Exercise 01

As scientific knowledge has substantially expanded, our approach to knowledge may have changed: the earlier native beliefs in undeniable truths have given way to the contextualization of knowledge, dramatically expressed as the end of grand narratives.

This is evident in the changing approaches towards expert knowledge, from full trust in the skills of the expert to a reserved trust, which places a higher burden of judgement on the individuals and the society.

A major shift from ‘science’ to ‘research’ is identified in the production of scientific knowledge.

According to this shift, knowledge becomes less final and more open to change.

Science was associated with ‘certainty, coldness, aloofness, objectivity, distance, and necessity’, but research was, in contrast, ‘uncertain; open-ended; immersed in many lowly problems of money, instruments, and know-how’.

Exercise 02

The early modern readers of travel accounts were likely to be interested in the descriptions of far-off peoples and places, but travel literature has also historically served to promote “national, religious, and cultural identities.”

Simon Schama has suggested that the struggle to control the sea was an important aspect of the merging Dutch identity; an identity won through transformative ordeals.

Stories describing Dutchmen persevering in the face of tremendous difficulties, gave the Dutch something similar to a heroic epic that formed the essence of what it meant to be Dutch in the seventeenth century.

Through stories like those presented in travel literature, the Dutch represented themselves by creating a type of heroic myth. This was a “myth” in the sense of “ a popular conception of a person or thing which exaggerates or idealizes the truth,” rather than a completely fictitious story.