aug. 1771, in *ibid.*, i, 42-3. Here is an extract from Chambers’s translation of Linnaeus’s letter: ‘Immortal Banks, I write to join with that public approbation, which the whole community of Botanists with a unanimous cry makes in your praise. None, from the earth’s foundation, has ventured such great things; none has ever been so generous; none, at any time, has so exposed himself to all dangers as you alone have. We botanists all give thanks to the almighty triune God, who has kept you safe through so many dangers. For this enterprise of yours I am certain that, more outstanding than all botanists who lived before you, you are the glory not only of England, but of the whole world.’ Linnaeus certainly had a proclivity for exaggeration in his praise of other (non-rival) scientists, but this still gives an indication of Banks’s fame as a naturalist already by 1771.

named Either in honor of distinguished Botanists, or, according to the Rules in *Philosophia Botanica*, by names derivd from the Greek.’¹⁴⁹ At the same time, Banks claimed that his interest in botany had first been sparked by his reading of Buffon’s *Histoire naturelle*.¹⁵⁰ The similarity in influences between Jefferson and Banks suggests that it is important to compare their respective instructions for travelers. The Englishman wrote many more such letters, but practically any of these may be compared with Jefferson’s masterful collage in his 1803 directions to Meriwether Lewis. It is perhaps most fitting here to discuss Banks’s supervision of naturalist-surgeon Archibald Menzies of the Vancouver circumnavigation, because Menzies explored the Pacific Northwest Coast.

The Vancouver Expedition (1791-5) went around the globe under the aegis of the British Admiralty, with the purpose of significantly extending British political and commercial influence over the North Pacific region. Spain had been alarmed by Cook’s reconnaissances of the area in the 1770s, and so had sponsored several Alaskan expeditions in the 1780s to try to reassert its dominance there. Because he sailed in the midst of what would become the Nootka Sound Crisis, Vancouver’s objectives became increasingly diplomatic. Vancouver summarised these objectives tersely: ‘it was deemed expedient, that an officer should be sent to Nootka to receive back, in form, a restitution of the territories on which the Spaniards had seized, and also to make an accurate survey of the [Northwest] coast, from the 30th degree of north latitude north-westward towards Cook’s river; and further, to obtain every profitable information that could be collected respecting the natural and political state of that country.’¹⁵¹ Vancouver had been on the

¹⁴⁹ Banks to Carolus Linnaeus the younger, Dec. 1778, in *ibid.*, i, 185-6. This constitutes definite evidence of Banks’s recourse to Linnaeus’s *Philosophia botanica* for his natural historical observations, descriptions and naming of specimens. See also Gascoigne, *Banks & the Enlightenment*, p. 105.

¹⁵⁰ Henri Nadault de Buffon (ed.), *Correspondance inédite de Buffon, à laquelle ont été réunies toutes les lettres publiées jusqu’à ce jour* (2 vols, Paris, 1860), ii, 316, n3.

¹⁵¹ George Vancouver, *A voyage of discovery to the Pacific Ocean and round the world* (3 vols, London, 1798), i, pp x-

crew for Cook's two last voyages, and he seemed to share with his former leader an obsession with the elusive Northwest Passage, in which Jefferson also believed.¹⁵²

Menzies, Vancouver's principal scientist, received his instructions from Banks in early 1791. The introductory paragraph of Banks's letter has a proto-Jeffersonian tone: 'The following instructions you will consider as a guide to the outline of your conduct, but, as many particulars will doubtless occur in the investigation of unknown Countries that are not noticed in them, all such are left to your discretion & good sense; and you are hereby directed to act in them as you judge most likely to promote the interest of Science, & contribute to the increase of human knowledge.' Banks stressed that Menzies' overarching goal was the 'increase of human knowledge' along transnational lines. More concretely, he wanted to ensure that Menzies' travel journal would be later transmitted to William Grenville, the British secretary of state for foreign affairs.¹⁵³

Banks then moved rapidly to the heart of his directives:

In all places where the Ship in which you are embarked shall touch, and the Commander shall make sufficient stay, you are to pay a particular regard to the nature of the soil, & to note down its quality, whether Clay, Sand, Gravel, Loam &c. &c., and how it is circumstanced in regard to water. You are to remark particularly [on] the size of the Trees that grow upon it, whether they stand in thick close Groves, or seperate and distinct from each other. You are to consider also, as far as you are enabled to do by the productions, the probable Climate, and whether, should it any time hereafter be deemed

xi. See George Godwin, *Vancouver: a life, 1757-1798* (London, 1930), p. 28; Derek Pethick, *The Nootka connection: Europe and the Northwest Coast, 1790-1795* (Vancouver, 1980), p. 98; and Germaine Warkentin (ed.), *Canadian exploration literature* (2nd ed., Toronto, 2006), p. 401.

¹⁵² Glyndwr Williams, 'George Vancouver, the admiralty, and exploration in the late eighteenth century,' in Stephen Haycox, James Barnett, and Caedmon Liburd (eds), *Enlightenment and exploration in the North Pacific, 1741-1805* (Seattle and London, 1997), pp 38-48; J. C. H King, 'Vancouver: cautious collector,' in *ibid.*, pp 149-60; and Robin Fisher, 'George Vancouver and the native peoples of the Northwest Coast,' in *ibid.*, pp 198-209.

¹⁵³ Banks to Archibald Menzies, 22 Feb. 1791, in Chambers, *Indian and Pacific correspondences*, iv, 199-202. After his return to Britain, Menzies procrastinated and failed to get his journal through the press. Banks, however, did manage to procure a large portion of the manuscript. The fate of the Menzies manuscript therefore recalls that of the Lewis and Clark journals. See Donald Jackson, 'The race to publish Lewis and Clark,' in Ronda, *Voyages of discovery*, pp 208-28.

expedient to send out settlers from England, the Grains, Pulse and Fruits cultivated in Europe [that] are likely to thrive, and if not what kind of produce would in your opinion be the most suitable.¹⁵⁴

The emphasis was on economic botany, but Banks took care to mention every possible physical feature of the targeted environments: ‘the nature of the soil,’ ‘the size of the Trees,’ ‘the probable Climate,’ etc. Two years later, Jefferson wrote André Michaux: ‘You will ... take notice of the country you pass through, it’s general face, soil, rivers, mountains, it’s productions animal, vegetable, & mineral so far as they may be new to us & may also be useful or very curious.’¹⁵⁵ And in his more refined instructions to Lewis, Jefferson liked to insist that Lewis pay close attention to the ‘character of the [western] country’, one of his favourite phrases, which (as a characterization) presented the advantage of encompassing all aspects of a specifically selected environment: climate, landscape, soil, population, and general extent. In his own instructions to Menzies, Banks resorted to similar categories, and he included a whole section on ethnography: ‘At all places where a friendly intercourse with the Natives is established, you are to make diligent inquiry into their manners, Customs, Language and Religion, & to obtain all the information in your power concerning their manufactures...’.¹⁵⁶

In fact, Banks’s and Jefferson’s sets of instructions look alike up to their finishing paragraphs. While Banks reminded Menzies of the importance of journal-keeping, and advised him to send back to London ‘a complete collection of specimens of Animals,

¹⁵⁴ Banks to Menzies, 2 Feb. 1791, in Chambers, *Indian and Pacific correspondence*, iv, 200. See also John Gascoigne, ‘Joseph Banks, mapping and the geographies of natural knowledge,’ in Miles Ogborn and Charles W. J. Withers (eds), *Georgian geographies: essays on space, place and landscape in the eighteenth century* (Manchester, 2004), p. 168.

¹⁵⁵ See Chapter 1 of this thesis, pp 43-5.

¹⁵⁶ Banks to Menzies, 22 Feb. 1791, in Chambers, *Indian and Pacific correspondence*, iv, 201. The paragraph continues: ‘... their manufactures, particularly the Art of dyeing, in which Savages have been frequently found to excell; and if any part of their Conduct, Civil or Religious, should appear to you so unreasonable as not to be likely to meet with Credit with related to Europe, you are, if you can do it with safety and propriety, to make yourself an eye witness of it, in order that the fact of it’s existence may be established on as firm a basis as the nature of the Enquiry will permit.’

Vegetables & Minerals you shall have obtained, as well as such curious articles of the Cloths, Arms, Implements and manufactures of the Indians as you shall deem worthy of particular notice,' Jefferson asked Lewis 'to communicate to us, at seasonable intervals, a copy of your journal, notes & observations, of every kind, putting into cypher whatever might do injury if betrayed.'¹⁵⁷ The fact that Banks and Jefferson never corresponded directly might make little difference from a historian of science's point of view. Conversely, it might show that the post-Buffon, post-Linnaeus phase of Republic of Science networking had (by the late 1790s and early 1800s) witnessed the elaboration of an increasingly harmonised intellectual framework for the supervision of exploratory science, which came to dominate the organisational thinking of all its members.¹⁵⁸

Both the Vancouver and the Lewis and Clark Expedition represented momentous undertakings in late-Enlightenment geopolitical planning and exploration. At the level of their conception, they were the intellectual offspring of a vigorously appropriative brand of early environmentalism that originated in the writings of Linnaeus and Buffon.¹⁵⁹ More openly political aspirations accompanied the planning of these voyages and encouraged funding by state governments, who often had to be first convinced of their utility, except in those rare cases (like in Jefferson's United States) where the main planner happened to be the president of his country. In a sense, such voyages of exploration carried a weight of doctrinal commitment even *before* they started out, which bound them to morph into more or less official expansionist reconnaissances in the long run. The growth of a quasi-symbiotic relationship between exploratory science, diplomacy, and geopolitics was a feature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth

¹⁵⁷ Jefferson's instructions to Lewis, 20 June 1803, in Jackson, *Letters*, i, p. 65.

¹⁵⁸ For a discussion of the importance of publishing expedition journals for the development of 'centers of calculation,' see Anthony Payne, 'The publication and readership of voyage journals in the age of Vancouver, 1730-1830,' in Haycox *et al.*, *Enlightenment & exploration in the North Pacific*, pp 176-86.

¹⁵⁹ Foucault, *The order of things*, pp 29-75.

century in Europe and the United States.¹⁶⁰ Arguably the last heir to this era of peculiar ‘symbiosis’ was Alexander von Humboldt, the great Prussian polymath, founder of the science of modern geography, a good friend of (and thus a potential intellectual link between) Jefferson and Banks, and, most crucially, a visitor to the United States in 1804 – only a few months after Lewis and Clark departed from St Louis. Humboldt, who would soon profess an interest in exploring the trans-Mississippi West when the occasion would permit it, needs to be discussed here because he closes the logical circle, as it were, of Jeffersonian expansionism’s relationship to European ‘enlightened’ scientific discourse. This can be observed as much from Humboldt’s direct interactions with Jefferson, Madison, and Gallatin in Philadelphia in 1804 as from his own travels to South America, undertaken the four years previous.

2. Alexander von Humboldt

Humboldt (1769-1859) is such a pivotal figure in the history of science that it would be redundant to rehearse more than essential biographical details here.¹⁶¹ Following a course that recalled Banks’s early career, Humboldt was a young Prussian administrator-scientist of rising reputation when he undertook (at his own expense) his great voyage to South America, with the blessing of the Spanish Crown. Accompanied by his lifetime collaborator, the French botanist Aimé Bonpland, he explored the territories covered by

¹⁶⁰ In the United States, the Army Corps of Topographical Engineers took the lead in trans-Mississippi western exploration and surveying from the year 1838. Ronda, “‘To acquire what knowledge you can,’” p. 413. Ronda argues that the Army Corps ‘carried on the Jefferson tradition, as did civilian explorers like John Wesley Powell, Clarence King, and Ferdinand V. Hayden.’ I agree with Ronda on this point. It would also deserve further scholarly elaboration.

¹⁶¹ The literature on Humboldt is immense. Helmut de Terra has contributed a quantity of articles and a valuable biography. See Helmut de Terra, *The life and times of Alexander Von Humboldt, 1769-1858* (New York, 1955). For more recent studies, see Douglas Botting, *Humboldt and the cosmos* (London, 1973); Aaron Sachs, *The Humboldt Current: nineteenth-century exploration and the roots of American environmentalism* (New York, 2006); Nicolaas A. Rupke, *Alexander von Humboldt: a metabiography* (Chicago, 2008); and Laura D. Walls, *The passage to cosmos: Alexander von Humboldt and the shaping of America* (Chicago, 2009).

the viceroalties of New Granada, Peru, and New Spain. Unlike Jefferson and Banks, after his return to Paris Humboldt evaded administrative duties and focused almost exclusively on scientific writing (he was elected to the A.P.S., the Royal Society, and the Académie des sciences, and contributed a wealth of articles to the latter).¹⁶² Humboldt's Spanish American travels resulted in the composition of the thirty-volume *Personal narrative of travels to the equinoctial regions of America during the years 1799–1804*.¹⁶³ This work would represent Humboldt's life achievement, alongside *Cosmos*.¹⁶⁴

That Humboldt travelled (after many previous failed attempts) under the auspices of King Charles IV of Spain was not, at the time, an indication of the range of his fame. He was barely thirty when he sailed out, with his reputation on the rise, but nowhere near that of a Buffon or even a Banks. King Charles's support of Humboldt stemmed from three major factors. First, Charles must have seen propitious political circumstances in Europe to honour the ideal of transnational solidarity inherent in the ethos of a 'Republic of Science'. Second, Humboldt's former employment as administrator in the Prussian mining industry promised economic benefits to the Spanish state, supposing for instance that Humboldt would study (as he did) South American silver and gold mines, and write expert treatises on how to improve their output.

Third, and perhaps foremost, Humboldt's journey (as he detailed to Charles IV) encompassed *all* the Spanish viceregal territories in America, and his proposed accounts (on demographics, topography, climate, colonial legal structures and institutions, reports

¹⁶² Humboldt to the professors of the Muséum d'histoire naturelle, 18 Dec. 1804, in E. T. Hamy (ed.), *Lettres américaines d'Alexandre de Humboldt* (Paris, 1905), p. 176; and professors to Humboldt, 1 Jan. 1805, in *ibid.*, p. 230.

¹⁶³ Alexander von Humboldt and Aimé Bonpland, *Voyage aux régions équinoxiales du nouveau continent* (30 vols, Paris, 1807-34). On the *Voyage*, see Suzanne Zantop, *Colonial fantasies: conquest, family and nation in precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (Durham, NC, 1997), pp 169-72; and the half-fictional work by Daniel Kehlmann, *Measuring the world*, trans. Carol B. Janeway (London, 2007).

¹⁶⁴ Alexander von Humboldt, *Cosmos: a sketch of a physical description of the universe*, trans. E. C. Otté (5 vols, London, 1849-70). In *Cosmos*, Humboldt attempted to understand and explain the universality of natural processes on Earth. *Cosmos* remained unfinished business after his death. Walls, *Passage to cosmos*, pp 220-1.

on landscape improvement, approximate censuses of non-Spanish Europeans and Creoles, etc.) might have provided some invaluable intelligence to the Spanish government, not only for policies of territorial aggrandisement but for the better administration of South American colonies in the fields where they were deemed the weakest. The expulsion of the Jesuits from the southern continent in 1767 had led to a dismantling of old and relatively reliable intelligence networks for the Spanish crown; Humboldt's proposed scientific enterprise, because of its purported nature as an extensive scientific study, may well have represented the possibility of an alternative source of data in the eyes of the king. My purpose here is not to delve too deep in those three factors behind the official permission granted Humboldt to travel through South America, but to deconstruct the myth of Humboldt as the lone, virtuous explorer-scientist, highlighting the peculiar geopolitical circumstances that both allowed and circumscribed his long South American journey. In different circumstances, Humboldt might not have obtained permission to travel at all.¹⁶⁵

Though often portrayed as an early Romantic, Humboldt embodied the finality of late-Enlightenment exploration. He wanted to understand everything, to collect and record everything, to put everything on paper or in boxes, and share everything with 'men of taste', as he liked to call his fellow scientists at the various 'centers of calculation' to which he was affiliated, from Paris to London to Berlin to Philadelphia.¹⁶⁶ He spoke German, French, English, and Spanish fluently, a gift which

¹⁶⁵ On Humboldt's employment in the Prussian mining industry, see Rupke, *Humboldt*, p. 12; Alan S. Weber (ed.), *Nineteenth century science: a selection of original texts* (Orchard Park, NY, 1999), p. 77; and Robert M. Sherwood III, 'The cartography of Alexander von Humboldt: images of the Enlightenment in America' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Texas, Arlington, 2008), p. 54. These works indicated that Humboldt had garnered a solid reputation as a mining administrator by the time he decided to go travelling.

¹⁶⁶ Humboldt to the Institut national de France, 21 June 1803, in Hamy, *Lettres américaines*, pp 156-63. Humboldt wrote this particular letter from Mexico City. He related that 'since the beginning of the expedition in which we engaged ourselves to contribute to the progress of the physical sciences, we have never ceased to look for ways of sending you objects worthy of being conserved in the National Museum.' Suggestively, he added that 'armed with more

promised him a central position in the Republic of Science for the gathering, conveying and categorising of new data. In an 1805 letter to his friend the Swiss physicist and astronomer Marc-Auguste Pictet, Humboldt revealed the core principles of his natural historical method: 'I believe that it is more philosophical to take nature as a whole, than to narrate one's own adventures ... Men want to *see* and I show them a microcosm on a sheet.'¹⁶⁷ This notion of a 'microcosm on a sheet' recalled Jefferson's compressed definition of the trans-Mississippi West as a 'skeleton' in need of sheet-based representation.¹⁶⁸ Humboldt admired Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia*, but Jefferson never travelled. Banks did travel, but published very little. Humboldt did both.¹⁶⁹

On his trip back to the Old Continent in 1804, Humboldt visited the United States for the months of May and June, missing Lewis and Clark by only a few months. In Philadelphia he befriended Jefferson, Madison, Gallatin, and several other figures associated with the A.P.S. and the Republic of Science, most of whom became regular correspondents of his.¹⁷⁰ The motivations behind Humboldt's visit cannot be pinned down to a particular event. He had professed a fascination with the United States (admitting nevertheless that the young Republic was a 'danger' to Spain in the geopolitical realm)¹⁷¹ and with its president.¹⁷² Jefferson returned the admiration and soon a regular correspondence developed between the two men, carrying a supposed

solid knowledge and more exact instruments, we may someday undertake a second expedition; it is already our dream.' The translation (from the French) is mine.

¹⁶⁷ Humboldt to M.A. Pictet, 3 Feb. 1805, in *ibid.*, pp 182-4. The translation is mine, but the emphasis is Humboldt's.

¹⁶⁸ And, to a lesser degree, Banks's description of Bengal as a 'vast blank in the book of information.' Banks to Yonge, 15 May 1787, in Chambers, *Indian and Pacific correspondence*, ii, 190-91. See Fulford *et al*, *Bodies of knowledge*, pp 73-4; DeRosier, *William Dunbar*, p. 127; and Gerald Holton, *Science and anti-science* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), p. 117.

¹⁶⁹ Humboldt to Jefferson, 12 June 1809, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, i, 264-5. On Humboldt as the 'de facto center of an entire research front,' see Walls, *Passage to cosmos*, p. 109.

¹⁷⁰ Helmut de Terra, 'Alexander von Humboldt's correspondence with Jefferson, Madison, and Gallatin,' in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, ciii, no. 6 (Dec., 1959), pp 783-806.

¹⁷¹ Humboldt to José de Espinosa y Tello, 25 Apr. 1804, in Ulrike Moheit (ed.), *Alexander von Humboldt: Briefe aus Amerika, 1799-1804* (Berlin, 1993), p. 287.

¹⁷² Helmut de Terra, 'Motives and consequences of Alexander von Humboldt's visit to the United States (1804),' in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, civ, no. 3 (Jun., 1960), pp 314-16.

ideal of disinterested science, which did include a lot of science but also a lot of geopolitics. Jefferson perceived in Humboldt a potential source of intelligence on the United States's North American neighbour, New Spain: 'The countries you have visited are of those least known, and most interesting, and a lively desire will be felt generally to receive the information you will be able to give. No one will feel it more strongly than myself, because no one perhaps views this new world with more partial hopes of its exhibiting an ameliorated state of the human condition.'¹⁷³ In keeping with the politically motivated 'pacific' rationale of Republic of Science members like Franklin and Banks, it was a recurrent trait of Jefferson's rhetoric to invoke ulterior philanthropic motives as a justification for the garnering of geopolitical data. Humboldt acceded to Jefferson's request, detailing what he knew about the natural productions of Texas. He supplied hard facts on the province's geography, politics, and demographics, and touched on the subject of the western boundaries of Louisiana.¹⁷⁴

Probably because he had heard much about Lewis and Clark's journey, Humboldt grew interested in the trans-Mississippi West. 'This country which extends to the west of the mountains presents a vast field to be conquered by the sciences!' Humboldt exclaimed to the architect and naturalist William Thornton.¹⁷⁵ A year after his return to Europe, Humboldt asked John Vaughan (at the time working as the treasurer of the A.P.S.) about a prospective 'Missury project': 'when, when will I be with you again? When will I be able to penetrate these immense western regions, for which M. Jefferson (in his new position) would be able to gather more support than before? I have not lost

¹⁷³ Jefferson to Humboldt, 28 May 1804, in Moheit, *Briefe aus Amerika*, p. 294. See also Blackhawk, *Violence over the land*, pp 330-31; and Gerard Helferich, *Humboldt's cosmos: Alexander von Humboldt and the Latin American journey that changed the way we see the world* (New York, 2004), pp 296-97.

¹⁷⁴ Humboldt to Jefferson, 27 June 1804, in Moheit, *Briefe aus Amerika*, p. 307. See Sandra Rebok, 'Two exponents of the Enlightenment: transatlantic communication by Thomas Jefferson and Alexander von Humboldt,' in *Southern Quarterly*, xliii, no. 4 (Summer, 2006), pp 126-52; and Walls, *Passage to cosmos*, pp 124-5.

¹⁷⁵ Humboldt to William Thornton, 20 June 1804, in Moheit, *Briefe aus Amerika*, p. 299. All translations (from the French) of Humboldt's letters to his U.S. correspondents are mine.

these hopes.¹⁷⁶ With Jefferson as president of the United States, Humboldt expected that he might obtain sizeable federal funding for a prospective exploring expedition across the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean. In an earlier letter to James Madison, he had predicted the institutionalisation of U.S. western exploration:

I can predict that I will see this beautiful country soon again. By that time, the way by the Missouri to the Pacific coast will be already open. The lakes, Canada and the enormous basin that extends from Pittsburg to the mountains seen by Fidler offer a vast domain for geological researches. With some help from Your Government we could begin a grand undertaking, at least as important as what [Peter S.] Pallas has done. I will even dare penetrate to the North until I reach Mount Elias ... and the Russian possessions!¹⁷⁷

Peter Fidler, a Hudson Bay Company surveyor, was the author of the 'Indian map of the Upper Missouri' (1801) that later got integrated to the Arrowsmith maps that Lewis and Clark had consulted before leaving Camp Dubois in 1803.¹⁷⁸ Always well-referenced, Humboldt seemed convinced that the Corps of Discovery would accomplish one of its major geopolitical objectives with the symbolic junction of the Missouri River and the Pacific coast. Conversations with Jefferson must have comforted him in the belief that the Corps would pave the way towards more systematised exploratory ventures and, in discourse, towards the conception of the United States as a continental unit joining the two oceans. In that sense, Humboldt understood the role of Lewis and Clark as

¹⁷⁶ Humboldt to John Vaughan, 10 June 1805, in Hamy, *Lettres américaines*, p. 188. See Ingo Schwartz (ed.), *Alexander von Humboldt und die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika: Briefwechsel* (Berlin, 2004).

¹⁷⁷ Humboldt to Madison, 19 June 1804, in Moheit, *Briefe aus Amerika*, pp 297-8.

¹⁷⁸ Allen, *Image of the American Northwest*, pp 1-47.

forerunners of more systematised American expansion, and he could seriously picture himself as one of those systematisers due to follow in their footsteps.¹⁷⁹

In a sense, Humboldt's greatest achievement in exploration was to manage to reconcile philanthropic rhetoric with more straightforwardly geopolitical interests. A truly magnetic personality, he had few enemies and many followers throughout the scientific world of his time. In writing if not in acts, he often condemned the Spanish colonial system in South America for its dependence on slavery in plantation agriculture. And he frequently sympathised with the plight of Native Americans in all of the viceroyalties of Spanish America, although his ethnological observations could reveal some deep-rooted prejudices. Environmental historian Aaron Sachs has summarised the Humboldt paradox: 'It is true that colonial science did often facilitate conquest. Maps can certainly be useful in planning an attack – whether an actual military invasion or something like an assimilation campaign. But what if Humboldt was just trying ... to “think globally”?'¹⁸⁰ Perhaps indeed, but the notion of 'thinking globally' remained as much an abstraction of Humboldt's discourse as was Jefferson's 'West'. It could be manipulated conceptually to support the formulation of territorial ambitions not actually motivated by science. When King Charles IV granted Humboldt permission to travel across his South American domains, he did it with the knowledge that precious geographical and demographic intelligence would accrue to Spanish colonial authorities.

¹⁷⁹ The extent of Lewis and Clark's geographical achievement was also widely discussed in British newspapers and journals at the time, although with some reservations. See William E. Foley, 'Lewis and Clark's American travels: the view from Britain,' in *Western Historical Quarterly*, xxxiv, no. 3 (Autumn, 2003), pp 301-24. Of course, Humboldt never returned to the U.S. But in his correspondence with Jefferson he continued to express the same wish of exploring the trans-Mississippi West sometime in the future. For example, see Humboldt to Jefferson, 23 Sept. 1810, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, iii, 107.

¹⁸⁰ Sachs, *Humboldt Current*, pp 13, 67. On the discursive connivance between descriptive (map-based) geography and 'imperial ideology,' see Lesley B. Cormack, 'The fashioning of an empire: geography and the state in Elizabethan England,' in Anne Godlewska and Neil Smith (eds), *Geography and empire* (Oxford, 1994), p. 20.

The A.P.S. and its planning of Lewis and Clark represented the U.S. ramification of a process of proto-systematic exploratory science already well-defined in Europe by the 1760s. We may take the voyages of Cook and Bougainville as a starting point. Of course, there were human beings at work behind the articulation of this process. They belonged to various categories, which may be divided into three main types: theoreticians, planners, and agents. There were ‘pure’ theoreticians (Linnaeus and Buffon), planners (Jefferson) and agents (Cook, Vancouver, Bougainville, Lewis and Clark), but also theoretician-planners (Franklin), planner-agents (Banks) and, in rare cases, all three together (Humboldt). Even though this only provides a fraction of the whole picture, I believe it to be sufficiently representative. Moreover, all these figures were related in some way or other to the postulatory articulation of Jeffersonian expansionism. As a scientific institution, the A.P.S. grew to become a ‘center of calculation’ on the model of the Royal Society and the Académie des sciences through Franklin’s formulation of its motto (‘useful knowledge’) and Jefferson’s role in institutionalising the Society by combining two presidencies, of the A.P.S. and of the United States. The Royal Society sponsored its Vancouvers and its William Blighs.¹⁸¹ In Paris, Buffon and André Thouin at the Académie des sciences and the Jardin du Roi supported its Bougainvilles, Lapérouses, and Humboldts. After more than a decade of failed attempts by Jefferson, by 1803 the A.P.S. had finally tutored its own agents in the characters of Lewis and Clark.¹⁸²

It could be argued that the notion of ‘centers of calculation’ is an inflated and over-interpreted one. After all, science remained science, and as a discipline it could not

¹⁸¹ William Bligh’s *Bounty* and *Providence* expeditions for the transplantation of the breadfruit tree from Tahiti to the West Indies, and Banks’s supervision of both voyages, will be briefly discussed in Chapter 4.

¹⁸² John C. Greene, *American science in the age of Jefferson* (Ames, IA, 1984), pp 51-4.

pretend to a central role in the actual, practical ‘stuff’ of territorial expansion. I hold this viewpoint to be dangerous one, not only because it implicitly downplays the importance of discourse itself but also because it seems to take the very totality of eighteenth-century exploratory science for granted. This line of reasoning would also argue that states possessing the technology, funding, and manpower to sponsor voyages of exploration obviously ought to have done so. But then the spectre of critique quickly evaporates. Holding such a position, if discourse is taken into account, would rather equate to the belief that a state with imperial aspirations ought to fulfil them if it has the *means* to do so. This translates as a teleology, whose (U.S.) doctrinal crux, dressed perhaps with more evangelical rhetoric, would recur in the nineteenth-century concept-myth of Manifest Destiny. Bernard DeVoto has shown that among the prominent traits of this myth were a belief in the inevitability of U.S. geographical expansion and the cultivation of the ideal of continental territorial contiguity.¹⁸³

In the specific case of the U.S. expansionist teleology, the Jeffersonian model for ‘natural historicising’ American Indians sought to turn a profoundly human conflict into a dichotomy between essentialized categories: ‘civilised’ versus ‘wilderness.’ This shift helped to *naturalise* the raw fact of U.S. westward expansion, since the so-called western environmental ‘wilderness’ state remained theoretically outside the very possibility of culturo-economic conflict. The more concrete, administrative challenge that Native Americans would pose in newly integrated and organised western territories went *beyond* discourse – that is, beyond Jefferson’s expertise. This explains why Jefferson found the expedient of Indian relocation beyond the Mississippi so attractive. But this expedient remained heavily dependent on the availability of land beyond the

¹⁸³ DeVoto, *Course of empire*, p. 404; and Drake, *The nation’s nature*, pp 231-64.

frontier. Jefferson, and Andrew Jackson after him, seem to have deliberately ignored the nature of the frontier (and so the ‘expedient’ of Indian removal) as a finite parameter.

From the beginning, then, the discursive prototype of nationalism that emerged from Jeffersonian expansionism was grounded in a contradiction. In accordance with the notion of an ‘Empire of Liberty’, any non-integrated western territory could be made politically and administratively part of the Union and, in the process, could ‘naturalise’ its new proprietors. When Lewis and Clark adopted native tribal codes at various points in their journey, they were making a statement that they, too, belonged to the ‘West.’ The distinctiveness of the Jeffersonian discourse of expansion and its application by Jefferson’s western agents culminated in this constant longing for the soil-related legitimacy of land occupation, a longing which originated historically in the crisis of identity that followed the War of Independence, and geographically in the continental and contiguous nature of North America.¹⁸⁴ No sea or ocean separated Philadelphia as ‘center of calculation’ from its western periphery. The development of U.S. expansionist doctrinal thought was bounded, as a result, to base itself on the hard reality of territorial continuity. Once the discursive emphasis on continuity was appropriately conveyed to a U.S. national audience, Jefferson’s peculiar brand of western discourse (but not its wider teleological and utopian implications) would logically come to an end.¹⁸⁵

Hence the strength of Jefferson’s utopian conceptualisation of the ‘West’. Behind the veil of its philanthropist rhetoric, it had framed a picture of a continental yeoman republic where native tribes could hardly find any recognisable landmarks: well-defined borders, freehold agriculture, increasingly regularised industry, private property, and a fluid definition of culture more and more predicated on the dual tenets of ‘improvement’

¹⁸⁴ On this, see the preface in DeVoto, *Course of empire*, p. xxxi.

¹⁸⁵ I elaborate on this concept in Chapter 5, where I use the expression ‘myth of continentality’.

and ‘progress’.¹⁸⁶ Thus, the more Jefferson idealised the ‘West’, the more he, in fact, implicitly pronounced native custom to be inherently antithetical to legal possession and administration of *any* type of North American territorial unit. Nevertheless, if Lewis and Clark were the practical agents of Jefferson’s reasoning, it must follow from this chapter’s argument that earlier European explorers (Cook, Bougainville, Lapérouse, etc.) performed similar roles, from which Jefferson could then choose what to take or to reject in his elaboration of an idiosyncratic form of U.S. expansionist discourse. Attention will now turn to discussing these European agents and their actions in specific foreign locales.

¹⁸⁶ Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, ‘From borderlands to borders: empires, nation-states, and the peoples in between in North American history,’ in *American Historical Review*, cvi, no. 3 (June, 1999), pp 814-41; and François Furstenberg, ‘The significance of the trans-Appalachian frontier in Atlantic history,’ in *ibid.*, cxiii, no. 3 (June, 2008), pp 647-77. For suggestive parallels in the discourse of eighteenth-century Spanish colonial authorities (political and intellectual) in their North and South American borderlands, see David J. Weber, *The Spanish frontier in North America* (2nd ed., New Haven and London, 2009), pp 90-129; and idem, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and their savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven and London, 2005), pp 19-90. I lack the required space to incorporate Spanish borderland political history in my comparative study, but it would make for illuminating new research.

4. Ideologies of environmentalism in Jefferson's West and the South Seas

I have often thought that if heaven had given me the choice of my position & calling, it should have been on a rich spot of earth, well watered, and near a good market for the productions of the garden. no occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, & no culture comparable to that of the garden. such a variety of subjects, some one always coming to perfection, the failure of one thing repaired by the success of another, & instead of one harvest a continued one thro' the year. under a total want of demand except for our family table I am still devoted to the garden. but tho' an old man, I am but a young gardener.

Jefferson to Charles Willson Peale, 20 August 1811¹

The previous chapters have centered on three important aspects of what I call the Jeffersonian *ideology* of westward expansion: first, the diplomatic and geopolitical contexts that led to the Louisiana Purchase, which may be considered the climactic 'event' of the aforesaid ideology; second, the Lewis and Clark Expedition as a political and scientific enterprise of legitimation of the planned federal incorporation of the trans-Mississippi West and, in discourse, as an enterprise setting the premises for a fully continental claim; third, the European Enlightenment intellectual origins that fed the 'middle way' rhetoric of early U.S. identity which sustained Jefferson's vision of a 'yeoman republic' spread over east and west of the Mississippi River. Earlier European parallels to Jefferson's method of supervising voyages of exploration, especially in the careers of Banks and Humboldt, have also been discussed.

¹ Jefferson to Peale, 20 Aug. 1811, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, iv, 93.

In this chapter, the comparative perspective continues through the examination of more concrete examples of what European and Euro-American precursors to Lewis and Clark *did* in the foreign environments they had been commissioned to explore and/or survey. What of those explorers who followed the directions of Banks, of the Académie des Sciences, or the Jardin du Roi?² What types of discursive tropes can be traced in those explorers' travel accounts that announce those found in Lewis and Clark's journals and, depending on the nature of those tropes, how can they be genealogically related to the elaboration of Jefferson's ideology of expansion? In the latter case, what would this all imply for the discourse of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century American expansionism as a discourse draping itself in proto-national rhetoric?

Having asked those preliminary questions, I return to the subject of exploring expeditions proper.³ Because exploration can be considered the logical first stage of expansion into a foreign territory,⁴ the actions of explorers, written as well as acted (writing records physical actions and translates them into discourse), will help determine the rough shape that expansionist policies subsequently follow.⁵ Beginning with the assumption that eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century voyages of exploration were never undertaken for their own sake, particular attention is focused on the travel writings of four late eighteenth-century circumnavigators: Louis-Antoine de Bougainville,

² On the agency of the Royal Society in sponsoring and supervising British exploration over the period 1660-1800, see John Gascoigne, 'The Royal Society, natural history and the peoples of the "New World(s)", 1660-1800,' in *British Journal for the History of Science*, lxii, no. 4 (Dec., 2009), pp 539-62. See also Lucile H. Brockway, *Science and colonial expansion: the role of the British Royal Botanic Gardens* (New York, 1979), p. 64.

³ In a sense, Chapter 4 provides a thematic echo to Chapter 2, but with a globalised focus.

⁴ This means that I disagree with McClellan and Regourd's (more historically and geographically localised) statement that 'French colonial science in the ancien régime is not completely congruent with French exploration in the eighteenth century. Voyages of discovery preceded formal colonization, but in the final analysis the better-known examples of scientific research expeditions undertaken by the French ... had little to do with colonization per se, even if the colonial enterprise ultimately benefited.' James E. McClellan and François Regourd, 'The colonial machine: French science and civilization in the Ancien Régime,' in *Osiris*, xv, no. 2 (2000), p. 49. See also Greenfield, *Narrating discovery*, pp 19-20.

⁵ This is a point found from a variety of perspectives in the scholarly literature. My approach seems to accord best with that expressed in David N. Livingstone and Charles W. J. Withers (eds), *Geography and Enlightenment* (Chicago, 1999), a collection of essays which I further discuss below. See Greenfield, *Narrating discovery*, pp 16-19.

the French captain of the *Boudeuse* expedition (1766-69); Joseph Banks; George Vancouver, officer in the Royal Navy, who served twice on Cook's voyages and later commanded his own crew of the *Discovery* (1791-5); and Jean-François de Galaup de Lapérouse, French *officier de la marine* who was designated captain of the *Boussole* and *Astrolabe* and whose party tragically vanished off the Solomon islands (1785-8).

Bougainville, Banks, Vancouver and Lapérouse are not in the least accidental candidates for a case study. All these names feature, to varying degrees, in Jefferson's correspondence, in the original Lewis and Clark journals, and in Nicholas Biddle's preparatory notes for the publication of the Lewis and Clark journals' edited version of 1814. In the chapter's first section, I return to Jefferson's correspondence to construct a picture of his intellectual and political relationship with these four European explorers. Jefferson read Bougainville's *Voyage autour du monde* and developed a lingering obsession with what he believed to be the colonising plans of the Lapérouse expedition on the Pacific Northwest Coast. George Vancouver numbered among the cartographical authorities consulted by William Clark when the U.S. captain explored the Northwest Coast (which did not prevent Clark from criticising Vancouver's lack of consistency and sporadic inaccuracies in the latter's mapping.)⁶ By reverting to Jefferson's letters, I seek to provide a stable conceptual ground on which to articulate my analysis of the accounts of Bougainville, Banks, Vancouver and Lapérouse. One of my primary goals is to argue that so-called 'oceanic' expeditions ought to be compared, in specific cases, to territorial ones. Jefferson's lifelong vision of the 'West' could then be associated to the image of a massive and bounded sea, vitally intersected by broad rivers (or currents) headed east,

⁶ Clark, 15 Nov. 1805, in Moulton, *Journals*, vi, 50. Interestingly, Biddle adds a mention of Lapérouse to Clark's implicit criticism of Vancouver: 'in full view of the *Ocian* from *Point Adams* [*NB: or Rond Islee la Payrouse*] to Cape Disapointment, I could not See any Island in the mouth of this river as laid down by Vancouver. The Bay which he laies down in the mouth is imediately below me.' See Eide, *American odyssey*, p. 145.

north, west and south, and peopled with countless unknown Indian villages comparable in Jefferson's conception to as many isolated oceanic islands.⁷

Jefferson's lifelong vision of the 'West' as an ocean to be described and delineated by successive U.S. exploring expeditions (which supports my comparative perspective with 'proper' oceanic expeditions undertaken decades earlier by the likes of Cook and Bougainville) was reflected at an adequately late stage of Jefferson's career, in a letter he received in 1809 from David Porter, the ambitious commander of the New Orleans naval station at the time.⁸ Porter tried to enlist the retired president's support for a 'Voyage of discovery to the N.W. Coast of America', which he intended as the U.S. response to earlier undertakings by Cook and Lapérouse in that area and, simultaneously, as a retroactive complement to what the Lewis and Clark Expedition had failed to achieve there.⁹ As existing accounts have not scrutinized this extensive letter before, I will begin by arguing for its symbolic (rather than literal) significance to the Jeffersonian ideology of expansion, in the sense that it unwittingly recapitulated Jefferson's European influences for the planning of Lewis and Clark (Cook and Lapérouse in particular).

In the section following, the scope of the 'domestic' dimension of early U.S. exploration is enlarged, as a necessary preliminary to the global comparative viewpoint I subsequently adopt, by discussing the work of Andrew Ellicott, a lasting influence on Lewis and Clark and author of one of the first and most undervalued accounts written

⁷ I expect that this point will be contested, but it supplies a heuristic hinge to my analysis. For a recent, if differently focused, suggestion of a similar picture from a geopolitical perspective, see Elizabeth Mancke, 'Early modern expansion and the politicization of oceanic space,' in *Geographical Review*, lxxxix, no. 2 (Apr., 1999), pp 225-36. The Lewis and Clark Expedition enjoys a brief mention in the article, p. 227.

⁸ See Peter J. Kastor, "'They are all Frenchmen': background and nation in an age of transformation,' in Kastor and François Weill (eds), *Empires of the imagination: transatlantic histories of the Louisiana Purchase* (Charlottesville and London, 2009), pp 250-1. Porter was commander of that station from 1808 to 1810. I provide further biographical details in the appropriate section below.

⁹ David Porter to Jefferson, 17 Aug. 1809, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, i, 443-9.

by a professional U.S. surveyor, the *Journal of Andrew Ellicott* (1803).¹⁰ Ellicott, a mathematician-surveyor and A.P.S. regular who would later train Lewis in astronomy from his home in Lancaster, spent four years (1796-1800) working on the survey of the boundary line between Spanish Florida and the United States defined by Pinckney's Treaty (1795).¹¹ His *Journal*, although in appearance merely a factual account of Ellicott's everyday trials and errors, contained a great amount of geopolitical intelligence on Spanish Louisiana. With his method of inserting scientific measurements into an early discourse of U.S. national integration, or vice-versa, Ellicott foreshadowed many of the Corps of Discovery's actions in the trans-Mississippi West. Ellicott's subtle interpretation of the geopolitical role of boundaries, both natural and artificial, coupled with his practical work as a surveyor, made him a redoubtable 'field architect' of Jeffersonian exploration. His work ultimately went beyond the merely domestic level of United States surveying by asserting U.S. claims against its Spanish neighbour.¹²

Having provided a fuller context for late eighteenth and nineteenth-century U.S. exploration and surveying and its geopolitical (that is, proto-international) pretensions, in the second section of this chapter I enlarge my scope further, both spatially and temporally, to examine the journals of those British and French navigators who influenced Jefferson's planning of western American exploration from the time of his supervision of Michaux's journey (1793). My approach is based on an analysis of the texts of these explorers' journals. A new conceptual framework is developed to compare each explorer's political comments, the contexts in which he voiced them, the multi-

¹⁰ Andrew Ellicott, *The journal of Andrew Ellicott, late commissioner on behalf of the United States during part of the year 1796, the years 1797, 1798, 1799, and part of the year 1800: for determining the boundary between the United States and the possessions of His Catholic Majesty in America* (Philadelphia, 1803). See also Matthews, *Andrew Ellicott*.

¹¹ I briefly discussed Ellicott's role in training Lewis in astronomy in Chapter 2, pp 19-20.

