Chapter 4
Circulating Seditious Knowledge: The "Daring Absurdities, Studied Misrepresentations, and Abominable Falsehoods" of William Macintosh

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The spatial mobility of knowledge—its circulation variously as text, speech, and object—has been subject to scrutiny in, among other fields, the history of science, book history, and historical geography (Secord, 2004). Much of this work has been informed by Latour's concept of "immutable and combinable mobiles" (1987, p. 227)—fixed and abstracted representations of the world (whether printed texts, maps, or specimens) that permit the distribution and assembly of knowledge. Nuanced revisions to this model—most particularly the categorization of so-called "fluid objects" (Law, 2002, p. 100), malleable in both literal and epistemic senses— have demonstrated that the exchange of knowledge has often depended upon the plasticity of its mobile representatives, rather than their assumed fixity. Attention to the movement of knowledge in print has shown, for example, how the vagaries of authorship, editing, and translation alter form, content, and meaning (Keighren, Withers, & Bell, 2015; MacLaren, 2003; Withers & Keighren, 2011). Rather than hinder the movement of knowledge, however, such textual variability is often facilitative of its flow. That an object or text can "shift and adapt to local circumstances" (Powell, 2007, p. 318), and thus be repositioned for a new audience, indicates that mobility often necessitates mutability.

The material and hermeneutic instability of print—and its effect on the circulation and reception of knowledge—has been examined in relation to questions of authorship, translation, and editorial intervention (Amrein & Nickelsen, 2008;

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Iliffe, 1995; Kutzinski, 2009; Martin, 2011). In his account of the complicated publication history of Bernhard Varenius's *Geographia generalis* (1750), Mayhew (2010) has shown, for example, quite how uncertain the notion of authorship was for a text that—in its linguistic transformation from Latin to English—passed through the hands of multiple editors and translators. Efforts made by the book's intermediaries to improve the text positioned it in ways that altered its meaning either subtly or profoundly. Rupke's (2000) examination of the translation of *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844)—an anonymously issued treatise on transmutation—has told a similar story: each translator of that book appropriated the text and, by means of additional prefaces, footnote commentary, illustrations, and omissions, conveyed "a different message from the one the author had in mind" (p. 210). Kontler (2001) shows much the same to be true of the German translations of the work of the Scottish historian William Robertson and thus demonstrates how the vagaries of linguistic reinterpretation reveal "the potential and the limits of the transmission of ideas across cultural and geographical boundaries" (p. 67). Hofmeyr (2003), in a peerless study of the transnational circulation of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), shows how global networks, both social and technological, permitted the international diffusion and repurposing of an important allegorical text.

Translation can, in this regard, be seen both as a liberating and an injurious intervention—a purposive act that permits a text to cross geographical and epistemic space, even as it alters its meaning as a consequence. Viewed pejoratively, such linguistic intercession might be dismissed merely as an impediment to the circulation of knowledge in print, mutability being symptomatic of textual, intellectual, and epistemic corruption. However damaging the intervention of editors, translators, and publishers is perceived to be to a text's meaning, these engagements are precisely what is required for knowledge to circulate, and must be taken seriously as a consequence. Although it is not necessary to recast such interventions as being necessarily benevolent or charitable, they are nevertheless inseparable from the ways in which knowledge as text has circulated within and beyond linguistic communities. To understand the spatial mobility of knowledge in print thus demands an attention to such interventions—to the decisions made by authors, editors, publishers, translators, and booksellers as to the appropriate staging of texts and their content.

As Martin and Pickford (2012) have noted, knowledge does not simply travel by itself; its circulation depends upon "the interaction between agents who are themselves in specific networks which allow for knowledge to travel" (p. 3). In this chapter I take the role of these agents seriously in seeking to reveal the ways in which one anonymously issued and politically seditious account of exploration—*Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa* (1782)—circulated within and beyond particular linguistic and geographical contexts. In specific terms, I examine the means by which one author's in-the-field writing became authoritative, printed text; how that text took shape through particular practices of authorship and editorial mediation; and how the resultant book moved spatially, and was changed materially, through acts of reprinting and translation. Through detailed attention to the making and movement of one book, I seek to reflect more broadly on the importance of mediation to the mobility of knowledge and ideas.

Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa represented the first independent excursion into geographical publishing on the extra-European world for a firm that would later emerge as Britain's leading nineteenth-century maker of travel texts: John Murray. By the end of the 1830s, narratives of exploration, geographical gazetteers, topographical descriptions, and tourist guidebooks flowed from Murray's London presses in a heady profusion. Between the house's founding by John Murray I (1745–1793) in 1768 and its mid-nineteenth-century apotheosis under the direction of John Murray II (1778–1843), the firm issued approximately 400 books of travel, published the journal of the Royal Geographical Society, and served as official publisher to the Admiralty and the Board of Longitude. It was, simply put, *the* authority on geographical publishing in nineteenth-century Britain. The emergence of Murray as a corporate geographical authority was, however, neither rapid nor straightforward, but represented hard-won experience in a competitive marketplace, carefully acquired credibility among readers, and shrewdly wrought influence in Britain's scientific and geographical circles. The house's ability to determine the value of a work of travel depended upon an understanding of public taste and market demand. Judgments were daily made as to the ways in which texts of travel might most sensibly be selected for publication and shaped for consumption. Questions of format, price, and the suitability of illustrations sat alongside assessments made as to the necessary redaction or editing of texts in order to satisfy particular audience expectations—whether in terms of an author's trustworthiness, a narrative's adventuresome excitement, or its perceived scientific rigor.

The expertise upon which Murray's nineteenth-century success in geographical publishing depended emerged, in part, from experience wrought through trial and error. The publication history of *Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa* offers an important insight into the evolution of the firm's judgments as to authorship, audience, and textual credibility—how decisions were made (often wrongly) as to the appropriate literary form for a work of travel and the ways in which its veracity and utility might most convincingly be demonstrated. More than simply an account of a journey undertaken, however, *Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa* was a seditious and seemingly libelous attack on Britain's colonial administrators, one whose reach and influence was facilitated by reprinting and translation. Examining how the book made the journey from manuscript to print, and how its textual and intellectual content altered at the hands of translators and publishers in the years following its original printing, offers an insight into the circulation of its ideas. So, too, is it possible to understand why, on account of political and pragmatic imperatives, the book's contents and arguments were differently staged and negotiated in different places within the British Isles, and beyond.

William Macintosh: A Colonial Life

The author upon whom Murray staked his first truly independent excursion into travel literature was a Scottish merchant and political commentator, William Macintosh (ca. 1738–ca. 1816). Although there is no biography of Macintosh—save

for a short account written by his great-nephew (Macintosh, 1847), described by one critical contemporary variously as "rather rambling," with little "savour of authenticity," and "simply rubbish" (Busteed, 1888, p. 249)—it is possible to outline various details of his life with some certainty.

Born in Rosskeen, a parish of Ross and Cromarty in the Scottish highlands, Macintosh embarked (while still an adolescent) upon a commercial career in the Caribbean, overseeing plantations in Tobago, Dominica, and Grenada, before eventually becoming comptroller of His Majesty's Customs for the Port of Grenville in Grenada (Macintosh, 1847; Rothschild, 2011). Following the ceding of Grenada from France to Britain at the end of the Seven Years' War in 1763, Macintosh was witness to prolonged political machinations there concerning the incorporation of French Catholics into the British Empire (Hamilton, 2005; Lambert, 2013; Willis, 2014). Opinion was divided as to the extent to which political rights that applied to British Protestants should be extended to French Catholics. These divisions resulted in political stalemate on the island lasting through much of the late 1760s and early 1770s.

Macintosh was, as one contemporary periodical noted, "zealous in the cause of Roman Catholic French subjects at Grenada" (*Political Register*, 1770, p. 282), supporting the extension of political rights across the sectarian divide. Macintosh's opinions as to the correct and just management of Grenada were communicated in an anonymously issued, coauthored pamphlet—*Audi Alteram Partem* (1770)—and in a series of letters sent to Lord Dartmouth, secretary of state for the colonies (*Manuscripts of the Earl of Dartmouth*, 1895). It was this desire to inform Britain's colonial policy—and to "retrieve the glory of the British name" (Macintosh, 1782, p. vi)—that emerged subsequently as the central concern of Macintosh's *Travels*.

Travels itself is—or purported to be—a series of "intimate and informal" letters sent from Macintosh to various correspondents in the period between 1777 and 1781 while he traveled to and from India by way of Europe and Africa (Wichmann, 1785, p. v). The purpose of Macintosh's journey is nowhere explained in the text, but the impression is given that he was traveling for private and commercial reasons, rather than in an official or administrative capacity. Although the names of the recipients of Macintosh's letters are thinly disguised in the text by means of dashes, it is clear that John Murray I was among Macintosh's correspondents. The pair shared a largely critical view of Britain's management of her colonies—particularly those in North America, which were then fast slipping from grip—and this fact was doubtless important in persuading Murray to take forward the book's publication.

