

the voyage and how much part, disgraced by his *Authentic Narrative* albeit, did he play in the art and engraving work for that much delayed official *Voyage to the Pacific Ocean . . . for making Discoveries in the Northern Hemisphere* (3 vols, London, 1784)? What, we must now ask of the art historian, are the connections between Ellis's and Webber's views and paintings in their various forms—of Christmas Harbour, for example, at Kerguelen?²²

'No voyage undertaken in the days before photography,' writes Bernard Smith, 'ever returned so well documented with pictorial illustrations' as this third voyage of Cook. 'Nor had so great an area of the earth's surface come under one artist's observation'.²³ We must now say two artists. In Smith's book William Ellis is relegated—indexed as a 'seaman'!—to an acting 'natural-history draughtsman', as scientific artistic assistant to the surgeon and excellent unofficial naturalist, William Anderson. Of Ellis's delicate landscapes, of his achievements in toning using his characteristic grey-greens and greenish-yellow, we read nothing in Smith. But it must have been on those landscapes and upon the finishing and perfecting of his natural history drawings that Ellis laboured during 1781-82 and certainly later.

They brought back so many drawings and charts from the third voyage that a committee, with Banks and Webber involved, sat to select those which would go into the official narrative.²⁴ That was one reason why it was so delayed. Ellis must have been associated with that enterprise; even if only on the fringe as an adviser.

He was certainly intimately—in art at least—associated with and influenced by Webber. Bernard Smith speaks of Webber as lacking 'Hodges experimental attitude to his art'; Webber is

. . . essentially illustrative. He sought to depict as faithfully as he could not only memorable incidents but also the dresses, houses, and customs of the people visited on the long voyage. He drew vegetation both in its individual plant forms and in mass with great care and attention as though he was seeking to satisfy the critical eye of professional botanists. Indeed, it is likely that the care which he took in thus depicting plant form was influenced by the sustained interest in botany which characterized the three voyages. This must be stressed. For the minute precision of his rendering of plant forms is a feature only of his finished work.²⁵

Webber was, in short, scientifically accurate—or strove to be. In Ellis he found a 'complement', one who was, Beaglehole writes, a 'relief' from Webber yet

by no means an equal contributor to our visual impression of the voyage; a bonus, not part of the documentary bargain struck by the Admiralty.²⁶