¹² This is a reference to my categorising of Jefferson as an 'architect' of westward expansion. On this, see Chapter 3. See also Martin W. Lewis and Kären Wigen, *The myth of continents: a critique of metageography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1997), pp 150-1.

layered political purposes behind them, as well as parallels to these comments that can be found in the Lewis and Clark journals.¹³ This attempt at a comparative analytical viewpoint demands that both Nicholas Biddle's edited version of the *Journals* and his notes for it be scrutinised. I examine what Biddle adds, omits or qualifies, and ask broader questions about the relationship between the writer-traveler and his text, the extent to which the writer-traveller is able to 'write' his environment(s) and thereby to distort it/them (either on the spot, like Vancouver and Banks, or once returned to his 'center of calculation,' like Bougainville, but also like William Clark in his post-Expedition collaboration with Biddle). I consider the role of 'textualisation' as a discursive instrument for the intellectual appropriation of foreign territories and the propagating of seeds of an imperial doctrine; and with it the potential for rhetorical legitimisation of any colonial enterprise, including the method and efficiency of transmission of this legitimising process.¹⁴

Lastly, I return to the domestic level of the United States' idiosyncratic concern with its own 'legitimising process,' still at the discursive level, by looking at the pioneering work by J. Hector St John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American farmer* (1782). As briefly indicated in the previous chapter, the *Letters'* fundamental assumption about the emergence of a unique U.S. identity – 'What is an American?' – builds itself around the conception of a flexible 'middle way' between the essentialised notions of 'civilisation' (Old World) and 'wilderness' (New World). Jefferson, in his correspondence, in his two books (the *Notes* and the *Account*) and in his instructions to

¹³ From the viewpoint of literary criticism, and with a slightly different focus, see Mary Louise Pratt's now classic *Imperial eyes: travel writing and transculturation* (London, 1992); and Haycox *et al.*, *Enlightenment & exploration*.

¹⁴ If my textual analysis of these explorers' journals involves a good deal of conceptualisation, it is because such an approach can, in my opinion, serve to rejuvenate the ageing critical historiography of Jeffersonian expansionism. I cannot think of any recent, theoretical and tightly focused work on the subject published in the last ten years. The best scholarship in the field remains that by James Ronda, particularly in his books *Lewis and Clark among the Indians* and *Finding the West*. See also Londa Schiebinger, *Plants and empire: colonial bioprospecting in the Atlantic world* (Cambridge, MA, 2004), pp 195-96.

A.P.S.-sponsored western explorers in the period 1793-1803, as well as in his written comments on Crèvecoeur's *Letters*, enriched this 'middle way' syntax progressively as he expanded his own library. But his library included more than the works of Linnaeus and Buffon and travel accounts by the likes of Cook and Vancouver. I suggest in the chapter's last section that the original philosophical assumption that made the U.S. discourse of the 'middle way' possible at all was contained in the writings of Crèvecoeur's intellectual mentor, Jean-Jacques Rousseau.¹⁵ The latter's works expound an idiosyncratic form of primitivism which (despite Rousseau himself) opened the possibility for conceptualising the idea of 'noble savagery', and with it the notion of cultural incommensurability between different levels of 'civilisation.' This logic could lead to the dehumanisation of native populations by their conquerors' discourse, and conjointly to the rationalisation of those conquerors' globalised colonial enterprise.¹⁶

This concomitant rationalisation, itself become the basis of any eighteenth-century process of legitimisation of self-consciously 'enlightened' imperial forays into foreign environments, was contested by French philosopher and *encyclopediste* Denis Diderot. Diderot made clear his support of the agency of the individual *as individual* in his vehement critique of the 'nature versus culture' debate (sparked at least indirectly by the publication of Rousseau's two *Discourses*) in his famous *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville*.¹⁷ Recognising the underlying ideological nature of the debate, Diderot warned against the dangers of any political or cultural doctrine overstressing the ideal of 'order' as its fundamental organisational premise. This led him to constantly question his *own* legitimacy as a participant in the 'nature versus culture' debate. Thanks to his

¹⁵ Bruce Mazlish, 'Crèvecoeur's New World,' in *Wilson Quarterly*, vi, no. 4 (Autumn, 1982), pp 144-6.

¹⁶ This is not an original point, but I will expand on it. For perhaps the best articulation of it in the recent literature, see Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment against empire* (Princeton and Oxford, 2003), pp 17-54.

¹⁷ Denis Diderot, *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville*, ed. Eric Poindron (Paris, 2007).

capacity for critical self-distancing, Diderot did not fall into the trap of ethnocentrism which had awaited Rousseau and would await Crèvecoeur, the latter of whom neglected Diderot's cosmopolitan framework to concentrate exclusively on trying to adapt and naturalise the Rousseauist notion of the 'middle state' of nature (as conceptualised in the *Second Discours*) into a paradigm for U.S. identity-making. I explore the discursive implications of this forced naturalisation, especially when it was applied in Jefferson's articulation of his vision of a continental yeoman republic, for instance in Lewis's letter of instructions. This analysis will enable me to elaborate on the notion of the 'nurturing of Utopia', which I define as the tacit and fundamental principle on which Jeffersonian expansionism was articulated as a doctrine.

A. U.S. westward exploration and its 'colonial' antecedents

1. Jefferson's exploratory concerns blend with geopolitics, 1780-1810

Jefferson's stint as ambassador to France (1784-9) coincided with his blooming interest in European circumnavigations of the earth. These had reached a new level of notoriety with Bougainville's departure from France on the *Boudeuse* in 1766. In a letter to Virginian bookseller Walker Maury, Jefferson inserted the 'Voiage de Bougainville' as part of a list of 'French writers ... useful pieces of reading for an American youth.'¹⁸ Jefferson was referring to Bougainville's *Voyage autour du monde*, published two years after the French captain's return to France.¹⁹ The reference might have looked fairly harmless, but barely sixteen days earlier Jefferson had communicated more earnest concerns to the American naval fighter and revolutionary hero John Paul Jones. This time

¹⁸ Jefferson to Walker Maury, with a list of books, 19 Aug. 1785, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, viii, 411.

¹⁹ Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, *Voyage autour du monde par la frégate du roi la Boudeuse, et la flûte l'Étoile; en 1766, 1767, 1768 et 1769* (Paris, 1771). I use a modern edition in my analysis of the work, which I reference below.

the issue at stake was more pressing because it involved not Bougainville (who was now part of the documentary record) but Lapérouse, a French navy officer just embarked on his own circumnavigation under the direct sponsorship of King Louis XVI.²⁰ An anxious Jefferson bombarded Jones with queries:

Will you be so good as to make an enquiry into all the circumstances relative to Peyrouse's expedition which seem to ascertain his destination. Particularly what number of men and of what conditions and vocations had he on board? What animals, their species and number? What trees, plants or seeds? What utensils? What merchandize or other necessaries? This enquiry should be made with as little appearance of interest in it as possible ... Commit all the circumstances to writing, and bring them when you come yourself, or send them by a safe hand.²¹

Jefferson was hoping that Jones could provide quick and reliable information about the Lapérouse expedition's manpower, geopolitical motivations, natural historical interests, instruments, and commercial aspirations. It is probable that he also knew, by that stage, about Buffon's involvement in the selection of scientists on Lapérouse's crew. Not only had Jefferson already developed an acute understanding of how European voyages of exploration were then organised; the letter also signals the young ambassador's budding interest in the confidential geopolitical (perhaps colonial?) goals of the Crown-backed Lapérouse.²² Jefferson shared his feelings with Secretary of Foreign Affairs John Jay nine days later:

²⁰ See Michael T. Bravo, 'Mission gardens: natural history and global expansion, 1720-1820,' in Londa Schiebinger and Claudia Swan (eds), *Colonial botany: science, commerce, and politics in the early modern world* (Philadelphia, 2007), p. 49.

²¹ Jefferson to John Paul Jones, 3 Aug. 1785, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, viii, 339; and Hale, *Franklin in France*, ii, 343.

²² Donald Jackson, 'Ledyard and Lapérouse: a contrast in Northwestern exploration,' in *Western Historical Quarterly*, ix, no. 4 (Oct., 1978), pp 495-508.

You have doubtless seen in the papers that this court was sending two vessels into the South sea, under the conduct of a Capt. Peyrouse. They give out that the object is merely for the improvement of our knowledge of the geography of that part of the globe. And certain it is that they carry men of eminence in different branches of science. Their loading however as detailed in conversations ... appeared to me to indicate some other design: perhaps that of colonising on the Western coast of America, or perhaps only to establish one or more factories there for the fur trade ... Events might arise which would render it very desirable for Congress to be satisfied they have no such wish.²³

Here Jefferson reveals a concern that he would repeat time and time again in the course of his correspondence: the fear of European prospects of ‘colonising on the Western coast of America’. His hostility to hypothetical plans of this kind, or at least to the prospect of them being carried out by agents of a European power, transpires in several respects throughout his letter to Jay. Jefferson sees the pretence of the ‘improvement of our knowledge of ... geography’ as complicit with schemes for European settlement on the Northwest Coast, and ‘men of eminence in different branches of science’ as their probable architects-planners. There is also a sense of impending imperial struggle in Jefferson’s tone, which originates from his awareness (born of his readings and of his political practice as a U.S. politician and diplomat) of the ulterior political and economic motives of late-eighteenth-century European circumnavigations. In a sense, Jefferson’s very misgivings about what he believes to be the secret mission of Lapérouse suggest a (dormant) similarity of intentions on his part; I mean by this that such misgivings arose from an instinct of ‘continental self-defence’ made starkly foreboding by the fact that the Pacific Northwest Coast did *not* belong to the U.S. in 1785. At that time, it was the question of the territorial organisation of the Old Northwest that dominated debates of

²³ Jefferson to Jay, 14 Aug. 1785, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, viii, 373-4. See Stephen F. Knott, *Secret and sanctioned: covert operations and the American presidency* (Oxford, 1996), p. 65.

that type in Congress. Nevertheless, we can already notice a sense of continuity in Jefferson's perspective.

Jones's reply only partially allayed Jefferson's fears of the prospect of French colonising plans on the Northwest Coast. Jones admitted that Lapérouse's crew might harbor the hopes of 'Establishing Factories at a future Day, for the Fur Trade', but he could hardly tell Jefferson more at this early stage in the French captain's journey.²⁴ After this intense but brief epistolary exchange, Jefferson remained silent on the Lapérouse circumnavigation for nearly a year. Then, in the summer of 1786, he wrote Jay: 'The gazette of France of July 28. announces the arrival of Peyrouse at Brazil, that he was to touch at Otaheité, and proceed to California, and still further Northwardly ... The presumption is therefore that they will make an establishment of some sort on the North-west coast of America.'²⁵ The paranoia continued, despite the clear lack of hard evidence. Jefferson's worry became chronic, and might have sowed in his psyche the early seeds of the Lewis and Clark Expedition – the coming to life of a journey westward planned by a U.S. scientist-politician, undertaken by U.S. soldiers for the sole political, territorial and economic interests of the United States.

As events transpired an 'oceanic' expedition that did not actually colonise on the Northwest Coast may have served to define the contours of Jefferson's later territorial schemes for the exploration of the Coast. The 'extensive and unexplored field,' the 'inexhaustible mine to men of a contemplative and philosophical turn' that Charles Thomson had introduced to Jefferson in 1782 would finally welcome Lewis and Clark's

²⁴ John Paul Jones to Jefferson, 5 Oct. 1785, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, viii, 588. See also John H. Sherburne, *The life of John Paul Jones* (2nd ed., Bedford, MA, 2009), p. 202; Gray, *The making of John Ledyard*, p. 123; and Johansen & Gates, *Empire of the Columbia*.

²⁵ Jefferson to Jay, 11 Aug. 1786, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, x, 221. Worthy of note in this letter is Jefferson's familiarity with the island of Tahiti, which he spells 'Otaheité.' The reference to 'Otaheité' indicates that Jefferson had read the accounts of Cook's various circumnavigations. The name of James Cook lies never far away from Lewis and Clark's mentions of Lapérouse in their travel accounts. See Jackson, *Jefferson and the Rocky Mountains*, p. 51.

exploration twenty-three years later.²⁶ This ‘mine,’ portrayed here in Thomson’s utopian idiom, was metaphorically integrated to the earth itself. It would be explored, described, measured, and eventually settled by U.S. citizens, partly as a response to an earlier French venture whose ideological mind-frame would have been very far removed from the growing ‘continentalism’ then expressed by the Jeffersonian expansionists. It is this apparent contradiction in territorial identity-forging that I attempt to resolve with reference to the travel accounts produced by the European wave of global exploration in which Lapérouse, among others, participated. The myth of ‘continentalism’ ought to be critiqued from the perspective of a stifled, though concrete, Old World legacy.²⁷

This legacy did not simply vanish with Jefferson’s retirement from political life in 1809. That year, he received a fascinating letter from U.S. Navy officer David Porter. At that time Porter was a young captain stationed in Louisiana. He was to make a name for himself in the War of 1812, and later through his appointment to the Board of Navy Commissioners.²⁸ Porter carefully introduced his missive by praising Jefferson for ‘the knowledge you possess of that Country derived from the Travels of Messrs Lewis and Clark.’ He then proposed to rekindle ‘the hopes of discovering a Northern or North Western Communication between the Atlantic and Pacific ... to believe that a more easy and direct mode of communication between the Atlantic States and the shores of the Pacific may be made than has yet been discovered.’²⁹ Porter’s outdated correlation between the mission of the Corps of Discovery and interest in a hypothetical Northwest Passage might have irritated the ageing Jefferson, whose hopes for this type of natural

²⁶ Charles Thomson to Jefferson, 9 Mar. 1782, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, vi, 163. See also Marie Kimball, *Thomas Jefferson: war and peace, 1776 to 1784* (2nd ed., New York, 2005), p. 265.

²⁷ Perhaps this new perspective would enrich DeVoto’s argument in *Course of empire*, and palliate the reservations expressed by Ronda in “‘The writingest explorers’: the Lewis and Clark Expedition in American historical literature,” in idem, *Voyages of discovery*, p. 312.

²⁸ On the little-studied Porter see Archibald D. Turnbull, *Commodore David Porter, 1780-1843* (New York and London, 1929), pp 84-222. Porter was appointed to the Board of Navy Commissioners in 1815.

²⁹ Porter to Jefferson, 17 Aug. 1809, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, i, 443.

‘communication’ between the Pacific Ocean and the North American interior had been dashed by the observations of Lewis and Clark.³⁰ Porter himself admitted that he had not documented himself enough on the subject (‘I have to apologise for having offered this plan prior to having any knowledge whatever of the discoveries of Lewis and Clark’) but this admission, though honest, did not secure him a reply from Jefferson.

Porter’s letter contained an enclosure of several pages, which detailed the specifics of his ‘Plan for a Voyage of Discovery’. By a curious boomerang effect, this enclosure seems to divulge (or at least to voice into the open) retroactively a number of facts about the Lewis and Clark Expedition never before stated as cohesively as Porter states them. It is this particular aspect of Porter’s letter that makes it illuminating: how it belatedly supplies the geopolitical context of the Corps’s movements on the Northwest Coast. For instance, Porter writes:

The discoveries of Cook, La Perouse and Dixon with some few made by the Spaniards may be said to be the only ones on the N.W. Coast which afford us any clear information of that part of the World ... La Perouse, being in a similar predicament with Cook, could make but few observations in passing that Coast, and those generally in foggy weather when he was unable to approach it, so that the only information which results from his observations is a clear account of the Port des Francais ... and an

³⁰ The debunking of the myth of the Northwest Passage has enjoyed sufficient scholarly attention, particularly in historical geographer John L. Allen’s articles and books. For a new interpretation that seeks to uncover the reasons for Lewis’s inconsistency in writing his expedition accounts, see Thomas Hallock, ‘Literary recipes from the Lewis and Clark journals: the epic design and wilderness tastes of early national nature writing,’ in *American Studies*, xxxviii, no. 3 (Autumn, 1997), p. 61. Hallock argues that the journals as ‘being written’ (the process leading to the actual, final textual product) provided a model for the organisation and subjugation of the western environment which Lewis and Clark described. Writing itself became an instrument of symbolic possession, a signifier of appropriation. Thus, when Jefferson’s hopes for a Northwest Passage faded in front of Lewis’s eyes, Lewis realised that he was facing an environment that defied the very process of being *written* – of putting ideas, preconceived or not, on a page. This prevented the captain from writing any longer, at least not until he recovered from his own demystification of the Northwest Passage. This is an exceptional example of the environment itself shattering an explorer’s recourse to writing as reifying tool of possession. I offer some more instances below.

imperfect one of the rest of the Coast as far South as Monterey, as in that space he had no communication with the shore.³¹

In exposing his plan to complete Cook's and Lapérouse's astronomical measurements on the Northwest Coast, Porter defined his journey (and Lewis and Clark's) *in terms* of those earlier European forays.³² Porter gave Jefferson precise indications of what the two European captains had recorded in the area. He intended to work on the data he had 'gleaned' from them – he uses that word – as a starting point in applying for federal support for U.S. reconnaissances of the region. Porter prioritised contacting Jefferson because he knew about the former president's expertise in organising voyages of discovery. But because the Corps of Discovery had eluded Porter's otherwise careful scrutiny, Lewis and Clark found themselves implicitly 'dissolved' in Porter's narrative into the greater mass of early European and Euro-American exploration of the Northwest Coast.

Porter's most traceable objective, as set out in the letter, was to establish a 'port', or settlement, on the Northwest Coast. This settlement would represent the embryo of a U.S. colony. It recalled precisely the chimerical plans Jefferson had imagined the Lapérouse crew to have harboured in his 1785 and 1786 letters to John Jay: 'colonizing on the Western coast', 'possessing continental colonies', 'make an establishment of some sort on the North-west coast of America', etc.³³ Already in those letters, Jefferson had expressed an intuition that Lapérouse's conjectural colonial strategies might have to

³¹ Porter to Jefferson, 17 Aug. 1809, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, i, 445. Note that 'Spaniards' are never named, which would confirm that Spain represented less of a threat to U.S. expansion by the early nineteenth century.

³² Of course, Porter had read Cook's and Lapérouse's accounts. See David D. Porter, *Memoir of Commodore David Porter, of the United States Navy* (Albany, 1875), p. 102. The author of this memoir was Porter's son, David Dixon Porter, admiral in the United States navy and fighter in the American Civil War. The passage referenced in this note also mentions the voyage of George Vancouver as an interest of the elder Porter's.

³³ Jefferson to Jay, 14 Aug. 1785, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, viii, 373-4; and Jefferson to Jay, 11 Aug. 1786, in *ibid.*, x, 221.

be countered by a native U.S. expedition of the same type. (I mean ‘native’ in the sense developed by Jefferson, as of ‘naturalised’ white Americans on North American soil, and organised in cities like Philadelphia.)³⁴ Theorising white Americans as ‘continental natives’ in early national discourse entailed that whatever protocolonial ambitions white Americans might have in the trans-Mississippi West (up to the Northwest Coast, their *natural* limit) would carry the legitimacy of occupation which the likes of Cook and Lapérouse could never have.

But Porter did not stop there. He asked, in a remarkably ‘Jeffersonian’ tone:

Is it not to be supposed that the only object a nation can have in view by extending her Territory is to obtain more Land for cultivation ... should that not be the case why should we already have done it when we had so much waste Land in the interior of our Country? ... We have purchased Louisiana and are no doubt desirous of reaping all its advantage; perhaps some of the Rivers which discharge themselves into the South Sea may be navigable so far inland as to make the land carriage to some of the great branches of the Mississippi short.³⁵

In keeping with argument articulated above, Porter here tacitly depicts the American continent as a sea linked by currents, making the Republic dependent on continuous connections by water. Porter’s ultimate goal was to connect the east and west coasts of North America in accordance with a vast, forerunning project of continental integration, using rivers, measuring the land, building settlements, and regulating commerce with native tribes and remnants of European colonials. And he quite openly identified the Louisiana Purchase as the diplomatic ‘event’ that had provided the territorial and political momentum for his multi-stage scheme of U.S. continental integration, of which

³⁴ On this, see Chapter 3, *passim*.

³⁵ Porter to Jefferson, 17 Aug. 1809, in *ibid.*, i, 448-9.

exploratory reconnaissances represented the first stage. Jefferson usually preferred to talk in more figurative terms and phrases, like ‘Empire of Liberty’ and ‘Atlantic and Mississippi confederacies’.³⁶ His and Porter’s view of the process of U.S. westward expansion differed little, but their way of expressing such views did somewhat. Jefferson must have quickly seized upon the divergence in his and Porter’s respective uses of rhetoric. Porter’s plan for continental integration was explicitly colonial. Porter showed little interest in the question of U.S. legitimacy in gradually annexing the trans-Mississippi West, a question which preoccupied Jefferson much more because of its ties to the intellectual maturation of U.S. national discourse and therefore with the country’s still fragile republican identity, and thus more concretely with the strength of the Union as a cohesive politico-cultural unit. To Jefferson’s mind, his earlier schemes for the exploration of the trans-Mississippi West were not ‘colonial’ in the traditional sense. These schemes represented, from his viewpoint, the cultural and territorial outgrowth of a specifically U.S. construction – what may be termed ‘natural’ colonialism.³⁷

Porter even offered his own definition of the ‘center of calculation’ principle:

Perhaps one object in making a purchase of Louisiana was that of having a Port on the Pacific ocean; should that be the case can we too soon ascertain its advantages? ... Were some of our vessels sent on such an expedition, intelligent Persons could be sent up the different branches of the Mississippi and cross over the Continent ... they could leave a Copy of their Journals and return by different routes

³⁶ See, for example, Jefferson to Priestley, 29 Jan. 1804; in Ford, *Works of Jefferson*, x, 69-72: ‘Whether we remain in one confederacy, or form into Atlantic and Mississippi confederacies, I believe not very important to the happiness of either part. Those of the western confederacy will be as much our children & descends as those of the eastern, and I feel myself as much identified with that country, in future time, as with this ... I should feel the duty & the desire to promote the western interests as zealously as the eastern, doing all the good for both portions of our future family which should fall within my power.’

³⁷ Lewis and Clark’s mission was also to produce a ‘catalog of western America.’ Following the logic of the ‘middle way,’ this catalog symbolised both the prospective politico-administrative appropriation of the trans-Mississippi western region and the discursive identification of American frontiersmen with the *land* of that region. The phrase ‘catalog of western America’ is used in Lang, ‘Describing a new environment,’ p. 10.

bringing with them an account of the discoveries made by our Vessels, by which means we should be certain of procuring the most correct information of that newly acquired and unknown Territory.³⁸

There is some irony in the fact that this rising navy officer, writing in 1809, appeared to be both plagiarising *and* clarifying Jefferson's geopolitical outline for Lewis and Clark's actions in the Northwest. At first sight, Porter's scheme looks charmingly belated. But its nature as a delayed fragment of Jeffersonian expansionist discourse had other, less pleasing implications. Porter listed Cook and Lapérouse as his main primary sources, not the Corps of Discovery. At the very same time, his letter looks like it was adapted from Jefferson's 1803 instructions to Lewis, and made more explicit in its geopolitics. Porter had put into words what for Jefferson was rhetorically unacceptable: that Cook and Lapérouse were obvious influences on the planning of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. And as if to lock Jefferson up in the contradictions of his own discourse, Porter concluded: 'Men of Science chosen by the different Philosophical societies might be embarked whose discoveries may tend very much to the advancement of useful knowledge ... America has long been a debtor to the World of Science'.³⁹ According to Porter, from the moment institutions like the A.P.S. ('Philosophical societies') became involved in the planning of voyages of exploration on a scale larger than national, the U.S. acknowledged its status as a 'debtor' to the European 'World of Science.' It was, of course, Jefferson who had enlarged the scope of the A.P.S. in the first place.

³⁸ Porter to Jefferson, 17 Aug. 1809, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, i, 449.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, i, 449.

2. Ellicott's *Journal* and the domestic 'fabric' of expansion, 1796-1800

Twelve years earlier, as Jefferson coupled the vice-presidency of the United States with the presidency of the A.P.S., Philadelphian surveyor and fellow A.P.S. member Andrew Ellicott had just embarked on an official surveying journey along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to Florida. Born into a Quaker family, Ellicott (1754-1820) had taken up surveying in his early twenties. The survey of the Mason-Dixon Line, completed in 1784, counted as one of his first feats.⁴⁰ As his reputation as a mathematician rose, Ellicott befriended astronomer David Rittenhouse, George Washington, James Madison, and Jefferson. Such acquaintances helped his appointment to a commission for the definition of the territorial limits of the District of Columbia (1791-2). Ellicott had also contributed to the design of the plan for the city of Washington after L'Enfant's rash withdrawal from the scene.⁴¹ When he left Philadelphia on 16 September 1796 Ellicott was bringing with him the weight of his experience in official surveying – skills that he would later teach Meriwether Lewis from his home in Lancaster.⁴² The Treaty of San Lorenzo (1795) marked out the thirty-first parallel as the boundary line between U.S. territory and Spanish Florida east of the Mississippi River; the physical border was to run accordingly from the Mississippi to the Chattahoochee River and on to the Atlantic Ocean. George Washington knew of Ellicott's expertise, and so he commissioned him as surveyor-representative on behalf of the U.S. The mission would last four years.

The focus of this chapter prevents me from delving in the particulars of Ellicott's journey. Especially pertinent questions to ask here relate to the way the surveyor made sense of his task, how he portrayed his own agency in carrying it to completion, whether

⁴⁰ William Buckner McGroarty, 'Major Andrew Ellicott and his historic border lines,' in *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, lviii, no. 1 (Jan., 1950), p. 101.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp 101-04.

⁴² See Chapter 2.

he had a doctrinal conception of it, and the relationship between all these questions and Ellicott's institutional membership in the A.P.S. I am interested in Ellicott's role as 'reifier' of boundaries, so to speak, and in his method for translating practically the geographical conceptualisations that he and his fellow A.P.S. colleagues held in common.⁴³ How aware was Ellicott of the geopolitics of the Mississippi River region in the 1790s? By extension, if he was geopolitically aware, did he transfer this awareness to Meriwether Lewis when the purchase of the entirety of Louisiana had become a palpable diplomatic outcome, six years after Ellicott's smaller-scale foray into former Spanish American territory? If there are answers to these questions, they must lie in Ellicott's *Journal*.

In the preface he appended in July 1803 for the book's publication, Ellicott noted that 'By the cession of Louisiana to the United States, we gain but little on the Gulf of Mexico, and are but little benefitted as a maritime people. The important, and safe harbours, in both the Floridas still remain in the possession of his Catholic Majesty. On the subject of those provinces, and their importance to the United States, I have been particular in the following work.'⁴⁴ Ellicott meant more by this than to passively remark on the strategic significance of the Floridas to the United States. His preface gave a political tint to his survey work which he wanted known to his reader. The stress on the 'harbours' of the Gulf of Mexico, put in causal relation to the cession of Louisiana to the United States, echoes David Porter's later remark to Jefferson that 'one object in making

⁴³ For a more global-scale discussion of this subject, see 'Introduction,' in Livingstone & Withers, *Geography & Enlightenment*, p. 21. See also John F. McDermott, 'The Enlightenment on the Mississippi frontier, 1763-1804,' in *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, xxvi (1963), pp 1129-42.

⁴⁴ Ellicott, *Journal*, p. vi. See also Weston A. Goodspeed, *The province and the states: a history of the province of Louisiana under France and Spain, and of the territories and states of the United States formed therefrom* (Madison, WI, 1904), p. 301; and Hubert B. Fuller, *The purchase of Florida: its history and diplomacy* (Cleveland, OH, 1906), p. 138. The paucity of the literature on Ellicott explains its old age.

a purchase of Louisiana was that of having a Port on the Pacific ocean.’⁴⁵ Their shared vision of the U.S. as a ‘continentalised’ country gave an imperial texture to the Louisiana Purchase, one which the Purchase (still) often eludes.⁴⁶ It pictured the building of ports on the Atlantic coast, on the Gulf of Mexico, and on the Pacific coast, and their communication both from within (via the Mississippi-Missouri-Ohio-Columbia river systems) and from without (via Cape Horn and later the Panama Canal), thereby progressively forming an inclusive network of commercial, political and cultural exchanges regulated by official federal institutions.

I believe this was the picture Ellicott had in mind when, while stranded in Natchez by Governor Manuel Gayoso de Lemos’s orders in early March 1797, he added the following entry to his journal:

Before we encamped [near Natchez], the following intelligence was communicated to me through confidential channels ... that the country [Louisiana] either was, or would be ceded to the Republic of France. This intelligence was kept secret for two reasons: *first*, because its being known might have produced suspicious injurious to individuals, and *secondly*, that we might be able gradually to effect our object, and secure to the United States a country very important both from its situation and value of its commerce ... Whatever my prejudices in favour of the principles of the French revolution, and of that nation, for the part in took in our arduous struggle with Great Britain for the liberty we now enjoy, I considered it my duty, as a citizen of the United States, not only to retain the post we then occupied [adjacent to Spanish Louisiana at that time] but to extend our limits if hostilities should commence.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Porter to Jefferson, 17 Aug. 1809, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, i, 449.

⁴⁶ Charles W. J. Withers, *Placing the Enlightenment: thinking geographically about the Age of Reason* (Chicago, 2007), p. 17. See also Furtwangler on the ‘enigma’ of the Purchase in *Acts of discovery*, p. 19.

⁴⁷ Ellicott, *Journal*, pp 44-5.

Ellicott sketched out a pattern of expansion downward that implicitly targeted New Orleans, or any other coastal location friendly to his scheme for a more integrated (semi-)continental network of distant U.S. cities. He had probably read less than Jefferson on the subject, but unlike the Virginian politician he possessed, as a commissioned surveyor, the means of physically altering the surrounding frontier's political landscape. Ellicott could work the very fabric of U.S. expansion.

Ellicott's way of working this fabric depended to a large extent on his understanding of the role played by rivers in survey work. The reification of rivers in U.S. landscape description did not begin with Lewis and Clark.⁴⁸ Chapter IV of Ellicott's *Journal* takes the Mississippi River as its central topic. Ellicott first draws a geographical and historical account of the Mississippi, foreshadowing Lewis and Clark's later recordings on the Missouri.⁴⁹ Using a vocabulary reminiscent of the 'civilisation versus wilderness' dialectic, he relates in a pivotal passage that 'descending the river, you meet with but little variety ... When the water is low, you have high muddy banks, quick-sands, and sand bars; and when full, you might almost as well be at sea: for days together you will float without meeting with any thing like soil in the river, and ... be environed by *an uninhabitable, and almost impenetrable wilderness*.'⁵⁰

Terse in appearance, this description of the great river displays the very grain of the Jeffersonian utopian idiom. It marks a vivid contrast between the full flow of the Mississippi in high water and the 'impenetrable wilderness' that surrounds it. Rivers had two facets. On the one hand, they embodied dynamic 'vectors of penetration' that could carry exploratory crews into yet-untamed 'wildernesses'. In that first sense, rivers

⁴⁸ On this subject, see Seelye, *Beautiful Machine*; and Ronda, *Finding the West*, p. 13.

⁴⁹ Ellicott, *Journal*, pp 117-37. On Lewis and Clark and the Missouri River, see Chapter 2, *passim*.

⁵⁰ Ellicott, *Journal*, p. 120. The emphases are mine. See also Hodding Carter, *Lower Mississippi* (New York, 1942), p. 126; and Michael Allen, *Western rivermen, 1763-1861: Ohio and Mississippi boatmen and the myth of the alligator horse* (Baton Rouge, 1990), p. 43.

were the discursive equivalents of the ocean currents that brought Bougainville to Tahiti, Cook to St Helena, Vancouver to Nootka Sound, and Lapérouse to Sakhalin. On the other hand, rivers *separated* in a seemingly natural fashion the spheres of the ‘civilised’ and the ‘savage’ (as pointed out earlier in the discussion of Jefferson’s *Notes of Virginia*.)⁵¹ On a map, for instance, the Mississippi River graphically sundered the West from the East along with the mental categories associated to each civilisational ‘sphere’. Ellicott’s contribution to that dual vision followed Jefferson’s, but differed from it in practical weight. As a professional surveyor, Ellicott wielded the power to turn rivers literally into boundaries, or at least to use them (e.g. the Mississippi and Chattahoochee) as crucial spatialised parameters in the determination of boundaries.

Ultimately, though, Ellicott’s orders originated from above. His agency as a surveyor can only be fully appreciated when studied in relation to Washington, Jefferson, and the A.P.S. Like the crew of the Corps of Discovery, Ellicott had to answer to the federal government. During his four-year survey work in the American Southeast he maintained a regular correspondence with Secretary of State Timothy Pickering.⁵² Like Lewis and Clark, he described Indian mounds and remarked on their proximity to rivers, surely a confirmation of the twofold civilising role he attributed to them.⁵³ Like the two captains he underscored the correlation between the compiling of Indian vocabularies and the broader enterprise of assimilation of ‘curious languages’ by

⁵¹ Ellicott’s description of the ‘concussion’ of the Mississippi and Missouri (*Journal*, p. 28) unmistakably recalls Jefferson’s account of the meeting of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers in the *Notes*. Ellicott writes: ‘Both rivers made the same appearance ... we were enabled to contemplate the prospect which was grand and awful, with some degree of pleasure and composure. The concussion of the ice at the junction of the two rivers produced a constant, rumbling noise, for many hours, similar to that of an earthquake.’ See Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p. 93; and Matthews, *Andrew Ellicott*, p. 143.

⁵² Ellicott mentions Pickering regularly in his journal. For instance: ‘the incidents relative to the political state of the country contained in the ensuing part of this work, are substantially the same, as detailed to the Secretary of State, and partly copied from my original communications.’ Ellicott, *Journal*, p. 41.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp 9-10.

the linguists of the A.P.S.⁵⁴ Lewis and Clark summarise best the actualisation of the Jeffersonian idea of the ‘West’ and its expansionist momentum in the wake of the Purchase. Nevertheless, the roots of this impulse lay partly in the experiences and teachings of Ellicott, a patient and dedicated marker of intellectual grids who brought lines of latitude and longitude to the West of his own time.⁵⁵

B. ‘Environmentalizing’ and the utopian idiom: parallels of practice, 1766-1806

1. Bougainville, Cook, Vancouver, Lapérouse: ideologies of scientific expansion

But the roots of this impulse lay outside of the United States and earlier than Ellicott’s career. The names Lapérouse and Bougainville pop up in Jefferson’s correspondence as early as 1785. Cook’s does even earlier. Jefferson’s initial concern about rival exploring nations was to be turned into a profitable planning methodology: even to contemplate making the U.S.’s western periphery a future seat of agricultural settlement demanded a certain level of familiarity with eighteenth-century European exploration. Journeys of this kind in Jefferson’s time often targeted distant Pacific islands – which were discovered, rediscovered, symbolically appropriated, and subsequently integrated politically, economically, and administratively as new dependencies of the French, British, or Spanish states. Jefferson’s most intimate connections in the Republic of Science were French and British, which is why I principally discuss those countries.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30. Note that William Dunbar was a close collaborator of Ellicott, both in survey work and in the compiling of native vocabularies. On the relationship between institutionalised linguistics and U.S. territorial expansion, see Peter Thompson, “‘Judicious neology’: the imperative of paternalism in Thomas Jefferson’s linguistic studies,” in *Early American Studies*, i, no. 2 (2003), pp 194-7.

⁵⁵ The expression ‘intellectual grids’ comes from Furtwangler, *Acts of discovery*, p. 86.

⁵⁶ For instance, Jefferson received plentiful French praise for the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The naturalist Lacépède, a long-time collaborator of Buffon at the Jardin du Roi and an influential member of the Académie des sciences, wrote him: ‘I would receive with gratitude, and read with interest, the important work printed by governor Lewis to narrate the story of this grand and curious voyage executed by him and general Clarke, guided by your views and under your direction.’ Bernard Germain de Lacépède to Jefferson, 31 May 1809, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, i,

Perhaps the first truly ‘modern’ European circumnavigation – in the extent and range of specialisation of its crew, in the crew leaders’ self-consciously ‘rational’ attitude to exploration and apprehension of cultural diversity, and in the extent of state involvement in its planning with the expectation of important intelligence trade-offs – was the *Boudeuse* and *Etoile* three-year voyage under the leadership of Louis-Antoine de Bougainville (1766-9). Preceding Cook by two years, Bougainville enjoyed Louis XV’s blessing and the more open support of prominent French scientists like Buffon and Charles de Brosses.⁵⁷ He brought with him a considerable ship crew that included naturalist Philibert Commerson, astronomer Pierre-Antoine Veyron, cartographer Charles Routier de Romainville, and a designated writer in the person of Louis-Antoine de Saint Germain. The question of the expedition’s achievements and failures is an old one, and will not be tackled here.⁵⁸ What is pertinent to this study is the so-called myth of Tahiti as ‘la Nouvelle Cythère’ to which Bougainville gave life in the *Voyage autour du monde*, his full-length account of the journey.⁵⁹ The ‘exotic dream’ which Bougainville painted, with eloquence and a certain pomposity, was to become one of the most powerful mythological foundations behind the justification of European imperialism in the late-eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Pacific region. A similar process was happening in the trans-Mississippi West of Jefferson’s time.

249. The translation is mine. Of course, ‘disconnections’ within the Republic of Science could turn out to be quite enlightening, too. I lack space to address them here, but this could provide the opportunity for further research.

⁵⁷ Robert Nicole, *The word, the pen, and the pistol: literature and power in Tahiti* (Albany, 2001), pp 47-50.

⁵⁸ Bougainville failed to visit China and the Philippines, making his South Asian exploration a failure. Many scientists of renown also questioned the scientific value of the journals, specimens and artifacts brought back to France in 1769. I return to the latter issue below. See also n55 above.

⁵⁹ The *Voyage* only came out in 1771, after significant editing and revising. I discuss these matters below. I use the most recent and exhaustive edition: Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, *Voyage autour du monde*, ed. Michel Bideaux and Sonia Faessel (Paris, 2001). On Bougainville’s relative failure to achieve important scientific and economic goals (bringing back new spices to France, exploring the east coast of China and the Philippines, inquiring into the existence of a southern continent, etc.) see *ibid.*, ‘Introduction,’ p. 43.

What linked Jeffersonian expansionist discourse to Bougainville's 'exotic dream'? The other exploring figures of this chapter must be introduced before tackling this question. Lapérouse was in many ways the successor to James Cook in France, although his journals make regular mention of Bougainville, too.⁶⁰ From 1785 to his disappearance off the Solomon Islands in 1788, Lapérouse retained the confidence of Louis XVI and his minister of the Navy, Charles Pierre Claret de Fleurieu. Both men had contributed to the drafting of the captain's instructions. They were so impressed with Cook's earlier voyages, and convinced of these voyages' geopolitical value, that they allowed Lapérouse and his second-in-command Fleuriot de Langle to organise a massive crew of over two hundred men for the *Boussole* and the *Astrolabe*.⁶¹ Crowded with navy officers, engineers, artists, astronomers, and naturalists, the expedition contributed valuable survey work in places as various as Easter Island, the coasts of Alaska and California, Macau, the Philippines, Sakhalin, Samoa, and Australia. To anticipate the possibility of wreckage, Lapérouse transferred extracts from his journals back to Paris in several instalments whenever intermittent breaks in the journey permitted it. This turned out to be a clear-sighted move. Lapérouse's main journals were edited and published in 1797 (in four volumes) by Louis-Marie-Antoine de Milet-Mureau, a politician and short-lived minister for defence under the French Directory.⁶²

Joseph Banks's account of his *Endeavour* experience deserves particular scrutiny for a number of reasons. Cook's own journal has attracted a lot of popular and scholarly attention, while Banks's has not. The chaos that has reigned over the (non-)publication

⁶⁰ Lapérouse's indebtedness to Cook will become obvious as I proceed with my comparative textual analysis of the four explorers' accounts. When Lapérouse mentions Bougainville, it is often (but not always) to mention that his predecessor had visited a specific place before him. In spirit, Lapérouse resembles Cook most.

⁶¹ Lorelai Kury, 'Les instructions de voyage dans les expéditions scientifiques françaises (1750–1830),' in *Revue d'Histoire des Sciences*, li, no.1 (Mar., 1998), p. 75.

⁶² Jean-François Galaup de Lapérouse, *Voyage autour du monde sur l'Astrolabe et la Boussole*, ed. Hélène Patris (Paris, 2008). Milet-Mureau had to resign his post as minister for defense in 1799, in the wake of Bonaparte's *coup d'état*.

of Banks's journal might be part of the explanation.⁶³ From another angle, the remarkable parallels between Banks's and Jefferson's careers makes Banks's earlier life as a voyager-naturalist interesting to examine. Because Banks was part of the scientific and literary crew of the *Endeavour* and would therefore have little to do with military command, his narrative relates an experience bereft of the pressure of leadership. This explains why Banks's accounts are so tightly focussed on describing the foreign environments he visited, and so apparently removed from any form of external pressure put on their content.⁶⁴ The same cannot be said of Bougainville, Lapérouse, or even Lewis and Clark. The young Banks embodies raw, disinterested science as somewhat of a counterweight in this analysis, though only to a degree.⁶⁵ His account of the three months spent in Tahiti reveals deep-seated similarities in discourse with Bougainville, despite Cook's open criticisms of the Frenchman's lack of abilities as a scientist. Another visitor to Tahiti was George Vancouver, a much-quoted name in the Lewis and Clark journals. Vancouver's circumnavigation lasted five years and established contact with dozens of regions, including Southern Africa, Australia, Hawaii, Alaska and California, as well as the Viceroyalty of Peru in South America. The constant tensions between Vancouver and Archibald Menzies have disqualified the former as an 'enlightened' explorer in the scholarly literature, but Vancouver's retracing of Cook's and Banks's steps on Tahitian

⁶³ Banks failed to publish his journal, despite repeated promises. I use John C. Beaglehole (ed.), *The Endeavour journal of Joseph Banks* (2 vols, Sydney, 1962). Beaglehole's is the only scholarly edition of the journal to date. See also William T. Stearn, 'A Royal Society appointment with Venus in 1769: the voyage of Cook and Banks in the "Endeavour" in 1768-1771 and its botanical results,' in *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, xxiv, no. 1 (June, 1969), pp 66-7; and Neil Chambers, 'Joseph Banks and the voyage account' (Conference paper, British Society for the History of Science, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, 24 June 2011).

⁶⁴ For more information and contextualisation on those 'scientific and literary' objectives, see Harold B. Carter, 'The Royal Society and the voyage of HMS "Endeavour" 1768-71,' in *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, xlix, no. 2 (July, 1995), pp 245-60.

⁶⁵ David P. Miller argues for the historical importance of Banks's *Endeavour* journal in idem, 'Joseph Banks, empire, and "centers of calculation",' in Miller & Reill, *Visions of empire*, p. 27: 'Certainly Cook's "additional instructions" for the voyage charged him to inquire into the nature of soils, vegetation, fauna, and marine life. But it was Banks, and those working under his direction, who did the most comprehensive job in this department and also in the matter of detailed accounts of the places where landings were made. In fulfilling this aspect of his duties, Cook used Banks's journal in compiling his official report to the Admiralty.'

soil is worthy of examination; so are Vancouver's and Lapérouse's reconnaissances of the Pacific Northwest Coast.⁶⁶

In their narratives, all four explorers use some form of utopian idiom, which constitutes part of their 'modernity'.⁶⁷ The expression of this idiom revolved around a number of key textual devices, which recur in every one of their accounts. The overarching device is what I call 'voidance.' Let us take an example from Lapérouse's reconnaissance of the Alaskan part of the Northwest Coast in the summer of 1786. In compliance with the offer of Tlingit chief, Lapérouse formally performed an act of possession of an island facing Baie des Français (present-day Lituya Bay, Alaska) where earlier he had set up an observatory. He recorded the ritual: 'I arranged the taking possession of the island with the ordinary formalities; a bottle was buried under a rock with an inscription relative to this act of possession, and next to it I put bronze medals which we had procured in France before our departure.'⁶⁸ Then he added about Baie des Français: 'we were its absolute masters; this bay not being inhabited, no Indian could put an obstacle to it [our taking possession of it].'⁶⁹

This is an archetypal illustration of the 'voidance' effect. It emerges from the creation of an artificial sense of emptiness in the description of a given landscape. Not only native sovereignty, but the very *possibility* of native presence is suppressed in the text. The act of the writer taking his pen and putting words on paper turns into a self-consciously hierarchical cultural signifier: its neglect of the possibility of the Other's

⁶⁶ A comparative analysis of Vancouver's and Lapérouse's textual accounts of the Northwest Coast with Lewis and Clark's would necessitate a book-length study. This project will hopefully come to life in the future.

