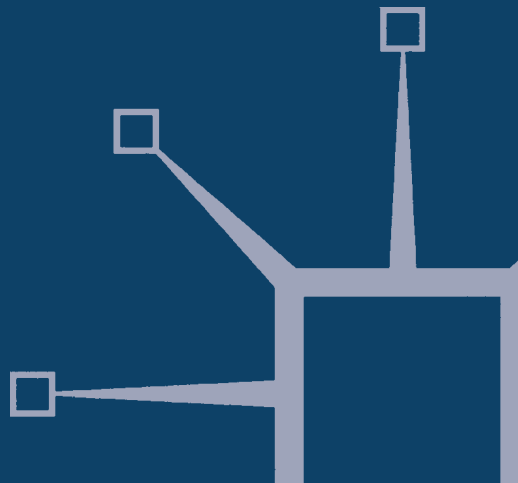


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# Science, Voyages, and Encounters in Oceania, 1511–1850

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Bronwen Douglas



# Science, Voyages, and Encounters in Oceania, 1511–1850

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# Science, Voyages, and Encounters in Oceania, 1511–1850

Bronwen Douglas

*Adjunct Associate Professor, The Australian National University*

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macmillan



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*For Jean Abbott  
and  
In loving memory of Jean Craig*

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# List of Abbreviations

ACM	Archives centrales de la Marine, Service historique de la Défense, Vincennes
AGS	Archivo General de Simancas, Spain
AN	Archives nationales, Paris
ASN	<i>Annales des Sciences naturelles</i>
<i>Atlas [historique]</i>	J. Dumont d'Urville (1833a), <i>Voyage de la corvette l'Astrolabe ... Atlas [historique]</i> . Paris: J. Tastu
CRHSAS	<i>Comptes rendus hebdomadaires des séances de l'Académie des Sciences</i>
MNHN	Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
NLA	National Library of Australia, Canberra
OUP	Oxford University Press
PNG	Papua New Guinea
RAE	Real Academia Española
SHD	Service historique de la Défense
SLNSW	State Library of New South Wales, Sydney
<i>Voyage au pôle sud et dans l'Océanie ...</i>	<i>Voyage au pôle sud et dans l'Océanie sur les corvettes l'Astrolabe et la Zélée ... pendant les années 1837–1838–1839–1840 ...</i>
<i>Voyage autour du monde ...</i>	<i>Voyage autour du monde ... sur les corvettes de S.M. l'Uranie et la Physicienne pendant les années 1817, 1818, 1819 et 1820 ...</i>
<i>Voyage autour du monde ... sur ... La Coquille</i>	<i>Voyage autour du monde ... sur la corvette de sa majesté, La Coquille, pendant les années 1822, 1823, 1824 et 1825 ...</i>

*Voyage de découvertes aux  
terres australes ...*

*Voyage de découvertes aux terres australes ...  
sur les corvettes le Géographe,  
le Naturaliste, et la goëlette le Casuarina,  
pendant les années 1800, 1801, 1802,  
1803 et 1804...*

*Voyage de la corvette  
l'Astrolabe ...*

*Voyage de la corvette l'Astrolabe ...  
pendant les années 1826–1827–1828–1829 ...*



# Preface and Acknowledgements

Beginning nearly two decades ago to work seriously on materials which led eventually to this volume, I published two articles on 'race' and Indigenous presence in Oceanic voyage literature (1999a, 1999b). I planned to produce a book on local agency in Oceanic encounters after 1750 but the theme of race exploded out of every effort I made to write the first chapter. It became clear that a thorough historical understanding of the complex intersections of racial ideas and regional experience requires more than antiracist outrage and postcolonial fluency in discourses on 'the savage'. It was equally evident that most general histories of race lack rigorous comparative grounding in the vernacular works of contemporary Euro-American theorists and that there was a paucity of detailed work on the history of race in the 'fifth part of the world'. Named 'Oceania' in the early 19th century, this vast zone encompasses the Pacific Islands, Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, New Guinea, and island Southeast Asia.

To redress these deficiencies, I combined ongoing research on the rich archival and published legacy of European voyages in that zone with detailed reading of original Euro-American texts in the natural history of man, comparative anatomy, geography, physical anthropology, ethnology, and the science of race during the century after 1750. This work bore fruit in my contributions to the collection of essays *Foreign Bodies: Oceania and the Science of Race 1750–1940* (2008), co-edited with Chris Ballard. I wrote two long chapters – one on the formulation and normalization of a biological concept of race in Europe; the other on the relationships of racial theory to evidence derived from scientific voyaging in Oceania. These detailed histories of the science of race in European theory and Oceanic practice constitute an original contribution to the history of ideas and set the discursive and theoretical scene for the present volume. Their ready availability online freed me to re-focus Part II of this book more on the Oceanic side of my historical equation – on encounters, Indigenous agency, their ambiguous traces in the written and visual representations of scientific voyagers, and their echoes in works of metropolitan synthesis. However, I realized that it was arbitrary and shortsighted to limit the double history of European ideas of human difference and encounters in Oceania to the period after 1750. Accordingly, Part I is much extended to span two entwined

themes. One is the lexico-semantic history of ‘not-race’ – the emergence and usage of a grab bag of words in several European languages to label, describe, and eventually classify people – from the 15th-century onset of overseas encounters until the late Enlightenment. The other is the ethnohistory of the first 250 years of Oceanian encounters with Europeans from 1511 until the scientific voyaging era.

As in *Foreign Bodies*, my strategy is to denaturalize the modernist scientific concept of race by historicizing it. Thus, I track the lexico-semantic history of the word, its non-uses, uses, and cognates, from insignificant genealogical origins to scientific and popular reification. I also seek to expose the tensions, inconsistencies, and fractures in racial discourses. And I scrutinize the disjunctions between voyagers’ ideas about human similarity or difference and their circumstantial renditions of embodied encounters with Indigenous people. This approach has several pragmatic corollaries – ‘racial’ is a relatively neutral term connoting ‘race’ in its modernist biological sense; ‘racialist’ labels negative opinions expressed about persons or groups on the basis of hereditary, supposedly collective physical and mental characters; and the overdetermined term ‘racist’ is generally avoided.

All translations are my own except where otherwise indicated. My particular thanks to Hilary Howes and Brett Baker for generous help in translating passages in German, Dutch, and Latin and Portuguese and Spanish, respectively.

For aesthetic reasons, I use inverted commas minimally except for direct quotations, including them only on first mention of a specialized English term in its contemporary sense. They are, however, consistently implied in the case of now problematic words such as ‘race’, (racial) ‘type’, ‘hybrid’, ‘nature’, ‘civilized’, ‘civilization’, ‘savage’, ‘savagery’, ‘primitive’, ‘Negro’, ‘Hottentot’, ‘Mulatto’, ‘Papuan’, ‘black’, ‘white’, ‘native’, ‘pagan’, ‘heathen’, ‘Moor’, ‘infidel’, ‘heretic’, ‘man’ (in the inclusive sense of humanity), ‘the West’, and so forth. First names are cited on first mention of individual protagonists and omitted thereafter. The personal names of French authors follow the international standard recommended by the Bibliothèque nationale de France. Where available, hyperlinks to online copies of maps or pictures referenced but not reproduced in the text are cited in the Bibliography.



This book entails intellectual debts which it is a pleasure to acknowledge. Bernard Smith told us long ago that pictures as well as words tell stories

and that antipodean experience helped reconfigure metropolitan ideas and modes of representation. Dipesh Chakrabarty, Ranajit Guha, Ann Stoler, and Nicholas Thomas provided theoretical reinforcement for my sense of the instability of colonial power and the cleavages in imperialism's discourses. Guha and Roland Barthes contributed key linguistic strategies for the critical dissection of European voyage texts and the identification of ethnohistorical markers and Indigenous countersigns embedded in them. Inga Clendinnen and Donna Merwick challenged me with their histories of encounters and delighted with their elegant prose. Claude Blanckaert and George Stocking, Jr, introduced me to the history of science and confirmed that the best histories combine empirical rigour with incisive reflection and theoretical sophistication.

I have more personal debts to colleagues, students, and editors. Warm thanks to Stephanie Anderson, Warwick Anderson, David Armitage, Brett Baker, Alban Bensa, Peter Brown, Rainer Buschmann, John Cashmere, Inga Clendinnen, Andy Connelly, Bertrand Daugeron, Greg Dening, Dario Di Rosa, Kirsty Douglas, Karen Fox, Helen Gardner, Tom Griffiths, Hilary Howes, Margaret Jolly, Susanne Kuehling, Spencer Leineweber, Billie Lythberg, Morris Low, Vicki Luker, Sandra Manickam, Donna Merwick, Carlos Mondragón, Michael Morgan, Adrian Muckle, Ashwin Raj, Judith Richards, Ricardo Roque, Anne Salmond, Tiffany Shellam, Matthew Spriggs, Nicholas Thomas, Serge Tcherkézoff, Benoît Trépiéd, Paul Turnbull, Robin Wallace-Crabbe, Christine Weir, and Graeme Whimp, who have generously shared ideas, expertise, experiences, texts, and friendly disputation about them. To Chris Ballard and Elena Govor, and Claude Blanckaert, my partners in successive Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery projects, particular thanks for your meticulous scholarship, collegiality, and unstinting friendship. I also thank my academic and professional colleagues in the Division of Pacific and Asian History, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies – now the Department of Pacific and Asian History, School of Culture, History and Language, ANU College of Asia and the Pacific – at The Australian National University (ANU), where I was a fellow and senior fellow for 16 fulfilling years. I thank my editors at Palgrave Macmillan, Jenny McCall and Holly Tyler, for their unfailing skill, patience, and encouragement.

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Museum. In France: the Archives nationales, the Bibliothèque and the Département Hommes – nature – sociétés of the Musée de l’Homme, the Bibliothèque of the Musée de la Marine, the Bibliothèque centrale of the Muséum national d’Histoire naturelle, and the Bibliothèque nationale, all in Paris; the Ancienne Ecole de Médecine navale in Rochefort; the Médiathèques in Rochefort and La Rochelle; the Musée des Beaux Arts in Chartres; the Muséums d’Histoire naturelle in Le Havre and La Rochelle; and the Service historique de la Défense, département Marine, in Vincennes, Rochefort, and Toulon. My particular thanks to Quentin Slade and Martin Woods at the National Library of Australia; Christian Coiffier and Philippe Mennecier at the Musée de l’Homme; Daniel Desprès in Chartres; Gabrielle Baglione in Le Havre; Yvonne Bouvier-Graux, Claude Stéfani, and Arnaud Thillier in Rochefort; and Chantal de Gaye, Elise Patole-Edoumba, and Jean-Louis Mahe in La Rochelle.

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# Introduction

# Introduction: Indigenous Presence to the Science of Race

This book is a study of the linkages and hiatuses between metropolitan discourse and regional praxis.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, it investigates the intersections of fluctuating European ideas about human similarity and differences over four centuries with the grounded experience of European voyagers during actual encounters with Indigenous people in the ‘fifth part of the world’, or ‘Oceania’, from 1511 to 1840. It is a systematic history of neither anthropology nor European seaborne exploration but a set of interconnected episodes that bring ethnohistory into play with the history of science through focus on the interactions of travellers and local inhabitants. Intellectual history and ethnohistory are bridged by lexico-semantic history – systematic attention to the contemporary meanings of the words used by savants or voyagers to describe, name, label, and eventually classify people or groups. I trace the long trajectory of one such term, ‘race’, from inconsequential genealogical origins to reconfiguration as a biological taxon.

In his presidential address to the annual assembly of the Société de Géographie in Paris in 1828, the renowned comparative anatomist Georges Cuvier (1829) vaunted the recent ‘conquests of geography’ by ‘maritime explorations’ which had ‘revealed to the world these greatly varied tribes; these countless islands that until recently the Ocean had ... rendered unknown to the rest of humanity’. Cuvier’s ‘conquests’ were not merely geographical – ‘our voyagers’ were ‘philosophers, naturalists, no less than astronomers and surveyors’; they collected the ‘products’ of lands visited and studied the ‘languages and customs’ of the inhabitants. ‘Saved for science’ in official archives and collections, ‘their harvests’ enriched ‘our museums, grammars, and lexicons’ as much as ‘our atlases and maps’. Cuvier was not unqualified to appraise the legacy

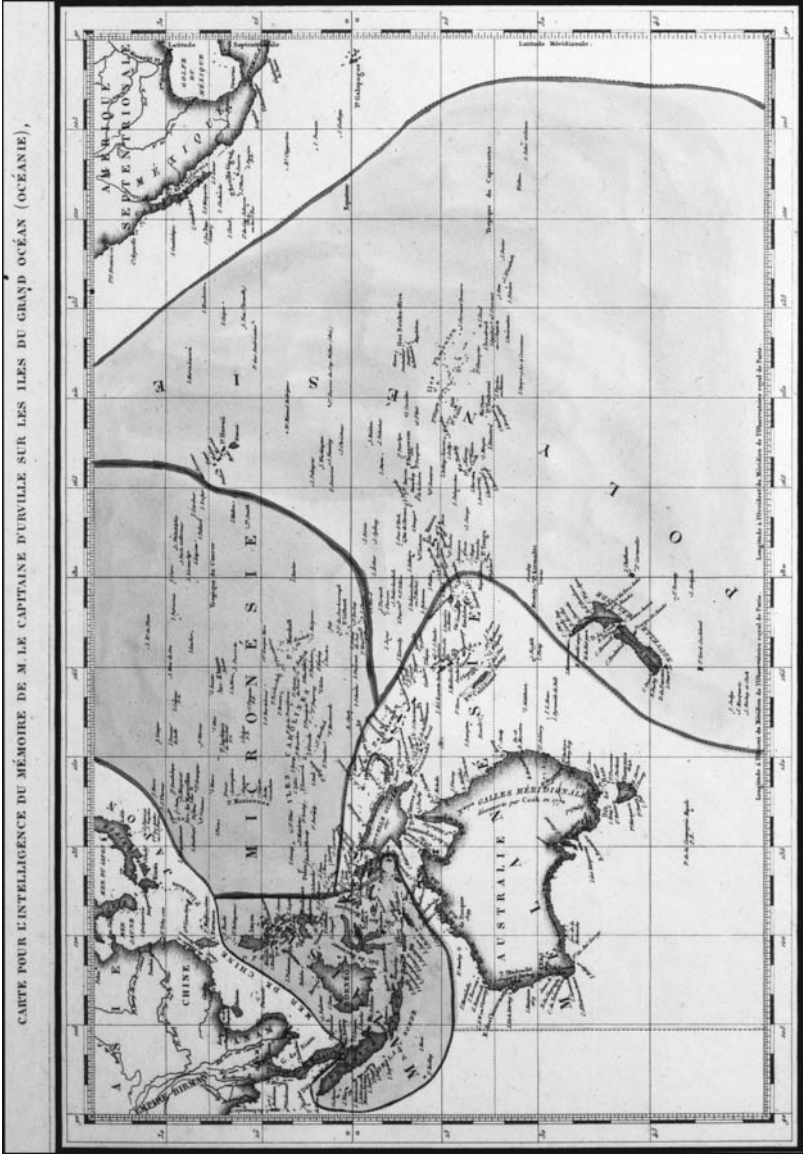
of Oceanic voyaging since, as a perpetual secretary in the Institut de France, he was often an official selector, instructor, or zoological commentator in relation to the naturalists on French scientific voyages during the three decades after 1800.

## Places

Cuvier's triumphalist platitudes adventitiously condense the spatial limits and the content of this book. Spatially, his maritime conquests were all products of voyages to the *mer Pacifique* ('Pacific sea') and parallel my focus on the fifth part of the world. Modern geopolitics often limits Oceania to the Pacific Islands or at most includes Australia. But I reinstate its original usage by early 19th-century French geographers and naturalists to name an extensive insular zone encompassing New Holland (mainland Australia), Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), New Guinea (Papua New Guinea/PNG and Indonesian Papua and West Papua), New Zealand (Aotearoa), the Pacific Islands (Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia), and the East Indies or Indian, Asian, or Malay Archipelago (island Southeast Asia) (Map 0.1). Lacking economical contemporary alternatives, I project Oceania backward in time to designate the fifth part of the world for the entire period of study.

This vast zone has been occupied by modern human beings for a more or less immense period but known empirically to Europeans for scarcely seven centuries.<sup>2</sup> Skirted by the Venetian traveller Marco Polo at the end of the 13th century, its western margins became familiar to the Portuguese as *Mar do Levante* or *Oceano Oriental* ('Eastern Sea/Ocean') following their capture of Malacca (Melaka, Peninsular Malaysia) in 1511. Two years and half a world away, the Spaniard Vasco Núñez de Balboa saw a great ocean to the south of Darien (Isthmus of Panama) and named it *Mar del Sur* ('South Sea'). Yet much of Oceania remained almost unknown and undifferentiated in Europe until the mid-18th century. This entire segment of the globe inspired European myth or speculation for far longer than it has been European actuality. The classical theory that a huge antipodean land or Antichthon necessarily counterbalanced the great known northern land masses of a spherical earth was deduced by Greek philosophers from the sixth century BCE; mapped by the Alexandrian geographer Ptolemy in the second century CE; rejected on scriptural grounds by most early Christian and medieval churchmen; and renewed in novel printed formats during the 15th-century Renaissance.<sup>3</sup>





Map 0.1 A. Tardieu (1833), 'Carte pour l'intelligence du mémoire de M. le capitaine d'Urville sur les îles du grand océan (Océanie)'. National Library of Australia, Canberra, MAP NK 2456/73

The passage of Ferdinand Magellan (Fernão de Magalhães) in 1520 to what he called *Mare Pacificum* ('Pacific Sea') seemed to many to prove the existence of a vast fifth continent south of the strait that bears his name. It would take 300 years for Magellan's oceanic nomenclature fully to supplant Balboa's (Spate 1977). But by 1600, his and later voyages had confirmed the discovery of a fifth part of the world to complement the *oikoumene*, the Old World of Europe, Asia, and Africa, and the New World of the Americas. While Europeans named the other four parts after the continents that constituted them, the enigmatic fifth was either *incognita* ('unknown') or largely maritime. For more than two centuries, the numerical descriptor 'Fifth part of the world' was the common denominator in diverse nomenclatures, some oceanic (*Mar del Sur*, *grand Océan*, Pacific Ocean), others terrestrial or insular (*Terra Australis*, *Zuytlandt*, South Land, *Süd-Indien*, *Polynesien*, *Australien*, *Monde maritime*, *Océanie*).

Many savants and mariners professed a tenacious belief in the ever-shrinking reality of *Terra Australis incognita* until the late 18th century. This 'unknown South Land' remained a persistent goal for exploration until definitively reduced by James Cook to roughly the modern contours of Australia and Antarctica.<sup>4</sup> The earliest geographical classification of the 'fifth part of the world' was proposed by the French savant Charles de Brosses (1756, I:76–80) who divided the *Terres australes* ('southern lands') into three great regions. *Australasie* ('Australasia') and *Magellanique* ('Magellanica') spanned large partly known or conjectural lands in the southern Indian, south Pacific, and south Atlantic Oceans. *Polynésie* ('Polynesia'), named for its 'multiplicity of islands', encompassed 'everything within the vast Pacific Ocean'.<sup>5</sup> As the mirage of the great southern continent dispelled, *Magellanique* was discarded but Brosses's other regional toponyms had enduring, if protean existence. From 1780, following the Swedish geographer Daniel Djurberg (1780), German-speaking savants adapted *Polynesien* ('Polynesia') as their preferred umbrella term for the fifth part of the world. It was sometimes bracketed with *Süd-Indien* ('South Indies') and superseded after 1800 by *Australien* ('Australia'). Some German cartographers divided the zone cardinally, usually into *West*, *Mittel*, and *Ost* regions.<sup>6</sup> A map published in an English missionary text (Anon. 1799) splits the 'Pacific Ocean' into two regions, 'Greater' and 'Lesser Australia', approximating Brosses's *Australasie* and *Polynésie*.

In 1804, when the *Terres australes* were known to Europeans in broad outline, the geographers Edme Mentelle and Conrad Malte-Brun (1804:359–63) suggested *Océanique* ('Oceanica') as a better designation,

supported by the geographer–linguist Adriano Balbi (1817:21, 294–5). In 1815, the term was amended to *Océanie* ('Oceania') by the cartographer Adrien-Hubert Brué (1815: plate 36) who had served as a midshipman on Nicolas Baudin's Australian voyage of 1800–4. The polymath Charles Athanase Walckenaer (1815:75–6) proposed another novel umbrella label by slotting the *Monde maritime* ('Maritime World') into a tripartition of the globe alongside the Old World and the New World. *Océanie* was well established in French cartography when endorsed empirically by the widely travelled navigator–naturalist Jules Dumont d'Urville (1832:2–3, 5–6, 10–11). He proposed a new, explicitly racialized regional classification, replacing Brosses's toponyms with the four 'principal divisions' of *Polynésie*, *Micronésie* ('Micronesia'), *Malaisie* ('Malaysia'), and *Mélanésie* ('Melanesia') which included New Holland or *Australie* (Map 0.1). He adopted *Mélanésie*, from Greek *melas* ('black'), 'as it is the homeland of the black Oceanian race'.<sup>7</sup>

*Océanie* and Dumont d'Urville's racialized regional divide were naturalized in France from the early 1830s and became the international standard in the 20th century. However, the route from French invention to global geopolitics was not straightforward, as other national nomenclatures took idiosyncratic directions during much of the 19th century (Douglas 2011b). Minimalist British mapmakers preferred Pacific Ocean or Pacific Islands as their umbrella label but often added a geographical distribution into Australasia, Polynesia, and sometimes Malaysia. In the United States, Oceanica was favoured from the 1820s, usually in tandem with the same regional triumvirate. Dumont d'Urville's regional names began to appear on British and United States maps late in the century. German cartographers largely ignored Oceania and retained *Australien* as the overall term but from 1850 often used Dumont d'Urville's labels and divisions. Elena Govor's exhaustive survey of names applied to the fifth part of the world in 40 Russian atlases published between 1713 and 1916 revealed no map dedicated to that zone before about 1810 and eclectic usages thereafter, often borrowed from German or French but with clear preference for *Avstraliia* ('Australia'). Regionally, these Russian atlases relied on Brosses's geographical terminology, qualified after 1840 by Dumont d'Urville's racialized alternative.<sup>8</sup>

## Themes

With respect to the content of this book, Cuvier's 1828 address specifically celebrates the human legacy of voyaging, a major focus of my enquiry. I investigate the patchy representations of Indigenous people

in Oceania by travellers from the early 16th century and the more systematic representations by sailors, naturalists, artists, and a phrenologist during the era of scientific voyaging after 1766. The study hinges on my contention that words written and pictures drawn by voyagers in the context of encounters with local inhabitants are imbued with signs and ambiguous ‘countersigns’ of Indigenous agency (see below). These representations were made by men who gained comparative experience of a wide range of Oceanic places and people during selected Spanish, Dutch, British, and French expeditions. They include the 16th-century voyages of Magellan, Alvaro de Mendaña y Neira, and Pedro Fernández de Quirós (Queirós); the 17th-century voyages of Quirós and Luis Váez de Torres, Jacob Le Maire and Willem Corneliszoon Schouten, and William Dampier; the 18th-century expeditions of Philip Carteret, Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, Cook, and Joseph Antoine Bruni d’Entrecasteaux; and the 19th-century voyages of Baudin, Matthew Flinders, Louis de Freycinet, Louis-Isidore Duperrey, and Dumont d’Urville.<sup>9</sup>

My second major theme, enmeshed with the first, is the eventual emergence and normalization of a ‘science of race’ (Douglas 2008a). The term refers to systematic efforts in the new 19th-century disciplines of biology and anthropology to theorize collective physical differences between broad human groups as innate, morally and intellectually determinant, and possibly original.<sup>10</sup> From the late 1760s, rich stocks of information and objects and a few Indigenous persons were repatriated from Oceania by scientific voyagers (Douglas 2008b). The science of ‘man’ used such materials to support deductions about the natural history and classification of the human species, giving the Indigenous people of the fifth part of the world a pragmatic or symbolic value well beyond their limited political, material, or demographic import in Europe. Later in the 19th century, metropolitan theory and Oceanic field experience fused in Darwinian conceptions of race. Darwinism’s leading English proponents Charles Darwin, Joseph Dalton Hooker, Thomas Henry Huxley, and Alfred Russel Wallace all spent formative periods as naturalists in Oceania and often made authoritative empirical reference to its denizens.<sup>11</sup>

As well as Cuvier and Malte-Brun, the savants considered are the Swede Carl Linnaeus; the Swiss Johann Caspar Lavater; the Dutchman Petrus Camper; the Frenchmen François Bernier, Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertuis, Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu, Georges-Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon, Brocchus, Walckenaer, François-Joseph-Victor Broussais, Julien-Joseph Virey, Jean-Baptiste-Geneviève-Marcellin Bory de Saint-Vincent, Etienne-Renaud-Augustin Serres,

Edgar Quinet, and Paul Broca; the Germans Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Immanuel Kant, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, Johann Gottfried Herder, Alexander von Humboldt, and Franz Josef Gall; the Scots Adam Smith, John Millar, Henry Home, Lord Kames, and George Combe; the Anglo-Irishman Oliver Goldsmith; the Italian Balbi; and the Englishmen Charles White, James Cowles Prichard, Darwin, and Wallace. These men spanned almost three centuries and a broad ideological range on such fraught questions as the origins, causes, and significance of human differences; the naming and classification of human varieties, races, or species; and the unity or otherwise of the human species.

Like all travellers, voyagers to Oceania had varied predispositions shaped by current cosmology, ontology, and embedded discourses. Such presumptions might be cast in sharper relief or confirmed or challenged in the heightened emotional state provoked by encounters with exotic places and people. From the inception of Oceanic voyaging after 1511, local populations attracted voyagers' interest, not least because their royal, parliamentary, republican, or commercial masters usually enjoined them to observe and report on the people they met, as potential colonial subjects, converts, suppliers, or customers. However, as science came to the forefront of imperial concern and competition after 1760, voyagers more systematically addressed natural history, including that of man, though it was always subordinate to the core nautical sciences of navigation, hydrography, geography, meteorology, physics, and astronomy. Diverse metropolitan ideas and theories about humanity went to Oceania in ships' libraries and in the intellectual baggage of travelling naturalists who brought prevailing concepts and an increasingly taxonomic mindset to bear on transient, often confronting personal experience of encounters with actual Indigenous people. Naturalists' speculative racial histories and regional human classifications bridge, on the one hand, the universalizing abstractions of the natural history of man or the science of race and, on the other hand, the grounded particularity of anecdotes and ethnography in travellers' journals, narratives, and artwork.

Though most of the naturalists considered in this book are French, they also include the Englishman Joseph Banks and the Germans Johann Reinhold and Georg Forster, who all sailed with Cook; the Englishman Robert Brown who served with Flinders; and the French-born German *littérateur* Adelbert von Chamisso who joined the first of Otto von Kotzebue's two Russian voyages. The earliest French naturalists to study a wide range of Oceanian people were all civilians. Philibert Commerson sailed with Bougainville, Jacques-Julien Houtou

de La Billardière with Bruni d'Entrecasteaux, and François Péron with Baudin. When Freycinet resumed scientific voyaging for France in 1817 after the long hiatus of the Napoleonic Wars, he refused to take civilian scientific personnel because, as a junior officer, he had experienced the incessant conflicts between savants and seamen that plagued Baudin's voyage. In what became official policy in Restoration France, Péron's successors were almost all naval medical officers doubling as naturalist–anthropologists (see Chapters 4 and 5). In this capacity, Jean-René Constant Quoy and Joseph-Paul Gaimard served with Freycinet and with Dumont d'Urville in 1826–9; Prosper Garnot and René-Primevère Lesson with Duperrey; Pierre-Adolphe Lesson with Dumont d'Urville in 1826–9; and Jacques-Bernard Hombron and Honoré Jacquinot with Dumont d'Urville in 1837–40, along with the civilian phrenologist Pierre-Marie Alexandre Dumoutier. Dumont d'Urville, himself a noted naturalist, also made important contributions to Oceanic anthropology.

In the interests of verisimilitude, naturalist–anthropologists where possible reinforced what they wrote or collected with the visual authority of ethnographic portraiture, sometimes drawn by themselves but more often by shipboard artists. The texts considered in this book include drawings of Oceanian people produced from the early 17th to the mid-19th centuries by Diego de Prado y Tovar, William Hodges, [Jean] Piron, William Westall, Nicolas-Martin Petit, Philip Parker King, Jules-Louis Le Jeune, Jacques Arago, Alphonse Pellion, Louis-Auguste de Sainson, Ernest Goupil, Louis Le Breton, and several anonymous artists. I refer also to two other visual genres – contemporary maps and the *moulages* (plaster busts) produced by Dumoutier of people he met in Oceania.

### **Human similitude to the science of race**

In one respect, there is apparent longstanding continuity in western European thinking about non-white people. For nearly five hundred years, opposed sets of supposedly 'Negro' and 'white' bodily characteristics have provided negative and positive standards for the description, naming, comparison, and ultimately the classification of human beings. Whereas classical and medieval slavery was not determined by skin colour, a steadily hardening anti-African sentiment paralleled growing European involvement in the slave trade in west Africa from the mid-15th century and the novel correlation of Negro with enslavement over the following century.<sup>12</sup> In a matching linguistic shift, the Iberian descriptive adjective *negro* ('black'), initially applied to darker-skinned people generally, was substantivized in pan-European usage

as a synonym for the noun 'African', with mounting connotations of paganism, backwardness, ugliness, and inferiority.<sup>13</sup>

However, if colour prejudice has long been ingrained in European sensibilities, its meanings and expressions have altered significantly over time. The empirical content of this book straddles two discursive shifts, treated as changing emphases rather than sudden ruptures. A minor theme is the 17th-century transition from longstanding theological to more rationalist conceptions of man and nature, in conjunction with heightened imperial competition, the consolidation of the slave trade, and an emerging commitment to classificatory system. A major theme is the late 18th-century displacement of the assumption of essential human similitude by differentiating belief in essential racial inequality, in an era of political revolution, renewed colonial rivalry, and paradigmatic shifts in the science of man (Douglas 2008a).

With respect to Britain, the literary historian Roxann Wheeler (2000:2–38) stressed the fluidity and multiplicity of 18th-century and earlier ideas about human differences, the correlation of visible bodily variation with 'older conceptions of Christianity, civility, and rank', and the causal centrality accorded 'elastic' climate and humoral theory over the 'more rigid anatomical model' that supplanted it. During the 18th century, varieties of the heterodox doctrine later labelled polygenism attracted a handful of prominent advocates, including the philosophers David Hume, Voltaire, and Kames, as well as both supporters and opponents of the African slave trade (Douglas 2008a:48–9). Polygenism takes the apparent existence of morphologically distinct human groups – often conceived as separate biological species – as proof that humanity originated in more than one independent set of ancestors. Its ancient moral and categorical antithesis is monogenism – belief in the ultimate unity and common ancestry of the single human species which became Christian dogma. These terms emerged in the mid-19th century (Gliddon 1857a:428) but condense much older ideas. For economy, I generalize them throughout the book to designate opposed positions on the fraught questions of human specific unity or diversity. However, until the late 18th century, holistic classical and Christian cosmologies held sway and most naturalists took human similitude for granted, notwithstanding widespread European distaste or contempt for non-Christians, Negroes, and 'savages'. By this monogenist logic, physical differences between seemingly discrete groups were neither intrinsic nor original but the surface outcomes of uneven environmental, historical, or moral processes – whether 'degeneration' (change) caused by the effects of climate, geography, or lifestyle on a single, migrating human

species; selective development towards civility since the creation; the presence or absence of ‘true religion’; or a mixture of such processes.

In these settings, the words *race* and ‘race’ were insignificant concepts in French and English until the 18th century. Emergent around the end of the 15th century and of ‘uncertain and disputed’ etymology, they connoted shared ancestry or descent and quality of breeding; denoted a ‘tribe, nation, or people, regarded as of common stock’; or referred to humanity as a whole – the human race as the posterity of a single couple.<sup>14</sup> Their German equivalent *Race* or *Rasse* was a recent borrowing from French and rarely used (Forster 1786:159). This book closely tracks the changing lexicons of savants and travellers over more than three centuries. During this long time-span, the words applied to people became more precise, more discriminative, more sweeping, and eventually more categorical as Europeans encountered a greater number and diversity of unfamiliar populations, sought to dominate them, and adjusted enunciation to experience. Throughout the 16th century and well into the next, the prevailing terms were neutral and all-inclusive (‘men’, ‘inhabitants’, ‘people’), but with increased recourse to the narrower, more or less demeaning synonyms ‘Indian’ and ‘native’ and to Negro. During the 17th century, collective terminology became steadily more common. By the 18th century, race was one of several roughly equivalent collective nouns which essentialize a group and take a singular verb – along with ‘variety’, ‘nation’, ‘tribe’, ‘people’, ‘class’, ‘kind’, ‘species’. Such nouns are nominalist labels for actual groupings which had their own or attributed names and were demarcated mainly by geography and physical appearance, especially skin colour, but also by language, customs, and supposed level of civility. This widening but imprecise metaphorical use of race occurred incidentally from the late 17th century in writings by Bernier, Leibniz, Maupertuis, Buffon, Goldsmith, and others (see Chapter 2). It is evident in the transposable wording applied by Reinhold Forster (1778:228, 276–7) to the ‘two great *varieties* of people’ he had discerned ‘in the South Seas’ during Cook’s second voyage:

Each of the above two *racés* of men, is again divided into several *varieties*, which form the gradations towards the other race ... the[se] two different *tribes* ... [are probably] descended from two different *racés* of men ... the five *racés* ... belonging to the first *tribe*, are really descended from the same original *nation*.<sup>15</sup>

From the late 18th century, race steadily outstripped its collective synonyms in popular and scientific lexicons but in nominalist usage the word is not necessarily racialist. If a race is a product of climate and milieu, rather than inherent organic properties, it is necessarily unstable and



impermanent, as the naturalist Buffon (1749, 1777) always insisted. However, in 1777 the philosopher Kant (1777:128–9) published a path-breaking redefinition of *Racen* ('races') as a category of stable 'hereditary differences' between animals of a 'single stock'. A race in this sense will consistently maintain itself when displaced to other areas. From the mid-1790s, the comparative anatomist Blumenbach (1797:23) popularized Kant's (1785a:405–9) conception of a race and criterion of 'unfailing heredity' as the main 'difference between races and varieties'. Blumenbach (1781:51–2; 1795:284–7; 1797:60–3) previously classified mankind into 'five main varieties' but now reconstituted them as five *Haupt-rassen* ('principal races').<sup>16</sup> In this categorical, rather than nominalist usage, a race is dematerialized as a taxon in a classification imposed a priori on actual groupings. Global geographical taxonomies of human varieties had appeared in 18th-century natural history with Linnaeus. Rebadged as races by Kant and Blumenbach, such taxa would be reified as true in the fixed human hierarchies propounded by the 19th-century science of race. There is an early cartographic manifestation of this dawning taxonomic impulse in two maps published by the German *littérateur* Georg August von Breitenbauch (1793). They superimpose twin taxonomies, only partly overlapping, on a nominalist mapping of the world's *Völker* ('peoples'). One division classifies seven or eight *Bildungen* ('formations') on the basis of *Körperbau* ('physique'); the other categorizes six named and one unnamed 'colours'.

The varied conception and definition of a race by eminent monogenists were textual markers of important but uneven shifts under way at the end of the 18th century in related discourses and epistemologies about man. Publicly, popular attitudes were hardening towards human differences in general and Negroes or savages in particular. However, Buffon, Kant, and Blumenbach all opposed slavery and denounced the insidious attractions of polygenism, while Blumenbach insisted on the 'perfectibility' of 'our black brethren'.<sup>17</sup> Intellectually, Kant and Blumenbach championed the swelling scientific credibility of hereditary accounts of human diversity, as venerable Christian, climatic, and humoral explanations lost ground in the face of novel anatomical and physiological knowledge. Methodologically, unlike Buffon, they broadly endorsed Linnaeus's (1758) abstract 'natural system'.<sup>18</sup>

Linnaean taxonomy facilitated the development of biology and anthropology which classed man as a natural object in relation to the other animals (rather than quarantine him from them as an exalted divine production) and eventually differentiated humanity internally into broad groupings or races. A race in this specialized sense is a permanent,

bounded entity determined by innate, hereditary, perhaps original physical characters.<sup>19</sup> The sixth edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (Institut de France 1835, II:553) gives 'by extension' a new signified for *race*: 'a multitude of men who originate from the same country, and resemble each other by facial traits, by external form. *The Caucasian race. The Mongol race. The Malay race.*'<sup>20</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* likewise cites late 18th-century and subsequent uses of *race* in 'more or less formal systems of classification' to mean 'any of the major groupings of mankind, having in common distinct physical features or having a similar ethnic background'.<sup>21</sup>

Taxonomy is not inherently hierarchical and Enlightenment classifications usually stressed the similarity of all men against other animals. Neither Buffon who opposed taxonomy, nor Reinhold Forster who embraced it, systematically ranked the labile varieties or races into which they divided the single human species. Rather, Buffon tacitly and Forster (1778:285, 212–609) explicitly located them along a provisional trajectory of assumed common development 'from the Savage state towards Civilization'. Such developmentalist or 'stadial' philosophies of human difference were systematized from the mid-18th century, parallel to and at times overlapping natural history's nominalist catalogues of human varieties (see Chapter 3). Both stadial theory and natural history would be ideologically subsumed by the science of race.

The 19th-century racial distinctions were novel not so much in nastiness – earlier discriminations could be vituperative – as in their reification of supposedly collective, hereditary physical differences within permanent racial hierarchies. Cuvier (1817b:270, 273) encapsulated this innovation by contrasting the traditional view of the head as 'the basis on which we have *always classed nations*' with modern practice in which 'we *distinguish the races* by the skeleton of the head'.<sup>22</sup> With racial inequality reconfigured as an immutable product of physical organization, especially the size of the brain, few 19th-century naturalists resisted the lure to marry classification with hierarchy. In the process, they racialized and congealed developmental theories and displaced ethnocentric scenarios of general human progress with pessimism about the aptness of certain non-European races for civilization or even for survival. The relative perfectibility of different races was a key point of cleavage between Enlightenment and 19th-century positions and between racial scientists and humanitarians. Yet, by the later 19th century, harsher racial attitudes in Europe and its colonies and the generalization of specific demographic decline into a universal scientific law, dooming 'inferior races' in the face of civilization, led many humanitarians to

concur regretfully with the likelihood of racial extinctions, notably in Australia and some Pacific Islands.<sup>23</sup>

Formulated in Germany, the new signified of race was quickly embraced by French naturalists, geographers, and comparative anatomists, led by Cuvier, and by British anatomists, though philanthropists resisted the term in Britain until the 1830s. National timelines varied and meanings were nowhere precise or uncontested but race as a biological category became a key lexical unit in anthropological discourses in western Europe during the half century after 1800. As a collective noun, race was used in both nominalist and taxonomic senses, often within a single text. However, during this period it was generalized into an abstract noun condensing a total, if illusory theoretical system. The science of race, or raciology, masked visceral emotion with a veneer of scientific rationality, as in the notorious aphorism of the Scottish anatomist Robert Knox (1850:7): 'Race is everything: literature, science, art, in a word, civilization, depend on it.' Thus naturalized as an invariable, fundamentally differentiating, measurable human physical quality with axiomatic social, moral, and intellectual correlates, the idea of race acquired the scientific authority which guaranteed its unquestioned realism over at least the next century.

With respect to Oceania, an emerging racial logic was insinuated, perhaps surprisingly, in the aforementioned English missionary text, the narrative of the first London Missionary Society voyage to the Pacific in 1796–8 ([Wilson] 1799). An anonymous 'Preliminary Discourse', attributed to the Rev. Samuel Greatheed (1799:lxxxv–lxxxviii), reinscribes Forster's twofold division of Pacific Islanders without acknowledgement and more categorically. Very widely read in the natural history of man (Gunson 1978:111), Greatheed identified 'two distinct races of inhabitants' which 'differ essentially'. One was a 'more savage', 'darker race' of 'black natives', similar 'in person' to Africans, who occupied the region as far east as Fiji. The other, their supposed 'supplanters' in many coastal areas, was a 'fairer race' which had 'dispersed' to the central and eastern Pacific Islands and New Zealand. The racial divide avowedly stimulated his regional toponyms 'Greater' and 'Lesser Australia', mapped on the 'Chart' of the voyage (Anon. 1799).

If Greatheed echoed earlier usages, the modern hereditarian, biological meaning of a race was anticipated in Malte-Brun's (1803:548) pioneer racial classification of the people of *Océanique*, first enunciated in collaboration with Mentelle (1804:363, 473–4, 612, 620). They differentiated the 'very beautiful', 'copper-coloured', '*Polynesian race*' from the 'black race' of '*Oceanic Negroes*'.<sup>24</sup> A decade later, Malte-Brun (1813:244)

refined his taxonomy along explicitly biological lines by dividing the *races* into ‘two very distinct stocks [*souches*]’, ‘yellow’ and ‘Negroes’. Between 1813 and 1822, the German cartographer Christian Gottlieb Reichard produced or inspired a series of maps which differentiated ‘the Malays’ of *Ost Australien* (the central and eastern Pacific Islands) from the ‘Negro-like’ inhabitants of *West Australien* (New Holland, Van Diemen’s Land, New Guinea, and neighbouring groups in modern Island Melanesia). In at least two maps, *West Australien* is labelled *der Ur-Nation* (‘of the original nation’), an implication of primitive autochthony. To my knowledge, these are the first maps to separate Oceanian people on an overtly racial basis.<sup>25</sup>

Dumont d’Urville (1832) took the biological reality of races for granted in reworking Malte-Brun’s nomenclature. He too classified ‘the Oceanians’ into ‘two distinct races’ but also ranked them hierarchically. The Malays, Polynesians, and Micronesians were inherently superior in racial, moral, and political terms to the Melanesians, Australians, and Tasmanians, though all were inferior to Europeans. With minor modifications, Dumont d’Urville’s tripartite division of Pacific Islanders into Polynesians, Micronesians, and Melanesians was normalized in global racial or ethnic terminology from the late 19th century. But, as with his toponyms, histories of its adoption were nationally quite diverse (Douglas 2011b). More recently, these categories were naturalized in modern Indigenous usages.

Racism and racial terminology have been widely discredited since the 1950s, while the genetic or cultural reality of races as discrete, permanent entities has been refuted by most, though not all, biologists and social scientists. Yet, the idea of race not only retains its realism and ontological status but still permeates popular opinion and vocabularies worldwide. One purpose of this book is to denaturalize the race concept by exposing its historical ambiguity and contingency. With specific reference to Oceania, I aim to show that the racial values which essentialize Polynesians, Micronesians, and Indonesians in opposition to Melanesians, Papuans, or Aborigines are not natural expressions of innate, collective physical differences. Rather, they are historical residues of centuries of encounters, colonial experience, and classification, informed from the late 18th century by hardening, though not fixed or unchallenged racial fantasies, camouflaged as science.

## **Exotic experience to Indigenous presence**

The crystallization of a biological concept of race and the genesis of racial taxonomy marked a paradigm shift in the embryonic science

of anthropology, from the natural history of man to the science of race.<sup>26</sup> In the 1960s, the historian of anthropology George W. Stocking, Jr (1968), epitomized this shift in the changing relationship between the emergent concepts of ‘civilization’ and ‘race’ – whereas civilization was seen in the 18th century as ‘the destined goal of all mankind’ and ‘often used to account for apparent racial differences’, in the 19th century it was seen more and more as ‘the peculiar achievement of certain “races”’. Stocking exemplified the transition in the disparity between the respectively physicalist and humanist programmes set out in 1800 for French travellers, particularly Baudin and his naturalists, by Cuvier (1857) and the *idéologue* philosopher Joseph-Marie de Gérando (1883).<sup>27</sup> In seeking to contextualize, rather than ‘account for’ the transition, Stocking acknowledged that discourse and praxis are mutually constitutive. By the 19th century, not only ‘the conventional framework in which contact was perceived’ had changed, but also ‘the circumstances of racial contact’. Earlier idealization of ‘the virtues of savage life’ was challenged by the ‘impact’ of increasing European ‘experience’ of contact with exotic people which produced novel ““empirical data”” about not so noble savages – notably, apparent proofs of the ‘visible “degradation” of the Tasmanians’ contained in the Baudin voyage literature.

Like Stocking, the art historian Bernard Smith pondered whether Indigenous behaviour towards scientific voyagers in Oceania might inadvertently have swayed widespread European attitudes towards so-called savages. Smith (1969, 1992) systematically anchored the transformation of Enlightenment discourses and conventions in the antipodean experience of naturalists and artists, thereby pioneering the history of the impact of Oceania in Europe. Unlike the prevailing conception of Indigenous people as static ‘images’ perceived by a dominant, objectifying imperial gaze, his key trope ‘vision’ allows tacit space for Indigenous input to European perceptions and representations of Oceanian people. But Smith (1969:85–7, 99–105) tapped the potential only fleetingly in arguing that ‘the death of famous navigators’ in Oceania in the late 18th century ‘did much’ to shift the weight of European opinion on savages from sentimental approval to general disgust. In a whimsical moment, he accorded Pacific Islanders an active contribution to reshaping imperial fictions. Reflecting on a piece of contemporary doggerel about the death of Cook, he mused that in this poem ‘the noble savage,... by the very act of killing the hero of empire has transformed himself into “the inglorious native”’. Notwithstanding his preoccupation with the impact of the exotic on European art and ideas, Smith’s passing insight hints at Indigenous presence in European imagining

and representation. His intuition was extended by the art historian William Eisler (1995:83–93) who attributed 17th-century Dutch representations of Pacific Islanders to experience of native behaviour rather than systematic racial predispositions, since ‘racism in its modern form’ did not yet exist.

Stocking’s and Smith’s recognition of the discursive influence of ‘experience’ beyond Europe was radical in the history of ideas in the 1960s, while Smith’s intimation of Indigenous textual presence was unprecedented. From about 1950, Euro-American intellectual historians began to expand their focus from metropolises to margins by studying European attempts ‘to make sense of a world outside Europe’. Though often principled anticolonialists, they usually positioned non-European worlds and their inhabitants as objects of hermetic, a priori European ‘images and conceptions’ (Marshall and Williams 1982:1, 299), leaving little scope for theorizing outside input to European knowledge.<sup>28</sup> A further widening of focus in the early 1990s, from European imaging of the exotic to include exotic impact on European imagining and imaging, is evident in Anthony Pagden’s contrast between his 1982 and 1993 projects. In the first (1986:4–6), he sought to describe the ‘cluster of notions, categories, suppositions’ about what Europeans would encounter ‘out there’ and how they ‘affected the first European attempts to understand the peoples of America’. But in the second (1993:5), he addressed European attempts to grasp ‘the *newness* of America’ and its impression ‘on the history of Europe itself’.<sup>29</sup> Yet even in this work, European cognition, aesthetics, discourses, protocols, representations, and actions remain squarely in the frame while Indigenous people are shadowy marginal figures.<sup>30</sup> For more than two decades, a core aim of my research and writing has been to redress that imbalance. The linchpin of this work, my conceptualization of Indigenous presence in the texts of encounter, has begun to infiltrate wider histories.<sup>31</sup>

## **An eye for Indigenous presence**

I shall not propose a causal explanation for the lexical, semantic, and discursive transitions outlined but rather chart the generation, content, and significance of fluid vocabularies of human difference – in action in encounters in Oceania, in voyagers’ representations, and in learned treatises and classifications. In the course of encounters, navigators, naturalists, and artists drew on varied received wisdoms to make sense of alien actions and demeanours. In the practical intersections of expectation with Indigenous presence, new understandings were forged

and representations inspired that served in turn as empirical fodder for scholarly deduction.

To counter the historical perils of essentialism, binarism, Eurocentrism, teleology, and anachronism, I take the following principles as axiomatic. First, an encounter is not a general clash of two opposed, homogeneous, reified cultures, leading inexorably to the destruction or demoralization of the weaker. Rather, it is a messy, embodied episode in a specific time and place, involving multifaceted interactions of gendered, classed Indigenous and foreign persons. I avoid the essentialist terms 'culture', 'cultural', and 'crosscultural'. Second, protagonists in encounters were not always opposed though understandings rarely corresponded across major differences of language and ontology. Third, Europeans did not inevitably control or dominate encounters and exchanges with Oceanian people. Fourth, a non-teleological history will try to suspend knowledge of outcomes and focus on past presents, allowing something of their myriad latent contemporary possibilities. Finally, rigorous semantic scrutiny of original materials in the languages of first publication will combat anachronism and show the alterity of all pasts, both European and non-European.

Strategically, I aim to decentre European authors on whose texts my study necessarily depends and expose the tensions, ambivalences, distortions, contradictions, and sleights of hand in those texts to ethno-historical exploitation.<sup>32</sup> Ethnocentrism, ignorance, racism, sexism, and other biases are thus not simply errors or moral failings but revealing discursive attributes to be recognized and used. Methodologically, this project involves tracking the production and reproduction of European knowledge about Indigenous Oceanians through different eras, nationalities, places, and encounters; through shifting discourses and artistic conventions; through different levels of abstraction; and through varied mediums, genres, or modes of representation. The mediums are written, drawn, and moulded; original or reproduced; unpublished or published. The genres range from contemporary journal, report, and correspondence to voyage narrative, reminiscence, and scientific treatise; from field sketch, chart, and *moulage* to finished drawing, painting, map, engraving, and lithograph. The modes are anecdote, history, autobiography, biography, portraiture, ethnography, anthropology, taxonomy, cartography, theory, and critique.

From early in my career as a Pacific historian (1972, 1998), I used colonial texts pragmatically to write historical ethnographies of past Indigenous worlds and ethnographic histories of particular Indigenous tactics to exploit, endure, resist, and subvert colonial presence. These

projects drew on what Antonio Gramsci (1996, II:21) called the ‘fragmentary’ ‘trace of autonomous initiative’ by the ‘subaltern classes’.<sup>33</sup> The idea of a trace alludes to the metaphor of texts as palimpsests bearing vestiges of past subaltern or colonized relationships, settings, and actions which can be read between the lines or across the grain. The historian Gyan Prakash (2000:287, 288, 293–4) used this image to point out: ‘what historical records present us with are palimpsests of the subaltern, impressions of the subversive force exerted by the “minor”, never the force itself’. However, the palimpsest metaphor can occlude human agency. I acknowledge Prakash’s important conception of ‘subaltern knowledges and subjects’ as an ‘intractable’, ‘subversive’, ‘irruptive’, ‘counterhegemonic’ presence that ‘arises in the entanglements of power, inhabiting the warps it produces in the fabric of dominance’. But I reiterate that Indigenous Oceanian people were not necessarily ‘subaltern’ in encounters with Europeans, even in mature colonial settings and rarely during brief shore visits by scientific expeditions. I contend that, not only are colonial texts infused by counterhegemonic impressions of subversion by the colonized, but also that the perceptions, reactions, and representations of the purportedly dominant were affected by the agency of the supposedly subjugated.

Historians routinely exploit the ethnohistorical potential in discordances between different kinds of texts and different categories of authors but most have done so empirically, relying on orthodox procedures of document analysis.<sup>34</sup> Ranajit Guha (1983), a founder of the Subaltern Studies group, helped pioneer the use of literary critical techniques to read generic differences in colonial and elite texts against the grain in order to write subaltern history. In the mid-1990s (1996, 1998:159–91), I adapted this tactic to ethnohistory by juxtaposing representations of particular episodes in various genres of texts – different categories of colonial writings; written or oral Indigenous histories and poetry; and modern ethnographies.<sup>35</sup> The method rests on careful linguistic investigation of the relationships between signifiers (expressions), signifieds (meanings), and referents (things referred to) (Barthes 1966, 1967). Signifier (*signifiant*) is not here given Saussure’s (1986:66, 130–1; 1989:149–51) strict sense of an arbitrary *image acoustique* (‘sound pattern’) paired with a *concept* or *signifié* (‘signified’) to constitute a *signe* (‘sign’). Rather, the definition ‘expression’ allows for the impression of referents on signifiers.

I subsequently complicated the equation of textual critique and ethnohistory by adding the factor of Indigenous presence.<sup>36</sup> The development, explication, and illustration of this idea constitute this book’s conceptual and methodological originality. Indigenous presence



designates the imprint of certain referents on the signifiers used to represent them. The referents in this study include the relationships, lifestyle, behaviour, and appearance of local people. Filtered through distorting screens of presupposition, precedent, perception, and emotion – both ecstasy and phobia<sup>37</sup> – Indigenous presence impinged on outsiders' representations in three ways. First, directly, as consciously processed sign. Second, indirectly, as latent ethnohistorical marker – a trace of local patterns of social, ritual, economic, and political practice. Third, inadvertently, as countersign – a residue of the oblique impact of Indigenous agency on visitors' perceptions and reactions. I borrowed the concept of countersign from an insight of the feminist literary critic Shari Benstock (1986:349–51) about the use of the strategy of palimpsest by modernist women writers: 'a palimpsest that would counter predominant male myths ... exposes through the layers of its compositions the feminine countersign of the male myth *already present* in the culture'.<sup>38</sup> Indigenous countersigns are variously evident in written and visual texts – lexically in vocabularies; syntactically in the choice and disposition of words or motifs; grammatically in tense, mood, and voice; semantically in presence, emphasis, ambiguity, or absence; and emotively in tone and style, tension or contradiction. They work, in the image of the literary theorist Paul Lyons (2001:147), through 'a kind of mimesis' which 'impresses the world of the referent into the seams of sentences', allowing 'the represented a contiguity with the processes of representation themselves'.<sup>39</sup>

My theoretical scenario rests on the general proposition that no representation transparently mirrors a fixed past reality. Its particular corollary is that imperial or colonial representations were generated in the practical intersections of discourse, author, and audience, medium, genre, and mode, *and* Indigenous presence. In contrast, Eurocentric scholarship may debate the relative importance of structure and authorship, discourse and experience in the determination of knowledge but overlooks the impact of local agency on outsiders' experience and imagery. Thus, in their fine study of 'British perceptions of the world' during the Enlightenment, Peter Marshall and Glyndwr Williams (1982:259) posited a 'clear and two-way link between the conclusions of scholars at home on primitive peoples in general and the explorers' assessments of the specific Pacific peoples they encountered'. But they evidently discerned no symbolic imprint of the behaviour and desires of 'specific Pacific peoples' on 'explorers' assessments', let alone any feedback into 'the conclusions of scholars at home'.<sup>40</sup>

I sum up my reasoning thus far. The representations of Indigenous people in Oceania by European voyagers were informed by metropolitan

literary or artistic conventions, prevailing discourses on human difference, and assumptions about audience demands. Convention, discourse, and presumption provided grammar and vocabulary for description and evaluation. But voyagers' representations were forged by individual authors and artists whose endowments, interests, and strategic voices contributed a particular syntax to the processing and description of experience. And their representations also bore the stamp of personal encounters with certain local inhabitants who attracted, intimidated, or repelled foreign observers. Such encounters affected visitors' perceptions; validated, contested, or transformed their predispositions; and left markers, signs, and countersigns in the written and pictorial archive.<sup>41</sup> Reciprocally, from the mid-18th century, the steady stream of empirical material from Oceania, with its subtle cargo of Indigenous presence, helped feed an emerging science of race. Across western Europe, that science took overlapping but distinctive national contours which in turn jostled with voyagers' experience to shape the racial classifications they imposed on Oceanian people.

### **The art of representing 'savages'**

Indigenous countersigns are not necessarily or uniformly disseminated through colonial texts. Their presence and salience differ widely depending on contingencies of authorship, local agendas, and the relative immediacy, genre, and medium of texts. As fallout from the uncertainties and emotions inherent in encounters, countersigns are most often evident in moments of doubt and in discrepancies within or between texts. Such doubts and inconsistencies are often indirect products of Indigenous agency. As Prakash (2000:293) remarked: 'Subaltern knowledges and subjects register their presence by acting upon the dominant discourse, by forcing it into contradictions, by making it speak in tongues.' Though more or less camouflaged in observers' ignorance, prejudices, and ethnocentrism, Indigenous countersigns can be cast in sharper relief in two ways – by exploiting generic ambiguities and differences, especially between relatively proximate texts (such as field notes, journals, or sketches) and more polished, reworked formats; and by juxtaposing the varied mediums of writing and drawing.

This book shows that the combined semantic power of words and pictures in conveying ethnohistorical information can surpass that of either symbolic code independently. Yet so far, visual materials have not often been systematically integrated into cultural histories of Oceania, despite the efforts of Smith (1969, 1992) and other art historians,

historians, and anthropologists.<sup>42</sup> The anthropologist of art Howard Morphy (2002:148) rightly lauded voyage ‘illustrations’ as a ‘rich source of information’ about both Aboriginal Australians and ‘the nature of the colonial encounter’ but failed to make the key link that such illustrations are themselves produced by colonial encounters. Historians and anthropologists have tended either to dismiss voyage and colonial art as hopelessly exoticist and objectifying, with no reliable factual content, or to take it literally, but trivialized, as a decorative accessory to written texts. Art historians often lack local grounding in Oceanic history and ethnography. By bracketing visual with written representations and subjecting both to crosscutting rigorous critique, the method proposed in this book significantly expands the quality as well as the quantity of the resources available for writing histories of encounters.

From the late 1790s, an increasing proportion of European representations of Oceanian people were produced by more or less long-term residents such as missionaries, administrators, and settlers whose works are often key ethnohistorical resources. The ethnographic and anthropological results of relatively short seaborne visits to particular places in Oceania before 1850 are nonetheless of ongoing comparative ethnohistorical interest. Many such voyages ranged widely across the zone and from the beginning their crews included artists. Expeditions after 1760 often correlated the trained empirical observation of naturalist–anthropologists with the dedicated expertise of scientific artists whose brief was to produce systematic, naturalistic images of people, places, and things encountered. In Barbara Stafford’s (1984:xix–xx) terms, the ‘strong alliance forged between art and science’ produced ‘a bivalent genre’ – ‘descriptive word wedded to accurate image’. Stafford’s theme was the influence of ‘the scientific aesthetic of discovery’ on travellers’ representations of landscapes. However, the ‘ardent yearning for facts rather than fictions’ applied equally to people, as in Herder’s (1785:68–9) rhetorical plea for ‘a magic wand’ which, by enabling him ‘to transform into pictures all the indeterminate verbal descriptions given thus far’, might thereby ‘provide man with a gallery of the illustrated forms and figures of his fellow men on this Earth’. Although the portraits produced on some 18th-century voyages were famously idealized and non-naturalistic, Smith (1969, 1992) showed that the displacement of neoclassicism by empirical naturalism was apparent in the art of Cook’s voyages and had become compelling by the end of the century. Eisler (1995) challenged Smith’s chronology by tracing the fertile association of art, science, and exploration to the Renaissance rather than the Enlightenment. He argued that, from the 16th century, Spanish,

English, and Dutch voyagers and their draughtsmen were strongly committed to the accurate description and depiction of non-European people, places, and natural phenomena, though much of their original work has not survived.

Drawing, moreover, may be inherently a less hierarchical mode of ethnographic representation than writing because, as Smith (1992:83–5, 93–7) pointed out, its execution usually had to be negotiated between hosts and visitors while accurate portraiture demands protracted interpersonal contacts and some cooperation between artist and subject. In such contexts, the agency of Indigenous subjects could infiltrate voyage art. The pressures on scientific artists for mimetic realism and their susceptibility to local agency meant that visual representations of Indigenous people often belie the racial stereotyping of 19th-century savants who mobilized voyage art in support of the science of race, especially in France.

### Regarding agency

This book goes beyond the now commonplace inference that there must have been some local agency in encounters to conceptualize the textual traces of such agency as Indigenous countersigns, an intrusive element in the content, language, and tone of voyagers' representations. The proposed investigative strategy in turn promises plausible access to countersigns and by extension to the agency they signify. Taking local agency seriously problematizes the hoary but still routine assumption – an occupational hazard in a study based on European texts – that Europeans inevitably controlled both the praxis and the representation of encounters with Indigenous people.