The focus of Macintosh's "epistolary lucubrations" (Wichmann, 1785, p. vi) was not primarily upon the geographical features of the countries through which he traveled, but rather their political and economic conditions. As a consequence of his experiences in the Caribbean—as a merchant and concerned citizen of empire—Macintosh was both politically engaged and outspoken. These predilections were cemented to an extent when, upon reaching the Cape of Good Hope in April 1779, Macintosh came into possession of a copy of Adam Smith's *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, published 3 years earlier (Smith, 1776). Macintosh read the text with interest, if not always agreement; he would later send

Smith a copy of his *Travels*, respectfully pointing out in a flyleaf dedication points where their opinions differed (Mizuta, 2000). Smith's principal ideas were, however, foremost in Macintosh's mind when he reached India, and he thus set about making a systematic assessment of the resources of that county, as well as the prevailing system of government under the East India Company. Although the precise nature of Macintosh's business in India is unclear, it is evident that a letter of introduction from the Scottish soldier-politician Hector Munro (1726–1805) facilitated Macintosh's contact with the ruling elite, including Warren Hastings (1732–1818), governor-general of Bengal, who was, as chance would have it, a regular customer of Murray's.

Macintosh was scandalized by what he saw as the inefficient, corrupt, and cruel administration of British India, and his letters roundly "condemned British colonial practices" (Tzoref-Ashkenazi, 2010, p. 21) and the administration of the East India Company. He criticized, particularly, the Company's "obsession with repression" (Wichmann, 1785, p. vi). Informed by the principles of humanism, Macintosh proposed in his letters an alternative system for the government and administration of British India—one based upon a formal and clearly defined alliance between the Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II (1728–1806), and the British government. At its core, Macintosh's plan called for the more just treatment of India's population. Macintosh was of the opinion that for Britain's imperial ambitions in India to succeed, it would be necessary for the Company to "resolve to treat the Hindoos, not as slaves or inferior animals, but as fellow-men, entitled to protection, liberty, and justice" (Macintosh, 1782, p. 73). He saw the greatest threat to the colonial project as being the "tyranny and injustice" (p. 73) that characterized the activities of the Company under Hastings's governorship.

Macintosh's resulting book, a compilation of his acerbic and politically charged missives, was part of a wider critical discourse on the activities of the East India Company—and its corrupt, profit-seeking servants (the so-called "nabobs")—a discussion that gained pace following the scandalous 1770 Bengal famine and would reach a particular apotheosis toward the end of the 1780s with the impeachment and trial, at the instigation of Edmund Burke (1729–1797), of Warren Hastings (Dirks, 2006; Edwardes, 1976; Nechtman, 2010). Against this background of widespread concern as to the activities of the East India Company, and Britain's increasingly perilous hold over its colonies, Murray judged that Macintosh's book was topical and important. At the same time, however, the text ran counter to Murray's own largely positive assessment of Hastings's personal qualities and Murray's private financial interest, as a proprietor of stocks, in the Company's commercial success (Zachs, 1998).

Murray was the London agent for (and secretary to) the Society of East India Commanders—a mutual organization founded in 1773 to represent the interests of the commanders of East India Company ships. The Society met from 1780 in the Jerusalem Coffee House, off Cornhill, east of St Paul's Cathedral—the center of the London book trade. The Jerusalem was the de facto hub of East India Company affairs—a meeting site for merchants, insurance brokers, and the managing owners of Company ships. There, and in his capacity as secretary to the Society, Murray

was able to promote his catalogue of useful literature—marketing everything from primers on Arabic and Asiatic languages to treatises on tropical and venereal disease (Zachs, 1998). Superficially, at least, Murray's decision to publish a text so evidently critical of an organization in which he was both financially and socially embedded appears somewhat peculiar. One reading of the situation is that Murray was sufficiently convinced that (notwithstanding the troublesome content of Macintosh's text) there was a clear business case for the book's publication, particularly given the interest it might be expected to excite among members of the Society and patrons at the Jerusalem. A less charitable interpretation is that Murray sought publication without having fully considered the implications Macintosh's book might have and the uses to which it might subsequently be put.

Polishing, Publication, and Reception of Macintosh's *Travels*

Notwithstanding his experience as an inveterate letter writer and political pamphleteer in Grenada, Macintosh was, as Murray (1790) later recalled, "unpractised in literary composition" (p. 17). The decision was, therefore, taken (either by Macintosh alone, or in discussion with Murray) that the former's "sundry papers" needed to be worked up into a form suitable for publication (p. 17). As such, Macintosh's in-the-field writings were passed to the jobbing Grub-Street writer, William Thomson (1746–1817), who

> did his best to give them circulation by throwing them … into the form of letters to a friend in England, by mixing them with various entertainment, furnished, for the most part, though not entirely, by his employer [Macintosh], and clothing them in tolerable language. (p. 17)