⁶⁷ On Bougainville's use of the utopian idiom, see Andy Martin, 'The Enlightenment in Paradise: Bougainville, Tahiti, and the duty of desire,' in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, xli, no. 2 (Winter, 2008), pp 203-16.

⁶⁸ Lapérouse, *Voyage*, p. 107. All translations from the Lapérouse journals are mine. On the French ritual of possession, see Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of possession*, pp 46-67.

⁶⁹ Lapérouse, *Voyage*, p. 116. See also Jean-Paul Faivre, *L'expansion française dans le Pacifique, 1800-1842* (Paris, 1953), p. 418; Catherine Gaziello, *L'édition de La érouse - ré l ue française aux voyages de Cook* (Paris, 1984), p. 193; and Alain Bombard, *Les grands navigateurs* (St-Malo, 1997), p. 106.

presence stems from the assumption that this Other only possesses oral, not written, traditions. Not being able to ‘inscribe’ his own legitimacy of territorial possession, this tacit Other is excluded from possession altogether, regardless of prior occupation. Thus, ‘voidance’ appears as a textual device that *concludes*, so to speak, the discursive process of legitimisation of European intrusion. Multiple textual sub-strategies imbricated themselves within the explorers’ landscape descriptions in order to trigger the effect of ‘voidance.’ Earlier, one of these sub-strategies was discussed in the form of ‘natural historicisation,’ which can be traced back to the theoretical systems (or non-systems) of Linnaeus and Buffon; but there are many more of these discursive twists to explore.⁷⁰

The analysis of the Lewis and Clark journals featured in an earlier chapter provides the opportunity here to broaden my comparative framework, and to suggest that the Corps of Discovery’s accounts were a variation on discourses of legitimisation such as the one found in Lapérouse. In the passage cited above, ‘voidance’ is produced at the level of the text. An event on Lituya Bay is recorded, which makes the Bay seem uninhabited. Lituya Bay is also idealised.⁷¹ But this record might have been also accompanied with maps, drawings, paintings, the sowing of seeds (to imply the original ‘untilledness’ of the soil), measurements of longitude and latitude prior to mapping in order to qualify the exploration as discovery, etc. ‘Voidance’, because it is primarily an effect, may encompass all these different aspects of an explorer’s physical and discursive interaction with new environments. It can also be correlated to the move towards more specialisation of late-eighteenth-century scientific and artistic crews in the fields of cartography, draughtsmanship, botany, natural history, ethnography, etc.

⁷⁰ In *Imperial eyes*, p. 38, Pratt goes so far as to speak of a ‘project of natural history’. I prefer limiting myself to the sphere of discourse, while acknowledging the bridges between discourse and the exercise of power. See William Beinart and Lotte Hughes (eds), *Environment and empire* (Oxford, 2007), p. 78.

⁷¹ Lapérouse, *Voyage*, p. 106. I discuss the link between idealisation in discourse and more concrete, expansive territorial ambitions below, in what I call the ‘environmentalising’ textual strategy.

In December 1787 Lapérouse touched at the island of Maoua in the Samoan archipelago. Bougainville had baptised it the ‘Archipel des Navigateurs’.⁷² Lapérouse offered his first impressions of the island:

This charming country still retained the double advantage of an uncultivated soil and of a climate that did not require to wear clothes. Breadfruit trees, cocoa nuts, bananas, guavas, oranges presented this fortunate people with a healthy and abundant diet ... They were so rich, they lacked so little that they refused our iron tools and our textiles, and only wanted small beads: replete with natural goods, they only wanted useless artifices.⁷³

This passage exemplifies another rhetorical strategy which Lapérouse utilised. I call it the ‘environmentalising’ of the native Samoan population of Maoua. The depiction of the ‘rich’ and ‘replete’ natives connects organically to the parallel treatment of their climate and living environment. This connection results in the fabrication of an image of innate wealth (of the environment) consumed in genetically logical scarcity (by the inhabitants). Lapérouse effected ‘voidance’ to bypass the obvious fact of Maoua’s dense population. In short, when a specific environmental setting appeared to be idealised, usually by recourse to a terminology highlighting the wealth of its natural life, it was actually being ‘environmentalised’. Lapérouse conscientiously turned the raw data he observed and collected into a textual performance that produced a solid object (the hard copy of his account), which he could then assign back to his ‘center of calculation’ in Paris, to be reproduced and circulated *ad infinitum*. The captain seemed aware of the fact that his accounts might subsequently be synthesised and utilised for the elaboration

⁷² Bougainville, *Voyage*, pp 241-8. See A. Monfat, *Les Samoa, ou Archipel des Navigateurs: étude historique et religieuse* (Lyon, 1890), p. 81; and Etienne Taillemite, *Bougainville* (Paris, 2011), especially Chapter 15.

⁷³ Lapérouse, *Voyage*, p. 343.

of more efficient exploratory methods: 'as a traveller, I account for the facts and I point out the differences; others will turn these data into a system.'⁷⁴

A statement like this ignored the sometimes lurid obstacle of reality. A few days after the crew's landing in Maouna, the native population reacted by massacring Fleuriot de Langle and eleven other of Lapérouse's men, for no identifiable reason.⁷⁵ Perhaps the reason existed and was even obvious to Maounans, but could only be comprehended from a non-ethnocentric, or reversed ethnocentric, perspective far removed from the socio-cultural picture articulated in Lapérouse's journals. (If one wanted to be really subversive, one could argue that the Samoans had simply attempted to resist the possibility of territorial takeover by their visitors). Ironically, the Maounans find themselves enjoying brief 'de-environmentalising' as the barbarity the French captain ascribed to them in the post-killings phase produces a brutal contrast with the utopian texture of the Samoan setting drawn in the pre-killings narrative. In a sense, by resisting textual harmonisation the Maounans temporarily withstood the discursive effect of 'voidance'.⁷⁶

A similar type of situation is related in Bougainville's *Voyage autour du monde*. In his first description of the interior of the island of Tahiti, Bougainville expresses a sense of wonderment:

I have often strolled ... in the interior. I felt as if I had been sent to the garden of Eden; we walked across a grassy plain, covered with beautiful fruit trees and chequered with fresh, delicious crooks ...

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 285. See Yves Cazaux, *Dans le sillage de Bougainville et de Lapérouse* (Paris, 1995).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 354-62. Since it is possible to interpret this killing only through Lapérouse's lenses, it is safe to suggest a parallel here with Lewis's ineptitude at writing after his dissipation of the illusion of the Northwest Passage. In both cases, the writer's feeling of descriptive control of his environment gets crushed. See n27 above.

⁷⁶ A seemingly barbaric form of physical resistance may then translate into a tactics of discursive opposition, depending on the viewpoint one adopts. See also Jocelyn Linnekin, 'Ignoble savages and other European visions: the La Pérouse affair in Samoan history,' in *Journal of Pacific History*, xxvi, no. 1 (June, 1991), pp 3-26.

A numerous people lives here, and enjoys the bounties that nature freely pours on him. We found men and women sitting in the shade of orchards; they all saluted us warmly ... everywhere we saw the reign of hospitality and rest, a sweet joy and all the appearances of happiness.⁷⁷

A little later, Bougainville revels at the fact that the ‘whole country, from the seashores to the mountains, is planted with fruit trees ... We thought we were in the Elysian fields. Public paths, intelligently used and carefully kept up, make for easy communications everywhere.’⁷⁸ The presence of ‘paths’ means order, straight lines, and perpendiculars. It conveys a sense of neat separation between the wild and the cultivated and inhabited ‘Elysian fields’. As it is described in the passage, Tahiti’s environment fits all the criteria for a utopian setting. Bougainville’s discourse only stresses the obvious: those Elysian fields are ‘colonisation-friendly’ – which is never the case of their antithesis, the ‘wilderness’. Vancouver adopted a similar approach when he observed and described a Tahitian plantation ‘surrounded by a well constructed fence of bamboo, neatly intersected with clean paths, that led in different directions, produced an effect that was extremely pleasing, and redounded much to the credit and ingenuity of the proprietor.’⁷⁹ Earlier, Banks had spoken in the same vein: ‘No countrey can boast such delightfull walks as this, the whole plains where the people live are coverd with groves of Breadfruit and cocoa nut trees without underwood; these are intersected in all directions by the paths which go from one house to the other, so the whole countrey is a shade than which

⁷⁷ Bougainville, *Voyage*, p. 213. All translations from Bougainville are mine. See also Philippe Bachimon, *Tahiti, entre mythes et réalités: essai d'histoire géographique* (Paris, 1990); Riccardo Pineri, *L'île, matière de Polynésie* (Paris, 1992), p. 36; Eliane Gandin, *Le voyage dans le Pacifique de Bougainville à Giraudoux* (Paris, 1998), pp 41-2; Francine Barthe-Deloizy, *é o r a e de la nud té tre nu uel ue art* (Rosney-sous-Bois, 2003), p. 40; Sonia Faessel, *Visions des îles: Tahiti et l'imaginaire européen, du mythe à son exploitation littéraire, XVIIIe - XXe siècles* (Paris, 2006), p. 28; and Pierre Gouirand, *L'accueil: théorie, histoire et pratique* (Paris, 2011), p. 155.

⁷⁸ Bougainville, *Voyage*, p. 223. See Jan Bourgeau, *La France du Pacifique* (Paris, 1955), p. 204; Gandin, *Le voyage dans le Pacifique*, p. 35; and Claire Laux, *Le Pacifique aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles, une confrontation franco-britannique: enjeu colonial et rivalité géopolitique, 1763-1914* (Paris, 2011), pp 43-4.

⁷⁹ Vancouver, *Voyage*, i, 116.

nothing can be more grateful in a climate where the sun has so powerful an influence.⁸⁰

Human and environmental metaphors multiplied and intertwined (with trees, fruits, shades, etc.) Banks's aesthetic affinity to an ordered landscape is evident from the terms he employs: 'walks,' 'intersected,' 'paths,' 'house,' 'admirably calculated,' etc.

What motivated these men to impose this drastic distinction in their writings between the 'wilderness' and its opposite? How deliberate was it? Bougainville's *Voyage* provides the beginning of an answer when, after the *Boudeuse's* landing at Tahiti, the French captain reveals a type of behaviour characteristic of exploring crews of the period:

I also suggested that we make a garden in our fashion and sow different seeds in it, which he accepted with joy. Within a short time Ereti [a Tahitian chief] had the field chosen by our gardeners prepared and circled by a fence ... they admired our garden tools ... We sowed wheat, barley, oats, rice, maize, onions ... We have reason to believe that these plantations will be well taken care of; because this people appear to love agriculture, and I think that we would easily encourage them to profit from the most fertile soil in the universe.⁸¹

I call this type of behaviour 'agricultural expansionism': the will to seize another region's natural productions, first intellectually then practically, by recording observations, collecting specimens and suggesting (sometimes imposing) changes in native methods of cultivation.⁸² Here Bougainville manipulates the agency of the Tahitian chief Ereti, who, the reader is told, 'received the propositions with joy'. Only two years later,

⁸⁰ Beaglehole, *Endeavour journal*, i, 339-40.

⁸¹ Bougainville, *Voyage*, p. 213. See Odile Gannier, 'L'île voyageuse,' in Serge Dunis (ed.), *D'île en île Pacifique* (Paris, 1999), p. 208; Christiane K. Williams, 'Des esprits excités: la subversion des récits de voyage en écrits érotiques,' in Anja Bandau, Marcel Dorigny, and Rebekka von Mallinckrodt (eds), *Les mondes coloniaux à Paris au XVIIIe siècle: circulation et enchevêtrement de savoirs* (Paris, 2010), pp 168-9; and Jean Guillaume, *Ils ont domestiqué plantes et des animaux: prélude à la civilisation* (Versailles, 2010), p. 159.

⁸² I return to this notion in Chapter 5, with a sharper focus on Jeffersonian America in the period 1790-1810.

Banks noted: ‘This morn Captn Cooke planted divers seeds which he had brought with him in a spot of ground turnd up for the purpose. They were all bought of Gordon at Mile End and sent in bottles seald up, whether or no that method will succeed the event of this plantation will shew.’⁸³ The attitude and practice of agricultural expansionism has roots in the Enlightenment premise of ‘useful knowledge.’⁸⁴ It was expansive in the sense that agricultural improvement was *imposed* (both rhetorically and practically) on foreign populations like the Tahitians. There is always the faint threat of punishment underneath Bougainville’s and Banks’s matter-of-fact reports of a given population’s adoption of new techniques of agriculture. Longer-term economic benefits loomed large, too, for France and Britain. The transplantation of Pacific species like the breadfruit from Tahiti to the West Indies would soon become a goal in Kew Gardens.⁸⁵

In the course of his visit to Easter Island in April 1786, Lapérouse exhorted his second-in-command Fleuriot de Langle to ‘sow seeds in every spot that appeared susceptible of propagating them, and to examine the soil, plants, culture, population and monuments ...’⁸⁶ We can deduce from these orders the practical steps involved in the *Boussole*’s own brand of agricultural expansionism. It is inherently appropriative. De Langle has the charge of literally penetrating into the heart of the island and is expected to sow seeds, scrutinise the soil, its culture, the manners and agricultural methods of its population, etc. This makes the explorer’s relationship with Easter Island’s environment

⁸³ Beaglehole, *Endeavour journal*, i, 274. See Nigel Rigby, ‘The politics and pragmatics of seaborne plant transportation, 1769-1805,’ in Margarete Lincoln (ed.), *Science and exploration in the Pacific: European voyages to the southern oceans in the 18th Century* (2nd ed., Woodbridge, 2001), p. 81.

⁸⁴ Richard Grove, ‘Indigenous knowledge and the significance of South-west India for Portuguese and Dutch constructions of tropical nature,’ in *Modern Asian Studies*, xxx, no. 1 (Feb., 1996), pp 121-43. On the role of colonial botanical gardens as ‘imperial scientific institutions,’ see Paolo Palladino and Michael Worboys, ‘Science and imperialism,’ in *Isis*, lxxxiv, no. 1 (Mar., 1993), p. 97. See also Chapter 5 in this thesis.

⁸⁵ On this, see Jill H. Casid, *Sowing empire: landscape and colonization* (Minneapolis, 2005), pp 45-94; Brockway, *Science and colonial expansion*, p. 80; Miller, ‘Banks, empire, and “centers of calculation”,’ p. 32; and Schiebinger, *Plants and empire*, p. 6.

⁸⁶ Lapérouse, *Voyage*, p. 67.

an unequal one, whereby the explorer ‘seizes’ new environmental features and writes them down in a neutral, often terse account of field trip. In other words, the very act of *narrating* the journey amounted tacitly to a territorial claim to the land being assessed. Recourse to textual form shaped a notion of ‘civilised’ expansion easily conveyable to the mental framework of those European readers (scholarly and lay) who would eagerly await the publication of the Lapérouse journals.⁸⁷

In the same vein, Vancouver wrote of the Tahitian landscape in 1791: ‘if a judgement is to be formed, by the deplorable state in which we found the several spots where foreign plants and seeds had been deposited, we had little reason to be sanguine in the success of our gardening. Nor do I believe such attempts will ever succeed until some Europeans shall remain on the island.’⁸⁸ Vancouver apparently lamented the fact that agricultural improvement (which he clearly identified as a European endeavour and not a specifically British one) had to be carried out exclusively by his own men. The sowing and tending of new crops could not be entrusted to the care of Tahitians because their climate, he surmised, made them too indolent.⁸⁹ It was logical for Vancouver to advocate direct interference by Tahiti’s European visitors because only they could, without fault, produce concrete results in agricultural improvement (that is, better tools, techniques, work patterns, etc.) If Europeans contented themselves with teaching the

⁸⁷ Linnekin treats this question with regard to the evolving European view of Samoans in idem, ‘Ignoble savages and other European visions,’ pp 11-26. See also Withers, *Placing the Enlightenment*, pp 124-5.

⁸⁸ Vancouver, *Voyage of discovery*, i, 148. See Eric H. McCormick, *Omai: Pacific envoy* (Auckland, 1977), p. 289.

⁸⁹ Banks had observed the same thing: ‘The great facility with which these people have always procurd the nescessaries of life may very reasonably be thought to have originaly sunk them into a kind of indolence which has as it were benumbnd their inventions, and prevented their producing such a variety of Arts as might reasonably be expected from the approaches they have made in their manners to the politeness of the Europeans.’ Beaglehole, *Endeavour journal*, i, 352-53. See also Lynne Withey, *Voyages of discovery: Captain Cook and the exploration of the Pacific* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1987), p. 123; David Mackay, ‘Myth, science, and experience in the British construction of the Pacific,’ in Alex Calder, Jonathan Lamb, and Bridget Orr (eds), *Voyages and beaches: Pacific encounters, 1769-1840* (Honolulu, 1999), p. 109; Pamela Cheek, *Sexual antipodes: Enlightenment, globalization, and the placing of sex* (Stanford, 2003), p. 26; and Peter Hulme, ‘Dominica and Tahiti: tropical islands compared,’ in Felix Driver and Luciana Martins (eds), *Tropical visions in an age of empire* (Chicago, 2005), p. 87.

natives, rather than following a line of direct and continuous pedagogy, neglect in European-friendly agriculture – and its commercial potential – might ensue once Europeans departed from the island. This is where Vancouver becomes closest to a traditional colonial mindset. He makes no overt mention of prospective colonies, but colonialism as an attitude is made explicit by his politico-economic interest in European interference in socio-cultural Tahitian matters.⁹⁰

The habit of lending tools to native insular populations was one concrete form of such interference; Bougainville had quickly remarked on this aspect.⁹¹ Patrick Gass of the Corps of Discovery would remark on it too, in a different historico-geographical context but arguably out of the same ‘interfering’ colonial logic.⁹² So would George Vancouver over and over again in Tahiti: ‘So important are the various European implements, and other commodities, now become to the happiness and comfort of these islanders, that I cannot avoid reflecting with Captain Cook on the very deplorable condition to which these good people on a certainty must be reduced, should their communication with Europeans be ever at an end.’⁹³ Perhaps taking advantage of the hindsight of Cook’s voyages, Vancouver felt he could lucidly explicate the process by which to make Pacific island populations (here the Tahitians) habituated and then addicted to European technology, to the extent of taking its superiority of efficiency (and with it of legitimacy) for granted. European tools and their use value symbolised the superiority of European civilisations at both a practical and intellectual level.⁹⁴ By

⁹⁰ Earlier, Vancouver had already announced that ‘further propagation [of agricultural improvements] will be at an end unless some additional assistance is afforded.’ Vancouver, *Voyage*, i, p. 137.

⁹¹ Bougainville, *Voyage*, p. 213.

⁹² Gass, 16 Aug. 1806, in Moulton, *Journals*, x, 268. I discuss Gass’s entry in Chapter 2.

⁹³ Vancouver, *Voyage*, i, 145. See Ernest S. Dodge, *Beyond the capes: Pacific exploration from Captain Cook to the Challenger, 1776-1877* (Boston, 1971), *passim*; idem, *Island and empires: western impact on the Pacific and East Asia* (Minneapolis, MN, 1976), pp 108-09; and Jean-François Baré, *Tahiti, les temps et les pouvoirs: pour une anthropologie do Tahiti post-européen* (Paris, 1987), p. 68.

⁹⁴ Christian Licoppe et Marie-Noëlle Bourguet, ‘Voyages, mesures et instruments : une nouvelle expérience du monde

throwing away their former tools, Tahitians were not simply admitting the ascendancy of European craftsmanship; they were also acknowledging, in European eyes at least, the ascendancy of the European *culture* that had engendered this craftsmanship.⁹⁵

What emerges particularly in the written accounts of Bougainville and Banks is another type of effort: that of recruiting Tahitian ‘volunteers’ for a trip back to Paris or London. It is possible that these efforts provided an exemplar for Jefferson’s later calls to Indian tribal chiefs to visit him in Washington (through the agency of Lewis and Clark, among others). But they had a further significance. Bougainville justified his enrolment of Aotourou in those words: ‘Forced to travel across an unknown sea ... it was necessary to have with us a man from one of this sea’s most considerable islands. Ought we not to assume that he spoke the same language as his neighbours, and that his credit among them would play decisively in our favour, after he described both our conduct with his fellow countrymen and our attitude towards his person?’⁹⁶

To borrow from Latourian terminology, here we find that Aotourou is turned into a *human* immutable and combinable mobile. In the captain’s rhetoric, his Tahitian ‘recruit’ temporarily switches from the status of ‘Other’ to that of the ‘Same’. This switch is made for a twofold purpose, articulated in Bougainville’s quote above: first, to safely return to France, and secondly, to extract enough information from Aotourou *while in France* to be later able to travel easily back to Tahiti. Again, this twofold dimension is arguably what made Bougainville’s recruiting practice distinctively modern. Recruiting was made from both a short- and long-term perspective, in

au siècle des Lumières,’ in *Annales, Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, lii, no. 5 (1997), pp 1115-51.

⁹⁵ For an archaeological viewpoint on this question, see Marcy Rockman, ‘Knowledge and learning in the archaeology of colonization,’ in Marcy Rockman and James Steele (eds), *Colonization of unfamiliar landscapes: the archaeology of adaptation* (London, 2003), pp 3-24.

⁹⁶ Bougainville, *Voyage*, p. 233. See Jean- tienne Martin-Allanic, *Bou a n lle na ateur et les dé ou ertes de son temps* (Paris, 1964), p. 964.

adequacy with the ‘center of calculation’ principle. During the difficult crossing and reconnoitring of Bougainville’s Pacific route, Aotourou’s presence made clear linguistic, political, and diplomatic sense. Bougainville assumed that all Pacific island natives were, in some essential sense, derivations of the Aotourou prototype.⁹⁷ But then, by travelling to France and accepting the predicament of being scrutinised as a foreign object, Aotourou *de facto* accepted his fate as an immutable mobile. He shared stories about his home country, talked about the shifting alliances among the tribes of nearby islands, helped the drafting of a vocabulary of the Tahitian language, etc. The data he supplied were, of course, translated into French by the appropriate authorities. He left France after barely a year, because all the ‘useful knowledge’ he had been in the power to provide had essentially been provided. In a way, he had turned into a ‘mutable’ mobile again, but only of the kind that could exist on Tahitian soil. Having been ‘re-Othered’ by virtue of the sheer exhaustion of his resources by Parisian observers, Aotourou soon vanished from the record of European history. He died in Mauritius, on his way back home.⁹⁸

On 12 July 1769, Banks recorded Tahitian chief Tupia’s agreement to join Cook’s crew for the inbound voyage:

This morn Tupia came on board, he had renewd his resolves of going with us to England ... He is certainly a most proper man, well born, cheif Tahowa or preist of this Island, consequently skilld in the mysteries of their religion; but what makes him more than any thing else desireable is his experience in the navigation of these people and knowledge of the Islands in these seas; he has told us the names of above 70, the most of which he has himself been at ... I do not know why I may not keep

⁹⁷ See Dick Stemerding, *Plants, animals, and formulae: natural history in the light of Latour’s ‘Science in action’ and Foucault’s ‘The order of things’* (Enschede, 1991), p. 39. Stemerding uses the ‘immutable mobiles’ model but does not include human beings in his interpretation of it.

⁹⁸ For a comparison with Cook’s Omai, see Neil Rennie, *Far-fetched facts: the literature of travel and the idea of the South Seas* (Oxford, 1996), pp 109-40. See also Latour, *Science in action*, p. 225.

him as a curiosity, as well as some of my neighbours do lions and tygers at a larger expence than he will probably ever put me to ... the benefit he will be of to this ship, as well as what he may be if another should be sent into these seas, will I think fully repay me.⁹⁹

Like Bougainville two years before him, Banks hinted at his hopes that Tupia would share large portions of his native knowledge for the *Endeavour* crew's navigational, linguistic, cartographical, and diplomatic interests. Banks's approach was fairly similar in its twofold purposes to Bougainville's recruitment of Aotourou. In the above journal entry, Banks also 'natural historicises' Tupia by comparing Tupia's companionship to the possession of 'lions and tygers'; he also labels the Tahitian 'a curiosity'. Cultural incommensurability is both implicitly suggested and explicitly exploited. In the case of human immutable mobiles, this expression of cultural incommensurability recurred in explorers' discourses to the degree that their ideological imperatives demanded the neat separation, once the relevant information was provided, between 'Other' and 'Same'.

Yet the rationalism endorsed and sanctioned by the explorers' 'centers of calculation' could conceal some objectively irrational behaviour. The epitome of those deviations can be found in the recording of acts of possession. Shortly after enrolling Tupia on board the *Endeavour*, Banks said his goodbyes to Tahiti and reported: 'On landing Tupia repeated the ceremony of praying as at Huahine after which an English Jack was set up on shore and Captn Cooke took possession of this and the other three Islands in sight viz. Huahine Otahah and Bola Bola for the use of his Britannick majesty.'¹⁰⁰ This recording of Cook's hasty act of possession of Tahiti and its three

⁹⁹ Beaglehole, *Endeavour journal*, i, 312-13. See also Edward Dodd, *Polynesia's sacred isle* (New York, 1976), p. 128; David Turnbull, 'Cook and Tupaia, a tale of cartographic *méconnaissance*?' in Lincoln, *Science and exploration in the Pacific*, p. 126; and Vanessa Smith, *Intimate strangers: friendship, exchange and Pacific encounters* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 179.

¹⁰⁰ Beaglehole, *Endeavour journal*, i, 318. The three islands cited in Banks's journal entry are present-day Huahine,

nearby islands directly echoed Bougainville's act, performed a year earlier.¹⁰¹ Both have a tone of nonchalance about them, in spite of the fact that each (unknowingly) annulled the other. Bougainville preceded Cook by more than a year, which makes Cook's act of possession – and Banks's extremely terse recording of it – look anomalous and objectively (if not subjectively) irrational.¹⁰² The islands targeted by Cook's ritual act of possession were not only inhabited, but for the purposes of European diplomacy they had already been annexed by Britain's greatest European rival. Ironically perhaps, the fact that this apparent contradiction proved to be without serious diplomatic consequences shows the extent to which European explorers spoke different rhetorics but the *same* discourse of legitimation of imperial expansion: the primacy of the overarching discourse over the ramified rhetorics meant that the issue of 'civilisation versus wilderness' came prior to that of, say, 'civilising power one versus civilising power two.'¹⁰³

On the *Endeavour's* inbound journey, Banks gave an account of the island of St Helena, which he visited briefly in May 1771. Whereas Tahiti and Samoa were inhabited islands, St Helena had no aboriginal population. It was practically an empty space, only gradually settled by small waves of British colonists. This particular demographic feature of St Helena made it a theoretical model on which textual strategies leading to the 'voidance' effect could be elaborated, in order to be applied later to those island settings (like Tahiti and Samoa) that *did* have a native population. St Helena had been under the informal rule of the East India Company since 1658. It hosted a few hundreds of British settlers whose seeming disregard for agricultural improvement

Tahaa and Bora Bora. See Dodd, *Polynesia's red sle*, p. 138.

¹⁰¹ See Bougainville, *Voyage*, p. 218.

¹⁰² On English ceremonies of possession, see Seed, *Ceremonies of possession*, pp 24-36. Cook and his crew might, of course, have had an interest in deliberately enforcing an act of possession which they may have known to be contested by right of pre-emption (say by France). This still made the act objectively irrational, and thus a factor undermining Cook and Banks's discursive promotion of their own objectivity in justifying the tutelage of childish, 'irrational' Tahitians.

¹⁰³ On the late-eighteenth-century European colonial explorer's sense of discourse, see Gananath Obeyesekere, *The apotheosis of Captain Cook: European mythmaking in the Pacific* (Princeton, 1992), especially pp 34-9.

aroused Banks's irritation: 'The White inhabitants ... appear to have by no means a supply equal to the extent as well as fertility of their soil, as well as the fortunate situation of their Island seem to promise. Situate in a degree between temperate and warm their Soil might produce most if not all the vegetables of Europe together with the fruits of the Indies, Yet both are almost totally neglected.'¹⁰⁴ To put it in another way, in Banks's eyes St Helena had not yet been properly *colonised*. It had not yet integrated the materialisation of Britain's cultural ascendancy with the rational and ordered exploitation of its soil.¹⁰⁵ If the utopian idiom was used in descriptions of St Helena, it did not seek 'voidance' (the island was devoid of native inhabitants) but instead it reflected in words a desire for the imposition of reason and order on raw nature.¹⁰⁶ The case of St Helena helps highlight the distinction between 'natural historicising' on the one hand, which targets human beings before their environments, and 'environmentalising' on the other, which targets environments before human beings (if there are any).¹⁰⁷

In *Green Imperialism*, Richard Grove offers a parallel interpretation of the role of St Helena and Mauritius in eighteenth- and nineteenth- century voyages of exploration: 'St. Helena and Mauritius ... were important staging posts on the Cape and Indian trading routes. Being uninhabited, they were peculiarly amenable to ... Edenic treatment ... To sailors exhausted and weakened by long voyages, they were veritable

¹⁰⁴ Beaglehole, *Endeavour journal*, ii, 265.

¹⁰⁵ Mere subsistence farming on St Helena could only infuriate an apostle of agricultural improvement like Banks. West of the Appalachians, similar practices (both by Indian tribes and white settlers) could also infuriate Jefferson. Timothy Sweet explains that 'a central assumption of land tenure in this country has been that the right to occupy land derives from laboring on it so as to improve it. This assumption, coupled with the fiction that Native Americans were not farmers, legitimated the expropriation of their lands.' See Sweet, *American georgics*, pp 111-16.

¹⁰⁶ See Richard Grove, 'Conserving Eden: the (European) East India companies and their environmental policies on St Helena, Mauritius and in Western India, 1660 to 1854,' in *Comparative studies in society and history*, xxxv, no. 2 (Apr., 1993), p. 329.

¹⁰⁷ Banks notably hypothesised: '... nor do I think I go too far in asserting that was the Cape now in the Hands of the English it would be a desert, as St Helena in the hands of the Dutch would as infallibly become a paradise.' Beaglehole, *Endeavour journal*, ii, 266. See Robert Lacour-Gayet, *A concise history of Australia* (Harmondsworth and Baltimore, 1976), p. 50; and Richard Grove, *Green imperialism: colonial expansion, tropical island Edens and the origins of environmentalism, 1600-1860* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 126.

paradises, bowers of untouched woodlands made up of plant species and inhabited by birds never before seen by man.’¹⁰⁸ This image, which was obviously Banks’s, connected the imperial annexation of an island like St Helena with the conservation and exploitation of its ‘bowers of untouched woodlands’ – an echo, too, to Pierre Poivre’s colonial conservation work in Mauritius.¹⁰⁹ Environmentalist awareness in the later Banksian sense corresponded to the stage in ‘nurturing Utopia’ thinking when the original expansive drive, legitimated by the explorers’ own discourses and sanctioned by their respective ‘centers of calculation,’ gave way to actual territorial occupation, administration and management.¹¹⁰ Colonial discourse, in other words, shifted from a ‘pre-expansion’ focus on articulating covetous idealisation to a ‘post-expansion’ focus on formulating protective conservatism. While on this question Grove has tended to downplay the strength of the historical relationship between environmental conservation and imperial exploitation, Richard Drayton has rightly pointed out that conservation, ‘while apparently contradicting the ethic of exploitation, was premised on the same paternalist ideology of command’.¹¹¹

2. Insular scientific expansionism applied to Jefferson’s ‘West’: Biddle’s *History*

From a transatlantic comparative viewpoint, if we carry on the logic of considering Lewis and Clark’s ‘West’ in the insular terms applied to the above-discussed European explorers’ journals, numerous passages from Nicholas Biddle’s notes for his 1814 edition of the Lewis and Clark journals can be interpreted through Draytonian lenses,

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹⁰⁹ Madeleine Ly-Tio-Fane, ‘Pierre Poivre et l’expansion française dans l’Indo-Pacifique,’ in *Bulletin de l’Ecole française de l’Extrême-Orient*, liii, no. 2 (1967), pp 453-512; and Grove, *Green imperialism*, pp 168-263.

¹¹⁰ Vladimir Kapor, ‘Shifting edenic codes: on two exotic visions of the Golden Age in the late eighteenth century,’ in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, xli, no. 2 (2008), p. 219.

¹¹¹ Drayton, *Nature’s ornament*, p. 234.

scrutinising the slow but recognizable discursive transition from ‘covetous idealisation’ to ‘protective conservationism’ (‘proto-conservationism’ might be more accurate in the case of the trans-Mississippi West of the 1810s). Biddle had had enough time to digest the raw material of the captains’ accounts, and to profit from William Clark’s additional comments and suggestions. He added a definite literary flavour to the journals, in the process distorting their factual essence somewhat, rather like Bougainville did in his own *Voyage autour du monde*.¹¹² Consider the following extract:

Generally speaking fine soil up the Missouri to the river Platte fine soil thin timbered well calculated for settle[men]t. Above Platte open wanting timber quite up to mountains – not so good for Settlet. on acct. of scarce timber, and bad water up to the mountains ... In the mounts. fine water and vallies capable of good cultivation – the East Side of the Mounts. not so well timbered as the West ... the Columbian plains which reach to the falls on each side of river forming a high broken land capable of culture (good land) (no timber) ...¹¹³

The captains’ opinions (translated *a posteriori*) about settlement prospects along the Missouri River have a visible environmentalist tinge in Biddle’s rendition of them: ‘fine soil thin timbered well calculated for settle[men]t ... vallies capable of good cultivation.’ The reader is reminded of Ellicott’s depiction of Mississippi soil.¹¹⁴ There is no recourse to the utopian idiom, but by then Biddle had no reason to speak otherwise. In 1814

¹¹² ‘Introduction,’ in Bougainville, *Voyage*, pp 25-6. Note that earlier in the introduction (p. 20) Bideaux and Faessel mistakenly affirm that Lapérouse neglects to quote Bougainville in his journal. For counter-examples, see Lapérouse, *Voyage*, pp 333, 363.

¹¹³ ‘The Nicholas Biddle notes,’ c. April 1810, in Jackson, *Letters*, ii, 530. Another such ‘environmentalist’ entry runs: ‘The Indian summer of our country is caused wholly by the smoke of the forests of the western country. In autumn when leaves &c. dry this fire runs with great rapidity – the plain for miles is on flame the plain has been for this long time encroaching on the wood ... Sometimes at St Louis the grass of these burnings are wafted in the streets ... plains so dry that pipe or accident will set them on fire – the neighboring Indians sometimes fire the grass on fire in the fall in order to catch the game which then comes to enjoy the fresh pasture which springs up (vegetation comes up ... after burning) others burn for signals.’ Jackson, *Letters*, ii, 518.

¹¹⁴ Ellicott, *Journal*, pp 118-25.

Louisiana was no more a geopolitical point of contention for the United States. It had achieved statehood. In this post-Purchase context, ‘nurturing Utopia’ thinking would gradually shift to federal planners’ ultimate worry: territorial administration and management of western resources. The insistence on rational management remained alive, but then it had become more a practical than a conceptual bias. The need for self-legitimation in Jeffersonian discourse disappeared with institutionalised occupancy.

Hence my definition of the principle of ‘nurturing Utopia’: it consisted in the elaboration of a discourse (first in instructions to explorers, then in the accounts drafted by those explorers, and finally in the edited version of those accounts) that kept a utopian viewpoint on foreign environments *all through the process* of colonial expansion. Foreign object-territories, seen through the eyes of imperial agents, seemed to remain just as utopian after they had been observed, measured, described and drawn. In theory, Utopia embodies the ‘no place’. This means that whatever utopian texture explorers recognised in exotic environments should have lost its meaning after the initial encounter between the visiting power and the ‘virginised’ country. But in this case, the explorers’ legitimising discourses would have lost their meaning, too. So the agents of a particular expanding power created an illusion of rhetoric, that of timeless, paradisaical settings that ought to remain unscathed through the entire process of territorial integration. This rhetoric justified its own final advocacy of conservationist policies. ‘Nurturing Utopia’ thinking is therefore irremediably bound to the issue of legitimation.

Viewed from this angle, the distinction between ‘territorial’ and ‘oceanic’ expansion has less validity than the distinction between occupation of inhabited territory on the one hand, and uninhabited territory on the other. This point is crucial to my argument here. Spaces without native populations (e.g. St Helena) provided an exemplar

for the more articulate ‘environmentalising’ of those spaces which could be *made* to seem uninhabited: Tahiti, Samoa, Australia, or Jefferson’s ‘West’. The insular nature of those settings, their relatively low population, their lack of technological development and a written language, their supposedly bountiful environments, and the appearance of cultural incommensurability made them ideal targets for ‘nurturing Utopia’ thinking.¹¹⁵

The discussion of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in Chapter 2 has hopefully shown that the journal-keepers of the Corps of Discovery resorted to much the same discursive strategies as did Bougainville, Banks, Lapérouse and Vancouver. The comparative perspective adopted in this study is intimately connected to the argument that the ‘territorial versus oceanic’ dichotomy should give way to a more flexible differentiation between expansion into inhabited lands and expansion into *uninhabited* lands. Whatever the degree of artificial construction involved in explorers’ textual renditions of ‘civilisation’ and ‘wilderness’, the sheer presence of the latter presupposed Utopia – its reversed sibling – and with it the continuation of the legitimising process in discourse. This logic reflected a typically colonial mindset in eighteenth-century Europe which was gradually assimilated by U.S. thinkers after the War of Independence.¹¹⁶ It is now important to return in time and investigate the European thinkers who made the very *logic* of the discourse of legitimation possible, because such a discourse might never have come to life otherwise.

¹¹⁵ The idiosyncrasy of insular expansionism as I understand it has not quite infiltrated the literature as yet. For the stimulating viewpoint of a literary critic, if slightly removed from my focus, see Rebecca Weaver-Hightower, *Empire islands: castaways, cannibals, and fantasies of conquest* (Minneapolis, 2007), pp xvi-xviii, 1-42. Weaver-Hightower acknowledges Pratt’s influence throughout her book, despite the fact that *Imperial eyes* omits insular settings.

¹¹⁶ See Pagden, *European encounters*, pp 158-61. Looking through Diderot’s eyes, Pagden moves from Bougainville’s status as always ‘potentially a colonist’ (a position he criticises) to the ‘midway virtue’ of English-Americans, which made it ‘even possible for Diderot to ignore the Indian massacres and the expropriation of Indian land.’

C. Nurturing Utopia: the issue of legitimation in Rousseau, Diderot, Crèvecoeur

1. Rousseau's idiosyncratic 'primitivism': a tool for rationalising expansion?

The Genevan philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78), author of the *Contrat social* (1762), took perhaps the most fundamental part in the actualisation of the logic of legitimation. Rousseau harboured a well-known passion for the natural sciences and especially for botany, which he indulged in *Les Rêveries du Promeneur Solitaire* (1776-8).¹¹⁷ He deeply admired Buffon and corresponded with Linnaeus.¹¹⁸ Jefferson mentions Rousseau in letters from as early as 1771, either about the purchase of his works, the philosopher's critique of the politics of the sciences and arts, or simply urban gossip.¹¹⁹ Rousseau's radical questioning of the fundamental principles of Enlightenment thought, which he began in his *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (1750), is paradoxically what connects him to the emergence of 'nurturing Utopia' thinking. By conceptualising a hypothetical state of savagery, Rousseau provided a theoretical model through which to oppose 'savage' and 'enlightened' as essential categories, and with it he opened the possibility for the discursive legitimation of either one.¹²⁰

One of the earliest attacks on Rousseau's first *Discours* was launched by the then heir to the kingdom of Poland, Stanislaw August Poniatowski. The prince vindicated the role of science in stimulating technological advance, and its compatibility with his own

¹¹⁷ As evidence for Rousseau's serious interest in botany, see the following work by two then respected members of the Institut de France: Antoine Laurent de Jussieu and René Just Haüy, *La botanique de J. J. Rousseau* (Paris, 1802), especially pp 264-87. The *Rêveries* was published posthumously, in 1782. See also Bernadette Bensaude-Vincent and Bruno Bernardi (eds), *Rousseau et les sciences* (Paris, 2003), pp 77-192.

¹¹⁸ I discussed Rousseau's correspondence with Linnaeus briefly in Chapter 3.

¹¹⁹ In regard to Rousseau's works, see Jefferson to Robert Skipwith, with a list of books for a private library, 3 Aug. 1771, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, i, 78; 'A course of reading for Joseph C. Cabell,' Sept. 1800, in *ibid.*, xxxii, 180. On the philosopher's criticism of the 'clannishness' of the sciences, see Jacques Joseph Ducarne de Blangy to Jefferson, 3 July 1801, in *ibid.*, xxxiv, 495-6. De Blangy was a French agronomist. Gossip usually revolved around Rousseau's tumultuous private life.

¹²⁰ See Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and civilization: a study of the Indian and the American mind* (2nd ed., Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1988), pp 139-42.

conception of ‘enlightened’ rule. Rousseau retaliated: ‘*Let us compare, says the author, to this period of ignorance and barbarity, these happy centuries where sciences had spread everywhere order and justice.* These happy centuries will be difficult to find; but we will find them more easily where, thanks to the sciences, order and justice will no longer be vain words coined to oppress the people.’¹²¹ With an ironic tone, Rousseau condemned the oppressive political use that could be made of the notions of ‘order and justice’ once they spilled out of the scientific domain. Here his answer to Poniatowski is undoubtedly partly rhetorical, but it shows the trace of Rousseau’s later critique of the politicised notion of order in both a domestic and non-domestic context.¹²²

As constructed ideals, order and justice pervade the Jeffersonian environmental dialectic. Rousseau surmised that the ideal of order existed for the sake of rationalising the ‘wild’ by defining its contours and making it comprehensible to a Eurocentric frame of reference. By the same token, if a particular form of environmental ‘wild’ was rich (say in agriculture or mining potential) it would then lie open for rational investment. The utopian idiom that pervades explorers’ accounts suggests that order does not exist *yet* in a given foreign environment, but *will* be imposed. It will be imposed first at the theoretical and textual levels, that is, before the physical re-organisation of Utopia and Utopia’s simultaneous disappearance from discourse. The principle of ‘nurturing Utopia’ is thus implied in Rousseau’s reasoning.¹²³

In the *Discours sur sciences et les arts*, and with even greater focus in the *Discours sur l’origine et les fondements de l’inégalité parmi les hommes* (1755), Rousseau posited a hypothetical ‘state of nature’ which existed before law and order

¹²¹ ‘Réponse au roi de Pologne, duc de Lorraine,’ in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discours sur les sciences et les arts*, ed. Jacques Roger (Paris, 1971), p. 93. All translations from Rousseau and Diderot are mine.

¹²² For a study of the relationship between natural order and political order in Rousseau’s thought, see Maurizio Viroli, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the ‘well-ordered society’*, trans. Derek Hanson (Cambridge, 2002), especially pp 15-63.