I have long rejected the pervasive impulse in the social sciences to reduce persons to inert objects of the operation of abstract causal forces or of the simple, linear imposition of colonial, gendered, or elite power. Edward Thompson (1958:89) called such positions 'the denial of the creative agency of men, when considered not as political or economic units in a chain of determined circumstances, but as moral and intellectual beings, in the making of their own history'. Traces of past human agency, particularly that of Indigenous, female, subaltern, and other historically suppressed categories of persons, have been my historical holy grail (1998:19–22). However, there is nothing unproblematic about either the concept of agency or the quest for it. Postcolonial writers like Talal Asad (1996), Dipesh Chakrabarty (1997), Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1992), and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

(1988) proffered powerful critiques of the complacent ethnocentrism which naturalizes and universalizes a secular, liberal, modernist idea of the legally responsible, rational individual. Anthropological historians like Nicholas Dirks (1997), Webb Keane (1997), and Lata Mani (1991) pointed to the ambivalent entanglement of variant conceptions of agency in colonial and Christian projects to civilize, convert, and rescue 'natives'. Poststructuralist feminists or feminist anthropologists like Bronwyn Davies (1991), Henrietta Moore (1994), and Marilyn Strathern (1988) deconstructed the notion of the unitary humanist subject as a male, bourgeois dominant trope.

In my usage, agency connotes neither of the two most common 'Western' senses of the term – a bounded, autonomous individual subject or Christian instrumentality in effecting God's will. Rather, it approximates Pierre Bourdieu's (1980:87, 104) thesis that agents act – not necessarily with 'subjective intention' – within the inertia of *habitus*, 'the system of structured, structuring dispositions which is constituted in practice and is always oriented towards practical functions'. I presume a general human potential to desire, choose, and act strategically, historicized within limits and possibilities set by unstable assemblages of systems, personalities, circumstances, and ideas. Pertinent here is Bourdieu's (1980:84) critique of the theory of 'the rational actor' who supposedly acts purely on the basis of 'the intention of rationality and the free, informed calculation of a rational subject':

[We must rather] seek the principle of practices in the relationship between external constraints, which leave a very variable margin to choice, and dispositions which are the product of economic and social processes [that are] more or less completely irreducible to those constraints as defined at a precise moment.<sup>43</sup>

However, perhaps because I have always studied social situations in rapid flux, my unstable assemblages are less homogeneous, structured, and determinant than Bourdieu's *habitus*.

The politics of acknowledging the agency of Indigenous or colonized people are fraught. To many conscientious anticolonialists, arguments for Indigenous agency in the face of the seemingly irresistible force of colonialism may seem naïvely utopian. Yet this elegiac stance can be both teleological and Eurocentric. By projecting the perceived outcome of colonial domination back to earlier phases of interaction, they mask 'the precariousness of the enterprise' (Fabian 1991:155). By believing Europeans' assumptions of their own centrality in Indigenous worlds, they attribute colonialism 'more power than it achieved' (Mani

1991:394, 407).<sup>44</sup> Conversely, reactionary hyperindividualists may appropriate the idea of Indigenous agency as a ploy to implicate the colonized in their own oppression. Rejecting both poles, I regard colonialism as usually humiliating and often tragic for colonized people but challenge the assumption that it always dominated or signified locally as its proponents intended. This caveat is germane to all imperial and colonial situations but patently so to the spasmodic exchanges between precariously seaborne Europeans and firmly entrenched local residents that constitute this book's empirical focus. Any 'coloniality' in such engagements was ephemeral and one-sided. It was psychological – rooted in voyagers' intentions, interests, and imagined civility or racial superiority. It was discursive – expressed in their more or less demeaning representations of Indigenous people. But it was also precedential – in that explorers and the local spectre of their actual or potential violence often laid the ground for political, material, and spiritual colonization, sooner rather than later in New Holland and Van Diemen's Land.

I do not of course recommend that we merely invert the standard oppositional logic that Europeans act while Indigenous people *react* and thereby turn voyagers into passive receptors of local agency. I contend rather that careful attention is needed to the located experience of encounters with persons and their actions that helped stimulate particular representations. Systematic critical investigation shows that voyagers' representations are littered with traces of Indigenous agency but such traces are rarely unambiguous. They pertain to actions and contexts alien to foreign visitors and difficult for modern ethnohistorians to reconstruct. They were pre-processed in observers' perceptions. And they were expressed in available vocabularies that took their meanings from a range of contemporary ideologies about what constituted humanness and civilized or savage behaviour.

## Histories

That local agency in European encounters with the inhabitants of Oceania left obscure footprints in voyage literature and art is as clear to me as that the precise contours and meanings of that agency are more or less opaque. Yet until fairly recently, the historiography of Oceanic voyages was almost entirely a subset of imperial history or biography, mainly concerned with the romance or the science of discovery or with the exploits of great men and largely oblivious to Indigenous presence. The mode began with Portuguese and Spanish chroniclers,<sup>45</sup> with notable subsequent practitioners in Brosses (1756), the Scottish hydrographer

Alexander Dalrymple (1767), and the participant–historian James Burney (1803–17) who had sailed with Cook. It is given varied modern scholarly expression by historians or biographers such as Glynn Barratt (1988–92), Marnie Bassett (1962), J.C. Beaglehole (1966), Jacques Brosse (1983), Danielle Clode (2007), John Dunmore (1965–9, 2005, 2006, 2007), Edward Duyker (2003, 2006), Alan Frost (1998, 2003), Michael Hoare (1976), H  l  ne Richard (1986), Oskar Spate (1979, 1983), and Etienne Taillemite (1977). More or less unthinkingly Eurocentric, often anticipating colonial domination, such works typically make the rest of the world satellite to Europe’s sun and take for granted that metropolitan ideas and voyagers’ representations were internally generated. Lacking ethnographic sensibility, they often ignore, exoticize, or demonize ‘natives’, universalize them as less advanced versions of ‘us’, or stereotype them as objects or victims of European initiatives.

The emergence from the 1950s of an empiricist ‘island-centred’ school of Pacific historiography (Davidson 1966; Maude 1971) inflected some anglophone voyage histories. Beaglehole leavened his monumental editorial project on Cook (1955, 1961, 1967) with detailed ethnographic commentary while Spate (1988:1–54) saluted Indigenous priority in Oceanic voyaging in the final volume of his magnum opus. Smith’s engagement with island-centred Pacific historians while writing the 1957 doctorate which became his 1960 book might have alerted him to Indigenous presence. His central theme of ‘European reactions to the Pacific’ (1969:v) logically allows for Indigenous *actions* and, as suggested, implies an embryonic recognition of local agency. Such insights rarely trouble studies of voyage texts produced by most other art and intellectual historians and by literature scholars or scientific biographers. Though allowing a general Oceanic ‘impact’ on European form, style, and thinking, histories of art, literature, and ideas are usually even more ethnocentric than conventional imperial histories. Their typical formalism or idealism privilege decontextualized realms of (European) aesthetics, knowledge, or fancy, effacing Indigenous and even much European agency.<sup>46</sup> The necessarily personal, often hagiographic focus of biographies makes most of them equally reductionist in this respect, apart from exaggerating their subjects’ agency. This unconsidered essentialism is condensed in the trope ‘image’ which reduces Indigenous people to inert objects of imperial seeing and is recurrent in art, intellectual, and literary histories.

Ungrounded idealism also largely expunges the disparities of power identified by Edward Said (1979:5) who argued that the reified ‘Orient’ signifies ‘a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of

a complex hegemony' with an equally reified 'Occident'. Writing in the wake of Said's *Orientalism*, Marshall and Williams (1982:303) tentatively admitted a power dimension in imperial settings but still privileged 'idea' over 'action'. Confident that 'if there are connections between assumed knowledge of the world and the growth of British power and influence, they are not simple ones', they tried 'to show how views about the world's peoples and an increasingly active British role in their lives went together'. Yet 'the world' remained an object of extraneous 'knowledge' while imperial 'power and influence' constituted a one-way street.

In sharp contrast, following Said, the oppositional modes of post-colonial art and literary critique and colonial discourse analysis take inequities of imperial and colonial power as a theoretical given. But before the late 1990s, they are also notorious for an ahistorical textualism that demotes praxis in favour of discourse, unmoors signifiers from their referents, and universalizes a dominant, undifferentiated imperial gaze in place, for example, of the varied array of individual discoverer-heroes romanticized by conventional voyage studies. The more or less invisible native of imperial history is thereby rendered inscrutably past, beyond representation or the possibility of meaningful agency.<sup>47</sup> Subsequently, postcolonial critique has become generically less resistant to history and context but actual Indigenous bodies often remain spectral. Writing about Australian travel literature on Melanesia, Robert Dixon (2001:1–9, 17–20) condemned the literary postcolonialism he had himself practised in the 1990s and insisted on the need to go 'beyond texts' by contextualizing them 'richly' in relation to 'distinct though contingent domains of practice'. Yet his privileged domain was 'colonial governance' and his primary concern the 'colonial body' and its 'fragilisation' in tropical settings – a process attributed not to direct native agency but to the combined onslaughts of disease and 'colonial psychosis' triggered by 'primitive forces' lurking at the European core. Ironically, Dixon's lucid historical critiques of Australian colonial representations of Melanesia largely elide the 'native subject'.

With respect to the initial phases of European contacts with Indigenous Oceanians, colonial discourse analysis has, at least in principle, been less essentialist, more historical, and more alert to local agency than in the wider mode – perhaps a tribute to Smith's influence and that of the reflexive Melbourne-based 'ethnographic history' project epitomized in works by Greg Denning (1980, 1992, 1995, 2004) and Inga Clendinnen (2003).<sup>48</sup> Postcolonial critiques of voyagers' or voyage historians' representations of Oceanians include the anthropologist Gananath Obeyesekere's (1997, 2001) assaults on European



'mythmaking' about Cook or cannibalism and the literary histories of Lyons (2001), Jonathan Lamb (2001), Rod Edmond (1997), and Vanessa Smith (1998), all of which are adequately contextualized. Edmond (1997:10–12) denounced the essentialism of colonial discourse studies with a strong appeal for historical and colonial specificity while Smith (2010:20) also demanded 'attention to specificity' in order to 'do justice to historical subjects'. Indigenous actors are key figures in Obeyesekere's (1997:xviii, 223) 'imaginatively "re-ethnographized"' reading of voyage texts by a self-styled 'native from a colonized nation' who might thereby 'have insights into the lifeways of other colonized peoples'. Though actual Islanders are marginal to the substance of Edmond's and Lyons's textual critiques, background Indigenous agency is not in question, especially for Lyons.

Early work on voyage iconography by the art historian Harriet Guest (1989) accords almost no agency to Indigenous subjects. But in a later paper (2003:109–14) and book (2007:91–115), she added European experience of Indigenous demeanour to her interpretive repertoire to try to explain ambivalence and uncertainty infusing variant representations of Tongans by Cook and Reinhold Forster. They were, she argued, battling an uneasy existential sense of 'being at a disadvantage', particularly in trading. Another art historian, Jeanette Hoorn (1998:52–6), collapsed voyage art and "'evidence"' as mere 'artefacts of Europe's project of possessing' Pacific lands and people but she nonetheless discerned a story of local female agency in those same reviled materials, though without explaining how.

Parallel to the growing, if ambivalent receptivity to history and local agency in postcolonial critique, some historians of ideas since 1990 have begun to address the epistemic implications of field encounters and local knowledge. Martin Staum (1996:6, 160–2, 167–9) made a rather lonely challenge to overly textualist approaches by insisting that events are 'more than linguistic' and that it is not 'obsolete' to ask how they 'inflected *ideas* in texts about human nature'.<sup>49</sup> Restated as the obvious, but often overlooked, principle that 'explorers' assessments of peoples vary with their reception', this premise helped him explain seeming anomalies in voyage narratives, including Bougainville's far more positive account of the Pacific Islanders he met in 1768 than of the Native Canadians and Americans he had seen in 1756. In a later book, Staum (2003:85–121) highlighted the significance for French racial theory and colonial praxis of ethnographic information repatriated from Oceania, though he largely ignored encounters per se. His work is a case in point of the salience accorded Oceanic field experience

in the history of science generally.<sup>50</sup> Simon Schaffer (2007:91–3) pointed out that scientific projects in the South Seas have long been attributed ‘foundational’ status in ‘accounts of the roots of modernity’s long-range powers’. Whereas such works typically privilege European knowledge, Schaffer discerned ‘important symmetries’ between very different European and Indigenous ‘communities of knowledge’ and inscription, as between writing and tattoo. In a north Pacific context, the cultural geographer Michael Bravo (1999) stressed the importance of field encounters and exchanges with local residents in the construction of geographical knowledge by Enlightenment scientific voyagers. He had earlier (1996:351) called for attention to the ‘varied perspectives of ethnology’s human subjects’ and suggested that the high quality of ethnological research undertaken by William Parry in northern Canada in 1821–3 ‘was thoroughly contingent on the willingness of the Inuit to co-operate and help him’, for their own reasons.

In two papers on the trope of ‘Indigenous nobility’ in north America, Polynesia, and Micronesia, Harry Liebersohn (1994, 1999) sketched vivid vignettes of Indigenous demeanour during encounters with aristocratic European travellers. He nonetheless presumed that European ‘images’ of Indigenous people were ‘determined’ by ‘categories of their own making’, linked to ‘specific features of European social history’. Yet more recently, Liebersohn (2006:7–8, 138–85, 298–305) stressed the importance of ‘overseas encounters’ in a ‘global system of intellectual production’. He positioned naturalists on scientific voyages in the Pacific as ‘interpreters’ and ‘mediators’ between ‘metropolitan histories’ and such encounters – a stance not unlike my own. Moreover, he acknowledged the agency of a handful of ‘Polynesian travelers’ and chiefly ‘collaborators’, arguing that Europeans’ ethnographies were ‘deeply informed’ by the ‘mixture of interest and feeling’ in such relationships. But Liebersohn’s conclusion backs away from this hint of Indigenous textual presence to reassert the epistemological primacy of metropolitan discourse – visitors to Pacific places ‘praised locals as friends or denounced them as demons according to their homegrown religious, aesthetic, and political predilections’.

If traditional narratives of discovery and empire either ignored or stereotyped Indigenous people, most imperial historians are now less blinkered. A volume on *Pacific Empires* in honour of Williams (Frost and Samson 1999) has a mid-section on ‘Encounters and Transformations’. Two essays in a collection edited by Williams (2004) are devoted to Polynesian ‘attitudes’ towards and ‘impact’ on Cook. John Gascoigne’s (1994, 1998, 2002) histories of English science, British empire, and Banks

are unproblematically Eurocentric. However, a later work (2007:xiv–xv) repositions Cook as a ‘voyager between worlds’ and a key protagonist in the ensuing ‘cultural encounter’. Substituting a thematic approach for conventional biography or narrative, Gascoigne dichotomized ‘Europe’ and ‘the Pacific’ in the preface as ‘two different cultures’ but represented them asymmetrically in the body of the book. ‘Europe’ is quickly decomposed into a nuanced, historically located, personalized rendition of Cook’s several British milieus whereas ‘the Pacific world’ remains homogeneous, depersonalized, ahistorical, and fundamentally Polynesian.<sup>51</sup> Imagined thus, Gascoigne’s concept of ‘cultural encounter’ juxtaposes British individuals with aggregated Polynesians who become metonyms for ‘the Pacific’.

Since about 1980, the history of Oceanic voyaging has been radically transformed by historical anthropologists and cultural historians who used various tactics to bring an Indigenous factor squarely into their equations – whether as reified culture or in the context of encounters which are either homogenized as cross-cultural or, increasingly, differentiated as personal. Marshall Sahlins (1981, 1985, 1995) traced the appropriation, sacrifice, and apotheosis of Cook by Hawaiian culture which was itself transformed in the conjuncture of system and event. Denig (1980, 1986, 1992, 1995, 2004) compared the rituals by which Native and Stranger reciprocally possessed the other on Marquesan, Tahitian, and Hawaiian beaches. Anne Salmond (1991, 1997) probed the double entendres of local and imperial stories in Aotearoa New Zealand, adding sustained archival research to her deep expertise in Māori language, ethnography, and oral histories. Serge Tcherkézoff (2008) did much the same with respect to “‘first contacts’” in Samoa. Salmond (2003:xx–xxi) subsequently charted the ‘impact of Polynesia’ on Cook in the course of ‘cross-cultural encounters, in which Europeans and Pacific Islanders alike were historical agents’. A later book (2009) broadens her thematic scope to ‘European discovery’ generally while narrowing it geographically to Tahiti. Her most recent work on William Bligh (2011) combines biography with a ‘South Seas’ setting and again foregrounds Indigenous actors.

In several groundbreaking works, including an outstanding study of the Cook voyages, Nicholas Thomas (1991, 1997, 2003:xxxiii–xxxv) challenged the stereotype that encounters involved the opposition of ‘coherent’ cultures and instead addressed the ‘messy actualities’ of ambiguous meetings and exchanges between voyagers and local inhabitants. His latest monograph, *Islanders* (2011), applies this strategy to a broad canvas – a history of Pacific people during the long 19th century.

Deftly navigating the cosmopolitan medley of Islanders' experiences from early European contacts to the high colonial era, Thomas highlighted their efforts to exploit, manage, and endure new conditions or statuses over which, too often, they had little ultimate control. In the process, he vividly conveyed the complex ambiguities of past human lives and encounters in Pacific worlds. Kathleen Wilson (2004:345) likewise insisted on the 'dialogic nature' of sexual encounters in Polynesia and the need to focus on "conjunctions" rather than "culture" *per se*'. She further argued that 'the practices and epistemologies of Pacific peoples impressed themselves upon the explorers and the imperial archive in ways that altered both their substance and hence our ways of knowing them' – a clear, if rare acknowledgement of Indigenous presence in the texts of encounter and their ethnohistorical potential.

The trend to person-centred rather than structural approaches has born empirical fruit in several recent histories of encounters in Oceania and even leached into popular historiography (Iglar 2013). Jennifer Newell (2010) achieved the not inconsiderable feat of an original perspective on Tahiti in her study of ecological exchanges between Tahitians and Europeans from the 18th to the 21st centuries. Shino Konishi (2012) challenged teleological histories by investigating ordinary embodied encounters between European explorers and Aboriginal men. Elena Govor (2010), Maria Nugent (2009), and Tiffany Shellam (2009) distilled painstaking microhistories of particular encounters in Polynesia or Australia from imaginative attention to what Europeans wrote and drew about them. Probing the mundane complexities of situated personal interactions between Indigenous people and visitors, they cast fresh light on Indigenous engagements with, respectively, the twelve-day Russian stay in Nuku Hiva (Marquesas) in 1804, Cook's eight-day visit to Botany Bay (New South Wales) in 1770, and the early years of British settlement at King George Sound (southwest Western Australia) after 1826.

The proliferation of recent works on seemingly well-furrowed historical fields like the Cook, Bligh, and Baudin voyages or encounters in Tahiti testifies to the power of novel, multivisioned ways of reading old texts such as those which produced this book. So too does the creative mobilization of digital technologies to enable different kinds of exploitation of these materials, as essayed with varying effect in the 'South Seas', 'Baudin Legacy', and 'Artefacts of Encounter' projects.<sup>52</sup> Innovative approaches have spurred attention to less familiar themes and places, unsettling if not dislodging the preoccupation with Polynesia that has thus far characterized voyage histories, including

many of the new breed. Part of the novelty of this book is its effort to ground a synoptic intellectual history from the Renaissance to the 19th century in a precise regional praxis through a series of ethnohistorical episodes drawn from right across the fifth part of the world, set in places both well known and less well known.

## The book

The Table of Contents condenses my themes, demarcations, and strategy. The hinge linking Parts I and II is the late 18th-century discursive shift that accompanied and enabled the science of race, from holistic presumption of basic human similitude to mounting obsession with racial differentiation and ranking. Part and chapter headings allude to lexico-semantic and ontological histories – to subtle transformations in the meanings of words and in the relative significance of enmeshed religious, developmentalist, racial, and taxonomic logics from the 16th to the 19th centuries. Chapter sub-headings signal the ethnohistories of Oceanic voyages which weave through every chapter and situate global discourses and ideas in relation to specific sets of encounters. Each chapter is prefaced by a vignette evoking a relevant phase or theme in the history of European ideas about human similarity and difference. This stylistic device enables me to sketch global intellectual settings without revisiting in detail my earlier history of the science of race (2008a). The bulk of each chapter can thus be devoted to stories about voyagers' encounters with Indigenous persons whose agency and presence permeate the representations on which these ethnohistories depend.

The three chapters in Part I constitute a lexico-semantic history and an ethnohistory of 'not-race' from 1500 to 1800. The changing, largely non-racialized words applied to people in abstract treatises are juxtaposed with those used in practical reports by voyagers in the fifth part of the world. As Europeans travelled ever more widely to encounter a plethora of unfamiliar populations, successive verbal strategies were adopted to manage the glut of human diversity. The 17th century saw a shift from general to more specific, often demeaning wording and growing use of nominalist collective terminology. Some savants proposed human classifications during the 18th century and the concept of a race was biologized as a taxon from the late 1770s. Empirically, these chapters span three phases of Oceanic exploration. From 1511 to about 1760, Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch colonial activity in the East Indies and along the west coast of the Americas provoked English or French competition and gave rise

to numerous, haphazard, often confronting meetings with Indigenous people and places in New Guinea, New Holland, and the Pacific Islands. The second phase, constituting the classic era of Enlightenment scientific expeditions round the world and to the Pacific Ocean from 1766 to 1794, produced more systematic, if no less challenging encounters. So too did the third phase, comprising the turn-of-the-century voyages of Baudin and Flinders to *Terra Australis*, now contracted to the Australian continent. I class these two abbreviated but onerous expeditions as transitional between the Enlightenment and modern eras of scientific voyaging in Oceania.

Part II sets the modern era of scientific voyaging under sail in relation to hardening racial values and imperial rivalry in the metropolises from 1800 to 1850. Intellectually, this half century saw the profound racialization of human difference as the science of race grew steadily in certainty and standing, notwithstanding its untenable premises and spurious deductive logic. Whereas in the late 18th century, the concept of a race had been dematerialized theoretically as a zoological taxon, in the 19th century, reified human races were rematerialized within rigidly hierarchical classifications. The empirical focus of these three chapters is on four French voyages undertaken by Freycinet, Duperrey, and Dumont d'Urville in the increasingly harsh racial climate of post-Napoleonic France and on the uneven, often equivocal adoption of racial terminology by voyagers themselves in the context of particular encounters. These naval surgeons, artists, and other officers embraced anthropology as a secondary duty and were subject to conflicting imperatives – their own and their superiors' shifting values; official instructions and expectations; personal relationships with local inhabitants; and aspirations to convert their ocular authority as travellers into wider scientific credibility. Encountering Indigenous people across Oceania, scientific voyagers represented them in diverse mediums or genres which are often impregnated with countersigns of local agency. Voyagers also engaged more or less awkwardly with contemporary savants, especially Cuvier and Gall, and with racial theory.

I conceive knowledge as knowing – situated, pragmatic, and dialogic, occurring at the juncture of orthodoxy, precedent, and experience.<sup>53</sup> This book unpacks the interdependence of two overlapping modes of formulating knowledge about humanity. One is global, universalized, but highly ethnocentric. The other is regionally cosmopolitan, also ethnocentric, but uneasily empirical. Whereas the deductive systems propounded by metropolitan savants were fairly immune to Indigenous presence, voyagers' accounts were always threatened by mismatches

between presupposition and personal experience – the inadequacy of received vocabularies and concepts to comprehend highly varied human physical forms, lifestyles, and behaviours. From the late 15th century, the recurring challenge of encountering exotic people inspired lexical and semantic innovations in European languages. Moreover, the fertile tension between theory and practice ultimately contributed to the broad discursive transitions in European thinking about man which provide this book's contextual frame.

## Part I

'Indians', 'Negroes', & 'Savages'  
in *Terra Australis*



# 1

## Before Races: Barbarity, Civility, & Salvation in the *Mar del Sur*

*Voyages of the Portuguese, Spanish, & Dutch 1511–1616*

In the third edition of *De Generis Humani Varietate Nativa* ('On the natural varieties of mankind'), his landmark study of diversity within a common humanity, Blumenbach (1795:302–22) settled his long emergent fivefold classification of the 'principal' human varieties by naming them 'Caucasian', 'Mongolian', 'Ethiopian', 'American', and 'Malay'. He justified the final term linguistically since the great majority of this variety spoke the 'Malay idiom', notwithstanding their dispersal across the immense space between Madagascar and Easter Island and the great variation in 'beauty' and other bodily attributes which saw the Tahitians divided into two 'diverse stocks (*races*)'. One was 'paler' and facially very like Europeans, the other comparable in colour and features to 'Mulattos'. This second Tahitian stock resembled Islanders seen in the western Pacific Ocean, amongst whom the New Hebrideans (modern ni-Vanuatu) 'gradually' approached the *Papuas* ('Papuaans') and the New Hollanders who themselves merged imperceptibly with the 'Ethiopian variety'. Accordingly, they might 'not unfittingly' be assigned to that category in Blumenbach's 'distribution' which made the Malay variety transitional between the Caucasian – his original 'medial variety of mankind' – and one of the 'two extremes', the Ethiopian. Prime illustration of 'insensible transition' within and between varieties, the Malay confirmed his principled argument that humanity constituted a single species.

Blumenbach underpinned his case empirically in three footnotes (1795:320–1, notes x, y, z) referring to recent voyage narratives. One acknowledges Banks, chief naturalist on Cook's first voyage of 1768–71 (Hawkesworth 1773, III:373), and the English philologist William Marsden (1782) as the first to point out the vast geographical span of what modern linguists call the Austronesian language family (Pawley

2007:20–3).<sup>1</sup> The second cites Bougainville (1771:214) as authority for the binary division of the Tahitians into different stocks – the bracketed term *races* was Bougainville’s own. The third lauds the ‘immortal’ Portuguese-born Spanish navigator Quirós (1770:164) for having ‘carefully differentiated the variety of men inhabiting the Pacific Islands’ by saying that some were *albidos* (‘whitish’), while comparing others to ‘Mulattos’, and others again to ‘Ethiopians’.

In appropriating voyagers’ descriptions of Pacific Islanders to a taxonomic agenda, Blumenbach succumbed to the common historical snare of anachronism by projecting his own classification backwards on to earlier representations. Bougainville’s circumnavigation of the globe in 1766–9 was the first great scientific voyage. The word *race* rarely features in his published narrative (1771) and always in its multivalent 18th-century sense rather than with the potentially segregative biological meaning that Blumenbach himself was in the process of formalizing (Douglas 2008a:37–49). In retrospect in the narrative – but not in his contemporary shipboard journal (1977) – Bougainville (1771:214) described the populace of Tahiti as comprising ‘two very different races of men’. The first, most numerous, was tall, beautifully proportioned, European of feature and a sunburned ‘white’ in colour. The ‘second race’ was medium sized, resembled ‘mulattos’ in ‘colour and features’, and had ‘stiff, frizzy hair’. Yet both shared the same language and customs and seemed to mix ‘without distinction’, with no correlation between physical appearance and social status or intellect. Ahutoru, a high-ranking man who accompanied the voyagers back to France and was their key source of ethnographic and linguistic information, was of ‘this second race’ but made up in ‘intelligence’ what he lacked in ‘beauty’ (Nassau-Siegen 1977:398; Hervé 1914:212–13).

Quirós had twice set out across the *Mar del Sur* from the Spanish viceroyalty of Peru on expeditions of colonization (in 1595) and discovery (in 1605), latterly as commander. In his best-known text, the so-called ‘eighth’ memorial submitted to the king of Spain in 1610 seeking royal support for a further voyage, Quirós (1973a:38–9) catalogued a broad, locally varied spectrum of skin and hair colour in people he had seen and heard about in the eastern and western Pacific Islands: ‘their colours are white, brown [*loros*] mulattos, and Indians, and mixtures of one and the others, the hair of some is black [*negros*], thick and loose, of others is twisted and frizzy, and of others very fair and thin’. This passage does not ‘compare’ some Islanders to the Ethiopians, as Blumenbach thought, deceived by Dalrymple’s mistranslation of Quirós’s Spanish adjective *loro* as the English noun ‘negroes’.<sup>2</sup> The eighth memorial was

quickly translated into most major European languages and helped foster widespread belief in *Terra Australis* for more than 150 years.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, Quirós could not have conceived and Bougainville did not propose a racial typology of Oceanian humanity. From the Renaissance to the late Enlightenment, the subjects of every expanding European realm took for granted their own ancestral, religious, and civil superiority but the words available for human description remained nominalist and comparative rather than abstract or racially categorical. These lexicons were also parochial, inegalitarian, and denigratory of feared or reviled persons – Jews, Moors (Muslims), infidels, heretics, pagans, Negroes, barbarians, manual workers, peasants, witches, wild men, and so forth. Several of Bougainville's shipmates depicted Tahitians in terms no less fuzzy than those of Quirós. Lieutenant Jean-Louis Caro (1977:325) reported that some were 'mulatto, some whitish, others reddish and the rest black'. The surgeon François Vivez (1977:242) saw 'several nuances between mulatto and very white', all with 'black frizzy' hair but none with 'wool' – code for Negro.

In Quirós's memorials, variations in the skin colour of people he encountered in islands across the *Mar del Sur* were rhetorical tokens in his tenacious campaign to prove the reality of an unknown southern land ripe for conversion, exploitation, and colonization by Spain. In an earlier memorial, Quirós (1990:37–9) argued that the 'disparity in colours' of people he had seen in the Marquesas must prove their 'communication with other peoples' and the necessary nearby presence of a *tierra firme* ('mainland, continent').<sup>4</sup> In yet another, Quirós (1625:1427–8, 1430) recounted how the 'Lord' of Taumako (Duff group, southeast Solomon Islands) had given him sailing directions for 'more than sixty islands, and a large land' whose inhabitants and products he described in detail. This Indigenous knowledge of 'many islands' populated by 'many peoples' of 'various colours, with hair long, fair, black, curled, frizzy', provided further ammunition that 'in that hidden quarter of the globe, there are very large and extended provinces'. In the eighth memorial, Quirós (1973a:38–9) again strategically invoked the variegated appearance of South Sea Islanders as 'certain' signs of the 'vicinity of more governed people' and the occurrence of 'much commerce and intercourse'.

## **Before races**

The introductory section epitomizes the main discursive backdrop of this book – the emergence of racial taxonomy at the end of the 18th century out of the holistic but inchoate natural history of man of the

late Enlightenment. In challenging Blumenbach's presumption that voyagers' earlier descriptions represent real racial categories, I emphasized certain resonances between Renaissance and Enlightenment perspectives on man, in implied comparison with the 19th-century science of race. Yet, just as seemingly radical differences need not connote epistemic rupture, so commonalities or analogies should not be mistaken for unrelieved sameness. Instead, particular representations must be contextualized within unstable contemporary patterns of meaning, sentiment, and faith. In this and the next chapter, I distinguish two preliminary phases in the semantic history of race, without implying a teleological trajectory with the science of race as preordained outcome. These phases bracket an earlier, less dramatic discursive transition apparent in western Europe by the late 17th century – a shift from a predominantly theological ontology to a more rationalist one, with related lexical changes.<sup>5</sup> My brief outline of the first phase and its relationship to the ethnohistory of Oceania further problematizes the present realism of race by highlighting the word's versatility and historical contingency. Moreover, it broadens my enquiry beyond its mainly French and British focus by acknowledging important European antecedents. This chapter spans just over a century – from 1511, when Europeans definitively entered Oceania after the Portuguese conquest of Malacca, to 1616, when the voyage of Le Maire and Schouten in search of the *Zuytlandt* ('South land') ended at *Iacatra* or Jayakërta (soon to be renamed Batavia by Dutch conquerors, now Indonesia's capital Jakarta).

I stress that 16th- and 17th-century Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch assessments of people newly encountered in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, the Americas, and the South Sea were not racial in either the modern scientific sense of the term race or its present popular meanings. Rather, such judgements took shape from the mid-15th century in the empirical context of a radical expansion in overseas encounters and in the wake of Reformation and Counter-Reformation. In the process, parochial, hierarchical, but universalized religious fundamentalisms drew on an ancient series of classical or Christian moral dichotomies – civilized and barbarian, essential and accidental, pure and polluted, white and black, godly and satanic, and so forth. Rationalized as natural by contemporary neo-Aristotelian science, religious and social bigotry was stiffened by specific histories – of protracted Iberian conflict with 'infidel' north African invaders and of the developing European identification of 'heathen', black, supposedly uncivilized Africans with chattel slavery (Russell-Wood 1978). Many Europeans, including Quirós, believed American, Antipodean, and African 'barbarians' to be redeemable by

Christianity but saw no contradiction in dispossessing, enslaving, or even killing them. The climatic and humoral theories dominant from classical times to the early 19th century attributed differences in physical appearance, including skin colour, to the effects of geography and external agencies which, at least in principle, were reversible or surmountable.<sup>6</sup> But such theories also implied that appearance was no reliable index of a person's ancestry or estate. This empirical uncertainty may help clarify the adoption by nervous civil and ecclesiastical authorities in post-*Reconquista* Spain and Portugal of draconian judicial methods – notably the Inquisition – to identify, repress, and expel supposed potential dissidents from Catholic orthodoxy.

Parallel to Blumenbach, some historians – especially liberal antiracists in the aftermath of World War II – mistook early modern Iberian expressions of hierarchy and anxiety about difference for actual or embryonic racial or class prejudice. For example, the imperial historian Charles Boxer (1975:136) defined the Portuguese phrase *limpeza de sangue* and its Spanish cognate *limpieza de sangre* as: “‘Purity of blood’ from religious, racial and class standpoints. Muslim, Heretic, Black African and white working-class ancestry all being regarded as defiling or degrading’. Challenging the Portuguese belief that they ‘never had any racial prejudice worth mentioning’, Boxer (1963; 1969:3, 249, 260–2) questioned their longstanding preoccupation with ‘purity of blood’ and deplored their ‘hatred and intolerance’ towards ‘alien creeds and races’ from the mid-15th century. He used such phrases as ‘stringent racial and class requirements’ with respect to the legal conditions placed on candidates for Portuguese public, ecclesiastical, military, or administrative posts and for admission to guilds and military or religious orders. He argued that discrimination was originally ‘as much religious as racial’ when directed mainly against persons of Jewish, Muslim, or ‘heretic’ (Protestant) descent; it became explicitly racial by the early 17th century as specific legal discrimination was directed against Negroes and Mulattos in the context of the expanding slave trade; while a class element was manifest throughout in proscriptions on candidature by those engaged in ‘unworthy’ occupations and manual labour.

This proposed trajectory from religious and class to racial and class discrimination is both misleading and ahistorical. The feature common to Jews, Moors, and Gentiles (‘heathens’ or ‘pagans’) during the Renaissance and early modern era was that they were not Christian. Some infidels – notably the Chinese and the Japanese – were acknowledged as civilized while barbarians of all descriptions were thought to lack civility as well as true religion. Notwithstanding the damning

liaison of blackness with African enslavement, skin colour was an ambiguous element in the constitution of prejudice due to its theoretical impermanence. Moreover, European workers, peasants, and inhabitants of remote districts were usually thought to be darker than persons of noble birth and high estate. The Iberian genealogical ideology of ‘purity’ meant that even conversion could not extinguish the ancestral stain of ‘infected’ or ‘impure’ blood and the ‘infamy’ or ‘disgrace’ it incurred. The Spanish term *infamia* could be a synonym for *villanía* (‘villainy’) which, like the English word, historically connoted low birth, rusticity, and depravity (RAE 1726–39, VI:487–8; Stevens 1726, II). Ignoring or discounting these intricate contemporary webs of meaning, sentiment, science, and history, Boxer at once anachronized and reified ‘race’ and ‘class’. Not only did his usage wrench them out of time, since neither word began to acquire its modern meaning until the late 18th century (Williams 1985:60–9, 248–50), but his oppositional logic granted them the reality of concrete entities – ‘races’ and ‘classes’.

Grounds for this critique litter Boxer’s texts. For instance (1969:260), he translated purity requirements for ordination in the archbishopric of Bahia, Brazil, as the need for candidates to prove they were ‘free from any racial stain of “Jew, Moor, Morisco, Mulatto, heretic or any other race disallowed as contaminated” (*outra alguma infecta nação reprovada*)’. Yet racial and race are inappropriate terms here. Heretics were not a race and the original vernacular wording does not call them one. Rather, like Jews, Moors, and Mulattos, they are *nação infecta*, an ‘impure nation’ or ‘people’. In contemporary dictionaries, the Portuguese noun *nação* could be inherently negative – the phrase *gente de nação* (‘people of the nation’) denoted so-called ‘new Christians’, the relentlessly persecuted descendants of Jews forcibly converted at the end of the 15th century. The term *nação* was also a synonym for *raça* (‘race’), in the genealogical sense of ‘descendants’ or ‘lineage’, and for *casta* (‘lineage’, ‘stock’). *Casta*, however, was used much more than *raça* which was applied to people rarely and negatively. Translated into English as ‘breed’, it was ‘properly confined to the brutal species’. The phrase *ter raça* (‘have race’) is glossed as ‘have the blood of a Moor, or a Jew’.<sup>7</sup>

Boxer’s antiracism conflated a range of Portuguese terms with specific derogatory contemporary meanings under the presumed umbrella of the modern idea of race. Thus (1963:31–2), he collapsed social estate into race by using the English phrase ‘on a basis of complete racial equality’ to render the Portuguese *não ha distinção de pessoas,... Nobres et Plebeos* (‘has no distinction of persons,... Nobles and Plebeians’). I fully acknowledge the dehumanizing brutality of Iberian religious persecution and

ominous nexus of colonialism and slavery, soon emulated by other early modern European states. But to reduce the multifaceted Iberian obsession with ‘purity’ – of blood, ancestry, birth, religion, estate, occupation, physical conformation, and so forth – to the blanket charge of ‘racism’ is to foreclose rigorous historical investigation into what these varied conditions might have meant, in practice as well as in law and precept.<sup>8</sup> As Boxer (1969:260–2, 266–71) acknowledged, dispensations could be obtained for ‘contaminated’ blood, as for other legal impediments such as ‘illegitimate birth and physical deformity’. Moreover, with Portugal’s repeal of blood purity requirements for office-holding in the late 18th century, ‘New’ Christians ‘vanished almost overnight as if they had never been’ because they were, and always had been, physically indistinguishable from ‘Old’ Christians – showing both the cruel fatuity of their persecution and the inaptness of calling it racial.

Drawing on early dictionaries and legal texts, several recent historians of Hispanic America interpreted *raza* (‘race’) as a minor genealogical synonym for *casta* (‘lineage’, ‘breed’, ‘kind’) in 16th- and 17th-century Spanish principles of hierarchy.<sup>9</sup> With respect to human beings, *raza* – like Portuguese *raça* – acquired narrow, negative connotations through association with the supposedly ineffaceable infamy of Catholicism’s bitter religious (and economic) rivals. Lexicographers recorded that to have ‘*la raza in lineages*’ meant having ‘some *raza* of a Moor, or a Jew’ and was regarded ‘badly’.<sup>10</sup> In Spanish America, however, membership of a *casta* (‘caste’) was a key principle of social identity, social relations, and social ordering. The historical anthropologist Laura Lewis (2003:24–5, 178–9) argued that in the vice-royalty of New Spain, ‘caste conveyed a sense of inclusion’ through reciprocal ties of kinship and approved relationships across *castas*. The metropole, in contrast, ‘tried to rid itself of the contamination of difference’ by persecuting and expelling Jews and Moors. The literary historian Ruth Hill insisted that in colonial American settings ‘*casta* was not biology’ but a ‘cluster of somatic, economic, linguistic, geographical, and other circumstances that varied from parish to parish, from town to town, and from person to person’. ‘Rooted’ in religion, the system of *castas* comprised an ‘elastic’ legal and relational hierarchy that, at least in principle, encompassed the entire populace – *españoles* (‘Spaniards’), *indios* (‘Indians’), *negros* (‘Negroes’), and the mixed *castas* of *mestizos* (Indian/Spanish), *mulatos* (black/Indian or black/Spanish), and so forth. Flexible local hierarchies were constituted from the intersections of *casta* with two other crucial ‘social facts’ – *estado* (‘estate’, ‘condition’), ranging from noble to plebeian; and *limpieza* (‘purity’), of both blood and occupation. None was reducible to *raza*.<sup>11</sup>

This volatile interplay of religion, *casta*, *estado*, and *limpieza* in early modern Spanish principles of human differentiation or ranking was crosscut and qualified by a further axis of evaluation with specific salience for encounters with Indigenous people – the ancient inherited antithesis between *civilidad* ('civility') and *barbaridad* ('barbarity') (Jones 1971). The early 17th-century dictionary of Sebastián de Covarrubias Orozco (1674 [1611]) includes neither word but each figures in the first edition of the *Diccionario de la lengua castellana* (RAE 1726–39, I:556; II:364) – *civilidad* denoting 'sociability, urbanity, public order [*policía*]; *barbaridad*, 'lack of cultivation, coarseness and roughness in the character and mode of living'. The purportedly extreme *barbaridad* of blacks justified their enslavement in the ostensible interests of improving them. The Iberian invention of the term *mulato* to label the offspring of the *mezcla extraordinaria* ('abnormal mixing') of whites and blacks (or blacks and Indians) explicitly compared such unions to 'the generation of the mule', thereby likening blacks to animals incapable of engendering progeny or sustaining lineages (Covarrubias 1674, II: folio 117v).<sup>12</sup> The relative degree of civility or barbarity attributed by particular Spaniards to particular people was not a matter of race. However, it contributed significantly to how they and their homelands were represented, labelled, and treated and to their formal legal status.

Just such criteria informed dismissive opinions emanating from New Spain about the achievements of Mendaña during his return voyage across the *Mar del Sur* from Peru in 1567–9. The future Solomon Islands, where he spent six months, were judged 'of very little importance' by a colonial official writing to the king (Orozco 1969:430). He scoffed that the expedition had found no 'specimens of spices or gold or silver or other merchandise or useful objects' while the people were 'all naked' and fit only to be 'slaves'.

### Encounters 'at the antipodes':<sup>13</sup> The voyage of Magellan

In the fifth part of the world, as elsewhere, the attitudes and responses of European voyagers to newly encountered people were negotiated in situ using existing or emergent terminologies which expressed current or personal predispositions and prevailing conventions of genre or audience. After 1511, the Malacca-based Portuguese gained a toehold in the Spice Islands or Moluccas (Maluku, eastern Indonesia). The first circumnavigation of the globe was completed in September 1522 by 18 crew members of the *Victoria*, remnants of a Spanish fleet of five ships and about 240 men commanded by the Portuguese navigator Magellan who left



Seville in 1519 in search of a westward route to the Moluccas.<sup>14</sup> Magellan was killed in 1521 during a local battle in the archipelago later named the Philippines. The only significant extant first-hand account of the expedition is a narrative written post-voyage by the Italian scholar Antonio Pigafetta who sailed as supernumerary.<sup>15</sup> Pigafetta's vivid, ethnocentric personal history exemplifies key aspects of contemporary European lexicons for the description of exotic people but also registers considerable Indigenous presence. His modern English editor Theodore J. Cachey, Jr. (1995:xiv–xvi, xxii–xxxvii), noted that Pigafetta's combination of 'ingenuous enthusiasm for the marvelous' with ethnographic, linguistic, and geographical precision enabled him both to entertain his Renaissance audience and 'legitimize the veracity' of his narrative.

In keeping with the era, Pigafetta's (1906, I:84, 174, 178; II, 74, 184) vocabulary manifests ubiquitous religiosity, no racial terminology, and few collective nouns applied to people met during the voyage. His standard terms are the aggregate nouns *populi/popoli* or *gente* ('people') and sometimes the plural *homini* ('men'). He occasionally used *indio*, meaning an inhabitant of India or the Indies, as a more specific but still very general discriminator.<sup>16</sup> An innovation coined from Columbus's geographical confusion and the need to name local protagonists in novel overseas encounters, 'Indian' was embedded in travellers' texts until well into the 19th century – though largely ignored in formal dictionaries. Once the expedition reached the East Indies, the interspersion of Muslim and pagan populations confirmed religion as the main axis of human differentiation and Pigafetta's primary identifiers were henceforth *mori* ('Moors') or *gentili/gentilli* ('Gentiles').

This religious nomenclature crosscuts a tacit continuum of relative civility or barbarity, sometimes shaped by experience but more often by conversations with interpreters and local interlocutors, including a pilot captured in Mindanao (southern Philippines) and two hired in Tidore (North Maluku Province, Indonesia) for the final phase of the voyage. The key terms in such evaluations are concrete descriptors rather than generalized abstractions – for example, Pigafetta (1906, II:144) reported that the 'men' of the island of Sula Besi (North Maluku Province) were 'Gentiles and have no king, eat human flesh, go naked, men just like women'. These implicit topoi of barbarity (paganism, anarchy, cannibalism, nudity) recur in particular contexts in the narrative, usually based on hearsay.<sup>17</sup> Only when the voyagers spent a fortnight on the island of *Malua* (Alor, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia) did they have prolonged personal interaction with people characterized by this lexical cluster. Here, Pigafetta (1906, II:150, 154) added brutalizing

epithets: these ‘men’ were ‘savage and bestial’; they were ‘the ugliest’ he had seen in the whole region; and their mode of wearing their beards ‘wrapped in leaves and placed in cane straws’ was ‘ridiculous’. The grounds for this acerbity are unclear but the insulting adjectives may be countersigns of disapproved Indigenous agency – signifiers (expressions) inflected by their referents (the people, actions, or things referred to). The men’s personal ornamentation offended Pigafetta’s aesthetic sense and they initially met the Europeans ‘with bows’, though quickly became ‘friends’ on receiving ‘presents’. His detailed description of the decorations worn by the warriors ‘when they go to fight’ implies that the voyagers had faced at least the threat of organized aggression.

The textual correlation between the term Gentile and the tacit topoi of barbarity is very partial in Pigafetta’s narrative (1906, I:104, 116–28, 142–6). He identified as Gentiles every group directly encountered in the Philippines but all had a *re* (‘king’) or *raya* (‘rajah’). Rajahs and ordinary people alike were more or less clothed or only relatively ‘naked’ and all ranks wore gold decorations. Further south, in modern Indonesia, Pigafetta (1906, I, 156; II:76, 112, 148) discerned a pattern, later commonplace, whereby ‘the Moors live near the sea and the Gentiles in the interior’. The voyagers learned that Moors had been in the Moluccas ‘for about fifty years’. They also gathered that in the adjacent large island of Gilolo (Halmahera), the ‘king’ of the Gentiles was called *raya Papua*, was ‘extremely rich in gold’, and dwelt inland. The Spanish, commented Pigafetta, preferred Gentiles to Moors since ‘the Moors are very much harder to convert’.

Moreover, there is no racial correlation, actual or implied, in Pigafetta’s terms Moor and Gentile or in his intimations of barbarity. This has not discouraged modern scholars from presuming the reality of races in his narrative. The term race occurs twice in the English versions as a translator’s artefact. The Italian manuscript recounts that in the island of *Caphi* (Gafi, west of Halmahera) there were ‘small *men* [*homini*], like dwarfs’. Cachey’s translation, following James Alexander Robertson’s, is ‘a *race* as small as dwarfs’. In another place, Cachey rendered the phrase ‘live *people* [*popoli*]’ as ‘lives a *race*’.<sup>18</sup> Editorial inference also invented ‘Negritos’ where there were none in Pigafetta’s text. A Spanish diminutive of *negro*, *negrito* largely supplanted the earlier term *negrillo* (‘little black’) which, from the late 16th century, Spaniards in the Philippines applied to allegedly barbarous inland dwellers who preyed on coastal people and haunted their stories.<sup>19</sup> By the 19th century, Negrito routinely denoted a ‘pygmy negro race’ supposedly autochthonous to the Malay Archipelago and New Guinea (Barrows 1910:362).<sup>20</sup> Pigafetta (1906, I:104–6; II:12) referred

to one populace in the Philippines as ‘caphri that is gentiles’. Cachey’s footnote correctly defines *kāfir* (‘Kaffir’) as Arabic for “‘unbeliever’” and the standard regional term for non-Muslim – a negative religious descriptor rather than the racial signifier it became. But he also quoted without comment an earlier editor’s anachronistic, racialized gloss that these people ‘were presumably Negrito aborigines, not Malays’. Yet Pigafetta characterized them as ‘olive’, with ‘very black hair to the waist’. He further reported coasting along another island in the Philippines inhabited by ‘black men, like in Ethiopia’. The phrase is descriptive and comparative, not racial, and does not warrant Cachey’s footnoted verdict, again following Robertson: ‘The black men were Negritos’.<sup>21</sup>

The primary motive for Iberian imperial expansion in the fifth part of the world, as elsewhere, was the entangled quest for spiritual, imperial, and material gain – winning souls for God, territory for king, and riches for self. In old age, the Spanish *conquistador* Bernal Díaz del Castillo (2005:809–10), who fought with Hernando Cortés in Mexico, explained frankly how the triple spur of religion, empire, and profit had impelled him and his companions ‘to serve God and His Majesty, and to give light to those who are in darkness, and also to get wealth, which all men commonly seek’.<sup>22</sup> Force, actual or threatened, underwrote pursuit of these goals. If the 19th-century American Protestant William Hickling Prescott (1843, II:478) thought ‘wealth’ a more plausible motive than ‘service’ for the Spanish conquest of Mexico, later historians have been readier to recognize how religious conviction fortified the potent blend of avarice and martial confidence that drove Iberian colonial enterprise. J.M. Cohen (1963:7) acknowledged ‘a sense of mission’ and ‘a crude greed for gold’. For Boxer (1969:74), the Portuguese seaborne empire was ‘a military and maritime enterprise cast in an ecclesiastical mould’. John M. Headley (1995:626) called the global empire claimed by Spain after its union with Portugal in 1580 ‘a sort of evangelical imperialism’.<sup>23</sup>

The interlaced motifs of god, gold, and coercion loom large in Pigafetta’s (1906, I:90–6) account of Magellan’s proceedings at Guam (Marianas Islands), the only inhabited Pacific island he reached, and in the Philippines where he died. When the three vessels remaining in the fleet reached Guam in March 1521, their crews were in extremis from deprivation and scurvy. Yet they could obtain no fresh supplies because the people came out to the ships on their ‘flying’ proas and seized everything they could, including a small boat. In a scenario eerily like Cook’s final acts in Hawai’i in 1778,<sup>24</sup> but without their immediate denouement, Magellan stormed ashore with 40 armed men, ‘burned

from forty to fifty houses with many canoes and killed seven men and got back the small boat'. Pigafetta characterized these Islanders as barbarous, heathen, but good-looking – ungoverned, naked, worshipping nothing, but tall, well-built, and 'olive' in skin colour, while the women were 'beautiful delicate and whiter than the men'.

A few weeks later, the fleet reached an island in the Philippines called *Mazaua* by Pigafetta (1906, I:106–28).<sup>25</sup> His narrative of Magellan's week-long stay typifies the complacent providentialism and ruthless opportunism of the navigator's engagements with Indigenous people and their rulers – rehearsing tactics of the Portuguese commanders he had served in India and Malacca. Confident about his expertise in regional mores and the communication skills of his Malaccan slave–interpreter Enrique, Magellan sought to dominate and manipulate exchange relations by making strategic prestations, forging 'blood-brother' ties with influential leaders, dissimulating his own lust for gold and spices, and controlling unlicensed trading by his men (another foretaste of Cook). Secure in his conviction of divine power and approval, he had mass celebrated ashore and a cross erected on the highest point of the island, promising the 'two kings' that he did so 'for their benefit' and that if they worshipped it 'neither thunder nor lightning nor tempest' would do them harm. Convinced of the technological superiority of his weapons and equipment, he stage-managed demonstrations of military strength; bluffed that the armed men at his disposal numbered 600 rather than about 50; and offered 'to destroy' or subject 'by force' the enemies of his new allies. The proposal was refused on this occasion but a similar strategy, his own hubris, and canny local tactics shortly combined to bring about Magellan's downfall at the island of Mactan, near Cebu.

Echoing Pigafetta's narrative, my discussion so far has positioned Europeans as the more active protagonists in these encounters. Yet the text is thick with Indigenous signs and countersigns. In Guam, the inhabitants' most galling actions were memorialized in the name Magellan gave to the island group, as Pigafetta (1906, I:94) made explicit: 'This people is poor but ingenious and very thievish, *for this* we named these three islands the Islands of Thieves',<sup>26</sup> *las Islas de los Ladrones* in Spanish. Local agency is most obvious in Pigafetta's (1906, I:132–78) account of the death of Magellan on 27 April 1521, during a battle between a small armed party from the Spanish ships and a large force of warriors led by the legendary hero Lapu-Lapu. The clash was preceded by Magellan's deployment of his usual tactical arsenal (in part reactive to the insecurity triggered by massive numerical inferiority) – intimidation;

bluff; coercive exchange; a peace ceremony and formal alliance; and exemplary Christian instruction culminating in the baptism, ‘voluntarily’, of the ‘king’, his ‘queen’, and ‘eight hundred souls’ in a single day. They were no doubt encouraged by Magellan’s promise that becoming Christian would enable the ‘king’ to ‘vanquish his enemies more easily’ and his threat to ‘kill’ recalcitrant ‘chiefs’ if they refused to obey ‘the king or us’. When Lapu-Lapu did so refuse, Magellan set out to teach him a lesson with about 60 armed men, accompanied by the ‘king’ and a contingent of warriors who were merely to watch ‘how we fought’. In the event, Magellan and eight of his companions received a fatal lesson. Many others were wounded, including Pigafetta. Notwithstanding hagiographic intent with respect to Magellan, the Italian’s recounting of the battle puts all the tactical nous on the Indigenous side. They attacked the Europeans in large numbers from the front and both flanks as they were wading ashore; they showed great persistence; they made the soldiers fire their crossbows and arquebuses from too long a range to be effective; they refused to be easy targets and kept moving to dodge bolts and balls; they bombarded the Europeans with spears, arrows, and stones and fired at their bare legs, unprotected by armour. This time, the uncanny preview of Cook’s death was near complete, with the captain-general isolated and overwhelmed, face down in the water, while most of his shattered companions escaped to the waiting boats.<sup>27</sup>

Countersigns of Indigenous agency are scattered through Pigafetta’s text (1906, I:110–82; II, 57–110). One is his complaint that, on a diplomatic visit ashore in Mazaua with one other man, he was forced to eat meat on Good Friday, for he ‘could not do other’ without insulting the king’s hospitality. He alluded often to Enrique’s importance to Magellan as interpreter and mediator and alleged his complicity with the newly ‘Christian king’ of Cebu in a ‘betrayal’ which culminated in the killing of more than 20 Europeans. He referred in passing to the survivors’ subsequent dependence on a kidnapped pilot to find the Moluccas. Once there, he described the manipulation of the Europeans by the Muslim ruler of Tidore who recruited the Spanish as allies in a conflict with his Portuguese-aligned opposite number at Ternate, also Muslim. Pilots and other local interlocutors are a ghostly presence behind the lavishly coloured maps interleaved with Pigafetta’s original narrative and the vocabularies he collected in Brazil, Patagonia, the Philippines, and the Moluccas.<sup>28</sup> Along with rich circumstantial detail and descriptions of people encountered, the maps and word lists give this text the considerable geographical, linguistic, and ethnohistorical interest for which it has long been esteemed.<sup>29</sup>

## Precedent and orientation

Chris Ballard (2008:158, 160, 178–80) highlighted the importance of ‘cardinality’ or ‘trajectories of travel’ in the description and regional comparison of Oceanian populations by scientific voyagers and naturalist fieldworkers in the late 18th and 19th centuries. Such trajectories contributed signally to the precedents and prior experience which shaped expectations and provided comparative foils. Physically, Magellan’s expedition approached the *Mar del Sur* from the east but his personal experience and mental precedents were Asian, since the Portuguese had reached the archipelagos of the *Oceano Oriental* from the west. Their representations of the inhabitants referenced successive experience from 1415 in Africa, India, Malacca, and the Moluccas. Hence, their key differentiation was between Moors and Gentiles and they adopted the term *Papua* from Moluccans to designate the *Ilhas das Papuas* (‘Papuan Islands’) east of the Moluccas, their inhabitants *os Papuas* (‘the Papuans’), and ultimately New Guinea itself and its people.<sup>30</sup>

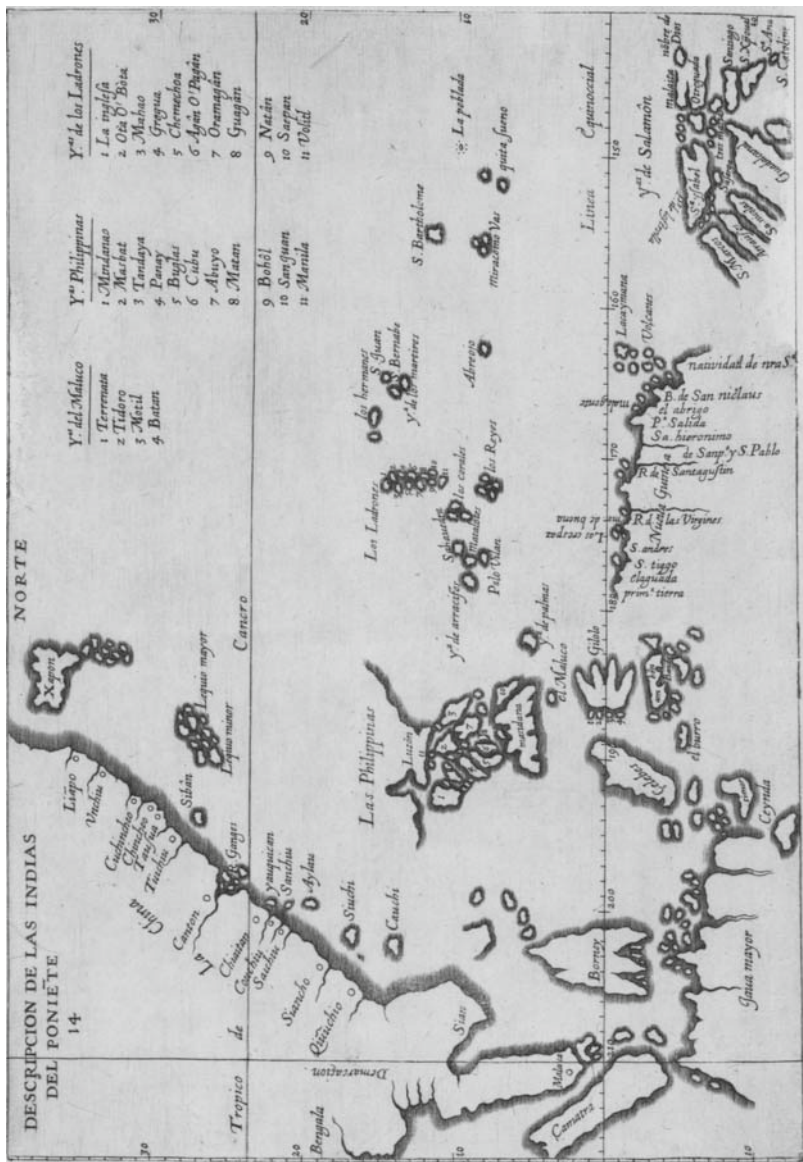
An island – probably Gilolo – inscribed ‘Island of papoia and its people are cafes [Kaffirs]’ appears on a map drawn in about 1513 by the Portuguese pilot-cartographer Francisco Rodrigues (Corteseo 1944, I:208, note 3; plate 27). Rodrigues had not been there himself but made detailed use of Javanese maps and the knowledge of local pilots. Another early Portuguese traveller (Corteseo 1944, II:449) related stories about ‘the island of papua’, said to be inhabited by ‘men with big ears who cover themselves with them’, though he gave the story ‘no more importance than it deserves’. Maximilian Transylvanus (1888:[84]), the Emperor Charles V’s secretary who wrote the first account of Magellan’s voyage in 1523 after interviewing the survivors, reported a similar story, also regarded as ‘nonsense’, heard ‘from the natives’ at Gilolo about ‘another island not far distant’. Pigafetta’s *Raya Papua* of Gilolo has been mentioned. Antonio Galvão (1563: folio 57v) – Portuguese station captain, pacifier, and so-called ‘apostle’ in the Moluccas from 1536 to 1539 and an initiator of the genre of voyage histories – explained that ‘the Moluccans’ called the ‘men’ of the north coast of New Guinea *os Papuas* because they were ‘black with frizzled hair’, like the *Papuas* they knew closer to home, and that ‘*therefore*’ the Portuguese did likewise.<sup>31</sup>

Galvão (1563: folio 67) evidently also absorbed negative Moluccan behavioural, as well as physical stereotypes for *Papuas*: ‘black people’, with *cabelo reuelto* (‘dishevelled/twisted hair’), who purportedly ate human flesh and were ‘great witches’, ‘given to the devils’. He implicitly contrasted them with other people seen by Spaniards in islands nearer

to Ternate who were ‘brown’ with *cabelo corredio* (‘flowing hair’), ‘like the Moluccans’. Such almost juxtaposed evaluations might be seen to anticipate the 19th-century racial dichotomy of black, frizzy-haired Papuans and brown, straight-haired Malays.<sup>32</sup> I suggest, however, that the contrasting Portuguese adjectives *revolto* and *corredio* are better read as contemporary metonyms for relative *barbaridade* (‘barbarity’) and *civilidade* (‘civility’) than as racialist epithets. Moreover, the fluid continuum between barbarity and civility clearly did not map neatly on to chromatic differences. Galvão (1563: folios 57v–58) reported an earlier encounter with tattooed ‘white men’ by the Spaniard Alvaro de Saavedra Céron, probably in the Caroline Islands (modern Micronesia). Saavedra concluded from their ‘appearance’ and ‘whiteness’ that they must have originated in China but over a long period of time become so *Barbaros* (‘barbarous/wild’) that they now lacked law, religion, and industry.