Thomson was, in the view of one contemporary, an "ingenious, versatile, and multifarious writer" (Chambers, 1841, p. 351), and was frequently employed by London's publishing booksellers in the capacity of author or editor. Less charitably, he was also described as a "brain-sucker" (Erdman, 1986, p. 2)—one who assumed credit for the intellectual labor of others. During his career, Thomson is assumed to have produced "a greater amount of literary work . . . than perhaps any English writer who preceded him," working happily across "history, biography, voyages, travels and memoirs, novels and romances, pamphlets and periodicals" (Chambers, 1841, p. 353). For Murray and Macintosh both, Thomson represented an experienced and professional authority to whom the preparation of Macintosh's volume could be entrusted. That it was felt necessary to employ an editor at all reflected a particular assessment, on the part of author and publisher, of the necessary literary characteristics of a work of travel. Many of the travel texts that followed Macintosh's under Murray's imprint were subject to some form of editorial mediation—sometimes subtle, sometimes savage—designed to shape them into the form deemed most suitable by Murray and the firm's advisors.

In his prefatory remarks, Macintosh acknowledged to his readers the fact that he was "no candidate for literary fame" (Macintosh, 1782, p. iii)—an indication of authorial modesty that would emerge as typical of the Murray firm's eighteenth- and

nineteenth-century travel writers. He elected, however, not to reveal Thomson's editorial influence. Furthermore, Macintosh had been "induced"—he claimed—"by the importunities of men distinguished for public and private virtue, to deliver to the public the contents of a genuine correspondence" (p. iii). Again, the claim to have pursued publication only at the insistence of learned friends is one that would become almost a default among Murray's travelers. Justification for publication was also seen to rest on a claim to public edification—Macintosh had been privy to "sources of intelligence, not often accessible to Europeans" (p. iii) and his text would consequently bring his readers insight and enlightenment. Prefatory declarations of modest ability and reluctant authorship, such as Macintosh's, are sufficiently commonplace in works of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travel writing that they risk being dismissed simply as "highly conventionalized" defaults, rather than being acknowledged as deliberate and crafted elements of rhetorical strategy (Sherman, 1996, p. 180). Scholarly attention to the role and evolution of the textual preface has shown, however, that its conventions are part of a venerable rhetorical tradition whose origins lie in Classical understandings of appropriate and convincing oratory (Dunn, 1994; Sell, 2006).

The fact that Macintosh's account was epistolary in nature, rather than narrative, was designed to make a further claim to authenticity and candor in two related ways. First, letters carried a connotation of intimacy—bringing the reader into the shared confidence between writer and recipient. That these were letters sent to "men distinguished for public and private virtue" (Macintosh, 1782, p. iii) added further to their authority. Secondly, presenting his account as a series of letters, rather than a worked-up journal or political treatise, lent additional weight to Macintosh's claim to be a reluctant author. While the existence of an on-the-spot, in-the-field journal might suggest a specific authorial intention, letters were, more convincingly, the medium of the reluctant author—someone persuaded only to bring forth their publication as a consequence of the overwhelming public benefit that might spring from them. Macintosh was thus able to present his letters as having been "related with fidelity" and left "unadorned" (Macintosh, 1782, p. iv). The reality, of course, was rather different.

Although the role of Thomson as editor had deliberately been kept covert, at least one reviewer of Macintosh's text, writing in the *Critical Review* (1782a, p. 343), suspected that "the author may have received the assistance of a person practiced in composition"—a fact attested to by the quality of the prose, which was deemed to have been written "with a degree of elegance, … seldom attained by men who have chiefly devoted their attention to commercial activities" (p. 343). The *Critical Review* was not alone in this assessment. The *Westminster Magazine* (1782) reached a similar conclusion:

> [t]he information it [the book] contains is evidently furnished by a traveller; but the execution of the work is in a style far superior to what could be expected from a person of this description. A man of letters, and improved by deep study and reflection, has here, doubtless, improved upon materials submitted to him. The value of the performance, accordingly, is to be imputed not to the author, but to the manufacturer. The former is a middling personage; the latter is a great master. (p. 484)

Despite the best efforts of Macintosh, Murray, and Thomson, the keen eyes of the periodical press were evidently not to be fooled.

The net effect of Thomson's editorial mediation was to undermine the credibility of the text: "we are afraid that the author has sometimes indulged himself in representations which are consistent neither with candour nor truth" (*Critical Review*, 1782b, p. 425). Furthermore, as the *Critical Review* (1782b, p. 425) noted, "there seems sufficient reason, from the testimony of others, to question, if not entirely to reject, the authority of different parts of the narrative." For the *Westminster Magazine* (1782, p. 485), the problem lay, most especially, with the fact that Thomson—the book's "manufacturer," in their terminology—had wasted his considerable talents on material that was clearly beneath him. As the reviewer noted, "It is a pain to think, that a man so cultivated should be induced to submit to give a value to the collections of other men" (*Westminster Magazine*, 1782, p. 485). Murray and Macintosh, evidently, had misjudged what the critical periodical press expected from a work of this kind, and in seeking to *add* to its credibility had, in fact, *diminished* it.

