

Cats as well as dogs were entire strangers to the New Continent, and though I formerly mentioned that a huntsman had taken to Columbus a cat which he had killed in the woods of America, I am now convinced that the species did not then exist there. I was then less aware of the abuses which had been made in names, and I acknowledge I am not yet sufficiently acquainted with animals to distinguish them with precision in the fictitious and misapplied denominations given them by travellers. Nor is this to be wondered at, since the nomenclators, whose researches were directed to this object, have rendered it more dark and intricate by their arbitrary names and arrangements. To the natural propensity of comparing things which we see for the first time, with those already known, and the almost insuperable difficulty of pronouncing the American names being added, we are to impute this misapplication of names which have since been productive of so many errors. It is much more easy, for example, to call a new animal, a *wild boar*, than to pronounce its name at Mexico, *quab-coya-melt*; to call another *American fox*, than to retain its Brazilian appellation, *tamandua-guacu*; to give the name of *Peruvian sheep*, or *camel*,

to