Spanish cardinal orientation differed markedly from Portuguese since they always approached Oceania from the east, via major trans-oceanic voyages, rather than the mostly coastal, incremental Portuguese entry from the west (Map 1.1). The great era of Hispanic exploratory voyaging in Oceania spanned much of the century after 1519, during which Spain moved from colonial conquest to the heyday of empire to incipient exhaustion and decline. That era was delimited by Magellan’s departure and the return in 1606 of his compatriot Quirós who probably also had experience in India and been a pilot in American waters (Kelly 1966, I:31). After one largely futile attempt by Garcia Jofre de Loaysa to acquire the Moluccas by emulating Magellan’s itinerary, subsequent voyages departed not from Spain but from the energetic American frontier colonies of New Spain and later Peru. The first such expedition was dispatched by Cortés in 1527 under the command of his kinsman Saavedra, after Cortés had consolidated his *conquista* of the Aztec empire in 1521 by gaining control of a vast segment of the adjacent Pacific littoral. His lengthy instructions to Saavedra suggest that he sought to gain a foothold for New Spain in the Moluccas but Spain sold its claims there to Portugal in 1529. Later voyages from New Spain set out for the *Islas del Poniente* (‘Western islands’), named *Filipinas* (‘Philippines’) by Ruy López de Villalobos during his expedition of 1542–6 which also ended in disarray in the Moluccas.<sup>33</sup>

For four decades from the early 1520s, every Spanish effort to effect a two-way crossing of the *Mar del Sur* foundered on the difficulty of return to New Spain in the face of prevailing winds and currents. Yet, in the course of such attempts, Spaniards brought a Moluccan orientation to several encounters with Indigenous people in *las Papuas* (‘the Papuan



Map 1.1 A. de Herrera y Tordesillas (1601), 'Descripción de las Indias del Poniente [Western Indies]'. National Library of Australia, Canberra, MAP RM 1835



[Islands]'), along the north coast of New Guinea, named in 1545, and in isolated islands to the north in what would become Micronesia. In 1565, Miguel López de Legazpi installed a settlement of New Spain in Cebu, in the Philippines. In 1571, he moved the headquarters to Manila by which stage the conundrum of the return voyage had been solved by sailing far to the north before turning east. Manila would become a military and missionary stronghold, western terminus of the annual Acapulco galleon, and the entrepot of China, the New World, and ultimately Europe. The Philippines provided another western touchstone for Spanish evaluations of Pacific Islanders (Mondragón 2007:149). López de Legazpi's initial colonizing activities in 1565 had been preceded by a formal act of possession in Guam, making the Marianas the first European colony in the Insular Pacific and Guam a frequent stopover on the galleon route (Spate 1979:84–6, 100–6, 220–8).

### Spanish encounters in the *Mar del Sur*

Peru was denied direct access to the fabulously lucrative China trade by New Spain's monopoly. In late 1567, the first of three major expeditions sailed into the *Mar del Sur* from Callao in search of imagined vast riches, great new colonies, and a multitude of heathens apt for conversion and exploitation. They were supposedly to be found at certain islands with which Inca legend and colonial fancy populated the ocean southwest of Peru and at the chimeric great southern *tierra firme* believed to lie beyond.<sup>34</sup> With Mendaña a young and green commander, the officers included the experienced, resentful, often violent Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, initially in command of the *capitana* ('flagship') and later banished to the *almiranta* (consort). Amongst the complement of about 150 men were 60–70 soldiers and four Franciscan chaplains. Apart from sighting a single atoll in what is now Tuvalu, the expedition made no significant landfall until early February 1568 when the ships reached the large island the Spanish called *Santa Ysabel* (Santa Isabel), at the heart of the elusive archipelago shortly to be called the Solomon Islands – an allusion to the biblical Ophir whence King Solomon had received legendary wealth. After six months, during which they charted and explored several islands and relations with the inhabitants steadily worsened, the Spaniards were forced by diminishing supplies and Indigenous hostility to abandon the group and undertake an arduous, almost year-long return voyage to Peru. A third of those who originally set out from Callao perished.<sup>35</sup>

Mendaña devoted the rest of his life to his quest to colonize and Christianize the Solomon Islands but it took him decades to obtain royal

approval and resources for the attempt. He sailed from Callao in April 1595 as captain-general of a lavishly equipped squadron, with Quirós as chief pilot and commander of the *capitana*. The complement of nearly 400 men, women, and children included several priests. After a brief, bloody visit to the islands of Fatuiva and Tahuata, in the south of the group Mendaña named *las Islas Marquesas de Mendoza* (Iles Marquises/Marquesas in Polynésie française/French Polynesia), three of four vessels reached the island of Ndeni which Mendaña called Santa Cruz (eastern Solomon Islands). Here, in Graciosa Bay, Mendaña attempted to establish his colony but the expedition had already lost almost half its members when the *almiranta* disappeared – modern archaeology confirmed that it was wrecked in the Solomons (Allen and Green 1972). The remnants of the squadron spent a miserable two months at Santa Cruz before it was decided to abandon the settlement which was wracked by internal dissension and sickness, presumably malaria – 47 people had died there, including Mendaña. Relations with the local inhabitants had quickly settled into a debilitating cycle of mutual misunderstanding, violence, retaliation, and ineffective efforts at reconciliation. After an agonizing voyage, Quirós brought the *capitana* with about 100 survivors to Manila and eventually reached Acapulco at the end of 1597.<sup>36</sup> The Philippines gave Quirós (2000:175) a cardinal point for speculation on the likely common origin of the inhabitants of New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Santa Cruz (see Chapter 2).

Quirós (2000:179, 180) assumed from Mendaña the mantle of avid, persistent promoter of the dazzling opportunities for glory, treasure, and colonization allegedly available in this ‘new world’. Having finally gained royal authorization, he left Callao in December 1605 with two galleons and a launch in search of his grail – to ‘discover’ the ‘many’ lands that he ‘suspected and even felt certain’ must exist there, together with an ‘infinite number of souls’ awaiting salvation. The formal complement of around 160 persons included Torres in command of the *almiranta*; the aristocratic Prado, an equivocal *capitán-entretenido* (‘super-numerary captain’) who despised his commander’s modest occupational background and Portuguese ancestry; six Franciscans; and the young poet Luis de Belmonte Bermúdez as Quirós’s devoted amanuensis.<sup>37</sup>

After briefly visiting several islands in what are now Polynésie française, Cook Islands, eastern Solomon Islands, and north Vanuatu, Quirós thought he had found the elusive southern continent at the place he named *La Australia del Espiritu Santo* (Espiritu Santo, Vanuatu).<sup>38</sup> There, he established a colony called New Jerusalem and on 14 May 1606 claimed for God and the Spanish king ‘all the islands

and lands that I have newly discovered, and shall discover as far as the [south] pole' (Sanz 1973:[8]). But there was no sign of the plethora of gold, silver, and pearls he had promised his discontented crew, while the inhabitants obdurately opposed the invasion of their places and were clearly unreceptive to salvation (Prado 1930a:100, 124). Under these conditions, the settlement lasted little more than a month. When his vessel was separated from the others during bad weather, Quirós (2000:283) abandoned them to head for Acapulco, insisting he had 'discovered so many good peoples and lands without knowing where they ended'. Torres and Prado (1930a:132–4) disproved any claim that Espiritu Santo was a *tierra firme* by going 'around the island as much as the east wind allowed us' and finding it to be 'about 30 leagues in circumference'. They then sailed southwest to more than 20° south but, reported Torres (1878:20) laconically, found no 'sign of land' before heading northwest to pass through the strait that bears his name, examine the south coast of New Guinea, and eventually reach Manila. Remarkably, only two Spaniards died during the expedition.

There ended official Spanish and Spanish American involvement in the south Pacific Islands for more than 150 years. These European pioneers of Pacific exploration were fired by the potent Spanish colonial amalgams of missionary fervour with lust for wealth, lands, and native labour, Christian conviction with military coercion. Their accounts of their conduct in situ epitomize the practical complexity of a seemingly homogeneous colonial enterprise. If Mendaña, Quirós, and their religious associates were, as Spate (1979:132) put it, 'men not of the Conquista but of the Counter-Reformation' in their sincere (though rigidly ethnocentric) zeal to convert and save the heathen, the same cannot be said of most of their subordinates.<sup>39</sup> The violent spirit of the *conquistadores* endured in ambitious officers such as Sarmiento or Prado and in many of the seamen and soldiers for whom piety was both guarantee of earthly success and justification for atrocities committed on the heathen.

This point is made by two notorious episodes recounted retrospectively in Quirós's narrative (2000:75, 79, 249–51), each set in the initial phases of a visit and anticipating the overall tone. In Tahuata in 1595, a man in the water holding a child was shot by a soldier who reportedly 'said later with great sorrow that the Devil must take those sent to him'. When Quirós asked why he had not 'fired high', the man replied, 'in order not to lose his reputation as a good arquebusier'. Quirós did not go ashore at the Marquesas but estimated that 200 Islanders were killed by 'the impious and inconsiderate soldiers' in little more than

a week. A decade later in Espiritu Santo, Quirós positioned himself as an anguished spectator on board the *capitana* while a large, well-armed, but jumpy shore party led by Torres ruined at the outset any prospect of the peaceful establishment of a Spanish settlement. An old, clearly respected man drew a line in the sand, gestured to the strangers not to cross it, and seemed to propose that both parties should lay down their arms. The pilot Gaspar González de Leza (1880:149) reported that Torres ‘told them to move back, since we were coming en masse, and all armed’. A careless soldier shot and killed a man whose body was mutilated and hung by the foot from a tree – as a vehicle for a ‘so-called peace’, said Quirós sardonically. Following further skirmishes, the old man was killed in an ambush and thus did ‘peace turn into war’. Prado (1930a:120–2) contemptuously dismissed Quirós’s scuples and ‘very harsh words’ about this episode – ‘moderation’ was pointless with ‘such barbarians’ who needed to be taught, by force if necessary, not to be ‘so rude to Spaniards whom all the world’s nations respect’.

## Representing Pacific Islanders

In sampling the vocabularies applied to Pacific Islanders by 16th- and early 17th-century Spanish voyagers, I relate words to contexts and stress the cryptic multiplexity of encounters. The legacy of orientation and colonial precedent is immediately apparent. With discrimination of Moors and Gentiles irrelevant, the term *gentile* (‘heathen’) almost vanishes. Its absence from the journal of the priest Martín de Munilla (1963) suggests that it was simply redundant in such contexts. The general aggregate noun *gente* (‘people’) held its ground. It was supplemented by the plural noun *indios* which was usually a synonym for the less common *naturales* (‘natives’), connoting the supposedly pre-social, even animalistic state of ‘natural man’ (Pagden 1986:8). As Transylvanus (1888:[68]) explained, ‘The natives of all unknown lands are called Indians’. However, *indio* was also used in the more restricted sense of ‘like a native of the Indies’, sometimes in implied contrast to *negro*. During the 16th century, the Spanish descriptor *negro* became ever more imbued with negative connotations of Africanness and *barbaridad*. And while Pigafetta only applied the Italian term to people as an adjective, his Spanish successors often made *negro* a noun, usually in the plural. But all Pacific Islanders seemed more or less barbarous to these voyagers and the relative *barbaridad* attributed to particular people depended more on their mode of life, dress or its absence, and demeanour than on their skin colour.

For example, in an ‘Account’ of Saavedra’s two unsuccessful attempts to return to New Spain from Tidore, the seaman Vicente de Nápoles (1866:88–93) depicted ‘black’, ‘frizzy’-haired, ‘naked’ people seen in 1528 in different islands off the north coast of (still unnamed) New Guinea. Yet, whereas some had ‘iron weapons and swords’ and provisioned the Spanish during a month-long stay, others further east attacked them with arrows, earning the additional epithet ‘ugly’ – the word is a countersign of Indigenous agency. The Europeans were subsequently threatened with slingstones by ‘white, bearded people’, probably in the Carolines near where they reportedly saw ‘barbarous’ ‘white men’ during Saavedra’s voyage of 1529.<sup>40</sup>

Andrés de Urdaneta (1837:436), a survivor of Loaysa’s expedition, made an explicit African comparison: there were ‘many islands’ to the east of Gilolo peopled by *negros* who called themselves *los Papuas* and had *cabello revuelto como guineos* (‘dishevelled/twisted hair like Guineans’ of west Africa). In 1545, Villalobos sent a vessel from Tidore under Iñigo Ortiz de Retes in another vain attempt to return to New Spain, during which Ortiz de Retes named New Guinea. According to Galvão (1563: folio 79), he gave the ‘coast of the Papuas’ that name ‘because the people were black & with cabelo reuolto’. This reason was adopted without question by many later authors who often eternalized their own racial categories. So the Spanish historian Carlos Martínez Shaw (1999:25) asserted that Ortiz de Retes named New Guinea ‘because of the dark skin of its Melanesian inhabitants’. Yet the racial term Melanesian was not invented until 1832. Moreover, contemporary explanations were ambiguous. The main surviving Spanish account of the voyage (Escalante 1866:155) – re-published by Martínez himself (Escalante 1999:79) – stresses the beauty of the land, at that point ‘uninhabited’. Only subsequently did the travellers see ‘well-proportioned’ *negros*, ‘as dark as those of Guinea’. The earliest maps of New Guinea per se state that the great island was *sic a nautis dicta* (‘so named by sailors’) ‘because’ the coastline and the land were ‘very similar to Guinea in Africa’.<sup>41</sup> Whatever Ortiz de Retes’s inspiration, his name entrenched the west African–*Papuas* analogy.

In sampling the large textual corpus produced by the three voyages of Mendaña and Quirós, I focus on original Spanish materials and span a range of genres, personalities, and occupations. These texts convey a double impression to a later eye sensitized to conventional racial categories. On the one hand, recurrent descriptions of the skin colour, hair colour and texture, general physical appearance, and the dress or apparent undress of people encountered can look racist to anachronistic

readings. On the other hand, the diverse, circumstantial wording suggests chaotic variety, crosscutting and subverting modern regional racial stereotypes.

In a narrative of his voyage of 1567–9, Mendaña (1967:221) reserved the substantive *negro* for black crew members, presumably slaves, and consistently referred to the inhabitants of Santa Isabel (modern Melanesia) as either *los naturales* or *los yndios*. His brief overview of the island depicts ‘differently coloured indians’, some ‘the colour of those of Peru’, ‘others black and some white’. Alluding to the supposed influence of climate on complexion, he reasoned that the white persons were those who ‘seldom left their houses, and youngsters’. He added that some were ‘naturally fair-haired’ while the women were ‘better looking and even whiter than the indians of Peru’. The racist mind-set of Mendaña’s early 20th-century English translators read this variegation as ‘signs of mixed origin’, presumably ‘more conspicuous 350 years ago’ than ‘now’.<sup>42</sup> An account derived from Sarmiento (Anon. 1969:304) represents these Islanders as ‘more reddish [*bermejós*] than mulatto-like’ and ‘naked’, although some women were ‘clothed’. A report cited by Mendaña (1967:233) describes the people of Gela, southeast of Santa Isabel, as ‘very large and good-looking’, ‘more polished’ than those of Santa Isabel, though ‘naked’ except for a loin-cloth. The anxious importance attached by the voyagers to signs of relative *policía* (‘public order’) is manifest in Mendaña’s (1967:211, 213, 224) expressed admiration for the ‘gravity and distinction’ – ‘for a barbarian’ – of the Isabel ‘chief’ Bile Ban Arra, notwithstanding the obviously limited scope of his influence and recurring doubt as to the sincerity of the ‘peace and friendship’ he had established by name exchange with Mendaña.<sup>43</sup>

In 1595 and 1606, the Spanish encountered Pacific Islanders across a much broader geographical span than on the first voyage. In hindsight, a statement made by Quirós (1990:105, 108) in 1602 in a memorial to the king could look like a threefold differentiation of physical types distilled from that wider experience. Mendaña, he wrote, had discovered ‘in certain islands never seen before, people of three colours: the first, men of fine stature and almost white; the second, of good colour and brownish features, and the third blacks’. The passage would have delighted Blumenbach, had he seen it. However, as already discussed, the illusion of a systematic human typology was an artefact of Quirós’s campaign to forge a causal link between the empirical fact of ‘varied peoples’ and the necessary ‘vicinity of great lands’. The phantasmal classification rests on an adventitious distinction drawn between the inhabitants of the neighbouring islands of Fatuiva and Tahuata in the

Marquesas (modern Polynesia). It is belied by all Quirós's other writings on the voyage.

In a brief report written in 1596, Quirós (1973b:101–3, 105) was inspired to adjectival rapture by the first encounter at Fatuiva: these *Indios* were 'white, very well-proportioned, tall, well-built, and burly', with 'fine' features and 'beautiful flowing hair', often 'very fair'. Though they were 'barbarous, naked people with so little reason', their appearance inspired 'much praise' for their creator. Other words are Indigenous countersigns – of the intimidating physical presence of several hundred people who were so large that 'next to them we seemed lesser men'; who were 'great thieves', swarmed over the *capitana*, and so provoked Mendaña that he had a cannon fired to frighten them; but who then responded by attacking the ship with stones and spears. Arquebuses were fired and the killings began. Of nearby Tahuata, Quirós here remarked only that the inhabitants seemed to differ facially from the Fatuivans. Later, with respect to Santa Cruz (modern Melanesia), he mentioned in passing that *la gente* ('the people') were *negros* ('blacks'). But his narrative of the voyage (2000:89), recorded a decade later by Belmonte Bermúdez, is more nuanced. These Islanders were *de color negro atezado* ('burned black in colour') while some were *más loros* ('more brown') – *atezado*, implying 'tanned and darkened by the sun' (RAE 2001), is another allusion to the contemporary belief in climatic causation of skin colouration. They had 'frizzled hair', often dyed 'white, blond, and other colours'. He added cryptically that they were 'people such as we have amongst us of their colour'.<sup>44</sup>

Quirós's further exposure to the human diversity of the Pacific Islands during his 1606 voyage dissolved any fleeting semblance of system into the kaleidoscope of the eighth memorial – which Blumenbach did read in Dalrymple's translation and proleptically reconfigured as an embryonic racial taxonomy. The texts of this voyage deploy a greater range of signifiers for Indigenous people and their demeanour. At Rakahanga (northern Cook Islands, modern Polynesia), the *hombres* ('men') or *indios* described in Quirós's narrative (2000:223–9) were 'tall', 'well made', 'beautiful', and of a 'good colour'; one youth with 'golden hair' reminded the Spaniards of a 'painted angel'. Munilla (1963:44–6) depicted these *yndios* as 'deeply tanned' while some were 'white and blonde'. But the priest – unnerved by the 'insolence' and 'audacity' of their behaviour which provoked or frightened the Spanish into firing their arquebuses and killing several – also stressed how 'well-built' and 'robust' they were. The pragmatic Torres (1878:16) had felt himself 'forced to skirmish' with the Islanders by their opposition to his landing and oversaw most of the deaths.

In Taumako (modern Melanesia), Munilla and Torres reported seeing inhabitants of wildly variant skin and hair colour and explicitly contrasted *negros* and Indians. According to Munilla (1963:52), most were like *mulatos no muy morenos* ('not very dark-skinned mulattos'), 'with hair like the frizz [*passas*] of a negro'; 'some' were Negroes; while others were *yndios blancos y bermejos* ('white and reddish indians'), 'with fair hair like Flemings'. Torres (1878:17–18) saw 'white and reddish people, others native indians coloured like those of the Indies, and others sunblackened negroes and mulattos'. The Spanish were deeply impressed by the 'very good conduct [*conversación*]' of the Taumako people. Munilla (1963:53) enthused of the 'chief' Tumai that he was 'powerful and burly and fine-looking and for a barbarian astute and prudent and well-intentioned'. Tumai's circumspection was evidently encouraged by antecedent knowledge of the bloody events in Santa Cruz in 1595, including the murder by a soldier of the 'chief' Malope who had exchanged names with Mendaña (Quirós 2000:91–4, 123–6, 237). But Taumakan friendliness was ill served when Torres (1878:18) on Quirós's orders kidnapped 'four Indians' on departure to serve as guides and interpreters. Prado (1930a:116–18) thought it poor 'payment' for the good treatment the Spanish had received and rejoiced when three leapt overboard and escaped.<sup>45</sup>

And so to Espiritu Santo via Gaua (Banks Islands, north Vanuatu, modern Melanesia) where more violence occurred and the multi-hued appearance of the people evoked similar comment, notably Munilla's (1963:58) breathlessly ambiguous statement that *los yndios* were 'of different colours brown mulatto-like and black [*pardos amulataados y negros*] and indians with beards and long hair'. To Torres (1878:19), they were simply 'black people'. In Espiritu Santo, force or its threat pervade the texts. No alliances were forged; no named individuals such as Bile Ban Arra, Malope, and Tumai emerged to capture Spanish attention, interest, and imagination; and the dominant tone shifts quickly to foreboding, fear, and dislike. Yet the descriptive terminology for the inhabitants is not unreservedly negative and varies significantly between authors, genres, and over the course of the Spanish visit. Munilla's journal (1963:61) reports early on that a boat's crew had seen 'many large and very well-built indians', presumably using Indian in the general sense. Quirós's narrative (2000:270) depicts these 'people' generally as 'corpulent, neither quite black nor mulatto', with 'frizzled' hair and 'good eyes'. In his letter-report, Torres (1878:19) represented them as 'all black naked people'. Prado's narrative (1930a:120) describes a noisy and presumably alarming attack by 'the indians' who were *negros*





Figure 1.1 D. de Prado y Tovar ([1607]), ‘Esta xente es d’esta baia s<sup>t</sup> Felipe y s<sup>t</sup> tiago [Big Bay, Espiritu Santo, Vanuatu] ...’. Ink and gouache. Ministerio de Cultura, Archivo General de Simancas, MPD, 18, 081

and *muy feos* (‘very ugly’), with their noses pierced by white bones. He drew a landscape map of Big Bay ([1606a]), where the ships anchored, and is generally attributed as the artist of an ink and gouache drawing of four very dark-skinned, armed men (Figure 1.1), one of four sketches produced to illustrate Indigenous appearance and artefacts in Espiritu Santo, New Guinea, and the Torres Strait Islands. They are among the earliest extant visual representations of the inhabitants of Oceania. According to a legend on the map, the bay was populated by *gente negra* (‘black people’) while one on the drawing ([1607a]) substantivizes them as *negros* ‘with coarse bodies’. In further instances of anachronistic projection of the reified modern idea of race on to early modern usage, Prado’s English translators Clements Markham (1904, II:470–1) and George Barwick (Prado 1930b:243) both rendered the phrase *gente negra* as ‘a black race’.

### Indigenous countersigns

Quirós’s narrative (2000:249–51) of the Spanish sojourn in Espiritu Santo includes a lamentation for peace aborted from the outset by

mutual misunderstanding and the intemperate soldiery. In marked contrast, Munilla (1963:64) framed the first week or so of the visit as a period of ‘good peace and friendship with the indians’ – but added the retrospective barb that the goodwill of these ‘brutish barbarians’ was afterwards proven to have been ‘false and feigned’. Hereafter, as fighting became more intense, Munilla’s language changes markedly (1963:61–82). Thus far, the Islanders have been *los yndios*; henceforth, they are usually *los negros*; and finally, they are traduced as *uil* (‘vile’) and *rruin* (‘despicable’). The rhetoric of the pilot González de Leza (1880:161–2) underwent an even more dramatic transition in response to Islanders’ actions: in a single page describing a bitter episode of fighting, he transformed them successively from *los naturales*, to *bárbaros*, to *El enemigo* (‘the enemy’). Prado’s (1930a:120) acerbic recourse to the phrase *muy feos* is unusually pejorative for his text. Such derogatory words do not merely enunciate hardwired Christian contempt for heathen barbarians. Rather, the words, their placement, and the shifting usages are countersigns of disquieting, volatile Indigenous behaviour which have infiltrated Spanish texts. This reading is doubly reinforced. An ambivalent passage in Torres’s letter (1878:19) attributes the violence to local initiative: ‘they never wanted peace with us though we often spoke to them and I gave them gifts; I never set foot on shore with their agreement they always wanting to forbid it and always fighting much to our satisfaction’. Moreover, the drawing of the men of Big Bay is the only one of four without a representative woman and child, their omission a further countersign of the extent to which male belligerence impinged on Spanish experience in Espiritu Santo.

Like Pigafetta’s narrative, these Spanish materials are saturated with Indigenous presence, if not with precise ethnographic detail. Their language, content, and tone consistently convey the versatility and resilience of inhabitants’ tactics to control, exploit, and if possible oust these unpredictable, nervous invaders whose need for food threatened insular economies and whose weapons killed too readily. The portrayals of Bile Ban Arra, Malope, and Tumai are particularly vivid, despite stereotyping. Spanish dependence on Indigenous cooperation and expertise is patent. Quirós routinely sought to abduct Islanders to serve as interpreters, guides, informants, and hostages while Torres (1878:21) ‘caught’ twenty persons ‘of different nations’ in New Guinea in order to make a ‘better report’ to the king.<sup>46</sup> Prado (1930a:118) equated Quirós’s stratagem with the Portuguese ‘custom’ of capturing slaves in India while Quirós (Quirós and Valera 1963), with ecclesiastical sanction granted in Peru, exalted it as an avenue for saving souls. Yet

he also admitted pragmatically (2000:225) that the ‘manifest risk’ to ships and people in such small islands – that is, local agency – made kidnap a ‘necessity’ to obtain vital supplies of water and wood. Torres (1878:21) remarked that his captives provided ‘much news on other peoples’, despite communication difficulties. Information from kidnapped Islanders is a shadowy subtext enriching Spanish writings. A man from the atoll of Sikaiana (eastern Solomon Islands) was seized in Taumako where he had been ‘like a captive’. He stayed cheerfully on board, was later baptized Pedro, learned some Spanish, and eventually died in Mexico. He expanded the regional geographical knowledge Quirós (1625) had gleaned in Taumako and willingly fought with the Spanish against the *negros* of Espiritu Santo who, Munilla (1963:77–8) opined, seemed ‘to be enemies of his’.

### Words for people

Within my umbrella theme of the experience and representation of human difference by European voyagers, this chapter specifically questions anachronistic applications of the terms race and racial to 16th-century Iberian ideologies of purity or evocations of barbarity. In journals, narratives, and memorials, early modern travellers in the Pacific Islands drew on a rich and varied verbal palette to depict the people they encountered. Yet every category of text is strikingly poor in collective nouns, aside from occasional collective use of people/s. The all-inclusive aggregate noun people and the general plural men are ubiquitous. More discriminating usages include Moors, Gentiles, Indians, or natives; toponyms such as Moluccans or Filipinos; and the vernacular term *Papuas*. By the end of the 16th century, *negro* was more common as a negative substantive than it had been. However, the noun *negro* was often reserved for particular Islanders whose actions had provoked or intimidated the visitors, as in Espiritu Santo, and in such cases is at once derogation and countersign. The term’s unstable connotations are evident in Prado’s narrative of his transit of New Guinea’s south coast with Torres. Prado (1930a:148–50, 160) usually referred to all local inhabitants as *gente* or *indios* but occasionally opposed *indios* and *negros*. Yet he also made it clear that not all ‘blacks’ were Negroes. Near the southeast tip of New Guinea, a large number of *indios* fled from an African slave whom they mistook for *negros* ‘who eat human flesh’. The Spanish subsequently decided that ‘these’ *negros* were raiders from the Torres Strait Islands who ‘are not negroes’, ‘but stain themselves to appear more fierce’.

The wide variation in skin colour, appearance, and signs of civility reported in Prado's narrative, in the legends to his three landscape maps and the associated drawings, and in Torres's letter belies the ontological realism accorded later racial typologies which class the inhabitants of New Guinea collectively as 'Papuan', 'Oceanic Negroes', or 'Melanesians'. In the southeast, Prado described 'slightly white Indians', 'well-built, tall, white people', and 'well-built, robust natives' who were 'the colour of mulatos'. He saw 'mulatto-like people' on the western side of the Gulf of Papua and 'gigantic men' in the Torres Strait Islands. In the far west, he saw 'black people', with some 'brown, well-built and robust' in Triton Bay; 'very black indians' further west, in the 'land of those who are called papuas'; 'black people with long hair and beards' still further west; and 'reddish people' at the extreme 'end of New Guinea' where the sight of iron and china goods showed the relieved Spaniards they were near the Moluccas and not 'lost as we thought'.<sup>47</sup> For his part, Torres (1878:20, 21) characterized the New Guineans generally as 'naked, not very white Indians, though with private parts well covered'. More precisely, the Torres Strait Islanders were 'very sturdy, naked black people' while the inhabitants of far western New Guinea were 'black people different from all the rest' and 'better adorned'. Some of these marked but subtle differences in skin tone, build, and accoutrements are depicted in the rather crude but naturalist drawings of men, women, and children the Spanish had seen, respectively, near modern Milne Bay (PNG) (Figure 1.2), in the Torres Strait Islands (Figure 1.3), and in Indonesian West Papua. Yet to the racially sensitized modern eye of the sailor, historian, and painter Brett Hilder (1980:163), these drawings lacked conviction and could not have been the work of Prado because they failed to register 'the racial variations which would have been noticeable'.

This labile, indefinite, empirical Spanish lexicon has too often been assumed to signify reified races by later scholars, including Blumenbach, Robertson, Cachey, Martínez, Amherst and Thomson, Markham, and Barwick, all cited above. In similar vein, Annie Baert (1999:236) asserted that during Quirós's 1606 voyage 'the navigators noted a difference between Polynesians and Melanesians'. Roberto Ferrando Pérez, Quirós's (2000:270, note 210) latest editor, stated confidently that the 'people' described in *Espiritu Santo* 'belong to the Melanesian family, fruit of the mixture of the Papuan Negroes and the Polynesians and Malays', though 'here the Negro and the Papuan predominate'.<sup>48</sup> Such retrospective readings unwittingly transpose later discourses and terminologies to the past. Yet these Hispanic travellers neither suggested nor anticipated a racial cartography or a racial typology. That is, they



Figure 1.2 D. de Prado y Tovar ([1607]), 'Esta xente es desta baya de san millan [Jenkins Bay, PNG] ...'. Ink and gouache. Ministerio de Cultura, Archivo General de Simancas, MPD, 18, 082



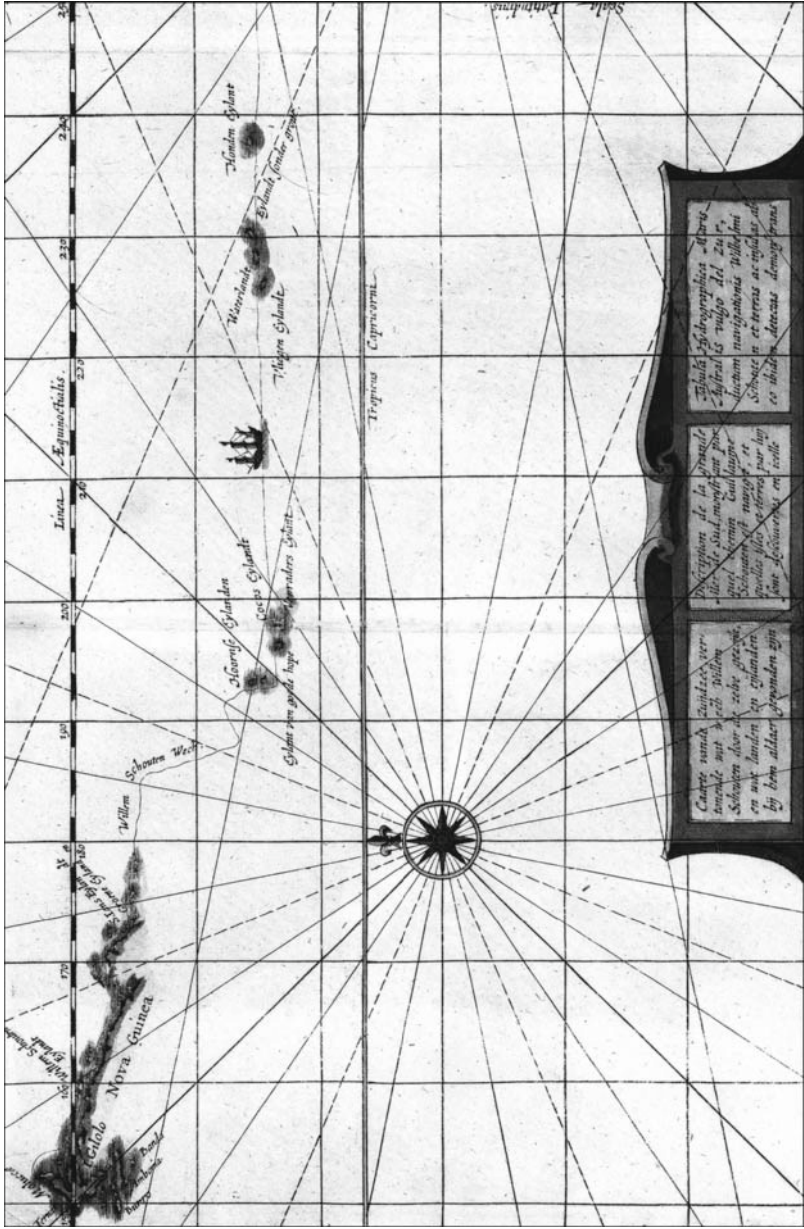
Figure 1.3 D. de Prado y Tovar ([1607]), 'Esta xente delas yslas que estan al aparte del sur de la Nueva Guinea [Torres Strait Islands] ...'. Ink and gouache. Ministerio de Cultura, Archivo General de Simancas, MPD, 18, 083

made no categorical correlation of skin colour and other supposedly innate characters with geography or group differentiation. Indeed, they scarcely used the collective noun *raza* or its more usual genealogical synonym *casta*. Any assumed identity of their representations with later racial categories is anachronistic, a posteriori, and unsustainable.

### The Dutch and the *Zuytlanders*

Having entered the complex geopolitical equation in the East Indies at the end of the 16th century, the Dutch rapidly supplanted the Portuguese, challenged expanding Islam, and confronted Spain in and north of the Moluccas. The Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) – the United East India Company, chartered in 1602 – was a major factor in the Moluccas by 1605, established a fortified base at Batavia in 1619, and wrenched Malacca from the Portuguese in 1641 (Ricklefs 2008:28–3, 69). In 1615, inspired by Quirós’s eighth memorial, the Amsterdam merchant Isaac Le Maire sponsored an expedition to search for *Terra Australis* and challenge the VOC monopoly over the trade routes through the Strait of Magellan and around the Cape of Good Hope. Led by Le Maire’s son Jacob and skippered by Schouten (1945:167), they found and passed through a previously unknown strait which they named for Le Maire, rounded and named Cape Horn, and thence entered the *Zuydzee* (‘South Sea’). No more successful than Mendaña or Quirós in finding the southern continent, they touched at several islands in the Tuamotus, the northern Tongan group, and the Hoorn Islands (all modern Polynesia) before reaching New Ireland (modern Melanesia) and coasting along northern New Guinea to Ternate and Iacatra where the VOC confiscated their vessel, the *Eendracht*, and their goods and papers (Map 1.2).<sup>49</sup>

From the outset, these voyagers retaliated violently to any hint of Indigenous insult or aggression, real or imagined, and wrote openly in their narratives about the numerous dead Islanders left in their wake.<sup>50</sup> Yet, far from confirming any natural domination of Christian Europeans over *Wilden* (‘savages’), their recourse to violence was usually preemptive or defensive, signalling their own anxieties and tenuous control of encounters. Dutch lexicons for the Indigenous people they encountered parallel Iberian usages over the previous century. There are very few collective nouns – clearly, travellers met particular persons, not groups. The term race is entirely absent. Le Maire (1622) used *Natie* (‘nation’) sporadically and he and Schouten (1945) used *Volck* (‘people’) somewhat erratically, mostly as a collective noun taking a singular verb but



Map 1.2 W.C. Schouten (1618), 'Caarte vande Zuidzee [South Sea]...', detail. Wikimedia Commons, [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Caarte\\_vande\\_Zuidzee\\_wat\\_wech\\_Willem\\_Schouten\\_door\\_de\\_zee\\_gezeijt\\_1618.jpg](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Caarte_vande_Zuidzee_wat_wech_Willem_Schouten_door_de_zee_gezeijt_1618.jpg)

sometimes pluralized as an aggregate noun. Schouten's English translator (1619:32–3) consistently gave people a plural verb: 'they were very theevish people'. Other plurals are the general nouns *menschen* ('human beings'), *mannen* ('men'), and *Inwoonders* ('inhabitants'); the belittling but non-racialist *Indianen* ('Indians') and *Wilden*; the vernacular toponym *Papoos* ('Papuan's'); and the problematic *Swarten* ('blacks').<sup>51</sup> As in the Spanish case, these terms are of interest for variant usages and relationships to context. Voyagers' word choices expressed not only convention, prejudice, and personal disposition but also the unstable emotions generated by the perils, uncertainties, excitement, and ecstasy of encounters with unfamiliar people and places. Such words and their modes of expression are often Indigenous countersigns.

There are notable contrasts between the narratives attributed to the well-bred young burgher Le Maire and the aging mariner Schouten, as well as between the Dutch and English versions of Schouten's text, especially with respect to skin colour. At an atoll in the Tuamotus, Le Maire (1622: folio 33) saw an 'exceedingly yellow' *volck*, 'tending to red, with pitch black long hair'. Schouten (1945:173) called them 'red'. At sea near the Tongan island of Tafahi, Le Maire (1622: folios 35, 37) saw a canoe-borne party of 'yellow Indians' with 'black hair, some loose, some somewhat curled, but not crisped'. For his part, Schouten (1945:180) reported a *root* ('red') *volck* with 'long hair coloured very black'. In the Hoorn Islands (Futuna and Alofi), Le Maire (1622: folio 52) depicted 'a robust' *Volck*, 'tall', 'brownish yellow' in colour and 'proud' of their hair. Schouten (1945:196) used similar epithets and added that the men were 'of great stature' and 'well proportioned'. Much further west, probably off Nukumanu (a Polynesian outlier in PNG), Le Maire (1622: folio 55) described a *volck* who were 'somewhat browner and blacker' than the Hoorn Islanders but spoke a similar language. According to Schouten's text (1945:199), they were 'somewhat blacker'.

From this point on, Le Maire's narrative scarcely mentions skin colour as the ship coasted past New Ireland and New Guinea towards the Moluccas. The noun *Swarten* ('blacks') henceforth recurs in Schouten's Dutch text but appears not at all in Le Maire's. Yet Schouten's English translator (1619:39, 60, 62) used black rarely and only adjectivally, while a single instance of the noun Negroes is applied to Schouten's 'red' *Wilden* of Tafahi (an anomaly for a modern reader). Throughout the English text, all local inhabitants are indiscriminately called Indians, including 'blacke *Indians*' in New Ireland.<sup>52</sup> At this period, or at least for this writer, skin colour was evidently indeterminate and the English noun Negro had not yet congealed into its conventional



negative meaning of 'African'. Rather, it was a nominalist synonym for Indian which was in turn given the general sense of native.

Schouten's Dutch narrative (1945:200–1) first applies the adjective *seer swart* ('very black') to people seen in canoes in New Ireland whose language differed entirely from that heard previously in the *Zuydzee*. These people transgressed doubly – by threatening Dutch security and by offending Schouten's prudish sensibilities. They launched 'very fierce' attacks with slingstones on the shallop and later on the ship. They were 'entirely naked', with 'nothing' over their *schamelheydt* ('shameful parts'),<sup>53</sup> and wore rings in holes bored through either side of their nose – 'a very strange thing to see'. As 'wild, black, uncivil men', they epitomized barbarity. Schouten (1945:202–3) first used *Swarten* as a substantive to label men who came on board the ship a few days later. The ambiguous nexus of skin colour and civility is here evident. He praised them as 'better and more civil people', though they brought no supplies, because they broke their spears over their heads 'in sign of peace', covered their *schamelheydt* with leaves, and had 'more elegant' canoes. But he changed his mind the next day when they attacked the ship and were bloodily repulsed. Le Maire (1622: folios 57, 58) was equally ambivalent – though their behaviour was 'mannerly', their faces were 'deformed', with 'flat noses, great lips, and mouths'.

*Swarten* abruptly became Schouten's (1945:206–8) dominant noun for local people from 15 July 1616, when a fierce attack by men at a small island off the New Guinea coast compelled a landing party to withdraw with multiple injuries and provoked the Dutch to furious retaliation. Here too, alarming behaviour was compounded by confronting appearance since these people were also 'completely naked, with their *schamelheydt* revealed'. The historian Ernst van den Boogaart (1982:46) argued that early 17th-century Dutchmen readily associated black skin with 'inner depravity' when they felt 'particularly threatened by blacks' but that 'savagery' was more striking than 'blackness' when it came to behaviour. Moreover, *Swarten* retains some nominalist imprecision in Schouten's text. Not far from the Moluccas, the ship was approached by a party of people Schouten (1945:208) referred to as *Swarten* but they were 'another type of people' than those seen previously, 'yellowish in colour, and greater in stature', some with 'long hair, some short'. The English translation (1619:67–70) consistently renders *Swarten* as 'Indians', suggesting broad equivalence rather than categorical distinction between the various items in this emergent but uncertain vocabulary of human difference.

As with their Spanish precursors, early modern Dutch evaluations of local inhabitants were more strongly influenced by Indigenous

behaviour, accoutrements, and so-called nudity than by presumptions based on skin colour. However, personal emphases varied. For example, according to Schouten (1945:194–8), the ‘brownish yellow’ inhabitants of the Hoorn Islands were a *Wilde volck* (‘savage people’) who went ‘quite naked’ and scarcely covered their *schamelheyt*. Le Maire (1622: folios 43, 52), the merchant, did not mention nakedness but found them ‘very covetous’ and ‘thievish’. Both authors traduced the women as ‘ugly’, ‘lecherous’, and knowing little ‘modesty’, while Le Maire alone noted their ‘pendulous’ breasts. Both concluded that these people lacked religion or ‘knowledge of commerce’ and lived like ‘birds in the forest’ or ‘beasts’ but Le Maire further demeaned them as primordial, ‘of the first age’.

If the noun *Swarten* is clearly a derogatory signifier in Schouten’s text, it is not an priori racial category any more than the descriptive adjectives ‘red’, ‘yellow’, or ‘black’. Rather, its sudden eruption into the narrative inscribes a particular experience of Indigenous conduct. The term is thus a countersign of local agency – of dangerous resort to preemptive violence and of a disapproved mode of dress, seen as undress. Le Maire (1622: folio 61) labelled the same people *Vyanden* (‘enemies’, modern *vijanden*), also a countersign. His text is less attentive to both skin colour and nudity but, as supplies ran perilously low, Le Maire (1622: folios 59, 60) exploded in vitriol against successive New Guinean visitors to the ship. Some were ‘very barbarous’, ‘very inquisitive like apes’. Others were ‘true maneaters’, their colour ‘ugly’, while the women’s breasts ‘hung down to the navel like an intestine’ and they had ‘thin legs like spindles, and poor apes’ faces’. This passage concludes with a specific grievance, a countersign of Indigenous agency which throws light on the invective that precedes it: ‘they brought us nothing’. The concatenation of textual elements encapsulates the potent mixture of imperatives and emotions which shaped encounters and representations alike. Fed by mutual excitement, curiosity, avidity, and trepidation, such volatile amalgams of needs and desires brought European arrogance, bigotry, prudishness, and exigency into relationship with multifaceted, if obscure Indigenous agency, attitudes, and strategies for handling strangers. And did so to diverse and unpredictable effect.

A further contrast between the two Dutch narratives has implications for the vexed, oft-debated, but enigmatic issue of whether Schouten wrote the shipboard journal on which the book published in his name was based, or if it was pirated from a journal written by Le Maire or by another crew member.<sup>54</sup> Schouten’s text (1945:173, 201–2, 204) has two clear markers of orientation and precedent that suggest previous

East Indian experience – which Schouten had and Le Maire did not. First, the term *Indianen* is almost entirely limited to the ‘red’ people with ‘very black, long hair’ who were seen in what is now Polynesia. This is the restricted sense in which Indian was commonly used by travellers familiar with the Indies or the Americas. The word hardly appears in Le Maire’s narrative while Schouten’s English translator used it with the alternative general meaning of ‘native’. Second, Schouten’s text applies *Papoos* as a familiar term to people seen in New Ireland and New Guinea: ‘We thought these people were Papoos, because they all had short hair and ate Betel with Chalk’.<sup>55</sup> This routine usage was inherited from the Iberians and ultimately the Moluccans (see above). It differs from the European orientation of Le Maire (1622: folios 57, 59) for whom *Papoos* was initially an exotic term *requiring definition*: ‘The inhabitants [of New Ireland] are named *Papoos*, mostly black’. Yet within a week, he had normalized the term into his working lexicon: the aforementioned ‘barbarous’ New Guineans had ‘pitch black’ hair, ‘they were real *Papoos*’.

## Epilogue

In mid-Atlantic, en route to south America, Le Maire (1622: folio 12) had Quirós’s eighth memorial read publicly to ‘encourage’ the crew who, he said, were imbued with ‘great desire and courage’ at the prospect of winning ‘good profit’ from so ‘excellent’ a voyage. However, Dutch Calvinists evidently drew inspiration not from Quiros’s professed missionary fervour to bring knowledge of God to ‘simple Gentiles’ but from more worldly aspirations. Notorious, even amongst fellow Protestants, for preferring ‘gain to godliness’, the pragmatic Dutch sought profit, trade monopoly, and geopolitical advantage over their Iberian and Muslim rivals, more than to spread their faith (Boxer 1973:126–72). As such, the Dutch entry into Oceania serves as a useful hiatus between this chapter and the next and as emblem for the historical shift that differentiates them – from the greater theological emphasis of 16th-century Portuguese and Spanish world views to the increasing rationalism of their Dutch, British, and French successors.

## 2

# Towards Races: Ambivalent Encounters in the South Seas

*Voyages of the British & French, 1577–1794*

In 1697, Leibniz (1718:36–8) speculated about ‘the languages and the origins’ of the central and northern Asian ‘peoples’ of Tartary and wondered whether some might not comprise ‘a single people’. He had ‘somewhere’ read that ‘a certain voyager had divided men into certain tribes, races, or classes’. He was alluding to an anonymous article attributed to the philosopher–physician Bernier (1684), given foundational status as the first published use of the modern sense of the term race and the earliest taxonomy of human races.<sup>1</sup> Because Bernier had travelled widely and lived in Asia, his work was authorized by personal observation and experience.<sup>2</sup> But he was also a respected savant, a protégé and interpreter (1678) of the empiricist philosopher Pierre Gassendi and a friend of John Locke. The article (1684:133–5, 138) recommends replacing the venerable geographical partition of the globe with a ‘new division’ into ‘four or five Species [*Especies*] or Races of men’, ‘notable’ for their ‘difference’. It speculates that the ‘blackness’ of ‘the Africans’ must be ‘essential’ rather than an ‘accidental’ result of exposure to the heat of the sun and seeks the cause ‘in the particular constitution [*contexture*] of their body’, or ‘in the blood’, or in ‘the seed [*semence*] which is particular to certain races or species’.

These radical suggestions had little contemporary impact (Boulle 2003:20). Leibniz (1718:38) refuted the implication of inherent racial or specific differences between human groups by avowing belief in human unity: ‘this does not mean that all men, who inhabit this globe, are not all of a single race, which has been altered by different climates, just as we see that animals & plants change nature, & become better, or degenerate’. This longstanding conventional wisdom, disputed by Bernier, would be systematized in Buffon’s ‘climate theory’ (1749:446–8, 480–4, 502–3, 517–30) which attributed human physical diversity to changes or ‘degeneration’ produced by the direct influence of climate, milieu, diet,

lifestyle, or intermingling on a single, originally white, migrating species. Buffon (1749:530; 1766:311–13) reasoned that, because such ‘alterations of nature’ were ‘superficial’ effects of the ‘conjunction of external and accidental causes’, they would ‘disappear’ or change yet again in a restored or further altered environment. Leibniz’s (1718:37) prime concern was not somatic but to reveal ‘the harmoniously differentiated unity of human languages’ (Fenves 2006:17). He scarcely used the word race but in a late 17th-century manuscript (1999:34) defined English ‘race’ or French *race* in standard genealogical terms: in Latin as *genus* and *Series generationum* (‘generational series’) and in German as *Geschlecht*, an omnibus term for ‘sex’, ‘(human) race’, ‘family’, ‘house’. He concluded tellingly that ‘the explanation for this series is genealogy’.<sup>3</sup>

The common thread in these tentative propositions is not the incidental occurrence of race but signs of a dawning interest in taxonomy, or at least increasing recourse to collective terminology in thinking about man from the early 17th century. In his work on Gassendi, Bernier (1678, III:30–1, 45–7) argued that, because most genera contain countless individuals, they must be reduced ‘to smaller clusters [*Amas*]’ or species. His important novelty was to apply classification to human beings by condensing ‘the Genus, or the innumerable multitude of Men into Europeans, Asiatics, Africans, & Americans’, each further subdivisible into ‘Nations’, ‘Provinces’, ‘Cities’, and even ‘Families’. The historian Siep Stuurman (2000:2–3, 11–16) saw Bernier’s ‘crucial innovation’ as manifesting, on the one hand, a general intellectual transition ‘from sacred history to natural history’; and, on the other, the systematizing reaction to ‘the impasse of Renaissance cosmography’ – the paralysing influx of escalating knowledge about ‘ever more nations and tribes’.

## Taxonomy and races

Stuurman’s thesis parallels two strands in Chapter 1 – my anticipation of a shifting discursive emphasis from theology to rationalism in 17th-century European ontologies; and my empirical tracking of the limited, but slowly growing lexicon of terms available to 16th-century travellers to describe or label a plethora of very varied, newly encountered populations. All the savants discussed in the present chapter, whatever their religious beliefs, scruples, or affiliations, framed their arguments in secular scientific or philosophical terms, with scripture at most allowed the confirmatory ‘authority of an old historical account’ (Forster 1778:257). Excess and diversity fed the need if not for classification, then at least for group appellations. General categories need general

labels. With respect to human beings, Bernier proposed the taxa ‘Species or Races’. Leibniz, not a taxonomist, referred in passing to ‘tribes, races, or classes’. By the late 17th century, the inclusion of race (in French or English) in a more or less transposable set of collective labels for broad human groupings marked the expanded metaphorical use of this hitherto insignificant genealogical term.

From the 1730s, Linnaeus (1735; 1758:7, 20; 1766:13) revolutionized taxonomy by propounding an abstract ‘method’ which systematically subdivided Nature’s ‘complex whole’, including *Homo* (‘Man’), into a fivefold nesting set of taxa. Classes and orders were *Sapientia* (mental constructs) but genera and species were fixed ‘works of nature’ while varieties were accidental, ephemeral results of the impact of climate and lifestyle. In the tenth edition of *Systema naturæ*, Linnaeus (1758:14–25) greatly elaborated his earlier schematic geographical classification of human varieties and now made *Homo* the first genus in the mammalian order of Primates, alongside *Simia* (‘Ape’). All known varieties are grouped within the single species *Homo sapiens* (‘knowing man’), classified according to *cultura, loco* (‘cultivation and place’) into American, European, Asian, and African, plus the fanciful categories ‘wild’ and ‘monstrous’. Linnaeus characterized all but the European unflatteringly, combining skin colour, physique, hair type, and mode of government with psychological attributes derived from Galen’s four temperaments. In *Anthropomorpha*, a thesis written by Linnaeus and defended by his Russian student Christian Emmanuel Hoppius (1760:2–4, 7, 13, 15–16), Linnaeus opined that ‘a natural distinction between man and his imitator the ape can scarcely be maintained’ while the ‘difference between them was no greater than that between the ‘greatest’ or most ‘well-born’ European and a ‘Hottentot’ (Khoikhoi) or a ‘wild man’.<sup>4</sup>

This intimate association of man and beast outraged many conventional thinkers, secular no less than religious, but notably Buffon (1749–67, I:12–41; II:18, 437–44; 1749:530) who always strategically positioned man as a ‘single species’, ‘at the head of all created beings’, infinitely separated from the ‘brutes’ by the capacity for speech and reason. Moreover, he rejected Linnaeus’s ‘general system’ and ‘artificial’ classification in favour of the nominalist position that ‘only individuals’ are real while families, genera, orders, and classes are imagined. For Buffon (1749–67, IV:384–6), the ‘abstract’ term *espèce* (‘species’) denoted not a ‘collection of similar individuals’ but a ‘constant succession of similar individuals who reproduce themselves’, only thus giving *espèces* ‘real’ existence and material historical continuity.

Linnaeus differentiated varieties of *Homo sapiens* but did not use the term *gens*, a Latin cognate of the old genealogical sense of a race

(Lewis and Short 1879). Other contemporary savants made race one of a range of collective nouns applied to extensive populations but avoided systematic classification of man. In *Vénus physique*, Maupertuis (1745:123, 125, 134, 137, 151, 153–4) represented man as a single but diverse *genre humain* ('human genus') or *race des hommes* ('race of men'), divided into numerous 'kinds', 'varieties', 'peoples', 'nations', or 'races', with *race* the least-used term. The ambiguity and interconvertibility of this terminology is patent in the following composite passage (1745:121–3):

[Africans] seem to comprise a new *kind* [*espece*] of men . towards the East, we shall see *peoples* whose features are softened ... [In America,] we find ... many new *varieties* ... [and in the far south,] a *race* of men whose height is almost double ours ... [In the extreme north of Europe is] another very different *kind* of men ... the Lapps in the North, the Patagonians in the South seem [to be] the extreme limits of *the race of men*... [In the islands of the Indian and Pacific Oceans,] each *people*, each *nation* there has its own form.<sup>5</sup>

In the fifth edition of 1748, Maupertuis (1752b:251) used the heading 'Varieties in the human species'. The following year, Buffon (1749) gave the same title to a landmark essay on human diversity in his *Histoire naturelle* (1749–67). Thus far, natural history had normally considered man as an individual (Blanckaert 2006:433–4). Many contemporary naturalists were unimpressed by Buffon's (1749:371) resolve to focus also on 'the species' and notably on the 'varieties evident between the men of different climates'. In this work, Buffon (1749:453, 473) assumed a broad differentiation between 'the white race' and 'the race of the blacks' but in practice his seemingly a priori racial dichotomy dissolves into an exhaustive geographical survey of the endless 'nuances' of the 'kinds', 'varieties', 'races', 'nations', or 'peoples' known to him within the single human species. This is not a racial taxonomy, notwithstanding the assumptions of numerous scholars who projected their own classificatory readings on to Buffon's text – including his contemporary follower Goldsmith (1774, II:212–42) who distilled Buffon's nominalist digest of nuanced human kinds into 'six distinct varieties', geographically determined.<sup>6</sup>

In this essay, Buffon used the word *race* far more often than Maupertuis but no less erratically. For example, convinced by voyagers' reports of great variation in 'the race of the blacks', Buffon (1749:453–4) proposed:

to divide the blacks into different *races*, & it seems to me that we can reduce them to ... two *kinds* of black men ... Then by examining more particularly the different *peoples* who compose each of these black *races*, we shall see there as many *varieties* as in the white *races*.<sup>7</sup>

Nonetheless, in a significant, if still inchoate departure from the ancient genealogical referents of race, Buffon (1749:371–9, 527–8) described ‘the Lapp race’ in the polar regions as ‘a *race* of men’ who had seemingly ‘degenerated from the *human species*’. Living ‘in deserts and in a climate uninhabitable by all other *nations*’, this race appeared to be ‘a particular *kind*’.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, he defamed ‘the Lapps’ (Sami) as ‘bizarre’, ‘savage’, ‘stunted’, ‘ugly’ people whose accidental ‘differences’ were a matter of ‘greater or lesser deformity’. He did not doubt that the ‘most handsome & best made’ people inhabited the *pays policés* (‘governed’ or ‘civilized countries’) of the zone from 40° to 50° north. They embodied the ‘true natural colour of man’, the ‘model or unity’ to which all ‘nuances of colour and beauty’ must be related, whereas the ‘two extremes’ who occupied the polar regions and equatorial Africa were ‘equally distant from the true & the beautiful’. However, this complacent ethnocentrism and vilification of certain non-Europeans does not constitute the modern meaning of race.

From the 1770s, a spreading belief that human physical diversity was innate, permanent, and fundamentally differentiating began to undermine the venerable dogma that man comprised a single, variously civilized species, of common ancestry but variegated appearance. Buffon (1777:462) clarified his ‘most extended sense’ of *race* as signifying climatically induced ‘resemblance’ amongst unrelated historical populations, rather than the older, ‘narrowest’ meaning of *nation*. The seeming modernity of this formulation is deceptive since Buffon (1766:313) and his disciples (Goldsmith 1774, II:240–2) continued to explain such likeness as an artefact of climate and to insist that a return to the ‘natal land’ would in time restore ‘original’ physical characters. He still shunned classification. In significant contrast, Kant (1785a:405–9) and Blumenbach (1797:23, 60–3) ultimately married a reproductive conception of race to taxonomy. Notwithstanding the commitment to monogeny they shared with Buffon, they thereby authorized the biologization of a *Race* or *Rasse* as ‘unfailingly hereditary’, its dematerialization as a zoological taxon, and the differentiation of reified human races within potentially hierarchical classificatory systems (see Chapter 3). These key ingredients of the racialization of human difference are absent from the voyage materials considered in this chapter and are addressed in more detail in the next chapter and in Part II.