¹²³ Jonathan Marks, *Perfection and disharmony in the thought of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Cambridge, 2005), pp 1-117.

began to permeate human society. To attribute to him the ‘noble savage’ concept would be unfair and erroneous, but Rousseau did establish parallels between that ‘state of nature’ and the life of Amerindians. His comparisons are tinged with a latent Eurocentrism, which I discuss below. Although Rousseau asked a truly modern question by oppugning the essence of the ‘civilised’ state, he could not long conceal the epistemological limitations of his analysis. (A modern reader will not be convinced by his questionable empirical studies of the supposed virtues of ‘natural man’).¹²⁴ In a famous passage from the *Second discours*, the philosopher makes the following proposition:

The entirety of Africa and her numerous inhabitants, as singular by their character as by their color, are still waiting to be examined; the entire earth is covered with nations of which we only know the name, and we dare judge humankind! Let us suppose a Montesquieu, a Buffon, a Diderot ... a d’Alembert, a Condillac ... observing and describing as they knew how to do, Egypt, Turkey ... the Africa interior and its eastern coasts ... and in the other hemisphere, Mexico, Peru, Chile ... finally the Caribbean, Florida ... let us suppose these new Hercules, once returned from this memorable course, undertake at their leisure a natural, moral and political history of what they had seen: we ourselves would see a new world come out from under their pens, and thus we would learn to know our own.¹²⁵

Here Rousseau seems to say that reliable and competent French scientists ought to explore non-European environments, if only to educate the remainder of the population

¹²⁴ Rousseau, *Discours sur l’origine et les fondements de l’inégalité parmi les hommes*, ed. Jacques Roger (Paris, 1971), p. 199. Here Rousseau develops the idea of what could be called natural man’s ‘ontological silence,’ which involved unique virtues that he describes in great detail. A critic may ask: what happens when ‘ontological silence’ becomes ‘ontological silencing,’ that is, when this ‘silence’ is imposed by an external force rather than inherent in an idealised raw state of nature? What happens, in other words, when Rousseau’s concept of ‘natural man’ gets appropriated and rephrased by apologists of imperial expansion? See Tracy B. Strong, *Jean Jacques Rousseau: the politics of the ordinary* (Lanham, MD, 2002), pp 49-66.

¹²⁵ Rousseau, *Discours sur l’origine et les fondements de l’inégalité parmi les hommes*, pp 181-2. See also Jean Châteauneuf, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: sa philosophie de l’éducation* (Paris, 1962), p. 105; Vinh De Nguyen, *Le problème de l’homme chez Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Quebec City, 1991), pp 92-3; and Lieve Spaas, ‘Rousseau et fractures de l’identité,’ in Josiane Boulad-Ayoub, Isabelle Schulte-Tenckhoff, and Paule-Monique Vernes (eds), *Rousseau: anticipateur - retardataire* (Quebec City, 2000), p. 248.

in the right way. He correctly saw that a scientist or a literary man taken individually might feel no conscious sense of belonging to a specific political ideology, and might not see oppression in basic scientific methods of ordering.¹²⁶ But Rousseau (unlike Diderot) underestimated the extent to which a Eurocentric viewpoint could, unbeknownst to its author, draw upon a discourse articulated from above and by those who made the plans and gave the instructions. Expansion into foreign regions was often justified *because* their supposed ‘savage’ potential made them unfriendly to the usual grammar of scientific universalism. ‘Noble savagism’ validated the colonial enterprise.¹²⁷

Rousseau’s conflicted, double idealisation of the state of savagery on the one hand and of (multi-staged) civilisational progress on the other was one he never resolved. He recognized in it, however, the possibility for a peaceful consensus in the notion of a ‘middle state’. Rousseau urged:

We ought to remark that once society has begun and relations were established, men already demanded in themselves qualities distinct from those which belonged to their primitive constitution; that because morality had started to penetrate human actions ... the goodness suitable to a pure state of nature did not suit the nascent society ... this period of the development of human faculties, holding a middle ground between the indolence of the primitive state and the petulant activity of our self-love, must have been the happiest and the most durable epoch ... The example of savages whom we almost all found at this point seems to confirm that humankind was made to remain there forever ... and that ulterior improvements were in appearance as much steps towards the perfection of the individual, as towards the decrepitude of the species.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Methods such as those I discussed throughout Chapter 3.

¹²⁷ Gaile McGregor, *The noble savage in the New World garden: notes toward a syntactics of place* (Toronto, 1988). On the United States, see especially pp 30-176.

¹²⁸ Rousseau, *Discours sur l’*état de nature**, pp 211-13. See Armand Farrachi, *Rousseau, ou, l’état sauvage* (Paris, 1997), p. 66; Gérard Namer, *Le système social de Rousseau: de l’inégalité économique à l’inégalité politique* (2nd ed., Paris, 1999), p. viii; Salvador Juan, *Critique de la déraison évolutionniste: animalisation de l’homme et processus de ‘l’*état de nature*’* (Paris, 2006), p. 61; and Jules Lemaître, *Rousseau* (Teddington, 2008), p. 60.

Rousseau claimed that this middle state was the lot of most of the ‘savage’ nations of his own time. Yet the ‘savage’ as he defined him *did not* exist. Rousseau’s attempts at empirical demonstration of ‘his’ existence consist of vague and shaky references to Amerindian tribes, which only highlight the discrepancy between Rousseau’s ideal and the realities of native tribal lives. Worse, by making those crude references Rousseau unwittingly dehumanised the populations he was talking about, and he opened up a skewed interpretive space for categorising autochthonous populations later invested by the descriptive methods of European and Euro-American colonial expedition planners and their agents. If concepts and ideals were allowed to blend so seamlessly with reality in the discourse of Rousseauist primitivism, then why not resort to such rhetorical manipulations as ‘natural historicising,’ ‘environmentalising’, and infantilising in more officially sanctioned circumstances? Both approaches shared the impulse to dehumanise the actual tribes they pretended to either celebrate or vindicate.¹²⁹

Jefferson came to develop his own syntax of the ‘middle landscape’ precisely because he met so few Native Americans in person. To limit himself to essentialisations of discourse (spoken or written) allowed him enough conceptual malleability to achieve this middle syntax. Jefferson never pretended that he was an expert ethnographer. He knew his strengths. When Rousseau had claimed that he could treat all his case studies empirically, he had *de facto* acknowledged a dimension of incommensurability between two types of society that could not cohabit. Jefferson, on the other hand, could safely continue to play with essences, blur the boundaries of identity, and fashion out a construction of white Americanness as *both* native and ‘civilised’. Discourse, not

¹²⁹ Laurence D. Cooper, *Rousseau, nature and the problem of the good life* (University Park, 1999), pp 37-66. See also Muthu, *Enlightenment against empire*, pp 69-71.

empirical facts that did not exist anyway, resolved the apparent paradox that discourse itself had created. This element of self-reflexiveness is characteristic of any ideology.¹³⁰

2. Diderot's *Supplément*: criticising Eurocentric forms of self-legitimation

In the field of eighteenth-century primitivism, Rousseau had alternately a friend and a rival in the person of French philosopher and encyclopaedist Denis Diderot (1713-1784). Diderot was a polymath, like Humboldt. Many of his books could be found on Jefferson's bookshelves.¹³¹ He did not deny Rousseau's influence on his thinking, but works like the *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville* (1772) sought to move beyond the naivety of the former's Eurocentrism.¹³² Diderot wanted to lay bare the artificiality of the 'nature versus culture' dialectic. He did not perceive an essential dichotomy between the two. To him, culture was simply a part of natural life.¹³³ In the *Supplément*, Diderot depicted Tahitian society according to categories fitting the European interpretation of the term 'cultural': themes as varied as language, family, morals, trade, and religion were discussed.¹³⁴ The sheer fact that Tahitians met, discussed and traded with Bougainville's men was evidence of Rousseau's 'middle state'. But if this 'middle state' is said to exist in the *Supplément*, it is only because Diderot avoided thinking in dichotomies. Nature was always in flux: it could exhibit various levels of cultural achievement corresponding

¹³⁰ On primitivism's yearning for a cultural 'middle way', or 'self-othering', see Simon During, 'Rousseau's patrimony: primitivism, romance and becoming Other,' in Francis Baker, Peter Hulme, and Margaret Iversen (eds), *Colonial discourse, postcolonial theory* (Manchester, 1994), pp 47-71. See also Drake, *The nation's nature*, pp 248-9.

¹³¹ Amable and Alexander Lory to Jefferson, 16 Dec. 1780, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, iv, 211; Jefferson to Samuel Henley, with a list of books, 3 Mar. 1785, in *ibid.*, viii, 11-14; and Jefferson to Madison, with a list of books, 1 Sept. 1785, in *ibid.*, viii, 460-4.

¹³² The *Supplément* was published posthumously, in 1796.

¹³³ Sharon A. Stanley, 'Unraveling natural Utopia: Diderot's *Supplément to the voyage of Bougainville*,' in *Political Theory*, xxxvii, no. 2 (Apr., 2009), pp 266-89.

¹³⁴ See the conversation between Orou and the French chaplain in Diderot, *Supplément*, pp 37-64, especially p. 57.

to specific, measurable features of a given society.¹³⁵ Unlike Rousseau's two *Discours* and the *Essai sur l'origine des langues* (published in 1781), Diderot's *Supplément* avoids the trap of Eurocentrism by refusing to participate in the debate of wilderness virginity versus civilised corruption.¹³⁶ Instead, the *Supplément* reads like a remarkably self-aware interrogation of the excesses of leisure in Europe against the societal habits of Tahitian people, although Diderot gives no definite opinion about what is 'natural' and what is not. He often conveys his own doubts about his ability to answer the questions he asks. This vocalised form of self-consciousness is much stronger in him than in Rousseau.¹³⁷

Diderot multiplied his warnings against ideologies based on an ideal of order: 'I call on every political, civil and religious institution: examine them thoroughly; and unless I am strongly mistaken, you will see there the human species crushed century after century under the yoke which a handful of rascals promised to impose on it. Distrust him who wants to impose order. To order is always to make oneself the master of others by impeding them.'¹³⁸ Diderot saw further than Rousseau in predicting the extension of order-centered mind-sets to colonial or proto-colonial settings such as Tahiti. There is definitely a covert obsession with order in the works of Bougainville, Lapérouse, Banks, Vancouver, and Lewis and Clark, that reflects a desire to master the 'Other' by restraining him and his environment. Order as the organisational and

¹³⁵ Martin, 'The Enlightenment in Paradise,' p. 215.

¹³⁶ Rousseau did criticise the proclivity of certain thinkers towards ethnocentrism, but failed to abide by his words: 'In order to appreciate men's actions we must take them in all their connection, and this is what we are not taught to do; when we put ourselves in another's place, we put ourselves as we have been modified, not as they should be; and when we think we judge them according to reason, we only compared their prejudices to ours.' Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Essai sur l'origine des langues*, ed. Angèle Kremer-Marietti (Paris, 2009), p. 143.

¹³⁷ We find evidence of this constant skepticism in A's remark to B that the dialogue between Orou and the chaplain features 'European ideas and turns of phrases.' Diderot, *Supplément*, p. 33. There is another similar glimpse inserted later, p. 65. See Wilda Anderson, *Diderot's dream* (Baltimore, 1990); Pineri, *L'île*, p. 44; and Franck Cabane, *L'écriture en marge dans l'oeuvre de Diderot* (Paris, 2009), p. 107.

¹³⁸ Diderot, *Supplément*, p. 75. See Henri E. Sée, *L'évolution de la pensée politique en France au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1925), pp 196-7; and René Pomeau, *Diderot sa vie et son œuvre* (Paris, 1967), p. 89.

aesthetic basis for a doctrine of territorial aggrandisement facilitated the legitimation and imposition of spatial control by Europeans.¹³⁹

Diderot's position, as expounded in the *Supplément*, indicates that he was ahead of his time on the subject. Rousseau seemed to demonise 'civilised' society and its vices in too Manichean a tone to be able to deconstruct the legitimising discourse of colonial exploitation. Diderot understood early that any caricature of the 'civilised' state could equally function as a vindication of it in the reverse. To idealise the 'savage' and the 'wilderness' involved idealising its opposite, 'civilisation'. As long as this opposite (in reality as much of a discursive construction) looked like an objective parameter of all European-autochthonous interactions, it would impede the efforts of native populations to develop their *own* 'narrative of anti-conquest' (to borrow a phrase from Mary Louise Pratt).¹⁴⁰ Diderot identified the trap of 'ontological silencing' in which Rousseau had fallen. For the most part Diderot avoided it – though for the most part only. At specific moments in the *Supplément*, Rousseau's legacy seems to spill over. Early in the book, for instance, Diderot explains that

The Tahitian reaches to the origins of the world, while the European reaches to its old age. The interval separating him from us is greater than that between the newborn and the decrepit old man. He hears nothing of our customs and laws; he sees but obstacles disguised in a hundred different shapes,

¹³⁹ For a different and interesting stance on this issue, see Aaron Sachs, 'The ultimate "Other": post-colonialism and Alexander von Humboldt's ecological relationship with nature,' in *History and Theory*, xlii, no. 4 (Dec., 2003), p. 120. Sachs argues: 'To Humboldt, though, nature encompassed humanity rather than the other way around: the natural world was the source of order, and all he could do was attempt to understand it and submit to it.'

¹⁴⁰ Pratt, *Imperial eyes*, pp 38-60. See also Alan Bewell, 'A passion that transforms: picturing the early natural history collector,' in Ann B. Shteir and Bernard Lightman (eds), *Figuring it out: science, gender, and visual culture* (Lebanon, NH, 2006), p. 35; and Natchee Blu Barnd, 'Inhabiting Indianness: US colonialism and indigenous geographies' (Ph.D. thesis, University of California, San Diego, 2008), pp 38-9.

hindrances that can only rouse the indignation and scorn of a being for whom the feeling of freedom is the most profound of feelings.¹⁴¹

The faint paternalism of this passage could have featured in the *Discours sur l' né al té*. It is clear that Diderot's purpose is to protect the notion of relative incommensurability between the Tahitian and European cultures in his attempt to counter the claims of the assimilationist ideology of French imperialism. But before his tone becomes ironic, it seems that Diderot's defense of Tahiti's 'original' inhabitants' individual agency works on the premise that Europeans could understand Tahitian culture, but not the reverse.¹⁴²

The Tahitian native 'hears nothing of our manners and our laws,' states Diderot, implying cultural deafness more than conscious resistance. But Europeans can understand Tahitian manners and laws; otherwise Diderot would not be writing the *Supplément* at all. He makes the relationship between the Tahitians and their European visitors an unequal one by stressing relative cultural incommensurability on the one hand, and making it absolute for the Tahitians on the other. Europeans were the visiting power. They explored the Pacific and performed acts of possession whenever they saw fit. Diderot recognised the logical absurdity of those acts, and he denounced them.¹⁴³ But

¹⁴¹ Diderot, *Supplément*, p. 24. See also Hans Mølbjerg, *Aspects de l'esthétique de Diderot* (København, 1964), p. 25; Victor Goldschmidt, *Anthropologie et politique: les principes du système de Rousseau* (Paris, 1974), p. 448, n54; Eric Vibart, *Tahiti: naissance d'un paradis au siècle des Lumières* (Bruxelles, 1987), p. 16; Gandin, *Le voyage dans le Pacifique*, p. 50; Amor Cherni, *Diderot: l'ordre et le devenir* (Genève, 2002), p. 384; Pierre Auriol, *La fin du voyage: postérité du capitaine Cook* (Paris, 2004), p. 47; Franck Michel, 'La voie métisse comme une brèche dans le mur,' in Jean-Marie Furt and Franck Michel (eds), *L' dent té au ur du oya e* (Paris, 2007), p. 69; and Philippe Junod, *Chemins de traverse: essais sur l'histoire des arts* (Gollion, 2007), p. 435.

¹⁴² In Pagden's terminology, this would equate to saying that the 'principle of attachment' could not work both ways for Europeans and Tahitians. Pagden, *European encounters*, p. 21. See also Marcel Hénaff, 'Supplement to Diderot's dream,' in Michel Feher (ed.), *The libertine reader: eroticism and Enlightenment in eighteenth-century France* (New York, 1997), pp 52-112.

¹⁴³ See Diderot's famous rebuke of Bougainville in the *Supplément*, p. 28: 'Orou! You, who can hear the tongue of these men, tell us all as you told me, what they wrote on this metal blade: *This country is ours*. This country is yours? Why? Because you set foot on it?' See also Doris L. Garraway, 'Of speaking Natives and hybrid philosophers: Lahontan, Diderot, and the French Enlightenment: critique of colonialism,' in Daniel Carey and Lynn Festa (eds), *The postcolonial Enlightenment: eighteenth-century colonialism and postcolonial theory* (Oxford, 2009), pp 207-39.

there was a danger in putting too much stress on incommensurability like Rousseau did (and later Crèvecoeur would do.) It could result in a deformed European belief in ‘pan-savage’ commensurability, so to speak, making a Hawaiian the cultural twin of a Tahitian or a Samoan. The illusion of a cohesive bloc of ‘savagery’ benefited the explorers’ own discourses of legitimation, because it allowed them to work in essentialisations that had already been normalised and made to look natural. In those essentialisations, the word ‘native’ could mean anything: ahistorical entities, natural historical specimens, cultural artefacts, the environment, the climate, individuals without agency, or even white Americans fashioning a new relationship with the North American soil.¹⁴⁴ The trilateral dialogue of ‘nurturing Utopia’ thinking (philosophical, architectural, and exploratory) worked by this sprawling dialectic, seemingly able to engulf everything in its meta-discourse.

3. Crèvecoeur’s naturalising of the ‘flexible middle way’: the *Letters*

Whether or not they can be considered ‘primitivistic’, if such a thing as strict primitivism existed, Rousseau and Diderot’s works contained the seed of this trilateral dialogue. Once fully grown, this seed produced the carving out of a hybrid identity between Old and New Worlds blessed with an existence outside of the dichotomy between nature and culture, and therefore able to withstand critique from either viewpoint, be it naturalistic or culturalistic.

In the United States, Leo Marx, referring to the writings of Jefferson and Crèvecoeur, has talked of a ‘syntax of the middle landscape’: ‘a conditional statement which has the effect of stressing a range of social [as well as cultural] possibilities

¹⁴⁴ See Ralph N. Miller, ‘American nationalism as theory of nature,’ in *William and Mary Quarterly*, third series, xii, no. 1 (Jan., 1955), pp 74-95; and Greenfield, *Narrating discovery*, pp 16-17.

unavailable to Europeans.’¹⁴⁵ Arguably, the publication of Crèvecoeur’s *Letters from an American farmer* in 1782 marked the entrance of this syntax into the published (Euro-American) world. It isolated the moment when the process of U.S. identity-making reached a self-conscious, written form. ‘What is an American?’ Crèvecoeur asked. The *Letters*’s publication coincided with the end of the War of Independence, but Crèvecoeur had started work on the manuscript before the outbreak of the war.¹⁴⁶ Aristocratic in background, he had been living in North America since 1755 (from the age of twenty) where after his experience in the Canadian militia during the French and Indian War he had moved to New York City in 1759. Although he had acquired British citizenship in 1765, Crèvecoeur’s excitement at the prospect of American Independence (which he translated into the *Letters*) indicated that his thwarted and conflicted French republican sympathies might finally resolve themselves in a *new* form of republicanism, unimpeded by European history while embracing North American geography, though in the process facing the reality of pre-European North American history.¹⁴⁷ For these reasons, Crèvecoeur’s *Letters* reflected a need for Euro-Americans not only to differentiate themselves culturally and politically from Britons, but also from Native Americans, without completely rejecting either’s identity traits. The *Letters*, in other words, foreshadowed Jefferson’s adaptation of ‘nurturing Utopia’ thinking into westward expansionist discourse.

Can Jefferson and Crèvecoeur’s doctrinal kinship be proven? The two men maintained a rich, though compact, correspondence between the years 1784 and

¹⁴⁵ Marx, *Machine in the garden*, pp 120-1. The emphases are mine. See also Pamela Regis, *Describing early America: Bartram, Jefferson, Crèvecoeur, and the influence of natural history* (2nd ed., Philadelphia 1999), p. 168, n7; and Paul Giles, *Transatlantic insurrections: British culture and the formation of American literature, 1730-1860* (Philadelphia, 2001), p. 94.

¹⁴⁶ Elayne A. Rapping, ‘Theory and experience in Crèvecoeur’s America,’ in *American Quarterly*, xix, no. 4 (Winter, 1967), p. 718; and Mazlish, ‘Crèvecoeur’s New World,’ p. 146.

¹⁴⁷ For the biographical detail on Crèvecoeur, see Thomas Philbrick, *St. John de Crèvecoeur* (New York, 1970), pp 18-19.

1789.¹⁴⁸ Contact was likely fuelled by Jefferson's five-year stint as ambassador to France and Crèvecoeur's symmetrical position in the eastern United States. It covered a variety of topics, including the prospects of having a bust of Washington sculpted by Houdon, the exchange of botanical seeds, and the most recent news of each other's country on the domestic and diplomatic fronts.¹⁴⁹ Crèvecoeur helped Jefferson acquaint himself with the Parisian salon world.¹⁵⁰ On the whole, however, the two men's epistolary communications revolved around two dominant themes: agriculture and politics. This choice was spatially and temporally coherent. Their most important exchange probably occurred on 18 May 1785, when Crèvecoeur requested of Jefferson:

I am much obliged to you for your Care in correcting errors in the Cultivator's Letters. I lost so Many Manuscripts whilst I was confined, that 'tis no Wonder Errors in Fact shou'd have made their way in my Poor composition—for I am no author ... Cou'd not you help me to Them in case of a Second Edition. Pardon the thought. It is not Vanity that Inspires it, but a desire that the Second Edition might be more usefull and more correct than the first. As I was saying I am no author mais Seulement un Ecrivain, which my Singular destiny has Led from the *actual* Cultivation of my Fields to be a Consul, and from sketching what I saw and Felt, for a Friend, to be an author. I am but a scrib[bler] after all, but if the Europeans Can form a better Idea of the united States than before I am satisfied; for altho' a French Consul I am a Citizen of one of these States and a considerable Freeholder. If you had Some Anecdotes to communicate me I'd willingly Inrich with them the Second reappareance of these 2 Vol: and shou'd Put your name To them. I have Collected materials Enough for a 3d. Vol: which Wou'd be really Instructif if it was thought Proper by the conoisseurs.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ At least twenty-seven letters, if my counts are correct.

¹⁴⁹ On Houdon and the exchange of seeds, see St John de Crèvecoeur to Jefferson, 1 Sept. 1784, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, vii, 413-15. On the American domestic political situation: Crèvecoeur to Jefferson, 9 Nov. 1787, in *ibid.*, xii, 332-3. On the French situation: Jefferson to Crèvecoeur, 9 Aug. 1788, in *ibid.*, xiii, 485-7. On the early days of the French Revolution: Jefferson to Crèvecoeur, 20 May 1789, in *ibid.*, xv, 139-41.

¹⁵⁰ Jefferson to Crèvecoeur, 6 Aug., 1787, in *ibid.*, xi, 692.

¹⁵¹ Crèvecoeur to Jefferson, 18 May 1785, in *ibid.*, viii, 155-6. See Gilbert Chinard, *Houdon in America: a collection of documents in the Jefferson papers in the Library of Congress* (Baltimore, 1930), p. 9; Howard C. Rice, *Le cultivateur américain: étude sur l' u re de Sa nt Jo n de Crè e ur* (Paris, 1932), p. 59; and Regis, *Describing early America*, p. 108.

Such a request did not simply uncover Jefferson's familiarity and direct intellectual involvement with the *Letters*. Crèvecoeur's warm tone indicates how much the two men agreed on the fact that 'if the Europeans Can form a better Idea of the united States than before I am satisfied.' This sense of satisfaction was not voiced for its own sake. Rather, it afforded Jefferson and Crèvecoeur the theoretical relief of knowing that their respective stances on the question of constructing a U.S. identity combined so well.¹⁵²

Crèvecoeur builds his character and *Letters* narrator James as a 'tabula rasa' behind his frontiersman's appearance.¹⁵³ Moving west, James's identity is moulded by the events he himself narrates until he reaches a seemingly all-encompassing forest which symbolises the western 'wilderness', circumscribed precisely to the extent that it encompasses everything except what is *not* forest. James meets an increasing number of (usually vaguely defined) tribes along his way and gradually 'goes Indian', finally settling among them a little before the geographically most extreme western point of his narrative. (The important point is now how far west James goes, but that he moves in a *western* direction). James is thus made compatible with western American geography in order to become its legitimate spokesperson. This process of naturalisation, which can be interpreted an allegory for U.S. citizenship, involves a climax where the character becomes 'grounded' in his new soil, in a subdued act of possession which Leo Marx recognises as the birth of the American pastoral.¹⁵⁴

Implicitly in full control of his westward progression, James circumscribes a middle landscape which he subsequently takes for granted, but in the process he never entirely renounces his 'civilised' past. He is ultimately Crèvecoeur's representative, or

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, pp 117-31.

¹⁵³ Grantland S. Rice, 'Crèvecoeur and the politics of authorship in republican America,' in *Early American Literature*, xxviii, no. 2 (1993), p. 97.

¹⁵⁴ Marx, *Machine in the garden*, pp 113-14.

agent of naturalisation, in many ways the fictional and ideological forerunner of Andrew Ellicott and Jefferson's Lewis and Clark. He speaks in a proto-environmentalist utopian idiom that facilitates the organic bridging of the identity of East Coast civilised society with the settlement potential of the western 'forests'.¹⁵⁵ This phenomenon of bridging is what constitutes the 'pastoral'. Jefferson, who had engaged intellectually with Crèvecoeur's work and had even suggested amendments to it, started from the same doctrinal viewpoint (the need to construct a U.S. 'middle way' identity vitally connected to the question of legitimacy of soil occupation) but he did not content himself with fictional characterisation. The climactic diplomatic achievement of the Purchase, and the exploratory reconnaissance of the trans-Mississippi West by Lewis and Clark, may be seen as physical retranscriptions of the politicised pastoralism of Crèvecoeur's *Letters*.

In an important analysis of the textual strategies Crèvecoeur used in trying to fashion out a new white American identity in the *Letters*, David M. Robinson has argued that the author's use of multiple 'utopian projections' served, first and foremost, as rhetorical tools for the articulation of his biting critique of the urban (white) American culture of his time.¹⁵⁶ It does seem so at a first reading, but Crèvecoeur's pastoralised 'middle way' yeoman farmer, the literal vehicle of this utopian idiom, can also be seen as a discursive construction that rationalises and normalises the advance of the western frontier. In the end, whether the characters in Crèvecoeur's narrative succeed or fail in their respective enterprises becomes irrelevant since what is described

¹⁵⁵ On the economic aspects of early American pastoralism, see Joyce Appleby, 'Commercial farming and the "agrarian myth" in the Early Republic,' in *Journal of American History*, lxxviii, no. 4 (Mar., 1982), pp 844-5; and Timothy Sweet, 'American pastoralism and the marketplace: eighteenth-century ideologies of farming,' in *Early American Literature*, xxix, no. 1 (1994), p. 67.

¹⁵⁶ David M. Robinson, 'Community and Utopia in Crèvecoeur's sketches,' in *American Literature*, lxii, no. 1 (Mar., 1990), p. 30.

in the *Letters* is so self-consciously steeped in time and the potentiality of change.¹⁵⁷ What remains much more discreet throughout the book is how all of the chapters' narratives are also steeped in *space*, more specifically the 'Other-space' of Indian territory. This 'Other-space' represents a testing ground for the success or failure of the various characters' respective enterprises, to be sure, but also more generally for the success or failure of their experiment as newfound frontier pastoralists.¹⁵⁸ The means justified the end: because it was at bottom a product of the European Enlightenment tradition, this pastoral 'experiment' demanded a shift of focus from the temporal to the spatial (territorial expansion) for the full harnessing of its reformative capacities. A peculiar form of naturalised rationalism became U.S. expansionism's new justification, and with it the extension of the 'silencing' of tribal voices.

In the episode featured in the *Letters* where the narrator sounds most like Crèvecoeur (Letter XII, 'Distresses of a frontier man') it quickly becomes obvious that the entire panel of options for James's process of 'going native' remains one-sided in its cultural bias.¹⁵⁹ The 'Indians' that James intends to live among are merely constitutive of a static environment which serves as foil to the white American man's negotiation with his 'civilised' environment further east.¹⁶⁰ There is a phenomenon of cultural silencing happening throughout Letter XII. What the invoked natives might think or say about James integrating their society, and about the broader context of his escape, is never addressed – because indeed, it *cannot* be addressed.

¹⁵⁷ On the peculiar notion of time in Crèvecoeur's *Letters*, see Bernard Chevignard, 'Mémoire et création dans les *Letters from an American farmer* de St John de Crèvecoeur,' in *Colloque - Société d'études anglo-américaines des 17e et 18e siècles*, xvii (1983), pp 131-2.

¹⁵⁸ See Louis S. Warren, 'The nature of conquest: Indians, Americans, and environmental history,' in Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury (eds), *A companion to American Indian history* (Oxford, 2004), p. 299.

¹⁵⁹ Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp 221-8. For an analysis of Crèvecoeur's *Letters* as a politically, economically and culturally motivated literary experiment, see Ed White, 'Crèvecoeur in Wyoming,' in *Early American Literature*, xliii, no. 2 (2008), pp 379-407. White scrutinises all the editions of the *Letters* that came out at the time.

¹⁶⁰ Regis, *Describing early America*, p. 128.

The environmental idiom in a discourse of territorial expansionism showcases both explorers as agents of a particular ‘center’ and the role of their accounts (that is, of their *text*) as vectors for the expression of their sponsors’ doctrine. The relationship between the explorer and his text is often intricate and capricious, as when Bougainville edited his journal for the publication of the *Voyage autour du monde*; when Milet-Mureau was charged with editing the Lapérouse records; when Nicholas Biddle produced a more literate version of the Lewis and Clark journals; etc. What never seemed to change was the essential relationship between the explorer and the new landscapes which he described in his text. Sparsely populated, blessed with rich and exploitable environments until then isolated geographically, these spaces often became the target of what I have called ‘nurturing Utopia’ thinking. ‘Nurturing Utopia’ thinking was colonial thinking, because every step of its discursive articulation implied the future need for direct physical intervention by the visiting (and describing) power: exploration, investigation, praise in the utopian idiom, and finally preservation, either as a typically tacit conserving impulse or as the scientifically more commonplace practice of ‘indigenating’ exotic seeds in botanic gardens.¹⁶¹ This mindset’s environmentalism was doctrinal, paternalistic, and paradoxical, in that it actually shackled those ‘paradises’ it pretended to safeguard.¹⁶²

Of course, the trans-Mississippi West of Jefferson’s era was a unique type of environment, not comparable to island oceanic settings despite some common features like its sparse population rate.¹⁶³ To the frontiersman’s eye, the West presented a gigantic swath of land, of inconsistent variety, and not always blessed with a luxuriant

¹⁶¹ On this process of ‘indigenation’, which is a word coined by Jefferson himself in an 1812 letter to Correa da Serra, see Chapter 5 in this thesis, pp 28-9. The full reference, which I provide again in the next chapter (p. 28, n94), is the following: Jefferson to Correa da Serra, 17 Apr. 1812, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, iv, 621.

¹⁶² On this, see the pioneering work by Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological imperialism: the biological expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (Cambridge, 1986), pp 269-93.

¹⁶³ Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian exchange: biological and cultural Consequences of 1491* (2nd ed., Westport, CT, 2003), pp 165-207.

climate. Despite this, Lewis and Clark did use a form of utopian idiom in their journals, along with the textual strategies that went with it.¹⁶⁴ Their specificity as agents resided in their self-consciousness. They were the representatives of a new, paradigmatic sense of U.S. identity in western territory. This sense pervades their accounts and gives their words a distinctive taste – always a little more than the merely prosaic.

The ‘middle way’ discourse of pastoralism suited those settlers and explorers who described themselves as natives of insular or insular-like spaces, having reduced the original population of these spaces to silence in their written accounts. In North America, Crèvecoeur’s *Letters* had crystallised the notion of a cultural ‘middle way’ both as a reaction to British colonialism and as a naturalistic stimulant for the expanding western frontier. Jefferson enjoyed the degree of political leverage that had eluded Crèvecoeur, and which enabled him to put Crèvecoeurian concepts (themselves adaptations from Rousseau) into practice. Lewis and Clark were guinea pigs of sorts.¹⁶⁵ They personified Jefferson’s success in giving justice to the ‘field preparations’ of previous western explorer-surveyors like Ellicott and Hutchins.¹⁶⁶ By reaching the Pacific coast and recording the event, Lewis and Clark reified the myth of ‘continentality’. They validated territorial contiguity and a new pastoralised identity as its founding traits. They also applied Jefferson’s idiosyncratic version of the environmental dialectic, which he had found in the writings of those European planners and explorers he had taken so many years to absorb.

¹⁶⁴ See Chapter 2. My comparative perspective is extended over Chapters 2 and 4. Chapter 3 provides the theoretical background for the transition between the two.

¹⁶⁵ On Lewis and Clark’s legacy on the ‘future expeditions and surveys’ of the trans-Mississippi West, see Clark Wissler, ‘The American Indian and the American Philosophical Society,’ in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, lxxxvi, no. 1 (Sept., 1942), pp 196-7.

¹⁶⁶ F. Terry Norris, ‘Thomas Hutchins and the proposed expedition to the Pacific Ocean’ (Conference paper, The Louisiana Purchase: An International Perspective Symposium, St Louis, MO, 21-13 Mar. 2002). Norris is an archeologist in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Jefferson, never adept at speeches, understood and mastered the role of textualisation as a process (and of the *text* as its final product) in the transmission of legitimising and reifying discourse. He built his influence gradually through his correspondence, his legal practice, his reading lists, his vocabularies, and his own books. All these domains were, above all, written domains. They helped systematise Jefferson's vision of a post-revolutionary continental republic in the years 1780 to 1803 (the year of the Purchase). The realm of representation in Jeffersonian discourse expanded beyond the textual, however. It incorporated a graphic interpretation of the pastoralised republic to be founded in the 'West' of the *Account of Louisiana*. The text provided the caption for the image, and vice-versa.¹⁶⁷ It is to this Jeffersonian image of the 'West as Garden' that I now shift my comparative focus.

¹⁶⁷ See Chambers, 'Joseph Banks and the voyage account.'

5. Aspects of the western ‘Garden’ in the Jeffersonian republican aesthetic

I am very much obliged to Captn. Lewis for his endeavors to encrease our knowledge of the Animals of that new acquired Territory ... It is more important to have this Museum supplied with the American Animals than those of other Country'es, yet for a comparative view it ought to possess those of every part of the Globe! In time this will be accomplished, as time need not lesson what is collected, and the same mode of preservation followed, must increase the collection immencely in a few years. But provision ought to be made for a display of the whole in their proper places, this will be surest means to keep the Museum together, a lasting benefit to our Country.

Charles Willson Peale to Jefferson, November 3, 4, 1805¹

The Jeffersonian need to ‘see the Republic’ was expressed at both a visual and textual level.² The previous chapters have shown that it drew inspiration from outside as well as inside the United States. In this final chapter, the focus returns to the city of Philadelphia and to the role it held as the cultural capital of the U.S. during the period 1780-1810. Here the purpose is to dissect one last important feature of the Jeffersonian ideology of expansion: the visual and material element in its discourse. This element may be divided into two broad categories: first, the artistic or cultural products themselves (portraits, landscape paintings, drawings and sketches, Indian artifacts); second, the venues where they were displayed (museums, literary and scientific societies, art galleries, private collections). Given the focus in previous chapters, here the thematic concentration is on landscape representation and museum management in

¹ Peale to Jefferson, 3, 4 Nov. 1805, in Lillian B. Miller, Sidney Hart, and Toby A. Appel (eds), *The selected papers of Charles Willson Peale and his family* (5 vols, New Haven, 1988), ii, 906-09.

² On the notion of a Jeffersonian imperative to ‘see the Republic’, see Chapter 1.

the early years of the American Republic, two activities whose interconnectedness ought to be emphasised. In the U.S. of the period 1790-1820, they evolved primarily through the efforts of one prominent Jeffersonian polymath: the painter, museum keeper and amateur naturalist Charles Willson Peale.

Why such a focus on landscape representation? I believe that scholarly discussions of the 'image of the Indian' in Jeffersonian America occupy an oversized portion of the literature.³ I have found (comparatively) little material on early depictions of the North American environment, let alone with an analytical focus on the deconstruction of myths and ideologies of continental integration.⁴ One reason for this might be the belief that there existed no such thing as a coherent field of landscape painting in the U.S. before the period of the Hudson River School. But this is not necessarily true. To take one example, Charles Willson Peale produced a great number of landscape paintings during his period at Belfield Farm (1810-20) and he sought an audience for them. It is true that Peale did not mean to represent the American 'West', and he focused instead on the various Pennsylvanian landscapes around Belfield. But these canvases already contained the germs of that 'eastern' model of redefinition of 'western' landscape which, once later appropriated by professional painters of the type

³ These include many classic studies. A few examples in this vast field include Pearce, *Savagism and civilization*; Robert F. Berkhofer, *The white man's Indian: images of the American Indian, from Columbus to the present* (New York, 1979); and Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians*. For a very recent work focused on portrait painting, see William H. Truettner, *Painting Indians and building empires in America, 1710-1840* (Berkeley, 2010).

⁴ From my specific line of approach, I do not think there is a single monograph on that topic. But useful insights can be found in the following works, some of which I will use below, despite their absence (or brevity) of focus on institutions and on Native Americans: Barbara Novak, *Nature and culture: American landscape and painting, 1825-1875* (3rd ed., Oxford, 2007); Angela Miller, *The empire of the eye: landscape representation and American cultural politics, 1825-1875* (Ithaca, 1993); eadem, 'Ideology and experience in the making of the national landscape,' in *American Literary History*, iv, no. 2 (Summer, 1992), pp 207-29; Denis E. Cosgrove, *Social formation and symbolic landscape* (Madison, 1985); Mick Gidley and Robert Lawson-Peebles (eds), *Views of American landscapes* (Cambridge, 1989); John R. Stilgoe, *Common landscape of America, 1580 to 1845* (New Haven and London, 1982); Michael P. Conzen (ed.), *The making of the American landscape* (London, 1990); Lawson-Peebles, *Landscape and written expression*; and Kevin S. Blake, 'Great Plains Native American representations along the Lewis And Clark trail,' in *Great Plains Quarterly*, xxiv, no. 4 (Autumn, 2004), pp 263-82.

of George Catlin, could be practically aimed at the redefinition of the trans-Mississippi West.⁵

The historical importance I ascribe to early American landscape painting also stems from my conviction that, in the words of W.J.T. Mitchell, landscape embodied the ‘dreamwork of imperialism ... unfolding its own movement in time and space from a central point of origin and folding back on itself to disclose both utopian fantasies of the perfected imperial prospect and fractured images of unresolved ambivalence and unsuppressed resistance.’⁶ In nineteenth-century Europe, at any rate, landscape as a theme dominated artistic output in the same way that imperialism dominated political ideology. Every administrative imperial hub had its panel of designated landscape painters (who sometimes lived as agents on the imperial peripheries that provided their inspirational material, or were involved in voyages of exploration).

In the United States, this phenomenon took mature shape a little later, but Peale’s pioneer work offers a visual echo to what I have called the Jeffersonian ‘architecture’ of the West. It was a vision of continental contiguity. Jefferson’s architectural sense was especially concerned with legitimation, and stayed clear of blatantly imperialist forms of rhetoric use. Instead, Jefferson embraced a neoclassical republican aesthetic which he thought well-adapted to the redesigning of the North American landscape according to a rationalised ideal of the ‘pastoral’ republic. This representational choice entailed the suppression of Native American agency on the land: it entailed not even *mentioning* the territorial tribal presence. Native Americans had already been assimilated to their

⁵ See Kathryn S. Hight, “‘Doomed to perish’: George Catlin’s depictions of the Mandan,” in *Art Journal*, xlix, no. 2 (Summer, 1990), pp 119-24; and Gareth E. John, ‘Benevolent imperialism: George Catlin and the practice of Jeffersonian geography,’ in *Journal of Historical Geography*, xxx, no. 4 (Oct., 2004), pp 597-617. Catlin spent some time at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1823, where he must have met Peale. More research needs to be done on their (probable) encounter. See Lillian B. Miller (ed.), *The collected papers of Charles Willson Peale and his family* (microfiche edition, Millwood, 1980), III/4F2.

⁶ W. J. T. Mitchell, ‘Imperial landscape,’ in idem (ed.), *Landscape and power* (Chicago, 1994), p. 10.

natural environment by textualised forms of discourse discussed in Chapter 4. To contemplate the full remodelling of the North American landscape required the definitive silencing of tribal agency.⁷ Towards such a goal, mapmaking belonged to a distinctive type of landscape representation. Maps played a more abstract role than paintings, based as they were (ostensibly) on astronomical calculations, and often institutionalised as scientific. But maps' institutional linkage also made it possible for them to be artificially constructed, and dominated by doctrinal motivations.⁸

The beginnings of landscape production in early U.S. art, whether through Peale or the maps produced by William Clark, only make sense when set in context with the emergence (from 1790 onwards) of a network of 'centers of calculation' based in Philadelphia. The development of this network fitted Philadelphia's position as a cultural, educational, and intellectual hub on the East Coast at that time. It reached beyond the growing influence of the A.P.S., however, even though the Society functioned as its nexus. I argue in this chapter that Peale's Museum, founded in 1784, became the network's artistic, popular and representational organ, imbued with a clear pedagogical bent, and worked in a symbiotic relationship with the A.P.S. made official by Peale's election to membership in 1786.⁹ The two institutions maintained close ties with the Lewis and Clark Expedition and with Jefferson, the latter eventually arranging for the sending back of the captain's journals to the A.P.S. headquarters and for the storage of natural historical specimens and tribal artefacts in the Museum, when these did not end

⁷ Barbara Belyea, 'Mapping the Marias: the interface of Native and scientific cartographies,' in *Great Plains Quarterly*, xvii, nos 3-4 (Autumn, 1997), pp 165-84; and eadem, 'Amerindian maps: the explorer as translator,' in *Journal of Historical Geography*, xviii, no. 3 (July, 1992), pp 267-77.

⁸ Frederick C. Luebke, Frances W. Kaye, and Gary E. Moulton (eds), *Mapping the North American plains* (Norman, 1987); and G. Malcolm Lewis, 'Misinterpretation of Amerindian information as a source of error on Euro-American maps,' in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, cxxvii, no. 4 (Dec., 1987), pp 542-63.