It was not just in the periodical press that Murray's author was attacked. Macintosh was also subject to a full-scale rebuttal by the East India Company captain Joseph Price (born ca. 1749) in a 167-page, venom-filled tract: *Some observations and remarks on the late publication, intitled*, Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa, *in which the real author of this new and curious Asiatic Atalantis, his character and his abilities are fully made known to the publick* (1782). Price's purpose was to destroy Macintosh's anonymity and to "prove that his work is political, and calculated to serve the views and purposes of himself and friends" (Price, 1782, p. 9). It was to one friend in particular—Philip Francis (1740–1818), who, with Edmund Burke, was a principal antagonist of Warren Hastings—that Price's ire was specifically directed. This followed an earlier public squabble regarding supposedly negative aspersions cast on Price's character by Francis while he was in the service of the East India Company (Colley, 2010; Price, 1781). Believing Macintosh to be "an agent employed by Mr. Francis to traduce the character of Governor Hastings," (*Monthly Review*, 1782, p. 256) and thus to denigrate Price himself, Price's text offered an epistle-by-epistle refutation of Macintosh's "collection of daring absurdities, studied misrepresentations, and abominable falsehoods" (Price, 1782, p. 63).

The value of Price's text as a sober corrective to Macintosh's volume was, however, debatable. The *Monthly Review* (1782) noted, for example, that

> [t]he indifferent reader, who only aims, if possible, to discover the truth, will not imbibe the warmth of the Author's resentments; he may attribute his anger to the weakness of his cause; if an enemy, he may derive great advantages from the Author's heat; or, if as a friend, he gives a more favourable interpretation to his asperity, it is an act of courtesy to which he can lay no claim. (p. 256)

In this respect, whilst the vociferousness of Price's "violent attack" limited its effectiveness, Macintosh's text was evidently controversial—either for those who saw it as part of the wider contemporary criticism of the East India Company, or for those who, as a consequence of its overwrought prose, considered its truth claims to be

potentially dubious (W. O. W., 1863, p. 67). Debate continued about the true author-ship of Macintosh's anonymous book, with some attributing it to Francis himself—he having been Hastings's "greatest enemy" (Ogborn, 2007, p. 213) during their time together on the Bengal Council. There is evidence to suggest that Macintosh received a financial subsidy from Francis, and it seems probable, therefore, that Macintosh's text was intended at least partly to communicate Francis's own views as to the corruption and mismanagement of the East India Company (Weitzman, 1929).

The Reading and Afterlife of *Travels*

Despite the concerns expressed by the periodical press as to the book's trustworthi-ness, its popularity and currency seem not to have been affected—in no small part a consequence of the subsequent impeachment and trial of Warren Hastings, which had the effect of extending the book's topical relevance. When Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), who had acquired a copy of *Travels* in 1786, attempted later the same year to procure one for a friend, he found that "McIntosh's [book] is not to be bought, the whole edition being exhausted" (Washington, 1853, p. 22). In 1785 and 1786, *Travels* was reprinted in Dublin to coincide with parliamentary efforts to further regulate the activities of the East India Company. The first Dublin edition (Macintosh, 1785), issued by Charles Lodge, was accompanied by a short advertise-ment that highlighted the text's purpose and significance to potential readers:

> The intent of this Publication by its humane and patriotic Author, is to rescue Millions of Souls from groaning and bleeding under the iron Yoke of Tyranny and Oppression. He hath given in the Course of his Work, the most striking Proofs of Cruelty and Injustice, in the Mismanagement of the East-India Company's Servants. It hath been from this ample Source of Information, that both Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox deduced their Knowledge, and founded all their Measures in their respective East-India Bills. In a Word, these interesting Volumes have caused greater Agitations in the English Cabinet, and greater Discussions in the English Senate, than, any Work published within the present Century. Whoever would form a just Idea of India Affairs, together with the modern State of Europe and Africa, may obtain it from a Perusal of this very ingenious and entertaining Publication.[1]

Presented thus, the book's topicality and authoritativeness (as an important source of information for Charles Fox [1749–1806] and William Pitt the Younger [1759–1806] in the drafting, respectively, of the 1783 East India Bill and 1784 East India Company Act, the second of which sought to bring the Company's rule in India under governmental control) was made entirely clear to likely purchasers. For much the same reason, the title page of the second Dublin printing, issued by J. Jones (whose premises at 39 College Green sat between the Irish Houses of

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[1] This advertisement is preserved on the flyleaf of a copy of the book owned by the American poli-tician Charles Pinckney (1757–1824), housed in the Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections at the University of South Carolina (G460.M3 1782).