### **Early Englishmen in the South Seas: Drake and Dampier**

The inhabitants of Oceania barely feature in the earliest catalogues of humanity or in Linnaeus’s taxonomy. Neither, in volume, does Oceania



loom large in Buffon's essay 'Varieties in the human species' which relied on travel narratives but predated the great scientific voyages of the late 18th century. Buffon (1749:395–411) surveyed this zone in a 16-page segment on the Indian Archipelago, Formosa (Taiwan), the Marianas, New Guinea and nearby islands, and New Holland. By far his most cited authority is the English privateer, naval officer, and naturalist Dampier (1697, 1699, 1703, 1709) who published four widely read narratives of his travels across the globe between 1673 and 1701. Dampier's vivid snapshots of people encountered in Guam, the East Indies, New Holland, New Guinea, New Britain, and (as yet unnamed) New Ireland helped shape metropolitan understandings and his successors' expectations.<sup>9</sup>

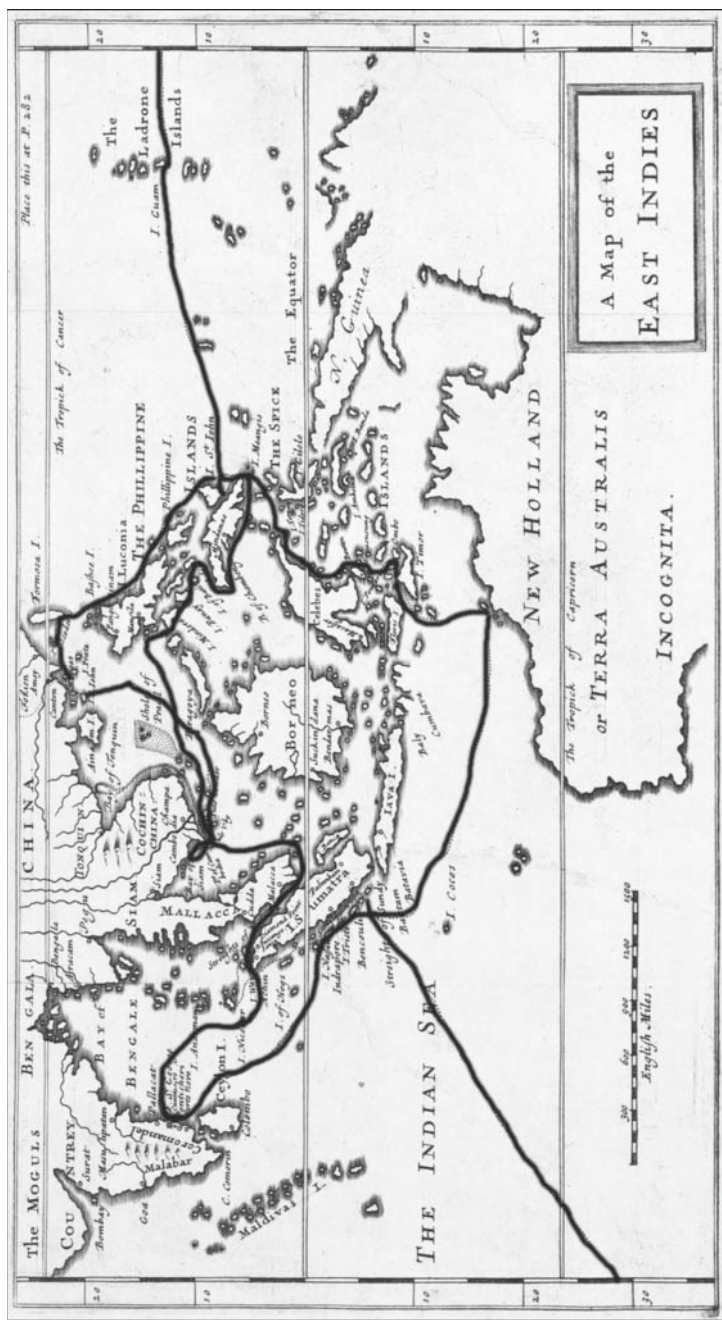
Dampier was by no means the first Englishman to encounter Indigenous people in Oceania. His most distinguished predecessor was the privateer Francis Drake who in 1577–80, on the *Golden Hind*, completed the first circumnavigation of the globe by a single commander. Drake's chronicler was the ship's chaplain Francis Fletcher whose narrative was published in 1628, heavily edited by Drake's nephew. Fletcher (1854:45, 77, 145, 148, 162) normally referred to people encountered during the voyage in sweeping human terms, as had Pigafetta: 'the men of the cuntry', 'the people', 'the inhabitants'. The demeaning substantives 'natiues' and 'negroes' appear only once each. More ascerbic, but entirely unracialized wording was triggered in particular situations by assumed lack of civility or true religion and by the undertow of local agency, enacted in violence or theft. At Puerto San Julián in Patagonia, 'the inhabitants' killed two crew members in a sudden, 'treacherous' attack, provoking Fletcher (1854:58–61) to relabel them 'these monsters', 'these enemies', and 'infidells'. The lexical shift is a countersign of Indigenous agency, unacknowledged by Fletcher who blamed 'this euill' on an 'old grudge' inspired by 'Spanish cruelties', 'not easily' forgotten by 'so quarrellsome and revengefull a people'.

Subsequently, in the Strait of Magellan, Fletcher (1854:77–8, 122, 131) expressed surprise at the quality of local water craft which seemed to require 'the cunning and expert iudgement of art' beyond the presumed capabilities of 'so rude and barbarous a people'. Near San Francisco Bay, faced by a 'great assembly of men, women, and children', Drake prudently recalled 'our experience of former Infidels' and took precautions to 'be able to keepe off the enemye (if they should so proue)' – which they did not, being 'without guile or treachery'. In one of the Caroline Islands, Indigenous agency – 'this vngracious company', expostulated Fletcher (1854:136) – goaded Drake to vent frustration

in a toponym: ‘offering in shew to deale with vs by way of exchange, vnder that pretence they cunningly fell a filching of what they could,... and so we left that place, by all passengers to bee knowne hereafter by the name of the *Island of Theeues*’. But Drake’s epithet did not stick, unlike Magellan’s for the Marianas which into the 20th century were sometimes still called the Ladrões (see Chapter 1). In Ternate (Maluku), the Christian minister Fletcher (1854:144–5, 158, 162) described the ‘king’ as a ‘Moore by nation’, the people as ‘Moores’, and their religion as ‘superstitious obseruations’. In contrast, at ‘Baratiua’ the people were ‘Gentiles’, ‘handsome’, ‘comely’, ‘civill’, ‘just’, and ‘courteous to strangers’. In 16th-century English usage, Gentile could mean ‘Hindu’ in opposition to ‘Muslim’ and this island was probably Bali.<sup>10</sup>

Nearly a century later, in about 1670, Dampier began a sailing career which over four decades took him through much of the maritime world.<sup>11</sup> His referential and descriptive terminology for the ‘great variety of Savages’ (1703:148) he encountered at once rehearses that of his predecessors but, in print at least, is also significantly innovative. His first two books (1697, 1699) combine narratives of his travels from Mexico to the East Indies and New Holland as a privateer in 1686–91 with accounts of his earlier experiences as a buccaneer in the Americas (Map 2.1). Dampier’s comparative orientation to encounters with Oceanian populations was firmly grounded in American precedents. Unlike the Spanish, but like the Dutch, his texts bear little trace of religious motivation or concerns. This markedly secular perspective was shared by every voyager discussed henceforth in this chapter, even the Lutheran pastor Reinhold Forster.

In an annotated manuscript copy of an early draft of his first book, Dampier (n.d.:28, 378, 390–1, 438–41) mainly used the all-inclusive aggregate noun people or the general discriminator natives. Moreover, his physical descriptions are laconic, rarely mention skin colour, and show only muted prejudice. Young women at the Isthmus of Darien were ‘well enough [looking] considering their Colour’. Women in Mindanao were ‘well featured though tawny’. But the ‘people’ of New Holland were ‘black’. In all his published works, ‘People’ and ‘Natives’ remain the standard terms of reference, plus the embracive ‘Men’, or ‘Inhabitants’. However, in marked contrast to the draft, Dampier’s books systematically describe the appearance of the residents of places visited, drawing comparatively on stereotypes of the ‘Indians’ and the ‘Negroes’, crosscut by highly ethnocentric evaluations of behaviour and lifestyle as savage/wild or civil. These embellishments were presumably adopted to enhance coherence and to suit audience tastes, but whether by Dampier himself or his publisher is unknown.



Map 2.1 W. Dampier (1697), 'A Map of the East Indies'. National Library of Australia, Canberra, NK1509 Map plate [4]. Annotation B. Douglas

Dampier (1697, 1699, 1709) did not use Indian in the general sense of native as the Spanish had mainly done (see Chapter 1). Rather, he labelled as '*Indians*' the populace of every place he visited in the West Indies, central and south America, Guam, and the East Indies. He characterized them as 'tawny', 'swarthy', or different shades of 'Copper-colour', 'with black lank Hair'. In his final work (1709:23, 65), these features constituted 'the Indian *kind*' or 'the *Indian-Race*'. This single instance of the word race – transcending genealogy because it connoted '*Indians, both East and West*' (1699:176) – perhaps anticipated Buffon's 'extended sense'.<sup>12</sup> Dampier used the term Negro far less often and only twice in his first book – significantly, as a negative comparative foil connoting a standard set of physical features attributed to 'the *Negroes of Guinea*'. He depicted thus the '*Hottantots*' he saw at the Cape of Good Hope near the end of his travels (1697:537):

Their Faces are of a flat oval Figure, of the *Negro* make, with great Eye-brows, black Eyes, but neither are their Noses so flat, nor their Lips so thick, as the *Negroes of Guinea*. Their Complexion is darker than the common *Indians*; tho' not so black as the *Negroes* or *New Hollanders*; neither is their Hair so much frizzled.

This word-picture is an empirical composite relativized by specific analogy to established group stereotypes – the familiar figures of the Negroes and the 'common' Indians but also the New Hollanders whom Dampier had already characterized by means of the same rhetorical tactic (see below).

Dampier's third and fourth books (1703, 1709) together constitute a narrative of his exploratory expedition to New Holland, New Guinea, and the East Indies in 1699–1701 in command of the Royal Navy vessel *Roebuck*. At the island of Pulau Sabuda (West Papua), Dampier (1709:100) recorded a striking difference in the physical appearance of the inhabitants: between 'a sort of very tawny *Indians*, with long black Hair', and 'shock Curl-pated *New-Guinea Negroes*', now using Negro as a concrete descriptor rather than an analogy. He took the Indians 'to be the chief' and many of the Negroes to be 'Slaves to the others'. Sailing well to the north of the New Guinea mainland, he reached present New Ireland, passed the Lihir and Tanga groups, and anchored at what he called Port Mountague (Montagu Harbour) on the south coast of New Britain, which he also named. Dampier (1709:122, 148) reported seeing large populations of '*Negroes*' at various places during his itinerary around PNG's Bismarck Archipelago. Those at Lihir were 'very black, strong, and well limb'd People; having great round Heads;

their Hair naturally curl'd and short', and 'broad round Faces with great bottle Noses yet agreeable enough'. He admired their 'ingeniously built' outrigger canoes, handled in 'very dextrous active' fashion.

These neutral or positive impressions intersperse a string of deeply ambivalent representations (1709:122, 134, 138, 140, 148), triggered by disapproved Indigenous agency which offended Dampier's aesthetics, threatened the security of the English, or thwarted his crew's desperate need for provisions. Lihirian features only remained 'agreeable' until they 'disfigure them by Painting, and by wearing great things through their Noses as big as a Mans Thumb'. The inhabitants of New Britain were 'very numerous', 'treacherous', 'shy and roguish', 'daring and bold', and 'could not be prevailed upon to a friendly Commerce'. Each word or phrase is an Indigenous countersign, a precipitate in a European text of an aspect of local conduct.

Dampier (1709:117–9, 133–42) recounted what happened. At '*Slingers Bay*' (probably Ramat Bay or Nabuto Bay, New Ireland), a large number of men in canoes 'made signs for us to go in towards the Shore', 'seem'd to rejoyce' when the vessel headed that way, but 'began to fling Stones at us as fast as they could' when Dampier withdrew because of uncertain weather. He fired 'one Gun' which 'killed or wounded' several men but was pragmatically 'unwilling to cut off' any more since he 'could not hope afterwards to bring them to treat with me'. A few weeks later, entering Montagu Harbour, he fired the ship's guns preemptively 'to scare them; for my business being to Wood and Water, I thought it necessary to strike some terrour into the Inhabitants'. This demonstration made them 'much afraid' but though they 'admir'd' the English hatchets and axes, they would 'part with nothing but Coco-nuts'. Dampier charged his crew 'to deal by fair means, and to act cautiously for their own Security' but the 'Natives in great Companies stood to resist them' and still refused to trade. Determined 'to have some Provision', the sailors fired their muskets, wounding some, 'but none were kill'd; our design being rather to fright than to kill them'. The English then raided the villagers' hog supplies – critical to local wealth and prestige – shot and stole at least 18 pigs, injured many others, and carried off some 'Nets and Images' and a small canoe. Dampier restored the canoe and left 'in her, two Axes, two Hatchets ... six Knives, six Looking-glasses, a large bunch of Beads, and four Glass-bottles' – stingy, belated recompense for blatant pillage, purely on his own terms. This frugal reciprocity also covertly acknowledged a perennial tension between conflicting imperatives inherent in such encounters – the travellers' physical and emotional vulnerability and need to replenish supplies; and Indigenous

determination to conserve resources and valuables despite the lure of foreign products or the lethal power of foreign weapons.

These examples show clearly that Dampier's sporadic comparison of Indians and Negroes is neither taxonomic nor a racial opposition. Rather, it is a rhetorical device, at once nominalist and contrastive. Both Indians and Negroes might be savage in his view but Negroes probably more so. Yet he allowed both the human potential to become civilized through commerce. In Sierra Leone in 1783, Dampier's (1697:78) ship anchored at a 'pretty large' town of Negroes who enthusiastically traded supplies to the crew, 'treated' them with palm wine, and 'were in no way shy', though their persons were 'like other Negroes'. The 'strong well-limb'd *Negroes*' of New Britain might, he opined (1709:148), 'be easily brought to Commerce', despite their intransigent refusal to trade with him.

Dampier's core trope is the relatively savage or civil Indian. The first book (1697:1–11, 85–6) begins with a brief account of the Miskito Indians (Honduras and Nicaragua), 'a small Nation or Family', 'of a dark Copper-colour', who often worked with the English and earned 'a great deal of respect'. He contrasted the 'very civil' Moskito men, who had learned from the English to forge tools out of iron, with other 'Wild' or '*Savage Indians*' who were restricted to their own 'ingenious' stone tools. In the East Indies, Dampier's (1697:394–5, 454–7, 515) national and professional interest in commerce meshed with the economic and religious concerns of some of his local interlocutors to shape his partiality for the 'civilized *Indians* of the Maritime Places, who trade with Foreigners'; 'spake the *Malayan* Language', the lingua franca which Europeans also learned; were 'generally *Mahometans*'; and often enslaved the 'idolatrour' 'inland people' whom they regarded 'as Savages'. In Mindanao, for example, Dampier (1697:324–5; n.d.:390) singled out the '*Mindanayans* properly so called' as the 'greatest Nation in the Island' and 'the more civil' because they traded 'by Sea with other Nations'. He contrasted them with 'another sorte of People' – 'the *Mountaniers*, the *Sologues*, and *Alfoorees*' – who were 'less known' to him, mostly dwelt inland, were less engaged in commerce, but were of the same 'colour', 'strength', 'stature', 'Religion', 'customs and manner of living' as the Mindanayans. These circumstantial assessments of relative civility do not anticipate the differentiation, commonly drawn locally and in many European writings, between Malay conquerors and displaced, supposedly black autochthones (see below), sometimes called 'Alfuros'.<sup>13</sup>

The ambiguous amalgam of somatic, religious, linguistic, national, occupational, and social criteria in Dampier's (1709:62–7, 75–82) terminology is patent with respect to Timor, where on the north coast

in 1699 he encountered a ‘Mungrel-Breed’, a ‘sort of lawless People’, ‘under no Government’. They were ‘Ambitious to be call’d *Portugueze*’ though most were ‘*Indians*’ and there were ‘very few right *Portugueze*’ in the Island. Yet they were ‘already so mixt, that it is hard to distinguish whether they are *Portugueze* or *Indians*’. They spoke Portuguese well, Malay ‘indifferently’, and their religion was ‘*Romish*’. This rich empirical diversity is epitomized in Dampier’s portrayal of the deputy commander of the Portuguese settlement as a ‘right *Indian*’, a ‘civil brisk Man’ who spoke ‘very good’ Portuguese and was a ‘Roman Catholick’. The settlement was a ‘place of pretty good Trade’ but the Portuguese lacked the weapons, discipline, and ‘good order’ of the Dutch who were installed in a ‘small neat Stone Fort’ in the west of the island and depended ‘more on their own Strength than on the Natives their Friends’.

On two occasions during his travels, both in New Holland, Dampier encountered people whose lifestyle, appearance, and behaviour escaped the conceptual grid forged from the intersection of stereotype (Indians and Negroes) with experience (civil and savage). In 1688, at present King Sound (northwest Western Australia), Dampier (1697:464) thought he saw ‘the miserabest People in the world’, next to whom the Hottentots (whom he was yet to see), ‘though a nasty People, yet for Wealth are Gentlemen to these’. Their ‘humane shape’ apart, they differed ‘but little from Brutes’ and were ‘of a very unpleasing Aspect’, with ‘great Heads, round Foreheads, and great Brows’, ‘great Bottle noses, pretty full lips, and wide mouths’. In line with this work’s rhetorical reliance on physical analogy, Dampier related the key human differentiae of skin colour and hair type to his twin stereotypes: ‘Their Hair is black, short and curl’d, like that of the Negroes: and not long and lank like the common *Indians*. The colour of their skins ... is coal black, like that of the Negroes of *Guinea*’. In 1699, at La Grange Bay, southwest of King Sound, Dampier (1703:145–9) clashed violently with a dozen ‘*N. Hollanders*’. He characterized them by abandoning explicit analogy but not denigration: they suffered from ‘natural Deformity’, exacerbated by body ‘Painting’; they were ‘probably the same sort of People’ as those he had met before, with ‘the same black Skins, and Hair frizled’; and they had ‘the most unpleasant Looks and the worst Features’ of any he had seen.

Seventy years later, these scathing words provoked Banks (1768–71:239, 249, \*216–17, \*255–6, \*278–9) to regret the ‘prejudices’ he had imbibed from Dampier and to conclude that he ‘either was mistaken very much’ in likening New Hollanders to Africans or that ‘he saw a very different race of people’ from those Banks had seen on the east coast.<sup>14</sup> Yet Dampier’s depiction of the inhabitants of northwest New Holland *in*

*the draft* of his first book differs significantly in structure, tone, and content from his published representations. Whereas the book foregrounds Indigenous physical appearance, the draft (n.d.:440) begins and mostly stays with their way of life and conduct – ‘they would not abide our coming’. Their bodies are described casually with notable traits attributed to diet, choice, or deficient tools rather than ‘natural Deformity’:

They are people of good stature but very thin and leane, I judge for want of foode they are black yett I believe their haire would be long ~~(Like a negroes hair)~~ I say if it was com[b]ed out but for want of Combs it is matted up like a negroes haire.<sup>15</sup>

Not only did Dampier here explicitly deny a natural Negro analogy with respect to hair but the defamatory epithets ‘miserablest’ and ‘unpleasant’ are missing.

From draft and printed texts alike, it is clear that Indigenous agency – the resolute refusal of ‘*New Hollanders*’ to engage with the visitors and their indifference to objects of European manufacture – discommoded and offended Dampier, defied his ethnocentric correlation of civil society with trade, and made him question their human capacity to become civilized. In 1688 (1697:464–6; n.d.:438–40), short of water and provisions but hoping ‘to allure them with toyes to a Commerce’, the English were much disappointed to find instead a largely absent populace, notable only for what they lacked: with ‘noe houses’, ‘neither have they any sorte of Graine or pulse flesh they have not nor any sorte of Cattle’, ‘they have noe sorte of fowle’, and ‘they are not troubled with household goods nor cloaths’.<sup>16</sup> Dampier’s (1697:468) anecdote of an attempt to hire several men to carry full water barrels to the ship in return for old clothes starts as transaction, becomes farce, and ends in disillusion:

we brought these our new Servants to the Wells, and put a Barrel on each of their Shoulders for them to carry to the Canoa. But all the signs we could make were to no purpose, for they stood like Statues, without motion, but grinn’d like so many Monkeys ... So we were forced to carry our Water our selves, and they very fairly put the Cloaths off again ... I did not perceive that they had any great liking to them at first, *neither did they seem to admire any thing that we had.*<sup>17</sup>

Dampier (1697:468–9; n.d.:441) was equally baffled and insulted when four men who had been taken on board the ship ‘tooke noe notice of any thing that wee had noe more then a brute would’, apart from ‘some victualls which they greedily devoured’, and then ‘ran away as fast as their Leggs could carry them’.



On his second visit to New Holland in 1699, Dampier (1703:145–7; 1709:4) planned ‘to observe what Inhabitants I should meet with, and to try to win them over to somewhat of Traffick and useful Intercourse’. However, his ‘Experience’ of their ‘Neighbours formerly’ led him to expect ‘no great Matters from them’. This expectation was fully realized at La Grange Bay when a handful of men ‘stood there menacing and threatning’ the English, rejected all Dampier’s ‘Signs of Peace and Friendship’, and responded violently when he tried to ‘catch one’ in order to locate fresh water. With a man wounded on either side, the encounter ended and was not resumed.

### The natural history of man in the South Seas

If the considerable literary influence of Dampier’s narratives – on Defoe, Swift, and Coleridge – has often been acknowledged, their scientific impact is less well known.<sup>18</sup> Yet, with respect to the natural history of man, Dampier not only gave Buffon the bulk of his empirical material on the fifth part of the world but in the process contributed crucial comparative evidence for the climatic determination of human variety. Buffon (1749:473, 519–22) reasoned thus. The maritime climate of the Indian Archipelago, unlike the African interior or west coast, was not excessively hot and ‘*therefore*’ these islands were inhabited by ‘brown men’. New Guinea was populated by ‘black men’, ‘true Negroes’ according to travellers, ‘*because*’ it was crossed by ‘burning’ winds. In New Holland, where the climate was less hot, the people were ‘less black’ and resembled the Hottentots who also lived in a ‘more temperate’ climate and were ‘not true Negroes’ – sometimes even ‘*naturally* more white than black’. Buffon concluded that, since contact between Africa and the ‘southern continent’ was unthinkable, the presence of the ‘same kinds of men’, ‘in the same latitude, at such a great distance from the other Negroes & the other Hottentots’, confirmed that their colour depended solely on climate. He argued further that ‘constant, always excessive heat’ was essential not only to the production but ‘*even to the conservation*’ of Negroes.<sup>19</sup> All this helped ‘prove’ his monogenist article of faith (1749:529–30): that the human genus did not comprise ‘essentially different species’; rather, that stable, but not irreversible ‘varieties of the species’ had been produced by the influence of ‘external and accidental causes’ on a single original species during its spread across the globe.

Buffon’s treatment of the ‘inhabitants’ of New Holland in this theoretical polemic is at odds with his earlier description of them. The discordance points to two variant modes of knowing that typically

commingled in the natural history of man. On the one hand, in assembling his exhaustive geographical catalogue of the varieties of man, Buffon (1749:408–10) took the empirical authority of voyagers more or less literally, ignoring inconsistencies. So he uncritically paraphrased Dampier's (mistaken) analogy to claim that the skin colour of these people was 'black like that of the Negroes of Guinea'. On the other hand, Buffon's (1749:470, 519–20) theoretical agenda predetermined the evidence needed in its support. So, oblivious to anomaly, he re-essentialized the people of New Holland as 'less black and quite similar to Hottentots' (who were 'not Negroes'). Thus, not only did Dampier's narratives distort his own unpublished impressions of the actual people he met in the place Europeans called New Holland but Buffon's theory wrenched them out of place, time, and encounter as '*floating signifiers*' – Claude Lévi-Strauss's (1968:42–3) term for concepts which serve semantically to facilitate thought in the face of internal contradictions.<sup>20</sup> Devoid of referents and 'empty of meaning', floating signifiers are 'pure symbols' that can be invested 'with any symbolic content whatsoever'.<sup>21</sup> In discourses about human difference, races can have precisely this function and status.

Towards the end of his human inventory of Oceania, as he moved from empirical to reflective mode, Buffon (1749:410–11) stated that the inhabitants of Formosa and the Marianas '*resemble*' each other in height, strength, and features and seemed 'to form a separate race different from all those nearby'. In the next sentence, he declared that the *Papous* ('Papuan') and other Islanders in and around New Guinea were 'true blacks and *resemble* those of Africa'.<sup>22</sup> These juxtaposed assertions might, with hindsight, be seen to anticipate the later racial differentiation of Micronesians and Melanesians. But, as with Dampier, it is inappropriate to attribute methodical binary intent to Buffon (1749:433, 448) whose stated intention here was to flag his conclusion of essential human unity without yet revealing it. His scattered recourse to the term *race* is usually ambiguous but sometimes prefigures his as yet undeveloped 'extended' sense, connoting a 'singular resemblance' in widely dispersed 'peoples' occupying a similar latitude.

Dampier's narratives also helped put *Terra Australis* firmly to the forefront of French and British scientific and colonial interests. In 1752, in a letter to his patron Frederick II of Prussia, Maupertuis (1752a:1–29) listed the 'discovery' of the *Terres australes* as the most urgent and worthy project that an enlightened Prince might undertake to advance 'Commerce' and 'Physics' (natural science). Four years later, Buffon's friend and fellow monogenist Brosses (1756, I:i, 2–4)

expanded Maupertuis's recommendation into an influential treatise. A compendium of voyage texts from the 16th to the 18th centuries and a speculative programme for discovery, commerce, and settlement in the 'fifth part of the world', this work helped inspire the great French and British scientific voyages of the 1760s. Brosse (1756, II, 385–99) identified New Britain as the most favourable site for a future colony, mainly due to Dampier's positive assessment of the country and its inhabitants' potential for commerce.<sup>23</sup> Within a decade, John Callander ([Brosse] 1766–8) plagiarized Brosse's work in English translation and appropriated his colonial prospectus 'to the Advantage of Great Britain'.

Brosse's treatise (1756, II:347–53, 376–80) professes 'astonishment' that the *Terres australes* should be populated by 'so many races of men of diverse kinds, & different colours, placed in the same climates at such short distances from each other' – 'white', *basannés* ('swarthy' or 'tanned'), 'black', 'mulatto', and 'speckled'. The passage loosely paraphrases Quirós's eighth memorial. This 'difference in the human species' within the same climatic zone was a Buffonian anomaly which Brosse resolved thus. He condensed Quirós's kaleidoscope by recalling reports of the existence in New Holland and the interior of the Asian islands of an *espèce* ('kind') 'very different from the other inhabitants', 'similar' to the 'African negroes'. He resurrected a conjectural history in which an 'old race' of 'more brutish & savage', 'frizzy-haired blacks' – supposedly 'ancient man in his primitive state of raw nature' – were displaced or destroyed in Asia by 'foreign colonies of Malay peoples' and only survived in 'unknown' lands like New Holland.

Such speculative histories of migration and dispersal pepper European literature on Oceanian populations from the 16th century. Travellers, missionaries, colonizers, and savants persistently wove local stories about small, brutish, dark-skinned inland dwellers into their own narratives in which black autochthones – called *negrillos* ('little blacks') by the Spanish in the Philippines – were driven to remote places by more civilized, lighter-skinned immigrants. An early Spanish official (Morga 2007:219–20) reported the presence in the mountains of Luzon of 'black', nomadic 'barbarians', 'not very tall' and with 'wrinkled hair', who were wont to 'kill and attack' the other inhabitants. A 17th-century Jesuit (Combes 1667:36) wrote of *Negros atezados* ('burned black') in Mindanao who lived in 'indomitable barbarity', 'more like brutes, than men', and deduced that they were the 'first' inhabitants. Quirós (2000:89, 173, 175) had already extended the scenario to the *Mar del Sur*. In a passage very different in mode from the rest of his narrative, he thought it 'certain' that the 'black' inhabitants of Santa Cruz and

the Solomon Islands came originally from the Philippines where *negros*, said to be ‘the natives of the land’ in Luzon, had been forced from their territories into remote corners by ‘little Moors [*morillos*] and Visaya Indians, and other castes’. These ‘persecuted’ people must have sought new places to settle in New Guinea, the Solomons Islands, and finally Santa Cruz where he had seen ‘black’ residents in 1595.<sup>24</sup> Dampier made no such inference but the teleological presumption of racial dispersion or extinction would haunt subsequent projects of racial taxonomy and colonization in Oceania.

Brosses’s (1756, I:80) tripartite spatial division of the *Terres australes* (see Introduction) did not extend to systematic classification of the many ‘kinds of different men’ in the fifth part of the world. It is thus anachronistic to recast his geography or conjectural history as anticipating dual racial categories (cf. Ryan 2002). Blumenbach (1779:62–4), however, redeployed Brosses’s regional toponyms in the first edition of his textbook *Handbuch der Naturgeschichte*, forging the umbrella human taxon ‘The Australasians and Polynesians; or the Southlanders of the fifth part of the world’. He thus temporarily named the fifth of the five ‘varieties’ into which initially he divided *Homo sapiens* (see Chapters 1 and 3).

The scientific voyagers of the later 18th century mostly had no more interest in classifying human beings than did Dampier, their oft acknowledged precursor.<sup>25</sup> The exception and purveyor of the earliest formal taxonomy of the inhabitants of Oceania was Reinhold Forster who, with his son Georg, accompanied Cook’s voyage of 1772–5. In his shipboard journal, Forster (1982, IV:555–657) mentioned but did not systematically differentiate the empirical diversity in skin colour and physical appearance he discerned in places visited across the Pacific – though his modern editor Michael Hoare anachronistically presumed the contemporary reality of later reified racial divisions.<sup>26</sup> In Forster’s eyes (1982, III:390), Tahitian ‘Chiefs’ were ‘rather yellow’ while the ‘common people’ were ‘as black, if not more so’, as the Tongans who were ‘a lively brown inclining towards the red or Copper colour’. Tahiti and Tonga are both in modern Polynesia. However, in his post-voyage *Observations Made During a Voyage Round the World*, Forster (1778:228, 276) famously identified ‘two great varieties of people in the South Seas’, one ‘more fair’ and the other ‘blacker’, both ‘living in the same climate, or nearly so’.

As a monogenist and a pastor, Forster (1778:252–84) did not doubt that ‘all mankind’ were ‘of one species’ and all varieties ‘only accidental’.<sup>27</sup> Yet, as a naturalist, he bolstered scripture with science to explain the ‘evident difference’ between the ‘two great tribes’ he had seen. He hypothesized that they must be ‘descended from two different races

of men' – using race in the ambiguous 18th-century sense – and thus resulted from different cycles 'of climates, food, and customs'. Forster (1778:353–60; 1982, IV:565, 621) joined experience to Brosses's conjectural history to make the 'fairer colour' of high-ranking Tahitians his grounds for supposing that the 'first and aboriginal inhabitants' of the Pacific Islands were 'Papuas' or people from New Guinea and nearby islands. He assumed they were 'such as we found' in the New Hebrides (Vanuatu, modern Melanesia) – 'very black' in Malakula and 'very dark or allmost black' in Tanna. This imagined 'aboriginal black race of people', believed to be 'all cannibals', were purportedly 'subdued' or displaced by 'successive' migrations of 'more civilized Malay tribes' and became the 'lowest rank' in the highly stratified societies Forster had visited in the eastern and central Pacific. In tandem with this speculative history, his chromatic dichotomy of Pacific Islanders ominously equated darker skin colour with primordially, cannibalism, absence of civility, and low station.

Yet Brosses and Forster denied none of these people the prospect of improvement. Brosses (1756, I:79; II, 347, 372–6, 380) rejected belief in the existence of 'any entirely uncontrollable [*indisciplinables*] kind of men' and presumed a shared human capacity for development towards civility through the exercise of native intelligence or by example and education. Forster (1778:285–335) insisted on a universal human potential to 'progress' towards 'civilization'. Moreover, his flexible rankings of particular groups of Islanders were contingent on perceived Indigenous behaviour and appearance rather than predetermined by biology.<sup>28</sup>

### 'Negroes' and 'Indians': Labelling 'natives' in the 1760s

In mid-1767, the master of HMS *Dolphin*,<sup>29</sup> George Robertson (1948:148, 179, 187, 215, 223, 227–8), described in his journal having seen 'three distinct colours of people' in Tahiti – 'the red or Indian Colour', by far the most numerous; 'the Whitest sort', by far the least; and 'the Mustees, which is a Medium between the Whitest sort and the red'. This is conventional 18th-century terminology for differentiating human appearance, equivalent to Dampier's. Robertson's keen eye saw no correlation between skin colour and status. On the one hand, the very high-ranking Porea, called 'Queen' by the British, was 'a fine well lookt woman of the dark Mustee colour'.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, the 'Red' or 'coper colour' of the paddlers of several large double canoes contrasted with the 'fair' colour of 'their masters and mistresses' who sat 'under the Canopys' and in his 'opinion' constituted a 'Race of White people' come from 'some distant shoar'.

Philip Carteret, who circumnavigated the globe in HMS *Swallow* in 1766–9,<sup>31</sup> applied Dampier's actual words Negro and Indian to people seen in the western Pacific (modern Melanesia) in August and September 1767. After a week in Santa Cruz, Carteret (1965:160–74) described the inhabitants as 'the black woolly headed Negroes well beyond of the common Stature', 'well featured but more on ye copper colour and not so black as the Afffrican guinea people and go all naked'. This empirical passage ends emotively: 'they seeme to be bold dispiretly [desperately] dareing warlike people neeble [nimble] and very very active'. He was alluding to a 'well disciplined' attack in force by local warriors in which the ship's master and three sailors were wounded and later died of tetanus. Despairingly admitting the vulnerability of voyagers, Carteret blamed the assault on the 'ill beheavour' of the master who had ignored his 'very perticullar' orders to 'run no maner of risque to be well on his guard', and to be 'very carefull' not to give the inhabitants 'any Umbrage'. Consequently, the travellers were 'deprived' of the 'means of friendly obtaining those provisions' they were 'so much in want of'. Carteret acknowledged that 'these bold Islanders' who had 'so ruffly handled' the English were 'brave fellows' and 'Heroick defenders of their country' but admiration for their valour did not deter his using force to replenish the ship's water or from repelling subsequent attacks with gunfire.

A month later, Carteret (1965:194–6) told how the ship was assailed by 'many hundreds of People' in 'many Canoes' off Manus Island (PNG). They were 'nearly of the same kind of people' as those at Santa Cruz. He depicted them similarly, in response to similar actions, as 'the woolly headed black, or rather copper coloured Negroes', who 'go quite naked', and seemed to be 'a wild, fierce savage People'. At this point, in a single angry passage, Carteret (1965:195) used Indian in its inclusive sense of 'native': 'my Sailors were burning with indignation, and revenge, *against all Indians*; for the Death of their brother Shipmates',<sup>32</sup> the men wounded in Santa Cruz. The vessel subsequently passed the offshore Mapia Islands (West Papua) which had probably been settled from what is now Micronesia (Lessa 1978). Carteret (1965:200–1) noted that several people who 'radly [readily]' came on board from canoes were avid to trade coconuts for hoop iron of which they were 'immoditratly' fond. Pleased and no doubt relieved by their 'happy Contenance', he described them very positively as 'Indien Copper Colour'd (first of the Kind we have seen in these parts) fine long black hair', here using Indian in its restricted sense. They were 'naked except the Privy parts they cover slightly'; 'well made & featured of ye common

stature, very neeble and active'; and 'of a free open disposition, not mistrustfull'. One man insisted on joining the vessel as a crewman but subsequently died in Celebes (Sulawesi, Indonesia).

As with Dampier, it is anachronistic and essentialist to read Robertson's or Carteret's descriptive contrasts or Carteret's terms 'Negroes' and 'Indien' as signs of real racial entities or a binary racial divide. Yet Carteret's modern editor Helen Wallis adjudged it 'significant' that the Mapia Islanders 'seemed different in race' and 'more sophisticated' than the 'Melanesians' previously encountered, since it brought them 'within the range of his understanding' and enabled 'his first friendly meeting with native peoples'.<sup>33</sup> Rejecting racial teleology, I argue that Indigenous demeanour towards Europeans was always strategic, tailored to particular circumstances and local agendas. For example, it was neither 'race' nor 'sophistication' that decided Tahitians to adopt their signature tactic of friendship to Europeans but the bloody repulse of repeated attacks that they initially launched on the *Dolphin*.<sup>34</sup>

In April 1768, less than a year after the *Dolphin's* visit, the French navigator Bougainville arrived in Tahiti and reaped the benefit of the inhabitants' shift from aggression to amity.<sup>35</sup> That their behaviour was considered rather than 'natural' is clear from his shipboard journal (1977:316–18, 329). The local *ari'i* ('chiefs') tried to negotiate, on their own terms, the shortest possible stay by the French. After Bougainville had inspired 'terror' by firing a dozen rockets, he noted that 'mistrust' and 'fear' made the people 'vigilant'. Gracious Tahitian conduct combined with the beauty of the people, the women's sexual complaisance, the 'mildness' of the climate, and the verdant landscape to dispose him to name the island *la Nouvelle-Cythère* (Aphrodite's island) and see it as 'the true Utopia' – both words express the author's whimsical primitivism but are also countersigns, insinuating Indigenous agency. In Chapter 1, I challenged Blumenbach's anachronistic taxonomic reading of the statement in Bougainville's published narrative (1771:214) that 'the population of Tahiti comprises two very different races of men', 'white' and 'mulatto'. There is no such distinction of Tahitian *races* in his journal but in a later entry in the western Pacific he commented grimly (1977:367): 'we observe that the negroes [*les nègres*] are much nastier than the Indians [*les Indiens*] whose colour is nearer to white. We found in one of their canoes, a man's half-grilled jaw'. By wrenching this passage out of context, it might be glossed as a racial differentiation of Negroes from lighter-coloured Indians. Indeed, Bougainville's latest English translator and editor John Dunmore (2002:115, note 2) did just that, retrospectively projecting later racial categories: 'Bougainville

now distinguishes between black Melanesians and brown-skinned Polynesians'.<sup>36</sup>

Yet close attention to genres, words, and situations argues against racial classification and in favour of deliberate recourse to a conventional descriptive vocabulary. Bougainville's journal indictment of *les nègres* registered the immediate shock and titillation of the discovery of the human jawbone following French repulse of a determined attack by very dark-skinned men with 'frizzy hair' in Choiseul (western Solomon Islands) in July 1768. The outburst generally and his splenetic use of the derogatory, but uncapitalized noun *nègres* are Indigenous countersigns. Otherwise (1771:268–9; 1977:367), he called these people *Indiens* and, with hindsight in his published narrative, 'brave islanders'. In the narrative, his reproach and any taxonomic implication are much diluted. It is detached from passing mention of the jawbone, the reference to *Indiens* is omitted, while *les nègres* is replaced by the weaker adjectival form *hommes negres* ('black men'): 'we have observed during this voyage, that in general black men are much nastier than those whose colour is nearer to white'.

In the 'Preliminary Discourse' to his narrative, Bougainville (1771:16–17) asserted that 'the very perceptible differences' he had noticed in the 'several countries' visited had deterred him from 'indulging in that spirit of system, so common today'. Accordingly, his terms for Pacific Islanders, while essentialist and at times highly disparaging, are descriptive or comparative rather than regionally or racially categorical. He scarcely used the word *race* and always in an ambiguous 18th-century sense. Bougainville (1771:214, 217) proffered Buffonian arguments for the interfertility of human races and the transformative potential of their intermixing. His two Tahitian *races* had 'the same language, the same customs', and seemed 'to mix together without distinction'. He attributed their 'difference' to the 'mixing' of victors with female captives from nearby islands in time of war.<sup>37</sup> In Ambae (north Vanuatu) in May 1768, Bougainville (1977:344–6) seized timber and 'fruits' at gunpoint from people he called *Indiens* or *insulaires* ('islanders'). They provoked his disquiet and distaste for their 'air of mistrust', their refusal to abandon or exchange their arms, and their appearance. Their behaviour in sending 'a hail of stones' and 'a few arrows' after the departing French spurred him to malign 'these uncouth people [*malotrus*]' who fled after two were killed or wounded by a few shots. He compared them to Negroes by allusion: 'This nation is ugly, small in size, covered in leprosy'; 'They are of two colours, black and mulatto'; 'Their hair is frizzy [*cotonnés*] and their lips thick'.<sup>38</sup> In contrast, Bougainville's aristocratic passenger Charles-Nicolas-Orthon de



Nassau-Siegen was readier to use the noun *nègre* and less allergic to system. Writing with hindsight after the voyage, Nassau-Siegen (1977:402) called the inhabitants of Ambae *les nègres* and declared that in this island the French had seen ‘the start of a new race of men different in stature from those we had found thus far’. In neither journal nor narrative did Bougainville profess such categorical logic.

Bougainville used *Indien* not in Dampier’s restricted sense but with the broad meaning of ‘native’ which had become its dominant signified. He deployed the term in both journal and narrative to refer to Amerindians; to Tahitians ‘white’ and ‘mulatto’ and a ‘bronzed’ party of Samoans encountered at sea (both modern Polynesia); to ‘black’ or ‘mulatto’ inhabitants of north Vanuatu, the western Solomons, Buka, New Britain, and New Ireland (all modern Melanesia); and to ‘Mahometans’ or ‘Moors’ and *Papous* in the East Indies (modern Indonesia). The contrast between the relatively neutral general descriptor *Indien* and the emotion-laden countersign *nègre* is patent in Bougainville’s (1977:381) account of yet another edgy meeting off islands east of New Ireland in July 1768: ‘The *Indian* canoes surrounded us the whole morning. The *negroes* wanted everything and offered nothing in return. They seemed to show bad faith in trading.’<sup>39</sup> Banks applied ‘Indians’ in similarly indiscriminate fashion to label people in South America, Tahiti, New Zealand, New Holland, and the East Indies. The South Seas voyage historian Burney (1803–17, I:152, note †), who twice served with Cook, differentiated ‘Indians’ of the ‘light copper-coloured complexion’ from the ‘black and woolly-headed Indians’. Georg Forster (1786:67) explained that ‘the English usage’ of the term *Indian* referred ‘in general to men who are otherwise described with an equally fuzzy term, *savages*’.<sup>40</sup> His remark was confirmed by the British ethnologist Prichard (1813:474): ‘all savages are called Indians by us without any imaginable reason’. This lexical idiosyncrasy had evidently long been shared with other western Europeans (see Chapter 1).

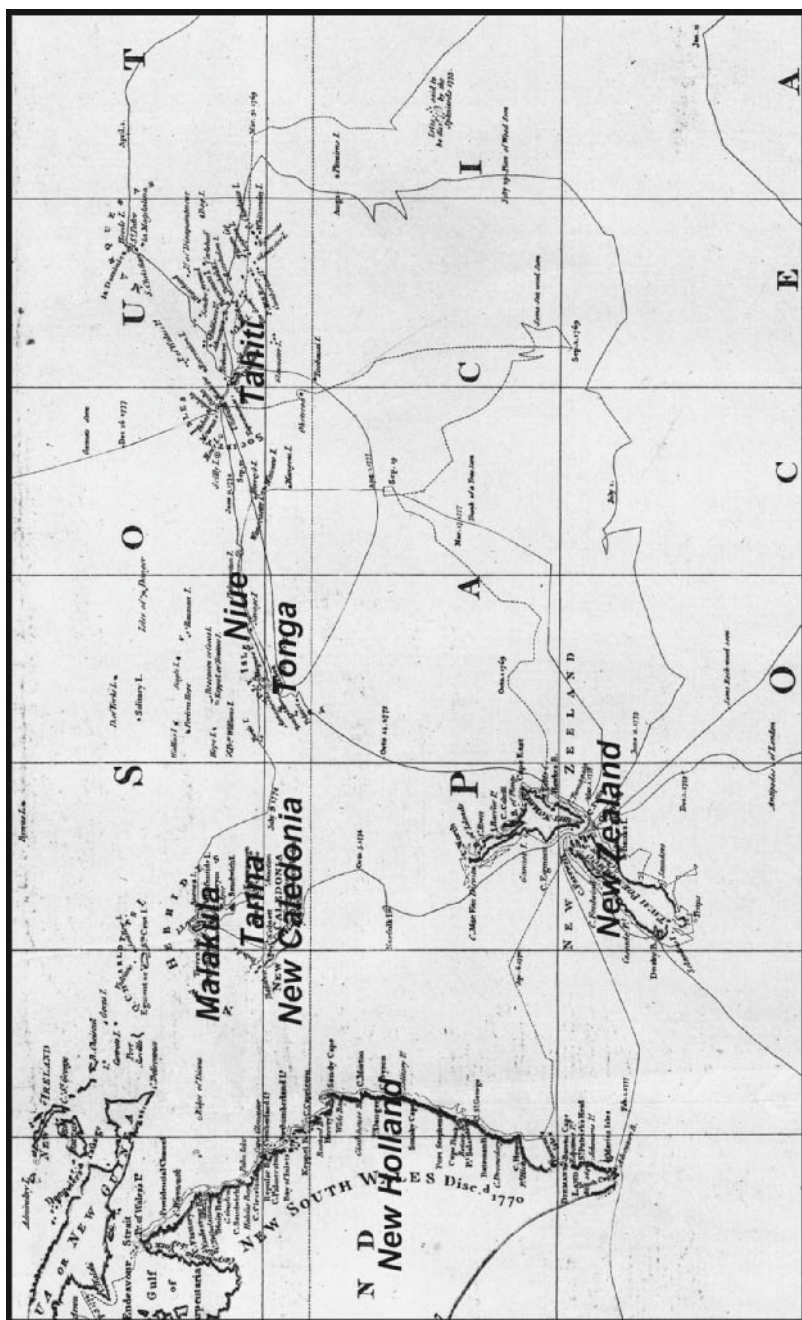
Bougainville (1771:214, 237–9; 1977:335–6) described the Samoans he met briefly as ‘more savage’ than the ‘gentle’ Tahitians and their language as ‘not the same’ – they ‘did not understand’ when addressed by ‘our Indian’ Ahutoru, a high-ranking Tahitian of Bougainville’s ‘second race’ who accompanied the expedition to France and expressed the ‘greatest contempt for these islanders’. Bougainville concluded: ‘this is no longer the same nation here’. Contra Dunmore, generic Polynesians in opposition to generic Melanesians are nowhere in evidence in Bougainville’s writings. His correlation of deepening skin colour with declining amiability did not intimate a categorical differentiation of Pacific Islanders

into races. Rather, it was a product of the complex entanglement of his own conventional prejudices (ambivalently pro-savage and anti-Negro) with the often baffling experience of Indigenous agency in particular encounters. This emotional maelstrom was no doubt complicated by Ahutoru's ethnocentric reactions to other Islanders – apart from his poor opinion of Samoans, he expressed 'much scorn' but also 'great fear' towards the people of Ambae whom he found 'very ugly'. It was reportedly he who fired the shots which killed or wounded some of them in the wake of the attack on a French shore party.<sup>41</sup>

In Bougainville's case, the interplay between equivocal primitivism and problematic encounters has not gone unremarked by historians, including Etienne Taillemite (1977:45–57), editor of his journal. Staum (1996:160–2) tracked Bougainville's shifting representations of savages over four decades. His journal ([1964]) as an army officer in New France (north America) in 1756–60 records 'uncomplimentary stereotypes' inspired by encounters with Iroquois. His narrative (1771) of his circumnavigation juxtaposes 'both ignoble and noble images' of Pacific Islanders. A much later ethnological memoir (1799) expresses a 'more nuanced view' of Indigenous North Americans as 'educable people'. Staum emphasized the weighty influence on ethnographic description of metropolitan ideas – two centuries of speculation about savages, beliefs about the impact of climate on temperament, 'Revolutionary sensitivity to the rights of man', and an emergent theory of race. But he attributed Bougainville's vacillating tone at least in part to his varied experience of Indigenous 'reception' and to the influence of Ahutoru.

### **Race, agency, and the Cook voyages**

Cook's first circumnavigation of the globe on HMS *Endeavour* (1768–71), following hard on those of Samuel Wallis, Carteret, and Bougainville, encompassed Tahiti, the Society Islands, New Zealand, the east coast of New Holland, and the East Indies, but not the southwest Pacific Islands (modern Island Melanesia) (Map 2.2). The word race seldom occurs in the journals of this voyage and always with the expanded metaphorical meaning of nation or people. Cook (1955:396), for instance, remarked that the New Hollanders were 'a timorous and inoffensive race' while Banks (1768–71, I:129) damned the Portuguese as 'without exception the laziest as well as the most ignorant race in the whole world'. As a Linnaeus-influenced naturalist who met Indigenous people of widely varying aspect, Banks might well have forestalled Forster's classification but he reserved taxonomy for plants and animals and retained the usual loose wording for



Map 2.2 H. Roberts (1784), 'A General Chart: Exhibiting the Discoveries made by Capt<sup>n</sup>. James Cook ...', detail. National Library of Australia, Canberra, NK 1428. Annotation B. Douglas

human beings or groups. His most-used general labels are people, Indians, inhabitants, or natives and he conflated race, nation, and species. So, alluding in his journal to Bougainville's 'two very different races of men', Banks (1768–71, II:\*279) added the marginal note 'Bourgainville 2 species' to a passage discussing 'the colours of different Nations' he had seen across the South Seas. In firm adherence to mainstream contemporary theory, Banks (1768–71, I:334) opined that the differences he had observed in skin colour between the 'Better sort' of Tahitians, on the one hand, and Tahitians 'of inferior rank' and 'the New Hollanders', on the other, were due entirely to differential exposure to 'Sun and wind'.

The term race occurs more often, but with unchanged meaning, in Cook's journal and published narrative of his second voyage on HMS *Resolution* (1772–5) which spanned an even wider geography than the first. I have elsewhere (2006:14–17; 2008c:720–6) tracked his contextual, non-categorical use of race to describe and compare people encountered in the southwest Pacific in July–September 1774, as in this passage on the inhabitants of New Caledonia (modern Melanesia): 'Was I to judge of the Origin of this *Nation*, I should take them to be a *race* between the people of Tanna and the Friendly Isles [Tonga] or between Tanna and the New Zealanders or all three' (Cook 1961:541).<sup>42</sup> Cook's terminology resembles Reinhold Forster's (1778:228) but his reasoning has no affinity with the naturalist's binary system which classed the people of New Caledonia and Tanna in his 'blacker' race and those of Tonga and New Zealand in the 'more fair'.

Cook (1961:462, 466, 467) notably traduced 'the Mallicollocans' or people of Malakula (north Vanuatu) as 'this Apish Nation' and – unusually for him – compared them to 'Negros'. I previously argued (2008c:720–3) that his representation of Malakulans condensed a particular conjuncture of Indigenous agency with his own anti-African stereotypes and recent experience. Their unprecedented appearance, unknown language, indifference to European goods, unwillingness to trade provisions, selective bargaining, and shrewd wariness goaded Cook into what Georg Forster's narrative (1777, II:207), written post-voyage, calls 'an ill-natured comparison between them and monkeys'. Reinhold Forster (1982, IV:565–9) made no such comparison in his journal but declared in *Observations* (1778:242) that the Malakulans were more like the 'tribe of monkeys' than any people he had seen. However, it is clear that he, like Cook, intended an unkind physical analogy rather than to imply a developmental sequence from ape to man or the close proximity of 'savage men' to 'brutes' in the great chain of being, in the vein of the Scottish philosopher James Burnett, Lord Monboddo.<sup>43</sup> Reinhold Forster (1778:253–6) specifically condemned Monboddo while Georg

(1777, II:207) inveighed against the ‘Orang-outang system’ of ‘superficial philosophers’. Cook himself reportedly protested in 1776 that “‘I did not say they were like monkeys. I said their faces put me in mind of monkeys”” (Ryskamp and Pottle 1963:308). His journal’s ‘Apish Nation’ (1961:466) is replaced in his narrative (1777, II:34) with ‘this ape-like nation’. Reinhold Forster (1778:242, 267) suggested that his ‘monkies’ comparison was inspired by the ‘singular structure’ of the skull of most of the Malakulans he saw. He speculated, with Georg (1777, II:229), that their ‘much depressed’ foreheads might be ‘artificial’, induced deliberately in infancy. The early 20th-century anthropologist John Layard (1942:3) confirmed human agency in the matter, reporting that ‘cranial deformation’ was practised in this region of Malakula to produce ritually significant, ‘artificially elongated’ skulls.

In Georg Forster’s narrative, the preferred general plurals for Indigenous people are natives, inhabitants, and occasionally Indians. Nation is by far his most common collective noun, then race, and occasionally tribe. He used race in both the oldest genealogical sense – as in ‘that pampered race’ (1777, I, 367), with reference to Tahitian chiefs – and in the 18th-century nominalist mode, synonymous with nation or tribe. Taxonomic thinking (1777, II:227–8, 231, 261, 267), if not terminological consistency, begins to infiltrate this text late in the voyage, when empirical surfeit and the shock of meeting ‘the Mallicollese’ stimulated Forster to anticipate his father’s formal division of Pacific humanity. He differentiated them as ‘a *race* totally distinct’ in ‘form’, ‘language’, and ‘manners’ from the ‘lighter-coloured *nation*’ he had seen in the eastern and central Pacific and in New Zealand, who evidently shared ‘one common origin’. He speculatively aligned the inhabitants of the New Hebrides with the ‘black *race*’ earlier reported in ‘parts of New Guinea and Papua’, since ‘both *nations*’ shared characteristically ‘black colour and woolly hair’. He further wondered whether ‘some other *tribes*’ might not be ‘a mixture of both *races*’.<sup>44</sup> Yet Forster (1777, II:208, 229, 236) defused Cook’s African analogy by arguing that, although the noses, upper faces, and hair of Malakulans were ‘very similar’ to those of ‘Negroes’, their lips and lower faces were ‘entirely different’. They were, moreover, the ‘most intelligent people’ he had yet met in the South Seas, ‘very open to improvement’, and ‘very cheerful’ in disposition, while their ‘irregular and ugly’ features showed ‘great sprightliness’ and expressed ‘a quick comprehension’. Cook’s ugly imagery also differs sharply in tone and content from the depictions of Malakulans by the expedition’s artist Hodges – specifically, from the even features and dignified air Hodges gave to his portrait of a ‘Man of the Island of Mallicolo’ which Georg Forster (1777, II:209) praised as ‘very characteristic of the nation’.<sup>45</sup>

Such tensions between authors and between different mediums or genres of representation are often countersigns of Indigenous appearance, disposition, and behaviour, processed through the varied perceptions of individual voyagers. Cook's peevish phrase 'Apish Nation', like Dampier's 'the miserablest People in the world', registered the frustration and anxiety induced in mariners by Indigenous contempt for their goods or refusal to trade – no light matter given their dependence on local cooperation to revictual. On the other hand, Georg Forster's (1777, II:208, 210, 213–14, 236, 243) admiration for Malakulan intelligence and acuteness registered the savant's delight at the readiness with which they understood the Forsters' 'signs and gestures', their assiduity in conveying words of their own language, and their ability to pronounce difficult foreign sounds. Hodges's sympathetic, naturalistic rendition of the 'Man' is a reminder that successful ethnographic portraiture in such settings usually required negotiation and at least the appearance of equivalence between artist and subject (Smith 1992:83–5, 93–7). Forster remarked that Malakulans were 'easily persuaded to sit for their portraits, and seemed to have an idea of the representations' – for him, no doubt, a further sign of their intelligence.

That Indigenous agency was the crux of these voyagers' representations, rather than European racial apriority, is patent from accounts of another episode, a daylong visit to the island of Niue (modern Polynesia) a month before the *Resolution* reached Malakula.<sup>46</sup> Georg Forster, in particular, was far less complimentary about Niueans than he was about Malakulans. Keen to establish cordial relations, Cook led a small party ashore, including both Forsters, their colleague Anders Sparrman, and Hodges. But their 'friendly signs' were met with 'menaces' by two men who were 'blackened as far as the waist', wore feathers in their hair, and 'charged forward with warlike shouts, dancing and gesticulating in the usual manner of savages'. Perhaps, as Niueans later recalled and J.C. Beaglehole (Cook 1961:437, note 3) reported, they were 'merely going through the ritual of the "challenge"', equivalent to a Māori *haka*. If so, the foreigners took it as a threat, not a welcome.<sup>47</sup> One of the men flung a 'large lump of coral' which hit Sparrman a 'violent blow' on the arm. To Cook's displeasure, Sparrman 'let fly at his enemy' with small shot and shortly afterwards the men withdrew. When the party landed at another place, a 'troop of natives' rushed upon them with 'the ferocity of wild Boars'. Two men, similarly decorated and armed with spears, advanced 'with furious shouts'. Cook and his companions discharged their muskets but they misfired, whereupon the men hurled two spears, narrowly missing Cook and Georg Forster. Only a 'regular firing' by the

sailors and marines covering the landing saved the day and convinced the attackers to withdraw. Their alarming ‘Conduct and aspect’, wrote Cook (1961:437), caused him to name the place Savage Island. Georg Forster (1777, II:166–7) thought their ‘almost inaccessible’ country made them ‘unsociable’ and deemed them ‘little advanced’ in civilization since they were ‘savage, and go naked’. Reinhold Forster (1982, III:538) called them ‘brave’ but ‘*inhospitable*’.<sup>48</sup>

In context, words like ‘blackened’, ‘enemy’, ‘furious’, ‘ferocity’, ‘unsociable’, ‘savage’, ‘naked’ are countersigns, textual fallout from the interplay of intimidating Indigenous demeanour with charged European emotions and bigoted standards of relatively civil or savage behaviour. The words do not express presumptions about innate racial characters since Georg Forster (1777, II:167–8, 190) recognized the Niueans’ common ‘origin’ with the Tongans as ‘one race of people’. Yet a few days out of Niue, at Nomuka in Tonga’s Ha’apai group, he admired the ‘difference between this race, and the savages whom we had so lately left’. Reinhold Forster (1982, III:392–3) thought Tongans ‘pretty well mannered & I may say civilized’, though addicted to stealing and ‘strangers to the high refined civilization among us’. Cook (1961:449) named the Tongan group the Friendly Archipelago as ‘their Courtesy to Strangers intitles them to that Name’ – as much a countersign of strategic local behaviour as is the appellation Savage for Niue. In *Observations*, Forster (1778:359–60) retrospectively deployed the ‘ferocious’ Niueans, recoloured to ‘very tawny’, as a likely exception in his conjectural history of the displacement of ‘black’ autochthones by more civilized Malay invaders: ‘*Savage-island*, whose inhabitants we found very tawny and ferocious, might perhaps be another island, which the Malay tribes have not hitherto been able to subdue’.

## Bruni d’Entrecasteaux and the end of Enlightenment

The expedition in search of La Pérouse led by Bruni d’Entrecasteaux to Van Diemen’s Land, New Holland, and the western Pacific Islands in 1791–4 was arguably the last of the great Enlightenment scientific voyages.<sup>49</sup> An initiative of the Revolutionary Constituent Assembly, it generated a diverse corpus of written and visual texts that I have explored and exploited in several earlier publications (1999a, 2003, 2007, 2009a). Here, I summarize relevant episodes, themes, and usages in Bruni d’Entrecasteaux’s posthumously edited narrative (1808).

In content and wording, this text is infused with Indigenous countersigns – signifiers shaped by their referents. Bruni d’Entrecasteaux’s descriptions of successive French encounters with particular local

communities bracket his discursive inversion from idealization of the primitive and critique of civilization to unqualified abhorrence of its lack. This rhetorical somersault was largely triggered by perceived differences in Indigenous behaviour and cannot plausibly be mapped in terms of Reinhold Forster's 'more fair' and 'blacker' varieties. In Van Diemen's Land, Bruni d'Entrecasteaux (1808, I:230–2, 242–3) was relieved by the inhabitants' 'peaceable dispositions' which 'proved' to him that 'these men so close to nature' were 'good and trusting'. It was, he rhapsodized, 'the most perfect image of the first state of society, when men are not yet troubled by the passions or corrupted by the vices which civilization sometimes brings in its wake'. These infantilized people were 'doubtless less advanced in civilization' than New Zealanders briefly met at sea, but also lacked their 'fierce' temperament.

In Tonga, Bruni d'Entrecasteaux (1808, I:307–8) doubted that the inhabitants were 'ferocious in character' but the seemingly arbitrary brutality of chiefs towards ordinary Islanders horrified him and provoked the global assertions that 'sentiments of humanity are unknown to them' and they 'attach no value to human life'. In New Caledonia, the inhabitants so appalled him (1808, I:332–4) with a single 'act of ferocity' – cannibalism – that he denied them 'the least degree of civilization' and classed them among 'the fiercest peoples', a verdict embodied in the artist Piron's iconic representation of a warrior as a classical hero (Figure 2.1). Bruni d'Entrecasteaux (1808, I:298, 305–12, 343) deemed the Tongans 'much more advanced' but advance was an equivocal blessing which had produced a 'feudal'-style government with 'weak', 'effeminate' chiefs whose 'voluptuous' lifestyle and arbitrary 'abuses' led to a 'state of anarchy' and forced the ordinary people into dissimulation, theft, and 'acts of cruelty'. Finally, in the Louisiade Archipelago (PNG), Bruni d'Entrecasteaux (1808, I:421–3, cf. 230, 234) took eye-witness testimony about vivid insults exchanged between two warring parties as grounds to damn entire groups as 'cannibals' and deplore 'the excesses in which the human species can indulge when morals are not moderated and softened by civilization'. Worn out, ill, and despairing, he was now rhetorically far from the 'simple, good' inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land whose 'sincerity and kindness' had seemed so distant from the 'vices' of civilization.

These fluid representations of particular people were moulded by cumulative experiences of Indigenous reception of foreigners – local actions and demeanour – which the author tried to square with his ambivalent developmentalist assumptions, pragmatic needs and desires, and place-specific precedents derived from earlier voyage literature.