⁹ Brooke Hindle, 'Charles Willson Peale's science and technology,' in Edgar P. Richardson, Brooke Hindle, and Lillian B. Miller (eds), *Charles Willson Peale and his world* (New York, 1982), p. 113.

up in his ‘Indian Hall’ at Monticello.¹⁰ Adopting a wider perspective, I suggest that the emergence of ‘centers of calculation’ in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was inextricably related to the parallel emergence of imperialising ideologies based on ‘enlightened’ rhetoric of the kind discussed in earlier chapters. In Jeffersonian America, those centers remained embryos; but as embryos they lined the path towards further specialisation up to the years of James Polk’s presidency. At the level of representational politics, the emergence in the early Republic of artistic discourse to supplement an already more established scientific discourse seemed to confirm Rousseau’s earlier qualms in the *Discours sur les sciences et les arts*.¹¹

This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, Peale’s agency in turning his Museum into a budding ‘center of calculation’ is considered. Jefferson’s role in helping Peale expanding the institution is examined, first by offering his vocal support and subsequently by encouraging stronger exchange ties between the museum and ‘Indian Hall’ as the two original eastern repositories for western expeditions. Peale, in fact, had the nominal support of most prominent eastern politicians at the time, including George Washington.¹² Peale’s repeated attempts at making his establishment a state institution are also related. There were some minor successes, like obtaining additional storage space for the collections; but by and large those attempts were failures, because support for it remained (indeed) overwhelmingly nominal. A voice like Humboldt’s was that of the Republic of Science, but even it did not win over the Pennsylvania Assembly.¹³ Yet the relationship between Peale and the developing

¹⁰ Joyce H. Robinson, ‘An American cabinet of curiosities: Thomas Jefferson’s “Indian Hall at Monticello,”’ in *Winterthur Portfolio*, xxx, no. 1 (Spring, 1995), pp 51-4.

¹¹ Rousseau, *Discours sur les sciences et les arts*, p. 93. For the full discussion, see Chapter 4.

¹² David R. Brigham, *Public culture in the early Republic: Peale’s Museum and its audience* (Washington, D.C., 1995), pp 142-3.

¹³ Peale, ‘Diary 20. Part 1: A journey to Washington, D.C., and return, including Baltimore and Annapolis, Maryland,’

transatlantic network of scientific institutions was what made the best case for the Museum as a ‘center of calculation’. Peale sought tirelessly to enter into correspondences and exchanges of natural historical information and specimens with European scientists, most often in England and France, such as Joseph Banks, André Thouin, and Palisot de Beauvois. To retrace Peale’s effort towards that goal helps shape a picture of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Philadelphia as the central culturo-intellectual nucleus for Jeffersonian expansionism’s harmonisation of supports, parallels and influences on its enterprise of visual appropriation of the trans-Mississippi West (and, by dialectical extension, of the entire continent). In the last part of the section, the relationship between Peale’s Museum and his Belfield Farm is examined, and I suggest that this relationship was representative of a wider, ‘Enlightened’, pedagogically oriented dialectic between museum and botanic garden as complementary *closed spaces* of possession and redefinition of western territory according to eastern mind-sets. Even the A.P.S. wanted a botanic garden.¹⁴

In the chapter’s second section, landscape depiction proper, which I divide thematically into painting and map-making, is discussed. I begin by looking at the work of Thomas Hutchins. As a ghostly presence in the current historiography, Hutchins merits future treatment. For reasons analysed below, the publication of his *Topographical description of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and North Carolina* (1778) marks, I believe, the moment of the penetration of official ideology into landscape description in American history. Although Hutchins’s expertise remains predominantly of a ‘textual’ kind (he only casually uses maps), I show how this textual production,

29 May to 21 June 1804, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 694.

¹⁴ Therese O’Malley, ‘Charles Willson Peale’s Belfield, its place in American garden history,’ in Lillian B. Miller and David C. Ward (eds), *New perspectives on Charles Willson Peale: a 250th anniversary celebration* (Pittsburgh, 1991), p. 276.

best exemplified by the *Topographical description*, blended in practice with his work as a surveyor reshaping the American western landscape of his own time. He was appointed first Geographer of the United States, and thereafter took part in the survey of the Seven Ranges of Ohio in the wake of the Northwest Ordinance. He also entered into a correspondence with Jefferson in the 1780s. With recourse to the Latourian model of ‘centers of calculation’, I highlight the overarching mechanism whereby the Northwest Territory underwent topographical assessment in Hutchins’s utopian idiom (in conjunction with an increase in the quality and quantity of cartographical representations) from the early 1780s to the eventual jurisdictional integration of the Territory by Congress in 1787.

Hutchins’s book left a recognisable legacy in Jefferson’s *Note on Virginia*, which in turn influenced the making of William Clark’s ‘master map’ of the West. Officially published in 1814, this map is arguably one of the most important visual documents in American history.¹⁵ In my analysis of it, I look for the devices which Clark utilised in his attempt to give a visual dimension to the myth of ‘continentality’. Historical geographer John L. Allen has already discussed Clark’s map in some depth.¹⁶ Therefore, I dwell especially on the map’s aesthetic specificities, in particular on how it embodied the U.S. derivation of the neoclassical ideal (monitored by Jefferson for the purpose of ‘seeing the Republic’) and on this ideal’s graphic investment in a still little-known western landscape. Clark’s map represented Jeffersonian expansionism on paper.¹⁷

Peale returns to the fore as a landscape painter in my discussion of the *View of the garden at Belfield* (1815-16) and *Belfield Farm* (1815-20). The *View of the garden* is

¹⁵ Carolyn Gilman, *Lewis and Clark: across the divide* (Washington, D.C., 2003), p. 163.

¹⁶ Allen, *Image of the American Northwest*, pp 375-98.

¹⁷ The map first appeared in Nicholas Biddle’s *History*. Allen, *Image of the American Northwest*, pp 386-7. On Biddle’s *History*, see also Chapter 4 in this thesis.

the best-known of Peale's landscapes, and certainly the most representative of his approach. It showcases Peale's own interpretation of neoclassical aesthetics, and his method for giving a visual expression to the Jeffersonian brand of the utopian idiom. It is important to contextualise this aspect of Peale's artistic production with the evolution of the Museum. Only once natural history became an overriding concern for the display of collections and for the museum's educational outreach – that is, when Peale understood that he could make the Museum a culturally influential institution through pedagogy – did Peale make the move towards landscape painting. He exhibited some of these late works in his museum, and at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.¹⁸

Peale's landscape production can be contextualised further, by comparing his works to those of Sydney Parkinson, the official draughtsman on Cook's *Endeavour* expedition, who died en route at the age of twenty-five. Parkinson, whose *Journal of a voyage to the South Seas* (1773) has passages sympathetic with the primitivist inclinations of Rousseau, was busy during the *Endeavour* journey with the dual tasks of visually 'natural historicising' and 'environmentalising' the South Sea landscapes he visited. Such landscapes included Tahiti.¹⁹ In the discussion of Parkinson's drawings and their affinity with the ideology that governed Cook's first circumnavigation, I show how the neoclassical aesthetic was applied by the painter (as an appropriative gesture) on native, 'wilderness' Pacific island environments. At this particular juncture,

¹⁸ Peale to Rembrandt Peale, 27 Dec. 1816, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, iii, 465. See also Charles C. Sellers, *Charles Willson Peale with patron and populace: a supplement to portraits and miniatures by Charles Willson Peale, with a survey of his work in other genres* (Philadelphia, 1969), pp 38-103.

¹⁹ Sydney Parkinson, *Journal of a voyage to the South Seas* (London, 1773), p. 23. See also Georg Forster's comment in Georg Forster, *A voyage round the world*, ed. Nicholas Thomas and Oliver Berghof (Honolulu, 2000), p. 232: 'The plates which ornamented the history of captain Cook's former voyage, have been justly criticised, because they exhibited to our eyes the pleasing forms of antique figures and draperies, instead of those Indians of which we wished to form some idea. But it is also greatly to be feared, that Mr. Hodges has lost the sketches and drawings which he made from NATURE in the course of the voyage, and supplied the deficiency in this case, from his own elegant ideas.' William Hodges served as draughtsman on Cook's second expedition (*Resolution*, 1772-1775), in which naturalist Georg Forster and his father Johann Reinhold were involved.

neoclassicism became *the* aesthetic choice for the graphic expression of the utopian idiom by European explorers at the periphery of colonial empires. ‘Applied’ neoclassical aesthetics adhered to straight lines, perpendiculars and near-boundaries between the category of the pastoral and all that was deemed not to pertain to it.²⁰

The ostensible realistic bent of Parkinson’s artistic output was praised immediately upon Cook’s return to England in 1771. This gives credence to the Scotsman’s being labelled an ‘enlightened expansionist.’²¹ Unlike Peale’s, Parkinson’s country could not claim territorial contiguity in the elaboration of its imperial discourse. This pre-empted the very possibility for a myth of ‘continentality’ on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. As a result, Parkinson’s visual discourse comes across as more openly ‘colonial’. The strength of Peale’s landscapes resided in their blurring of territorial appropriation with architectural redefinition, and in their agency in producing a picture of the North American land as *naturally* republican in essence. The myths of ‘nature’s nation’ and of ‘continentality’ are thus genealogically and causally connected.

This chapter concludes with an investigation of the ideological affinities between the so-called Jeffersonian ‘visuals of the Garden’ and the oeuvres of three figures not usually associated with the process of U.S. westward expansion: Jedidiah Morse, Thomas Cole, and Alexander von Humboldt. Morse’s widely influential *American geography* (1789) and its numerous re-editions taught generations of young Americans the basics of their continent’s geography. The book features a lengthy discussion (in the utopian idiom) of the Northwest Territory, congruent with Morse’s celebration of the advent of an ‘AMERICAN EMPIRE’.²² It is actually riveting to see Morse, all his life a staunch Federalist, so preoccupied by the construction of a vision of American

²⁰ On Lewis and Clark’s subscription to neoclassicism, see Seelye, *Beautiful machine*, p. 205.

²¹ Sydney Parkinson, *Voyage autour du monde*, trans. C. Henri (Paris, 1797), pp 10-11.

²² Jedidiah Morse, *The American geography* (London, 1792), p. 469.

continentalism in the end so near in spirit to the central tenets of Jeffersonian expansionism. This confirmed the privileged situation of the Republic of Science above party sympathies.²³ In a sense, it was precisely because Morse did *not* belong to the Jeffersonian circle that he could afford to write so explicitly about his country's destiny as an 'empire'.

The myths on which Jeffersonian discourse based itself and from which intellectuals as ideologically removed from Jefferson as Morse borrowed were destroyed, I argue, by the body of work of Hudson River School painter Thomas Cole, and more specifically by his *Course of empire* series (1833-6). But the fatalistic strand in Cole's romantic celebration of a vanishing American 'wilderness' did not so much contest the policies of U.S. territorial expansion formulated by the federal government as (ironically) put an effective end for the government's need for discursive self-legitimation. This, in conjunction with Cole's unfinished departure from neoclassical aesthetics – observable in his writings, as will be shown – can be viewed as having indirectly facilitated, by its pessimism, the shift to the more prophetic and blatantly imperialistic celebration of the United States' 'Manifest Destiny'.²⁴ Arguably, the germs of Colean pessimism stemmed from Cole's attempt to represent visually the experience and the deep contradictions of Jeffersonian expansionism. As for Humboldt's own strand of romanticism, it certainly repelled fatalistic thinking (maybe partly because the South American 'wilderness' had better withstood the impact of Spanish colonisation) but this, in turn, made the Prussian's exploratory discourse more subtly appropriative.

²³ I would disagree here with Peter Kastor, who depicts Morse as a New England localist with an inherent reluctance to support the federally supervised process of territorial expansion of his country. See Kastor's otherwise valuable book, *William Clark's world: describing America in an age of unknowns* (New Haven, 2011), p. 49.

²⁴ Thomas Cole, 'Essay on American scenery,' in *American Monthly Magazine*, no.1 (Jan., 1836), pp 1-12. I will have more space below to elaborate on the connection between Cole's debunking of the Jeffersonian ideology of expansion and the emergence of 'Manifest Destiny' teleology.

His discourse was actually close to Jefferson's in texture, if we consider Humboldt's sketches and textual extrapolations in *Aspects of Nature* (1808) and *Vue des Cordillères et monuments des peuples indigènes de l'Amérique* (1816).²⁵ Humboldt, the man who had expressed his hopes to explore the trans-Mississippi West someday in the wake of Lewis and Clark, would perhaps face historically inevitable (or 'cosmic', to borrow from the Prussian's own vocabulary) reasons not to do so. By the middle of Humboldt's career, American expansionist discourse was still indebted to the 'architecture' laid out by Jefferson, but its form had become much more self-consciously imperial.²⁶

A. Peale's Museum as an 'artistic' center of calculation

1. The Museum as institution: links with the A.P.S. and the 'Republic of Science'

The most casual look at Charles Willson Peale's correspondence reveals that one of his life's great priorities was to make his museum a central repository for all kinds of natural historical items, domestic as well as foreign, in keeping with Linnean classification.²⁷ Peale's 'turn to the scientific' certainly did not occur straightaway, but by the early 1790s he had already lost patience with the prospects of mere portrait painting, where he had begun. He had also lost patience with the maintenance of a museum that, at the time, specialised solely in mass entertainment.²⁸ Although endowed

²⁵ Alexander von Humboldt, *Aspects of nature*, trans. Elizabeth J. Sabine (2 vols, London, 1849); and idem, *Vues des Cordillères et monumens des peuples indigènes de l'Amérique* (2 vols, Paris, 1816).

²⁶ The literature on the imperial texture of 'Manifest Destiny' teleology is immense. It needs not be tackled here.

²⁷ Peale to Edmund Fanning and John B. Coles, 6 June 1808, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 1084-5; and William De Peyster to Peale, 27 Sept. 1802 (A.P.S., Peale-Sellers Family Collection, Mss.B.P31, 7-3/4x6-1/2, 1p.and add.) See Brigham, *Public culture*, pp 142-3, for Washington's donation 'of a feather cloak and a hat from Tahiti.'

²⁸ David C. Ward, *Charles Willson Peale: art and selfhood in the early Republic* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2004), p. 98. See also Peale to the directors of the Library Company of Philadelphia, 5 Oct. 1795, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 126-7. A fascinating Peale manuscript in the Charles Coleman Sellers collection at the A.P.S. illustrates the museum keeper's own method of historicising natural history: he clearly saw the activity as bound with both natural historical theory and with the museum as display space. See Peale, 'Concerning natural history,' undated (A.P.S., Peale-Sellers Family Collection, Mss.B.P31, D. 6p.)

with a practical mind, or perhaps because of it, Peale took natural historical theory very seriously. He soon developed a familiarity with the taxonomical system of Linnaeus and the organic anti-system of Buffon which few in the United States could boast.²⁹ At one point he even claimed that in his intellectual endeavours he took philosophical inspiration from Rousseau.³⁰ Peale's entirely self-taught training in natural history would enable him to arrange the items of the Museum in systematic fashion. He was still vaunting his rational ordering of his variegated items from the natural world to Jefferson in 1804: 'Linneus's classification of Animals is framed in the Rooms. The name of each genus, the various specimens numbered, and the lattan, English and French names placed over each case, so that now no visitor ought to expect any attendant to accompany them through the Rooms: This is now nearly compleated in three of the orders, and on almost every other subject is the English name ... The Museum must be great, as mediocrity will stamp no value on it.'³¹

Peale's reference to 'lattan, English and French names' was indicative of the evolution of his method for the management of his Museum collections.³² To complete, as it were, his initiation into the realm of amateur natural history, but also to leave a trace on Philadelphian culture and U.S. cultural politics, he identified two major life aims for the Museum: first, to institutionalise it by obtaining a form of state (or federal)

²⁹ On Buffon, see Peale to James Madison, 21 May 1801, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 306-07; Peale to Mr Reibill, 13 Mar. 1805, in Miller, *Collected papers*, IIA/33E3-7. Peale to Rubens Peale, 24 June 1805, in *ibid.*, IIA/35A2-6. On Linnaeus, see Peale, 'Introduction to a course of lectures on natural history delivered in the University of Pennsylvania, 16 Nov. 1799,' in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 261-71. See also Sidney Hart and David C. Ward, 'The waning of an Enlightenment ideal: Charles Willson Peale's Philadelphia museum, 1790-1820,' in *Journal of the Early Republic*, viii, no. 4 (Winter, 1988), pp 389-418; and David R. Brigham, "'Ask the beasts, and they shall teach thee": the human lessons of Charles Willson Peale's natural history displays,' in *Huntington Library Quarterly*, lix, no. 2-3 (1996), pp 183-206.

³⁰ Peale, 'Preliminary draft of autobiography written prior to the year 1790,' in Miller, *Collected papers*, IIC/p. 12.

³¹ Peale to Jefferson, 26 Feb. 1804, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 640. See also Peale, 'Advertisement for subscription to *A scientific and descriptive catalogue of Peale's Museum*,' Dunlap and Claypoole's *American Daily Advertiser*, 14 Nov. 1795, in *ibid.*, ii, 128.

³² Richardson, 'Charles Willson Peale and his world,' in Richardson *et al.*, *Peale and his world*, p. 86.

support or recognition; and alongside this, to gradually make the Museum known to the wider Republic of Science. These two aims were interlinked, since they would both enhance the scientific pedigree of Jeffersonian expansionist discourse through foreign sanction – with the contradictions in logic that this entailed for American exceptionalism – and embed natural historical terminology within the official layers of federal policy.³³

In a 1795 memorial to the Pennsylvanian legislature, Peale announced the establishment ‘of a Grand National MUSEUM ... that may even vie with European collections ... Of more than common value is that knowledge which presents to the enquiring mind nature in all her boundless varieties, as modified by climate, culture and innumerable other causes ... which levels the barriers of nations and presents, at one view, an interesting epitome of the world.’³⁴

However, Peale never succeeded in obtaining state funding. He never lost hope either. Undaunted, he kept updating Jefferson about his periodic expectations for a change of mind on the side of the legislature, when it would realise that ‘the Collection which now constitutes my Museum, is but a part of an Establishment, which in becoming national, should embrace the exhibition of every article, by which knowledge, in all its branches, can possibly be communicated.’³⁵ Peale did experience some minor successes. In 1794 he secured from the A.P.S. the lease of Philosophical Hall, seizing the occasion to praise ‘the marvellous works of God ... and that love of order so indispensable to public and private prosperity.’³⁶ Here Peale sounded much like

³³ For a thought-provoking discussion of the spatial and ideological connections between Peale’s Museum, the A.P.S., and the U.S. federal government, see Ellen Fernandez-Sacco, ‘Framing “the Indian”: the visual culture of conquest in the museums of Pierre Eugene du Simitiere and Charles Willson Peale, 1779-96,’ in *Social Identities*, viii, no. 4 (2002), pp 578-9.

³⁴ Peale, ‘Memorial to the Pennsylvania Legislature,’ *Dunlap and Claypoole’s Daily Advertiser*, 26 Dec. 1795, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 137.

³⁵ Peale to Jefferson, 12 Jan. 1802, in *ibid.*, ii, 386-9.

³⁶ ‘Peale’s Museum: announcement to move to Philosophical Hall,’ *General Advertiser*, 19 Sept. 1794, in *ibid.*, ii, 98. See also Brigham, *Public culture*, pp 15-16.

Linnaeus. He put the two aspects of the ‘marvellous works of God’ and the ‘love of order’ in direct correlation with public patronage and the promotion of ‘science and virtue.’ His broader aim was to politicise the museum by making it an organ of the state, while instructing U.S. citizens about the inherent order and harmony of American nature. This was Peale’s ideal: to institutionalise a republican form of U.S. identity along the lines of Linnaean systematics.³⁷

Another small victory, which resounded more for what it symbolised than for its financial impact on Peale’s career, was the granting to the museum of additional room in the Pennsylvania State House by the state legislature in 1802. Peale perceived in this grant an ‘an opportunity of displaying the museum in an orderly manner, and to render it more strikingly useful than heretofore.’³⁸ A degree of state intervention helped Peale envision the coming together of his Linnaean ideal. Spatial organisation was closely tied to taxonomical ordering.³⁹ In pure logistical terms, increased storage space would not allow a massive increase in profits, but it would contribute to the enlargement of the Museum and with it to the cultural enrichment of a widening American audience.

Peale told the A.P.S. in 1797 that ‘a well organized Museum is an Epitome of the World, where the various interesting subjects of every country may be brought into one view.’⁴⁰ Here he hinted at his own interpretation of the ‘world in miniature’ trope which would recur regularly throughout his life, and which suggestively mirrored the Humboldtian view of the whole globe as an object of study.⁴¹ The relationship between the museum and the A.P.S. evolved significantly during the 1790s and reached a peak

³⁷ Christopher Brooks, ‘Charles Willson Peale: painting and natural history in eighteenth-century North America,’ in *Oxford Art Journal*, v, no. 1 (1982), p. 37.

³⁸ Peale to Jefferson, 6 June 1802, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 41. See also Alexander Nemerov, *The body of Raphaelle Peale: still life and selfhood, 1812-1814* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2001), p. 178.

³⁹ Fernandez-Sacco, ‘Framing “the Indian,”’ p. 606; and Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the shaping of knowledge* (London, 1992), p. 140.

⁴⁰ Peale to A.P.S., 7 Mar. 1797, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 177.

⁴¹ ‘Introduction,’ in Miller & Ward, *New perspectives on Peale*, p. 6. On Humboldt, see Sachs, *Humboldt Current*, p. 51.

of integration with Jefferson's election to the presidency of the Society in 1797. Peale was elected to membership in 1786, and counted many friends at the Society (Jefferson, Ellicott, and Robert Patterson among others). In 1801 he received from it a loan of five hundred dollars to dig up mastodon bones in the New York countryside. Peale amply repaid this loan by uncovering nearly two complete skeletons and producing his famous painting, *The exhumation of the mastodon* (1805-1808).⁴² The financial help that Peale had asked for and obtained from the A.P.S. gives an indication of the intimate links between the two bodies. This was a form of 'Republic of Science' relationship: the money invested would benefit the Museum by putting on display the assembled 'mammoth', which guaranteed to attract a lot of visitors. In turn, Peale hoped that the predictably spectacular exhibition would help resurrect his scheme for government funding. The extensiveness and inclusiveness of the Philadelphian network of 'centers of calculation' came to the fore in those matters relating to natural history, and none more so than in the Lewis and Clark Expedition, whose links with Peale's Museum are considered below.

But the strongest manifestation of the 'Republic of Science' principle in Peale's vocation as a museum manager and naturalist was expressed in his inveterate efforts to develop fruitful scientific correspondences across the eastern seaboard and on the other side of the ocean.⁴³ In an 'Address to the Public' published in the Philadelphian newspaper *Aurora* in January 1800, he referred to the examples of England, France, and

⁴² Peale to Robert Patterson, 24 July 1801, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 346-7; and Lillian B. Miller, 'Charles Willson Peale as history painter: The exhumation of the mastodon,' in *American Art Journal*, xiii, no. 1 (Winter, 1981), pp 47-68.

⁴³ Florike Edmond and Peter Mason, *The mammoth and the mouse: microhistory and morphology* (Baltimore, 1997), p. 10. See Peale's praise of Humboldt as 'a fountain of knowledge which flows in copious streams,' in Peale to John DePeyster, 27 June 1804, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 725.

Italy to illustrate the benefits of state funding for institutions similar to his.⁴⁴ As early as 1791, Peale had written to the Royal Swedish Academy of Science (founded by Linnaeus on the model of the Royal Society and the Académie des sciences) to seek ‘regular correspondence with you, and exchange of American production for those of Sweden.’⁴⁵ In 1794 he enclosed museum tickets in a letter to Joseph Priestley, who was soon to become an A.P.S. member. The two men already knew each other well. The doctor’s visit would confer additional scientific sanction on the museum, and give credibility to the establishment’s recent turn towards ‘serious’ and educational natural history teaching.⁴⁶

Among Peale’s most renowned scientific correspondents was Joseph Banks, a familiar figure in this study.⁴⁷ Banks’s first communications to Peale extolled the prestige of national repositories. The president of the Royal Society remarked that ‘Private Collections which formerly used to be made with great ease & Little expence are now almost wholly impracticable.’⁴⁸ The inauguration of Peale into the Republic of Science by one of its senior members (at that stage, Banks had been president of the Royal Society for sixteen years) was tacitly endorsed by Banks’s advice to the painter to ‘enter into a Correspondence’ with James Parkinson, the owner of the Leverian Museum of London.⁴⁹ That same year, English antiquarian and local historian Henry Wansey visited Peale’s Museum and there found ‘Scalps, tomahawks, belts of wampum, of curious variety; Indian and Otaheite dresses, and feathers from the

⁴⁴ Peale, ‘Address to the public,’ *Aurora*, 27 Jan. 1800, in *ibid.*, ii, 274-5. The editor specifies that Peale ‘was referring to the British Museum in England, the Muséum d’Histoire Naturelle and the Louvre in France, and the Vatican in Italy.’

⁴⁵ Peale to the Royal Swedish Academy of Science, 11 May 1791, in *ibid.*, i, 612-13.

⁴⁶ Peale to Priestley, 26 June 1794, in *ibid.*, ii, 96-7.

⁴⁷ Brooke Hindle, ‘Charles Willson Peale’s science and technology,’ in Richardson *et al.*, *Peale and his world*, p. 126. See also Charles C. Sellers, *Charles Willson Peale* (New York, 1969), p. 256.

⁴⁸ Banks to Peale, 1 Oct. 1794, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 98-9.

⁴⁹ Peale heeded Banks’s advice. See Peale to James Parkinson, 30 Dec. 1800, in *ibid.*, ii, 296. The letter contains a revealing remark: ‘I possess a New World, and you the Old. This will become old & rich too in some future day.’

Friendly Isles’, evidence that Peale had already acquired Pacific objects from other repositories across the western world, both public and private.⁵⁰

In a sense, the increasing frequency of Banks’s epistolary exchanges with the American entrepreneur was to be expected. In 1800 Peale wrote his British counterpart an illuminating letter, where he asked Banks for advice on his prospective series of natural history lectures at the Museum.⁵¹ Such a gesture reminds us of Crèvecoeur’s request for Jefferson’s opinion on the manuscript of the *Letters from an American farmer*.⁵² Peale also envisaged the possibility that Banks might disagree with his method and suggest his own amendments, a fact the museum keeper seemed ready to accept.

Peale consulted Banks on a great wealth of subjects: natural history lectures, the skills needed for museum management, methods for arranging collections of natural historical specimens, and more. This, in itself, testifies to Banks’s subtle influence on the shaping of early U.S. ‘centers of calculation’.⁵³ Two year after his preliminary queries, Peale proceeded on with the ritual of exchange by sending Banks parts of the skeleton of a megalonyx ‘found on the Ohio’, and referred to the expertise of Jefferson and Caspar Wistar to justify the skeleton’s importance as a paleontological item. Besides, Peale was desirous to ‘offer my Sons to your notice and Patronage’, yet another proof of Banks’s reputation and of Peale’s interest in making between the connection between the Royal

⁵⁰ Henry Wansey, ‘Excerpt: *the journal of an excursion to the United States of North America in the summer of 1794*,’ in *ibid.*, ii, 97.

⁵¹ Peale to Banks, Dec. 1800, in *ibid.*, ii, 297.

⁵² On Crèvecoeur’s correspondence with Jefferson on this subject, see Chapter 4.

⁵³ Banks’s portrait even found its place in the Museum, alongside Humboldt, Franklin, Priestley, and Franklin. From the viewpoint of strategies of representation, having portraits of eminent figures at the top of a hierarchy of display implied their importance not merely in terms of prestige but also from the understanding that they had contributed to shape the current approach to natural historical practice and theory – with the political ramifications that I have identified and that indirectly justify the importance ascribed to such figures as Banks and Humboldt in this chapter. The transnationality of the display further exemplified the transnationality of enlightened expansionism and thus of U.S. westward expansionist discourse, belying the notion of American exceptionalism. See Peale, ‘*Guide to the Philadelphia Museum*,’ 1804, in *ibid.*, ii, 763.

Society and the Museum more intimate.⁵⁴ In his reply, Banks divulged another aspect of the ‘Republic of Science’ ritual by thanking Peale for ‘the two seeds you have been so good as to Send to me ... they will if they [are] good be usefull here as the Plant is a scarce one in our Exotic Gardens.’⁵⁵ Jefferson was already well-versed in those pursuits. By 1813 the Virginian was still exchanging seeds with André Thouïn, and sharing his enthusiasm about the new research paths opened up by the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Peale was only following in Jefferson’s footsteps.⁵⁶

An obligatory step in the ritual, the exchange of seeds across the Atlantic could pose many complications, especially in wartime.⁵⁷ In 1800 a hopeful Peale wrote Philadelphian merchant and surveyor Timothy Matlack that ‘I have a prospect of obtaining from Europe as soon as the War ceases, great numbers of subjects belonging to the other quarters of the Globe in exchange for those I have preserved of this country.’⁵⁸ Peale knew that to officialise his museum’s entrance into the transatlantic network of scientific institutions meant doing more than simply receiving items from Europe. He had to display them and to make them familiar to his audience, both lay and

⁵⁴ Peale to Banks, 22 June 1802, in *ibid.*, ii, 436. See also Carol E. Hevner and Lillian B. Miller (eds), *Rembrandt Peale, 1778-1860: a life in the arts* (Philadelphia, 1985), p. 40.

⁵⁵ Banks to Peale, 2 Feb. 1804, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 634. In this letter, Banks also expressed his distress at the fact that ‘the Public here did not pay so much attention’ to the skeleton of the American mastodon sent by Peale through his sons Rembrandt and Rubens, a testimony to Banks’s desire to reach a large audience for his botanical and natural historical displays.

⁵⁶ Jefferson to André Thouïn, 14 Dec. 1813, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, vii, 55. Jefferson inquired into Thouïn’s apparently pioneer work in ‘indigenation,’ and wished the knowledge to be shared with the scientists on the other side of the Atlantic. A further proof of the peculiar texture of exchanges across the ‘Republic of Science’ and their concomitant rituals is Jefferson’s promise that he would send Thouïn, provided the war ended, ‘a collection of the seeds & new plants which were brought to us by Lewis and Clark from the other side of our Continent.’ The symbolic consequence of this ritualistic move would be the implicit sanction by France of the actions of the Corps of Discovery. The letter also unveils, by its mention of Bernard McMahon, that by 1813 the main American ‘centers of calculation’ remained in Philadelphia. A last point which deserves mention is Jefferson’s referring in the letter to ‘our Continent,’ which revealed both an appropriative attitude in language towards the North American continent and the vision of the United States as already continental, even though not yet politically and administratively so. This substantiates Bernard DeVoto’s point that ‘the American teleology is geographical.’ DeVoto, *Course of empire*, p. 404.

⁵⁷ Jefferson customarily invoked and praised the imperviousness of the ‘republic of letters’ to war, though often to no avail. See Jefferson to Robert Patterson, 1 Sept. 1811, in *ibid.*, iv, 148.

⁵⁸ Peale to Timothy Matlack, 9 Mar. 1800, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 283; and Peale to A. M. F. J. Palisot de Beauvois, 10 Aug. 1798, in *ibid.*, ii, 223-4.

scholarly. Then he had to make this known to his European peers.⁵⁹ This informal duty explains the pertinence of Peale's early collaboration with the French naturalist Ambroise Marie François Joseph Palisot, Baron de Beauvois, a colourful but overlooked figure in the early Philadelphian history of science.⁶⁰ Beauvois had been trained in Paris by Antoine Laurent de Jussieu, the famed professor of botany at the Jardin des Plantes whose taxonomical system competed with Linnaeus's (and had been acknowledged as such by Jefferson in the 1814 letter to John Manners). The Frenchman faced chronic bad luck in all the voyages he undertook. When he arrived in the United States in 1793 (after fleeing a slave insurrection in Haiti, where he had served as a colonial official), his few belongings had been seized on the seas by the British fleet. Financial distress pushed him towards low-paid work as a curator in Peale's Museum. Fortunately his unscathed scientific reputation had made him an A.P.S. member in 1792, and he would eventually gain membership to the Parisian Académie in 1806.⁶¹

Peale counted earnestly on Beauvois's connections with French intellectual circles to 'enrich my Museum in a mode which I conceive will be most agreeable to the Amateurs of this delightful Science on the other side of the Water, who may be desirous of possessing those of America – I mean by a reciprocal exchange of Subject for subject.'⁶² Beauvois executed his orders. Soon Peale received a letter from Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire and Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, both of them noted professors at the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle. They offered to enter into a formal correspondence

⁵⁹ In that undertaking Peale would emulate, consciously or not, the career path of John Bartram. He would also announce that of Constantine Samuel Rafinesque. See Leonard Warren, *Constantine Samuel Rafinesque: a voice in the American wilderness* (Lexington, 2004), p. 14.

⁶⁰ See Arsenne T. de Berneaud, *Éloge historique de A. M. F. J. Palisot de Beauvois* (Paris, 1821), especially pp 45-6 on the United States and the A.P.S.

⁶¹ E. D. Merrill, 'Palisot de Beauvois as an overlooked American botanist,' in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, lxxvi, no. 6 (1936), pp 899-920. For Jefferson's reference to Jussieu's system, see Jefferson to John Manners, 22 Feb. 1814, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, vii, 207-11.

⁶² Peale to Palisot de Beauvois, 4 Oct. 1794, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 100-01.

involving the exchange of specimens across the ocean, and asked for more information about ‘your known corporations of learned men’ (that is, scientific societies) in the eastern United States.⁶³ Saint-Hilaire and Lamarck’s request promised the strengthening of ties between the various Parisian ‘centers of calculation’ in whose names they spoke and their embryonic counterparts in North America – the A.P.S. and now Peale’s Museum.⁶⁴

Jefferson encouraged Peale very much in this enterprise. He even suggested potential new contacts for his friend.⁶⁵ This could be expected. In 1811 it was Jefferson himself who would devise a ‘Scheme for a system of agricultural societies’, whereby

a central society might be agreed on to which ... all the others should send their communications. The society thus honored by the general confidence, would doubtless feel and fulfill the duty of selecting such papers as should be worthy of entire communications, of extracting ... from others whatever might be useful, and of condensing their matter within such compass as to reconcile it to the reading, as well as to the purchase of the great mass of practical men. Many circumstances would recommend, for the central society, that which should be established in the county of the seat of government.⁶⁶

Jefferson did more than advocate the establishment of a ‘central society.’ He decreed that this prospective society should be ‘established in the country of the seat of government’, thereby making it an institutional extension of the state. He did support

⁶³ Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire and Jean-Baptiste Lamarck to Peale, 30 Jan. 1796, in *ibid.*, ii, 143-4.

⁶⁴ On the correspondence between Peale and Lamarck, see Paul Semonin, *American monster: how the nation’s first prehistoric creature became a symbol of national identity* (New York, 2000), pp 299-300.

⁶⁵ Jefferson to Peale, 5 June 1796, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 148. Jefferson proposed Louis, the king of Parma (1773-1803) and ‘a young man of letters,’ as a correspondent. Notwithstanding Peale’s initial excitement at the idea, the plan came to naught. Peale to Jefferson, 6 Feb. 1797, in *ibid.*, ii, 167; and Peale to Jefferson, 22 June 1796, in *ibid.*, ii, 154. The help of William Bartram is considered in the second letter. See Peale to Jefferson, 11 Oct. 1801, in *ibid.*, ii, 375.

⁶⁶ Jefferson, ‘Scheme for a system of agricultural societies,’ Mar. 1811, in Betts, *Jefferson’s Garden Book*, p. 640. In 1813, Jefferson’s hopes were still alive. He had hoped that his Portuguese friend Correa da Serra, himself a product of the transnationality of the ‘Republic of Science,’ would take the head of the prospective institution. Jefferson to Nemours, 29 Nov. 1813, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, vii, 7. See also Cohen, *Jefferson and the sciences*, p. 51; and Browne, *Scientific trends*, p. 411.

the parallel development of an independent press that would represent the said society, as well as ‘informal conferences’ with members of the state legislature who (Jefferson assumed) would also be members of that society. All such features were unmistakably those of an anticipated ‘center of calculation’ of the type that Peale had aspired to for the museum ten years earlier. Peale had recapped the idea in concrete, painstaking detail to Pennsylvania senator William Findley in 1800: ‘Rooms for Utensils, models, Arms & cloathing of Various Nations ... a picture gallery to exhibit many things that would communicate knowledge which words feebly express. a Large Room to deliver Lectures in – and a Library to contain at least a complete collection on Natural History ... also an allotment for Botany, and some conveniences for keeping a few living animals.’⁶⁷

Peale also corresponded with Thouïn, one of Jefferson’s favourites, setting forth his eagerness to make seed exchanges with Paris as fruitful and numerous as possible.⁶⁸ Being the chair of horticulture at the Muséum, Thouïn possessed the type of scientific pedigree that Peale could profit from if wisely harnessed. However, despite Peale’s repeated pleas that ‘War ought not to be made against the science of Natural history’ (pleas reminiscent of Franklin, Buffon, Banks, and so on) he eventually grew frustrated at the museum professors’ failure to send back specimens in exchange for those he had communicated.⁶⁹ Unabashed by what could have been deemed a fiasco, Peale attempted to bypass direct communication with Paris by asking his brother-in-law Philip DePeyster, then travelling through Europe, for intelligence on the layout of various museums in France, Spain, and Portugal. DePeyster’s answer looked like an agent’s letter, though he could not pretend to being a representative of the Republic of Science.

⁶⁷ Peale to William Findley, 18 Feb. 1800, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 276-81; Peale to Doct. Hosack, 29 June 1805, in Miller, *Collected papers*, IIA/35B1-4; and Peale to Nicholas Biddle, 14 Jan. 1811, in *ibid.*, IIA/49G5-8.

⁶⁸ Peale to André Thouïn, 28 Jan. 1797, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 164.

⁶⁹ Peale to Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, 30 Apr. 1797, in *ibid.*, ii, 199. For Peale’s complaints to Beauvois, see Peale to Palisot de Beauvois, 16 June 1799, in *ibid.*, ii, 247.

Peale had deliberately overlooked this fact, and had sponsored DePeyster to discover how important repositories across Europe were spatially and taxonomically organised.⁷⁰

In the end, Peale's relative success in making the museum an acknowledged organ of the Republic of Science was summed up in an intriguing letter he received (in French) from Philippe-Rose Roume. The latter had served for many years as an agent of the French government in the Caribbean, but the revolution in Saint Domingue brought him to North American soil in 1802.⁷¹ He arrived in Philadelphia with a résumé that included membership in the Institut des sciences, not a trifling qualification in the Napoleonic era. Roume's first communication to Peale was dithyrambic, vaunting the entrepreneur's merits as naturalist and museum keeper.⁷² Excited equally by Peale's recent excavation of mastodon bones in New York, Roume took the opportunity to rebuke Buffon's accusations of American degeneracy, a stance that might have looked redundant by the early 1800s. Roume put Peale on an equal intellectual footing with Franklin and Jefferson, and encouraged his correspondent about the prospects of turning the Museum into a public institution. (Peale must have appreciated this detail, as he acknowledged it in his answer.) From his modest position in the Republic of Science, Roume granted open recognition to Peale's role as an articulator (through the museum) of the 'middle way' discourse of U.S. intellectuals and politicians in the post-Independence years. Peale's agency was to *show* this discourse. It was him who excavated, assembled and displayed the mastodon, so that Jefferson's thesis in the *Notes on Virginia* – negating Buffon while simultaneously acknowledging Buffon's

⁷⁰ Philip DePeyster to Peale, 14 July 1800, in *ibid.*, ii, 285-7.

⁷¹ Roume remains a somewhat intangible figure, even in the French historiography. He makes an appearance in Denis Laurent-Ropa, *Haïti, une colonie française, 1625-1802* (Paris, 1993), pp 219, 261; and in Sauveur P. Etienne, *Haïti, la République Dominicaine et Cuba: économie et société, 1492-2009* (Paris, 2011), pp 107-08. As a matter of interest, see Roume's own *Mémoire de M. Roume, commissaire et ordonnateur de l'île de Tabago* (Paris, 1791).

⁷² Philippe Rose Roume to Peale, 4 Jan. 1802, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 381-6. The editor notes: 'Because of Roume's stature and interest in natural history, Peale gave him and his company a preview of the skeleton. Roume ... returned Peale's favor by publicizing the mastodon and the museum.'

intellectual ‘guardianship’ – could claim a powerful visual primary source. As both a naturalist and a showman, Peale played a crucial part in the construction of Jefferson’s ‘middle way’ identity by giving it a body. Historians have focused so much on the practicalities of the museum’s history that they tend to have overlooked Peale’s doctrinal agency in making Jefferson’s continental conception of the Republic a visual and material reality.⁷³

2. Peale’s connections with Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, and ‘Indian Hall’

Besides its growing importance as a venue for the natural history courses given by Benjamin Smith Barton, Peale’s Museum’s palpable rise to the status of a ‘center of calculation’ took a new step with the Lewis and Clark Expedition, for which it acted as a repository.⁷⁴ In a circular pattern, while the A.P.S. took Lewis under its wing for preliminary training, the museum, in cooperation with Jefferson’s ‘Indian Hall’ at Monticello, received a number of artifacts and natural historical specimens collected en route by the Corps of Discovery.⁷⁵ And it did so from early on. As early as 24 July 1804, Peale acknowledged receipt of ‘the curious ... Lizard of Louisiana ... I mean to give a drawing of it to the Philosophical Society for their next Volume.’⁷⁶ Information travelled back and forth between the various stopping points designated by the Corps and the two Philadelphian institutions. By this blossoming process of networking and exchange, an

⁷³ Apart from Edmond and Mason’s *The mammoth and the mouse*, no work on Peale has shown a theoretical bent.

⁷⁴ On that subject, see Woodger and Toropov, *Encyclopedia of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, pp 34-5; Paul A. Johnsgard, *Lewis and Clark on the Great Plains: a natural history* (Lincoln, 2003), pp 114-15; and Cutright, *Pioneering naturalists*, p. 381. On the Museum as a venue for natural history classes, see Manners to Jefferson, 24 Jan. 1814, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, vii, 152. Manners explained that ‘While a student of medicine I attended several courses of lectures on natural History in the Museum of Mr Peale by Dr Barton. He adopted the classification of M. Cuvier with some modifications.’

⁷⁵ Brigham, *Public culture*, pp 140-3; and Robinson, ‘American cabinet of curiosities,’ pp 49-58.

⁷⁶ Peale to Jefferson, 24 July 1804, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 742-3.

image of Louisiana as the ‘West’ (literally an image, a drawing) got conveyed to eastern eyes by means of the propagation of serious scientific information.

Jefferson acted as the principal intermediary between the two ‘centers’. There were certain kinds of items expedited from across the Mississippi (various types of minerals in particular) which Jefferson preferred to see housed at the A.P.S. Other kinds, like ‘horns, dressed skins, utensils, etc.’ he wished to keep in his ‘Indian Hall’. Still, under Jefferson’s aegis the museum would welcome various animal skins, skeletons, a living burrowing squirrel of the prairies, a living magpie, and many minerals.⁷⁷ Peale duly expressed his gratitude: ‘I am very thankful for these additions to the Museum [items from the Lewis and Clark Expedition], everything that comes from Louisiana must be interesting to the Public.’⁷⁸ In the process, he underlined the importance of Jefferson’s donations by tying their value to their place of origin – the trans-Mississippi West, or Louisiana as representative of the ‘West’. This was in harmony with the vast picture drawn by Jefferson in the *Account of Louisiana*.

There are several instances in Peale’s correspondence where he seems to be really conscious of his role in articulating a vision of Louisiana in line with Jefferson’s. In late 1805 he wrote his daughter Angelica that ‘we hope to make the Museum the Admiration of all men of Science, fashion, & taste. The encrease of subjects to it of late has been not only important, but numerous, we have received from Louisana many articles, presents from Mr. Jefferson amongst them some living Animals. every thing from that Country must now become interesting to the Public.’⁷⁹ In a letter he sent to British inventor John Isaac Hawkins only a few months later, Peale reiterated his ambition to

⁷⁷ Jefferson to Peale, 6 Oct. 1805, in *ibid.*, ii, 893-5. On minerals: Jefferson to Peale, 5 May 1805, in *ibid.*, ii, 828-9. See Carla Yanni, *Nature’s museums: Victorian science and the architecture of display* (New York, 2005), pp 28-30.