Parliament and Trinity College), was altered to highlight the text's contemporary political significance (Macintosh, 1786). It informed its readers, many of whom would have been drawn from Dublin's scholarly and political communities, that

> A Work of this Kind becomes particularly interesting to the Public, at a critical Moment, in which a late Governor of Bengal is called before the great Tribunal of the British Parliament, to answer various Charges of Misconduct, founded in great Measure on this authentic and instructive Narrative. (Macintosh, 1786, title page)

That it was not Murray who elected to reissue *Travels* to capitalize on the political maneuverings of Burke, Fox, and Pitt is explained by the fact that, from the mid-1780s, Murray had become a vocal advocate *for* Warren Hastings, publishing articles in the *English Review* (Murray's own periodical) in Hastings's defense (Zachs, 1998). Murray, moreover, secured Hastings's permission to issue an authorized version of his *Memoirs Relative to the State of India* in 1786, the same year that J. Jones reissued *Travels* in Dublin. Hastings, for his part, appears to have carried no ill will toward Murray for his involvement in the publication of Macintosh's book. Following the commencement of Hastings's trial—a 7-year *cause célèbre*, which ultimately resulted in Hastings's acquittal—Murray was active in "copublishing Hastings' answers to the charges and reporting the case regularly in the *English Review*" (Carnall & Nicholson, 1989; Zachs, 1998, p. 235). That Murray had published the very text that served as evidence upon which certain of the charges against Hastings had been brought, would, one might imagine, have caused Murray no little chagrin.

Although Murray had longstanding agreements with the Dublin book trade over the distribution of his texts in Ireland, it is difficult to determine whether Lodge and Jones were authorized distributors of *Travels*, or whether they simply took advantage of Murray's awkward political position to issue pirated versions of the book. Although the latter interpretation appears superficially more probable, it is notable that Murray later pursued a complaint against an East India Company captain, Innes Munro (d. 1827), whom he accused of having plagiarized *Travels* in his own *A narrative of the military operations, on the Coromandel coast* (1789). That Murray was protective of his literary property is evident; quite how he regarded the Dublin editions of a somewhat embarrassing text is, however, less obvious.

Notwithstanding cosmetic changes to the book's title page, the textual content of *Travels* remained otherwise unaltered in its Dublin editions. This was not the case, however, when contemporaneous translations of the book appeared in Germany and France in 1785 and 1786. If we are interested in thinking about the ways in which Macintosh's geographical knowledge and seditious opinions circulated, geographically and linguistically, it is necessary to attend to these translations and specifically to the ways in which the book's content was altered and differently framed by its translators.

Macintosh in Leipzig

Although translation (most often *into* English from French and German) was an important element of the Murray firm's activities in the eighteenth century, and would become ever more so in the nineteenth, there is no evidence to indicate that Murray had any formal agreement with Friedrich Gotthold Jacobäer, the Leipzig publisher who issued a German translation of Macintosh's text in 1785 (Stark, 1999). The book's translator was Christian August Wichmann (1735–1807), a prolific interpreter whose translations ranged across "history and travelogues, philosophical essays, plays, short stories and novels" (Horlacher, 2004, p. 110). Having recently undertaken the German translation of Adam Smith's *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776–1778), Wichmann was well positioned to negotiate and appropriately stage Macintosh's political and economic reflections. Together, Wichmann and his publisher offered a full-scale translation of Macintosh's book—a work whose value was assumed by them to lie in the fact that "he instructs and converses with the reader more through political speculation than the depiction of natural scenes" (Wichmann, 1785, p. iv). That Macintosh's text departed, in this respect, from the assumed conventions of its genre meant that it neatly avoided the risk of "tiring the public's interest . . . [by] repetitive descriptions" (p. iv). Given that Macintosh's identity had, by this stage, been revealed by Joseph Price, his name was incorporated into the book's translated title (albeit with an additional "k"): *Des Herrn Mackintosh's Reisen durch Europa, Asia und Africa*.

Wichmann's role was not simply that of translator but also of commentator. The German edition of Macintosh's text was accompanied by Wichmann's own observations and remarks. These, he informed readers in his preface, "for the most part spring forth spontaneously," originating from "principles, which we recognize, after careful and yearlong reflection, as correct, and conducive to the welfare of states and even humanity in general" (Wichmann, 1785, p. vi). Wichmann's paratextual commentary—informed by his humanist beliefs and concern for "moral, political and economic betterment" (Horlacher, 2004, p. 110)—was offered to readers "as an impetus to further reflection" (p. 110), albeit with the tacit acknowledgement that the reader might not always concur with Wichmann's view.