Bruni d'Entrecasteaux (1808, I:310, 313, 320, 357) used race both in its old genealogical sense – ‘the race of pigs’ – and metaphorically, as a synonym for ‘class’. He could not conceive of a ‘finer race of men’ than the Tongans, ‘especially that of the chiefs’. Most Tongan women of ‘the chiefly class’ had a ‘very agreeable physiognomy’ whereas ‘the people’ seemed to be ‘of a different race’, while still enjoying a healthy and comfortable existence. This text bears little trace of taxonomic thinking or systematic discrimination of human groups apart from a passing allusion to Forster’s two great varieties – ‘if, as Mr Forster thinks’, the Pacific Islands are ‘peopled only by two races of men ...’ – mentioned in the context of a comparison between the ‘beautiful’ Tongans and a single ‘native



*Figure 2.1* J.L. Copia after [J.] Piron (1800), ‘Sauvage de la Nouvelle Calédonie lançant une zagaie’. Engraving. National Library of Australia, Canberra, N F307 (Atlas)

of Fiji' (modern Melanesia). He was less handsome than the Tongans but had 'an equally fine stature'. He 'seemed endowed with more intelligence' and 'more desire to educate himself' – unlike the Tongans, he carefully scrutinized the ships before concerning himself with exchanges.

Bruni d'Entrecasteaux took for granted the reality of a developmental trajectory from *la nature* to *la civilisation*, along which the different Indigenous groups encountered were implicitly ranged on the basis of experience. The moral universalism of the spectrum remained intact across the gamut of his representations but the specific moral valence of his words shifted dramatically in response to a variety of unpredictable, often unsettling local behaviours. His narrative is an ominous synecdoche for the dawning disenchantment with primitivist idealization of *le bon sauvage* ('the good savage') in a revolutionary, newly colonizing era and its supplanting by negative, ultimately racialized attitudes towards savages in general. Yet Bruni d'Entrecasteaux's vocabulary and the values it expresses do not signify the categorical racialization of observed human differences or the denial of perfectibility to certain races. In principle at least, 18th-century humanism, both neoclassical and Christian, allowed the potential for progress or salvation to all human beings while representing them in thoroughly ethnocentric, at times scurrilous ways.

## Conclusion

This chapter has juggled discrete but intertwined themes relevant to both the natural history of man and the representation of Oceanian people by European voyagers in the late 17th and 18th centuries. They are the extension of taxonomic thinking to human beings; the proliferation of collective nouns with which to describe, label, or classify people; and the unsteadily expanding signification and salience of one of these terms, race. I investigate these themes with particular reference to countersigns of local agency haphazardly embedded in travellers' representations of encounters with Indigenous people. I draw three conclusions and two main lessons from this enquiry. My first conclusion is that human classification remained a minor element both in the natural history of man and in Oceanic voyage literature until very late in the 18th century – notwithstanding the taxonomic efforts of Linnaeus, Kant, Blumenbach, and the Forsters; the displacement histories of Brosset and Reinhold Forster; or the contrastive rhetoric of Dampier, Carteret, and Bougainville. The second conclusion is that, throughout this period, savants and voyagers alike mostly deployed a broad, transposable, relatively neutral vocabulary to designate non-European persons and groupings. The third is that the nominalist collective noun

race figures in this lexicon, but not prominently, and as an expanded genealogical metaphor rather than a biological fact.

My first lesson stresses the ubiquity of Indigenous countersigns as a key element in voyagers' first-hand representations, both positive and negative. Dampier's 'miserablest People', Carteret's 'warlike' Solomon Islanders and 'not mistrustfull' Mapia Islanders, Bougainville's 'gentle' Tahitians and 'much nastier' Solomon Islanders, Cook's 'Apish Nation' and Georg Forster's 'intelligent' Malakulans and 'savage' Niueans, are all countersigns of diverse Indigenous tactics for receiving or interacting with newcomers, some long practised, others innovative and circumstantial. These words involved recourse to conventional terminology to express reactions to particular people in specific situations. None signifies an already coherent racial system.

The second lesson addresses the twin historical solecisms of anachronism and reification. It is critical not to read words used by savants or travellers as transparent reflexes of real racial differences, such as between Polynesians, Micronesians, or Malays, on the one hand, and Melanesians, Papuans, or Australians, on the other. To do so anticipates and hypostatizes the later binary opposition and hierarchical discrimination of Oceanian races as inevitable and true. For example, whatever the gossip on the *Resolution* in September 1774, the shipboard journals, including Reinhold Forster's, finely discriminate the people encountered on different islands in the New Hebrides and in New Caledonia as different races, nations, or tribes of the human species, rather than run them together as the less favoured of 'two distinct races' in Oceania, as would be the 19th-century norm (Dumont d'Urville 1832:3). Forster's 'two great varieties' of South Sea Islanders were an artefact of post voyage reflection on recalcitrant experience. The main ingredients in voyagers' descriptions of the people they encountered – skin colour, hair type and colour, physical features, clothing or its lack, mode of governance, and disposition to strangers – are basic criteria in his classification but in piecemeal and empirical fashion, rather than systemically. Yet by classing 'the inhabitants of Tanna, New Caledonia, and Mallicollo' together in his 'blacker' variety, Forster (1778:260) encouraged others to racialize them subsequently as Oceanic Negroes, Papuans, or Melanesians. The remainder of this book will trace how the hardening of Forster's fluid categories into 'two distinct races' authorized the methodical weaving of piecemeal, empirical differences into normalized hierarchies of biologically defined races. While never uncontested, this scientific idea of race has been remarkably long-lived or recursive, as strikingly demonstrated by the modern editorial interventions cited in this and the previous chapter.

# 3

## Seeing Races: Confronting ‘Savages’ in *Terra Australis*

*Voyages of Flinders & Baudin 1795–1803*

Lionized as founder by 19th-century anthropology, equivocally embraced by the science of race, Buffon has been designated the ‘originating source’ for ‘modern notions of race’ and damned as an exponent of ‘racialist theory in its entirety’.<sup>1</sup> These charges misconstrue both his haphazard use of the term *race* in the essay ‘Varieties in the human species’ and his thinking on human unity and diversity. There is no hint in the essay of a biological account of human variation. At this point, Buffon (1749:447–8, 526) attributed its emergence to the concurrence of three extrinsic ‘causes’ – climate, diet, and lifestyle – but refused to speculate on how they might operate.

Only in his essay ‘On the degeneration of animals’ did Buffon (1766:312–16) proffer an organic explanation for the puzzle of marked diversity within the single human species. He now argued that the ‘influence of the climate’ produced only superficial alterations in colour. Changes in size, facial features, and hair quality were ‘more profound’ and required the added action of ‘other causes’, notably the ‘quality of food’ which channelled the ‘influence of the land’ and affected man’s ‘interior form’. Perpetuated by reproduction over ‘centuries’, these internal alterations became ‘the general and constant characters in which we recognize the different races and even nations which comprise the human genus’. However, such changes were still reversible with a return to the original environment. A decade later, Buffon’s reading (1777:555) of recent voyagers’ texts on the very diverse South Sea Islanders and New Hollanders provided an empirical context to synthesize climate and milieus as interdependent elements in the production of the ‘principal varieties’. ‘Climate’ now connoted a total environment – ‘all the contributing circumstances’ (latitude, height above sea level, distance from the coast, prevailing winds) which made up the ‘temperature of each

country'. For on temperature depended 'not only men's colour' but the 'difference' in their food, a 'second cause' of profound significance for man's temperament, nature, size, and strength.

### Race, taxonomy, and the biologization of human difference

From the mid-1770s, two discrete conceptual innovations promoted race as the preferred collective noun for broad human subgroups. Buffon (1777:462–3, 478–80, 484) differentiated 'race in its most extended sense', connoting 'resemblance' rather than filiation, from its 'narrowest' genealogical meaning, synonymous with nation. An extreme climate had produced such similarity between all polar inhabitants, whatever their 'first origin' or 'nation', that they had become 'one and the same kind of men [*espèce d'hommes*]' – 'a single race different from all the others in the human species [*l'espèce humaine*]' – though 'not of the same nation'. The juxtaposed phrases *espèce d'hommes* and *l'espèce humaine* played on the ambiguity of the term *espèce* (Féraud 1787–8, II:148) – its vague common sense as a synonym for *sorte* ('kind', 'type'); and its technical usage 'in logic' to mean 'what is below the genus' ('species'). For Buffon and many other monogenists, race denoted a mutable kind or variety whereas polygenist advocates of plural human origins often equated races with species which were in principle fixed.<sup>2</sup> Yet his novel extended signified gave race neither a firm taxonomic status nor its modern biological meaning. Buffon (1766:313; 1777:462) never resiled from his belief that the human 'germ' was everywhere the same or that gross human differences depended 'on the diversity of climates' and were therefore not innately organic or permanent. Far from seamlessly anticipating the scientific idea of race, Buffon's extended sense was a theoretical dead end, though it remained popular currency throughout the 19th century. However, because his breeding criterion of interfertility for species membership allowed for hybrid generation through 'the mixing of races' and his concept of degeneration acknowledged the transformative impact of milieus, his ideas retained greater salience for post-Darwinian racial thinking after 1860 than did the static morphological approach that typified the emergent science of race during the half century after 1800.<sup>3</sup>

Far more significant than Buffon in systematizing a biological and taxonomic concept of race were Kant and Blumenbach who also sought scientific resolution to the paradox of striking physical diversity within a single human species of common ancestry.<sup>4</sup> Kant's (1777:125–44, 156–61; 1785a:390–409) seminal papers explained

present human *Verschiedenheit* ('variety') as a product of the triggering by altered external conditions of inherent predispositions within the original stock, 'wisely designed' by nature to be irreversibly adaptive to different climates and terrains. Such 'external things' could not cause 'necessarily inherited' traits so that the 'very capacity to reproduce' a physical character proved it was innate. Kant differentiated *Racen* ('races') taxonomically from species and varieties. Individuals of different *Racen* of the same stock could produce fertile hybrid offspring, unlike those belonging to different species, while mere varieties could not engender stable hybrids. He redefined 'the concept of a race' as 'the difference between the classes of the animals of one and the same stock, insofar as it is unfailingly hereditary'. He identified four human races, deviations from an original *Stammgattung* ('stem genus') assumed to have been 'white of brunette colour' – first, 'high blond' from the damp cold of northern Europe; second, 'copper-red' from the dry cold of America; third, 'black' from the damp heat of west Africa; and fourth, 'olive-yellow' from the dry heat of India. Since these primary differences in skin colour were the '*only*' characters that were unfailingly hereditary, even in racial mixing, they and the races they embodied must logically stem from 'natural predispositions' in the 'unknown' original stock.<sup>5</sup>

Blumenbach (1795:198; 1806:60–1) wrestled with the problem of human unity in diversity over more than three decades, juggling his beliefs in the 'identity of mankind as a whole', the 'boundless transitions' linking the physical 'extremes', and the 'natural division' of the species revealed in anatomical comparison of 'genuine skulls of different nations'. Initially (1776:41–2; 1779:63–4; 1781:51–2), he classified humanity into four and then five 'varieties' delimited by geography and skin colour. Subsequently (1795:284–321), he applied his well-known nomenclature to the five 'principal varieties'. Eventually (1797:60–3), he reconfigured them as five *Haupt-rassen* ('principal races'). Blumenbach (1795:114–283) never ceased to maintain that human 'degeneration' or change – notably manifested in 'national differences in [skin] colour' – resulted from the operation of outside physical causes on a single migrating species rather than from an original plurality of species. But from the fifth edition of *Handbuch der Naturgeschichte* (1797:23), he modified this insistence on external causation by defining 'the word race in the exact sense' in acknowledged Kantian terms: 'a character resulting from degeneration which is unfailingly and necessarily inherited through reproduction'. Blumenbach thereby popularized Kant's innovation. The passage is unchanged in the seven subsequent

editions of this oft-pirated, widely translated textbook published until 1830.

Cuvier enthusiastically endorsed Blumenbach's taxonomy of human races and its comparative cranial grounding but causally aligned the physical, intellectual, and moral characters of races in ways that Blumenbach always rejected. Whereas Blumenbach (1806:73–97) vigorously refuted the widespread belief that 'the Negroes' were 'specifically different' in physique and greatly 'inferior' in 'mental faculties', Cuvier abandoned similar humanist principles he had professed in his youth.<sup>6</sup> In 1800 (1857:264–5), he asserted that it was 'no longer in doubt' that the 'races of the human species' were characterized by systematic anatomical differences in cranial structure which probably decided their 'moral and intellectual faculties'. In published lectures on comparative anatomy, Cuvier (1800–5, II:2–10) pronounced that the 'more the brain grows', the more the skull 'increases in capacity' and the 'more considerable it becomes' in proportion to the face. The ratio of skull to face therefore indexed 'the greater or lesser perfection' of the mental faculties. Clearly implying that racial inequality was a product of physical organization, notably the size of the brain, he measured 'the European' skull at 'almost four times that of the face' while the facial area increased by 'a tenth in the calmuck [Mongol]', by 'about a fifth' in 'the negro', and by 'a little' more in 'the *orang-outang*'.

Cuvier developed his crude gauge of the cranio-facial ratio from the idea of the facial angle proposed as an aesthetic diagnostic by the anatomist–artist Camper (1791:8–9, 34–44, 50) who argued that systematic comparison of '*facial lines*' and the angles they made in relation to a horizontal line revealed 'characteristic varieties' in the 'faces of different Nations'.<sup>7</sup> His measurements of a 'sequence of heads' in his anatomical collection ranged from angles of 58° for an orangutan to 100° for an idealized Greek image while his living human span was from 70° for a Negro to 80° for a European. An ardent monogenist, Camper dismissed as 'absurd' the 'singular resemblance' his juxtapositions of skulls seemingly displayed between 'the Apes & the Negroes'.<sup>8</sup> But others, like Cuvier, were less scrupulous and the facial angle or its derivatives subsequently became raciological staples.

### **Agriculture, civility, and the 'stages of the social life'<sup>9</sup>**

In both content and tenor, Cuvier's embryonic racial theory was on the cusp of the discursive transition from the deeply Eurocentric universalism of the study of man in the late Enlightenment to the

divisive racialism which dominated 19th-century anthropology.<sup>10</sup> The 18th-century theorists commonly acknowledged the potential equality and perfectibility of all human beings in contrast to the other animals while branding particular historical or actual populations as relatively savage, or barbarous, or civilized. Buffon (1749:446–7; 1778:248) made civility itself a causal factor in physical differences by arguing that the process of becoming ‘policed’ or governed could enable and sustain organic improvement in man.

Unlike most naturalists, Enlightenment philosophers tended to treat human differences as political, economic, or civic more than physical, though the great polymaths were attuned to both perspectives. In 1748, Montesquieu (1749, II:1–23, 83–98) correlated, on the one hand, climate with national ‘character’ and, on the other, the ‘nature of the soil’ and subsistence practices with the relative ‘extent’ of the ‘code of laws’. His subsistence–legal modes ranged from the complex code required by a commercial and maritime people to the successively simpler laws needed by agriculturalists, ‘barbarous’ pastoralists, or ‘savage’ hunting peoples. Montesquieu did not historicize his coeval modes in terms of stages of human development. However, his compatriot Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot (1808:173–4), writing in the early 1750s on the ‘past and future progress of the human genus’, referred to ‘successive changes in the lifestyle of men, and the order in which they have followed one another: peoples who are hunters, herders, cultivators [*laboueurs*]’. At the end of the 18th century, Jean-Antoine-Nicolas de Caritat, marquis de Condorcet (1794:1–15), matched the history of the ‘progress of the human spirit’ with the successive ‘state of civilization’ of the *espèce humaine* – from ‘hunting and fishing’, progressing through domestication of animals and ‘agriculture’, to ‘exchange’, ‘industry’, ‘arts’, and ‘sciences’.

From about 1850, several Scottish moral philosophers also built on Montesquieu’s work to produce ‘*Theoretical* or *conjectural*’ histories seeking to explain the origins of ‘civilized society’. Their ‘stadial’ theory probably originated with Adam Smith and universalized a ladder of improvement ‘from rudeness to civilization’ through three or four ‘gradual steps’ on which actual past or present communities were stationed.<sup>11</sup> In a 1762 lecture, Smith (1978:14) listed the ‘four distinct states which mankind pass thro’ – the ‘Age of Hunters’, the ‘Age of Shepherds’, the ‘Age of Agriculture’, and ‘the Age of Commerce’. Kames (1758, I:77, 92–3) proclaimed that these ‘progressive changes’ could be ‘traced in all nations’. Millar (1779:3–6) confidently identified a ‘remarkable uniformity’ in man’s ‘progression’ from ‘ignorance to knowledge, and from rude, to civilized manners’. Kames (1758, I:144–6)



reasoned that the shift to agriculture was the key transition because it produced the 'relation of land-property'.<sup>12</sup> This presumed critical nexus between civil society and an historically specific agricultural practice was soon a staple in developmentalist theories, with dire implications for present Indigenous people whose subsistence activities and lifestyles seemed not to match the mould – particularly Aboriginal Australians and Tasmanians in expanding colonial settings after 1788.

Most stadial theorists concurred with Millar (1771:iii) that 'Man is every where the same' and that 'the untutored Indian and the civilized European have acted upon the same principles'. Yet they ethnocentrically assumed a single trajectory of progress and, like Adam Ferguson (1767:122–3), consigned so-called 'barbarous or savage' contemporary populations to the stalled status of a 'mirroure' reflecting 'the features of our own progenitors'. Moreover, it is sometimes doubtful how far the rubric 'man' stretched. Millar was echoing the almost identical dictum of his compatriot David Hume (1748:134; 1752:161–2) who condemned slavery. Yet, in a footnote in the second edition of his essay 'Of National Characters', Hume (1753:291, note \*) not only speculated that 'the negroes, and in general all the other species of men', were 'naturally inferior to the whites', but made the polygenist hint of an 'original distinction betwixt these breeds of men'. Kames (1774, I:10–15, 32) also denounced slavery (Whyte 2006:32, 66) but demeaned 'the Negroes' and flirted with polygenism: 'different races of men' were 'fitted by nature for different climates'; 'negroes' were distinguished 'from every other race of men' by their 'black colour', 'thick lips, flat nose, crisped woolly hair, and rank smell'.<sup>13</sup>

## **Stadial theory in Oceania**

Reinhold Forster (1778:324–5, 373–5, 381) interwove a Christian narrative of relative postdiluvian degeneration with an ethnocentric developmentalism that made 'agriculture, and the cultivation of vegetables' essential for 'progress' in 'civilization' and 'happiness'. The New Zealanders were thus 'more improved' than the Tierra del Fuegians due to their descent from 'more happy and less degenerated ancestors' while their practice of agriculture ranked them 'higher in the scale of human beings'.

Such assumptions, valorizing familiar agricultural practices over other modes of life and production, permeate voyagers' assessments of particular people encountered in Oceania and often generated ill-informed remarks about the alleged absence of Indigenous agriculture. Such

judgements were sometimes emotively triggered by Indigenous conduct. For instance, Jean-François de Galaup, comte de La Pérouse, and Bruni d'Entrecasteaux stated that the inhabitants of Tutuila (American Samoa) and New Caledonia, respectively, hardly cultivated the soil. These absurd claims are Indigenous countersigns, produced in the horrified aftermath of an episode of violent local behaviour. Echoing Forster and the stadial theorists, La Pérouse (1985:155, 445–59, 477) had vaunted 'agriculture' as the most effective means to 'soften' man's manners and 'render him sociable'. A sudden Samoan attack at Tutuila in 1787, killing a dozen of his shipmates, provoked a stark verbal contrast in his journal between 'one of the finest countries in Nature' and 'these barbaric peoples' with their 'atrocious mores', who should have been the 'happiest denizens of the earth' but were instead 'ferocious beings'. In an entry written after the event, La Pérouse first rhetorically denied Samoans the agency of cultivation by depicting an idyllic land whose fruits grew '*without any culture*' and which supplied its 'fortunate' residents with 'tasty healthy nourishment', '*without any work*'.<sup>14</sup> He then described the massacre and confirmed his own simplistic equation of agriculture and sociability by invoking the reflex agency of savagery to explain the attack: 'almost savage man [living] in anarchy is a more vicious being than the wolves and tigers of the forests'.<sup>15</sup> In New Caledonia in 1793, Bruni d'Entrecasteaux (1808, I:332–4, 354–6) was similarly appalled by a provocative demonstration of cannibalism. He attributed the practice to the inhabitants' wilful degeneration or 'distancing' from the 'works of agriculture' to embrace a 'wandering, turbulent life'. Unable to ignore signs of gardens abandoned during a recent 'war' or cleverly constructed irrigation works, he admitted that 'the art of culture is not entirely unknown to them'. But he concluded that they were too lazy 'to provide for their subsistence by a hard-working life' and were thus 'reduced' to the 'most revolting of all excesses'.<sup>16</sup> As with La Pérouse and the Samoans, Bruni d'Entrecasteaux could not allow New Caledonians the unqualified status of cultivators because their actions contradicted his fixed belief in the civilizing agency and moral virtue of agriculture itself.

Of all the Indigenous lifestyles in Oceania, those observed in New Holland and Van Diemen's Land were most often misrepresented. Banks (1768–71, II:\*275) surmised that the land was 'thinly inhabited to admiration'. At Botany Bay in May 1770, Cook (1955:307) marvelled that 'the woods are free from under wood of every kind' while the trees were far enough apart to enable cultivation 'without being oblig'd to cut down a single tree'. The artist Sydney Parkinson (1773:124) likened the scene to 'plantations in a gentleman's park'. Such imagery would

usually be read today as typical of an Australian landscape produced by Aboriginal fire-stick farming (Gammage 2011; Jones 1969).<sup>17</sup> Yet in a general overview of ‘the Natives’, Cook (1955:387–8, 393, 397) claimed that they knew ‘nothing of Cultivation’ and wrongly inferred that he had seen a ‘Country in the pure state of Nature’, bereft of any trace of the ‘Industry of Man’ but in a ‘flourishing state’ for the introduction of farming and grazing. This virtual prospectus for colonization, paraphrased in John Hawkesworth’s (1773, III:93, 227–8) influential published narrative of the voyage, underwrote Cook’s repeated unilateral acts of possession along the east coast, in the face of orders to seek the ‘Consent of the Natives’ to enact such protocols.<sup>18</sup> Such judgements were reiterated in Banks’s advice to two parliamentary committees on Botany Bay’s suitability for a future penal colony (Reynolds 1996:17–20). These authoritative opinions no doubt helped fuel the disastrous colonial fiction, repeatedly disproved in practice, of a land unused by a handful of savages and awaiting exploitation by the civilized.

From the very end of the 18th century, a nascent science of race began to entrench racial inequality as an immutable product of physical organization, as Cuvier implied. Biological criteria were often buttressed by hardening assumptions about stages of social development. The coupling of congealed racial and stadial theories consigned certain races to permanent occupation of the lowest rungs of the human ladder. In the process, both Buffon’s nominalist inventory of different varieties or kinds of men and the developmental scenario of ‘peoples’ at different stages of universal human ‘improvement’ gave way to taxonomies of hierarchically graded races, amongst which some classed as savage were condemned as unfit for progress due to ineradicable constitutional inferiority.

## **Knowing man in New Holland and Van Diemen’s Land**

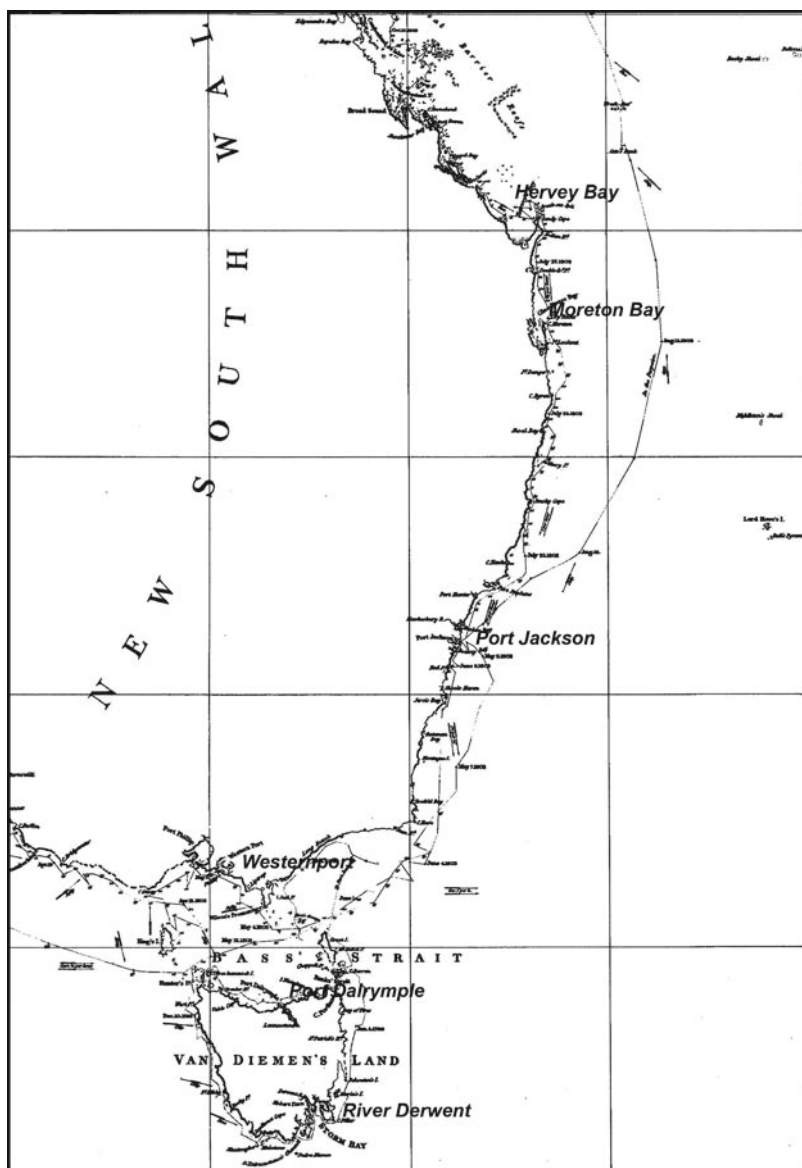
Whereas previous chapters used scattered ethnohistorical episodes to illustrate a semantic history of race and collective or taxonomic thinking about man over long durations, my relative emphasis on the history of ideas or ethnohistory is henceforth reversed. In this chapter, a compact series of encounters during several turn-of-the-century British and French voyages in New Holland and Van Diemen’s Land enable detailed ethnohistorical investigation of particular circumstances in which words for Indigenous people were used and old or emergent conceptions of human differences were confirmed or challenged or reconstituted in action.

Before 1770, European knowledge of Australia's inhabitants was very slight and very negative. It depended on laconic Dutch accounts of often violent meetings along the northern and western margins after 1606 and on Dampier's damning reports of his visits to the northwest coast in 1688 and 1699 (see Chapter 2). Typically, the Dutchman Jan Carstenz (1859:45–6) described people he saw at Cape York Peninsula in 1623 as 'pitch-black', 'entirely naked', 'poor and wretched' 'barbarians'.<sup>19</sup> Over the three decades after 1770, such bleak caricatures were fleshed out and tempered by men espousing late Enlightenment attitudes to natives/Indians/savages – relatively openminded and humanist in principle, Eurocentric and self-serving in practice. This ambivalence was expressed in voyagers' reports of fleeting coastal encounters; in participant histories of the fledgling English colony at Port Jackson (Sydney), especially by the Marine officers Watkin Tench (1789, 1793) and David Collins (1798, 1802); and in the rich iconography of voyage and colonial artists (Smith 1969:117–39). All bear traces of Indigenous agency. This chapter draws on the comparative potential of shallow but far-flung travel reportage by scientific voyagers more than the localized depth of settler productions.

I have previously (2003, 2008c, 2009a) discussed situated encounters during visits to New Holland and Van Diemen's Land by major late Enlightenment voyages, Cook's in 1770 and 1777 and Bruni d'Entrecasteaux's in 1792 and 1793. Peppered with Indigenous countersigns, their texts suggest a rhetorical correlation between, on the one hand, voyagers' relief at friendly or unthreatening native conduct; and, on the other, positive assessments of the character, morality, and physical appearance of approved people who are distanced from the adverse stereotype of 'the Negro'. Rather than revisit these episodes, I focus here on encounters between particular Indigenous people and outsiders during expeditions undertaken between 1796 and 1803 by the Englishman Flinders and the Frenchman Baudin who between them all but completed the known outline of the Australian coast.

### **Colonial encounters: Bass and Flinders**

Flinders, second lieutenant on HMS *Reliance*, and the ship's surgeon George Bass together and singly undertook six expeditions from Port Jackson from 1795 to 1799. Sometimes in open boats, they surveyed half the east coast of New South Wales, from Hervey Bay (Queensland) to Western Port (Victoria), and circumnavigated Van Diemen's Land (Map 3.1). Young men inspired by 'the furor of discovery' (Flinders



Map 3.1 M. Flinders (1814), 'General Chart of Terra Australis or Australia', detail. Photograph and annotation B. Douglas

n.d.:2), their accounts are spiced with derring-do but pervaded by real or imagined Indigenous presence. The extant texts are of varying immediacy – Flinders’s (1801–3, n.d.) manuscripts; Collins’s (1802:142–94, 224–63) published narratives of two voyages ‘taken from’ the journals of Bass and Flinders; Flinders’s (1801) brief coastal *Observations*; his history of ‘Prior Discoveries in Terra Australis’ (1814, I:i–cciv); and the official narrative (1814) of his voyage on HMS *Investigator*.

In March 1796, Flinders, Bass, and Bass’s boy servant William Martin rowed and sailed a tiny boat named *Tom Thumb* south from Port Jackson to Lake Illawarra for a week-long return voyage of around 240 kilometres. They had two muskets, a few days’ provisions, and a small barrel of undrinkable water. Ethnocentric, Flinders did not doubt English superiority but his manuscript narrative (n.d.) of the voyage is suffused with ‘apprehension’ at the prospect of adverse, unpredictable native behaviour. In contrast, his later published history (1814, I:xcvii–cii) is far more confident in tone, with negative emotion largely elided in this public, imperial genre. At the time, though, South Seas voyagers were prone to dark imaginings about savage hordes, given notorious precedents in the real or assumed fates of Cook, La Pérouse, and other navigators. Flinders (1814, I:xxi–xxvi) knew from experience that the equation between the ‘superiority of our arms’ and ‘great differences of numbers’ could be lethally unstable, even in clashes with ‘naked savages’. As a midshipman with William Bligh on HMS *Providence* in 1792, he had seen a seaman killed and another badly wounded in a canoe-borne attack on the English vessels by Torres Strait Islanders.

In 1796, Flinders’s anxiety was oriented by colonial intimacy with Port Jackson as ‘home’ and shaped by the agency of the settlement’s Indigenous denizens. Both his accounts differentiate ‘friendly natives’, with whom communication was possible, from ‘strange natives’ who lived south of Botany Bay, were reputed at Port Jackson to be ‘exceedingly ferocious, if not cannibals’, and were ‘altogether unintelligible’. The manuscript recounts how the English accepted the offer of two ‘friendly’ men who had ‘been at Port Jackson’ to guide them to a nearby ‘fresh-water river’ – the outlet from Lake Illawarra. But the arrival of numerous ‘other natives’ convinced the nervous Englishmen that they should ‘get away from this place as soon as possible’. They managed to do so through a combination of ruse, distraction, and threat. In the event, the dichotomy of friendly and strange natives collapsed because ‘our friends’ were ‘constantly importuning’ and seemed verbally ‘more violent’ than the others. A year later, one of them was implicated in the killing of two castaway sailors and was ‘sought after to be shot by M<sup>r</sup> Bass and others’.

Whether Flinders's qualms matched Indigenous intentions is unknowable. In the manuscript, pragmatically acknowledging travellers' vulnerability in such a situation, he concluded that they probably 'suffered us to get away, only because they had not agreed upon any plan of action'. They also seemed to be in 'extreme fear' of the 'harmless firearms', made useless when the boat was swamped. He recognized, however, that even with muskets 'in order', the English could scarcely have resisted 'their numbers'. Alongside such explicit admissions of European trepidation and prudence are tacit markers of a parallel local moral economy at work in an embryonic colonial setting. Countersigns of Indigenous desire, need, caution, and fear are embedded in successive descriptive passages – of an initial exchange with the two 'friendly' men; of their promise that women and food would be available at the river; of their 'persuading' the 'strange natives' to have Flinders cut their hair and beards, as he had earlier done for the two men; of their 'desiring, or indeed almost insisting' that the boat should continue into the lake; of a general 'shouting and singing' as the group dragged the boat back to the ocean when the Englishmen demurred; of the theft of a hat and its return when asked; of the men's apparent assumption that the sailors were soldiers whom they held in particular dread. 'We did not much admire our new name "Soja"', remarked Flinders dryly, 'yet thought it best not to undeceive them.'

Late in 1798, Flinders (1801:8; 1814:clxxxvi–clxxxvii) and Bass (Collins 1802:187) in the colonial sloop *Norfolk* sailed through Bass Strait and around Van Diemen's Land, proving its insularity. They noticed signs of human presence at several points, including Port Dalrymple (the Tamar estuary), but interacted with only one local inhabitant. In the upper Derwent, they came face to face with two women and a man. The women 'scampered off' (Bass), 'screaming' (Flinders), but the man showed no 'signs of fear or distrust' and accepted a dead swan 'with rapture'. Apparently 'ignorant of muskets', his only interest was the swan and the Englishmen's red neckerchiefs. He did not know their smattering of Port Jackson and Tahitian words but seemed to understand their signs and agreed to show them his habitation. However, his 'devious route and frequent stoppages' convinced them that he sought only 'to amuse [himself] and tire them out' – Bass read caution in this tactic and 'jealousy' about 'his women' – but they parted 'in great friendship'.

In a classic slippage, Flinders and Bass (Collins 1802:188) made this fleeting individual contact stand for an entire group – the man's 'frank and open deportment' produced a 'favourable opinion of the disposition' of the inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land. Their reportage fits the rhetorical trajectory identified above, from relief at apparent

'friendship', to positive representations of Indigenous character and persons, and denial of any Negro analogy. Sequence and representations encode countersigns of local behaviour, processed by travellers in the double light of the profound insecurity of sailing in unfamiliar waters and their standard distaste for stereotyped Negro physiognomy. In the earlier of Flinders's (1801:8) reports of the meeting at the Derwent, the man 'seemed to be devoid of fear', 'his countenance was more expressive of benignity and intelligence, than of ferocity or stupidity', and 'his features were less negro-like than is usual in New South Wales'. In the later (1814:clxxxvii), 'the quickness with which he comprehended our signs spoke in favour of his intelligence' and his hair 'had not the appearance of being woolly' – code for 'not Negro'. The man was evidently alert, wary, and sought to control and profit from the meeting on his own terms while the women avoided one entirely.

In July 1799, Flinders took the *Norfolk* to examine the coast north of Port Jackson. He was without Bass but accompanied by Bungaree (Figure 3.1), a man from Broken Bay, north of Port Jackson, 'whose good disposition and manly conduct' had attracted Flinders's 'esteem' (1814:cxci), and who for thirty years would be among the best-known, most portrayed Aborigines in the colony. On 16 July, they reached Bribie Island in Moreton Bay (Queensland) (Collins 1802:230–56). At the island's southern tip, called Point Skirmish by Flinders and still so named, he and Bungaree conversed 'by signs' with several apparently unarmed local men. Bungaree stripped naked and went ashore, also unarmed, to engage in the first of several exchanges which punctuated Flinders's stay in Moreton Bay – his yarn belt for a kangaroo fur band. Bungaree was the key figure in these transactions. Flinders eventually landed, armed against 'treachery' with a musket, but refused to exchange his cabbage-tree hat on demand. As he and Bungaree retreated to the boat, crowded from behind, one man tried good-humouredly to take the hat by ruse but failed. The situation then deteriorated. A man hurled a spear which narrowly missed. Alarmed, Flinders shot at the 'offender' and finally wounded him. After another man was reportedly shot in the arm by a seaman, they all fled.

Although Flinders professed satisfaction at 'the great influence which the awe of a superior power has in savages', his journal tells a story of ongoing apprehension and confused emotions cloaking countersigns of enigmatic Indigenous agency. There is insult at the 'impudent' and 'very wanton attack'; regret that he had been provoked into firing; hope that it would deter further attacks by the 'enemy'; anxiety nonetheless; and vulnerability because he had to repair the sloop and survey the bay. For five



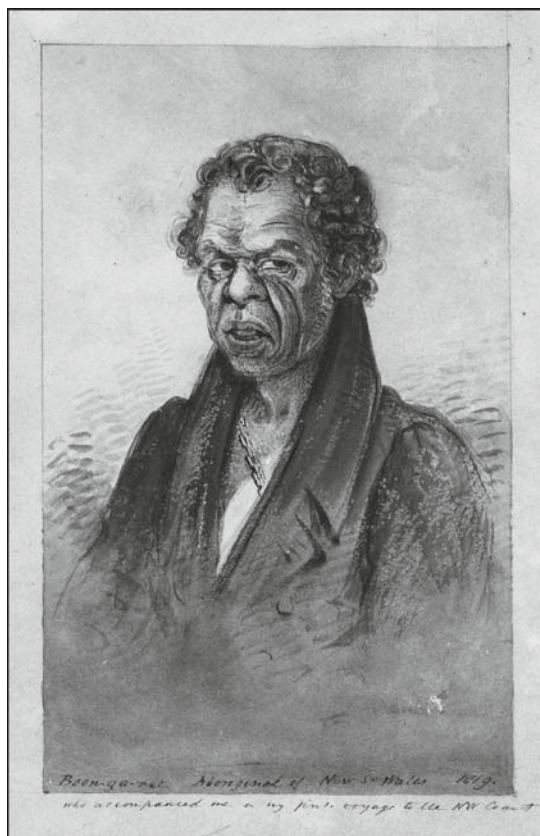


Figure 3.1 P.P. King (1819), 'Boon-ga-ree Aboriginal of New S<sup>o</sup> Wales 1819 who Accompanied me on my First Voyage to the NW Coast'. Watercolour. State Library of New South Wales, Sydney, PXC 767, a3464032

days, he cautiously ignored repeated invitations for further contacts. His prudence seemed justified on 18 July when the *Norfolk* was approached by a 'party of natives', 'standing up in their canoes, and pulling toward them', 'in very regular order'. The English counted about twenty, 'coming on with much resolution'. The decks were cleared, the men armed, and the sloop bore away towards the attackers who had surprisingly got no closer. Flinders recounted the denouement with wry appreciation of its absurdity: 'this hostile array turned out to be a few peaceable fishermen' standing on a sand flat and 'driving fish into their nets'.

From 21 July, Flinders's tension gradually eased as Bungaree, 'in his usual undaunted manner', facilitated relations with local people who welcomed him but remained apprehensive of the white men, their muskets, and especially Flinders. Hardly any women were seen. During the last two days of the visit, with the sloop detained by bad weather near Skirmish Point, the exchanges expanded to include the Europeans and featured much singing and 'not ungraceful' dancing, an Indigenous tactic to pacify or control the dangerous strangers who thought they were being 'entertained'.<sup>20</sup> These 'friendly interchanges' culminated in 'reciprocal' introductions – they called Flinders 'Mid-ger Plindah', he recorded three of their names, and was reminded of Cook's remark that the 'ceremony' of introduction 'by name' was 'never omitted' at the Endeavour River in 1770.<sup>21</sup>

In content and wording, Flinders's journal (Collins 1802:231–50) implies that Bungaree was the critical factor in local responses to the strangers and reiterated enthusiasm to engage with them. The inhabitants persistently sought him out despite the lack of a common language (Flinders 1814:cxcviii). And his mediatory skills were much valued by the Europeans with whom he shared the developing lingua franca of Port Jackson. Flinders represented him as the key agent in three of four exchange events which succeeded the initial violence. On 21 July, 'about six miles' from Skirmish Point, two men signalled for them to land but fled from Flinders, only to return when they saw Bungaree. After a 'friendly exchange', he went to the boat for additional items, 'to make the exchange equal'. A more elaborate transaction occurred four days later, with Bungaree again the main player. Having eagerly received presents of 'yarn caps, pork, and biscuit', the inhabitants 'made signs for Bong-ree to go with them, and they would give him girdles and fillets, to bind round his head and the upper parts of his arms'. So long as there were only two visitors, they were 'lively, dancing and singing in concert in a pleasing manner'. But as the number of white men 'imperceptibly increased', they became 'alarmed and suspicious'. On 28 July, when several local men were greatly 'startled' by the noise of a tree felled by crew members, Bungaree made amends for their fright by giving them a spear and a spear thrower and showing them how to use it. I take this tutorial as a *crosscultural* act, signifying a reciprocal rather than a hierarchical relationship and challenging the reified notion of 'crosscultural' as contact between opposed, homogenized 'cultures'. I conclude that the Moreton Bay people probably took Bungaree for the leader of the expedition and the white men for his followers.

Bungaree also served Flinders (Collins 1802:228, 238, 249–53) as a datum point in a comparative or stadial agenda which sought empirical

evidence of the relative ‘condition’ of different groups, pivoting on Flinders’s claim to expert knowledge of the Port Jackson people. En route to Moreton Bay, they had seen three large, well-built habitations which Bungaree ‘readily admitted’ were ‘much superior’ to any huts he had previously seen. A fishing net taken from a house in Moreton Bay was ‘proof of the superior ingenuity of these over the natives of Port Jackson’. Their singing, too, was better and more complex: ‘musical and pleasing, and not merely in the diatonic scale, descending by thirds, as at Port Jackson’. Yet Bungaree’s weaponry was superior and, although the inhabitants of Moreton Bay bore a general physical resemblance to those of Port Jackson, there was none ‘whose countenance had so little of the savage, or the symmetry of whose limbs expressed strength and agility, so much, as those of their companion Bong-ree’. In this common colonial trope, a personal relationship transcends a demeaning stereotype.

These were piecemeal empirical contrasts. However, Flinders closed his account of Moreton Bay by outlining an inductive theory of environmentally driven social development suggestive of Montesquieu and the stadialists. His retrospective summary (1814:cxviii) declares baldly: ‘They fish almost wholly with cast and setting nets, live more in society than the natives to the southward, and are much better lodged.’ His contemporary explanation (Collins 1802:253–5) adds detail and an argument. The superior ‘net-works’ of the Moreton Bay people enabled them to catch large prey and required ‘co-operation’, producing a ‘favourable change in the manners and dispositions even of a savage’. In contrast, dependence on the spear needed only a ‘single arm’ rather than ‘the aid of society’ and produced a ‘gloomy, unsettled, and unsocial being’. (Theory here runs roughshod over experience since Bungaree clearly broke this mould.) Bringing the developmentalist scenario full circle, Flinders reasoned thus: ‘large nets’ ensured a ‘more certain’ food supply but were not very portable; a ‘more permanent residence’ would thereby be both possible and necessary while houses would ‘naturally’ be better built; such ‘superiority’ derived from the ‘different mode’ of catching fish by the ‘use of nets’ which in turn ‘arose from the form of the bay’. His logic made geography – the ‘form of the bay’ – the ultimate determinant of the amount or level of ‘society’ but also presumed variation, inventiveness, and improvement in Aboriginal Australians.

### **Voyages to *Terra Australis***

In October 1800, Baudin left Le Havre in command of the corvettes *Géographe* and *Naturaliste*. The expedition, which he had proposed (n.d.), was to undertake ‘observations and research on Geography and Natural

History' in New Holland.<sup>22</sup> During 1801, he sailed along the continent's west coast, thence to Timor, and reached Van Diemen's Land in early 1802. In the meantime, the British Admiralty had despatched Flinders (1814, I:8) on HMS *Investigator* on a rival similar mission – 'a complete examination and survey' of New Holland's coasts. Flinders spent three weeks at King George Sound in December 1801 and during the next four months did a detailed survey of the south coast. On 8 April 1802, at Encounter Bay (South Australia), he met Baudin who was surveying the coast westward from Van Diemen's Land. Between July 1802 and June 1803, joined again by Bungaree, Flinders circumnavigated the continent from Port Jackson, surveying much of the northeast and north coasts before the ship's rottenness and the crew's poor health compelled him to return via Timor. Baudin recommenced his journey in November 1802 after five months in Port Jackson. He sailed westward to King George Sound, revisited the west coast and Timor, and headed home in July 1803. Both men came to grief in Ile de France (Mauritius). Baudin died of tuberculosis in September 1803. Flinders was arrested three months later en route to England and interned for seven years as a prisoner of war.

Nationalist in spirit, both voyages were avowedly scientific in intent. Baudin (1801, 1801–2, 1802) left with 22 savants, gardeners, or artists but ten quit at Ile de France on the outward journey and five died during the voyage. The young naturalist Péron (1802, 1807, 1913; Péron and Freycinet 1816, 1824) assumed primary responsibility for natural history and weighted it towards his fields of zoology and anthropology. Reportage of encounters is complemented by ethnographic description, anthropological reflection, and a wonderful visual archive (Collection Lesueur 1800–4).<sup>23</sup> In contrast, the natural history focus during Flinders's voyage was heavily botanical, befitting Banks's patronage and the contributions of the botanist Brown and the gardener Peter Good. No systematic enquiry into man was produced but reports by Flinders (1801–3, 1814), Brown (2001), Good (1981), and the seaman Samuel Smith ([2002]), complemented by Westall's (1801–3) vivid drawings, are empirically very rich. My comparative critical ethnohistory is underpinned by these varied research emphases, different mediums, diverse modes of representation, and broad range of genres. I class these voyages as transitional between the Enlightenment and modern eras of scientific voyaging in Oceania.

### **Investigating a continent: Flinders**

In December 1801, HMS *Investigator* anchored at King George Sound, long occupied by Nyungar people, now site of the city of Albany.

Recently visited by whalers, the harbour was first charted in 1791 by the English circumnavigator George Vancouver (1798, I:32–40, 54–6). He saw no inhabitants but conjectured from their dwellings that they were a ‘miserable’, ‘wandering people’, ‘unassisted by civil society, and undirected by the sciences’. This grim conventional judgement effaced ethnohistorical markers of Indigenous ‘society’ and ‘science’ mentioned by Vancouver himself: ‘tolerably large villages’ and strategic use of fire to promote better hunting.

Though Flinders and his shipmates were not the first foreigners to visit King George Sound, their journals recount the earliest recorded meetings with Nyungar.<sup>24</sup> A string of encounters with a handful of men permeated these texts with signs and countersigns of the men’s wary self-confidence and tactics to receive the strangers, prevent access to their women and children, and benefit on their own terms. After six days, the naturalists and Westall were in a party approached by a man ‘loudly hollowing’. The English gathered that he did not ‘wish communication’ and, when he fired the vegetation separating them, that he sought to ‘gain time for his family to escape’. He collected a dead bird and a handkerchief left for him but spurned ‘a knife, some biscuit & three musket balls’. Over the next fortnight, several men regularly visited the English camp ashore, ‘enticed’ by red nightcaps and handkerchiefs’ but placing ‘no value’ on other objects. They were ‘much pleased’ to ascertain the visitors’ sex, ‘shewd some knowledge of barter’, would not be followed, and refused to exchange their kangaroo-skin capes for ‘any Trinkets’. A graphic final encounter, when the marines exercised their musketry ashore, stirred ‘screams of delight’ from four witnesses. ‘Being apprised’ in advance by Flinders, they were not alarmed by the explosions and much admired the soldiers’ ‘red coats and cross belts’ – probably because they resembled ‘their own manner of ornamenting themselves’. An ‘old man’, who had often come to the camp and sought to control where the English went, watched the drill ‘attentively’ and imitated it ‘with a rude stick’. More than a century later, an aged man named Nebinyan told the welfare worker Daisy Bates that the marines’ ceremony had inspired a new dance at King George Sound (White 1980:34–5; Shellam 2009:18).

Flinders’s *Investigator* journal (1801–3, I:9, 21, 233, 235, 240) betrays persistent anxiety about security. On three of four occasions, he qualified descriptions of visitors’ behaviour with the adverb ‘peaceably’ and on departure hoped they had formed ‘higher ideas of our powers’. Again, in hindsight, his published narrative (1814, I:58–60, 65) is far more assured in tone, elides apprehension, and encapsulates the encounter as

‘frequent and amicable communication’. Both texts show his desire for good local relations and presumption that gifts of ‘iron and toys’ were keys to native cooperation. Initially, ‘our friends, the natives’ were given ‘many presents’ but the practice was dropped on utilitarian grounds determined by Indigenous values and actions: ‘they very rarely brought us any thing in return; nor was it uncommon to find small mirrors, and other things left about the shore; so that at length our presents were discontinued’. The passage mixes an ethnohistorical marker of local exchange protocols and conceptions of utility with an overt sign that the Europeans were reacting to Indigenous actions.

These voyagers represented Nyungar in paternalistic but mostly positive terms. Racial thinking, wording, and analogies are largely absent or sidestepped, though lower-deck impressions are more astringent than those of captain or gentlemen. Smith ([2002]:31–2) was disconcerted by their nakedness – ‘such activity that wou’d pawl [appall] any European to Exhibit, without clothing’ – and by their ‘large Mouths & long teeth’ which made their features ‘Quite awfull’. Flinders (1801–3, I:232–3; 1814, I:66) found them ‘intelligent in comprehending our signs’ but (irritatingly) oblivious to European ‘superiority’. He reported secondhand that the man first seen was ‘admired for the good form of his body and his manly behaviour’. Brown (2001:96, 97) tacitly denied Negro characters – they were not ‘a full black’ but ‘copper’ in colour with hair ‘by no means wooly’. He personalized the first visitors to the camp, using the simple past tense rather than the generalizing ethnographic present – two ‘had skin cloaks loosely thrown about their shoulders’; all ‘were remarkably thin, especially their extremities’; ‘mouth large, lips rather thin, in one thick nose somewhat depressd at the base & dilated at the apex’; they ‘were by no means stupid’ but ‘inquisitive especially about our persons’.

Brown (2001:97) clearly preferred botanical to zoological or anthropological investigation. But he paid lip service to metropolitan demand for comparative anatomical mensuration and specimens, mentioning that he ‘did not measure any’ of the first visitors to the camp or ‘ascertain the proportions of diff[erent] parts of their bodies’. His account (2001: 105) of another episode shows that somatic measurement of living subjects, ethnographic portraiture, and lexical enquiry all demanded active Indigenous cooperation, plus reciprocity, negotiation, and respect from voyagers. His words are saturated by Indigenous countersigns that suggest local control of the encounter:

The old man & the middle aged stout man with a name we supposd was Warena allowd themselves, especially the latter, to be measurd with the

greatest patience tho it took up nearly an hour. Mr Westal[l] shewd Warena his own figure w<sup>ch</sup> he had drawn. He appeard pleas'd & bar'd his body to the waist that Mr W[estall] might be able to finish his work. They appear[ed] clearly to understand our wishes to know their names for the different parts of the body & one of them unaskd began to run over them.

Westall's portrait (Figure 3.2) is probably of 'Warena', skin cloak thrown back to reveal torso and limbs 'stout' only relative to his 'remarkably thin' compatriots. Good (1981:52) added that Brown and the surgeon Hugh Bell did the measuring and gleaned 'a few words of a Vocabulary'. Flinders's (1814, I:67–8) narrative reproduces these staples of scientific travel in successive tables – a comparative list of words used for body



*Figure 3.2* W. Westall (1801), 'K. George's S.'. Pencil. National Library of Australia, Canberra, an4561675

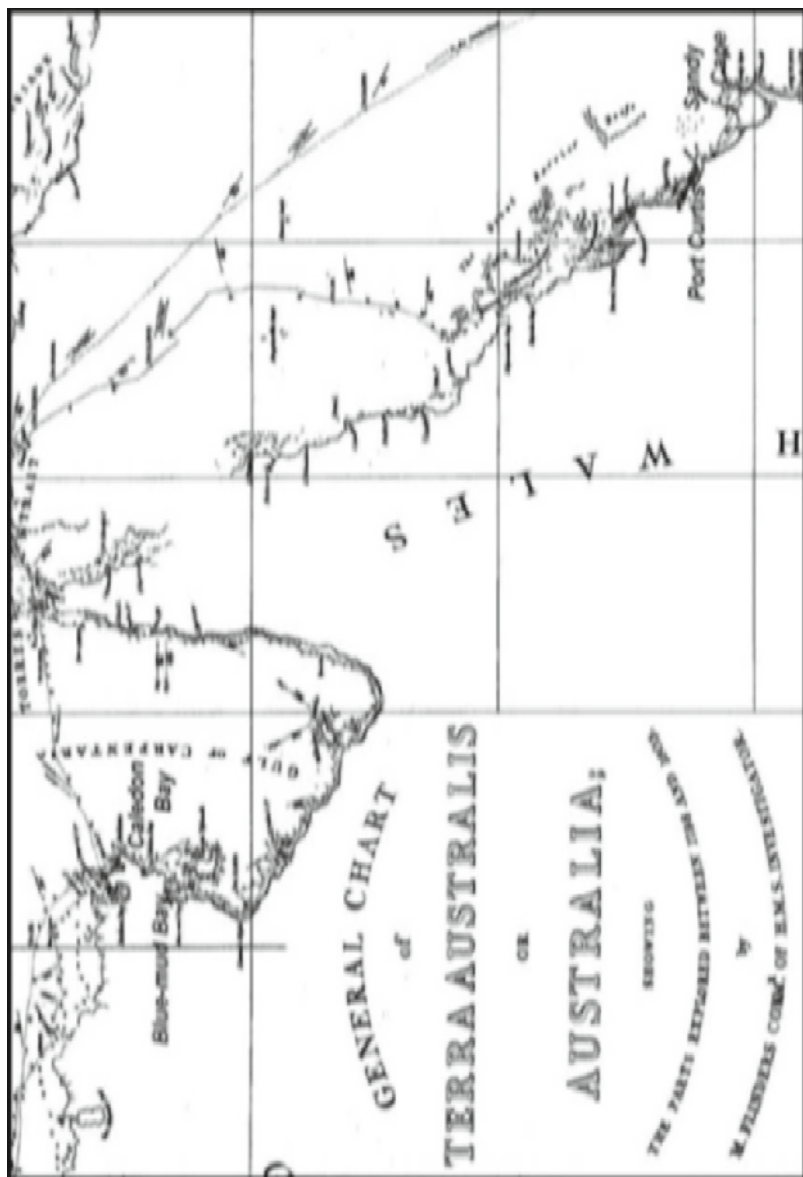
parts at King George Sound, Port Jackson, and Van Diemen's Land; and, entirely without comment, Bell's 'anatomical admeasurement of one of the best proportioned of our visitors'.

Presumably Bell, as surgeon, took the lead in anatomical enquiry. However, Brown (2001:231, 238; Good 1981:82–4) colluded in collecting Indigenous bodily remains. At Sandy Cape (Queensland) during the *Investigator's* continental circumnavigation (Map 3.2), he found a burial place containing 'the bones of a man the Skull being tolerably perfect'. He added laconically, 'I brought it off.' Such outright theft was common contemporary practice but paradoxical given Brown's undoubted humanism. A few days later at Port Curtis, he condemned his companions for firing indiscriminately at a group of 'poor unarm'd savages' who had just hurled a 'pretty smart shower of stones & sticks' at them. He approved when Flinders 'very properly' ordered the return of objects seized by some of the shore party.

Bell's primary responsibility for the limited human anatomical research done during the voyage is subsequently confirmed in Flinders's journal (1801–3, II:347–8; cf. 1814, II:197–8). In January 1803, at the place he named Blue-mud Bay (Arnhem Land, Northern Territory), Flinders ordered the retrieval of the body of a local man slain following the spearing of a crew member. It was required 'for the painter to draw and the surgeon to examine'. Flinders further reported the exact trajectory of the fatal musket ball. Good (1981:112) described the appearance of the corpse, adding: 'He was dissected & his head put in Spirits'. Westall produced a confronting sketch of an apparently partly dismembered body – though the separated foot was probably dictated by the size of the page (Figure 3.3). Brown (2001:348), however, only mentioned in passing that 'the ball had entered the back & lodged *I believe* in the Neck',<sup>25</sup> suggesting that he did not participate in the dissection. Smith ([2002]:58) confirmed that 'the Surgeon Cut off his Head & took out his Heart & put them in Spirits'.

In July 1802, at Port Jackson, Flinders (1814, I:235; II:10) was authorized by Governor Philip Gidley King to embark two Indigenous men for the voyage's next phase – one, a Port Jackson youth called Nanberry; the other Flinders's 'native friend', the 'worthy and brave' Bungaree, whose value in facilitating 'friendly intercourse' with local people he already knew. Bungaree's textual presence is patchy but signs and countersigns of his activity punctuate Flinders's writings (1801–3, II:22–3, 41, 56, 399; 1814, II:10–11, 126, 238–9). He was the captain's regular 'attendant', speared fish for the common benefit, and was a key figure in several encounters. At Sandy Cape, 'our native' Bungaree communicated





Map 3.2 M. Flinders (1814), 'General Chart of Terra Australis or Australia', detail. Photograph and annotation B. Douglas

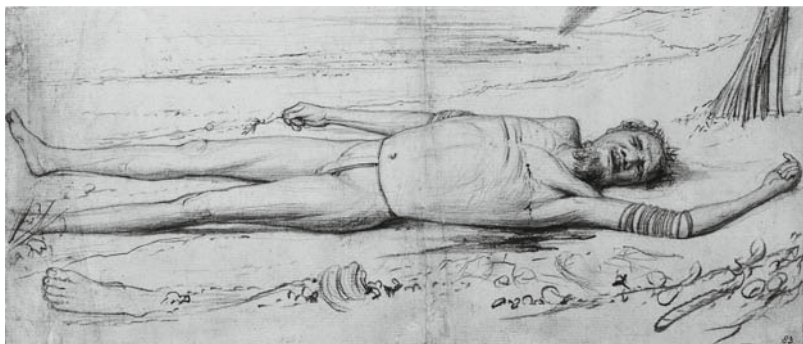


Figure 3.3 W. Westall (1803), [Blue Mud Bay, Body of a Native Shot on Morgan's Island]. Pencil. National Library of Australia, Canberra, an4565197

with a reluctant group of men. Having 'stripped off his clothes', he 'boldly' approached, 'singly, unarmed, and naked', and spoke to them in 'broken English' when they did not understand his language. They allowed him to join them, followed by the Europeans, and were given presents, a meal, and a lesson from Bungaree in using a spear thrower with which they were unfamiliar. Good (1981:82–3) found them 'mild & sociable' but Flinders attributed this friendly demeanour to the 'medium' of Bungaree while Brown (2001:231–2) was equally explicit about his agency: 'This intercourse was brought about by Bongaree'. His appeal to other Indigenous people, courage, and resourcefulness were not shared by Nanberry who was among those stoned at Port Curtis and accompanied the *Investigator's* damaged consort back to Port Jackson (Brown 2001:238; Flinders 1814, II:97). It was a marker of Bungaree's toughness that he later escaped the dysentery which killed at least nine crew members, including Good the gardener, during and after a torturous passage from Timor to Port Jackson.<sup>26</sup>

In late January 1803, the *Investigator* spent several days around Blue Mud Bay, country then and now occupied by Yolngu people. This visit – referred to above re the division of scientific labour – occasioned the expedition's sole recorded fatal clash. Strong emotions left stark textual residues which imply that all parties were moved by unstable blends of caution, fear, curiosity, and desire. On 21 January, Flinders (1801–3, II:345–7; 1814, II:195–7) sent a party to cut wood on a small island. He also landed and Brown (2001:345–7; Good 1981:111–12) led a group botanizing. Everyone was 'tolerably well armed' since footprints seen were so recent 'that we expected to meet with Indians'. The prospect

was realized when Westall and his servant were ‘nearly surprized’ by six armed men who ‘followed’ them as they ‘retreated’ towards the wooding party. According to Smith ([2002]:57), the ‘6 natives’ were ‘Observ’d to creep along’, ‘as if their Intention was to come suddingly on the Party’. Approached from various directions – by Brown, who yearned for a ‘friendly interview’, by some of the wooders, and by Flinders and his party – they evidently feared ‘to be surrounded’ and ‘scamper’d off’. Brown, frustrated, thought they looked back ‘with some curiosity’ but were deterred by the ‘number of people’. A master’s mate, John Whitewood, tried again to engage with the men, taking a loaded musket and an unarmed companion. One man ‘presented’ a spear to Whitewood but, when he reached for it, ‘thrust it into his breast’. Whitewood’s musket misfired but he escaped and was taken to the ship with non-fatal wounds.