⁷⁸ Peale to Jefferson, 22 Oct. 1805, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 901. See Jengo, ‘Mineral productions of every kind,’ in Cox, *Shortest and most convenient route*, pp 136-214.

⁷⁹ Peale to Angelica Peale Robinson, 29 Oct. 1805, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 904.

compete with ‘the boasted Museums of Europe’, and he explicitly targeted Louisiana as the region that could provide him with the adequate sources he would need.⁸⁰ Peale’s apparently sincere belief that his establishment could someday be made ‘equal, if not in quantum, yet in neatness and utility’ to the greatest museums of Europe could be taken at face value, though nowadays it might sound risible. But if we understand the words ‘neatness’ and ‘utility’ as meaning the efficacy of the museum in promoting a picture of Louisiana suitable to the discourse of Jeffersonian expansionism, then the ‘comparative view’ championed by Peale in his letter to Jefferson of 3 and 4 November 1805 (this chapter’s introductory quotation) makes sense.⁸¹ It summarises the captivating blend of competition and solidarity that made up the Republic of Science in the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment periods. As will be shown below, Peale’s notion of a ‘picture of Louisiana’ acted as a counterpart to, for instance, that of a ‘picture of Tahiti’ or a ‘picture of Australia’, promoted by artists in the French and British ‘centers’ that sponsored the voyages of Bougainville, Cook, Lapérouse, Vancouver, etc.⁸²

Peale’s agency in the enterprise of visualising Louisiana crystallised in his plans to mount and draw the animal specimens transferred to him through Jefferson by the Corps, as he detailed them to his son Raphaëlle.⁸³ He barely ever mentioned Clark, as if to say that Lewis’s counterpart did not belong to the ‘center of calculation’ network to which Lewis had been officially affiliated by his employment as Jefferson’s private

⁸⁰ Peale to John Isaac Hawkins, 17, 22, 25 Dec. 1805, in *ibid.*, ii, 914-17.

⁸¹ Peale to Jefferson, 3, 4 Nov. 1805, in *ibid.*, ii, 906-09.

⁸² For a discussion of this issue from an interdisciplinary perspective, see Barbara M. Stafford, *Voyage into substance: art, science, nature, and the illustrated travel account, 1760-1840* (Cambridge, MA, 1984). See also Mitchell, ‘Imperial landscape,’ p. 18. I would disagree partly with Mitchell’s depiction of ‘India, China, or the Middle East’ as equally different receptacles of colonisation from the South Seas as was North America. As pointed out in Chapter 4, North America and the South Pacific displayed in fact many similarities depending on the comparative perspective adopted.

⁸³ Peale to Raphaëlle Peale, 6, 7 June 1807, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 1018-19. See also Robert M. Peck, “‘I wished for the pencil of Salvator Rosa’: the artistic legacy of Lewis and Clark,” in James P. Ronda and Nancy Tystad Koupal (eds), *Finding Lewis and Clark: old trails, new directions* (Pierre, SD, 2004), p. 93.

secretary.⁸⁴ By drawing mounted animals of trans-Mississippi western origin, Peale worked at two distinct levels of representation: the ‘real’ as display and the ‘painted’ as display. This duality of representational strategies produced a double effect on the museum spectators. Not only did they view two-dimensional animals enclosed within a frame; they also experienced the true-to-life replicas that occupied the confines of the museum space. Peale’s implicit aim was to permeate the consciousness of his visitors with an image of Louisiana as *both* western territory and U.S. federal property, that is, as emblematic both of the native ‘wilderness’ and of the growing republican culture of the eastern seaboard. Through the medium of museum display, Peale sought to harmonise the process of westward expansion.⁸⁵

When Lewis began making announcements for the publication of his travel accounts, Peale saw an opportunity to bring his own enterprise of visualisation of the ‘West’ to a higher level of cultural and political authority. In 1806 Peale had obtained from Jefferson ‘Capt Lewis’s original catalogue of articles’ (forwarded first to Monticello), which led him to envisage systematising the collection of western items discovered in the period 1803-06. A year later Peale informed Benjamin Hawkins, after a long praise of Lewis’s munificence, that he hoped to complement the captain’s journal entries with natural historical drawings by his own hand.⁸⁶ This project never materialised, but Peale’s descriptive rendering to Hawkins of specimens he had recently received from Lewis bears witness to his familiarity with artifacts which he must have retrieved through Jefferson’s agency, probably the result of long and careful scrutiny.

⁸⁴ For an exception to this rule, where Clark is acknowledged in an 1810 letter that relates Peale’s drawings of ‘three of the birds, the Braroe & Antelope,’ see Paul R. Cutright, ‘A history of Lewis’s woodpecker and Clark’s nutcracker,’ in Robert A. Saindon, *Explorations into the world of Lewis and Clark* (3 vols, Great Falls, MT, 2003), ii, 909. See also Jackson, *Letters*, ii, 490.

⁸⁵ Fernandez-Sacco, ‘Framing “the Indian,”’ p. 606.

⁸⁶ Peale to Hawkins, 25 Oct. 1807, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 1037. On Lewis’s catalogue, see Jefferson to Peale, 1 Jan. 1806, in *ibid.*, ii, 918-19. See also Ewan & Ewan, *Benjamin Smith Barton*, p. 543.

Peale continued to receive items from Louisiana after Lewis's death.⁸⁷ Moreover, the tragic captain became immortalised by Peale's wax figure of him, the caption of which offered a detail of Lewis's encounter with Shoshone chief Cameahwait. In this revealing caption, Peale expounded his own interpretation of the encounter, and transcribed Lewis's speech as an exhortation to Cameahwait to learn 'many useful Arts' as the path towards agricultural improvement. Peale's Museum proposed a specific interpretation of the Lewis and Clark Expedition to its audience. It was an interpretation that had been assessed and validated by the Corps, by Jefferson, and finally by the A.P.S. – in short, by the whole network of Philadelphian 'centers'. Appropriately, Peale was assigned the task of conveying this meaning to a broadening popular audience.⁸⁸

3. Pedagogy and the dialectic between museum and botanic garden: the Museum and Belfield Farm

In 1810 Peale and his family moved to Belfield Farm, a pleasant homestead located in the environs of Germantown, Pennsylvania. They stayed there for ten years. Peale's trajectory paralleled that of Jefferson, who had by then retired to Monticello for good.⁸⁹

There is no need here to cover in depth that period in the painter's life. It would be

⁸⁷ Peale to Rembrandt Peale, 28 Oct. and 27 Nov. 1809, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, ii, 1238. See also Jackson, *Letters*, ii, 469-70. Once made aware of Lewis's death, Peale now expected Clark to take the lead in the publication of the journals. In a letter to Rembrandt he even disclosed a certain familiarity with Clark's talents at performing ethnographic observations, 'which the Notes taken by Capt'n Lewis probably passed over unnoticed.' See Peale to Rembrandt Peale, 3, 9 Feb. 1810, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, iii, 6; and Jackson, *Letters*, ii, 493-94.

⁸⁸ Peale to Jefferson, 29 Jan. 1808, in *ibid.*, ii, 1055-6. In Chapter 2, I have remarked upon the double-facetedness of Lewis's transcribed discourse, notwithstanding the essential and probably unsurpassable problem posed by translation. Translation as politics would orient us to the assumption that Lewis and, by extension, Peale made the Indians speak and react in a way that suited the white man's rhetoric of westward expansion as promoted by Jefferson, and actuated in the West by the Corps. See Jackson, *Letters*, ii, 439-40; Charles C. Sellers, *Portraits and miniatures by Charles Willson Peale* (Philadelphia, 1952), p. 127; Dillon, *Meriwether Lewis*, p. 287; and Brigham, *Public culture*, p. 128.

⁸⁹ Jessie J. Poesch, 'Mr. Peale's "farm persevere": some documentary views,' in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, c, no. 6 (Dec., 1956), pp 545-6. Poesch's article, despite its age, has the merit of focusing exclusively on Belfield, its environs, and the logistics of Peale's ten-year stay at the place. On the parallels between Peale and Jefferson, who were engrossed at the same time in the practice of gardening, see Jefferson to Peale, 5 May 1809, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, i, 187.

wrong, though, to assume that he broke off contact with the scientific world during that time. With its direction delegated to Peale's son Rubens, the Museum remained very much alive.⁹⁰ At Belfield, Peale gathered his efforts at developing what I propose to call the 'museum and garden' dialectic.⁹¹ On its own, a museum could not encompass the full extent of a given environment; vegetable life existed outside its confines. Hence the complementarity between museum and garden: seeds from an expedition like Lewis and Clark's (or obtained from exchanges with other repositories across the Atlantic) found their way into botanic gardens. Museum display had the discursive power to naturalise a showcased environment by offering a performative rendering of it to the visiting public. This was effected first by recourse to Linnean taxonomy, by such types of Eurocentric contextualisation as the caption under Lewis's wax figure, and then by hierarchical ordering, like positioning portraits of notable Euro-American figures above displays of (for instance) Native American artefacts.⁹²

In the same way, botanic gardens could integrate foreign species, as Jefferson explained to Correa da Serra: 'to my much valued friend Mr. Thouin especially I am indebted for frequent attentions, and particularly in the transmission of foreign seeds, which I place always in the hands of the best gardeners of the US. With a view of having them indigenated here, and of thus fulfilling his benevolent intentions of disseminating what is useful.'⁹³ This notion of 'indigenation' is particularly interesting because it incorporates all the fundamental aspects of the assimilative ideological bias that drove Jefferson's sponsorship of the Corps of Discovery. The twin tasks of

⁹⁰ Sellers, *Portraits and miniatures*, p. 16; and William T. Anderson, *Mermaids, mummies and mastodons: the emergence of the American museum* (Washington, D.C., 1992), pp 41-4.

⁹¹ For Peale's well-known statement to Jefferson that 'your garden must be a museum to you,' see Peale to Jefferson, 2 Mar. 1812, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, iv, 532.

⁹² There is no monograph on this particular ideological dimension of Peale's Museum, but for a broader and stimulating treatment of the subject, see Didier Maleuvre, *Museum memories: history, technology, art* (Stanford, 1999), especially p. 11. See also Ward, *Art and selfhood*, p. 103.

⁹³ Jefferson to Correa da Serra, 17 Apr. 1812, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, iv, 621.

‘indigenating’ and ‘disseminating what is useful’ were features of nearly all enterprises in colonial botany in the centers and peripheries of the French, British, Spanish and Dutch empires in the East and West Indies.⁹⁴ The Republic of Science served as the global-sized vessel for sustaining and spreading those practices. Their transnationality transpires in the fact that Jefferson shared the information with Correa da Serra, and stressed in the same letter his friendship with Thouin as well as his regular involvement in ‘the transmission of foreign seeds.’ What had started as a habit had become a ritual.⁹⁵

B. Landscape painting and imperial discourse in Jeffersonian America

1. Peale’s ‘neoclassical’ *Belfield* landscapes: an analysis (1)

Peale never turned Belfield into an actual botanic garden, and there is little evidence to show that he would have had the means to do so.⁹⁶ Still, in the middle years of his countryside period he set about painting various aspects of the place, and he informed his son Rembrandt about it, not without a degree of thrill.⁹⁷ These landscape

⁹⁴ Drayton, *Nature’s government*; Schiebinger, *Plants and empire*; Wulf, *Brother gardeners*; Wulf, *Founding gardeners*; and Jim Endersby, *Imperial nature: Joseph Hooker and the practices of Victorian science* (Chicago, 2008), especially p. 233 for a mention of Banks.

⁹⁵ At this time, Jefferson was also getting increasingly involved in those ‘ritualistic’ practices. For instance, see Leonardo de Prunner to Jefferson, 15 Mar. 1810, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, ii, 297.

⁹⁶ Peale did not try to compete with William Hamilton’s Woodlands or Bernard McMahon’s nursery, both based in Philadelphia. Hamilton and McMahon are understudied figures in the historiography. They both received seeds from the Lewis and Clark Expedition. For a general discussion of them in relation to the Corps of Discovery and Jefferson, see S. D. Kimmel, ‘Philanthropic enterprise: the imperial contradictions of republican political economy in Philadelphia during the era of Lewis and Clark,’ in Cox, *Shortest and most convenient route*, pp 52-101; and Cox, “‘I never yet parted’’: Bernard McMahon and the seeds of the Corps of Discovery,’ in *ibid.*, pp 102-35. See also Frederick D. Nichols and Ralph E. Griswold, *Thomas Jefferson: landscape architect* (Charlottesville, 1978), pp 128-31. McMahon was the noted author of *The American gardener’s calendar* (Philadelphia, 1806). On his exchanges with Jefferson of seeds collected during the Lewis and Clark Expedition, see McMahon to Jefferson, 24 Dec. 1809, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, ii, 89. Jefferson to McMahon, 13 Jan. 1810, in *ibid.*, ii, 140; and McMahon to Jefferson, 28 Feb. 1812, in *ibid.*, iv, 524-5. Benjamin Smith Barton also participated in that process but to a lesser degree, because of the breadth of his academic activity. See Jefferson to Barton, 6 Oct. 1810, in *ibid.*, iii, 150.

⁹⁷ Peale to Rembrandt Peale, 15 Aug. 1816, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, iii, 43; and Peale to Rembrandt Peale, 1 Oct. 1818, in *ibid.*, iii, 607-09. Among his sons, Peale seems to have favoured Rembrandt for discussions of landscape painting. In this first letter, he enters into the technical aspects of how to make a convincing depiction of the Belfield gardens, and expresses his own difficulties in that regard, being a portraitist by training. Sellers, *Patron and populace*, pp 41-2.

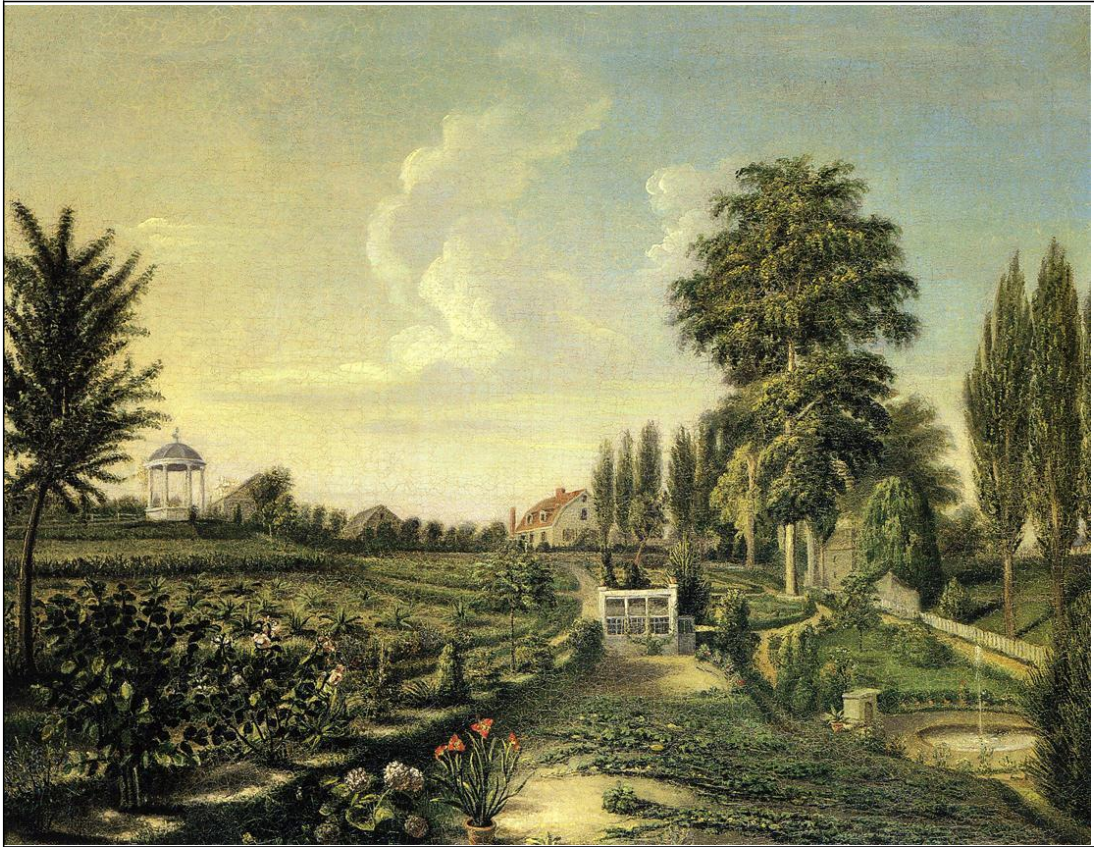
productions have never undergone extensive scholarly scrutiny, and this despite Therese O'Malley's warning that a 'fuller understanding of Peale cannot be achieved until a complete study of the garden, its sources, iconography, and botanic organisation has been accomplished.'⁹⁸ As my way of agreeing with that statement, I now propose an analysis of Peale's *View of the garden at Belfield* (1815-16) from the perspective of the painter's enterprise of visualisation of Jeffersonian expansionist discourse.⁹⁹

I argue that this representation of Belfield gardens, although perhaps ordinary in appearance, includes in fact the most fundamental features of the neoclassical aesthetic assimilated in Jeffersonian discourse from the early 1780s onwards (the *Notes on Virginia* provide a point of departure). Since no official or at least institutional landscape tradition existed in the United States at that time, Peale acted as somewhat of a forerunner, as he did in the field of museum keeping.¹⁰⁰ The landscape presented in the *View of the Garden at Belfield* is thoroughly ordered, every element being placed in its designated spot: the main path in the middle; flowers on the left side of the foreground; a fountain on the right side of the foreground; peaceable and trimmed-looking trees on the right side of the middle ground; a gate erected on the path (middle ground); the main house block at the center back; a classically-inspired dome supported by six pillars with a statue of George Washington at the top of it, elevated at the right

⁹⁸ O'Malley, 'Peale's Belfield,' p. 276. Studies of the garden at Belfield have occasionally appeared in specialist garden periodicals. See, for instance, Emily T. Cooperman, 'Belfield, Springland and early American picturesque: the artist's garden and the American early Republic,' in *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes*, xxvi, no. 2 (2006), pp 118-31; and Diane Newbury, 'But that garden now became my hobby-horse: Charles Willson Peale and his garden at Belfield,' in *Journal of the New England Garden History Society*, iv (1996), pp 38-47. See also Amy R. W. Meyers (ed.), *Art and science in America: issues of representation* (San Marino, CA, 1998).

⁹⁹ In the summer of 1812, Peale expressed to Jefferson the desire to make 'views of your Garden ... I propose to myself to give you some sketches which may be picturesque, tho' not in a stile of Grandeur.' Peale to Jefferson, 19 Aug, 1812, in *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, v, 324.

¹⁰⁰ Richardson, 'Peale and his world,' pp 95-8. See also Jennifer S. Zarro, 'Views of Philadelphia and the culture of geography, 1780-1800: maps, magazine engravings, and William Birch' (Ph.D. thesis, Rutgers, State University of New Jersey, 2007), pp 82-155.



Charles Willson Peale, *View of the garden at Belfield*, 1815-16

side of the background. Above these allocated items, the sky provides a soothing light.

Edgar Richardson has called the painting a ‘documentary’. His interpretation is supported by the fact that Peale gave priority to the depiction of an enlightened form of ordering over the aesthetic potential of the piece itself.¹⁰¹ The intended effect on the viewer is that of a peculiar form of republican harmony, which explains the addition of neoclassical architectural staples like the pillars, the dome and the bust of Washington. The arch is actually an invention of Peale’s: in the real garden, it was a tool-shed that occupied the spot.¹⁰² This suggests that Peale wanted to represent Belfield Garden as even more of a neoclassical paradise in its painted rendition than in reality (the inventive

¹⁰¹ Richardson, ‘Peale and his world,’ p. 98.

¹⁰² Peale to Angelica Peale, 2 Aug. 1813, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, iii, 202. See O’Malley, ‘Peale’s Belfield,’ pp 270-4.

possibilities were more numerous). It also suggests that Peale intended the painting to be exhibited and gazed at, an impression confirmed by his intention, voiced a little later, to display a 'collection' of Belfield pieces in the Museum, which would happen on 11 February 1822. Another eight such landscapes went earlier to exhibitions at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, in 1817.¹⁰³ Peale basically showcased his own landscapes in his own 'centers' (or 'centers' the founding of which he had contributed to, like the P.A.F.A.) He was trying to institutionalise not just his museum but the very practice of landscape painting in North America. Following the logic of his own agenda, it made sense for him to foster more complementarity between the two types of repository that he managed: the museum and Belfield Gardens. The A.P.S. had attempted precisely the same thing in 1787, though without success.¹⁰⁴

The Linnean museum thus echoed the neoclassically arranged garden. Through the art of painting, Peale sought not only to add a further ideological layer to Jeffersonian expansionist discourse by handling that discourse's visual vocabulary. He could also reach directly a relatively wide audience – unlike Jefferson. Grottoes, statuary, and temples became staple components of the visual remodelling of the North American 'wilderness' according to the Enlightenment-derived notion of the pastoral landscape. At a visual and architectural level, and with their discursive specificities, these components re-enacted the narrative of expansion over the 'wilderness' (that is, if

¹⁰³ Peale to Rembrandt Peale, 27 Dec. 1816, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, iii, 465. For better visibility, I use the shortcut P.A.F.A. to designate the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

¹⁰⁴ On the failure of the A.P.S. to establish a botanic garden, see O'Malley, 'Peale's Belfield,' p. 276. On Peale's plans for the aggrandisement of his Philadelphian scientific and artistic 'centers,' see Peale to Titian Ramsay Peale, 7 Mar. 1818, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, iii, 586. In a passage remarkably resonant with Jefferson's earlier plans for a system of agricultural societies, Peale exposed the following scheme to Titian: 'I now meditate an indeavour to unite a considerable number of the Citizens most likely to promote the cultivation of Science and learning, to make a Pennsyla Institute, in which the Museum will form the base, and must furnish the articles to be lectured on ... It is my wish to united the Academy of Science, the Atheneum & and such other Societies and [that] may be congenial to the Institution, and try to raise a sum sufficient to purchase a lot and build suitable Rooms for the Museum, Lecture Rooms, and for the meeting of the united societys, and a reading Room &c ... The Museum in my plan may be governed in its usefulness to the public.'

one digs beneath the layer of imagery, of the trans-Mississippi West) of their textual equivalents. The model of ancient Rome, omnipresent in Jeffersonian adaptations of neoclassical rhetoric, fitted both the purpose of strengthening an early cohesive U.S. republican identity and the emerging prospect (even the necessity, for the sake of the survival of that identity) of continental empire. Peale's *View* is but an early illustration of the recording of that redesigning of North American landscape along the lines of Jefferson-inspired 'neo-native' neoclassical architecture. It retained features of tribal occupation because of its subscription to the 'middle way' discourse of the pastoral; at the same time, it silenced the Native American presence visually in all cases. In paintings, it sufficed not to draw tribal populations, although these could also be both present *and* silent (as shown in my interpretation of Sydney Parkinson's *Endeavour* drawings below). Early U.S. landscape painting purposely concentrated on showing the visible products of the (Euro-American) 'civilising' imprint on untamed environments. Characteristically, it erased the violence inherent in that process, especially that of conflict with tribes.¹⁰⁵

Peale completed *Belfield Farm* (1815-20) a few years after the *View*. It does not require as long an analysis since it shares most of the features of its predecessor: a clear sky, neatly arranged trees on each side of the canvas, a path in the middle, and (perhaps most importantly) a fence that borders the path throughout.¹⁰⁶ The farm is not visible

¹⁰⁵ It is especially the stifling of that violence in visual discourse that makes the discourse 'ideological.' In a discussion of New Western History and landscape, Don Mitchell says: 'Uncovering how landscapes are made, and how they thus represent the relations of labour that go into their making, is a very different project from one which assumes that landscapes – or even nature – are simply there for the encounter. To assume the latter is to buy into the ideology of landscape, and thereby to erase from the view exactly the history one is trying to uncover – and the politics one is trying to promote.' This applies to Peale's Belfield representations. See Don Mitchell, 'Writing the western: New Western History's encounter with landscape,' in *Ecumene*, v, no. 1 (Jan., 1998), pp 7-29.

¹⁰⁶ In 1813 Peale informed Jefferson that 'My attention has been engaged in making fences ... Thorn fences are indispensably necessary in the Vicinity of large Manufactories; to keep the people belonging to those factories from trespassing on our fields, in crossing our farms by every direction they are permitted to go.' Peale to Jefferson, 28 Dec. 1813, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, vii, 80.



Charles Willson Peale, *Belfield Farm*, 1815-20

despite the painting's title, but the direction given by Peale's brush strokes implies that it rests beyond the slope in the background. Perhaps the farm does not have to be displayed, because *Belfield Farm* showcases not so much the archetypal neoclassical elements observed earlier (domes, vaults, pillars, arches, and statues) as a neatly pastoral landscape seemingly commemorating the naturalness of order itself. The superimposed addition of neoclassical 'units' on the canvas as well as in the land ran the risk of looking artificial, a liability at odds with the anticipated imagery of the myth of 'nature's nation' and the paradigm of the 'middle way.'¹⁰⁷

This leads me to the hypothesis that the *View* and *Belfield Farm* only make sense as two sides of the same artistic coin. This hypothesis is corroborated by the closeness

¹⁰⁷ For an invigorating exploration of the dialectic between the 'nationalisation of nature' and the 'naturalisation of the nation' in early American history, which could be applied to Peale's paintings, see Eric Kaufmann, "Naturalizing the nation": the rise of naturalistic nationalism in the United States and Canada, in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, xl, no. 4 (Oct., 1998), pp 668-9.

in their dates of conception. *Belfield Farm* may be seen as supplying the aesthetic compensation for the inescapable degree of artfulness invested in the *View* by focusing solely on the neat parallels and boundaries immanent in nature itself. In a revealing way, the fence is painted in a shade very close to that of the path ground. The visual effect produced may be called the ‘naturalisation of the boundary’, the impression created on the viewer that the fence is but a natural outgrowth of Belfield, while in fact it was of English origin (the ‘worm’ or zig-zag fence) and served the political purpose of keeping ‘the wilderness at bay’, in the words of Graham Clarke. The fence had a distinctively utopian quality, in that it secured the advance of an ordered-looking frontier over a land depicted as wild.¹⁰⁸ The rail and board fence that featured in *Belfield Farm* was of New England origin, although based on earlier English models. Its use was doctrinally synonymous with the affirmation over the North American landscape of a ‘domestic typology’ (another of Clarke’s phrases) which corresponded, on the visual plane, to what the grid system had performed in the Northwest Territory at an abstract, spatialised and administrative level.

2. Clark’s 1814 ‘master map’ of the West: an analysis (2)

From the viewpoint of an increasingly integrative republican neoclassical aesthetic, these two sides of the coin of early U.S. landscape painting were complementary with late eighteenth-century American adaptations of European cartographical practice. Two years before Peale brought the finishing touches to the *View*, William Clark had issued through the press his ‘master map’ of the American West in Nicholas Biddle’s *History*

¹⁰⁸ Graham Clarke, ‘Landscape painting and the domestic typology of post-revolutionary America,’ in Gidley & Lawson-Peebles, *Views of American landscapes*, p. 158.

(1814).¹⁰⁹ Although Peale and Clark communicated very little, if at all, Peale must have seen the map in printed form. He was too involved in the aftermath of the Expedition to miss it. Scrutinising its astonishing level of detail, Peale might have realised that the ‘master map’ crystallised his mentor Jefferson’s spatial conception of Upper Louisiana, necessarily an abstract one since the Virginian had never travelled beyond the frontier. If Peale’s landscapes gave a tangible shape to the Jeffersonian architecture of the ‘West’, Clark’s map showcased its topographical cohesiveness.¹¹⁰

Carolyn Gilman has said that it is important to not take Clark’s map as ‘a value-neutral document.’¹¹¹ The map had great geopolitical value, to be sure, being the product of Clark’s experience of nearly four years’ travelling across the continent. It also recorded the bits of intelligence Clark had culled afterwards from such western explorers as John Colter, George Drouillard, Zebulon Pike, and Andrew Henry. (Colter and Drouillard were former members of the Corps of Discovery. They later joined an expedition headed by St Louis merchant Manuel Lisa to the Upper Missouri region in 1807, with the mission to build a string of trading forts there.)¹¹² Lewis had contributed his great descriptive skill to the written entries of the journals and their utopian feel, but it was Clark who worked best at giving these entries a visual expression.¹¹³ Completed

¹⁰⁹ Nicholas Biddle (ed.), *History of the Expedition under the command of Captains Lewis and Clark* (New York, 1814).

¹¹⁰ William E. Foley, *Wilderness journey: the life of William Clark* (Columbia, 2004), pp 187-88; Buckley, *William Clark: Indian diplomat* (Norman, 2008), p. 150; and Ronda, *Jefferson’s West*, p. 73.

¹¹¹ Gilman, *Across the divide*, p. 163. For another testimony of the significance of Clark’s map in its political context, see Wood, *Prologue to Lewis and Clark*, p. 63.

¹¹² On Lisa and Henry, see Allen, *Image of the American Northwest*, pp 376-82; and Paul E. Cohen, *Mapping the West: America’s westward movement 1524-1890* (New York, 2002), p. 91. On Colter, see Woodger and Toropov, *Encyclopedia of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, p. 94; and Ann Rogers, *Lewis and Clark in Missouri* (Columbia, 2002), p. 99. On Drouillard, see M. O. Skarsten, *George Drouillard: hunter and interpreter for Lewis and Clark and fur trader, 1807-1810* (2nd ed., Lincoln, 2005), p. ix. On Pike, see John L. Allen, ‘Zebulon Montgomery Pike and American science,’ in Tim Blevins, Matt Mayberry, Chris Nicholl, Calvin P. Otto, and Nancy Thaler (eds), *To spare no pains: Zebulon Montgomery Pike and his 1806-1807 Southwest expedition* (Colorado Springs, 2007), pp 66-7.

¹¹³ Seelye, *Beautiful machine*, p. 205; Kastor, *William Clark’s world*, p. 150; Lawson-Peebles, *Landscape and written expression*, p. 199. See also my Chapter 2, *passim*.



Clark's map of the West, published in 1814 in Biddle's *History of the Expedition*
(Philadelphia)

as a draft in 1810 but only published four years later, the 'master map' covered literally a continental expanse of territory, from longitude 90° to 123° (roughly from St Louis to the Pacific Coast at the present-day states of Oregon and Washington) and from latitude 38° to 48°, bounded by British Canada on the north and New Spain on the south.

Clark's map concentrates such a staggering amount of geographical information that it would nearly deserve a monograph-length study by itself. John Logan Allen has discussed it at some length in the last chapter of his classic work, *Lewis and Clark and the image of the American Northwest*.¹¹⁴ Before I scrutinise the document, it must be reminded that the map had a great influence on settlers 'forming eastern images of the West' and derived information from (while simultaneously providing new directions to the activities of) 'explorers, traders, and trappers who began to pass through his [Clark's] office on their way to or from the West' in the period 1806-14.¹¹⁵ In keeping

¹¹⁴ Allen, *Image of the American Northwest*, pp 375-94.

¹¹⁵ Gilman, *Across the divide*, p. 163. On the legacy of Clark's map see Allen, *Image of the American Northwest*, pp

with this chapter's main thematic thread, I analyse the map in the light of early U.S. neoclassical aesthetics. That being said, its more blatant geopolitical and diplomatic wealth of details deserves scrutiny elsewhere.¹¹⁶

Aesthetically speaking, Clark's 'master map' comes across as the cartographical embodiment of Jefferson's neo-classicist bias, in his oft-quoted but (logically) never materialised 'western vision'. It was a republican vision. The two most conspicuous features to emerge from the map are mountain ranges and rivers. By 1814, both had been updated by Clark with a degree of accuracy never before achieved by an American cartographer. But this should not obscure the deeper conceptual motivations behind the elaboration of the map itself. Its place at a watershed in U.S. cartographical history is justified by the ideological weight with which it carried one of the first comprehensive pictures of the 'West', and by extension of the whole United States as a country of visible continental harmony.

In his discussion of Jefferson's conception of the American West's typology, which he summarises as 'Jefferson's imaginary map', John Seelye describes it in these terms: 'the twin, pyramidal ranges of the Alleghenies and the Rockies looked not unlike a great suspension bridge, for from the mountain heights hung a reticulated web of rivers that held together the otherwise disparate parts of the continent, anchoring them to the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.'¹¹⁷ Clark's map validates Seelye's interpretation in every respect. It visually transports the Jeffersonian architectural picture of the 'West' from the sphere of reification to that of materialisation. The Mississippi River of Ellicott's

375-6; Ralph E. Ehrenberg, 'U.S. Army military mapping of the American Southwest during the nineteenth century,' in Dennis Reinhartz and Gerald D. Saxon (eds), *Mapping and empire: soldier-engineers on the southwestern frontier* (Austin, 2005), p. 80; and Geoff King, *Mapping reality: an exploration of cultural cartographies* (London, 1996), p. 106.

¹¹⁶ In view of the historical importance of the document, it is surprising that nobody has followed up on Allen's discussion of the map, for instance by assessing its influence on later generations of western explorers, settlers, and speculators.

¹¹⁷ Seelye, *Beautiful machine*, p. 199.

Account is replaced by the Missouri, which, as it were, plays the leading role in the map with the Rocky Mountains. The Missouri's ascribed task as a 'vector of penetration' finds additional momentum in the bold tones that Clark uses to delineate its westward course. The captain's spatial rendering of the Rockies can be interpreted in the same light. Along the Missouri, the viewer notices a profusion of tributaries with (for the majority of them) English names. They disperse themselves in the several thick ranges of the Rockies, only to be taken up again by the tributaries of the Columbia River, an equally important western 'vector' emptying itself in the Pacific Ocean. The western path has thus been fully traced, from its natural beginning to its natural end. 'Continentality' becomes the truth of the land. The Rockies imposed a very real barrier to expansion from the east, and Clark had to do his share, as a virtuosic cartographer, in the disintegration of old myths of easy crossings. But the net effect produced by the map on the viewer's eye is that, despite the obstacle presented by the mountain wall, rivers are depicted as mingling with it and through it: they eventually reach beyond the wall to the Columbia River, proving by the same token that in 'nature's nation' even natural features may act by themselves to facilitate the continental reach.¹¹⁸

On Clark's map the Rocky Mountains may look like boundaries, but they are not. The 'Northern Boundary of Louisiana', visible between latitudes 47°/48° and longitudes 108/113°, serves to separate the United States from British Canada but it fails to maintain its course along the first range of the great western mountains. The real, though implied western boundary of the map is the Pacific Ocean, where the rivers (those organically connected veins of the continent) empty. Their eastern sisters do the

¹¹⁸ On the origins of 'continentiality' in the post-revolutionary American consciousness, see Hildegard B. Johnson, 'Towards a national landscape,' in Conzen, *Making of the American landscape*, p. 132. I have not been able to find much literature on the neoclassical element in Clark's 'master map.' For a brief discussion of the technicalities of the making of the map, see Raymonde Litalien, Jean-François Palomino, and Denis Vaugeois (eds), *La mesure d'un continent: Atlas historique de l'Amérique du Nord, 1492-1814* (Paris, 2007), p. 272.

same by traversing the Alleghenies and emptying into the Atlantic, as Jefferson took care to report in the *Notes on Virginia's* description of the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers piercing through the Blue Ridge Mountains.¹¹⁹ The myth of continental symmetry, then, had not perished despite the American explorers' earlier, momentous realisation that the eastern and western ranges vastly differed in height and extent. Mountains may differ in quantity, but not in quality: North American geography retained a neoclassical texture shaped by symmetrical cohesiveness, a harmony of river systems and mountain ranges, and clearly set boundaries north, south, east, and west.¹²⁰

Of course, the affirmation of this utopian quality meant the emergence of another serious challenge: that of vindicating and rationalising U.S. prerogative over tribal practical possession of most of the trans-Mississippi western territory. For a cartographer like Clark, this challenge brought back to the fore the agenda of naturalising U.S. agency through the stifling of native agency. Here the first step of naturalisation derived from the sheer pedigree which Clark had acquired by his prior experience 'on western ground' with the Corps of Discovery. The second step, discussed in detail in a previous chapter, originated with the image *within* Clark's cartographic picture.¹²¹ Its text was written in the English language, attributing English names to rivers, mountains, and human settlements. The map does record the (scattered) presence of Native American tribes, but as Carolyn Gilman has observed, 'any sense that they inhabited the landscape was erased. The map showed what Jefferson wanted: an essentially empty land, open

¹¹⁹ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p. 93. See also Furtwangler, *Acts of discovery*, p. 27.

¹²⁰ See Paul Shepard, *The cultivated wilderness: or, what is landscape?* (Cambridge, MA, 1997), pp 1-24; and Mitchell, 'Imperial landscape,' pp 18-20.

¹²¹ On the question of the 'discourse of landscape' from a poststructuralist viewpoint, see J. B. Harley, 'Deconstructing the map,' in Trevor J. Barnes and James S. Duncan (eds), *Writing worlds: discourse, text, and metaphor in the representation of landscape* (London, 1992), pp 231-47; G. Malcolm Lewis, 'Rhetoric of the western interior: modes of environmental description in American promotional literature of the nineteenth century,' in Denis E. Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (eds), *The iconography of landscape* (Cambridge, 1988), pp 179-93; and J. B. Harley, 'Maps, knowledge, and power,' in *ibid.*, pp 277-312.

and ready for settlement.’¹²² U.S. explorers’ reliance on increasingly systematic Euro-American cartographic methodologies in the early nineteenth century expedited the erasure of tribal narratives from their maps of North America, betraying the reality of the Native American contribution of rich cartographical data to people like Clark. Clark had the peculiar talent of being able to translate such data into a language intelligible to the eastern American ‘centers of calculation’ that sponsored him. In the end, the tribes he did inscribe on his map looked like mundane features of the western landscape. The ‘environmentalising’ strategy applied also to the field of cartography.¹²³

Notwithstanding the role of Clark’s map in thrashing such myths as that of an early portage from the Missouri to the Columbia River and the ideal of *absolute* continental symmetry, it kept other myths alive. The myth of a ‘common source area’ for North American rivers, Allen has pointed out, was displaced to the Southeast, with a new zone of contact identified between the Platte River, the Bighorn, the Arkansas and the Rio Grande.¹²⁴ This basic readjustment of an older myth served purely and simply to sustain ‘continentality’ in discourse by renovating and maintaining alive the longing for an authentically neoclassical panorama of the great North American rivers interlocking at their points of origin. Boundaries, parallels, crossings, and intersections – all pertained, through artful emphasis, to the neoclassical aesthetic. The role of this aesthetic in W. J. T. Mitchell’s notion of the ‘dreamwork of imperialism’ takes on a lively persona if we consider Clark’s ‘master map’ as an allegory of nineteenth-century U.S. westward expansion. As the years went by, Clark regularly amended his map by

¹²² Gilman, *Across the divide*, p. 163; and Anne F. Hyde, *Empires, nations and families: a history of the North American West, 1800-1860* (Lincoln, 2011), especially pp 250-7.

¹²³ On the legacy of ‘Indian erasure’ in American cartography, and more specifically on Lewis and Clark, see Kevin S. Blake, ‘Great Plains Native American representations,’ pp 270-1; and Gilman, *Across the divide*, pp 140-51. On the physical and epistemological reality of the Indian perspective before Lewis and Clark, see the excellent work by Colin G. Calloway, *One vast winter count*. See also Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to write the history of the New World: histories, epistemologies, and identities in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world* (Stanford, 2001), pp 60-129.

¹²⁴ Allen, *Image of the American Northwest*, p. 392.

adding pieces of information garnered from those white adventurers and traders in the Upper Missouri region that passed through his office (he acted as governor of Missouri Territory from 1813 to 1820). One of the net results of this process was the progressive erasure of the tribal ‘trace’ from his map; and the lesser the Native American presence, the more room for a neoclassically inspired rendition of an imperial, continent-sized United States.¹²⁵

3. Global draughtsman: Parkinson’s *Journal* and paintings on the *Endeavour*

Obviously, ‘continentalism’ as an ideology could not have been envisaged in those earlier European circumnavigations that had so interested Jefferson in the 1780s and 1790s. Yet, like there existed parallels of rhetoric at the textual level between the two types of venture, there were visual parallels too. Cook’s *Endeavour* expedition remains a fertile field for comparison because of the painter it recruited for the journey, Sydney Parkinson. Parkinson fits in every respect the costume of the neoclassically trained painter at the periphery of empire. Born in Edinburgh into a Quaker family, he developed skills at botanical drawing that soon caught Banks’s eyes. First noticed by Banks in 1767, he was soon convinced to join the Cook crew for departure the following year. Parkinson was originally employed as a botanical draughtsman, but the death of his counterpart Alexander Buchan early during the trip forced him to take up topographical drawing in addition to his own work. Parkinson produced sketches of

¹²⁵ For a brief discussion of Clark’s map within the context of Jefferson’s imaginary geography, and the assertion that ‘imperial and political interests were never far below the surface’, see David N. Livingstone, *The geographical tradition: episodes in the history of a contested enterprise* (Oxford, 1992), pp 148-9. On the relationship between neoclassical aesthetics and the tendency for theoretical abstraction, see Charles A. Cramer, *Abstraction and the classical ideal, 1760-1920* (Cranbury, 2006).

coastlines as well as territorial interiors, which are especially pertinent here.¹²⁶ He also composed a remarkable (though mostly overlooked) account of his travels, *Journal of a voyage to the South Seas* (1773), in which the reader can distinguish the contours of the painter's neoclassical affinities, his passion for compiling vocabularies of Pacific languages, and his proclivity for 'natural historicising' and 'environmentalising' both in his text and in his sketches.¹²⁷ Parkinson died from dysentery at Batavia in 1771, aged barely twenty-five, but the impact and legacy of his visual renditions of Pacific environments like Tahiti and Australia should not be underestimated.¹²⁸

Early in his journal, Parkinson paid tribute to the 'center of calculation' sponsoring his journey. He dedicated the discovery of the Tuamotu Archipelago (discovered in fact by Bougainville a few years earlier) and in particular of 'Chain Island' (Anaa) to the Royal Society of London.¹²⁹ This fact deserves mention, because it suggests that even a young draughtsman of seemingly little influence over the direction of Cook's mission could feel the full extent of the 'Republic of Science' principle and work towards the integration of 'center' and 'periphery' alongside more archetypal figures like Banks and Cook. During the extended call at Tahiti, Parkinson adopted the familiar trope of blending criticisms of the 'civilised' brutality of his crewmates with his

¹²⁶ Bernard Smith, *European vision and the South Pacific* (2nd ed., New Haven, 1985), pp 18-27; and Smith, *Imagining the Pacific: in the wake of the Cook voyages* (New Haven, 1992), pp 1-110. On the pioneer work of Bernard Smith in Pacific Studies see Peter Beilharz, *Imagining the antipodes: culture, theory and the visual in the work of Bernard Smith* (Cambridge, 1997), especially pp 63-96; and Tom Ryan, 'Revisiting the Pacific: Bernard Smith in the South Seas,' in *Thesis Eleven*, lxxxii, no. 1 (Aug., 2005), pp 16-28.