In the opinion of one contemporary reviewer of *Reisen*, Wichmann's commentary, although "often too extensive," offered "some advantages" to German readers (*Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, 1785, p. 65). For that critic, however, the decision to publish a translation of the entire book, rather than a "concise excerpt of the original version" (p. 65), was peculiar. A condensed version would "have certainly attracted more readers in Germany than this translation with the current format" (p. 65). Questions of size and arrangement aside, it is evident that Wichmann saw his role as being one of reflection and positioning—of offering an assessment to German readers of a text whose seditious content rendered it titillating, but whose wider importance could best be highlighted through appropriate commentary. The mobility of Macintosh's knowledge in a German context depended, in Wichmann's view,

on specific staging and presentation—a literal translation would be insufficient in isolation. Much the same reasoning was apparent in the production of the French edition, published in Paris the following year.

Although much work remains to be done to outline fully the reading and reception of *Reisen* in Germany, it is evident that Macintosh's perspective on the nature of society in India was important in informing contemporary German debate concerning happiness and virtue, savagery and civilization (Sikka, 2005). In this respect, Macintosh's book had a particular influence on the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), who drew upon it in his description of Hindus—whom he called "the gentlest of the races of men" (Willson, 1955, p. 1051)—in his philosophical treatise on race, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784–1791). More generally, Macintosh's book was a source from which German travelers to (and writers about) India drew—their number including the naturalists Friedrich Ludwig Langstedt (1750–1804) and Georg Forster (1754–1794) (Tzoref-Ashkenazi, 2010).

Macintosh in Paris

The Paris edition of Macintosh's *Travels*—issued under the authority of *permissions tacites* by the Left Bank bookseller Louis-Emmanuel Regnault—had been translated by the pamphleteer and political agitator, Jacques Pierre Brissot (1754–1793) (Darnton, 1982). Brissot would later assume a central role in the French Revolution—giving his name to a loose affiliation of likeminded Jacobin revolutionaries: the Brissotines, or Girondins. In prerevolutionary France, Brissot was viewed with suspicion by the Ancien Régime, not least because of frequent visits to London. He spent 2 months of 1784 incarcerated in the Bastille "on suspicion of having produced some pamphlets satirizing French officials" (Darnton, 1968, p. 302). Financial difficulties, compounded by this incarceration, led Brissot to undertake a variety of publishing and translation activities upon his release—his aim being to "popularize knowledge, to attack abuses, and to further reform" (Ellery, 1915, p. 36). The radical and revolutionary content of Macintosh's volume (which Brissot is likely to have encountered first in London), as well as its humanist principles, appealed to Brissot. He proposed the volume—*Voyages en Europe, en Asie et en Afrique*—first to his Swiss publisher, Société typographique de Neuchâtel, in 1784, but for reasons that remain unrecorded they were not inclined to undertake the book's publication and it passed ultimately to Regnault.

Salacious allegations and political agitation notwithstanding, Brissot regarded the primary importance of Macintosh's text as being to counter ignorance in France as to the political and economic condition of India. As Brissot noted, Britain had "a thousand persons perfectly familiar with the Geography and Topography of India" (Brissot, 1786, p. xi)—each driven by a desire to "observe all, collect all, and print all," whereas continental Europe "could gather scarcely fifty" (p. xi). Understanding the political administration of British India would, Brissot argued, offer an important

insight into Britain itself—something deemed crucial if "we wish to counter the universal influence of Great Britain" (p. xiii). Brissot was, in this respect, sizing up a future enemy: "we must study it [Britain], consult it, in Hindustan as with her own territory" (p. xi). Brissot's later role in the Legislative Assembly in Paris saw him declare war on Britain in 1793.

Much like Wichmann, Brissot felt it valuable that Macintosh's work—like that of other English-language texts—be presented more-or-less at its full length and not subject to radical extraction:

> Whatever the French may say, I believe the English writers must be translated in full, translated as slanderously as written; firstly because these judgements help us to know ourselves, or at least see the manner in which we are perceived by foreigners; secondly our arguments reach them and correct their faults, because the English originals are frequently reprinted in England with notes made by French authors, their newspapers point out the corrections, & thus prejudices gradually dissipate. (Brissot, 1786, pp. xvi–xvii)

In his preface, Brissot outlined to his readers the practical and intellectual approach to translation he had taken:

> I have enriched this translation, tasking myself to reject anything bearing too strongly the character of vengeance & partiality . . . Repetitions were trimmed back, lengthy passages were abridged, unclear ideas were clarified, falsehoods have been refuted in the notes; in total, I endeavoured to retain in this work all that could be informative, interesting, or amusing for the French. (Brissot, 1786, pp. xviii–xix)

In this respect, Brissot was repositioning and reshaping the text for its new, French readers. Like it was for Wichmann, the role of translator was not, for Brissot, one of simple linguistic relocation, but cultural appropriation. The mobility of Macintosh's text depended, once again, upon its mutability.