Two of his assailants were less fortunate. They were subsequently pursued by parties led by the master whose orders, Flinders (1801–3, II:347–9) claimed, were to exercise restraint. If ‘the natives had been the aggressors’, he should seize their canoe. If one had been shot, he should ‘bring off his body’. But he should not ‘go after’ them and if they approached, he should ‘be friendly’ and give them presents, with no ‘regard to what might have passed’. But in the heat of the moment, vengefulness trumped discipline. Three men seen ‘Making their Escape’ in the canoe were at once fired on with ‘Muskets loaded with ball & Buck Shot’ (Smith [2002]:57). Brown (2001:346), who disapproved, alleged that the sailors ‘even went up to the middle in water to get nearer the poor wretches’. Two men jumped overboard but the third was shot dead in the canoe and his body afterwards sank. The next day, a corpse was recovered from the beach (Figure 3.3). Flinders (1814, II:197–8) deduced that it was not the man killed in the canoe since the body was found ‘in the posture of a man who was just able to crawl out of the water and die’.

As discussed, the slain body was dissected ‘for anatomical purposes’. This episode has enduring affect. The Yolngu leader, teacher, and musician Mandawuy Yunupingu (2003:[2]) made it emblematic of when ‘my people had first met science’. While acknowledging that ‘fear and confusion played a large part in the murder’, he was less charitable about the aftermath: ‘the bit that I find hardest to listen to ... is that part where they dissected and sketched one of the bodies. And then cut off the head to put it in a bottle of alcohol.’ This troubled legacy is complicated by a gruesome irony stemming from a marine’s coincident death from sunstroke. Whereas Flinders (1801–3, II:346, 348; 1814, II:197–8)

permitted the anonymous body of ‘the native’ to be mutilated and parts retained as disembodied specimens, he memorialized the marine in the toponym ‘Morgan’s Island’. There was further asymmetry in the disposal of the two corpses which Smith ([2002]:58) alone recorded: ‘This Day we Interr’d Morgan according to the Usual serimony perform’d at sea, afterwards the Native was hove overboard & seen to be devour’d by Sharks.’

Flinders’s ambivalence is patent. In public retrospect in the narrative (1814, II:196–7), he conjectured that ‘our people must have been the aggressors’ and condemned the master ‘for having acted so contrary to my orders’. More equivocal in the journal (1801–3, II:348–9), he censured the master by implication only. Since the local men’s attack appeared ‘premeditated’, they would ‘not have suffered more than their violence merited’. Flinders’s post-mortem insensitivity was no doubt pragmatic – ‘the mischief being unfortunately done’, why not satisfy the desire of the ‘scientific gentlemen’ for human specimens? Why not concurrently meet the crew’s need to combat death with ritual and avenge insults inflicted by despised but frightening savages? Yet the brutal contrast in his authorized treatment of the bodies surely also indexed his unequal estimation of the humanity of an unknown native relative to a lowly member of his own crew.

Bungaree does not figure in accounts of the stay at Blue Mud Bay. But he loomed large in subsequent encounters at Caledon Bay, also Yolngu country, where the Europeans were forced to react to the desires and initiatives of local inhabitants who were ‘almost certainly’ relatives of the men killed at Blue Mud Bay (Morphy 2002:156–9). Brown (2001:352–5) again represented Bungaree as the ‘means’ to achieving an initial ‘friendly interview with the natives’. When Flinders (1801–3, II:366–9; 1814, II:205–8) first went ashore, a dozen men ‘expressed much joy, especially at seeing Bongaree’. Ten accompanied Brown’s party on an excursion inland, ‘unarmed & very friendly’. Yet during the walk, a hatchet and a musket were ‘snatchd’ from ‘careless’ servants. Next morning, Brown and Bell were ‘employed with the Natives in learning their language Customs &c.’ (Good 1981:114–15) and Brown (2001:356–8) recorded a long list of personal names and words for plants and body parts. But later, when an axe was stolen, Flinders invoked collective responsibility by ordering a hostage to be held against its return. A youth called ‘Woga’ was seized and kept captive for two days.

Westall’s portrait of ‘Woogah’ (Figure 3.4) suggests ‘anxiety’ and ‘melancholy’ noted by Good (1981:115–16) and Flinders (1801–3, II:370–1; 1814, II:208–10). But on board he was ‘tolerable cheerful’, ‘ate heartily,

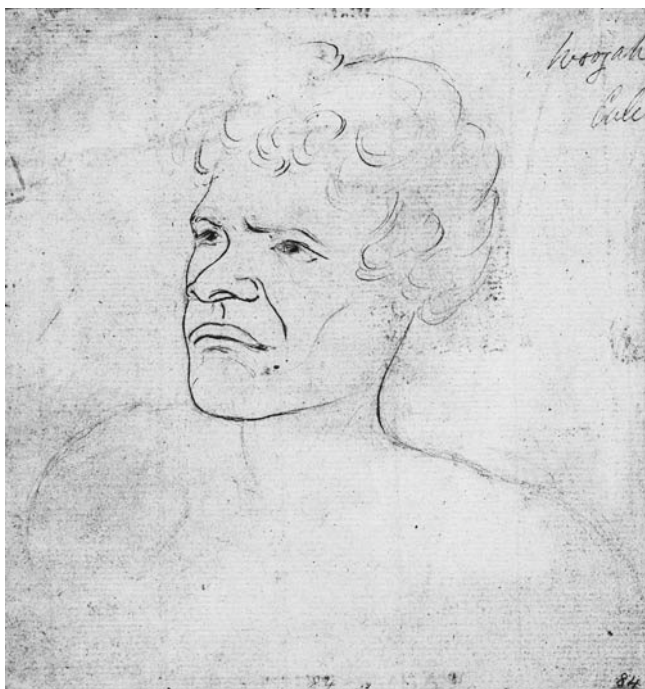


Figure 3.4 W. Westall (1803), 'Woogah. Caledon Bay'. Pencil. National Library of Australia, Canberra, an4564868

laughed', 'noticed every thing', and admired 'the sheep, hogs and cats'. That evening, Woga's compatriots brought a girl to the beach 'who by expressive signs they offered to Bongaree' and indicated that 'he might have her if he would land'. In narrative retrospect, Flinders claimed that they sought to 'entice' Bongaree ashore and seize him in 'retaliation' but he recorded no such surmise at the time. The next morning, Woga begged Bongaree 'earnistly' to be taken ashore and called on him for help when prevented from escaping. Freed in the evening, he tried 'to prevail on Bungery to go with him'. This catalogue of puzzling actions encodes enigmatic countersigns of Indigenous thinking – their assumption, perhaps, that Bongaree led the expedition or was their dead kinsman's surrogate.

Flinders's decision to liberate Woga with axe unreturned is a countersign of local agency and of the vulnerability of mariners in uncharted waters amid independent populations. After taking his hostage, Flinders

(1801–3, II:369, 371–2; 1814, II:209–10) kept the shore camp under the protection of the ship's guns since the inhabitants 'came armd' and 'with stones', apparently 'to attempt a rescue' (Brown 2001:360–1). Caledon Bay was not a comfortable haven for the English. Brown's 'not very prudent' attempt to botanize ended in a nervous retreat to the beach where buckshot was fired to discourage a 'daring', well-armed party, wounding two men. Henceforth, the 'gentlemen did not think it safe to proceed in their business' and Good (1981:116) complained that they were 'so much disturbed with the Natives that we could not examine the Country'. Flinders admitted that, far from achieving the intended intimidation and restitution, Woga's detention had 'caused some annoyance to us, and mischief to his countrymen'. About to depart and fearing they would 'do injury' to subsequent visitors, Flinders released the boy with 'some clothing and presents'. The English saw no more of 'these Arnheems'.

Surprised that the men encountered at Blue Mud Bay had actively 'sought' a quarrel, Flinders (1801–3, II:376–8, 391–5; 1814, II:198, 213, 228–33) also found the people's 'manners' at Caledon Bay to be 'considerably different from those of other New Hollanders'. They were prepared to risk their lives to seize iron tools and would not exchange the stolen axe for their captive compatriot. Flinders attributed their 'unusual conduct', 'thieving propensity', knowledge of iron, and familiarity with firearms to 'previous visitors' whose traces he saw all along the western side of the Gulf of Carpentaria. A subsequent meeting proved them to be 'Malays of Macassar' fishing for trepang. Flinders deduced from the 'audacity' of the Indigenous people that they had received 'mild and humane' treatment from the Macassans and gained 'no respectful opinion' of them. He hoped that foreign arrivals would henceforth meet a better balance between brazen robbery and avoidance.<sup>27</sup>

### **Naturalizing an island: Baudin**

In the meantime, the only protracted French encounters with Indigenous people during Baudin's sojourn in Australian waters occurred in early 1802 during coastal surveys in Van Diemen's Land.<sup>28</sup> Baudin was bound by orders and inclination to avoid using force against 'savage peoples' except at the 'last extremity' of self-defence. Like Bruni d'Entrecasteaux, he inherited the 'special instructions' composed by the king for La Pérouse in 1785. They enjoined that *les naturels* ('the natives') be treated with 'benevolence', 'honest means', 'consideration', and 'humanity' while 'every precaution' consistent with prudence should be taken.

Baudin's own orders urged him pragmatically to resist showing 'too ardent a philanthropy' towards 'uncivilized peoples' given their 'deplorable' record of murdering voyagers.<sup>29</sup>

Having read earlier voyage narratives, Baudin (1801–2:205, 207) was favourably disposed towards the inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land. He 'absolutely' forbade 'any hostility' against them unless European 'safety' was at risk, since they seemed 'not to be wicked unless provoked'. But he also ordered constant 'vigilance'. His journal dispassionately describes a succession of wary, tense, but mostly amicable French meetings with small groups at Bruny Island (Nuenonne band) and Maria Island (Tyreddeme band) between mid-January and late February (Map 3.3).<sup>30</sup> Baudin (1801–2:205–10) was personally involved in five encounters, the first at Bruny Island when several men approached his party 'without the least distrust' and were embraced and received 'a few trifles'. The next day, given how 'the natives had behaved', he sent only two armed marines to guard a fishing party – his decision is an Indigenous countersign. The fishermen intermingled with local men, women, and children, 'as if without fear'. They were 'loaded with presents' and the artist Petit drew several portraits. But this gratifying scene culminated in an 'unexpected accident' when a single spear deeply wounded a midshipman (Milius 1987:30–1).

A fortnight later, Baudin and Petit spent several hours with three men who initially ordered the French party to leave but joined them when both sides put down their weapons. Baudin (1801–2:209, 226–9) had noted their 'very great fear' of firearms and attributed it to an earlier 'sorry experience'.<sup>31</sup> The men closely examined their visitors' possessions, clothes, and bodies and exchanged spears for uniform buttons. Yet again, a seemingly friendly meeting ended violently. One man snatched a portrait Petit had drawn but Petit grabbed it back. Another threatened him with a log and they hurled stones at the French, wounding Baudin 'slightly'. His assailant fled when he aimed his firearm.<sup>32</sup> Two days later, Baudin (1801–2:230–1) went ashore with another fishing party which interacted cheerfully with a large group, including children who played happily with the sailors. He was astonished to see the earlier stonethrowers, neither nervous nor abashed, and concluded 'either that their character is not wicked or that they judge us incapable of doing them harm'. His two final meetings (1801–2:246–9, 256–7) occurred in mutual confidence at Maria Island with a group of about 20 men, women, and children.

Baudin's journal (1801–2:208–9, 229, 247, 253) is evenhanded and pragmatic in tenor, even when reporting the contretemps. He attributed





(1801–2:206, 227, 231) are largely favourable, if indirectly racialized by aversion to Africans and blackness. The persons seen at Bruny Island were ‘much less dark than the Negroes of Africa’ with ‘nothing unpleasant’ about their looks. Their nose was ‘a little flat’, mouth ‘large’, ‘body proportions’ good, except for ‘weak and spindly legs’, faces with ‘character’, while the children looked ‘very likeable’. He typified them ethnographically (1801–2:253–60): character, ‘gentle and peaceable’; hair, ‘frizzy’ but much less ‘thick’ than African; nose, ‘flat’ but ‘in no way’ like that of the Negroes with some ‘long and well-proportioned’. The men of Maria Island were ‘much stronger’, ‘more robust’, ‘taller and better built’ – perhaps due to better ‘subsistence’ – but the women were ‘no more attractive’.

Months later, at Port Jackson, Baudin (1802) reported to the Minister for the Navy on his voyage leg from Timor. A lengthy disquisition on Van Diemen’s Land includes nine pages ‘On the natives’, following the order to observe in detail the populations of countries visited.<sup>33</sup> In sharp contrast to the journal’s existential restraint, Baudin in hindsight indignantly denounced Bruni d’Entrecasteaux’s naturalist La Billardière (1800, II:27–72) for setting an unreliable precedent by representing the inhabitants of Van Diemen’s Land as ‘good’ and ‘peaceful’. Written for a demanding, perhaps carping official audience, the report exaggerates the violence encountered – the journal’s single spear becomes ‘several’ while his own injury is inflicted ‘quite forcefully’ by one of a ‘hail’ of stones. The two assaults are now emblematic of the ingratitude and ‘fickleness’ of ‘primitive men of nature’, at the ‘furthest possible degree of civilization’, who were ‘heaped’ with gifts and given ‘no provocation’ to attack. Bemused by their inexplicable mood shifts between amity and hostility and with no clear ‘idea of their character’, Baudin here ascribed the stonethrowers’ brazen reappearance to ‘faulty memory’ – defective minds rather than his earlier implication of moral innocence or strategic choice.

This section of the report seesaws between empirical description and emotional outburst, the oscillation itself a countersign of unfathomable Indigenous agency. So too is Baudin’s candour about the insecurity of sailors on little-known shores, dependent for revictualling on ‘good understanding’ with local people. ‘Experience’ had taught him that ‘superior force’ was not the only guarantee against ‘the traps of natural man’ and that ‘prudence’ could avert endless alarms about the safety of shore parties. While the subsequent conduct of people met at Bruny Island caused ‘only slight annoyance’, their minor aggressions infuse the text with uncertainty and motivated the cautionary moral that later

voyagers ‘must not drop their guard’ because ‘too much confidence’ could be as dangerous as ‘too much severity’. Frustration with their volatility paralleled a retrospective shift in the tone of Baudin’s physical description, now ambivalent while still rejecting African analogies. They were ‘below average’ height and ‘quite poorly built’. Their nose was ‘slightly squashed’ but less so than ‘that of the Africans’. Their ‘look, without being wild’, was ‘in no way pleasant, although lively and animated’. In contrast, the men at Maria Island received the French armed but ‘amicably’, with their wives and children present, proving they had ‘no hostile project’. Their treatment of a young carpenter confirmed Baudin’s good impression. Grabbed when his companions fled, he was released unharmed with his axe after being stripped and his body carefully examined, presumably to determine his sex.<sup>34</sup> The ‘firm and assured air’ of these men and their ‘evident’ lack of ‘evil intent’ impinged on Baudin’s moral evaluation – they were ‘more courageous’ than those seen at Bruny Island.

Baudin’s death and subsequent discredit meant that his accounts of the expedition long remained unpublished – his journal (1974) has only appeared in English translation. Production of the official voyage narrative was assigned to Péron (1807) who died in 1810 with the second volume unfinished. It was completed by Freycinet (Péron and Freycinet 1816), initially *enseigne* (‘sub-lieutenant’) and promoted to lieutenant during the voyage. Both men loathed Baudin and their disparagement or elision of him retained general credence until his mid-20th-century scholarly rehabilitation.<sup>35</sup>

Péron was Cuvier’s student and protégé but of demotic origin, his father a provincial saddler who had died early (Girard 1857:15). He received diverse instructions, including two documents drafted for La Pérouse by the Académie des Sciences and the Société de Médecine (La Pérouse 1797, I:165–8, 180–5, 253). With respect to man, both texts straddle the contemporary divide in natural history between traditional environmentalist or emergent innatist explanations for perceived collective human difference. On the one hand, they evince Buffonian principles and endorse his *Histoire naturelle* as the best ‘common method’ for zoological and anatomical description. On the other, they advocate a broad programme of physical anthropology grounded in comparative anatomy with particular attention to the characteristic ‘form of the head or the skull’ in different ‘nations’.

Having adopted Baudin’s proposal (n.d.) for a new voyage to the *mers du Sud*, the government charged the Institut national to plan the voyage and issue instructions for the savants. The Institut in turn requested

the new Société des Observateurs de l'Homme to prepare 'particular instructions' for research on man. With its brief 'the science of man, in his triple physical, moral and intellectual relationships', the Société saw Baudin's voyage as a priceless opportunity to 'advance [*perfectionner*] anthropology' and duly provided two sets of instructions.<sup>36</sup> One, by Cuvier (1857), focusses on man as a physical being. The other, by Gérando (1883), tackles the study of man in primarily moral terms. Both saw the physical and the moral as entangled but from very different positions. Gérando's text is renowned as a farsighted prospectus for a humanist, fieldwork-based anthropology demanding protracted observation, systematic comparison, rigorous inductive reasoning, and vernacular expertise. But it was hardly practical advice for naval naturalists trying to study exotic people, amongst other duties, in taxing encounters during fleeting visits ashore. Gérando (1883:155, 176–7, 181) combined Buffonian and stadial theories of human differences in universalist but unthinkingly Eurocentric terms – 'varieties' were products of 'climate', 'organization', and 'physical habits'; 'human society' ranged along a civilizational 'ladder'; 'our brothers' the savages inhabited the 'first epoques of our own history'; scientific voyagers to the 'extremities of the earth' also travelled back in time with the goal of leading 'these abandoned peoples' to the 'advantages of civilization'.

Cuvier's much shorter 'Instructive note' (1857) had greater practical import. It signalled his developing physicalist conception of a race and much inspired Péron (Girard 1857:21). Convinced that racial differences were structural rather than superficial or artificially induced, Cuvier invoked Camper to assert that 'the proportion of the skull to the face, the projection of the snout, the size of the cheekbones, the shape of the eye-socket' differed sharply between races and evidently determined their 'moral and intellectual faculties'. Following Blumenbach, he identified three 'great races' in the Old World – 'caucasic' ('white'), 'mongolic' ('yellow'), and 'ethiopic' ('negro') – and allowed the possibility of three others: in the polar regions ('brown'), in the Americas ('red'), and in the South Sea Islands and New Holland (varying 'from yellow to black'). He sketched a practical programme for the voyage anthropologist whose main duty was to fill the gaps in knowledge about humanity, especially the *Papous* of New Guinea ('long regarded as Negroes') and the inhabitants of most of New Holland, the South Sea Islands, and the Strait of Magellan. 'Anatomical pieces', principally of the 'bony head', were 'a first base' for such an enquiry. They must be systematically assembled in conjunction with 'numerous true portraits', made on the spot with 'geometric precision', and 'thoughtful, careful observations' – unlike the

unreliable descriptions and ethnocentric drawings of previous voyagers. Cuvier thereupon outlined strict standards for empirical racial portraiture and collecting that a generation of French voyage artists and naturalists in Oceania would try to follow.

While the tensions between Baudin's journal and later official report are useful pointers to his discomfiting experience of local agency, the generic diversity in Péron's writings is even more revealing, as are the differences between Baudin's and Péron's texts.<sup>37</sup> Péron (1913:10–11, 14–15, note 1, 16) embarked with the Buffonian agenda of comparing diverse people's 'physical and moral relationships with the climate they inhabited', qualified by the Cuvierien inkling that the (alleged) moral and physical 'insensibility' of savages depended largely on their 'physical organization'. At this point, Péron idealized the 'robust majesty of natural man' in contrast to 'degenerate, degraded social man' and hypothesized that physical and moral 'perfection' were inversely related. He recommended that 'young medical students', charged to study man as *Anthropologistes*, should be appointed to Baudin's imminent expedition. Péron's alignment of anthropology with medical science sided him with Cuvier rather than Gérando. His memoir (1913) expounding these ideas was well received by the Institut but, at Cuvier's behest, his belated appointment was as 'cadet zoologist' responsible for comparative anatomy, rather than anthropologist.<sup>38</sup>

Burdened with multiple duties in the itinerant uncertainty and severe privations of a voyage of exploration – 'the lack of time and favourable circumstances, the prejudices of the natives, their suspicion, fears, threats, even the dangers', as Péron (1802:3–4) himself put it – he had little opportunity or 'aptitude' to implement Gérando's ambitious programme of vernacular fieldwork, even were he inclined to do so. On Baudin's orders, he tried to meet Gérando's demands in a report on 'Maria Island: anthropological observations' (1802).<sup>39</sup> In it, he committed virtually all the 'faults' Gérando (1883:156–9) identified in earlier 'observations on savage man'. Some are inherent in the mode of seaborne ethnography – fragmentary observations; linguistic ignorance; and unfamiliarity with local traditions, history, or ideas. Others are peculiar to Péron – a priori reasoning; thoughtless ethnocentrism; impressionistic terminology; hyperbole; too hasty generalization; and over-reliance on first impressions received during the 'extraordinary', emotive circumstances of initial encounters.<sup>40</sup> This text was evidently written in the immediate aftermath of Péron's visit ashore at Maria Island on 22 February 1802, with Petit and three sailors. It has few parallels with either Baudin's journal or his retrospective report.<sup>41</sup> Baudin's

(1802) empirical strictures against the ‘man of nature’ he encountered at Bruny Island voiced a practical mariner’s griefs at the human ‘fickleness’ which complicated his job and endangered his crews. Péron’s (1802:1–2) *Man of nature*, ‘so close to the zero point of civilization’, was an a priori construct in a philosophical polemic who failed to meet the test of Péron’s experience.<sup>42</sup> Baudin’s prevailing emotion is irritation. Péron’s ‘Observations’ are punctuated with trepidation and abhorrence. The common denominator is inscrutable Indigenous behaviour.

Péron’s (1802:7–11) text is particularized as ‘A meeting with the natives’ at Maria Island. The French party came across 14 men gathered around a large fire who welcomed them with ‘surprise, admiration and pleasure’. Both groups put down their weapons and engaged in mutual inspection – mainly visual by the French but intimately physical by the local men. Péron persuaded a frail, beardless young seaman to allow them to examine his genitals and his sudden erection moved them to ‘great’ surprise and hilarity. This reaction in turn inspired Péron to propose two bizarre hypotheses – that, ‘like most animals’, ‘natural man’ only experienced the ‘need for love’ periodically; and that ‘continuity of desires’ might be ‘one of the benefits of civilization’. He especially admired (1802:12, 14) a ‘very pretty’, well-built young man, his hair curled and reddened with ochre (Figure 3.5). His ‘regular’ features made him ‘more handsome than all the rest’ though he shared his ‘nation’s general defect’ of ‘spindly, weak extremities’. Overall, Péron deemed their faces ‘deeply expressive’, with strong but fleeting passions imprinted on ‘mobile’ features in which, however, he discerned ‘something sinister and fierce’, even in that ‘agreeable-looking’ young man. Juxtaposing prejudice and confronting experience, Péron here alluded to the ancient art of physiognomy, recently revitalized as a ‘science’ by Lavater (1781–1803; see Chapter 6), to proffer the confident deduction that this ‘fierce’ look constituted their ‘basic character’. Yet later, as tension escalated, Péron (1802:24) nervously despaired of his capacity to distinguish their ‘character’ given the rapid play of feelings which made their physiognomy ‘excessively difficult’ to read. This internal textual inconsistency is an Indigenous countersign.

Péron’s (1802:12–15, 19–28) account of the remainder of the Maria Island meeting shifts in tone from romantic approval, to disenchantment, to disquiet, to fearfulness. Each is a reflex of the perceived demeanour of his Indigenous interlocutors on whom, with no self-awareness or reflexivity, he repeatedly projected his own labile emotions. After the initial phase, the men’s ‘confidence’ grew as the French distributed gifts and Péron allowed one to blacken his face with charcoal. Petit drew



Figure 3.5 N.M. Petit (1802), 'Terre de Diémen – Bara-Orou'. Pencil and charcoal. Muséum d'Histoire naturelle, Le Havre, 20019–1

the handsome young man's portrait (Figure 3.5) while Péron collected words. At this point, he exulted that the encounter was 'truly moving' and inclusive – 'jumbled all together amid the ashes of their fire, we all seemed equally happy with one another'. Yet local agency quickly changed his mind and convinced him that their defining emotion was a deep 'anxiety, suspicion, and wickedness that they vainly sought to hide'. His 'direct proof' was that the men became 'greatly agitated' at the sight of a passing ship's boat. Too 'uneasy and distracted' for portraiture or word collection, they also became more 'brazen' and a man ripped a ring from Péron's ear. He now tried to persuade them to test their strength on a dynamometer – an instrument developed for Buffon by Edme Regnier (1798) to compare the relative physical strength of men of

different age or estate and various draught animals but adapted by Péron to the allegedly objective measurement of racial difference.<sup>43</sup> Only four had done so when an old man stopped the experiment. Inferring that he suspected 'some secret and treacherous' intent, Péron vowed that henceforth he would seek to 'dispel their suspicions' of the instrument rather than admit its true purpose. This dubious stratagem was also dictated by local agency. When relations deteriorated further as Péron tried to obtain local weapons by exchange, he ordered a 'slow', measured retreat to the boat, covered from behind by a seaman with his 'scarer', a faulty firearm.

Péron's official narrative of Baudin's voyage is an intellectual history of the age and the ongoing shift from nostalgic primitivism to harsher, often racist progressivism. It is also an intimate story of one man's experience of this transition (1807:218–302), fired in the crucible of encounters in Van Diemen's Land. His story is framed by emblematic meetings and thick with Indigenous countersigns. In the event, Péron's (1807:231, 236) residual primitivism evaporated in the face of the 'cowardly and ferocious treachery' – the incomprehensible agency – of man in the 'state of nature'.

Following his initial anchorage off Bruny Island, Baudin (1801–2:204–5) despatched his longboat under Henri de Freycinet, Louis's older brother, to 'reconnoitre' the Huon River and Port Cygnet on the mainland. Péron and the artist Charles Alexandre Lesueur went to do natural history. Péron (1807:221–3, 230–1) launched the Van Diemen's Land section of his narrative with a 'rigorously exact' account of the highlight of this excursion – a quintessential first encounter with natural man. It began at Port Cygnet when a young man 'threw himself' from a rocky outcrop amid the French party. With features not at all 'severe' or 'wild' and 'lively', 'intelligent' eyes, his manner expressed 'goodwill and surprise' though he did not respond when embraced. His careful scrutiny of the boat thrilled Péron as a 'most striking' example of 'attentiveness and reflection' in 'savage peoples'. An old man and two women confirmed the good impression. The younger woman earned Péron's patronizing approval for her 'reasonably well shaped' breasts, 'expressive', 'intelligent' eyes, and 'maternal affection' for her baby. However, the 'indifference' of this 'good and interesting family' to the gifts pressed on them 'surprised' (and irritated?) Henri de Freycinet and Péron.<sup>44</sup> While the sailors performed their duties, Péron (1807:223–8) dabbled in ethnography, observing the 'savages' and compiling a word list. He mocked the younger woman's fright when a seaman removed his gloves as evidence of 'the state of peoples placed so far from our social state'. Later, the 'family' shared a meal of shellfish with the French who reciprocated with an

impromptu concert, received with ‘uncertainty’ and then ‘enthusiasm’. Péron concluded the episode with an effusive account of a young girl named as Ourê-Ourê – gentle, ‘affectionate’, ‘lively’, and ‘passionate’, she was both an ‘innocent student of nature’ and a flirt who blackened her face with charcoal to attract Freycinet. Her coquetry and taste for decoration (‘innate to woman’s heart’) led Péron, with typical excess, to infer a universal female ‘character’ far freer than man’s from the triple ‘influence’ of climate, social improvement, and ‘physical needs’.

This ‘affecting’ behaviour of ‘our good Diemenlanders’ left Péron (1807:230–1, 237) ‘strongly moved’ by seeming confirmation of the celebrated ‘happiness and simplicity of the state of nature’. Yet within a few pages, the narrative tone swings from sentimental approval to scathing denunciation of the ‘violent aggression’ of ‘these fierce men’. This dramatic mood shift has inspired much historical debate. The anthropologist Armand de Quatrefages (1884:343) read ‘exaggeration in both judgments’. Modern scholars privileged analysis of European discourses. Staum (1996:167–8) highlighted Péron’s vacillation ‘between the stereotypes of the noble and ignoble savage’. Miranda Hughes (1988:73–5) identified a transition from Rousseauesque ‘preconceptions’ to equally a priori ‘misconceptions’ about savages. Jean-Luc Chappey (n.d.) saw Péron’s ambivalent representations of ‘savage peoples’ as emblematic of the political and intellectual ambiguities of the Empire. Rhys Jones (1988:45; 1992:753–4) stressed Péron’s narrative contrivance of ‘a personal journey’ from ‘enthusiasm’ to ‘disillusionment’ to revelation of the ‘futility’ of philosophical speculations. The primacy of discourse is sometimes qualified by hints of the textual impact of experience. Hughes called for (but did not provide) ‘a closer examination of the dynamics of the encounter’ and how ‘interpretations were affected by actual confrontation’ with Indigenous people. Jones also noted the imprint of violent incidents which provoked such a ‘sense of anger and of betrayal’ that ‘euphoric descriptions’ turned to ‘disgust’. Howard Morphy (2002:151–2) attributed the deterioration in relations to worsening ‘French attitudes’ but acknowledged a temporal sequence from the spear-throwing episode to ‘increasingly negative’ French descriptions.

However, serious consideration of local agency is rare in this literature. Patty O’Brien’s (1999:21) outrage at the ‘rapacity of the French anthropological gaze’ on Indigenous women blinded her to traces of their agency which punctuate Péron’s narrative and helped fuel his racial misogyny. In contrast, Shino Konishi (2007:5, 14, 15) challenged the common notion – which she had shared – that the Tasmanians had no part ‘in shaping these derogatory European attitudes’. Reimagining



Péron's encounters as his 'unrequited romance' with 'noble savages', blighted by their 'disdain' and 'cool indifference to him', she ended with a manifesto on the need to consider the 'power' or 'agency' of Indigenous people in early encounters.

My history stresses textual refractions of actions and experience. The existential trigger for Péron's (1807:235–8) rhetorical about-face was news of the spear- and stone-throwing episodes, conflated over two days into one literary motif. He drew two morals, each borrowed from a shipmate's journal. Lieutenant Jacques de Saint-Cricq (1983:142) saw the first 'accident' as a 'profitable lesson' on the need to take precautions during such encounters. For the botanist Jean-Baptiste-Louis-Claude-Théodore Leschenault de la Tour (1983:132–3), the same incident recalled the 'many examples of treachery and cruelty' reported in voyage narratives and led to the grim conclusion that 'men of nature' whose 'character' was 'not yet softened' by civilization were 'wicked' and could not be mistrusted too much. This bleak opinion was also a response to the spearing but Péron relocated it as a general commentary on the telescoped twin episodes – which neither man witnessed.

Henceforth, there is a bitter edge to Péron's general representations of the inhabitants, sometimes qualified individually. When he and two colleagues met a large group of women at Bruny Island (1807:250–6), one woman controlled the meeting from the outset, ordering the Frenchmen to sit and put down their firearms (Figure 3.6). She questioned them vociferously and seemed 'to criticize and laugh at' them. Péron's general description of the women is nasty, misogynist, and prurient. They were 'perfectly nude' with skin 'black and disgusting with seal grease', hair 'short, frizzy, black and dirty', bodies 'generally thin and shrivelled', and breasts 'long and pendulous' – 'in a word', he concluded, 'every detail of their physical organization was repellent' apart from two teenage girls of 'reasonably pleasing' shape, with 'firm' breasts but over-large nipples (cf. Hamelin 1800–3, II:90). Of the older women, only she who had choreographed the meeting escaped disparagement. Assured and good humoured, she sang and danced in response to a French song and blackened the faces of Péron and another officer. Thus, he reflected with a rare flash of relativism, was the whiteness esteemed by Europeans seen here as a 'real defect, a sort of deformity'. He admitted that the Frenchmen were 'forced' to conform to the women's wishes. Subsequently, Péron again met the impressive woman, now carrying a baby, and gathered she was called Arră-Măidă. Petit drew her portrait (Figure 3.6), approved by Péron as 'a perfect likeness' which captured her 'assurance and pride'.

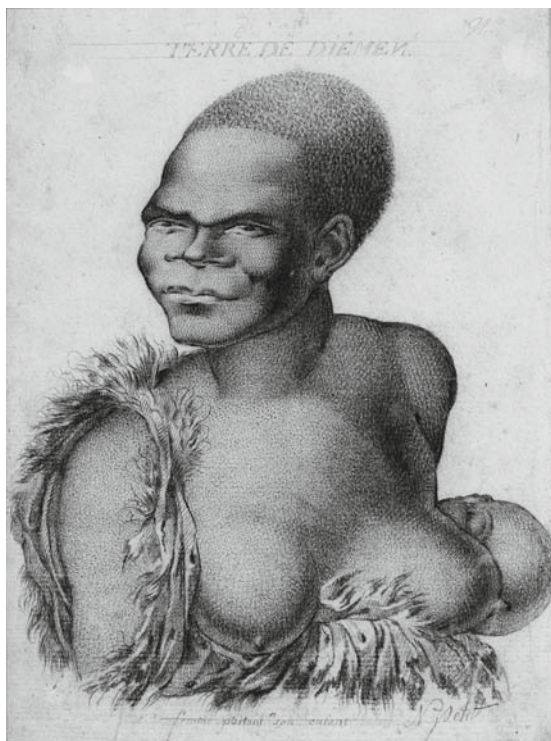


Figure 3.6 N.M. Petit (1802), 'Terre de Diémen – femme portant son enfant'. Pencil and charcoal. Muséum d'Histoire naturelle, Le Havre, 20004–2

Recounting the 'perilous meeting' at Maria Island in the published narrative, Péron (1807:278–87) largely rehearsed his first-hand 'Observations' but with more strident grievances, harsher language, and dour conclusions. Despite gifts 'heaped' on the 'savages' encountered and French compliance with 'their every whim', he complained, 'all their *actions* revealed a treachery and ferocity' which 'revolted' him and his comrades.<sup>45</sup> Their 'unfair', 'bad behaviour' goaded Péron to a diatribe on the 'difficulties faced by travellers in communicating with savage peoples, and the impossibility of overcoming the natural ferocity of their character and their prejudices against us'. Ironically, the most threatening actions were committed by the 'lively' young man – now named as Bara-Orou – described earlier by Péron as the 'handsomest man in the band' and 'carefully painted' by Petit (Figure 3.5). Yet Baudin (1801–2:249, 260), as noted, had found no fault with people met at

Maria Island and praised their treatment of the young carpenter whom they released after undressing and examining him. Baudin's account of that incident is corroborated in other contemporary texts, including Péron's (1802:50) Maria Island report which praises the men's 'reserve and moderation' when they could easily have abused their power.<sup>46</sup> But Péron's narrative (1807:278) contorts 'this accident' into a near fatal attack on the carpenters who 'had all but fallen under the natives' blows'.

If Péron's rhetorical trajectory from approbation to disgust was contrived for polemical effect, it nonetheless registered the patent materiality of his unsettling experience of ambiguous, versatile Indigenous demeanour. Yearning to forge emotional bonds with the human denizens of an alien land, anticipating admiration, gratitude, or awe from idealized 'natural man', Péron (1807:245, 257, 279, 282) ran headlong into unpredictable local agency. Their importunate, intrusive physical curiosity (literally) outstripped parallel French scientific scrutiny. They were indifferent to most objects bestowed by the French, bottles and buttons apart,<sup>47</sup> and to their cherished bodily intimacy of 'kisses and affectionate caresses', 'those two delightful actions which seem so natural to us'. Their 'mercurial character' and abrupt switches from cordiality, to aloofness, to occasional violence alarmed and angered the Europeans. They interacted with the strangers on their own terms and expressed the desire for them to leave both verbally and in actions such as stone-throwing or strategic firing of the bush.

### Science and the savage encounter: Péron

The penultimate chapter of Péron's first volume (1807:446–84) suspends chronological narrative to address a scientific theme. It first summarizes his main anthropological findings (1807:448) – that Van Diemen's Land was inhabited by 'a race of men entirely different' from that peopling New Holland and distinguished from Europeans by 'their peculiar physical structure'. This race had 'all the characters of non-social man', was 'the *child of nature* par excellence',<sup>48</sup> but resembled not at all the alluring images of natural man 'set in opposition to our social state' by dogmatic theorists. The next paragraph reveals the emotional roots of this confident verdict in his experience of 'difficult and perilous' encounters with 'such fierce' men, embroidered as the disingenuous claim that most meetings 'ended with hostile aggression on their part'.

Péron (1807:446, 471) structured this chapter as objective refutation of the 'vain sophisms' of unnamed 'celebrated' authors who, disillusioned with civilization, vaunted the superior 'physical power and

vigour' of 'savage man' against the 'physical degeneration' resulting from 'progress in civilization' – the position he had endorsed before the voyage. Péron (1807:446–58, 476–84) grounded this repudiation empirically in the 'results' of his dynamometric experiments conducted during the voyage and calibrated into 'a priceless gradation of the social state' which doubles as a global racial classification. He admitted the 'delicate' nature of the tests conducted in Van Diemen's Land and his 'few, even incomplete' data. Yet, 'without fear of error', he generalized trials made by 12 suspicious men, unfamiliar with the process, as proof of the 'truly extraordinary lack of strength' of an entire 'race', consigned to the 'last degree' as the 'most feeble' people tested and the 'most savage' of all. He ranked the equally 'savage hordes' of New Holland on the next level because they manifested 'the first elements of social organization', but only slightly higher because they were 'scarcely more civilized' and the 17 men tested were only little stronger. He assigned the next three 'degrees' in principle to the New Guineans, the New Zealanders, and the Pacific Islanders whom he had not seen or tested. He allotted the sixth 'rung' to the 'inhabitants' of Timor and neighbouring islands (56 men tested) who, despite a 'fairly advanced state of civilization', were 'much weaker' and still 'incomparably less civilized' than the English (14 men tested at Port Jackson) and the French (17 crew members tested). They therefore ranked much lower.

Experience and experiment thus combined to dispel Péron's early theoretical enthusiasm for natural man and make him a passionate advocate for the physical, as well as the moral superiority of 'civilized' over 'savage man'. He argued (1807:458–71) that the relative 'weakness' of the 'Malays' of Timor was explicable in standard physiological terms as the product of a hot, humid climate and an 'indolent', 'inactive' lifestyle. But this simple equation did not explain the absolute 'weakness' of the 'savages' of Van Diemen's Land and New Holland. Instead, he hypothesized a close causal link between 'social organization' or its purported 'absence' and 'physical constitution' – that is, between civilization and race. By this reasoning, their alleged physical 'weakness' and common *vice de conformation* (the 'structural flaw' of excessively thin bodily extremities) resulted from the deficient diet and lifestyle inherent in the 'savage state' itself. An 'improvement in the social state', Péron maintained, would promote 'abundance' and transform them physically, eradicating the flaw. This optimistic developmentalism was perhaps triggered by his experience at Port Jackson (1807:375–6) where the apparent success of penal colonization in transforming 'brigands' into property-owning citizens and 'prostitutes'

into hard-working, remarkably fertile ‘mothers of families’ convinced him of the ‘happy influence of social institutions’. Péron’s social logic rehearses Buffon’s late suggestion that the process of becoming ‘policed’ or civilized could stimulate organic improvement in man but is often seen as Lamarckian.<sup>49</sup> At this stage Péron (1807:471) was noncommittal on the fraught question of whether human variation was somatically or externally determined, concluding that the relative physical strength of the various ‘peoples’ of the globe was linked equally to ‘their physical constitution, their social organization’, and to ‘climate, its temperature, its diverse productions’.

More generally, the permutations in Péron’s thinking instantiate the broad contemporary intellectual movement from Enlightenment griefs about the ills engendered by civilization to post-revolutionary optimism about the malleability of social and human body alike. Both positions imaginatively appropriated ‘the savage’, ‘now to translate the aspirations of civilization, now to manifest its anxieties’ (Jamin 1983:53, 68). At this point in Péron’s text (1807:448, 450, 465–6), his ideological panegyric for civilization required a social explanation and he merely toyed with the idea that the ‘singular conformation’ and ‘decided’ structural flaw he discerned in the inhabitants of Van Diemen’s Land and New Holland might be inherent, a marker of the idiosyncratic ‘physical organization’ of people different in so many respects from ‘those already known’.

That constraint had vanished when Péron (Péron and Freycinet 1816:161, 163–4) again interrupted his narrative flow to insert a thematic chapter on relationships between aspects of antipodean zoology and the ‘physical history’ of the human species. He here made a biological argument for the ‘absolute difference’ between the ‘races’ peopling Van Diemen’s Land and New Holland, insisting that, thin limbs apart, they had ‘almost nothing in common’ in their manners, customs, ‘crude’ arts, artefacts, language, or in ‘their total physical constitution’. A footnote (Péron and Freycinet 1816:164, note a) promises a subsequent work proving that the ‘peoples’ of Van Diemen’s Land ‘differ *essentially* from all other known peoples’.<sup>50</sup> These words arguably imply separate autochthonous origin, a radical but by no means unthinkable concept given recent publication of polygenist treatises by the English surgeon–anatomist White (1799) and the French physician–naturalist Virey (1800).<sup>51</sup> Péron (Péron and Freycinet 1816:164, 182, 214–15) now problematized climatic explanations for human variation. The ‘singular anomalies’ of the inhabitants of Van Diemen’s Land – their ‘darker colour’ and ‘short, woolly, frizzy hair, in a country much colder than New Holland’ – proved ‘the imperfection of our [theoretical] systems on

the communications of peoples, their transmigrations, and the influence of climate on man'. He afterwards pronounced that '*social man*' is undoubtedly 'more independent of the climate and the seasons' than '*savage man*' whose 'physical constitution', manners, habits, arts, and means of subsistence were subject to the 'absolute empire' of climate.<sup>52</sup> By implication, then, they were less susceptible of improvement.

## Words for people

The descriptive or referential language for Indigenous people used in Péron's published narrative differs remarkably from that of every other text produced by Flinders's and Baudin's voyages. Contemporary accounts, including Péron's 'Observations', mostly apply a neutral or slightly demeaning lexicon. The aggregate noun people and the general plurals inhabitants, men, and persons are scattered throughout but by far the most common plurals are natives and its French cognate *naturels*. In ancient English usage, native meant 'a person born in bondage'. By the 17th century, native and *naturel* had acquired their modern senses of 'A person born in a specified place, region, or country' or an 'original inhabitant of a country' and their often disparaging plural application to Indigenous people. In both languages, the word referred in 'joking' or 'mildly depreciative' fashion to local or provincial populations within 'civilized nations'.<sup>53</sup> Flinders consistently used natives in his *Investigator* journal but his published narrative, alone amongst these texts, often supplements generic plurals with Indians and occasionally with 'Australians',<sup>54</sup> Brosse's term (1756, I, 19; II:411) for the inhabitants of *Australasie*.

The word savage is rare in the contemporary texts. I found only one, adjectival instance in Baudin's journal (1801–2:254) though his colleagues sometimes made the noun *sauvage* a synonym for *naturel*.<sup>55</sup> Péron's use of the term in his 'Observations', written for Baudin, is pertinent in view of his later published investment in a splenetic vocabulary of savagery in action. The report begins with an abstract discussion of the study of *l'Homme de la nature* or *l'homme sauvage* and is punctuated by further abstract passages, including one on the emotional capacities of *l'homme sauvage de la nature*, with *sauvage* added above the line via a caret. The descriptive sections of this text refer consistently to *naturels* with a neutral smattering of *gens* ('people'), *hommes*, *habitans*, *personnes*, and *individus* ('individuals'). In the final section, *sauvages*, underlined or italicized, features in a long passage quoting the spoken words of a seaman – surely a parody tailored for Baudin, perhaps because his aversion to the term *sauvage* was known. The word savage figures rarely in equivalent

English texts.<sup>56</sup> However, two examples in the more demotic context of Smith's journal ([2002]:32, 57) are countersigns imbued with deep feeling in response to Indigenous demeanour. Local people are usually 'Natives' but, finding the 'Features' of the men of King George Sound 'Quite awful', he expostulated: 'Every part Exhibits the Attitudes & Manners of A compleat Savage.' The act of spearing Whitewood at Blue Mud Bay provoked an instantaneous lexical shift from 'one of the Natives' to 'the Savage': 'Approaching them in order to be Friendly with them, one of the Natives presented A spear to Mr Whitewood. On holding out his Hand to receive the present, the Savage thrust it into his breast.'

Collective nouns for human groupings – an obvious symptom of essentialism – are sparse in the contemporary texts. They are almost absent in first-hand descriptions of encounters since travellers evidently still met persons, not tribes or nations or races. They are only slightly more common in ethnographic passages, though collective terminology is normative in this mode. However, those sparse usages can hint at unspoken assumptions. Writing ethnographically, Baudin (1801–2:254; 1802) referred to *ces peuples ... Sauvages et Errants* ('these Savage, Wandering peoples') and to *une peuplade errante* ('a wandering small group'). The term *peuplade* originally denoted colonizers 'sent from our country to people some place' but by the 19th century had acquired the accessory meaning of 'little groups of men, in non-civilized countries'.<sup>57</sup> Juxtaposed with *errante*, the word connotes numerical deficiency and nomadism, both purported markers of the earliest human state.<sup>58</sup> Most early visitors to Van Diemen's Land probably took for granted the primordially of Indigenous people encountered but the immediate lexical expression of this tacit opinion is as patchy as the presence of collective nouns.

In ethnographic 'remarks' on Caledon Bay in his *Investigator* journal, Flinders (1801–3, II:376) used the collective nouns race and tribe: 'the natives' were 'doubtless of the same race as those of Port Jackson and King George Sound' but their 'personal appearance' was 'somewhat behind some tribes' he had seen, though the difference was 'not considerable'. He elaborated the passage in the narrative (1814, II:212), stressing that he had seen the 'same race of men' at 'opposite extremities of Terra Australis'. These rare examples and his discussion of the 'multiplicity of tongues' spoken across the continent show that, for Flinders (1814, II:214), race was synonymous with nation and connoted 'common origin', rather than its embryonic biological sense:

although similarity of language in two nations proves their origin to be the same, yet dissimilarity of language is not proof of the contrary position.

The language of Caledon Bay may therefore be totally different to what is spoken on the East and South Coasts, and yet the inhabitants have one common origin.<sup>59</sup>

Flinders's occasional ethnological musings (see above) compare the relative 'superiority' in material culture or degree of (civil) society attained by different groups but the stadial logic in such passages is environmental, not racial. Similarly (1814, II:212), he attributed the physical 'difference' he discerned between the Caledon Bay people and some other 'tribes' to a 'less abundant supply of food'.

In marked contrast to these sporadic nominalist usages, collective nouns litter Péron's narrative – unsurprisingly, since his agenda was abstract and anthropological as well as empirical and historical. They include *peuplade*, *tribu* ('tribe'), and *nation* but most common are *race* and *peuple*, the latter usually plural, particularly in the reiterated phrase *peuples sauvages* ('savage peoples'). In his 'Observations', Péron (1802:12, 43, 44) had interchanged *nation* and *race* as fuzzy synonyms. However, in the narrative (1807:221, 280, 465), *race* supplants *nation* and acquires biological and taxonomic implications in the course of the text, seemingly triggered by Indigenous behaviour. Whereas the romanticized young man met at Port Cygnet had 'no other fault than the slender legs and arms characteristic of his nation', the menacing Bara-Ourou met subsequently at Maria Island had the 'structural flaw common to his whole race'. This essentialist presumption that a widespread physical trait constituted a 'decided', 'general' racial character in the inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land and New Holland is at odds with Flinders's (1814, II:137) empirical relativism on the matter. In 1802, in the Gulf of Carpentaria, he met the two 'tallest Indians' he had ever seen and explained that, 'like most of the Australians, their legs did not bear *the European proportion* to the size of their heads and bodies'. However, their shorter companion was, '*according to our notions*, better proportioned'.<sup>60</sup>

Péron's (1807:144–5) congealing racialism was systematically enunciated in relation to Timor where he spent a total of four months during 1801 and 1803 in the Dutch settlement of Coupang. His narrative identifies 'three absolutely distinct races of men', purportedly there since 'time immemorial', which retained 'all the original characters' of their ancestors, social, moral, and physical. The 'first' – which he did not see – comprised the *indigènes* ('natives') who had been 'pushed back into the interior' to remote places, lacked 'almost every social institution', lived entirely by hunting and gathering, were 'fierce', warlike, reputed cannibals, and combined all the physical attributes of the 'true Negro race'.



The ‘second’ – at once romanticized and patronized – were ‘reddish copper-coloured’ Malays with ‘long hair’, descendants of the archipelago’s ancient conquerors who retained their ancestors’ independence, pride, and daring. Alongside the Malays, though unable to dominate them, were the Chinese who were ‘clever traders’ but ‘cowardly and weak’. Entangled in Péron’s confident racial taxonomy of Timor were old local tales and longstanding European stereotypes about remnant Indigenous Negro populations supposedly banished to the interior of the larger Asian islands (see Chapter 2). Unsurprisingly, most of his reported interlocutors were ‘Malay’.

In striking contrast, a chapter describing the expedition’s return visit to Coupang in 1803, written by Louis de Freycinet (Péron and Freycinet 1816:255–81) after Péron’s death, does not mention race but focusses on local religions and rituals. In re-editing the second edition of the narrative, Freycinet (Péron and Freycinet 1824, IV:3–94) added a long chapter on the *mœurs et usages* (‘lifestyle and customs’) of the people of Timor. It starts with a brusque list of the island’s ‘five classes of inhabitants’ and a brief physical description of ‘the Malay’ but is otherwise wholly ethnographic. His far greater interest in the ethnography of populations encountered than in their physical organization or racial distribution is patent in his history of his own voyage of circumnavigation (see Chapter 5). In this text, Freycinet (1825–39, I:521–2, 589–91) addressed the theme of races in fewer than four of more than 230 pages on Timor, revisited in 1818. However, he specifically rehearsed Péron’s just-so story about ‘woolly-headed Negroes’ purportedly destroyed or dispersed into the interior mountains by ‘smarter or bolder’ invaders. Flinders (1814, II:254) stopped briefly at Coupang in 1803, less than a month before Baudin’s second visit. A matter-of-fact passage in his narrative on the ‘original inhabitants’ of Timor is not unlike Péron’s in content and supposition but lacks his denigratory language or racial armature. They were ‘black’ but their hair was ‘not woolly’ (equals ‘not Negro’) and they inhabited the mountains where they had apparently ‘been driven by the Malays’ who mostly occupied the coast.

If the words Péron applied to Indigenous people in his ‘Observations’ are similar to those used in the other contemporary texts, their tone is more tendentious while his narrative is permeated by exaggerated rhetoric and negative epithets. His unpleasant words for Indigenous women have been mentioned. The word *sauvages* as plural noun and adjective – especially in the phrases *peuples sauvages* and *hordes sauvages* – figures nearly twice as often as *naturels* while these nouns are not always simple synonyms. Rather, like the seaman Smith’s fleeting recourse to ‘Savage’,

Péron's (1807:236, 287) use of *sauvages* is often inflected with particular venom and as such is an Indigenous countersign. For example, syntactically he juxtaposed the phrases 'cowardly and ferocious treachery' and *les sauvages* in the context of the spear-throwing incident, and the phrases *les peuples sauvages* and 'the natural ferocity of their character' in the context of his retreat from Maria Island. Other expressions register not only his priggish character and hardening racial prejudice but are also countersigns of mingled fear and outrage triggered by what I call local agency but Péron (1807:239, 255, 282, 285) experienced as the 'mercurial character' of 'these fierce, rude tribes'. So, the 'multiplicity of fires' seen in 'ancient forests' manifested the 'destructive instinct of their wild inhabitants' rather than a hunting or martial tactic. All the 'behaviour towards us' of the men encountered at Maria Island was 'unjust and treacherous'. When he reached the beach with the group of women he had met at Bruny Island, their 'husbands' repaid French 'generosity' with a 'wild, menacing look' and a 'strained', 'malicious', 'deceitful' attitude which, in Péron's eyes (but not mine), were captured in Barthélemy Roger's ([1807]) engraving of Petit's portrait of one of these men.

### **Climate to race**

Péron's muted challenge to climate theory, inspired by the alleged 'singular anomalies' of the Van Diemen's Landers, has been mentioned. From the late 18th century, as an innatist conception of race took hold across the ideological spectrum of the science of man, Buffon's climatic argument for reversible human variety was widely contested – by the polygenist naturalists White (1799), Virey (1800, 1817b, 1824), and Louis-Antoine Desmoulins (1826); by the ambivalently monogenist anatomist William Lawrence (1819); by the committed monogenist ethnologist Prichard (1813, 1843); and ultimately by Darwin (1871). The work of Walckenaer, a staunch monogenist, embodied this altered discursive landscape. In a late 18th-century 'history of the human species' (1798:7–24), he insisted that men were all alike in 'external form', 'internal organization', and morality and explained their differences in explicitly Buffonian and stadial terms, ignoring races entirely. On the one hand, modifications resulted from the 'accidental' influence of 'climate', 'customs', and nutriment. On the other, their 'principal cause' was the degree of 'progress' achieved by particular 'human societies' across six universal stages, culminating in 'decline'. Yet within two decades, Walckenaer (1815:155–63, 168) had fitted a reified racial hierarchy

into his ongoing stadial emphasis on ‘progress towards civilization’ as the key differentia of ‘peoples’. In a chapter ‘On the different races of Men’, he took for granted humanity’s division into three ‘distinct’ races – ‘white’, ‘yellowish’, and ‘black’ – which differed radically ‘in their physical and moral nature’.<sup>61</sup> Those ‘essential’ differences stemmed not from ‘the climate or the mode of existence’ but from ‘fundamental’ anatomical causes transmitted by generation.

Using race in the same hereditarian sense, the geographer Malte-Brun (1803:540, 548) had already dislodged an empirical keystone of Buffon’s ‘orthodox doctrine’. He reasoned that the ‘black race of the Pacific Ocean’ could not have emigrated from Africa, given the vast distance, but equally could not have resulted from ‘the influence of the climate’, as Buffon claimed, since ‘the air’ in its homelands was consistently cooled by sea breezes. A decade later, Malte-Brun (1813:229, 253) hypothesized that ‘the race of *Oceanian Negroes*’ was seemingly ‘originary’ to the part of the world it inhabited – an insinuation of autochthony that lent credence to the once heterodox idea of original human diversity.<sup>62</sup> So, in the meantime, did Péron’s unverified assertion that the inhabitants of Van Diemen’s Land ‘differ essentially from all other known peoples’.

Malte-Brun (1803:548), writing with Mentelle (1804:363, 473–4, 612, 620), presumed the physical reality of races in sketching the first racial classification of the region they named *Océanique*. Their ‘black race’ of Oceanic Negroes inhabited New Guinea, the island chains to the east and southeast, and Van Diemen’s Land. Many were ‘as black as the Negroes of Africa, with lips as thick, nose as flat, and wool instead of hair’. Their ‘Polynesian race’ occupied modern Micronesia and Polynesia, shared ‘common origin’ with ‘the Malays of Asia’, was ‘more or less tanned’, ‘often whiter than the Spanish’, and had ‘agreeable’ features. They populated New Holland with a probable ‘third distinct race’, ranked it ‘only a single degree above the brute’, and likened it to ‘the apes’. Malte-Brun (1813:244, 252–4, 321) later settled on a dual racial system by differentiating ‘two very distinct stocks’ on the basis of ‘physiognomy’ and ‘language’: ‘the *Malays* or the *yellow Oceanians*, and the *Negroes of Oceanica*’, now including the inhabitants of New Holland.<sup>63</sup> Having characterized the Oceanian Negroes by a standardized set of physical features (skin colour ‘black or blackish-brown’, facial angle ‘very obtuse’,<sup>64</sup> nose ‘flat’, lips ‘thick’, hair ‘frizzy but not woolly’, ‘excessively’ long, thin limbs), he resorted to ‘racial mixing’ to explain away the myriad empirical ‘nuances’ that defied typification. On the grounds of ‘extreme wretchedness’, lack of ‘any reasoned industry’, and

a 'brutish lifestyle', he consigned this entire race to the 'last degree of the scale of the human species'.

Malte-Brun (1813:225–422; Mentelle and Malte-Brun 1804:357–626) deduced the earliest global racial taxonomies to incorporate the 'Oceanians' systematically. In contrast, Péron dabbled in regional racial classification on the inductive basis of his allegedly objective scientific observation and measurement of different races. But his differentiation of 'absolutely distinct races' within Timor and between New Holland and Van Diemen's Land is politically and morally charged. The affective experiential core of a supposedly dispassionate cerebral science is further evident in Péron's (1807:90) broad-brush opposition of racial behaviours. Thus, he counterposed the dogged avoidance or 'even' repulsion of strangers by the inhabitants of southwestern New Holland and the 'anxious sollicitude' with which 'all' Pacific Islanders rushed to greet the first European visitors. Similarly, in a scholarly address after his return to France, Péron (n.d.) invited his audience to compare his 'very exact' portrait of the 'wretched savage tribes' of the southern continent, 'so close to the zero term of civilization', with the 'elegant and graceful forms' of the Mollucans or with the 'graceful scenes' drawn by voyagers of 'those voluptuous Tahitians, those beautiful Pacific islanders'. Péron's voyage narrative alone put him, along with Cuvier, in the theoretical vanguard of biological, anthropometric, and racist tendencies in the science of man. Indeed, some modern historians have seen him as a forerunner of the 'medicalized' physical anthropology dominant in France in the second half of the 19th century.<sup>65</sup>

### **Naturalists, naval men, and Aborigines**

Péron was the influential first in a long line of travelling naturalists whose published observations empirically sustained abysmal evaluations of Aboriginal Australians and Tasmanians by metropolitan savants of all disciplinary and political persuasions. Geographers, naturalists, ethnologists, anatomists, linguists, anthropologists, monogenists, polygenists, and evolutionists concurred in ranking the Australians at the bottom of the scale of human races and, increasingly, in doubting their capacity for improvement or even survival. The harsh opinion of ambivalently monogenist Malte-Brun (1813:346), who lauded Péron as 'this enlightened, tireless and intrepid traveller', has been mentioned. The naturalist Joseph-Philippe-François Deleuze (1811:268) eulogized Péron for having 'informed us about two races of horribly ferocious savages, and shown us the final degree of wretchedness and degradation in

the human species'. Even philanthropic Prichard (1813:221) maligned the inhabitants of New Holland as the 'most miserable and destitute savages' and those of Van Diemen's Land as 'in the most truly savage and unimproved state of all men'. Lawrence (1819:476–7), citing Péron, called them 'hideous savages'. Balbi (1826: Table synoptique), another equivocal monogenist, deplored 'the brutish state of the most degraded race of the human species'. The polygenist naturalist Bory de Saint-Vincent (1825:308–9) invoked Péron and Petit to damn 'the Australasian' as the 'most bestial of Men' with faces resembling 'the Mandrills'. The self-proclaimed Oceanic voyager and savant Grégoire Louis Domeny de Rienzi (1836–8, I:22), alluding to Péron, described the facial profile of 'the Australians' as 'hideously animalistic' and deemed them 'scarcely superior' to the orangutan 'except in language'.

By 1860, the polygenist anatomist–anthropologist Broca (1859–60:413–14) rated 'the Australians and the Tasmanians' as 'inferior to all the other' races, 'absolutely incorrigible savages', and 'closest to the brutes'. The Darwinian naturalist Wallace (1864:clxiv–clxv, clxvii), ranking 'the Australians' as 'mentally undeveloped' and the 'lowest' race of the 'modern epoch', regretfully predicted their 'inevitable extinction' through the operation of Darwin's 'great law of "*the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life*"'.<sup>66</sup> Darwin (1839:519–20) had likewise prophesied their doom and anticipated his famous principle in the narrative of his voyage round the world on HMS *Beagle*. Recalling an encounter with a party of 'black aborigines' inland from Sydney in 1836, he lamented the 'mysterious agency' which appeared to dictate that, 'wherever the European has trod, death seems to pursue the aboriginal', 'the stronger always extirpating the weaker'. This dismal litany merely scratches the surface of the great weight of much metropolitan, colonial, and eventually Australian national opinion about Aboriginal people and their prospects over at least a century and a half.