¹²⁷ For Parkinson's observation that the Tahitian language 'is also very metaphorical,' see Parkinson, *Journal*, p. 65. Parkinson's remark on the metaphoricity of Tahitian languages reminds us of Jefferson's own comments on the metaphoricity of Native American languages, best exemplified by the eloquence of Logan's speeches as they were accounted for in the *Notes on Virginia*. At the linguistic level, there is a parallel in treatment between natives of North America and of the South Seas, not necessarily in terms of their respective dialects but of how their visitors perceived them, and how they made sense of them within an overarching ideology of expansion.

¹²⁸ Denis J. Carr (ed.), *Sydney Parkinson: artist of Cook's Endeavour voyage* (London, 1983), pp 1-45. See also Rex Rienits and Thea Rienits, *Early artists of Australia* (Sydney, 1963), pp 9-12.

¹²⁹ Parkinson, *Journal*, p. 13. See also Peter H. Buck, *Explorers of the Pacific: European and American discoveries in Polynesia* (Honolulu, 1953), p. 25; and John M. Gwyther, *Captain Cook and the South Pacific: the voyage of the 'Endeavour,' 1768-1771* (Boston, 1955), p. 80.

own rhetorical strategies of ‘natural historicising’: ‘A centinel being off his guard, one of the natives snatched a musket out of his hand, which occasioned the fray. A boy, a midshipman, was the commanding officer, and, giving orders to fire, they obeyed with the greatest glee imaginable, as if they had been shooting at wild ducks, killed one stout man, and wounded many others. What a pity, that such brutality should be exercised by civilized people upon unarmed ignorant Indians!’¹³⁰ This technique was nearly systematically used in conjunction with infantilising. Adjectives like ‘ignorant’ and ‘unarmed’ prove eerily complementary with the qualification of Tahitian people as ‘wild ducks.’ Parkinson’s tendency to ‘natural historicise’ autochthonous populations comes as no real surprise, inasmuch that the entirety of the literate crew of Cook’s ship practiced it. But the fact that a *painter* resorted to these strategies with zeal equal to that of his scientific tutors is worth mentioning, because it implies that Parkinson likely used similar strategies in his drawing practice.¹³¹

On the verge of leaving Tahiti, Parkinson remembered his close collaboration on the island with the expedition’s duo of naturalists: ‘During our stay here Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander were very assiduous in collecting whatever ... might contribute to the advancement of Natural History; and, by their directions, I made drawings of a great many curious trees, and other plants, fish, birds, and of such natural bodies as could not be conveniently preserved entire, to be brought home.’¹³² While Banks and Solander collected specimens and classified them, Parkinson was given the task of drawing them. His *Journal* does not include many of his Tahiti sketches, but among those included

¹³⁰ Parkinson, *Journal*, p. 15. See Smith, *Imagining the Pacific*, p. 92; Alexander H. Bolyanatz, *Pacific Romanticism: Tahiti and the European imagination* (Westport, CT, 2004), pp 100-01; Jeffrey Geiger, *Facing the Pacific: Polynesia and the U.S. imperial imagination* (Honolulu, 2007), pp 22-24; Beilharz, *Imagining the antipodes*, pp 84-5; and Frank McLynn, *Captain Cook: master of the seas* (New Haven, 2011).

¹³¹ Smith, *European vision*, p. 18; Jeffrey Geiger, *Facing the Pacific*, pp 22-4; and Beilharz, *Imagining the antipodes*, pp 84-5.

¹³² Parkinson, *Journal*, p. 36.

some are worthy of analysis.¹³³ Parkinson usually recorded the drawings and paintings he made. (Textual data could ‘log’ visual data, and vice-versa.) He also revealed that he privileged for drawing those specimens that ‘could not be conveniently preserved entire, to be brought home.’ Visual representation served, therefore, as a substitute for physical preservation and mobility, two criteria implying material possession that echoed directly the ‘center of calculation’ bias observed by Latour in the journals of Lapérouse. Parkinson knew that painting could serve this role, and he was equally aware that the next step in the process involved the *transportation* of his canvases, for their lodging and display at European museums of natural history. Well-known establishments such as the British Museum and Leverian Museum represented, from that perspective, Peale Museum’s earlier British counterparts.¹³⁴

A clear correlation thus appears in Parkinson’s *Journal* between natural history drawing at the periphery of empire and the museums at the center which served as stable repositories not only of natural historical specimens, but also (when those specimens proved impractical for transportation) for drawings of them. Specimens, artifacts, and their visual embodiment in sketches served the same purpose: the representation of the foreign as *circumscribed*. It has been emphasised throughout this thesis that Jefferson followed this line of reasoning almost step by step in his directions to western explorers, reaching the highest level of fidelity in his 1803 letter to Lewis.¹³⁵

¹³³ Smith, *European vision*, p. 18; Carr, *Sydney Parkinson*, p. 81; Hank Ebes (ed.), *The florilegium of Captain Cook’s first voyage to Australia, 1768-1771* (Melbourne, 1988), especially p. 11. See also the plates in Parkinson’s *Journal* selected below for discussion. On Parkinson’s ornithological drawings, arguably another side of the enterprise of visual ‘natural historicising’ of the places he visited, see John T. Battalio, *The rhetoric of science in the evolution of American ornithological discourse* (London, 1998), p. 35.

¹³⁴ Latour, *Science in action*, pp 215-57. For a similar argument in the context of late-eighteenth-century Spanish South America, centered on Spanish botanist José Celestino Mutis, see Daniela Bleichmar, ‘Painting as exploration: visualizing nature in eighteenth-century colonial science,’ in *Colonial Latin American Review*, xv, no. 1 (June, 2006), pp 81-104; the publication by the British Museum, *Captain Cook and the South Pacific* (London, 1979), p. 11; and Alan McCulloch and Susan McCulloch (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Australian art* (Honolulu, 1994), p. 9.

¹³⁵ On the complementarity between the artist and the naturalist in the ‘center of calculation’ process, see Daniela

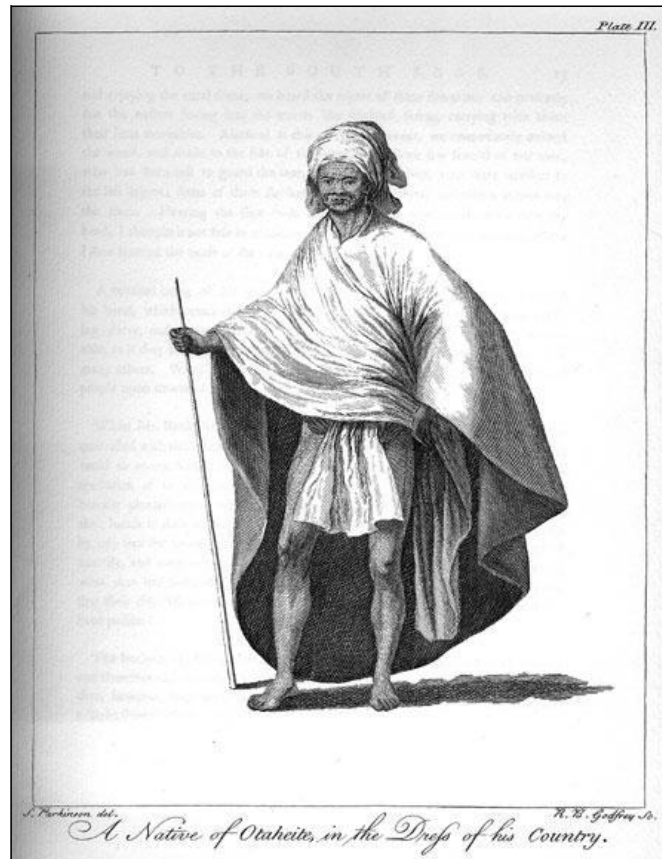


Plate III: 'A native of Otaheite, in the dress of his country' (Parkinson, *Journal*)

Plate III in Parkinson's *Journal* features 'A Native of Otaheite, in the dress of his country.'¹³⁶ A man is portrayed wearing a white toga and a stick, two staples of what may be called 'neoclassical dress.' The soft primitivism of the sketch comes out most starkly through the curves of the native's clothes. His expression is firm and resolute, though not hostile or ferocious. He stands erect, and the stick in his hand reflects a straight line that parallels his own stature. The straight line is another staple feature of

Bleichmar, 'Visible empire: scientific expeditions and visual culture in the Hispanic Enlightenment,' in *Postcolonial Studies*, xii, no. 4 (Dec., 2009) pp 441-66; and eadem, 'A visible and useful empire: visual culture and colonial natural history in the eighteenth-century Spanish world,' in eadem, Paula de Vos, Kristin Huffine, and Kevin Sheehan (eds), *Science in the Spanish and Portuguese empires, 1500-1800* (Stanford, 2009), pp 290-310.

¹³⁶ Plate III, in Parkinson, *Journal*, p. 14. See Harriet Guest, 'Curiously marked: tattooing, masculinity, and nationality in eighteenth-century British perceptions of the South Pacific,' in John Barrell (ed.), *Painting and the politics of culture: new essays on British art, 1700-1850* (Oxford, 1992), pp 101-34.

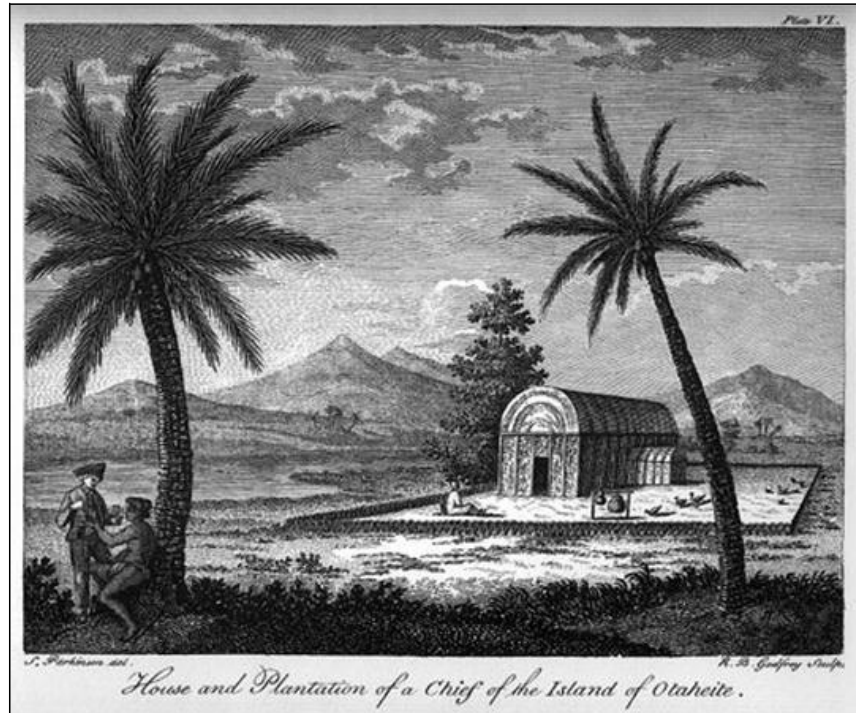


Plate VI: 'House and Plantation of a Chief of the Island of Otaheite' (Parkinson, *Journal*)

neoclassical aesthetics (and of the utopian idiom, by extension). In this drawing, it is the man who holds the stick. Conversely, in the sketch below, Plate VI, we notice that the relationship has been reversed: the straight line now circumscribes and encloses him.

Plate VI offers a memorable example of pastoral visual discourse applied to Tahiti.¹³⁷ The eye distinguishes neat lines of separation in the parallelism of the palm trees, and a peaceful sky with few clouds. Birds are the only visible animals. They seem enclosed, 'in the possession' of man. A contrast emerges between the elements of the foreground (dark and thickly wooded) and the main scene of the sketch, which is occupied by a clearing. The way the landscape is arranged suggests an allegory of the 'civilised' takeover of the Tahitian 'wilderness'. It is a pastoral landscape, where the native Tahitians are implicitly depicted as assimilating with the imported culture of their

¹³⁷ Plate VI, in Parkinson, *Journal*, p. 24. On Parkinson as primarily a 'landscape artist,' see Claudio Greppi, "'On the spot': traveling artists and the iconographic inventory of the world, 1769-1859," in Driver & Martins, *Tropical visions*, pp 25-7.

British visitors. Parkinson moulds his representation of the Tahitian environment to fit the utopian idiom, bent as he is on painting a visual picture of the idea of regularity and improvement found in the accounts of Banks, Cook, and his own journal. Parkinson's output provides a striking instance of the complementarity between the scientific and artistic extensions of colonial discourse in late eighteenth-century voyages of exploration. This relationship continued to be fruitful after the expedition crew's return to the mother country, through museum displays in London, Paris, or Philadelphia. The 'center of calculation' process had then come full circle.¹³⁸

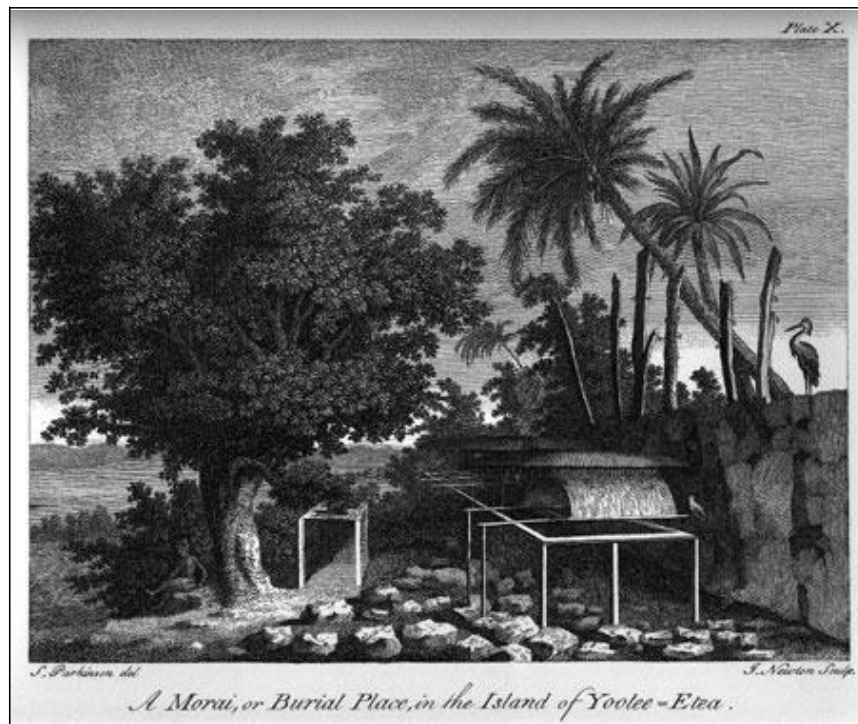


Plate X: 'A Morai, or Burial Place, in the Island of Yoolee-Etea' (Parkinson, *Journal of a Voyage to the South Seas*)

¹³⁸ See Chapter 4, *passim*. On Parkinson's sketches and drawings finding their way into British museums, see M. H. Lazarus and H. S. Pardoe (eds), *Catalogue of botanical prints and drawings at the national museums and galleries of Wales* (Cardiff, 2003), pp 109-26. On the relationship between Parkinson and Banks, see Gascoigne, *Banks and the English Enlightenment*, p. 78. More specifically on science, collecting, and representation in that era, see Jonathan Lamb, *Preserving the self in the South Seas, 1680-1840* (Chicago, 2001), pp 76-113.

Plate X is best analysed in contrast to Plate VI.¹³⁹ Away from the pastoral, it supposedly depicts the ‘wilderness’. A round, thick, massive tree invades the viewer’s visual space, next to which are found two bending palm trees. The scene is devoid of human beings; the few traces of civilisation conveyed by the Morai look abandoned and overgrown. The one bird standing on the wall (on the right side of the picture) is not enclosed, and seems to gaze at the backlash takeover of the ideal of order by the reality of Tahitian ‘wilderness’ – caused by the failure of British colonisers, in this particular instance, to circumscribe the ‘wilderness’ as efficiently as they had done in Plate VI. Does Parkinson mean to imply that this is because white men are absent from Plate X, since the Morai is an idiosyncratically Tahitian structure? The artificial straight lines of the Morai do stand out, but they are dominated spatially, being shown in an inferior hierarchical position to the trees that blatantly overlook the overall picture. If Plate X exposes a ‘wilderness’ landscape, however, it can still be interpreted as retaining a sense of ambivalence, since Parkinson’s authorship of the sketch involved in itself a territorial claim, regardless of how practically contested this claim may have been on the spot.¹⁴⁰

4. ‘Sequential’ naturalness and ‘topical’ scientificity: Hutchins’s survey work

In the case of the United States, we may legitimately wonder when the ‘turn to the neoclassical’ occurred there. In the late 1760s, somebody like Parkinson was still acting within a conceptual world of representation influenced (for landscape painting at least) by the methods of Claude Lorrain.¹⁴¹ In Peale’s country the influence of Claude was not

¹³⁹ Plate X, in Parkinson, *Journal*, p. 70.

¹⁴⁰ On the appropriative tendencies of Parkinson’s drawings, see Patricia Johnston, ‘Advertising Paradise: Hawai’i in art, anthropology, and commercial photography,’ in Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson, *Colonialist photography: imag(in)ing race and place* (London, 2002), pp 193-4; and Mitchell, ‘Imperial landscape,’ pp 9-10.

¹⁴¹ On this, see Katharine Baetjer and Michael Rosenthal (eds), *Glorious nature: British landscape painting, 1750-1850*

only lesser; it was overshadowed by U.S. artists' desire to represent the unique relationship between the North American (white) people and their environment. It was a relationship predicated on the prospect of the continued expansion of the western frontier. Two decades before the annexation of Louisiana, the 1780s had witnessed the issue of the incorporation of the Northwest Territory, which produced three groundbreaking Ordinances and led to the implementation of the grid system for the disposal of federally appropriated lands. If the neoclassical element in the aesthetic of Jeffersonian expansionism originated anywhere, it was there. The ideological redefinition of Louisiana in Jefferson's *Account* (with a view towards the federal integration of Louisiana Territory into the Union) had had an earlier parallel. It was the role played by Thomas Hutchins in the Old Northwest, and particularly his drafting of the *Topographical description*. This book could be tantalisingly renamed the 'Notes on Illinois'.¹⁴²

Born in New Jersey in 1730, Hutchins worked as a mapmaker and colonial surveyor in the Ohio Valley before the Revolution and as a military officer on the British side during the war. He was accused of treason by the British government in 1779, a shock which caused him to resign his commission a year later. Hutchins's skills in surveying must have made some noise at the time, for he was quickly 'recruited' by the American Congress in 1781 and appointed first Geographer of the United States. He was soon employed in the survey of the Seven Ranges of the Northwest Territory, following the ratification of the Northwest Ordinance (1787). Though he died too early to complete his task, Hutchins remains the first man to have given a physical reality to

(New York and Lanham 1993), pp 112, 180; William Gaunt, *The great century of British painting: Hogarth to Turner* (London, 1978), pp 25-8; Luke Herrmann, *British landscape painting of the eighteenth century* (Oxford, 1974), pp 10-12; and Richard Rand, *Claude Lorraine, the painter as draftsman: drawings from the British Museum* (New Haven, 2006), p. 22.

¹⁴² Todd A. Shallat, *Structures in the stream: water, science, and the rise of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* (Austin, 1994), pp 52-6; and W. M. Verhoeven, 'Land-jobbing in the western territories: radicalism, transatlantic emigration, and the 1790s American travel narrative,' in Amanda Gilroy (ed.), *Romantic geographies: discourses of travel, 1775-1844* (Manchester, 2000), p. 191.

the Jefferson-inspired grid system.¹⁴³ The few maps he produced granted a visual dimension to his work.¹⁴⁴ Prior to all this, however, even before his appointment by Congress, Hutchins had written the *Topographical description* and had published it in 1778. In this book, he had laid the discursive basis (textual as well as visual) for a federally supervised territorial integration of the Old Northwest. This had a considerable impact on Jefferson, Ellicott, and by extension Lewis and Clark. Hutchins's method amounted to a blueprint for the Jeffersonian rhetoric of the 'middle way' by achieving, in Lawson-Peebles's vocabulary, the reconciliation of 'sequential naturalness' with 'topical scientificity'.¹⁴⁵

The most obvious advantage of an in-between mode of narrative resided in the ability of the narrator to assert for himself a degree of organic legitimacy with his environment. This was accomplished by the 'sequential' idiom, which created an atmosphere of familiarity through emphasis on repetition and daily routine. Simultaneously, the 'topical' idiom imposed for the author a sense of authority over his environment (and an open path towards later administrative integration by the federal state) by recording measurements of its every angle according to western epistemological reference points, and by putting the environment's astronomical coordinates on maps like those produced by William Clark. In brief, the 'sequential' idiom produced the illusion of naturalness while the 'topical' idiom produced the

¹⁴³ Ben A. Smith and James W. Vining, *American geographers, 1784-1812: a bio-bibliographical guide* (Greenwood, CT, 2003), pp 105-09; Robert J. Malone, 'The two Williams: science and connections in West Florida,' in Kathryn E. H. Braundt and Charlotte M. Porter (eds), *Fields of vision: essays on the travels of William Bartram* (Tuscaloosa, 2010), pp 57-8; and Robert R. Hubach, *Early Midwestern travel narratives: an annotated bibliography, 1634-1850* (2nd ed., Detroit, 1998), p. 23.

¹⁴⁴ Thomas Hallock, *From the fallen tree: frontier narratives, environmental politics, and the roots of a national pastoral, 1749-1826* (Chapel Hill, 2003), pp 30-1; and Milo M. Quaife, *Chicago and the Old Northwest, 1673-1835* (Chicago, 2001), p. 43.

¹⁴⁵ Lawson-Peebles, *Landscape and written expression*, p. 198. Among the later 'users' of this method pioneered by Hutchins, Lawson-Peebles lists Ellicott and the Corps of Discovery. See also Merle Curti, *The growth of American thought* (3rd ed, New Brunswick, 1982), pp 142-4.

illusion of an inclusive civilising process. These two idioms could in fact be seen as the pillars of Jeffersonian expansionist rhetoric.¹⁴⁶

Jefferson read Hutchins's *Topographical Description* with interest, and in a gesture that recalled his exchanges with Crèvecoeur, he wrote a letter to Hutchins to suggest corrections to 'your pamphlet'.¹⁴⁷ Soon to embark for France, Jefferson had clearly done more than to simply peruse the work. Hutchins promptly answered: 'I am collecting materials to enable me to furnish a more particular account of that valuable country to the West-ward, which I purpose doing, by re-publishing the present Pamphlet, after correcting its errors, with the addition of every useful information that I shall be able to acquire; any hints furnished by my friends for the promotion of this work, will be thankfully received.'¹⁴⁸ The geographer's mention of 'that valuable country to the West-ward' echoed his earlier bias for idealisation in the *Topographical description*. Shortly after the work's introductory essay, Hutchins had coolly stated:

The country on both sides of the Ohio, extending South-easterly, and South-westerly from Fort Pitt to the Mississippi, and watered by the Ohio River, and its branches, contains at least a million of square miles, and it may, with truth, be affirmed, that no part of the globe is blessed with a more healthful air, or climate ... watered with more navigable rivers and branches communicating with the *Atlantick Ocean*, by the rivers Potowmack, *James*, *Rappahannock*, *Mississippi*, and *St. Lawrence*, or capable of

¹⁴⁶ Seelye, *Beautiful machine*, pp 199-205. Hutchins had first practiced this mode in a lesser-known account mentioned in Chapter 1, the *Historical narrative of Louisiana*. Hutchins published his work in 1784, but he had written it a decade before, while still under British rule. Although nominally about Louisiana, the *Historical narrative* looks factually and discursively thin compared to the later *Description*.

¹⁴⁷ Jefferson to Thomas Hutchins, 24 Jan. 1784, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, vi, 737. Jefferson objected: 'Will you give me leave to correct an error in your pamphlet page 13. where you say that the country extending from Fort Pitt to the Missisipi and on both sides watered by the Ohio and it's branches contains at least a million of square miles. I think the Ohio in all it's parts and branches cannot water more than the fourth of that ... I think the whole United states reduced to a square would not be more than one of 900 miles each way and of course that the whole U.S. do not contain a million of square miles.' See Hoffmann, 'Queries regarding the western rivers,' pp 15-28; and Jackson, *Jefferson and the Rocky Mountains*, p. 92.

¹⁴⁸ Hutchins to Jefferson, 11 Feb. 1784, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, vi, 535-7.

producing with less labour and expence, *Wheat, Indian Corn, Buck-wheat, Rye, Oats, Barley, Flax, Hemp, Tobacco, Rice, Silk, Pot-ash, &c.* than the country under consideration.¹⁴⁹

Here, the author's handling of the utopian idiom consists of the textual circumscribing of the territory under scrutiny ('a million square miles') in conjunction with identifiable moments of resort to exaggeration ('no part of the globe is blessed with a more healthful air ... no soil can possibly yield larger crops of red and white Clover ... than this does.')

In fact, the *Topographical description* focused more on the Ohio River and its adjoining lands (that is, the Old Northwest) than on 'Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and North Carolina,' as the title would suggest. This is perhaps the most politically revealing aspect of Hutchins's book. What it really sought to do was to *delineate* the Ohio in the interest of the physical and jurisdictional appropriation of the Old Northwest by Congress. Hutchins actually became physically involved in this task when he took part in the layout of the Seven Ranges, as part of the Public Land Survey System.¹⁵⁰

The most striking trait of the *Description* remains its compatibility with neoclassical terminology. In a description of the Kaskaskia River emptying into the Mississippi, Hutchins records: 'The high grounds ... principally composed of Lime and Free Stone ... are from 100 to 130 feet high, divided in several places by deep cavities, through which many small rivulets pass before they fall into the Mississippi. The sides of these hills, fronting this River, are in many places perpendicular, – and appear like solid pieces of Stone Masonry, of Various colours, figures and sizes.'¹⁵¹ By comparing the

¹⁴⁹ Hutchins, *Topographical description*, pp 13-14. See also Chastellux, *Travels in North-America, in the years 1780-81-82*, trans. anonymous (New York, 1782), pp 252-5; and Hoffman, 'Queries regarding the western rivers,' p. 22.

¹⁵⁰ Ronald E. Grim, *Historical geography of the United States: a guide to information sources* (Farmington Hills, 1982), p. 178; Walter W. Ristow, *American maps and mapmakers: commercial cartography in the nineteenth century* (Detroit, 1985), p. 73; and Bill Hubbard, *American boundaries: the nation, the states, the rectangular survey* (Chicago, 2009), pp 181-402 and *passim*.

¹⁵¹ Hutchins, *Topographical description*, pp 35-6. See George W. White, *Essays on history of geology* (New York,

‘perpendicular’ sides of these hills to ‘solid pieces of Stone Masonry’, Hutchins announced squareness, and a level of organic craftsmanship which portrayed the Ohio territory to the reader as land fit for technological improvement. The Ohio ‘wilderness’ was effectively turned into a neoclassical landscape infused with Hutchins’s own interpretation of the civilising mission. Twenty-five years later, Lewis would write many such entries into his depictions of chosen features of the trans-Mississippi West, the most vividly remembered of being his rhapsody about the Great Falls of the Missouri.¹⁵²

In Hutchins’s work, recourse to neoclassical terminology leads invariably to textual highlights of utopian euphoria. These idealisations can be disturbingly reminiscent of Banks’s and Cook’s references to (and Parkinson’s representations of) Tahitian landscape: ‘The Illinois country is in general of a superior soil to any other part of North America that I have seen ... every thing, that a reasonable mind can desire, is to be found, or may, with little pains, be produced here.’¹⁵³ Passages like these must now look commonplace enough in the writing of expansion-minded republican writers, yet they exude a naivety that will strike the reader as both deliberate and impenetrable. Curiously perhaps, but unsurprisingly in the end, such naivety only evaporates in the literary production of Jefferson’s contemporary *non-republican* writers. Eastern U.S. intellectuals who explicitly favoured expansionist policies and who were thus at least indirectly friendly with the terms of the Jeffersonian ‘middle way’ on that front, but who never experienced the burden of having borrowed doctrinally from Europe because they often had Federalist sympathies, may offer ground for interesting case studies.

1978), pp 8-10.

¹⁵² Seelye, *Beautiful machine*, p. 205; and Lawson-Peebles, *Landscape and written expression*, p. 199.

¹⁵³ Hutchins, *Topographical description*, pp 45-6. See Robert W. Karrow and David Buisseret, *Gardens of delight: maps and travel accounts of Illinois and the Great Lakes from the collection of Hermon Dunlap Smith* (Chicago, 1984), p. 13.

C. From the republican neoclassical aesthetic to Manifest Destiny

1. Morse's 'imperial' geography: the Old Northwest and Louisiana

Perhaps the most prominent and certainly the most pertinent of these non-republican writers was the clergyman-scholar Jedidiah Morse, now customarily called the 'father of American geography.' A stern, conservative Calvinist New Englander with strong Federalist sympathies, Morse did not celebrate Jefferson's victory in the presidential election of 1800.¹⁵⁴ Nevertheless, he shared many of the Virginian's intellectual proclivities, and he had an interest in the notion of a possibly cohesive U.S. identity after Independence. His best-selling *American geography* (1789) offered a topographical picture of his country in holistic fashion. In the book, Morse quickly acknowledged the city of Philadelphia as the preeminent 'center of calculation' in the U.S. at that time.¹⁵⁵ He did lavish praise on Jefferson the scientist, 'whose extensive and accurate information ranks him among the first authorities, in his notes on Virginia, has given a description of the river Ohio, and annexed such remarks on the situation of the western waters as will throw great light on this part of our subject ... His observations ... will afford the reader a comprehensive and pretty complete view of the internal navigation of the United States.'¹⁵⁶ Morse forwarded the *American geography* in a personal package to Jefferson in 1793. The book went through many re-editions over the following decades, and remained on the reading lists of U.S. schools and colleges until well into the nineteenth

¹⁵⁴ Richard J. Moss, *The life of Jedidiah Morse: a station of peculiar exposure* (Knoxville, 1995), p. 83; and Joseph W. Phillips, *Jedidiah Morse and New England congregationalism* (New Brunswick, 1983), p. 92.

¹⁵⁵ Morse, *American geography*, pp vi-vii. See also Zarro, 'Views of Philadelphia,' pp 29-30.

¹⁵⁶ Morse, *American geography*, p. 43. On Morse and Jefferson's respective geographical methodologies, see Joseph A. Ernst and H. Roy Merrens, 'Praxis and theory in the writing of American geography,' in *Journal of Historical Geography*, iv, no. 3 (July, 1978), p. 283; David N. Livingstone, "'Risen into empire": moral geographies of the American Republic,' in David N. Livingstone and Charles W. J. Withers (eds), *Geography and revolution* (Chicago, 2005), pp 304-35; and Michael L. Dorn, 'Volney's *Tableau*, medical geography and books on the frontier,' in Mike Ogborn and Charles W. J. Withers (eds), *Geographies of the book* (Farnham, 2010), p. 266.

century.¹⁵⁷ The image of North America which Morse proposed in the book would come to pervade the forming collective consciousness of early U.S. citizens. For that reason, the core sections of the *American Geography* ought to be set in context with the rise of Jeffersonian expansionist discourse.

The first few pages of the book reveal another of Morse's common traits with Jefferson: a thorough acquaintance with Thomas Hutchins. In his preface, Morse notes Hutchins's 'assistance' in writing the book.¹⁵⁸ At that time, the surveyor must have been busy preparing for the layout of the Seven Ranges. His name appears in other sections of the *Geography*, notably those about the Northwest Territory. In seeming contradiction with his personal convictions, Morse reported that 'It is in contemplation to divide it [the Old Northwest] into new states, with *republican* constitutions similar to the old states near the Atlantic Ocean.'¹⁵⁹ He grudgingly acknowledged the tribal information given him for the lesser-known parts of his map, while at the same time affirming that

¹⁵⁷ For Morse's letter to Jefferson that included a copy of *American geography*, see Jedidiah Morse to Jefferson, 25 June 1793, in Oberg, *Jefferson papers*, xxvi, 369. This contradicts Kastor's argument that Morse made few efforts to get his works recognised and read in influential political circles. Kastor, *William Clark's world*, p. 52. Almost thirty years later, Morse and Jefferson had a disagreement on the proper course and policy to follow for the 'civilization and improvement of Indian tribes.' Morse had asked for Jefferson's support in establishing a missionary society for the purpose, but Jefferson declined, on the grounds that 'The government is, at this time, going on with the process of civilizing the Indians on a plan probably as promising as any one of us is able to devise.' Jefferson to Morse, 6 Mar. 1822, in Ford, *Works of Jefferson*, xii, 222-5. On the influence of Morse's *American geography* on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American society, see Eric Slauter, 'The dividing line of American federalism: partitioning sovereignty in the early Republic,' in Martin Bruckner and Hsuan L. Hsu (eds), *American literary geographies: spatial practice and cultural production, 1500-1900* (Cranbury, 2007), p. 76; Moss, *Life of Jedidiah Morse*, p. 35; Michael Belok, *Forming the American minds: early school-books and their compilers, 1783-1837* (Agra, 1973), p. 144; David P. Nord, 'Benevolent books: printing, religion, and reform,' in David D. Hall, Robert A. Gross, and Mary Kelley (eds), *A history of the book in America*, ii: *An extensive republic: print, culture, and society in the new nation, 1790-1840* (2nd ed., 5 vols, Chapel Hill, 2010) pp 224-5; and John R. Short, 'A new mode of thinking: creating a national geography in the early Republic,' in Edward C. Carter (ed.), *Surveying the record: North American scientific exploration to 1930* (Philadelphia, 1999), pp 34-6.

¹⁵⁸ Morse, *American geography*, pp v-vi. Morse also cited the American explorer Jonathan Carver as a serious source, especially on the topic of the Mississippi River. See Carver, *Three years travels*, pp 54-5. Carver supported and contributed to strengthen several myths of American geography, including continental symmetry and a common source for the major rivers of the continent. His influence on Jefferson has been ascertained in a vast amount of scholarly works, too vast to be listed here. The authoritative work on the subject remains Allen, *Image of the American Northwest*.

¹⁵⁹ Morse, *American geography*, p. 35. The emphases are mine. Morse used Hutchins's data to assess the surface covered by the Northwest Territory: 'to be disposed by order of Congress, 220,000,000 of acres. The whole of this immense extent of unappropriated western territory ... has been, by the cession of some of the original thirteen states, and by the treaty of peace, transferred to the federal government, and is pledged as a fund for sinking the continental debt.' For Morse's commendation of Hutchins's 'beautiful and authentic' description on the Mississippi River, see pp 40-4.

Europe was ‘the only theatre of history from the creation of the world the year of our Lord 1492.’¹⁶⁰ Morse adopted, in short, a strategy of Indian erasure on the great textual map he conceived reminiscent of Jeffersonian discourse and its transatlantic inspirations. Morse depicted the North American continent in ‘oceanic’ terms to put in relief the organic, neo-classical harmony of its constituent parts: ‘the whole country is checkered into islands and peninsulas. The United States, and indeed all parts of North America, seem to have been formed by nature for the most intimate union.’¹⁶¹ The temptation is strong to see in this passage as a perfect caption for Clark’s ‘master map’ of the West.

In the section of his book titled (suggestively) ‘The Western Territory’, Morse moves to determine the boundaries of the Northwest Territory: ‘bounded by Pennsylvania on the east, by the Great Miami on the west, by the Ohio on the south, and extend nearly to the head waters of the Muskingum and Siooto [Scioto] on the north’. He then remarks that the Indian title is ‘extinguished’ within them.¹⁶² Much can be said for Morse’s agency in making the annexation of the Old Northwest a geographical reality for his readers. The enterprise of measurement and delineation involved in survey work, usually followed by written accounts of the progress of frontier settlement, always accompanied federal policies of expansion not only as informative addenda but as legitimating forces in discourse. This is what would later happen in Louisiana, following a nearly identical pattern. By 1803, President Jefferson was in a perfect position to give general directions for federal policies of territorial organisation in the decades to come.¹⁶³

Historians usually identify Morse’s reference to ‘the period, as not far distant, when the AMERICAN EMPIRE will comprehend millions of souls’ as the most significant

¹⁶⁰ Morse, *American geography*, pp 12, 43.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 36. See Marcus Baker, ‘A century of geography in the United States,’ in *Bulletin of the Philosophical Society of Washington*, xiii (Apr., 1898), p. 228.

¹⁶² Morse, *American geography*, p. 458.

¹⁶³ On the related notion of political ‘middle ground’, see and Hinderaker, *Elusive empires*, pp 187-270.

passage of the book. I suggest instead that it appears a little earlier, in a long paragraph which Morse had borrowed and adapted from an anonymous pamphlet:

The undistinguished terms of admiration, that are commonly used in speaking of the natural fertility of the country on the western waters of the United States, would render it difficult, without accurate attention in the surveys, to ascribe a preference to any particular part; or to give a just description of the territory under consideration, without the hazard of being suspected of exaggeration; But in this we have the united opinion of the geographer, the surveyors, and every traveller that has been intimately acquainted with the country, and marked every natural object with the most scrupulous exactness.¹⁶⁴

With remarkable intellectual alertness, Morse remarks on the use of ‘exaggerations’ in descriptions of the Ohio region, characterised by ‘undistinguished terms of admiration’ that run the risk of impinging on the accuracy of the descriptions themselves. The unnamed author from whom he plagiarises claims, however, that ‘in this we have the united opinion of the geographer, the surveyor, and every traveller that has been intimately acquainted with the country.’ In short, this author acknowledges the utopian strand in depictions of the Old Northwest, and backs it up with mention of three categories of proto-scientist (the surveyor, the geographer, and the ‘traveller’, that is, the

¹⁶⁴ Morse, *American geography*, p. 460. See also Joseph F. X. McCarthy, *Record of America: a reference history of the United States* (10 vols, New York, 1974), ix, 119. I have decided not to discuss the aforementioned reference to ‘AMERICAN EMPIRE’ at too much length, because it has already enjoyed a good degree of scholarly attention. The position of the phrase as a logical conclusion to Morse’s series of descriptions in the utopian idiom is what needs to be underlined. Morse’s desire for appropriation by the ‘sciences and the arts of civilized life’ of what he deems not civilised dominates his argument, and can be said to contain religious overtones. The dialectical relationship taking place in the *American geography* between the secular and the sacred produces a sense of veneration of God in nature compatible with the myth of ‘nature’s nation’ and with Linnean taxonomy. Morse has stepped out of the rhetoric of Jeffersonian expansionism to embrace a more self-aware and proselytising vision of empire, which foreshadows Manifest Destiny.

explorer) as the most reliable type of witnesses then available to him. Morse took this statement for granted, and inserted it verbatim in the *Geography*.¹⁶⁵

Several lessons may be drawn from this. Morse believed in the role of geographers, surveyors, and explorers in the twin processes of spatial delineation and physical appropriation of western lands. Second, he posited a direct correlation between the ‘scrupulous exactness’ of these men’s works and their utopian proclivities in discourse; third, he *himself* reiterated the vocal idealisation of the supposed unparalleled richness of Ohio land. Taken together, these three lessons emphasise the similarity of Morse’s passage with Jefferson’s shorter development on Upper Louisiana in the *Account*.¹⁶⁶ Morse’s (borrowed) vindication of the utopian idiom is ideologically motivated. It throws light on the prophetic concluding words (‘AMERICAN EMPIRE’) of his section on the Northwest Territory.¹⁶⁷ Morse’s understanding of the Jeffersonian notion of the ‘middle way’ had enough subtlety to play on the inherently expansive and exploitative bias of ‘nurturing Utopia’ thinking, whether it targeted the Old Northwest or Upper Louisiana. It is simply unusual that the deliberateness of utopian exaggerations should have been recognised in such an overt manner by a staunch Federalist.

Later in the same section, the anonymous writer calls it ‘a happy circumstance, that the Ohio Company are about to commence the settlement of this country in so regular and judicious a manner. It will serve as a wise model for the future settlement of all the federal lands ... the whole country above Miami will be brought to that degree of cultivation, which will ... justify those descriptions of travellers which have so often

¹⁶⁵ On Morse’s intellectual convergence with Hutchins on this point, see Amy DeRogatis, *Moral geography: maps, missionaries, and the American frontier* (New York, 2003), pp 29-30; and Pratt, *Imperial eyes*, pp 15-37.

¹⁶⁶ Jefferson, *Account of Louisiana*, pp 10-12. See Hayes, *Road to Monticello*, pp 487-9.

¹⁶⁷ On the concluding paragraph of the section titled ‘Western Territory,’ see n165 above.

made it the garden of the world, the seat of wealth, and the centre of a great empire.’¹⁶⁸

In fact, the Ohio country was not always associated in the literature with the ‘garden of the world’ metaphor. Sometimes this appellation aimed at Upper Louisiana.¹⁶⁹ Yet this shows, in the end, how factitious the overall discourse was and how undifferentiated the lands running for the ‘garden of the world’ prize remained as long as they had *not yet been* federally integrated by the Union. Morse’s use of the term ‘regularly’ is too close aesthetically to neoclassicism to be innocent. And since the material expression of the utopian aesthetic of the ‘garden of the world’ myth must involve territorial annexation and physical exploitation, there is little surprise in finding Morse, at the close of the paragraph, envisioning Ohio’s future second-hand as ‘the centre of a great empire.’

2. Cole’s depictions of republican empire: the end of the need for legitimation?

Imperial in its ultimate worldview, the visual legacy of the Jeffersonian variation on neoclassical aesthetics resonated in all its contradictions in the painter Thomas Cole’s tortured questioning of it. Only twenty-five years old when Jefferson died, the founder of the Hudson River School of landscape painting is rarely, if ever, associated with Jeffersonian thought.¹⁷⁰ Yet Cole spotlighted the excesses and silences of early U.S. expansionist rhetoric by going, as it were, full circle in the five stages of his *Course of*

¹⁶⁸ Morse, *American geography*, pp 462-3. See also Seelye, *Beautiful machine*, p. 82; McCarthy, *Record of America*, ix, 119; and Dorothy A. Dondore, *The prairie and the making of Middle America: four centuries of description* (2nd ed., New York, 1961), p. 136.

¹⁶⁹ Leo Marx’s *Machine in the garden* and Henry Nash Smith’s *Virgin land: the American West as symbol and myth* (Cambridge, MA, 1950) provide numerous examples of the sometimes flexible contrasts in early American descriptions of Ohio’s and Louisiana’s respective environmental wealth. See also Andrew R. L. Cayton, ‘The significance of Ohio in the early American Republic,’ in idem (ed.), *The center of a great empire: the Ohio country in the early Republic* (Athens, OH, 2005), pp 1-2; Emily Foster (ed.), *The Ohio frontier: an anthology of early writings* (Lexington, 1996), p. 154; and Hurt, *Ohio frontier*, p. 178.