By means of elision and addition, Brissot altered aspects of the text's meaning (albeit, as he saw it, in the interests of improving its impartiality). The most radical change to the text came through the addition of extensive excerpts from a pair of related travel narratives—James Capper's (1743–1825) *Observations on the Passage to India* (1783) and Anders Sparrman's (1748–1820) *A Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope* (1785). By means of such additions, the purpose and relevance of Macintosh's account was continually being remade in the decade following its initial publication. Any illusion the printed text offers of stability and fixity is thus gainsaid by the fluid and malleable character of Macintosh's text. The idea of authorship—already confused by the editorial influence of Murray and Thomson—is further complicated by questions of translation and the inclusion of new prefaces and appendices. While the circulation of Macintosh's ideas may have been motivated by their seditious qualities, they were not immutable in their mobility. At different times, and in different places, Macintosh's letters were put to different purposes, by different actors, for different audiences.

As with the German edition of Macintosh's book, the precise contours of the French reading and reception of *Voyages* remain to be charted. From the evidence contained in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sales catalogues of private libraries, it is clear, however, that the book circulated widely among a diverse audience

of savants, politicians, and travelers: readers who included the encyclopedist and philosopher, Paul-Henri Thiry, Baron d'Holbach (1723–1789); the naval commander and circumnavigator, Louis-Antoine, Comte de Bougainville (1729–1811); the statesman and botanist Guillaume-Chrétien de Lamoignon de Malesherbes (1721–1794); and, later, the naturalist Georges Cuvier (1769–1832). Something of the popularity of *Voyages* in France in the early years of the Revolution is indicated to by the fact that its publisher, Regnault, reissued the text in 1788, 1792, and 1793 (the latter date coinciding with Brissot's execution). In this respect, Macintosh's book enjoyed an afterlife in France that neither he, nor Murray, could have predicted.

Conclusion: Text, Translation, and Truth

Macintosh's *Travels*, as a first independent outing into the publication of extra-European travel literature, was an instructive—if not always unproblematic—experience for Murray, but one whose lessons would be applied to the publication of subsequent works of travel. In showing the production of a travel text to be a form of manufacture, Macintosh's volume illustrated quite how complicated the relationship was between author, editor, and publisher (indeed, how ill-defined the category of *author* actually was). Editing and redaction remained important, if often covert, elements of production in the house of Murray, but perceptions of what constituted a correct literary style for travel texts changed. For many of Murray's subsequent authors, rough and unpolished writing was often the goal—unvarnished text serving as a proxy for unvarnished truth (Keighren & Withers, 2011). Simply put, Murray, his editors, and advisors became increasingly canny when it came to understanding the ways in which text could make truth and what was required of author and publisher for a work of travel to be seen as credible (Keighren & Withers, 2012). Taken together, the Murray firm's books of travel thus offer an important insight into the collaborative effort that underpinned the process of writing the world in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The translation and edition history of Macintosh's *Travels*—three editions or reprints in English, one in German, and four in French—raises a number of questions to do with the spatial mobility of knowledge, most especially regarding what gets lost, and what is retained, in the process of linguistic and cultural relocation. While the differently presented Dublin editions, and the German and French translations, are precisely what permitted the circulation of Macintosh's text, they are also what changed its meaning—placing emphasis on certain parts at the expense of others, offering new juxtapositions and contextualization. In material and epistemic terms, Macintosh's written words were almost always in flux as they passed through the hands of Murray, Thompson, Lodge, Jones, Wichmann, and Brissot. While it was the seditious character of Macintosh's writing that acted as the principal spur to the circulation of his book, what was emphasized by its reprinters and translators was the text's practical utility as a source of political and geographical information.

In that sense, there was a degree of commonality in the text's restaging that points to the preservation of essential elements of Macintosh's writing and the de-emphasizing of aspects judged to be peripheral or surplus. The spatial mobility of Macintosh's book between and beyond London, Dublin, Leipzig, and Paris thus reveals not simply a geography of reading and reception, but points to the complex mechanisms by which ideas are made mobile, knowledge is made to circulate, and value is attributed and constructed.

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