In contrast, the naval officers Flinders and Baudin, like their predecessors Cook and Bruni d'Entrecasteaux, used moderate, mostly non-racialized language, took stadial differences for granted as real but not immutable, and were indifferent to human taxonomy. All four expressed intelligent, if ethnocentric comparative interest in the particular people they encountered around the coasts of New Holland and Van Diemen's Land. All were humane but cautious, at times anxious pragmatists who, in principle at least, were reluctant to use force except in extreme circumstances.<sup>67</sup> Seaman Smith ([2002]:32, 57) grumbled about 'Orders being so Humane towards the Natives that we must put up with every thing but heaving Spears'. If this policy prevented the 'Exasperated'

sailors from retaliating when assailed by pieces of wood at King George Sound, the spearing of Whitewood licensed their enthusiastic firing on the men in the canoe at Blue Mud Bay, to Flinders's considerable regret.

A parallel moral gulf is evident in the French texts. When Baudin (1801–2:221) buttressed his demand for restraint in dealings with the inhabitants by denying firearms to boat's crews and insisting they 'limit their defence' to a sabre, Péron (1807:278) accused him of condemning them 'to suffer, defenceless, the blows of the savages'. Whereas confronting experience at Bruny Island drew from Baudin (1802) the lesson that voyagers must be prudent and alert to 'the traps of natural man', similar experience at Maria Island shocked Péron (1807:285) into advocating a global protocolonial strategy of control:

comparing everything we saw with what had previously happened ... to several of our comrades, we came to the conclusion, that these peoples must only be approached with sufficient means to curb their ill will or repel their attacks. Moreover, this principle ... can be extended to all savage or hardly civilized nations, as is quickly apparent from perusing voyagers' accounts.

At Port Jackson, Péron (1914) pursued French geopolitical interests as an amateur spy.<sup>68</sup> Baudin, however, in a private letter to his friend Governor King, denounced colonialism and the injustice of European seizure of a land 'inhabited by men who have not always deserved the labels lavished on them of savages and cannibals; when they were still only children of nature and as little civilized as your Scottish highlanders or our peasants of lower Brittany are today'. For him personally, neither French nor British government had good grounds to settle Van Diemen's Land.<sup>69</sup>

Yet, whatever their commanders' private opinions, there was nothing innocent about any of these voyages or their perpetrators. Flinders and Baudin, like their predecessors, followed orders that melded science with national political and economic interests.<sup>70</sup> Flinders put the matter neatly in a letter to Banks offering himself as commander of a prospective voyage around New Holland: 'The interests of geography and natural history in general, and of the British nation in particular, seem to require, that this only remaining considerable part of the globe should be thoroughly explored.' Such a voyage 'should examine into the natural productions of this wonderful country'.<sup>71</sup> Flinders (1814, I:62–5, 148, 172, 218–19; II:71–2) and Baudin (1802) cast keen predatory eyes over the coastal areas and shorelines they traversed, assessing the naval potential of the harbours, the land's resources, and its prospects for settlement, pasture, and agriculture.<sup>72</sup>

In September 1803, with the express intention of forestalling the French, the British settled in Van Diemen's Land at Risdon Cove, recommended as suitable by Bass. After a week, the commandant John Bowen remarked that he had not yet seen 'a single native' and, 'not apprehending they would be of any use', thought himself 'well off' if he never saw them again. Nine months later, a violent encounter ensued in which several local people were killed. The pattern of avoidance and violence recurred following the definitive settlement at Hobart Town in February 1804 and the abandonment of Risdon Cove.<sup>73</sup> Ironically, the first lieutenant-governor of the new colony was David Collins, the relatively sympathetic chronicler of the first decade of encounters at Port Jackson and the amanuensis of Bass and Flinders.

## Conclusion

My empirical investigation in this chapter focusses on the impression of referents on signifiers, specifically on traces of local agency in voyagers' representations – its overt signs in descriptions of observed (though rarely understood) Indigenous behaviour and its opaque countersigns embedded in language and tone. Every genre of voyage text considered – from journal, to report, to published narrative, from sketch to engraving – is more or less thickly populated with Indigenous countersigns. However, they are especially notable in passages or genres impregnated by strong emotion, such as in Flinders's accounts of his colonial voyages of 1796 and 1799, Westall's sketches, Smith's journal, Baudin's ethnographic report, and Péron's 'Observations' and narrative.

Discursively, the chapter anticipates a series of shifting emphases in thinking about man under way in western Europe from the end of the 18th century. Ideologically, stadial theory and natural history were gradually subsumed in an emergent science of race. Methodologically, fluid nominalist catalogues of actual human varieties were eventually frozen into taxonomic hierarchies of unequal, reified physical races. And lexically (Williams 1985), a cluster of key words, including race, civilization, culture, class, science, biology, and anthropology, were acquiring new or altered modern significations. Globally, these transitions were authorized by novel anatomical and physiological knowledge and sustained by hardening European attitudes towards non-Europeans in an era of revolution, war, political reaction, and renewed colonial competition. Regionally, they are ambiguously heralded in Péron's published narrative and its marked divergence in tone and terminology from every other voyage text considered so far.

## **Part II**

# **Race, Classification, & Encounters in *Océanie***



# 4

## Meeting Agency: Islanders, Voyagers, & Races in the *mer du Sud*

*Voyage of Duperrey 1822–1825*

The global circumnavigation by Vancouver in 1791–5 and Flinders's Australian voyage of 1801–3 were the last significant expeditions of exploration or survey sent to the South Seas by the Royal Navy before the long hiatus of the Napoleonic Wars. French scientific voyaging to Oceania was similarly interrupted by war and eventual defeat after the return of Baudin's expedition in 1804. The geopolitical void was partly filled by the Russian voyages of Adam Johann von Krusenstern and Iury Fyodorovich Lisiansky (1803–6), Vasily Mikhailovich Golovnin (1807–9, 1817–19), and Kotzebue (1815–18).<sup>1</sup> Yet the United Kingdom, unlike France, was by no means strategically absent from Oceania during this period. From the late 18th century, growing British colonial or non-official presence was assured by the acquisition of commercial footholds in India, the Straits of Malacca, and Canton; the establishment of colonies in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land; the settlement of Protestant missionaries in several Pacific Islands and in New Zealand; and burgeoning intra-regional trade centred on Port Jackson. The need to despatch expensive naval expeditions from the metropole was thus considerably diminished. Britain finally resumed long-range voyaging from the mid-1820s with the expeditions of Frederick William Beechey (1825–8), Robert FitzRoy (1831–6), Edward Belcher (1837–42), and James Clark Ross (1839–43). All had the polar regions or the American coasts as their main objectives and Oceanic involvement was more or less incidental – though in FitzRoy's case momentous because of the presence on board HMS *Beagle* of the young Darwin.<sup>2</sup> As with British South Seas voyaging generally after Cook, the commitment and contribution of these expeditions to the methodical study of man were uneven and serendipitous.

In contrast, the lack of Gallic presence anywhere in Oceania saw the Bourbon Restoration after 1815 eager to renew France's longstanding

commitment to strategic scientific voyaging, in the entangled interests of reviving national glory, locating potential economic resources, colonies, or naval bases, and advancing science. The Minister for the Navy signalled official priorities in 1825 in requesting royal approval for a ‘new voyage of discovery’ by Dumont d’Urville.<sup>3</sup> The first goal was to further the ‘interest of the sciences and navigation’ by detailed exploration of places thus far neglected. A second, highly emotive goal was to investigate rumours of traces of La Pérouse’s lost vessels. But the ‘principal object’ was to seek suitable harbours where fleets might rendezvous and revictual ‘during a maritime war’, particularly in New Zealand where proposals existed for the ‘cession of a vast territory’.

Part II of this book addresses the modern era of scientific voyaging under sail – successors to the great Enlightenment voyages and those of Baudin and Flinders. My primary focus is four French expeditions undertaken between 1817 and 1840 in the hardening racial climate of the reactionary Bourbon and bourgeois Orléanist monarchies. The first, commanded by Baudin’s erstwhile lieutenant and Péron’s collaborator Louis de Freycinet, circumnavigated the globe from 1817 to 1820 and is discussed in Chapter 5. A follow-up voyage round the world from 1822 to 1825 was led by Louis-Isidore Duperrey who had served under Freycinet, with Dumont d’Urville as his first lieutenant, and is the subject of this chapter. Dumont d’Urville’s expeditions of 1826–9 and 1837–40 are considered in Chapters 5 and 6.<sup>4</sup> I do not aim to write a comprehensive chronicle of exploration in Oceania but to illustrate the grounding of naval anthropology in encounters with Indigenous agency and its uneasy relationships with contemporary theory in the science of man.

## **France and the science of man in Oceania**

Natural history was by no means the primary scientific objective of these voyages – Freycinet’s formal mission, for instance, was to advance the ‘physical, nautical or natural sciences’, in that order (Arago et al. 1821–2:148). Moreover, the systematic study of man did not loom large within shipborne natural history until Dumont d’Urville’s final voyage. Yet these travellers all made significant contributions to the description (ethnography) and comparison (ethnology) of the human populations of Oceania – what Freycinet (1825–39, I:viii–x) called ‘the nature and distinctive character’ of ‘unknown peoples’, their ‘lifestyles and customs’, and their languages. Encounters with and reflections on local inhabitants are staple ingredients in the multi-volume voyage

histories written by Freycinet (1825–39) and Dumont d'Urville (1830–3, 1842–6). Both mined their officers' journals for circumstantial detail, especially those of their surgeon–naturalists. Duperrey never completed the history of his voyage and the task was undertaken years later by his pharmacist–naturalist René-Primevère Lesson (1839).

Rooted in the empirical cornucopia of seaborne ethnography, the (physical) anthropology produced by these voyages was expressed in zoological chapters or volumes on man and anthropology; in racial taxonomies; in portraits and drawings; and in diverse collections – of human skeletal remains, *moulages* or plaster busts taken from living subjects, artefacts, or words. Most of this work was done not by civilian naturalists, the norm on the great Enlightenment expeditions, but by serving naval medical officers assigned natural history as a secondary duty. The phrenologist Dumoutier, who sailed on Dumont d'Urville's final expedition, was the sole exception but even he held the appointment of auxiliary surgeon. The innovation was due to Freycinet, persuaded by his experience of bitter clashes between scientific and naval personnel during Baudin's voyage that a ship of war was no place for civilians. Adopted as official policy, responsibility for natural history and anthropology on French scientific voyages was henceforth assigned to naval doctors, assisted by other officers according to their particular aptitudes and interests, most notably Dumont d'Urville himself.<sup>5</sup>

The first such appointees were Quoy and Gaimard, chief and second surgeon respectively under Freycinet. Years later in his autobiography, Quoy (1864–8:100) recalled that he had been 'tolerably astonished' when Freycinet informed him that no savants would embark on the voyage and that he was 'counting on his own officers to fulfil his mission'. That decision earned him 'many attacks, the hostility' of the Institut de France and especially the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle whose professors, including Cuvier, had nominated the naturalists on previous expeditions.<sup>6</sup> Cuvier evidently overcame his early objections in the face of the quality of the repatriated collections which, he acknowledged in a letter to Gaimard, were 'finer than one could have hoped for given the nature of the expedition'.<sup>7</sup> Cuvier's public reports to the Académie des Sciences praised the policy itself and the performance and collections of the naval naturalists on successive expeditions.<sup>8</sup>

Cuvier's embrace of racial theory at the start of the 19th century is outlined in Chapter 3. In his magnum opus *Le règne animal* (1817a, I:18–19, 91–4), he doubted that 'circumstances' such as 'heat, the abundance and type of food', could produce 'all the differences that today distinguish [organized] beings'. He subsequently sketched a new 'raciological

synthesis' fusing stadial and racial theories.<sup>9</sup> It begins with a standard conjectural history relating 'very different degrees' of social 'development' to 'more or less favourable circumstances'. The 'first hordes' did not increase and made 'little progress', retarded by dependence for subsistence on hunting, fishing, and gathering 'wild fruits'. Pastoralists, due to their 'wandering life', were only somewhat more advanced. Population growth and associated progress in knowledge and the arts depended on the 'invention of agriculture and the division of the soil into hereditary properties' which facilitated 'exchanges' and the building of 'fortunes'. In a seamless slide from historical speculation to present reality, he differentiated present-day 'savage hunters or fishermen' and the still 'half-civilized hordes' of Asia and Africa from civilized agriculturalists who inhabited lands best endowed in climate, soil, and vegetation. 'Enlightenment' of all kinds emerged first in Europe and 'today' was almost general in 'that happy part of the world'. This deeply ethnocentric scenario concludes with the racist caveat that 'intrinsic causes' appeared to 'halt the progress of certain races, even under the most favourable circumstances', and the comment that the human species, though seemingly 'unique', contained 'certain hereditary conformations' called '*racés*'.<sup>10</sup> Cuvier (1817b:273) elsewhere completed the syllogism by asserting that a 'cruel law' had 'condemned the races with depressed and compressed skulls to eternal inferiority'.

The radical nature of Cuvier's seminal formulation is put in sharp relief by comparison with Walckenaer's (1815:160, 168) more conventional monogenist synthesis of racial and stadial presumptions with ongoing adherence to the notion of universal human perfectibility: 'all races', he proclaimed, were 'endowed with reason' and thus had the capacity to 'improve their natural penchants' and strengthen their 'intellectual faculties'. Moreover, the key cause of civic and behavioural diversity in 'peoples' was relative 'progress towards civilization', rather than 'climates and races, which are accorded too much influence'.

From eminent institutional bases in the Institut and the Muséum, Cuvier dominated the natural sciences in France for three decades until his death in 1832. He much influenced the embryonic discipline of anthropology, though writing relatively little on man himself, and oversaw the professional instruction and assessment of the naturalists on French scientific voyages.<sup>11</sup> Like Péron (1807:486), every naturalist responsible for zoology on the Restoration voyages followed Cuvier's taxonomic principles, his insistence on the primacy of physical organization, and his division of the human species into three 'eminently distinct' major races characterized by congenital somatic features.<sup>12</sup> Though

purportedly scientific and dispassionate, Cuvier's (1817a:94–100) catalogue of racial traits is suffused with value judgements and implies a hierarchy of races. The 'white, or Caucasian' race ('to which we belong') was typified by the 'beauty' of its 'oval head form'; the 'yellow, or Mongolic', by its 'prominent cheek bones', 'flat face', and 'narrow, slanting eyes'; and the 'negro, or Ethiopic' by its 'black' complexion, 'compressed skull', and 'squashed nose' while its 'projecting snout [*museau*] and thick lips put it visibly close to the apes'.<sup>13</sup>

The practical imprint of this agenda is patent in Lesson's (1826b:110) published advice to his younger brother Pierre-Adolphe – about to sail for Oceania as Dumont d'Urville's assistant surgeon–botanist – to try to advance Cuvier's 'wise works in comparative anatomy' by procuring Indigenous skeletons. Their 'very characteristic facial type' would enable anatomists to draw 'new conclusions from skeletal structure in order to throw light on the races'. Cuvier's personal dividend from patronage of scientific voyaging was privileged access to the rich zoological collections amassed by travelling naturalists which helped cement his reputation as the pre-eminent comparative anatomist of his generation. He assured Quoy that he would content himself with 'your leftovers' and 'religiously conserve' Quoy's manuscripts and drawings for him to publish himself. However, Quoy later commented privately that the great man was not always scrupulous about giving voyagers credit for their discoveries and was not necessarily a reliable patron.<sup>14</sup>

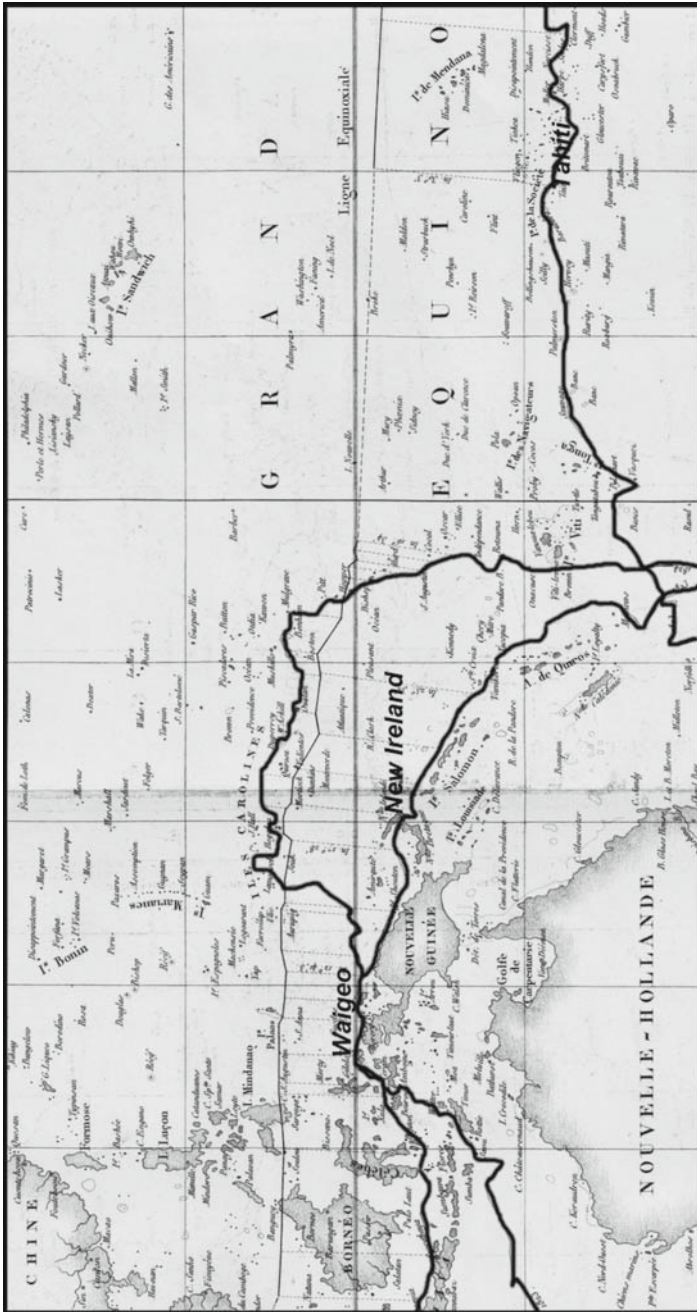
### **Around the world on the *Coquille***

This and the remaining chapters interweave comparative textual critique of voyagers' representations with ethnohistorical snapshots of encounters across Oceania during particular voyages. As always, I interpret encounters situationally, in terms of qualified mutual agency and interpersonal negotiations, rather than crossculturally. The result is not a metanarrative on the clash of reified cultures but a patchwork of stories about the messy engagements of Indigenous and foreign persons where 'beach crossings' (Denning 2004) were entwined with local or shipboard relationships. Such engagements left countersigns in the foreigners' representations. Anthropologically, the volatile interplay of ideology, prejudice, personality, precedent, experience, and Indigenous agency stimulated the precipitation of now familiar racial types ('Aboriginal', 'Malay', 'Melanesian', 'Micronesian', 'Papuan', 'Polynesian') out of an earlier uncertain, descriptive, nominalist terminology.

Beginning out of chronological order with Duperrey's circumnavigation on the corvette *Coquille*, I leave Freycinet's earlier voyage to the next chapter which focusses comparatively on the Oceanic experience and anthropology of Quoy who sailed as senior surgeon with Freycinet (1825–39, I:xii) and as 'professor and naturalist' with Dumont d'Urville (1830–3, I:xxxiv) in 1826. The *Coquille* left France in August 1822 with the express goal of filling gaps in Freycinet's coverage of the Carolines, New Guinea, and the northern Marianas.<sup>15</sup> During the voyage, Duperrey landed at Tahiti and Bora Bora (Society Islands); Port Praslin (Lassim Bay, New Ireland); Offak Bay (Teluk Fofak, Waigeo, West Papua); Buru and Ambon (Maluku); Port Jackson; the Bay of Islands (New Zealand); Kosrae (Carolines); Dorey Bay (Teluk Doreri, West Papua); and Java (Map 4.1).<sup>16</sup> The *Coquille* returned to France in March 1825. The representations examined were made during or in the wake of the expedition by Duperrey; Dumont d'Urville; the *enseigne* Jules-Alphonse-René Poret de Blosseville; the *maître canonnier* ('master gunner') Thomas Pierre Rolland; the artist Le Jeune; the senior surgeon-naturalist Garnot and his assistant, the pharmacist Lesson who became chief surgeon in February 1824 when Garnot was forced by illness to quit the expedition at Port Jackson. The mediums of their expression are written and visual, published and unpublished. The genres range from contemporary journal and report to voyage narrative, scientific treatise, and monograph; from sketch to drawing to engraving. The modes are anecdote, history, ethnography, and taxonomy. The encounters considered took place in Tahiti (modern Polynesia) and New Ireland and Waigeo (modern Melanesia) in 1823.

### **'All power is with the missionaries':<sup>17</sup> Tahiti, May 1823**

On 3 May 1823, the *Coquille* became the first French vessel to anchor at Tahiti since Bougainville's nine-day visit in 1768. The published reports of his, Wallis's, Cook's, and Bligh's sojourns in Tahiti had generated a potent, enduring European myth of a place endowed by bountiful nature with 'rich and enticing productions' and beautiful, seductive women.<sup>18</sup> On arrival in Matavai Bay, wrote Rolland (1993:66, 70) in his journal, the French were 'much surprised' when no canoes came out to greet them. The reason soon became apparent: 'it was their Sunday and devoted to church services'. The following day, to Duperrey's (1823a; 1823b:1–5) relief, the promise of ample supplies was met when great crowds of people 'brought all kinds of provisions' to the vessel. This flourishing market continued unabated throughout the French visit,



Map 4.1 L.I. Duperrey (1829), 'Configuration de l'équateur magnétique conclue des observations de l'inclinaison de l'aiguille aimantée faites dans la campagne de la Corvette de S.M. la Coquille ...', detail. National Library of Australia, Canberra, FRM F1069

ratified by formal exchanges of visits and gifts between Duperrey and the Tahitian royal family (Figure 4.1).<sup>19</sup> The sober, middle-aged Rolland (1993:68) noted with surprise that the women were ‘no longer’, as they had been in Bougainville’s time, eager to ‘lavish their favours on the kind voyagers’. Le Jeune (1822–3:21v), barely 18 and thus young in years as well as name, rued the disparity between expectation and experience



Figure 4.1 J.L. Le Jeune (1823), ‘Taïti’. Ink and grey wash. Bibliothèque, Service historique de la Défense, Vincennes, SH 356, folio 55



in unpublished notes on the voyage: 'in the districts where there are missionaries, the women are extremely reserved' and 'no longer indulge in the indecent scenes that occurred during Bougainville's passage'. The reason was not 'lack of desire but too much surveillance'. Writing in long retrospect in his published narrative, Lesson (1839, I:250) confirmed the 'cruel disappointment' suffered at the outset by crew members whose 'sensual images' and 'tender expectations' had been stirred by 'Bougainville's stories'.

In French eyes, the spoilsports were the Protestant missionaries of the London Missionary Society (LMS) who laboured unavailingly in Tahiti for more than 15 years from 1797 before Pomare II endorsed their faith, consolidated his rule as the island's Christian king, and oversaw the installation of Evangelical Christianity as the new state religion (Davies 1961). Now, nearly 18 months after Pomare's death, the missionaries seemed to the French to be the 'real sovereigns of these islands', the 'absolute masters' of a 'sad', subdued populace. Dumont d'Urville (1825a:124) regretted that the 'real good' the missionaries had done had turned into a 'kind of inquisition' over the 'timorous consciences of these feeble humans'. They 'control everything' said Rolland (1993:68, 70), 'tyrannize' the people, and banned tattooing, dance, and song – in Duperrey's (1823b:6, 9) opinion, 'the three greatest deprivations' imaginable for a Tahitian.<sup>20</sup>

The captain's official reports to the Minister for the Navy (1823a:[11]; 1823b:6, 8, 12) are ambivalent. On the one hand, he professed himself 'gripped with admiration' for the 'happy changes' inspired in Tahitian 'mind and morals' by 'the word of god', citing the end of 'idolatry', 'bloody wars', 'human sacrifices', sexual license, and the taboo on women's eating with their husbands, along with the general introduction of literacy and European-style marriage.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, he claimed that in matters of 'commerce' the missionaries did not act 'in the interests of the people they admit to their Communion'. Duperrey's shipmates were more forthright. Le Jeune (1822–3:21v, 22v) protested that the missionaries 'mislead the public' by making 'ideas of religion and humanity' their 'pretext' for a 'commercial system' that extorted an annual 'tribute' in kind from every Tahitian for the benefit of the Missionary Society. Lesson's contemporary journal ([1823–4], I) and especially his narrative (1839, I:239–40, 419–46) seethe with 'regret' for the vanished primitive and disdain for missionaries who were 'without talent or greatness of soul', who behaved like 'madmen', and whose 'works' were only 'ramifications of a vast commercial enterprise'. He deplored their 'narrow, bigoted ideas', 'fanaticism', and 'rigorism'

which had caused the ‘naïve physiognomy’ of these ‘big children’ to be ‘disfigured’ as their natural ‘penchant for love’ vanished beneath a ‘vener of deceit’. He and his colleague Garnot (1827:279) both accused the missionaries of using ‘corporal punishment’ to deter Tahitian women from ‘the pleasures of love’.

### Ambiguous agencies

Lesson ([1823–4], I) demeaned ‘the kings’ of the several Society Islands as the ‘first vassals of the missionaries’ and ‘the chiefs’ as their ‘auxiliaries’ and ‘spies’, ‘won over’ by gifts and support for the ‘extension of their authority’. In a short monograph on Tahiti, Garnot (1836a:24) similarly charged the missionaries with seeking to shore up their ‘despotism’ by fostering ‘friendship’ with the chiefs who were ‘almost all their partisans’. Both men were evidently oblivious to the reciprocal aspect of any such alliance, that kings and *ari’i* (‘chiefs’) had their own political and moral agendas in pursuit of longstanding Tahitian goals – control of resources and people through ritual access to divine power. Garnot (1836a:19–20) allowed that a public debate on the annual contributions required from the populace took place at the annual general assembly of the mission, held during the French visit and attended by several officers. The assembly ‘voted and fixed’ subventions for the king and the mission but denied them to the district governors in the face of armed opposition from ‘the people’.<sup>22</sup> Yet these intimations of varied local agency were eclipsed in Garnot’s (1836a:26, 46–8) blanket condemnation of the ‘rigorism’ of the missionaries who had ‘seized the island’ and enslaved the people – an improbable scenario since only eight were actually resident in Tahiti at the time.

The image of Tahiti as a bleak theocracy was rehearsed in published narratives by the captains of two subsequent expeditions. In his account of a ten-day visit to Matavai Bay in March 1824, Kotzebue (1830, I:121–223) damned the LMS missionaries as ignorant tyrants who exercised ‘an unlimited influence over the minds of the natives’. He concocted a fantastic history of the Christianization of Tahiti ‘by force’, via a process of ‘bloody persecution instigated by the Missionaries’. And he disparaged the Tahitians as an abject, ‘degenerate’, ‘oppressed people’, ‘*soi-disant*’ Christians who ‘submissively bow to the yoke’ imposed by their ‘zealous converters’. Two years later, Beechey (1831, I:267–312) anchored nearby for twelve days and later published a similar, more restrained, but arguably more damaging verdict on the impact of the mission. Admitting his ‘very limited’ intercourse with

Tahitians, Beechey nonetheless claimed privileged access to a more ‘correct knowledge of their real disposition and habits’ than was available to missionaries who had lived and worked in the island for years. He regretted the suppression of the ‘amusements of the people’ and the ‘life of austere privation’ imposed on them by ‘Pomarree, or whoever framed the laws’ – by heavy implication this meant the missionaries whom the general populace held in ‘great respect’ and feared the ‘consequences of offending’. The loss of their ‘diversions’ had, Beechey thought, left them mired in ‘indolence’, ‘idleness’, ‘sensuality’, ‘apathy’, and ‘indifference’. He concluded on the doubly patronizing note that ‘these zealous and really praiseworthy men’ would have better succeeded had they ‘restricted instead of suppressed the amusements of the people, and taught them such parts of the Christian religion as were intelligible to their simple understandings, and were most conducive to their moral improvement and domestic comfort’.<sup>23</sup> The year following the appearance of the English edition of Kotzebue’s narrative, the missionary William Ellis (1831b) published a 140-page *Vindication of the South Sea Missions* against the Russian’s ‘misrepresentations’ and concluded his text with an ‘Appendix’ refuting Beechey.

An earlier, less partial perspective on the interplay of missionary influence and local agency in Tahiti was provided by the Russian navigator Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen (1945, II:261–87) who spent just under a week at Matavai Bay in July 1820. Pomare II was clearly still driving the profound political, social, and moral changes he had initiated in the island in collaboration with trusted missionary advisers, particularly Henry Nott whose ‘courage’ and persistence even Garnot (1836a:23) praised. The King impressed Bellingshausen who marvelled that the Islanders had attained ‘such a high level of education in such a short time’ since most could ‘read and write well’. The Russian found their ‘strict observance’ of the Sabbath ‘exemplary’ and thought that religious change had improved their morality ‘to an incredible degree’. He rued the ‘suppression of all their old amusements, dances, and other games’ but was told by the missionaries that the newly Christian Tahitians had chosen to do so ‘of their own free will’ because such practices were ‘reminders of their former errors’ and inseparable from ‘their idolatrous habits’. The missionary position was confirmed for Bellingshausen when, out of ‘mere curiosity’, he asked Pomare to allow the Islanders to dance for the visitors but the King refused, ‘saying it was wicked’. Ellis (1831b:153–4) reaffirmed the point: ‘their own convictions of the immorality of these amusements, and their intimate connexion with paganism, led to their universal discontinuance’. Yet he would only

admit local agency with respect to moral improvement – an ‘agent’ in the Christian sense is the instrument of God’s will. Backsliding, such as the ‘partial revival’ of ‘those ancient lascivious dances’, was the product of satanic external incitement: ‘but part of a plan, resolutely pursued by some ill-disposed foreigners, for the purpose of diverting the natives from the instructions of the Missionaries, and destroying that influence which the precepts of religion appeared to produce’.<sup>24</sup>

### From ‘caricature’ to agency

The dismal French catalogue of peculation, loss, and thwarted desire is profoundly Eurocentric and shot through with sexual, gender, religious, national, class, and racial biases. Such texts might seem an unlikely vehicle for a serious discussion of Indigenous agency. Yet, as in Garnot’s monograph, French representations of this visit to Tahiti are suffused with more or less obscure traces of the actions and demeanours of Tahitian women and men who were engaged in multiple negotiations – with each other, with foreigners, with a new god, and with aspects of modernity. Some of their tactics were acknowledged by the visitors and reported even-handedly. Others were noticed but belittled or satirized. Many left traces unwittingly embedded in the very fabric of the representations themselves, including blatant expressions of prejudice. I here sample a range of such signs and countersigns clustered loosely under the rubrics encounter, dress, tattoo, and sex. The following section on New Ireland makes exchange its major focus.

Le Jeune’s manuscript (1822–3:22) includes a disarmingly frank account of his first sightings of Tahitians. Initially, he said, the crew were ‘alarmed’ by the vast number of people onshore, ‘especially as some had guns and spears’ and they showed ‘pleasure’ rather than fear at the noise of the ship’s 21-gun salute. Though quickly rendered implausible by the warmth of the Tahitian welcome, this fleeting admission of apprehension is yet another reminder of the perennial insecurity of Oceanic voyaging and the vulnerability of sailors to unpredictable local behaviour. Lesson ([1823–4], I, II) reported that Tahitians were ‘abundantly supplied with guns and powder’ that they knew ‘very well how to use’ and had obtained by trading pigs with visiting vessels.<sup>25</sup> Firearms were evidently important Tahitian accessories. Duperrey (1823b:4–6) reported that the crowds of people from Tahiti and neighbouring islands who attended the annual assembly were ‘almost all armed with guns and balls’, apparently a defensive precaution against local rivals but surely an *Indigenous* innovation for a church

gathering. The captain had earlier presented the king with an artillery sabre in conformity with local 'English usage' but refused his aunt, the regent's hopeful request for 'boats, cannons, guns and blunderbusses'. The king was escorted on his visit to the ship by 'a guard composed of 6 men armed with guns'.<sup>26</sup> Three were drawn by Le Jeune (Figure 4.2).



Figure 4.2 J.L. Le Jeune (1823), 'Le mot d'ordre: garde royale de Taïti'. Grey wash. Bibliothèque, Service historique de la Défense, Vincennes, SH 356, folio 52

These men, sneered Lesson ([1823–4], I, II), were ‘grotesquely decked out in old European costumes’. Le Jeune’s portraits have a hint of caricature made overt in his comment (1822–3:22, 22v) on local modes of dress: ‘I was much amused to see their costumes, some had only a shirt, others a ragged tailcoat, others a pair of trousers, the women wore a European skirt to their knees and had straw hats though most were naked apart from a maro [“loincloth”].’ For the general assembly, most people donned European-style clothes and the chiefs proudly ‘dressed as gentlemen’ but in garments ‘so tight they feared to move’. Le Jeune opined that ‘this costume did not suit them as well as their own’ and expressed the verdict visually in a watercolour depicting ‘Costumes of Tahiti’ (Figure 4.3). Several superbly muscled, elegantly disposed, tattooed men in traditional dress are juxtaposed with three awkwardly posed women in a motley array of local cloth and imported garments. In Rolland’s (1993:72) view, the indiscriminate wearing by men and women alike of ill-fitting European garments – like the waistcoat on the middle woman in the watercolour – gave them an ‘air of caricature’.

The French authors responded with varying degrees of incredulity, ambivalence, discomfort, sarcasm, or contempt to the – to them – incongruous appearance and behaviour of exotic Tahitian Christians.



Figure 4.3 J.L. Le Jeune (1823), ‘Costumes de l’île Taïti’. Watercolour. Bibliothèque, Service historique de la Défense, Vincennes, SH 356, folio 40

Le Jeune (1822–3:22) artlessly admitted that ‘we expected to see savage men entirely in the state of nature’ but were ‘astounded’ when the first two Tahitians to board the ship spoke ‘bad English’ and dined in a ‘perfectly civilized’ manner, though they were ‘naked except for a maro’ and ‘covered in tattoo’. In ironic inversion of the demeaning cliché of the naïve savage gawking at the civilized, he reported – and Lesson confirmed ([1823–4], I) – that the Europeans ‘followed their movements attentively and each of their actions made us cry out in astonishment’. In contrast to Le Jeune’s mild strictures on the eclecticism of Tahitian dress, Duperrey (1823b:11) scathingly condemned and racialized the new modes. These ‘incomplete’ introduced costumes cost them ‘their distinctive character’ and made them look like ‘large apes’ trying clumsily to ‘mimic’ Europeans; while the women’s taste for home-made ‘English hats’ instead of garlands of flowers produced the anomaly of ‘a strongly tanned face beneath an inherently ridiculous headgear’. Lesson’s journal ([1823–4], II) pronounced a similarly unkind verdict – the women were transformed into ‘walking caricatures’ by European dress.

As a patronizing romantic who thought it unwise to ‘multiply the needs of these peoples’ rather than keep them in ‘their modest simplicity’, Duperrey (1823a; 1823b:9–11) clearly took for granted that the aesthetic changes he deplored, like the moral and educational ones he condoned, were simply ‘prescribed’ and enforced by missionaries who had ‘totally changed the direction of the morals and customs of this people’. Yet his reports and the journals and narratives of his shipmates repeatedly testify to the complex intersections of convention or innovation, constraint or opportunity, conformity or desire, compulsion or choice that hedge or enable any human action. Women, for example, evidently wore mission dresses and straw hats because they wanted to, for reasons of fashion, decorum, status, or perhaps as a sunscreen, and not just because prudish missionaries made them do so – since for everyday wear, Le Jeune (1822–3:22) remarked, they usually went bare-breasted (Figure 4.3).<sup>27</sup>

Disentangling agency with respect to *tatau* (‘tattooing’), is also problematic (D’Alleva 2005:91–8). Le Jeune’s drawings (Figures 4.2, 4.3) depict an exuberant range of *tatau* motifs displayed for the artist by Tahitians of both sexes. Lesson (1839, I:380–1) likened *tatouage* to ‘a kind of indelible garment on men [and women!] who usually go naked’ and averred that they loved it ‘passionately’. However, most of the missionaries condemned the practice as immoral and anti-Christian and no doubt encouraged its proscription in the codes of law they helped chiefs across the Society Islands to adopt in the wake of Pomare II’s

initiative in 1819.<sup>28</sup> Lesson ([1823–4], I, II; 1839, I:442–3) did not doubt that the laws were ‘given’ and ‘imposed by the missionaries’. While admitting that most were ‘wise and well conceived’, he condemned as ‘truly unjust and cruel’ several relating to moral ‘purity’. By contrast, the missionary historian Ellis (1831a, III:137) attributed the first code to Pomare II and ‘a few of the chiefs’, with missionary ‘advice and direction’ but without their entire approval because Pomare used it to reinforce his despotism: ‘He was exceedingly jealous of his rights and prerogatives, and unwilling to admit the chiefs to a participation in his power.’ After Pomare’s death, his widow and her sister the regent vied with district governors who were *ari’i*, judges who mostly were not, and *ra’atira* (landholders) to fill the power vacuum he had left. Most were ardent Christians who endorsed his decision to replace the waning, localized, now largely discredited force of *tapu* (‘taboo’) with the universal authority of Christian law.<sup>29</sup>

According to Lesson ([1823–4], II; 1839, I:442–3), ‘the Tahitians’ were particularly irked by the ‘inflexibility’ of the laws on ‘purity’ and by the missionaries’ stringent application of them to the ‘inferior class’, especially women. It presumably did not occur to him that this agenda was shared or even inspired by local elite women and men determined to buttress their own power and flaunt their rank. Lesson’s prime example of such ‘extreme rigour’ was the punishment inflicted on women found guilty of sexual transgressions, which might include facial branding with tattoo. He and Garnot (1836a:37) imputed hypocrisy to ‘the missionaries’ who at once proscribed tattooing but ordered (or at least condoned) its penal use on women. The charge is not unjust, even if such punishment was exceptional and particular to the Leeward Islands of Raiatea and Bora Bora. Lesson attributed ‘frequent’ examples seen in Bora Bora to the missionary John Orsmond. The French trader Jacques-Antoine Moerenhout, who resided in Tahiti for several years from the late 1820s and became United States consul-general in the Pacific Islands, was a stern critic of the English Protestant missionaries. In a work on the geography, ethnography, and history of Oceania, Moerenhout (1837, I:353–5, note 1; II:513–14) claimed that the laws were imposed with much more ‘severity’ in the Leeward Islands, to the point of ‘torture, and a true inquisition’, notably in the punitive facial tattooing of erring women and girls. He especially blamed the missionary John Williams who allegedly ‘governed’ Raiatea, at least with respect to school- and church-going and morality. Moerenhout praised Williams’s ‘courage’ and ‘perseverance’ but reproached his impatience and use of force to achieve ‘good’. The Frenchman concluded: ‘I know that the missionaries



say it was not them who established these tyrannical laws; that is possible; but it is difficult to believe that at this period they did not have the power to abolish them or prevent their execution.'

In 1847, the English naval officer Henry Byam Martin (1981:126–7), who spent a year on station in the Society Islands and Hawai'i as captain of HMS *Grampus*, saw a Raratongan (Cook Islands) woman in Tahiti with the word 'MURDERER' tattooed upside down across her face and upper lip. She had reputedly 'murdered her husband under circumstances of great atrocity'. Martin's text and his striking, annotated watercolour portrait of the woman suggest both the problematic agency involved in her punishment and its ambiguity – 'the people wished to put her to death'; the missionary (John Williams again) 'interfered and prevailed upon them to spare her life on condition that she should submit to be branded'; 'the executioner taking her head between his knees made the word upside down'. Martin quite reasonably deplored the 'horrible idea' of proclaiming 'her crime to the world in conspicuous, indelible & everlasting characters'.<sup>30</sup> One wonders, however, whether a tattooed, upside-down English word had the same significance in a Polynesian world, where *tatau* had (or had once had) high social, ritual, or ornamental value, as in a European world where branding was a mark of disgrace.

Lesson ([1823–4], I; 1839, I:239, 380, 443) and Garnot (1836a:37–8) again elided the political agency of local elites by attributing the prohibition of tattooing solely to 'the missionaries', under threat of 'severe punishment'. However, Lesson's loathing of these English Evangelicals sensitized him to defiant or independent actions by some Tahitians whom he otherwise belittled as 'big children'. He reported that young men, in particular, were so keen to add to their *tatau* that they fled to the woods for the purpose. Garnot specified that they went to the 'Low Islands' (Tuamotus) or into the mountains to circumvent the ban on 'one of their greatest pleasures'.<sup>31</sup> Lesson took sardonic pleasure in the desire to be tattooed expressed by several chiefs because it put the missionaries in an embarrassing double bind – they had either to oppose the wish (causing offence to a chief) or agree (breaking the law). The bans on tattooing were widely resented, often contravened, and shortlived, though the practice was eventually abandoned in any case (D'Alleva 2005:97–8; Gunson 1962).

Most of the French visitors were preoccupied with sex – craved, withheld, surreptitiously granted, or pruriently observed. Agency is always ambiguous in sexual relations but Europeans typically attribute little or none to Indigenous women.<sup>32</sup> Duperrey (1823b:4) reported that

the sailors were ‘much put out’ to be deprived of sexual partners. He attributed this state of affairs to a régime of punitive control by middle-ranking men, *ra’atira*, who posted guards to keep the women in their houses at night. In published ethnological ‘Notes’ (1827:279–81) and his monograph on Tahiti (1836a:31), Garnot slotted such men into a conventional hierarchy of agency which gave all initiative to European missionaries; made local men their dupes in policing female conduct; and objectified women as mere puppets. Lesson’s early journal entries ([1823–4], I) also represent ‘the chiefs’ as the missionaries’ ‘auxiliaries’ and the chiefs’ henchmen as sexual ‘spies’. But Garnot complicated his scenario with an admission of surreptitious local male agency, accusing the guards of privately brokering ‘precious favours’ for foreigners from women, including those of high rank. In his informal notes, *Le Jeune* (1822–3:22) reconfigured Garnot’s charge of pimping into wry admission of a joke at French expense. Though no women came on board the ship because of the missionary ban, some Tahitian men promised to arrange a tryst ashore at night. But when the time came, the men themselves turned up instead of women and were ‘much amused at our mistake’.

In contrast, Rolland (1993:72) supposed that women acted independently to evade the new moral code. Though mocking it, they nonetheless complied during the daytime but at night dodged their guards in order to meet their French lovers. Towards the end of the visit, Lesson ([1823–4], II), too, noted the determination of many Tahitian women, including the ‘queen mother’, to indulge their ‘taste’ for illicit sex, often brokered by trusted male intermediaries. In the final days, several of the ‘prettiest girls’ sneaked on board for the night. Such behaviour prompted the snide comment that Tahitians had made great ‘progress in dissimulation’ in the face of ‘missionary anathemas’ and local ‘spies’. Lesson’s published narrative (1839, I:250) extends this sardonic misogyny and in the process inscribes further countersigns of female agency. After the first frustrating days, Tahitian women showed the sailors that ‘their shrewdness did not need a civilized education to sin in secret and that they knew well how to wrap their actions in a thick and mysterious veil’.

### ‘good faith in exchanges’:<sup>33</sup> New Ireland, August 1823

On 12 August 1823, after more than a month in the Society Islands and a difficult nine-week passage across the Pacific, Duperrey sought urgently needed supplies in the extreme south of New Ireland at Port Praslin

(Lassim Bay), where Carteret in 1767 and Bougainville in 1768 had found secure anchorage and ample wood and water. The area is one of the wettest places on earth and torrential rain fell during Bougainville's visit, as it did at nearby Carteret Harbour (Lamassa Bay) when Bruni d'Entrecasteaux and Dumont d'Urville stayed there in 1792 and 1827 respectively. But in 1823, superb weather and plentiful supplies led Duperrey (1823b:16–19; 1828:598) to profess himself 'enchanted with this stopover'. Equally, if unexpectedly, 'admirable' was the 'pacific and hospitable' conduct of local people. There were no permanent settlements in the vicinity and none of the earlier expeditions had had the 'advantage of communicating with the inhabitants'. But on the first morning, the ship was confidently approached by several dozen unarmed men who came in canoes from their village on the other side of the island and instigated peaceful trading relations with the French. They camped in the bay and exchanged a 'quite considerable' quantity of local produce, mainly for sharpened pieces of hoop iron which they clearly recognized, probably due to contacts with European whalers. The value they seemed to place on iron was such that Lesson (1839, II:61) thought it was 'more precious in their eyes than gold'. They also helped the sailors draw the seine for fish and readily assisted the naturalists with their collecting (Figure 4.4). After five days, they took friendly leave and departed because, Duperrey supposed, they had 'nothing more to sell' and were probably 'impatient to see their wives' of whom they were 'very jealous'.<sup>34</sup>

A serendipitous balance of power, wariness, desire, and complaisance between the parties to this brief encounter evidently underpinned their mutual gratification. But by all the European accounts, the terms of engagement were from the start mostly set by the Indigenous participants whose gestures (signs of 'peace and friendship'), demeanour ('mild, cheerful, and obliging'), and actions ('not armed'; 'honesty'; 'hospitality') were accurately read by the nervous French as signalling 'good intentions'. Their 'conduct', admitted Lesson (1839, II:20), belied French 'fears' and 'precautions' – double guards on the ship and well-armed shore parties. Euphoric with relief, Duperrey (1823b:16–18) lyrically praised the 'good faith' of the inhabitants 'in exchanges'. Rolland (1993:86–94) concluded from vulnerable personal experience that their reputation for cruelty and cannibalism was unfounded. Along with Le Jeune and Blossville, he was treated kindly by 18 men whom they met unexpectedly in the jungle during a trek across the island. In an account of the expedition transcribed by Lesson, Blossville ([1823–4]) emphasized the precedence of Indigenous agency: 'The conduct of the natives, from

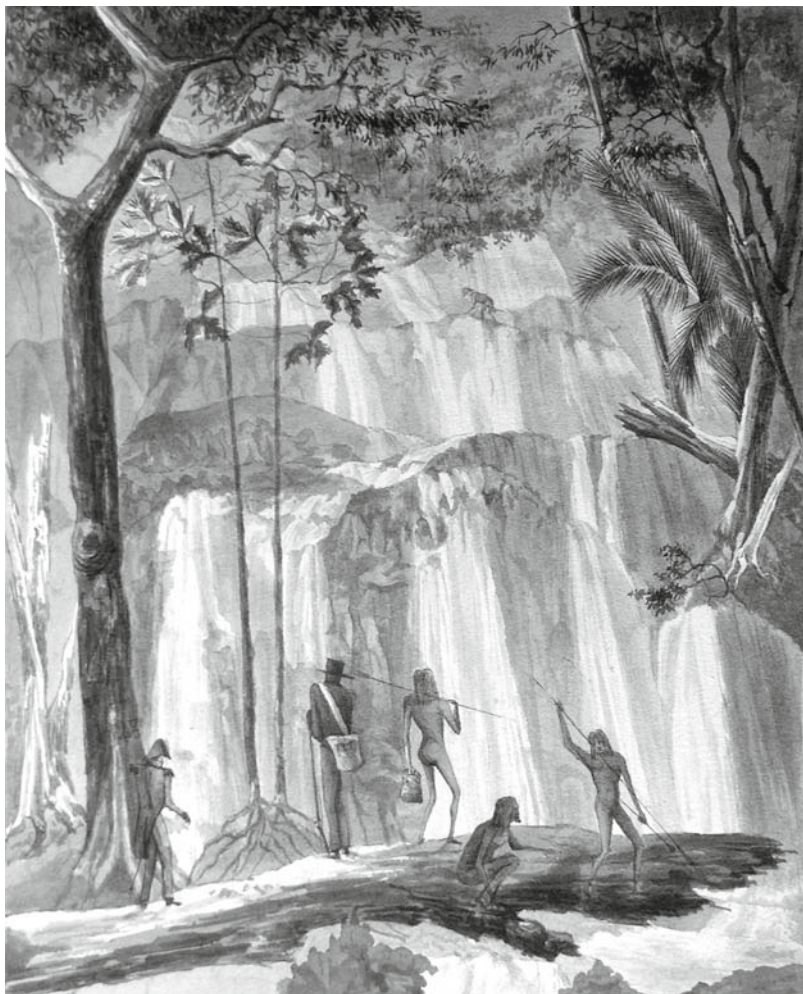


Figure 4.4 J.L. Le Jeune (1823), 'Cascade du Port Praslin: N<sup>lle</sup> Irlande'. Grey wash. Bibliothèque, Service historique de la Défense, Vincennes, SH 356, folio 75

their first visit, determined ours and we carried no arms.' Lesson, hard-nosed and contemptuous of all 'savages', especially so-called 'Negroes', was more guarded. In the immediacy of his journal ([1823–4], II), he allowed a degree of strategic local agency, surmising that, after unpleasant past experience of the 'immense superiority' conferred on Europeans by firearms, the New Irelanders had 'taken the wisest course,

that of living in good accord, and gaining every possible benefit from these fleeting relationships'. But in the more distanced genre of the published narrative (1839, II:19, 20, 23, 61–2), he professed no doubt that fear of French firearms and the 'power' of the warship had alone restrained 'the violence of their passions' and dictated their 'peaceful sentiments'. Yet even here, Lesson allowed that French 'relations' with these New Irelanders were 'openly friendly'. He praised their *loyauté* ('honesty') in commerce and the *bienveillance* ('goodwill') shown by local guides to the naturalists who were entirely 'at their mercy' while wandering unarmed in the forests in search of specimens (Figure 4.4).

Traces of Indigenous agency in exchange are less ambiguous in French representations of their stay in Port Praslin, where European visitors, apart from occasional whalers, were relatively uncommon, than in relation to Tahiti which Europeans had long visited. However, exchange was a basic social organizing principle in New Ireland and barter familiar whereas in Tahiti exchange with foreigners, especially by chiefs, was often managed through a customary relationship which camouflaged transactions in emotion. Le Jeune (1822–3:22) noted wryly that the ingratiating conduct and 'gentle character' of the 'good people' encountered in Tahiti had so delighted him and his shipmates at the outset that they gave away many objects without expecting a return. Tahitians then sought to formalize such moral imperatives through the institution of *taio* ('friendship') forged with individual sailors who were expected to engage in disinterested mutual gift-giving with their new 'friend'.<sup>35</sup> More cynical and far less generous than the artist, Lesson and Garnot negatively admitted Tahitian agency in exchanges. Lesson ([1823–4], I) railed against 'shrewd' dealings by 'clever' traders or moral coercion by *tayo* who demanded much more in return gifts of clothing than they had given in 'curiosities'. Garnot (1836a:33–4) complained that:

this kind of exchange is often bothersome; better not to have a formal *Tayo* because, not wanting to be in debt to him, it often happens that you pay more for the objects he has given you than they are worth. Moreover, the *Tayo* believes he has the right to importune you, and is often a *perfunctory* friend [*trop sans gêne*].<sup>36</sup>

Garnot (1827:283–4) further accused Tahitians of lacking 'good faith in commercial relations' and of having a 'penchant for theft as much by skill as by cunning'. Lesson (1839, I:393) said that they applauded theft from foreigners as a legitimate display of 'dexterity'.

At Port Praslin, the French were charged high prices for coconuts, poultry, and pigs. Lesson ([1823–4], II) initially took for granted that

such demands were economically determined, a reflex of paucity of resources: 'It seems that this tribe is not rich and has only a small number of coconut palms' while fowls and pigs were 'not abundant'. Read strategically, however, these terms of trade are Indigenous countersigns, textual residues of astute bargaining by men adept in exchange. In Tahiti, Lesson ([1823–4], I, II; 1839, II:20–1) had yearned for the impersonal 'fair balance' and finality of one-off transactions. But when a 'public market' was set up at Port Praslin in the 'neutral ground' of the ship's chain-wale, he bemoaned the 'exorbitant price' demanded for valued livestock. Both medical officers maligned the New Irelanders as 'fundamentally thievish' – another countersign. Lesson ([1823–4], II) maintained that they had at first behaved 'with the utmost circumspection', inspired by fear of firearms, and only 'raised the mask' late in the visit. Garnot (1827:286) thought them as 'prone to theft' as other South Sea Islanders and 'much more blameworthy' because they showed they knew it was wrong by 'hiding behind trees to pilfer the sailors' washing'.

In counterpoint to Tahiti where women were publicly reticent but privately compliant, the French saw no females at all during their stay at Port Praslin and sex figured in neither interactions nor representations. They blamed the 'jealousy' of the men who did their best to keep the visitors away from their village and the women, including by deliberate misdirection. Only the young *enseigne* Blossville ([1823–4]), accompanied by an English sailor, was permitted a brief tour of the village after showing extraordinary persistence to get there and scrupulously negotiating entry with the old men. But even then no women were in evidence – 'not even little girls' – and Blossville presumed they were shut away in their houses.<sup>37</sup>

## Producing races

The written texts considered in this and the remaining chapters tend to be more constrained by precedent and congealing racial presumptions than were equivalent 18th-century voyage materials. Yet if, by the third decade of the 19th century, French travelling naturalists reified human racial categories as manifest and true, ordinary naval officers usually did not do so explicitly. There were thus marked disjunctions in these texts – in the degree and tone of the racialization of different Oceanian groups; between different genres or modes of representation; and between authors. The less the people encountered met usual European standards of lifestyle, physical appearance, or behaviour, the lower they were ranked socially or racially. Less intimate genres, more

schematic modes, more scientific authors typically produced more sclerotic assessments of racial differences or racial character. Indigenous countersigns are perhaps even more enigmatic in such texts but are by no means lacking.

In journals or reports written close to the event, the officers Blosseville and Duperrey and the artist Le Jeune gave largely unracialized accounts of friendly personal engagements with the *habitants*, the men and women, or the *naturels* of places visited – familiarity having bred the reverse of contempt, local agency is prominent and collective nouns, including race, are rare. The journal of the master gunner Rolland, who had risen on merit from the lowly rank of ship's boy and previously served with Freycinet, gives a more demotic perspective (Rivière and Einam 1993:21–31). Rolland (1993:66–106) often used *peuple/s* as a collective noun but never *race*. For general reference during the initial phase of the voyage, he favoured the nouns *habitant/s* and *sauvage/s*. Tahitians are almost invariably *habitants* and only once *sauvages*, at the outset of the visit before Rolland knew them. New Irelanders, in contrast, are usually *sauvages* and only occasionally *habitants*. The Tahitians were 'built almost like Europeans' except for a 'flat' nose. The New Irelanders were 'black' with 'nothing to cover their bodies' and hair 'best compared to the wool of the poodle'. In Waigeo, the stopover following Port Praslin, northwest of New Guinea, the *sauvages* were 'much smaller' than either Tahitians or New Irelanders and 'thin, with enormous frizzy hairstyles'. Henceforth, Rolland virtually dropped the nominal usage of *sauvage* and his main noun for people is *naturel/s*.

Dichotomized, these word sets might be taken as an implicit racial differentiation of black from lighter-coloured Oceanic populations along lines already being contemplated by the naturalists aboard the vessel, whose collecting Rolland often abetted.<sup>38</sup> Yet physical descriptions are incidental in his journal while the lexical shift from *habitant* to *sauvage* is evidently not racist but an ethnocentric stadiol or developmentalist judgement about lifestyles, epitomized adjectivally in Rolland's (1993:90) remark that the New Irelanders were *très sauvages* ('very primitive'). In contrast, many Tahitians were literate. Evaluations of relative barbarism litter this text (1993:104–6, 124) but with no correlation to emergent geographical or racial divisions. The Waigeo people were *très malheureux* ('very wretched') because New Guineans made war on and 'enslaved' them. Yet the most *malheureux* and most *barbares* ('barbaric') people Rolland saw during two global circumnavigations were (Polynesian) Māori of the village of Manawa in New Zealand's North Island. He adjudged others encountered during this voyage to

be *arriéré* ('backward') (1993:82, 170–2) – the *sauvages/habitants* of Buka (Bougainville Province, PNG) because their 'nudity' suggested they did not know how to make cloth; and the *naturels* of Dorey Bay because they were 'constantly at war' and always went armed. In both contexts, *arriéré* is at once a sign of the author's developmentalist assumptions and an ethnohistorical marker of Indigenous values or practice. In Ualan (Kosrae, Micronesia), where Europeans were not known to have landed previously, the 'astonishment' expressed by the *naturels* at the appearance of the French sailors, their white skin, clothing, and 'everything we could show them' much amused Rolland (1993:144–60). Their 'obliging' behaviour pleased him, despite a tendency to steal. He found them physically attractive, of 'fine size' with 'very interesting faces' and 'very long, very black hair', including some 'very well made', 'very pretty' women. But they too were *arriéré* because they knew 'absolutely nothing at all' about the productions of 'civilized countries'.

Non-racialized developmentalist reasoning is a subtext in other of these firsthand writings. Indigenous conduct and manners during his village visit stimulated Blossville ([1823–4]) to hope that the 'magnanimous way' in which the New Irelanders treated the French when they were 'entirely at their mercy', their 'lifestyle', and the 'remarkable cleanliness' of their habitations (in contrast to those of Tahitians) would prove they were 'much less distant from the first levels of civilization' than was previously supposed. The extant portion of Le Jeune's journal (1822–3:23v) ends with a philosophical flourish worthy of Péron, invoking personal authority as voyager to extol the virtues and happiness of 'civilized countries' over 'savage' – 'among Savages', 'man is often no longer man' but ranks with the 'fiercest beasts'.<sup>39</sup> Yet his experience in Tahiti – where fertile soil, a mild temperature, and some 'progress in industry' had improved subsistence, 'softened' savage life and manners, and enhanced 'happiness' – suggested the stadial or Buffonian lesson that a 'more or less rigorous Climate contributes to sustain or change the essential vice of domestic society'.

Essentialism is an occupational hazard of all travel writing but is intrinsic to ethnographic generalization and ethnological comparison, especially by naturalists. Garnot's 'Notes' (1827:276–7, 284–5) marvel at the 'difference' between essentialized Tahitians and New Irelanders. 'The Tahitian' was 'generally well built', *basané* ('tanned'), and relatively literate, with 'black, not frizzy' hair, a 'lightly flattened' nose, and a facial angle 'as open as that of the Europeans'. 'The New Irelanders' were 'black', 'thin', of 'average' size, and 'less advanced in civilization', with 'woolly, frizzy' hair, a nose 'large without being flattened', and



a far more oblique facial angle. Lesson's journal ([1823–4], II) draws a similar dichotomy – ‘the fine figures of the Tahitians disappear’ in New Ireland – and racializes it explicitly. ‘The Tahitians’ and South Sea Islanders generally were an offshoot of the ‘Malay race’ but with ‘still more pleasing forms’. ‘The New Irelanders’ were ‘evidently of Negro race’ and their facial angle, measured with an instrument made on board, never exceeded 65–7°. A lexical shift equivalent to Rolland's is apparent here but with a racial inflection lacking in the gunner's text. Lesson's most common general noun for Tahitians is *naturels*. The inhabitants of Waigeo, whom he classed as *papoux* and graded higher than Negroes, are also usually *naturels*. Yet the ‘Negro population’ of New Ireland are almost always *sauvages*. The grim implications of Lesson's tacit coupling of developmentalist and racial criteria are evident later in the journal where he maligned Indigenous people seen around Port Jackson as ‘animal-men’, ‘plunged’ in ‘barbarism’. He ranked the *indigènes* of New Holland as the most *disgraciée* (‘hideous’) of all races and classified them as ‘Oceanian Negroes’ on the basis of the ‘perfect identity’ he claimed to have ‘observed’ between the inhabitants of New Ireland, New Britain, and Port Jackson.