¹⁷⁰ This applies to most of the literature on either Jefferson or Cole, who are considered part of two distinctive epochs in American history. For a noteworthy exception, see Thomas M. Allen, *A republic in time*, pp 17-58.

empire (1833-6).¹⁷¹ The series can be viewed as Cole taking up the task of displaying what Peale had concealed in his own paintings: ‘Consummation’, ‘Destruction’, ‘and ‘Desolation’ as the inevitable follow-up stages to ‘The Savage State’ and ‘The Pastoral or Arcadian State’. The ‘Arcadian’ stage represented that initial moment of utopian peace resulting from the circumscription of the ‘wilderness.’ This explains why Cole’s paintings moved away from the topographic view that Peale had embraced, and which dominated the texts and maps of Hutchins, Ellicott, Morse, Jefferson, and others. The topographic view that influenced Peale’s method of landscape painting (and of which Peale said to his son Rembrandt that he had acquired ‘considerable knowledge’) was the ultimate form of landscape abstraction, fitting the practical needs of settlers, surveyors, and speculators at the expense of tribal settlements and Native Americans’ more narrative- and tradition-based cartographic practice.¹⁷²

This process of ‘epistemological superseding,’ so to speak, was grasped by Cole, but he (like most of the Romantics of the Hudson River School) opted for a fatalistic rather than a critical stance on the matter. As a result, he failed to pose a challenge to official ideology through his art.¹⁷³ Cole’s position, backward-looking though it was, retained strong elements of the neoclassical aesthetic, which are quite conspicuous in his

¹⁷¹ On the *Course of empire* paintings, see especially Miller, *Empire of the eye*, p. 138; Laurence Goldstein, *Ruins and empire: the evolution of a theme in Augustan and Romantic literature* (Pittsburgh, 1977), pp 208-32; Howard S. Merritt, ‘A wild scene: genesis of a painting,’ in Gertrude Rosenthal, Howard S. Merritt, William H. Gerdts, Jr., and Kay Silberfeld (eds), *Studies on Thomas Cole: an American romanticist* (Baltimore, 1967), pp 7-102; Alan Wallach, ‘Cole, Byron, and the course of empire,’ in *Art Bulletin*, 1, no. 4 (Dec., 1968), pp 375-9; idem, ‘Thomas Cole: landscape and the course of American empire,’ in William H. Truettner and Alan Wallach (eds), *Thomas Cole: landscape into history* (New Haven, 1994), pp 23-112; Roberta G. Katz, ‘The literary paintings of Thomas Cole: image and text’ (Ph.D. thesis, University of Illinois, Chicago, 2009), pp 1-47; and Ellwood C. Parry, *The art of Thomas Cole: ambition and imagination* (Newark, DE, 1988).

¹⁷² Peale to Rembrandt Peale, 27 Dec. 1816, in Miller *et al.*, *Selected papers*, iii, 465. See Gilman, *Across the divide*, pp 140, 151. On Cole’s conscious departure from the topographic view, see Julia B. Rosenbaum, *Visions of belonging: New England art and the making of American identity* (Ithaca, 2006), pp 79-80.

¹⁷³ John R. Stilgoe, Ellwood Parry, Frances F. Dunwell, and Christine T. Robinson (eds), *Thomas Cole: drawn to nature* (Albany, 1993), p. 15; Charles Harrison, Paul Wood, and Jason Gaiger (eds), *Art in theory, 1815-1900: an anthology of changing ideas* (Oxford, 1998), p. 190; and David Bjelajac, *American art: a cultural history* (2nd ed., Upper Saddle River, 2005), p. 211.



Thomas Cole, *The course of empire: the Arcadian or pastoral state*, 1834

‘Essay on American scenery’ (1836) and in several fragments from his private journal. Cole openly admired Claude Lorrain and called him ‘the greatest of landscape painters.’¹⁷⁴ He also opined that the ‘painter of American scenery has, indeed, privileges superior to any other. All nature here is new to art ... primeval forests, virgin lakes and waterfalls, feasting his eye with new delights, and filling his portfolio with new features of beauty and magnificence, hallowed to his soul by their freshness from the creation, for his own favoured pencil.’¹⁷⁵ Native tribal art had existed long before the arrival of Europeans on the North American continent, but it escaped Cole’s still Eurocentric perspective. Cole considered Indian art productions merely as artefacts to be shown in

¹⁷⁴ Louis L. Noble, *The life and works of Thomas Cole* (New York, 1856), p. 171. In the ‘Essay,’ Cole wrote landscape descriptions infused with neoclassical rhetoric, making reference to ‘temple, and tower, and dome, in every variety of picturesqueness and magnificence.’ Cole, ‘Essay on American scenery,’ pp 7-9. See also John K. Howat, *American Paradise: the world of the Hudson River School* (New York, 1987), p. 27; and Joseph D. Ketner and Michael J. Tammenga, *The beautiful, the sublime, and the picturesque: British influences on American landscape painting* (St Louis, MO, 1984), p. 29.

¹⁷⁵ Noble, *Life and works of Cole*, pp 202-03. See Arne Neset, *Arcadian waters*, p. 23; and Charles L. Sanford, *The quest for Paradise: Europe and the American moral imagination* (Chicago, 1961), p. 139.

public places like Peale's Museum in Philadelphia, or at private venues like Jefferson's 'Indian Hall'.

By displaying tribal art in eastern museums or other like repositories without openly acknowledging it as 'art', museum directors were following a political agenda that denied Native authors their authorship, transferring it instead to themselves as the authorities who housed the works and played the role of effective collectors of products of the North American past. Cole fully complied with this other feature of the 'silencing' process, as he revealed in a letter to his parents.¹⁷⁶ He liked to talk about 'filling his portfolio' like Jefferson had talked about 'filling the gaps' of the imagined map of the West. And in the *Arcadian or pastoral state* painting shown above as in the other *Course of empire* paintings, it is important to point out that Cole did not ever display American aboriginal architecture, boats, or figures, but instead allegorical-republican images of them: (white) people in togas, arches, pillars, etc. The fact that he criticised the excesses of what he conceived as an inherently destructive republican imperialism did not change the blunt fact of his visual silencing of Amerindians on North American soil. By the same logic, allegorical figures, precisely because they were allegorical, could be appropriated as their own by non-Indian U.S. citizens. The blend of Cole's fatalism and prejudices contributed indirectly to create (by his failure at ideological opposition) the intellectual conditions for a self-aware and self-confidently expansive

¹⁷⁶ Thomas Cole to his parents, 4 Mar. 1832, in Noble, *Life and works of Cole*, pp 156-7. Cole also 'natural historicised' Native Americans in the 'Essay,' when he talked about 'savage beasts, and scarcely less savage men.' On this, see Rochelle Johnson, *Passions for nature: nineteenth-century America's aesthetics of alienation* (Athens, GA, 2009), p. 77; and Michael P. Branch (ed.), *Reading the roots: American nature writing before Walden* (Athens, GA, and London, 2004), p. 296. In a following paragraph Cole resorts to a terminology reminiscent of Linnaeus: 'the consequent associations are of God the creator ... they are his undefiled works.' Cole, 'Essay on American scenery,' pp 2-5. See Robert Mugerauer, *Interpreting environments: tradition, deconstruction, hermeneutics* (Austin, 1995), pp 65-6; Patrick V. McGreevy, *Stairway to empire: Lockport, the Erie Canal, and the shaping of America* (New York, 2009), p. 212; Albert F. Moritz, *America the picturesque in nineteenth-century engraving* (New York, 1983), p. 24; Rosenbaum, *Visions of belonging*, pp 81-2; and Novak, *Nature and culture*, p. 5.

U.S. identity, no more in need of territorial legitimation but rather of the type of prophetic mythification that Manifest Destiny came to incarnate.¹⁷⁷

Cole's brand of romanticism represented more a transition from U.S. neoclassicism than a total break from it. None other than James Fenimore Cooper captured the essence of this transitory phase in a commentary on Cole's *Course of empire* series. His thoughts on the second painting, *The Arcadian or pastoral state*, seem especially à propos:

... we look in upon the empire in its youth. In the lapse of years, we are carried forward to the period when the supremacy, at first asserted, becomes a living vigorous reality. Hopes now begin to be realized, promises made good, prophecies fulfilled. The aboriginal canoe and hut are exchanged for the busy village by the water-side, and the bolder craft that can wing the seas. The savage is transformed into civilized man, rising from grosser superstitions into higher forms of natural religion, progressing in science and the arts, abandoning the chase for the sober toils of agriculture, and forgetting scenes of barbarous mirth in the gentler pastimes of the peasant. Time has tamed and tempered man, man has tempered and softened the wilderness.... The landscape, now seen from a point of view different from that first occupied by the beholder, has a milder aspect.¹⁷⁸

Cooper's commentary includes a celebration of pastoralism; sprawling 'middle way' rhetoric; a physiocratic interpretation of agriculture as the primary and vital economic activity of a country; references to landscape as a vessel of ideology throughout history; a comment on aboriginal people 'transformed' into civilised people, implying an organic transition in identity rather than a stark, exogenously imposed takeover; and a remark

¹⁷⁷ On this ironic historical outcome, see Mark Pimlott, *Without and within: essays on territory and the interior* (Amsterdam, 2007), pp 60-110; Fresonke, *West of Emerson*, p. 132; Kevin E. O'Donnell and Helen Hollingsworth (eds), *Seekers of scenery: travel writing from southern Appalachia, 1840-1900* (Knoxville, 2004), pp 12-14; Matthew Baigell, *Thomas Cole* (New York, 1981), p. 64; and Stilgoe *et al.*, *Drawn to nature*, p. 35.

¹⁷⁸ James Fenimore Cooper, 'Remarks on the *Course of empire*,' in Noble, *Life and works of Cole*, p. 231.

about ‘prophecies fulfilled’ that foreshadows Manifest Destiny teleology. Limiting himself solely to an interpretation of Cole’s work, Cooper is able here to sum up the transition from the neoclassical to the romanticised aesthetic of U.S. imperialism.¹⁷⁹

3. Humboldt’s *Vue des Cordillères*: the transition to the romantic trope

The coming to an end of the need for imperial self-legitimation, which Cole vividly captured in his paintings and career, signified the end of the Jeffersonian expansionist discourse itself. At the same time, though, it safeguarded its legacy. More than anything else, it encapsulated the unique course of the American imperial mindset from the time of independence. This becomes clear when we consider the nineteenth-century path of Jefferson’s fellow scientist-polymath, Alexander von Humboldt. The latter carried his integrative and organic method well into the nineteenth century, but outside the United States.¹⁸⁰ Humboldt and Jefferson continued corresponding until Jefferson’s death. They praised each other’s works throughout the years. Perhaps Jefferson’s admiration for Humboldt came partly from the fact that the Prussian’s writings on South America had retained that idiom of ‘wilderness’ description so familiar to him, and which were beginning to vanish from the records of the exuberantly expansionist U.S. era of 1820 to 1850.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ On the relationship between Cole and Cooper, see Elwood C. Parry, ‘Cooper, Cole, and the last of the Mohicans,’ in Susan Scott (ed.), *Art and the Native American: perceptions, reality and influences* (University Park, 2001), pp 146-95; Christopher Johnson, *This grand and magnificent place: the wilderness heritage of the White Mountains* (Lebanon, NH, 2006), pp 80-2; Charles H. Adams, ‘Uniformity and progress: the natural history of the crater,’ in W. M. Verhoeven (ed.), *James Fenimore Cooper, new historical and literary contexts* (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA, 1993), pp 207-08; and Rosenthal *et al.*, *Studies on Thomas Cole*, p. 118.

¹⁸⁰ As mentioned in Chapter 3, Humboldt only visited the United States once, from early May to late June 1804.

¹⁸¹ Jefferson to Humboldt, 6 Mar. 1809, in Looney, *Jefferson papers: retirement series*, i, 24; Humboldt to Jefferson, 20 Dec. 1811, in *ibid.*, iv, 352-3; Jefferson to Humboldt, 6 Dec. 1813, in *ibid.*, vii, 30-1; Jefferson to Humboldt, 13 June 1817, in Ford, *Works of Jefferson*, xii, 69-70. See Betts, *Jefferson’s Garden Book*, pp 572-3; Ingo Schwarz, *Alexander von Humboldt und die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika* (Berlin, 2004), pp 145-6; Joe R. Feagin, *The white racial frame: centuries of racial framing and counter-framing* (New York, 2010), p. 64; Drinnon, *Facing West*; Lerner, *The thinking revolutionary*, p. 169; and Bedini, *Stateman of science*, p. 426.



Plate II: 'Ponts naturels d'Icononzo' (Humboldt, *Vues des Cordillères*)

Legitimation remained a reality to be reckoned with in Humboldt's discourse. That this was the case appears starkly in the *Vue des Cordillères et monumens des peuples indigènes de l'Amérique*, which he published in two volumes in 1816. In assessing Buffon's legacy as a naturalist and recounting his many errors, Humboldt resorts to plant metaphors, his own brand of 'natural historicising' and 'environmentalising'.¹⁸² Later, he presents a view of the bridge of Icononzo, in Colombia, with explicit mention of that 'excellent naturalist' Jefferson's description of the Natural Bridge of Virginia.¹⁸³

¹⁸² See, for example, Humboldt's statement that 'Characteristic features of nations are like that of the internal structure of the plants spread all over the surface of the globe. Everywhere the imprint of a primitive type manifests itself, in spite of the differences produced by the nature of climates.' Humboldt, *Vue des Cordillères*, i, 8. For a refutation of Buffon's theory of American degeneracy, see *ibid.*, i, pp 28-9. See also Sachs, *Humboldt Current*, p. 68.

¹⁸³ Humboldt, *Vue des Cordillères*, i, 69-70. Humboldt also refers to the Lewis and Clark Expedition in *Aspects of nature*, pp 50, 167-6. Jefferson had read the work. Jefferson to Humboldt, 11 Apr. 1814, in Looney, *Jefferson papers*:

The Natural Bridge is truly a fascinating environmental object of study if viewed from the vantage point of the convergence of neoclassical and romantic aesthetics in nineteenth-century North America. It comes across as a near flawless incarnation of the ‘middle way’, natural yet artful. Even its name, ‘natural bridge’, is oxymoronic and captures the fruitful blending of the ideals of ‘wilderness’ and ‘civilisation’. No wonder that Jefferson made it so central to his *Notes on Virginia* and that Humboldt took it up in the *Vue des Cordillères*. No wonder either that Frederick Church chose it as a subject for painting as late as 1852, he who had once enjoyed Thomas Cole’s artistic guardianship and who had never made a secret of Humboldt’s influence on his work.¹⁸⁴

The *Vue des Cordillère* is a virtuosic work, in which Humboldt compellingly argues for the importance of the visual representation of *both* Native American monuments (that is, tribal art) and the specific environments where their creators lived:

In presenting in the same work the rough monuments of the indigenous peoples of America and the picturesque views of the mountainous country these peoples have inhabited, I think I have gathered all the objects whose connections have not escaped the sagacity of those versed in the philosophical study of the human mind. Although the mores of nations, the development of their intellectual faculties, the peculiar character emerging from their works, depend on a great number of causes that are not all purely local, one could not doubt that climate, the configuration of the soil, the physiognomy of plants

retirement series, iii, 554. See Laura D. Walls, *Passage to cosmos*, pp 123-4; and John F. Crossen, ‘Francisco Javier Clavijero and the founding of the literary West,’ in Benson Tong and Regan A. Lutz (eds), *The human tradition in the American West* (Wilmington, 2002), pp 9-10.

¹⁸⁴ Frank Baron, ‘From Alexander von Humboldt to Frederic Edwin Church: voyages of scientific exploration and creativity,’ in *International Review for Humboldtian Studies*, vi, no. 10 (2005), pp 2-15; Gerald M. Ackerman, *Les orientalistes de l’école américaine* (Courbevoie, 1994), p. 60; Stephen J. Gould, ‘Church, Humboldt, and Darwin: the tension and harmony of art and science,’ in William H. Beezley and Linda A. Curcio (eds), *Latin American popular culture: an introduction* (Lanham, 2000), pp 27-42; and Elaine E. Dee, *To embrace the universe: the drawings of Frederic Edwin Church* (Yonkers, 1984), pp 10-11.

... impact on the progress of arts and on the style which distinguishes their production. This impact is all the more felt when man is distant from civilization.¹⁸⁵

Humboldt's recourse to depiction in plates blurs the boundaries between art and nature in the life of American Indians. This blurring is contrasted, in turn, with the much clearer cultural line followed by more 'advanced' civilisations. This sense of contrast fit rather well within the discourse of Jeffersonian expansionism, but by 1816 few intellectuals in the United States (if any) were still following that path. Despite himself, Humboldt proposed a conceptual extension of Jeffersonian discourse both spatially and temporally outside the United States. Not only did his work confirm the European ideological origins of U.S. expansionist doctrine: it retraced the direction U.S. doctrine had adopted for the last fifty years of American independence, first in espousing the rational and aesthetically neoclassical notion of the 'middle way', and then by its mutation into the ebullient and aesthetically romantic doctrine of Manifest Destiny.¹⁸⁶

The Jeffersonian architecture of the 'West' manifested itself at several interconnected levels. Representation involved catching the eye, of course, but towards this purpose a burgeoning network of 'centers of calculation' was needed to give life to a specific vision according to a specific set of ideological principles, and then to spread it to all levels of U.S. society from the highest political spheres of decision-making to the life of the everyday citizen. The representational organ of the Jeffersonian 'center of calculation' structure was embodied respectively in the Philadelphian museum and botanic garden.

¹⁸⁵ Humboldt, *Vue des Cordillères*, ii 48-9. See Pratt, *Imperial eyes*, pp 130-2.

¹⁸⁶ Fresonke, *West of Emerson*, pp 79-80; Walls, *Passage to cosmos*, p. 121; Sachs, *Humboldt Current*, pp 187-8; Bruckner & Hsu, *American literary geographies*, p. 127; Laura D. Walls, *Seeing new worlds: Henry David Thoreau and nineteenth-century natural science* (Madison, 1995), p. 105; and Denis E. Cosgrove, *Apollo's eye: a cartographic genealogy of the Earth in the Western imagination* (Baltimore, 2001), pp 211-15.

Peale's Museum typified this construction in its faltering steps. It was located in the city that housed Hamilton's and McMachon's experimental gardens and the A.P.S. Through Jefferson's agency, Peale obtained western specimens and artefacts for display at the Museum. His own correspondence with numerous high-standing intellectuals across the ocean helped him contribute to the rise in status of Philadelphia as *the* U.S. cultural and scientific city in the late Enlightenment period of the Republic of Science. The museum and the botanic garden, on a European model adapted by Jefferson to facilitate the U.S. embrace of 'middle way' pastoral discourse, served in a process of 'indigenation' of products of the trans-Mississippi West brought back by the Corps of Discovery, which simultaneously subdued Native American presence (intellectually, geographically and physically) and turned Euro-American agency into 'neo-native' agency.

This realm of representation included concrete visual products, like paintings and maps, which appeared in museums for popular display. Peale counted among the first practitioners of landscape painting in North America (a telling fact) and in his *Belfield* canvases it quickly appeared that he had incorporated a neoclassical vocabulary suited to the republican discourse of Jeffersonian expansionism. By imposing domes, statues, and finally fences on the native landscape, Peale remodelled that landscape by making Jefferson's peculiar interpretation of a yeoman republic *visible*. William Clark worked on maps, which allowed him the means of a spatialised continental vision. Where Peale had supplied the physical elements of the fledgling U.S. republican landscape, Clark granted these elements the illusion of continental spread and harmony by applying the neoclassical aesthetic to the field of cartography.

While the example of Sydney Parkinson's drawings on the *Endeavour* and Humboldt's own trials and tribulations in the Andes thirty years later had constituted

models for the visual discursive outlet of Jeffersonian expansionism, the rise of the Hudson River School in the 1820s signalled and transcribed pictorially the closing days of Jeffersonian expansionism's doctrinal agency. The artistic production of Thomas Cole displayed conspicuous qualms about the expansion of the U.S. frontier, rolling as it seemed to do over an idealised pristine 'wilderness' he already felt nostalgic about. But Cole was unable to challenge explicitly the federal government's policies, either as a political activist or through his art. Similar to what would happen in the 'vanishing Indian' debate, it became commonplace to mourn the gradual disappearance of the 'wilderness' and the large-scale technological reshaping of the North American environment without actually doing much against it.¹⁸⁷ Parallel to the 'vanishing Indian' myth, then, there emerged a myth of the 'vanishing wilderness'. This myth had origins in Jeffersonian expansionist discourse, particularly in its remnants of the neoclassical aesthetic. But it assumed a novel form as a result of the extinction of its own need for legitimisation. In response to the societal nostalgia voiced about the political shackling of American Indian tribes and the systematisation of nature study came not further legitimisation (mere nostalgia did not require it) but nostalgia's polar opposite: celebration, exuberance, and the prophetic seeds of 'Manifest Destiny'.

¹⁸⁷ On 'vanishing Indian' discourse, see Sheehan, *Seeds of extinction*, pp 119-275; Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians*, pp 75-107; Pearce, *Savagism and civilization*, pp 105-236; and Berkhofer, *The white man's Indian*, pp 113-94.

Conclusion: contexts, problems, and openings

This study has considered five aspects or ‘contexts’ of Jeffersonian expansionist ideology, which may be ascribed to the following categories: geopolitics, diplomacy and exploration, science, literature and travel writing, and art. The boundaries between these categories are porous at best. In most instances they allow for a significant amount of thematic blending. In a sense, the fact that Jeffersonian expansionism can be tackled from such varied and interconnected angles (and I do claim to have covered all possible angles) confirms its nature as a former potent ideology.

In the course of my study I hope to have shown, both directly and indirectly, that even to begin to encompass what Jeffersonian expansionism represented as a more or less coherent system of ideas and practices regarding the past, present and future of the early American nation and its relationship to the ‘continent’, one needs to look beyond, indeed sometimes far beyond North American borders. Any work on Jeffersonian expansion is bound to adopt a transnational perspective, regardless of what the explicit aspirations of its author might be at the start. We could even go further and suggest that doing full justice to Jeffersonian expansionism (and to its broader relevance to American history) must partly depend upon the historians’ ability and willingness to circumscribe and analyse it as an event of world history. This is what has been attempted in this thesis.

But to understand why Jeffersonian expansionism *has not* yet been assessed in world historical terms is an interesting research question in itself, and one towards which I propose to clear a path here. This conclusion does not intend merely to recapitulate the themes addressed in the five chapters. Rather, I look back at these themes in organic

fashion with the purpose of clearing this (potentially) new research path. This is done by dividing the conclusion into two main sections. The first section considers the nature of Jeffersonian expansionism as an ideology and seeks to locate where its idiosyncrasy lies historically – in its circular structure, I would argue, and in the personality and agency of its main architect. As a prominent intellectual figure and a vastly influential politician, Jefferson worked better as a definer of discourse than as an enforcer of the *products* of discourse (that is, actions such as the physical extension of the frontier through settlement or even, prior to this, its politico-diplomatic expansion with the Purchase). Even in the case of the Louisiana Purchase, Jefferson did not actually make it happen the way it did (with the acquisition from France of the entire territory) but, through discourse, he created a continental context which facilitated its happening that way by the agency of his two envoys, James Monroe and Robert Livingston.

All of the significant facts of (or contributing to) westward territorial advance that took place with Jefferson in a prominent political position, from the period of the three 1780s Ordinances to the end of his presidency, can be scrutinised through the lens of discursive analysis. Perhaps this interpretation of Jefferson's 'architectural' agency in westward expansion refers to the Hegelian concept of the Spirit of an age. Jefferson would then embody the Spirit of early United States expansionism from the 1780s to his death in the 1820s, when a new period began with Jacksonian democracy and the novel form of rhetoric that came with it. I return to this idea below.

The 1820s were also the recognisable doctrinal starting point of the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny, as I argue in the conclusion's second section. In a sense, Manifest Destiny was only the formulated and thoroughly embraced actuation of continental legitimisation as formerly pursued by Jeffersonian expansionism. The Jeffersonian

ideology of expansion and the principle of ‘nurturing Utopia’ were conceptualised before they turned official; Manifest Destiny represented exactly the reverse. It was official policy investing the trans-Mississippi West with a mythology imagined previously by thinkers of Jeffersonian sympathies. In addition, it contained religious overtones which cannot be seriously be posited to appear in the Jeffersonians’ self-consciously secular discourse. But in a sense, the sacrality of the United States’ continental destiny which was celebrated in the idiom of Manifest Destiny echoed the U.S. sanctification of the ‘ideologised’ scientific discourse of rationalisation found in Euro-American Enlightenment thought, and which Jefferson had first borrowed from figures like Linnaeus and Franklin.

In Enlightened thought, the so-called ‘discourse of science’ carried a type of faith in scientific activity’s power of rationalisation, measurement, delineation and spatialisation (the pillars of the principle of ‘nurturing Utopia’). But this faith also existed as a reaction to something, from a defensive position – and this something was the need for territorial legitimation facing all Euro-American imperial ventures in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, obliged as they had become to make sense of the dualism between the categories of ‘enlightenment’ and ‘wilderness’ tropes. I have discussed these notions earlier. But Manifest Destiny’s growth *out of* the legitimising element in scientific discourse meant that legitimation was not its purpose anymore at any level. Therefore, belief in U.S. ‘continentality’ could show itself as it really was – a belief, a faith, at best a teleological system, but not actually an outcome of genuine scientific reasoning. In the last part of the conclusion, I suggest that the discursive continuities between Jeffersonian expansionism and Manifest Destiny (which exist and are crucial) can only be properly addressed in a critical work that incorporates

environmental history as a method of scholarly investigation. A form of environmental history theoretically informed by an ecocritical lens may continue the process of uncovering how the transfer from ‘nurturing Utopia’ legitimation to ‘investing Utopia’ Manifest Destiny took place in the third decade of the nineteenth century.

To attempt to delineate the idiosyncrasy of Jeffersonian expansionism means to attempt highlighting its deep structure as a discourse. In a sense the previous five chapters have sought to do just that. But what perhaps has not come across yet is how all the aspects of the Jeffersonian ideology of expansion studied in these chapters present a *circular* pattern. The circularity of Jeffersonian expansionist rhetoric is an absolutely essential feature to its goals of attaining territorial self-legitimation and (by extension) of opening up a new discursive space for fledgling mythological constructs like Manifest Destiny. How is their circularity articulated? By invoking the ‘center of calculation’ principle in a non-oceanic zone. All that was promulgated by eastern centers like the A.P.S. came ultimately back to the East. Being envisaged as Utopia in Jeffersonian discourse, the trans-Mississippi West only existed (according to that discourse) in a state of organic dependency on the East (more precisely eastern scientific minds) that had given it life. Organs of the Republic of Science like Peale’s Museum and the A.P.S. contributed to materialise this sense of symbiotic connection between East and West. Still according to the same circular pattern, the geographical reality of the ‘West’ as a territorial extension of the East justified the notion of *recovery* in the idea of ‘extension’; simultaneously it de-historicised the diplomatic feat of the Louisiana Purchase by making everything that occurred before the Treaty look irrelevant, because not conforming to the ideal of symbiotic organicity between American ‘East’ and American ‘West’.

In other words, from the viewpoint of Jeffersonian discourse the West ‘as West’ did not really exist before the Purchase. However, once secured by the Purchase it became almost mechanically a vital (indeed the main) hinge of Jeffersonian continental teleology, born as an intellectual reaction to the realisation of the post-Independence Republic’s lack of a cohesive continental politico-cultural identity – entailing risks of secession, etc. It is possible to argue that the structural idiosyncrasy of Jeffersonian expansionism, which is its historico-geographical circularity, is precisely what makes it a difficult object of study for historians. The element of contextualisation in the historiographical method must face the challenge posed by Jeffersonian expansionism’s de-historicising of the trans-Mississippi West before the Purchase came in its official expression. It must also face the de-historicising of Native American populations by the interconnected idiomatic strategies I have explored in the previous chapters (‘natural historicising’, ‘environmentalising’, the voidance effect, the utopian idiom, etc.) and the concomitant appropriation of reified and idealised ‘native’ traits by these strategies. In that perspective, it needs to be recalled that Jefferson did *not* enforce official policies of Indian removal like Jackson would later do. Simply, as always, he created a context by which such policies (if enforced) would not come across as either a logical or an ethical shock to U.S. societal values.

After all, Jefferson did envision Upper Louisiana as a short-term territorial solution for housing those eastern Indian tribes that posed legal, political, cultural and sometimes economic difficulties to Congress and the federal government. This is well-known. But Jeffersonian expansionism’s reifying of ‘Indian’ traits went much further than this. The process of reification was circular in a way that reflected the circular pattern of its fathering ideology. It was concerned not only with the legitimation of U.S.

territorial expropriation of tribal lands but with the thickening of a cohesive white American identity via the rhetorical mode of the ‘middle way’, which entailed the construction of a new interpretation of U.S. citizenship as ‘neo-native’ of the North American continent. The concealment of the basic artificiality of this construction was made possible by the concomitant de-historicising of the pre-Purchase West – which is also why ‘middle way’ discourse was so entirely dependent on a context of exploration and scientific investigation of the Upper Missouri region. That region was the only genuine Utopia of Jefferson’s discourse, not because it was actually empty and its environment bounded and bounteous but because it was distant enough and little-known enough *while* contiguous to the East to allow a considerable degree of manipulation of abstractions in order to make it a teleological parameter of U.S. history and geography.

Within that parameter, idealised western tribes could play the role of perfect foils to the construction of a new sense of U.S. identity. They remained, as it were, *hidden* at the very center of the circle of Jeffersonian discourse. The discourse could not ‘turn’ without them, but in the very process of turning the central Indian presence was hidden by the motion occasioned. This schema perhaps summarises best the phenomenon of ‘silencing’ of native tribes which I have tackled in some of the essays. It shows how necessary American Indians were to Jeffersonian expansionist logic and at the same time how unnecessary they would become to the doctrine of Manifest Destiny, when they would be pushed out of the circle because, indeed, there would no longer be a circle. Manifest Destiny looked unflinchingly westward in a way that Jeffersonian expansionism could never pretend to do. It possessed the confidence of territorial legitimacy, which its discursive predecessor did not have but had ascribed to its own legacy by virtue of the evolution of its discourse alongside the concrete facts of improved

western investigation – Stephen Long, the Wilkes Expedition, the Polk presidency, etc.

The ambivalence of Jefferson's attitude towards Native Americans, which has never been confidently explained away by historians, can be envisaged as an integral and logical trait of the 'middle way' discourse he helped refine from the 1780s to the 1810s. This would mean that there was more deliberateness than the reverse in Jefferson's behaviour, a claim not actually that daring in view of the evidence available to depict him as one of the most meticulous politician-scientists in American history. Who ever left less to chance than he? Peale, perhaps, or Gallatin, but they were Jefferson's intellectual and political disciples. In the end the 'center of calculation' model first enunciated by Bruno Latour turns out to offer vast new interpretive possibilities for scholars of the period and specialists of early American expansionist doctrine. But this model's historical grounding does not mitigate its nature as a sociological model, which risks causing qualms to historians about its possibly reductionist bias.

The threat of historical reductionism is a real one and needs to be addressed. It is intimately related to the question of how aware Jefferson was of 'all this': it would make no sense, for instance, to imagine that he planned the minutest details of westward expansion in the years 1790-1810 from an elevated eastern throne of presidential super-knowledge, foresight and computation. He did not. Jefferson worked best as an architect and moderator of discourse. Like the 'center of calculation' principle that constituted a big part of it, this discourse had to somehow ground itself in a number of scientific and political institutions, but those need not be omnipresent in practice. The A.P.S., Peale's Museum, 'Indian Hall', St Louis, Fort Clatsop, Clark's later office of Missouri governor, and other such official and semi-official organs did not dictate the course of early U.S. history. They had a role, though, in crystallising Jeffersonian expansionist

discourse and its core principle of ‘nurturing Utopia’, which led to concrete territorial outcomes and represented an important *aspect* of early American history. Jefferson comes across as close to a governing figure of this aspect not because he had planned everything in advance in a large-scale Machiavellian fashion but because he had taken the biggest part in creating the discursive context for this ‘aspect’ to emerge.

Therefore, everything that constituted a ramification of this historical aspect (be it political, legal, economic, administrative, diplomatic, cultural, or even intellectual) led ultimately back to Jefferson not as schemer but as father figure. He was the figure who best embodied the ‘Spirit’ of his age, if this ‘Spirit’ is considered as the entirety of the circular structure of late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century U.S. expansionist doctrine under all the rubrics scrutinised in the five chapters of this study. Maybe at this point it is useful to cite from Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s *Philosophy of history*:

Spirit is essentially the result of its own activity; its activity is the transcending of immediate, simple, unreflected existence – the negation of that existence, and the returning into itself. We may compare it with the seed; for with this the plant begins, yet it is also the result of the plant’s entire life. But the weak side of life is exhibited in the fact that the commencement and the result are disjoined from each other. Thus also is it in the life of individuals and peoples. The life of a people ripens a certain fruit; its activity aims at the complete manifestation of the principle which it embodies. But this fruit does not fall back into the bosom of the people that produced and matured it; on the contrary, it becomes a poison-draught to it. That poison-draught it cannot let alone, for it has an insatiable thirst for it: the taste of the draught is its annihilation, though at the same time the rise of a new principle ... The principles of the successive phases of Spirit that animate the Nations in a necessitated gradation, are themselves only steps in the development of the one universal Spirit, which through them elevates and completes itself to a self-comprehending *totality*.¹

¹ Georg W. F. Hegel, *The philosophy of history*, trans. J. B. Sibree (New York, 1956), p, 78.

At some point in the early nineteenth century (logically enough, around the time of Jefferson's death) Jeffersonian expansionism can be said to have mutated and solidified into a myth which, in Hegelian terms, it had contained in its bosom as a 'seed' from the beginning. This seed, once materialised, was what the fruit of Manifest Destiny doctrine would emerge from. My purpose here is not to discuss Manifest Destiny itself but the transition between the two ideologies. When John L. O'Sullivan coined the phrase in 1839, he had long been an advocate of Jacksonian democracy and its views on United States territorial aggrandisement. What O'Sullivan did was only to objectify an ideology born one or two decades earlier, although its birth cannot realistically be separated from the longer and more gradual process of its emergence out of the discourse of Jeffersonian expansionism. In the second section of this conclusion, I propose to return to the legacy of Jeffersonian expansionism in the form of the doctrine of Manifest Destiny, to assess the measure of the morphing from one to the next (including this morphing's most conspicuous variations) and to suggest new ways of looking at this process of historico-discursive transition critically, in particular by making use of the lenses of environmental history and ecocriticism.²

Manifest Destiny differed from Jeffersonian expansionism in two major respects: its theological dimension and its simultaneous embrace of democracy, stipulated from the highest circles of the federal government (Jackson). The official texture of this democratic trait was clearly new. It saw itself as popularly sanctioned much more than Jeffersonian expansionism ever did, despite the fact that Jefferson had incorporated a democratic element in his discourse, too (the ideal of the continental yeoman republic,

² For the founding work of U.S. ecocritical thinking, see Lawrence Buell, *The environmental imagination*.

the popular outreach of Peale's Museum's displays, etc.) Still, Jefferson's concept of expansion remained more elitist. This cannot be denied. I believe a parallel can be made between Manifest Destiny's denser popular stretch and the fact of the religious element in its rhetoric; similarly, Jeffersonian expansionism's reliance on scientific discourse may explain its seeming elitism. Therefore, if it can be proven or at least coherently suggested that the religious element in Manifest Destiny rhetoric consists of a reversed mutation of the scientific element in Jeffersonian rhetoric, then the intellectual parenthood between the two can also be established and with it the mechanico-conceptual reasons between the transition from the scientific to the religious as the dominant rhetorical trope in nineteenth-century U.S. expansionist discourse.

The confidence exhibited in the expansionism of the post-Jefferson era resembled in many ways the type of confidence displayed after someone finds the solution to a mathematical problem. It emitted an aura of undisputable righteousness of the kind that Thomas Cole could call into question in his art but never be energetic enough to properly counter in discourse. American Romanticism strove to resist teleological reasoning by virtue of its back-to-raw-nature leitmotif, but it worked in idealisations that were functions of its obsession with incarnating an anti-scientific vocabulary for U.S. society. It lay at the end of the spectrum of the Jeffersonian heritage opposite to where Manifest Destiny lay: one absorbed the principle of legitimation of scientific discourse and embarked upon a mission guided by the deist conception of reason's revelation; while the other turned its back on scientific discourse altogether, to the degree that what we may call the 'real stakes' at the core of early U.S. expansionist doctrine (legitimation), rather than being targeted for what they symbolised, were instead *transferred* to an entire other realm of discourse. U.S. Romanticism's craving for legitimation stemmed from its

conception as a reaction to Jeffersonian expansionism. It did not pretend to solve problems. At best (or worst) it aestheticised them – as did Thomas Cole, William Cullen Bryant, Asher B. Durand, Frederick Church, etc. It was all the more inclined towards aestheticising since it had refuted systematic thinking.

But Manifest Destiny did not take up the Jeffersonian blueprint for systematic reasoning; it took it for granted, which is not the same thing. As a result, the rhetorics of Manifest Destiny and American Romanticism exude a similar level of confidence, which in fact originates in both cases (one as the tacit heir *to*, the other as the visible rebel *against*) from Jeffersonian expansionism's attainment of the 'middle way' stage by recourse to the principle of 'nurturing Utopia'.

It may be surmised that when man's belief in the circumscribing power of science becomes a faith, the ideologised discourse it supports may turn into a myth – of dimensions proportional to the categorical extent (political, geographical, historical, and aesthetic) covered by the discourse. The myth of 'continentality' contained as a seed in Jeffersonian discourse reached full blossom in Manifest Destiny, a destiny (clearly formulated) to occupy the entire North American continental block. This destiny became 'manifest' in the sense that it was no longer illogical for Jacksonian and post-Jacksonian democrats to blend the implicit but theologically heavy concept of predestination with the practical application of taken-for-granted scientific survey methods in the Far West by (for instance) the Army Corps of Topographical Engineers. Both science and 'destiny' could be invoked because their rhetorical amalgamation had already been resolved in Jeffersonianism's pastoral idiom of the 'middle state'. At the same time the notion of 'middle state' revealed its true nature as a rhetorical trope of discourse by gradually losing its relevance as the frontier progressed westward. Once the frontier

reached the Pacific Ocean, the twin ideals of the pastoral and the ‘yeoman republic’ began looking like what they were – mere ideals. Port cities could not realistically apply for a pastoralised mode of production and exchange, and yet they too were then continentally legitimate administrative units of the United States.

With the North American landscape now showcasing the full extent of its topographical variety, Manifest Destiny could showcase the *political* motivations behind its day-to-day formulation: the will to seize the heritage of Jeffersonian expansionism to complete the practical process of continental aggrandisement (through territorial ‘recovery’) of the United States. It worked through deliberate, officially sanctioned policies more than through the elaboration of ‘contexts’ like in the Jeffersonian manner.

Of course, these are questions I am merely touching on. My research has opened these up, but I lack space to address them in greater detail here. A final question, more practical this time, relates to historiography and the best type of history suited to continue the assessment of Jeffersonian expansionism and its historical connections to Manifest Destiny in new ways. It seems to me that the mythical element in these connections necessitates that we resort to theorisation and hypothesis in addition to the mere garnering of plain facts. Perhaps my own work has given enough attention to discourse, but a major aspect which I certainly have not had the room to discuss here is that of environmental history. If Jefferson drew the plans for an ‘architecture’ of the trans-Mississippi West in his speeches, correspondence and published works, how was his ‘architecture’ concretely laid out from the time of Andrew Ellicott onwards to Lewis and Clark and to the Corps of Topographical Engineers? All these exploring crews contributed in some sense to transform the trans-Mississippi western landscape in advance of actual settlers – in advance of the frontier itself, it would seem, unless we

decide to consider early American explorers the original human element of the frontier.

To address these issues without remaining locked in discursive analysis (while still making use of it) calls for a form of environmental historical awareness informed by ecocritical thinking – an environmental history of the Lewis and Clark Expedition that would integrate within its quantum of data the Lewis and Clark journals, for example, not only as a mere source of factual evidence but as a method illustrating a specific interpretation of the western American landscape. I hope my thesis has shown that landscape is so crucial to the articulation of Jeffersonian expansionist discourse (through the strategies listed above of ‘environmentalising’, voidance, etc.) that a theoretically informed environmental history monograph may justifiably pretend to continue the de-ideologisation of Jeffersonian pastoral landscape beyond the text and on the ground. Only then will the aforementioned textual strategies be truly broken apart.

By doing this, it will come across how much of an event of world history early United States expansionism was. I have suggested this in my five chapters and discussed numerous explorers’ journal extracts to corroborate my points, but once again my analysis has been mostly discursive. Even at this level, the need to picture Jeffersonian expansionism as part of a broader Euro-American ideological movement supported by the pillars of the ‘Republic of Science’ must have become obvious. Perhaps a global-scale environmental history would uncover many more similarities in concrete landscape re-management and with them new interpretive possibilities. It would cross through porous disciplinary boundaries, especially those of imperial historiography, and this would be a boon rather than a hindrance. The current tendency observable in the profession is for environmental history to keep somewhat of a local focus, but there are

many exceptions to this rule and someday they might take the field over.³ What makes little doubt is that the capacity and propensity of science *as a discourse* to effect its own naturalisation and thereby to seemingly pass through attempts at its exegesis (Foucault was one of the first to make this point in the *Order of Things*) requires further examination in our context.⁴ The critical historiography of early U.S. expansionism might become lethargic if it does not take this into account with a greater sense of urgency.

Finally, the principle of ‘nurturing Utopia’ (particularly as I have defined it in the fourth and fifth chapters) may turn out to be a useful model for the critical scrutiny of historical environmental settings other than the trans-Mississippi West. This seems obvious to me, since I have determined that Jefferson had conceptual predecessors in his articulation of the principle. This way, recourse to the ‘nurturing Utopia’ model might not only contribute a modest theoretical tool for the analysis of an aspect of late-eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century European and U.S. discourses of territorial aggrandisement; it would also, in that process, establish the period of Jeffersonian expansion as a true event of world history, rather than one available for the taking in that form of mythological exploitation using the guise of exceptionalism.

³ For example, see Worster, *Rivers of empire*; William Cronon, *Changes in the land: Indians, colonists, and the ecology of New England* (New York, 1988); Cronon, *Nature's metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York, 1992); Cronon, Miles, and Gitlin, *Under an open sky*; Eugene C. Hargrove, ‘Anglo-American land use attitudes,’ in *Environmental Ethics*, ii (1980), pp 121-48; William M. Denevan, ‘The pristine myth: the landscape of the Americas in 1492,’ in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, lxxxii, no. 3 (Sept., 1992), pp 369-85; Shepard Krech III, *The ecological Indian: myth and history* (New York, 1999); Mark Fiege, *Irrigated Eden*; Dan L. Flores, *Horizontal yellow: nature and history in the near Southwest* (Albuquerque, 1999); Theodore Binemma, *Common and contested ground: a human and environmental history of the Northwestern Plains* (Norman, 2001); Gregory A. Barton, *Empire forestry and the origins of environmentalism* (Cambridge, 2002), pp 130-43; Richard W. Judd, ‘A “wonderfull order and balance”: natural history and the beginnings of forest conservation in America,’ in *Environmental History*, xi, no. 1 (Jan., 2006), pp 8-36; Carolyn Merchant, *American environmental history: an introduction* (New York, 2007); and Douglas C. Sackman (ed.), *A companion to American environmental history* (Chichester, 2010).

⁴ Foucault, *The order of things*, pp 235-420.

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