However, even Lesson oscillated between particular historical or generalizing modes which parallel less or more acerbic racial judgements and show marked discrepancies in voice, tense, vocabulary, and Indigenous presence. In both journal ([1823–4], II) and narrative (1839, II:14, 19, 23, 38–9, 54), his accounts of the ‘honesty’ in trading, generous food-sharing, and ‘good intentions’ of individual New Irelanders are phrased in the active voice and concretized in the past tense. Such passages register clear signs of local agency. Conversely, his invidious racial comparisons or vitriolic physical, aesthetic, and moral generalizations about *ces nègres* are made in the passive voice and eternalized by the ethnographic present. But they are also often markers or countersigns of confronting aspects of Indigenous lifestyle or behaviour. Lesson, too, was offended by the New Irelanders’ apparent nudity and the lack of ‘industry’ it seemed to denote: ‘all their needs being purely animalistic’, he fulminated, ‘all the Negro races find themselves more or less behind the rest of the human species’. The New Irelanders’ body decorations provoked his particular spleen: the men’s ‘singular’ nose ornaments ‘stamp a hideous and ferocious quality on to their naturally repulsive and ugly physiognomy’ (Figures 4.6, 4.10). Personality is involved in such appraisals as well as profession, experience, genre, and mode. Even Lesson's (1839, I:363–5; II:23, 36) positive remarks often have a racialized edge, especially in the later narrative. Though generally impressed by

the ‘regular and gracious forms which characterize the Oceanians’ (his term for modern Polynesians), he was at once prurient, misogynist, and racist about Tahitian women. Young women had well-shaped, ‘firm’ breasts but ugly nipples compared with ‘the woman of Caucasian race’; Tahitian women were ‘generally very ugly’; and the old women were all ‘disgusting’. Similarly, having praised the two ‘young Negroes’ who helped him collect and name specimens at Port Praslin, he described them as ‘clambering in the trees like apes’.

Voyagers’ representations of Indigenous people are ambiguous precipitates of the lived tension between stereotype and personal experience. As previously remarked, European relief at approved conduct typically generated positive depictions or softened negative ones, even in the face of prejudiced aversion to physical appearance, and triggered rhetorical ploys to distance such people from analogy with ‘the Negro’. These textual elements are Indigenous countersigns – oblique traces of local demeanour as processed in European perceptions. Duperrey’s (1823b:18) exhilaration at the ‘admirable’ conduct of the New Irelanders prefaced his praise for their ‘good faith’, ‘hospitality’, and ‘considerable intelligence’. Even Lesson (1839, II:41–2) moved from acknowledging ‘good accord’ with New Irelanders the French saw often to the assertion that their figures lacked ‘that emaciation exhibited in several other Negro races, and their limbs were agile and supple’. Garnot (1827:284–6) judged their colour to be ‘less dark than the Negroes of the coast of Africa’; their faces overall to be ‘far from agreeable’ but the separate features ‘regular enough’; their noses not ‘flattened like the Negroes’; and their bodies ‘well-proportioned’. A ‘mild, cheerful, and obliging nature’ sealed his ambivalent approbation of ‘these savages’.

## Reproducing races

Le Jeune’s extant manuscript notes cease in Tahiti and his candour, enthusiasm, and tolerance are much missed from the textual corpus of the *Coquille’s* visit to New Ireland. All I know of his experience there is that he was ‘sick with fright’ when stung on the foot by an insect while walking across the island with Blossville and Rolland (1993:92). The Tahitian part of his superb portfolio ([1822–5]; Morgat 2005) contains more than 50 sketches, drawings, and watercolours of women and men, many of them named. In contrast, there are extant drawings of only three anonymous New Ireland men. One has some of the naturalism and sensitivity to personal demeanour evident in many of Le Jeune’s Tahitian portraits (Figure 4.5). The two figures in the other

drawing (Figures 4.6) are classicized ethnographic specimens prepared for engraving in the historical *Atlas* of the voyage (Duperrey 1826) (Figure 4.10). This discrepancy between Le Jeune's representations of Tahitians and New Irelanders probably stemmed from the interplay of European artistic convention with local agency and the particular contexts of encounter. His shipmates praised the 'perfect' likenesses which Le Jeune apparently often achieved using an 'optical' aide – a spyglass which enabled him to watch his models unobserved and capture them, unsuspecting, from life (Arago et al. 1825:481; Morgat 2005:11).



*Figure 4.5* J.L. Le Jeune (1823), 'N<sup>lle</sup> Irlande'. Pencil and ink. Bibliothèque, Service historique de la Défense, Vincennes, SH 356, folio 20

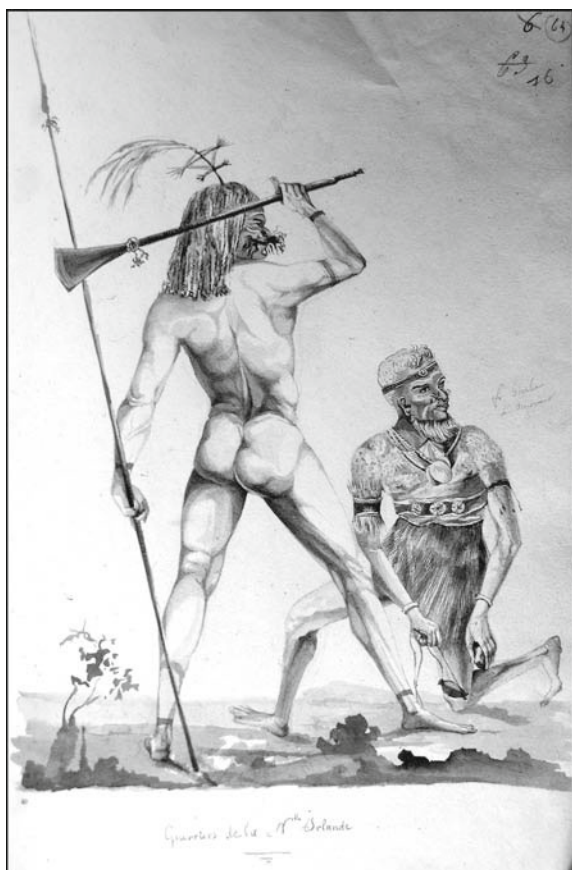


Figure 4.6 J.L. Le Jeune (1823), 'Guerriers de la N<sup>lle</sup> Irlande'. Grey wash. Bibliothèque, Service historique de la Défense, Vincennes, SH 356, folio 76

However, in Tahiti he probably also exploited a *taio* relationship to recruit knowing subjects whom he found easy to draw because many approximated familiar classical physiques. Conversely, in New Ireland a scarcity of obliging subjects might have compounded his struggle to portray alien bodies. An unusually reflexive passage in Lesson's narrative (1839, II:14) evokes the mutual visual shock of this encounter:

If our pale, bleached visages seemed strange to them, I must admit that their black, oily skin, their dishevelled hair covered in very red ochre dissolved in fish oil, forming a thick coating on their head, gave an extraordinary aspect

to their complete nudity; to this outfit are added a stick thrust through the septum of the nose and white bars on the face set off by red dust covering the cheekbones.

The historical *Atlas* is positioned towards the classificatory end of the representational series from encounter to taxonomy. It served an emerging typological (though not yet racial) agenda by standardizing Le Jeune's lively, if somewhat cartoonish drawings of actual people into objectified engravings of ethnological specimens. The reworking was done by the artist Antoine Chazal and the engraver Ambroise Tardieu, both associated with the Muséum. Two of Tardieu's three engravings of Tahitians and his single engraving of New Irelanders are reproduced here. Juxtaposition of Le Jeune's sketches and drawings with the equivalent engravings illustrates how this process of reproduction dehumanized persons and bodies as ethnographic or gendered types – homogenized vehicles for the depiction of hairstyle, facial hair, dress, ornamentation, body decoration including tattoo, weaponry, and artefacts. For instance, the authoritative, primly attired, somewhat androgynous presence of the queen mother Tere Moe-moe, which evidently impressed the artist (Figure 4.1), has been softened, feminized, partly undressed, and wrapped in *tapa* (bark cloth) in the engraving (Figure 4.7) while her sister the regent retains her demure European dress. The engraving strips both women of individuality but satisfies prurient European stereotypes of traditional Tahitian womanhood, along with historical documentation of a changing dress code. The second Tahitian engraving (Figure 4.8) depersonalizes two named men as representative *naturels* rather than Le Jeune's more neutral *habitants* (Figure 4.9) – while Unawolla is the bare-chested primitive, Taruri is the incongruous, half-civilized Christian.

The objectification and distortion inherent in the transition from drawing to engraving is especially marked with respect to the 'natives of New Ireland' depicted in the *Atlas*. The engraving (Figure 4.10) classicizes Le Jeune's awkward drawing of a man he had seen off Buka (Figure 4.11) and reconstitutes him as a New Irelander who bears little relationship to French descriptions of people they met at Port Praslin – indeed, in his journal, Lesson ([1823–4], II) initially differentiated both the physiognomy and the hair of the *race papou* of Buka from those of the *race nègre* of New Ireland.<sup>40</sup> Le Jeune's kneeling figure of an old New Ireland man (Figure 4.6) loses forty years and all personality in the engraving. His neighbour's nose ornaments which so upset Lesson have become an excrescence on the chin.

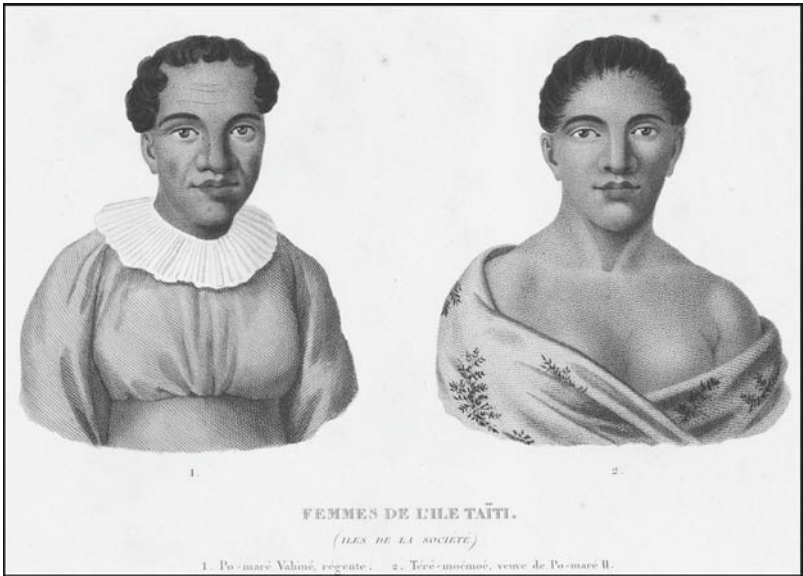


Figure 4.7 A. Tardieu after A. Chazal and J.L. Le Jeune (1826), 'Femmes dell'île Taïti (Iles de la Société): 1. Po-maré Vahiné, régente; 2. Téré-moémoé, veuve de Po-maré II'. Engraving. National Library of Australia, Canberra, an10344376

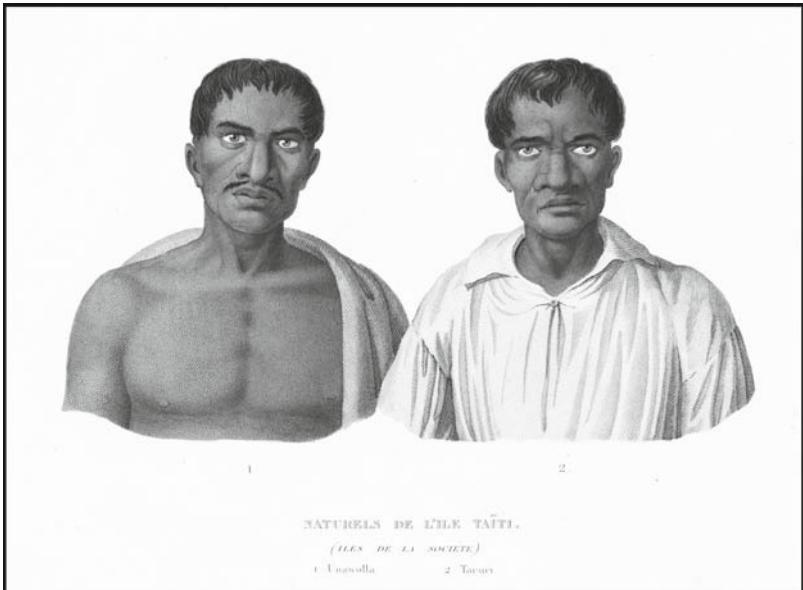


Figure 4.8 A. Tardieu after A. Chazal and J.L. Le Jeune (1826), 'Naturels de l'île Taïti (Iles de la Société): 1. Unawolla; 2. Taruri'. Engraving. National Library of Australia, Canberra, an10344377

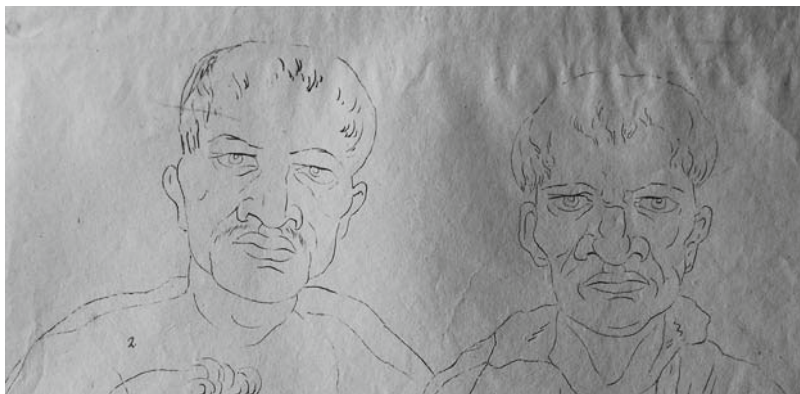


Figure 4.9 J.L. Le Jeune (1823), 'Habitants de l'île d'Otaïti: 'Unawolla; Taruri', detail. Ink. Bibliothèque, Service historique de la Défense, Vincennes, SH 356, folio 54

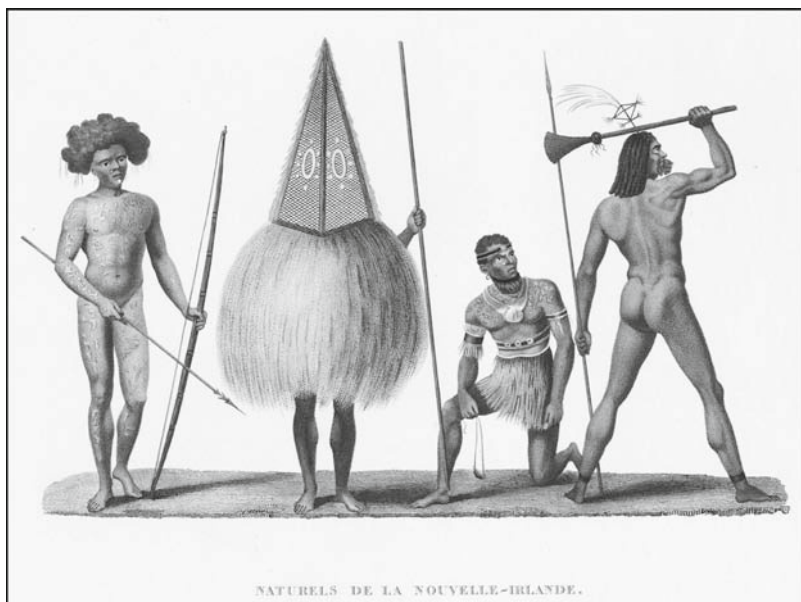


Figure 4.10 A. Tardieu after A. Chazal and J.L. Le Jeune (1826), 'Naturels de la Nouvelle-Irlande'. Engraving. National Library of Australia, Canberra, an10345447



Figure 4.11 J.L. Le Jeune (1823), 'Papou de L'Île Bougainville Bouca'. Grey wash and watercolour. Bibliothèque, Service historique de la Défense, Vincennes, SH 356, folio 74

## Classifying races

Disjoined from actual encounters, even more objectifying than the ethnographic overviews usually included in voyage narratives, the racial taxonomies proposed by French naval naturalists in the wake of post-Restoration voyages are at best patronizing and essentialist, at worst scurrilous about various Oceanian people.<sup>41</sup> Their memoirs on man in Oceania were published in the *Zoologie* volumes of voyage narratives; in scientific journals; and as entries in the prolific genre of dictionaries or



encyclopedias of natural history or the natural or medical sciences. The immediate trigger for human classification was evidently the lure of a prize offered in 1822 by the newly formed Société de Géographie for a memoir on the ‘origin’, ‘differences’, and ‘similarities’ of the ‘various peoples’ of Oceania, beginning with their ‘shape’ and ‘physical constitution’. Garnot, Lesson, and Dumont d’Urville all tackled the theme after their return to France, self-consciously engaging with the emergent science of race in attempts to convert their empirical authority as voyagers into wider scientific credibility. However, it seems that no entry was actually considered and the prize lapsed without award in 1830.<sup>42</sup>

By 1825, the *Coquille*’s naturalists had access to a range of global racial taxonomies apart from Blumenbach’s classic works, Malte-Brun’s racial geography, and Cuvier’s brief but influential synthesis.<sup>43</sup> Other French offerings appeared in a popular treatise by Virey (1800, I:124–55); a *lycée* (secondary school) text on natural history by the monogenist zoologist André-Marie-Constant Duméril (1807, II:336–42); and dictionary entries on *Homme* by Virey (1803, 1817a, 1817b), his fellow polygenist Bory de Saint-Vincent (1825), and the monogenist zoologist Etienne de Lacépède (1821). Striving to match this exalted company, Lesson (1827:21–8) began his *Manuel de Mammalogie* with a brief taxonomy of the races of ‘Man (*Homo*)’, classed as the first genus of the order *Bimana*, while Garnot (1828) included a general memoir on ‘the human races’ in the *Zoologie* of the voyage. Both men mentioned a range of earlier classifications but opted for the ‘simplest’ (Garnot 1828:509) – Cuvier’s partition of the human species into three ‘clearly defined’ great divisions.

Lesson’s ‘1st race’, ‘white or Caucasian’, includes a ‘Malay’ branch found from Madagascar to the Philippines and an ‘Oceanian’ branch in modern Polynesia. His ‘2nd race’, ‘yellow or Mongolian’, includes a ‘Caroline’ branch, the modern Micronesians. His ‘3rd race’ lumps all ‘black or blackish peoples’ worldwide as *Mélanienne*. This term had recently been invented by Bory de Saint-Vincent (1825:323–5) whose classification of the human genus localizes the *Espèce Mélanienne* (‘Melanian Species’), in Van Diemen’s Land, modern Melanesia, and parts of maritime southeast Asia. Garnot’s global taxonomy (1828:509–20) is more ambitious. In the process, he differentiated an ‘Oceanic’ branch of the ‘yellow or Mongolic race’ (occupying most of the South Sea Islands) from a *Papou* branch of the ‘black or Negro-Ethiopian race’ (located in the western Pacific Islands, New Guinea, Waigeo, and Van Diemen’s Land). In a series of invidious comparisons, he typified the ‘Oceanians’ in the ‘well-built’ Tahitians whose facial angle was ‘as open as that of the Europeans’; the *Papous* as ‘in a way a hybrid variety’ with a

far more oblique facial angle than that of the Tahitians; and the *naturels* of New Holland as ‘without doubt the most hideous peoples known’, with an even narrower facial angle. Garnot (1836b) later expanded the memoir in a dictionary entry on *Homme*. He ended with six engraved plates, four of which synecdochically deploy images of Oceanian people to typify the global Mongolic and Ethiopic races. In a companion entry on *Nègre*, focussing on ‘the Negro of New Holland’, Garnot (1837:628–32) abandoned the term *Papou* and reconfigured the ‘black race’ of Oceania as a ‘frightful’-looking branch of the ‘Negro race’. Now blatantly hierarchical, he asserted that a ‘very different’ physical organization ‘from ours’ meant that Negroes were ‘always, taken en masse, inferior to the yellow and white races’. Some were allegedly ‘uncivilizable’ – notably in New South Wales where their organization was ‘closest to the Baboons’ and their facial angle ‘nearest that of the animals’.

Lesson (1826a) and Dumont d’Urville ([1826], 1832) confined their main taxonomic remit to the inhabitants of the ‘islands of the *Grand-Océan*’ or *Océanie*. Both paid particular tribute to two earlier regional ‘models’ – the ‘simple, lucid system of the immortal Forster’ and the recent ‘learned memoir’ by Chamisso, a naturalist on Kotzebue’s first Pacific voyage of 1815–18. Dumont d’Urville (1832:18–19) lauded Forster’s binary identification of ‘two truly distinct races in *Océanie*’, ‘so well continued by Chamisso’. Lesson (1826a:2, 34) acknowledged them as originators of the human classification of this zone – the ‘idea of generalized grouping’ of the ‘natives of the South Sea’. He endorsed Forster’s ‘fundamental thought, that man constitutes only a *single species*’ which eventually gave rise to ‘varieties’, and praised the ‘rich and fertile erudition’ of Chamisso’s comparative research on languages and human origins.<sup>44</sup> So impressed was Lesson by Chamisso’s memoir, ‘A View of the Great Ocean, of its Islands, and its Coasts’, that he translated the English version into French while on the *Coquille* and published it after his return to France.<sup>45</sup> Dumont d’Urville ([1826]) enthused that, having met Chamisso in Paris and much admired his moral and intellectual ‘qualities’, he was pleased to count him among his ‘best friends’.

Chamisso’s Oceanic ethnographic experience was mainly located north of the equator in Hawai’i the Carolines, the Marianas, and the Philippines. He did not visit New Holland, New Guinea, or the southwest Pacific Islands. His taxonomic efforts were no more systematic or hierarchical than Forster’s, whose regional identification of ‘two decidedly different human races’ he adopted and whose monogenist humanism he shared, tinged with romanticism and an embryonic racial ontology. His memoir

correlates geography and language with a vestigial racial nomenclature. Like Malte-Brun (1813:386–422), Chamisso (1821:30, 38–47) conflated modern Micronesia and Polynesia as the ‘two chief provinces’ of the ‘ocean basin’ of *Polynesien*. He racialized these places as the abode of the (unnamed) ‘predominant race’ of the Great Ocean, characterized by ‘handsome features’, ‘long curly hair’, and ‘white’ skin colour (‘but more or less tanned from the influence of the climate’). Following the orientalist Marsden and anticipating linguists’ later designation of the Malayo-Polynesian language family, ultimately called Austronesian, he recognized a common ancestral language across the ‘immense’ space from Madagascar to Easter Island.<sup>46</sup>

Chamisso’s (1821:36–7) racial presumptions are explicit with respect to *die Papuas* whom he had never seen but essentialized with conventional disfavour as ‘Austral negroes, with woolly hair, projecting maxillae, thick lips, and black skin’. He rehearsed uncritically the conjectural displacement histories of Brosses, Forster, and numerous writers on the Malay Archipelago. Primordialized as ‘aborigines’ of the East Indies, the nearby continents, and the archipelagos east and southeast of New Guinea, ‘these negroes’ were allegedly ‘expelled’ to the interior mountains by ‘immigrant’ *Völker* (‘peoples’) whose arrival signalled the ‘beginning of history’. Chamisso’s a priori racial stereotypes are patent in his blanket claim that ‘the whiter ones are foreign conquerors’ and in the phrase, ‘the cultivated light-coloured coastal dwellers’. Yet the mismatch of racial system and empirical facts induced perplexity and tortuous logic. Chamisso peopled the west coast of New Holland and Van Diemen’s Land with ‘real’ *Papuas*, ‘negroes with woolly hair’ who might have been ‘the aborigines’, and the rest of New Holland with *einer eigenthümlichen Race* (‘a peculiar race’), at the ‘lowest degree of development’. They might nonetheless have driven ‘the negroes’ to the ‘furthest corner of their former country’. The legendary *Haraforas*, *Alfurier* or *Alföirs* were an ongoing conundrum. Often ‘confounded’ with *Papuas* from whom, however, they seemed to differ, and reckoned among the ‘most savage and oldest inhabitants’ of the Great Ocean, they were consigned to Chamisso’s residual category of ‘a peculiar race’ because they were longhaired and often ‘lighter’ in colour than Malays.<sup>47</sup>

At one level, Chamisso’s memoir merely reinscribes the crude contemporary correlation of language and race. At another, his philological expertise, in the service of uncompromising monogenism, enabled him partially to disarticulate the two.<sup>48</sup> Chamisso (1821:38) prefigured the modern linguistic consensus on the ubiquity of Austronesian languages

throughout coastal and Island Melanesia by noting ‘a few roots’ and numerals ‘common’ to the general South Sea Islands language in the word lists collected by Forster from ‘his second human race’ in Vanuatu and by Le Maire in New Guinea. The politics of his cautious sensitivity to the interplay of racial and linguistic affinities or differences with the presumed effects of climate become clearer at the end of the memoir in a long passage of conjectural history (1821:50–1). A ‘certain resemblance’ between Indigenous Americans suggested a *Menschenstamm* (‘common human stock’) but their languages had become ‘completely separated’. Under the ‘equal influence’ of the sun as ‘the African’, the *Papua* suffered the ‘same change’ – blackened skin – ‘or perhaps belongs with him to one stock’.<sup>49</sup> Chamisso concluded the passage by reinstating the nexus of race and language but in the singular and to a very different end, in support of original human unity. He guessed that, could ‘all the languages spoken by men’ be compared, they would be recognized as ‘dialects’ derived from ‘one stock’.

Notwithstanding deference to predecessors, both Dumont d’Urville and Lesson stressed their own empirical credentials. Dumont d’Urville ([1826]) promised that his knowledge of ‘many facts unknown’ to Forster and Chamisso would enable ‘more precise distinctions’. The pharmacist (1826a:2) vaunted the originality of his viewpoint and the ‘remarkable modifications’ he would bring to the work of classification. His idiosyncratic geographical terminology restricted *Océanie* ‘properly speaking’ to what is now called Polynesia. He initially redeployed *Polynésie* to denominate the ‘Asian archipelagoes’, including New Guinea, but in a late footnote suggested the neologism *Malaisie* as ‘perhaps’ a ‘preferable’ name. Lesson’s (1826a:36–113) convoluted tripartite racial hierarchy lauded the ‘Hindu-Caucasic’ Oceanians (modern Polynesians) as ‘superior’ to all other South Sea Islanders in ‘beauty’ and bodily conformation. He assigned the ‘Carolinians’ (modern Micronesians) to the ‘Mongolic’ race and deemed them physically *agréable* (‘good-looking’). He split the ‘black race’ into two branches distributed between four varieties. A ‘Caffro-Madagascan’ branch comprised the *Papouas* or *Papous* (modern Melanesians) and the ‘Tasmanians’ of Van Diemen’s Land. An *Alfourou* branch included the *Endamênes* of the interior of New Guinea and some of the large Malay islands and, at the base of the hierarchy, the ‘Australians’ of New Holland whose ‘savage physiognomy’ repelled and ‘native immodesty’ shocked. He represented all ‘these negroes’ as intellectually and morally deficient but the ‘austral Negroes’ of New Holland – whom he had only seen afflicted by disease, expropriation, and alcohol at Port Jackson – as totally resistant to ‘civilization’ and

mired in especially ‘profound ignorance, great misery, and a sort of moral brutalization’.<sup>50</sup>

If Chamisso’s struggle to fit second-hand empirical descriptions within the received racial category *Papuas* was mainly intellectual, Lesson’s equivalent racial presumptions were defied by kaleidoscopic personal experience. In particular, the anomalous appearance and conformation of certain so-called *Papous* provoked him to erratic reasoning and muddled nomenclature. In his journal, Lesson ([1823–4], II) confidently assigned the *naturels* of Buka to the ‘race of the *Papous*’ on the basis of the ‘characteristic’ small facial features and bouffant hairstyles of six men fleetingly encountered at sea (Figure 4.11). After a more protracted stay in nearby New Ireland, he described the inhabitants as a ‘negro race’ with ‘woolly’ hair worn in braids (Figure 4.5). They closely resembled the Africans of Guinea but differed ‘much’ from their *Papou* ‘neighbours’ in Buka whose ‘frizzy’, puffed-out hair made their heads look out of all proportion to their bodies. He restated the case for radical difference in a letter (1825a:326) sent from Port Jackson to the editor of an official publication – the New Irelanders were of ‘negro race’ and in physical constitution ‘quite opposite’ to the *Papous*. Yet Lesson ([1823–4], II) evidently thought better of his initial impression since in his journal the phrase ‘differ *much*’ is crossed out and replaced with ‘differ *little*’.<sup>51</sup> The confusion is compounded in his formal racial taxonomy (1826a:84–9) by shifts between narrow and more generalized meanings of the term *Papous/Papouas*. A specialized sense, recently proposed by Quoy and Gaimard (1824c; see Chapter 5), defined *Papous* as a ‘hybrid species’ of ‘Negro-Malays’ who ‘naturally’ occupied the ‘frontiers’ between the Malay islands and the ‘lands of the Papouas’ to the east, including the northwest coast of New Guinea. A broader signified of *Papou* designated ‘negroes’ who inhabited the entire New Guinea littoral and the island groups as far east as Fiji – the modern Island Melanesians. Eventually, in his belatedly published voyage narrative, Lesson (1839, II:13, 35, 56) conflated the once ‘opposite’ Bukans and New Irelanders as *Papouas*, *nègres*, or *nègres Papouas*. Yet this usage was still less inclusive than Cuvier’s (1817a:99) blanket labelling of all ‘black’ Oceanians as *Papous* since Lesson (1826a:84–113) consistently differentiated *Papouas* from the ‘negro’ *Alfourous-Endamènes* and Australians supposedly ‘aboriginal’ to inland New Guinea and to New Holland.

Dumont d’Urville’s extant journal (1822–5) of this voyage is mainly nautical in content and remains unpublished. In a report read to the Académie des Sciences (1825b:62, 69), he explained that his main

scientific responsibilities were botany and etymology but that, like all his colleagues, he had maintained a keen interest in ‘the lifestyle, customs and religious opinions’ of populations visited, with particular focus on their languages. In the year between returning to France and leaving again for Oceania in April 1826 in command of the same vessel, renamed *Astrolabe*, he wrote a long unfinished manuscript ([1826]) addressing the essay prize questions. Starting, as instructed, with the theme of ‘physical constitution’, he proposed the first systematic regional correlation of geography and race by splitting the ‘various peoples’ of Oceania across ‘three great Provinces’ and into ‘the three great divisions’ that seemed to him to be ‘the most natural’. The *Australiens* occupied New Holland, New Guinea, and the island groups to the east as far as Fiji. The *tonga*, the ‘true Polynesians’, ‘adepts of *tabou*’, occupied the vast island realm of the modern Polynesian triangle. The *Carolins* were the inhabitants of modern Micronesia. The ‘Malay race properly speaking’ remains outside the classification but the text anticipates in all but names Dumont d’Urville’s (1832) classic distribution of Pacific Islanders into Melanesian, Polynesian, and Micronesian races (see Chapter 5). Not yet formally hierarchical, this early schema is avowedly racialized since physical characters are his primary differentiae and he also referred to the Australians as *Noirs* (‘blacks’) or *Mélaniens*, ‘from the dark colour of their skin’, thus preempting Lesson’s misappropriation of Bory de Saint-Vincent’s racial neologism.<sup>52</sup>

Nonetheless, at this point a sharp sensitivity to empirical diversity and ‘exceptions’ blurred the clean outlines of Dumont d’Urville’s taxa and terms. Within his first province, the *Papouas* or *Papoux* of coastal New Guinea seemed to be of ‘fairly pure or at least little mixed race’ but navigators concurred that the Islanders to the east were ‘very varied’ in skin colour, including some who were ‘yellowish’ – a ‘proof’ to him ‘of mixing’. A ‘different race’ inhabited interior New Guinea while the eastern Islanders were more vigorous and muscular than the ‘feeble *Papoux*’, except for the New Caledonians who seemed to be physically ‘inferior’. The inhabitants of New Holland were ‘poor, wretched and degraded’ but physically very diverse. Dumont d’Urville had personally seen some ‘perfectly shaped’, ‘truly athletic’ men and a few ‘passably built’ women amongst the reportedly ‘misshapen’, ‘hideous’ majority. In the second province, the New Zealanders were ‘robust, nervous, active; and very different’ from the Australians, but difficult to characterize racially because they were so assorted in ‘colour’, ‘features’, and ‘stature’. The salience of racial characters in this analysis is qualified by a parallel emphasis on station. Throughout Oceania, contended

Dumont d'Urville, 'the class of chiefs is eminently distinguished from that of the people, by size as by skin colour and beauty of form'. In the Tuamotus (modern Polynesia), there were no 'individuals of high rank' and the populace universally resembled the inhabitants of the large western Pacific islands (modern Melanesia). Leaving open the question of whether dark-skinned commoners, Tuamotuans, and western Pacific Islanders shared 'a common origin', 'different from that of the Chiefs', he concluded on a partly inclusive rather than a sharply differentiating note: 'these three great Provinces, which differ essentially in physique with respect to individuals of the distinguished classes, come insensibly together when the natives of the last classes are compared'.

## Conclusion

This chapter has three intertwined strands. One critically probes the entanglement of discourse, prejudice, profession, language use, experience, and local agency in the representation, designation, and racial classification of Oceanian people. Another identifies Indigenous countersigns embedded in voyagers' productions and traces their uneven trajectories from the personal encounters which provoked them through varied mediums, genres, and modes of expression. A third exploits critique and countersigns to sketch exemplary ethnohistories of particular encounters between European voyagers and Pacific Islanders. Two specific foci of enquiry weave through the chapter, as through the book as a whole. They are the deployment of plural, collective, or categorical nouns by different authors in various genres; and the interplay of developmentalist logic and conjectural history in shifting conceptions of human difference, especially emergent racial theory.

My ethnohistorical conclusion, once again, is that referents (things referred to) can inflect the signifiers (expressions) through which they are formulated. Indigenous presence pervades first-hand voyage materials, written and drawn. It disrupts the more remote but still inductive genres of narrative or regional treatise. It is dissipated but by no means absent from the essentializing schematic modes of ethnological typology and racial taxonomy. The ambiguity and unpredictability of local agency in actual encounters regularly disconcerted, frightened, or infuriated voyagers, whether they acknowledged, demeaned, distorted, or repressed it. The threat of Indigenous hostility, violence, or refusal to trade for supplies was ubiquitous during the age of sail in Oceania. That is why Tahitian 'sociability' and 'sweet, pliant character' so pleased the French on the *Coquille*, like most of their predecessors. It is why their

praise for the ‘mild, cheerful, and obliging nature’ of the New Irelanders qualified the racial ambivalence induced by supposedly ‘Negro’ features, nudity, and extravagant body decorations. But voyagers usually failed to recognize the agency in friendly Tahitian demeanours, attributing them to lethargy induced by an undemanding lifestyle in a naturally favoured environment and latterly to the enforced influence of Christianity, rather than to desire or intent (Garnot 1827:283; Lesson 1839, I:361–2). Le Jeune’s (1822–3:20, 23v) fleeting historical insight that in 1767, following a lethal encounter with British guns, Tahitians had chosen to abandon aggression in favour of ‘peaceable intentions’ is a rare allusion to the global strategy adopted and henceforth maintained by Tahitian leaders and people alike. In the immediate aftermath of encounters in New Ireland, Lesson ([1823–4], II) acknowledged some intent in friendly local behaviour, perhaps because it so contradicted his ingrained belief in the ‘savagery’ and ‘pure animality’ of ‘Negro races’. In retrospect, though, he concluded (1839, II:54, 61, 274) that the New Irelanders’ ‘circumspection’ was not ‘habitual’ but was ‘imposed’ by fear of European firearms. Complaisance and recalcitrance may equally be designed but in Oceania the self-styled civilized preferred to interpret both as natural reflexes of varying degrees of savagery – notwithstanding the compelling intimations of Indigenous agency which populate their own representations.



# 5

## Races in the Field: Encounters & Taxonomy in the *grand Océan*

*Voyages of Freycinet 1817–1820 & Dumont d'Urville 1826–1829*

The German philosopher and Protestant divine Herder often provoked extreme responses. Kant (1785b:22, 154), his teacher, disparaged his lack of intellectual rigour, excessively 'poetic language', undisciplined empiricism, and reliance on 'dogmatic' metaphysics. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Herder's own student and co-leader of the *Sturm und Drang* literary movement, recoiled from aspects of his thinking and from the sting of his 'generally ugly disposition' (Laan 1986:562).<sup>1</sup> Ever since, competing political, philosophical, or biological teleologies have drawn selectively on internal tensions in Herder's texts to produce anachronistic present judgements on his meanings and influence. He has been serially feted or damned – as opponent of slavery, anti-imperialist, and champion of cultural plurality; as founder of the modern notions of history, cultural relativism, and cultural anthropology; as precursor of biological racism, 'aggressive' nationalism, and ultimately Nazism.<sup>2</sup> Eschewing teleology, I focus on Herder's expressions of the theme of human difference in the second volume of *Ideen zur Philosophie des Geschichte der Menschheit* (1785).<sup>3</sup>

Herder, like Maupertuis, Buffon, Kant, and Blumenbach, sought a naturalist resolution to the Enlightenment conundrum of marked physical and mental diversity within a single human species of common origin. Herder (1785:4–70), too, combined ethnocentric partiality for the 'beauty' of the *Völker* ('peoples') of the northern temperate zone from India to western Europe with repugnance for the features and *Bildung* ('form') of polar, east Asian, and Negro *Völker*. Yet this was not a racial aesthetic per se. Fusing aspects of mature Buffonian reasoning and Kantian theory with his own epigenetic embryology, Herder (1785:14, 18, 42, 80–1, 112–13) attributed human diversity to the interplay of an inherent 'genetic force' with 'climatic causes'. Like the later Buffon, he used climate 'in

the broadest sense of the word, including lifestyle and food' and the 'qualities of the land'. Like Kant, he limited the empire of climate and the mutability of organic adaptations to external conditions. Climate's effects were 'grafted' into the 'physique of the people' and such changes became 'hereditary' through 'descent and intermixing'. Thus transmitted, the human form could only be remodified genetically, notably by blending with other national forms. Therefore, 'every Volk is a Volk: it has its national *Bildung* as it does its language'. The effects of climate did not efface the 'original form of the nation's stock'. In this context, Herder opposed excessive 'differentiation' of the human species and, without mentioning Kant, condemned application of the word *Racen* to label 'four or five divisions' originally made on the basis of geography or skin colour. *Race*, Herder declared, denoted 'diversity of origin' which either had 'not occurred' or each region of the world comprehended 'the most disparate races' of every colour. 'In short', he concluded, 'there are neither four or five races nor exclusive varieties on the earth. The colours disappear into each other, the [national] forms are dependent on the genetic character'.

Herder (1785:158–9) also took serious exception to stadial theory on what would today be called anti-essentialist and historical grounds. 'It is customary', he complained, 'to divide the nations of the earth into hunters, fishermen, herdsman and peasants and from this division not only to determine the rank of each in civilization [*Cultur*], but also to define civilization itself as a necessary consequence of this or that way of life.' In his preface (1784), he had railed against the ethnocentric application of 'what we call *Cultur*' to 'entire peoples and eras' and demanded rhetorically:<sup>4</sup> 'Which people of the world is there, that does not have some *Cultur*?' At that period, *Cultur* in German usually still meant 'cultivation' in English but could already mean *civilisation* in French. Now, almost alone amongst contemporary savants, Herder insisted not only that modes of life necessarily varied with place, but that they were so intermixed that application of the pure classification was 'excessively difficult'. He concluded this section of his argument (1785:171) with a plea for 'justice' to be accorded to lifestyles other than agriculture on the grounds that all varieties of man's 'practical understanding' were meant by nature to 'thrive and bear fruit'; and with the rhetorical flourish, 'thus the most diversified species received so diversified an earth'.

### **Herder and 'the varieties in the organization of peoples'<sup>5</sup>**

The particular interest of Herder's work for this book, apart from his scepticism about the reality of races or fixed stages of human development, lies in the contrasting words used for people in successive editions

of *Ideen* – the original German text; the English edition (Herder 1800) translated by T.O. Churchill; and the French edition (Herder 1827–8) translated from the English by the historian and poet Quinet.<sup>6</sup> A close comparison of the chain of lexical and semantic shifts provides a synecdoche of ways in which emergent racial ideas and wording became entangled with changing stadial concepts across time, nationality, and language.

In Book Six, Herder (1785:3–70) switched register from the ‘general nature’ of the human species to consider the ‘varied appearance’ of men globally, starting with the ‘varieties’ in the ‘organization’ of the *Völker*, already a key theme in natural history. He interchanged a typically versatile late 18th-century array of terms for broad human groupings – most often the aggregate noun *Volk* (‘people’) and the collective nouns *Volk/Völker* (‘people/s’), *Nation*, and *Geschlecht* (‘family’, ‘house’, ‘issue’, ‘species’/‘genus’), but also the metaphorical *Abkunft* (‘descent’), *Menschengattung* (‘kind of men’), *Stamm* (‘stem’, ‘tribe’, ‘stock’), *Menschengestalt* (‘human form or figure’), and *Bildung* (‘formation’). Churchill (Herder 1800:132–62) and Quinet (Herder 1827–8, I:304–72) mostly translated *Nation* literally but used the collective noun ‘race’/race for all the other terms, despite Herder’s rejection of the word.

By the end of the 18th century, race had outstripped its synonyms in both technical and popular usage but Churchill’s sense is still loosely nominalist. Over the next three decades, the naturalization of racial thinking saw human difference essentialized as innate and its categories hypostatized. Quinet’s liberal internationalism did not preclude his giving an unwitting but now conventional racial gloss to Churchill’s literal renderings of Herder’s wording. Quinet translated Churchill’s ‘various appearances’ as *ce type* (‘this type’);<sup>7</sup> ‘an ancient custom transmitted from father to son’ as *une coutume héréditaire* (‘an hereditary custom’);<sup>8</sup> ‘well-formed ... nations’ as *nations bien organisées* (‘well-organized nations’);<sup>9</sup> ‘the negro temperament’ as *la couleur même du Nègre* (‘the very colour of the Negro’);<sup>10</sup> ‘similar blacks’ as *un grand nombre de tribus noires exactement semblables* (‘a great number of identical black tribes’);<sup>11</sup> ‘the species [= kinds] and varieties of the human race’ as *les différentes races d’hommes* (‘the different races of men’);<sup>12</sup> ‘the progeny’ as *une race d’hommes* (‘a race of men’);<sup>13</sup> ‘Complexions run into each other: forms follow the genetic character’ as *les constitutions rentrent les unes dans les autres, les formes suivent leur type originel* (‘constitutions run into each other, forms follow the original type’).<sup>14</sup> In these contexts, the reified or essentialized signifiers *type*, *héréditaire*, *bien organisées*, *couleur*, *tribus*, *races/race*, and *constitutions* are imbued with implicit raciological presumptions.

Ordering his material geographically because it suited his climatic emphasis, Herder devoted successive chapters to the *Völker* or *Menschen* of the north polar regions, the Asian ‘spine of the earth’, the northern temperate regions, Africa, and the ‘islands of the torrid zone’, and to ‘the Americans’. His discussion (1785:47–51) of the ‘organization of Man in the islands of the torrid zone’ shows the ongoing exemplary significance of human diversity in the fifth part of the world for the nascent discipline of anthropology. For Herder, it was a ‘meeting-place’ of the most varied *Formen* (‘forms’) which differed according to the ‘character’ of the people, their land, duration of residence, and way of life. Drawing heavily on Reinhold Forster, ‘the Ulysses of these regions’, Herder sketched a familiar conjectural history of migration and displacement. He took for granted that the ‘oldest inhabitants’ were *eine Art Negergeschlechter* (‘a kind of Negro stock’). He attributed their greater or lesser resemblance to African Negroes to the varied impact of ‘climate and lifestyle’ on their *Bildung* (‘form’) and *Temperament* (‘temperament’, ‘disposition’). He deduced that many such peoples had been pushed into the mountains by ‘later arrivals’. There they remained at the ‘lowest level’ of *Ausbildung* (‘formation’, ‘development’) because, as ‘first inhabitants’, they necessarily bore the ‘deepest imprint’ of the ‘formative nature’ of the region. So, Dampier’s *Wilden* (‘savages’) of the west coast of New Holland, who occupied one of the most barren tracts on earth, were the ‘bottommost class’ of this *Bildung* (‘formation’).<sup>15</sup>

Then, as today, Herder’s term *Ausbildung* connoted mental or social development through education (Wahrig-Burfeind 2000:213), though it is unclear whether or how he conceived *Ausbildung* to have the power to overcome the joint climatic-genetic determination of the human form and mind. Churchill translated it as ‘cultivation’, Quinet as *civilisation*. Between them, the three usages encapsulate the gradual emergence of the modern signified of the abstract noun civilization (Fr. *civilisation*; G. *Zivilisation* or *Kultur*) through repeated crossings of French, German, and English. Raymond Williams (1985:57–60, 89–90) outlined how, by the late 18th century, civilization denoted both the Enlightenment idea of a general secular process of human development from a primordial state and the ultimate outcome of that trajectory, an ‘achieved condition’ of refinement and social order, of being ‘cultivated’ or ‘civil’, purportedly realized in (European) modernity. Appearing earlier in French than in English, the second meaning of outcome dichotomized the ancient graded series from barbarism to civility. Herder’s reservations about exclusivist European conceptions of *Cultur* have been mentioned. Churchill’s (Herder 1800:152) phrase ‘at the lowest stage of cultivation’

echoed Herder's (1785:49) *der untersten Stufe der Ausbildung*. But it might also have expressed English ambivalence about abstraction and resistance to the semantic innovation which made civilization more about absolute social order and 'ordered knowledge' than grades of refined manners. Quinet (Herder 1827–8, I:350) no doubt had this by now established sense in mind in rendering Churchill's phrase as *au premier degré de civilisation* ('at the first degree of civilization').

Churchill and Quinet shared similar political leanings. Churchill's translation of Herder was aided by the radical Swiss-born artist and critic Henry Fuseli and published by the radical bookseller Joseph Johnson who had recently been jailed for seditious libel (Allentuck 1974; Gillies 1947). Quinet was a lifelong liberal republican and internationalist who later spent nearly two decades in exile during the Second Empire. As discussed in previous chapters, from the late 18th century, beginning in France, many naturalists, comparative anatomists, geographers, and anthropologists began to differentiate human races as permanent, hereditary products of physical organization; to order them hierarchically; and to question the capacity of so-called 'inferior races' to progress. I suggest that the lexical and semantic disparities between Churchill's and Quinet's texts were not a simple reflex of individual differences. Rather, Quinet's tacitly racialized terminology and reifications were discursive, national, and historical expressions of hardening, hierarchized attitudes to human difference which by the late 1820s were permeating the science of man and general European vocabularies alike. Quinet's aims were literary, not literal. He wished to offer the excitement and stimulus of Herder's philosophy to his compatriots of his own era. But – at least with respect to the discourse and wording of human difference – Quinet's text is an early *19th-century* classic. By my reading, its relationship to the 18th-century German original and the discourse that had generated it is genealogical, not mimetic.

### Jean-René Constant Quoy: Naval surgeon and naturalist

Just as the translations by Churchill and Quinet bracket this key discursive transition, so Quoy's writings do so within the compass of an individual career. However, his texts embody a dimension absent from Herder's metropolitan philosophy – the signs and countersigns of often unsettling experiences of exotic encounters with Indigenous people during two voyages to the other side of the world as medical officer–zoologist on the corvettes *Uranie* and *Astrolabe*. Freycinet (1825–39, I:ivii–viii) and Dumont d'Urville (1830–3, I:xxxiii) both acknowledged

the manuscripts of Quoy and his friend and colleague Gaimard as ‘a fertile source’ of ‘most useful information’.

Trained as a surgeon at the *Ecole de Médecine navale* (School of Naval Medicine) at Rochefort and in medicine at the University of Montpellier, Quoy was the first and most celebrated of the naval doctors who also undertook natural history during scientific voyages of the Restoration and the July Monarchy.<sup>16</sup> His collections and zoological publications, produced in collaboration with Gaimard, drew public praise from the most eminent savants for their ‘notable’ contributions to science.<sup>17</sup> Quoy was a corresponding member of several august academies and learned societies, including the *Académie des Sciences* and the *Muséum*. He was supported by the professors of the *Muséum* for a vacant chair following Cuvier’s death but his candidature was rejected after a ‘high and powerful influence prevailed’ – according to Quoy, the Queen intervened on behalf of his competitor. Thereafter, he devoted himself with great success to his naval career and served as *Inspector général* of the *Service de santé de la Marine* (Naval Medical Service) from 1848 to 1858.<sup>18</sup> Unlike Gaimard – the ‘most disorganized man’ Quoy (1864–8:135) had ever known – he left an important archive and is a significant exemplar in the history of scientific voyaging in Oceania.

This chapter draws strategically on Quoy’s journals, correspondence, reminiscences, and works on the natural history of man, together with diverse materials produced by his shipmates Freycinet, Gaimard, Dumont d’Urville, the midshipman and artist Pellion, the artists Arago and Sainson, Freycinet’s wife Rose who was smuggled aboard *Uranie* in Toulon, and the surgeon–botanist Pierre-Adolphe Lesson. I illustrate, first, the global relationship between emergent racial thinking and specific regional praxis; and second, the ways in which travellers’ words, drawings, and collections were partly generated in situ, out of the tensions and ambiguities of personal encounters with Indigenous people. The representations of the inhabitants of Oceania by Quoy and his colleagues oscillate in relation to shifting discourses and varied mediums, genres, or modes. But they also do so in response to their reception in particular places and their emotive personal perceptions of the inhabitants’ behaviour, lifestyle, appearance, and physical environment.

### **‘only barbarous by want of judgment and civilization’<sup>19</sup>**

In September 1817, Quoy left France as chief surgeon on the *Uranie*, commanded by Freycinet (1825–39, I:xii) who appointed him to share

zoological research with the second surgeon Gaimard. The mainly pelagic trajectory of the voyage mirrored Freycinet's official orders which stress that 'questions relative to the shape of the earth and the theory of the magnet' were his main 'scientific objectives'.<sup>20</sup> During a three-year circumnavigation, the *Uranie* traversed a vast tract of Oceania with relatively few ports of call, anchoring only on the west coast of New Holland and in Timor, Rawak (Pulau Lawak, a small island off Waigeo), Guam, several Hawaiian Islands, and Port Jackson. The orders reduce the study of man to the observation or measurement of seven physical qualities listed in a 'Note' on the 'natural history of animals' prepared by the Académie des Sciences. In mid-Atlantic in October 1817, Freycinet (1817) summarized these orders in a brief letter to his officers on the 'Observations to be made aboard'. Yet, official goals notwithstanding, the bulk of the texts produced by this voyage are humanist in tone, matching Freycinet's (1817) 25-page 'Table of observations and researches' to be made during stopovers ashore, outlined in another letter to his officers two months later in Rio de Janeiro.

The differences in length, detail, and perspective between the two directives are striking. The second is presented as a 'plan' to control the 'labyrinth of facts' that would confront the officers on land, including the 'history', 'productions', 'industry', 'commerce', and 'government' of countries visited. The eight-page core of the document is a 193-point programme for 'Observations on the human species'. This section begins with just 19 questions on man's 'physical constitution' and 'physical qualities' that expand the Académie's desiderata and rehearse contemporary racial discourse by veiling value-laden judgements in the cloak of objective science. The next 30 questions revert to natural history's longstanding interest in the human life cycle and diseases. And in the final 144 questions, Freycinet's agenda for the study of man veers away from 'Physical relations' to address 'Domestic' and 'Moral and social relations', with religion a particular concern, as in his chapter on Coupang in the narrative of Baudin's expedition (see Chapter 3).<sup>21</sup> In retrospect, the document reads like a prospectus for Freycinet's three-volume official *Historique* (1825–39) of his own voyage.

I take very seriously Claude Blanckaert's (2008:14) insight that 'the secret of race really lies in the correlation of the "physical" and the "moral", each serving as sign of the other', and that 'the idea of race in no way excludes studies of the "genius" or the "national character" of peoples'. Yet Freycinet's two letters suggest that he placed far greater weight on personal, social, and political dynamics, ethnography, and the importance of milieux, than on meeting the demands of a static

physical anthropology. In the *Historique* (1825–39, I:ix), he avowedly avoided discussing ‘our scientific researches’ and instead focussed ‘with the greatest care’ on the ‘lifestyle and customs’ of populations encountered, with only brief prologues on their physical organization. The vast bulk of this text comprises ethnocentric, often essentialized consideration of the setting, social relations, history, industry, commerce, politics, and so forth, of places and people visited. Notwithstanding imperialist connotations, it is far more ethnographic and historical than racial in the naturalists’ sense.

In keeping with his commander’s ethos, Quoy (1817–20:[i]-[ii]) prefaced his shipboard journal with a relativist dictum from a French translation of *The History of America* by the Scottish civic humanist William Robertson (1779, II:179). He added his own profession of noble intent:

I swear here that I prefer to lose my life than to keep it by killing unfortunates who are only barbarous by want of judgment and civilization, and who cannot always work out what our intentions are in landing on their shores.... Accordingly, if I maintain the same sentiments which animate me at present, I shall always limit myself to a simple defence.

It is clear that at this point Quoy acknowledged the common humanity of the ‘natives’ he expected to meet and attributed their behaviour to external circumstances and level of civilization rather than physical organization – a more Buffonian than Cuvierian agenda.

Throughout this campaign, the French enjoyed more or less friendly relations with most of the Indigenous people they encountered. In a travelogue framed as a series of letters to an old friend, Arago (1822, I:264) revealed the patronizing wariness, agog for human contact with ‘the savages’, that variously motivated the actions and representations of European voyagers. Though confident of French ‘superiority’ over savages, he was alert to the ‘dangers’ they posed. But he was especially ‘moved’ by the hope of ‘making friends’ sufficiently to glean ‘anecdotes’ or ‘grotesque and curious scenes’ with which ‘to enrich’ his text and atlas of plates. French representations of episodes in New Holland and Rawak epitomize the emotional amalgam of mutual curiosity, caution, desire, and apprehension which marked these encounters.

In September 1818, the vessel anchored at the Baie des Chiens-marins (Shark Bay) on what Freycinet (1825–39, I:470) called the ‘desolate shores’ of western New Holland. Neither Quoy nor Gaimard (1817–19:283) saw any local people there. However, Quoy’s journal (1817–20:86–9) includes a detailed hearsay report of a brief encounter between a French shore party and 15 of ‘these poor inhabitants of this



thankless land', mostly men but including some women and children. Freycinet (1825–39, I:450–3), who glimpsed only a handful of men in the distance, reproduced Pellion's eyewitness description of this 'if not intimate, at least peaceful' meeting. Pellion's matter-of-fact account suggests that the Europeans' actions were dictated by the demeanour of the Indigenous men who suddenly appeared on an escarpment behind the French camp and 'obviously' gestured to them to return to the ship. Initially alarmed at the prospect of confronting 'audacious, cruel men', the French remained constantly alert and tried various tactics to 'calm' and befriend their visitors who instead seemed to be 'timid beings'. They made them laugh by dancing in a circle, proffered gifts, put down their arms and lay on the ground, and ignored them. But the men refused to allow the sailors to come too close and insisted that gifts be left in the gap between the parties. Some items pleased them – a piece of tin plate which shone in the sun; a lump of lard they intended to rub on their bodies; a mirror; a pair of white drawers that they tore apart and divided amongst themselves; a brightly coloured scarf in return for which they gave Pellion a spear and another weapon. Even-handed, Pellion admired their 'naturally' musical whistling, their 'very expressive' gestures, the 'good understanding' that seemed to reign amongst them, and the 'respect' they showed for a woman and child.

Arago (1822, I:263–9) arrived in the latter stages of the meeting and sensationalized it in print and pencil. Sardonic and hyperbolic, his travelogue makes himself the central figure and demeans the Indigenous protagonists. His drawing (Figure 5.1) shows the artist playing the castanets, several naked men capering in what the text calls 'so grotesque a manner, that we choked with laughter', and another man striking a spear with two sticks 'without keeping time or caring that he didn't'. An officer proffers beads in one outstretched hand and with the other drapes a piece of cloth over the end of a spear, held at arm's length by another naked man. There is sleight of hand in both scenes. Arago's own text, as well as Pellion's, make it clear that the castanet playing was peripheral. Pellion, moreover, noted the 'rhythm' with which the drummer accompanied the castanets and reported the dancing they inspired without derisive comment. Arago's trope of exchange at the end of a spear became iconic. Though Quoy neither witnessed the gesture nor mentioned it in his journal, years later (n.d.b:3) he made it racially emblematic of 'clearly the most degraded species on earth, at the last rung of humanity'. Yet it was only one of several exchange modes described by Pellion (Freycinet 1825–39, I:452) who reflexively inverted the agency involved in a way unflattering to the French: 'On



Figure 5.1 J. Arago (1927), 'Première entrevue avec les sauvages'. Collotype of pencil. National Library of Australia, Canberra, an11510415

several occasions they threw us their spears, inviting us by gestures to attach our presents to them and send them back; at the same time they showed us how to do it. We did what they desired, no doubt awkwardly since they seemed to make fun of us.'

After a fortnight doing hydrography, geology, and natural history, the French sailed for Timor and thence to Waigeo. For three weeks from mid-December, Freycinet (1825–39, II:20) anchored at Rawak, a 'small, uninhabited' island off the north coast of Waigeo where the French continued the 'diverse series' of scientific observations 'demanded by the nature of the expedition'. Freycinet stressed that, while 'the Papous of Vaigiou' sometimes visited the vessel to trade, 'reciprocal relations' were rare, communication was limited to a smattering of Malay, and only 'a few facts' could be gleaned about 'their customs'. In contrast, these 'direct' encounters authorized Quoy and Gaimard's anthropological enquiry (1824c:5). They prefaced their physical typification of the *Papous* with the assurance: 'we were able to establish relations with several hundred natives who came to trade with us'. The different degrees

of familiarity deemed necessary for ethnographic or anthropological investigation are here manifest.

Freycinet (1825–39, II:20–4) found these *Papous* ‘intelligent and witty [*spirituels*]’, especially Moro, a ‘chief’ from the Ayou Islands (Pulau Ayu), north of Rawak, who could converse with him in Malay. ‘Lively and cheerful’, Moro ingratiated himself through gift exchanges, general assistance, sharp curiosity, and by policing the market, to mutual advantage. Quoy (1817–20:140–1) noted in his journal that, by the third day of the stopover, the French could count on visits to the anchorage by at least eight to ten canoes a day, their occupants fired by ‘desire to have our objects of exchange’ (Figure 5.2). Rose de Freycinet (1927:71–2) described a vital commerce that supplied the ship with fresh food in return for ‘small knives, mirrors and other bagatelles’.<sup>22</sup> But the Europeans did not dominate such transactions because, she complained, the *Papous* preferred pieces of cloth to the petty ironmongery which comprised the bulk of the ship’s trade goods. Quoy admired the ‘finesse’ of their

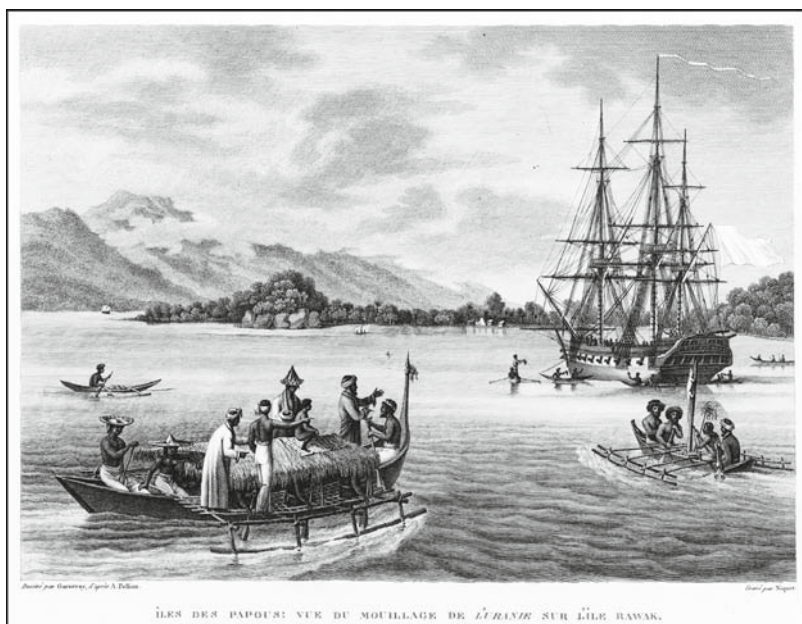


Figure 5.2 C. Niquet after L. Garneray after A. Pellion (1825), ‘Iles des Papous: vue du mouillage de l’*Uranie* sur l’île Rawak’. Engraving. National Library of Australia, Canberra, an9031713

dealings and wondered if ‘fear’ prevented its degeneration ‘into deception’. Rose de Freycinet thought Moro amiable and compared him, condescendingly but favourably, to ‘our mountain-dwellers or even our rude peasants’ – ‘which of them’, she wondered, ‘is the savage?’ He was also ‘furiously rapacious’ with intelligence equal to that of the ‘sharpest dealer in Europe’.

The unthreatening, obliging behaviour of the *Papous* much impressed the French – if Freycinet (1825–39, II:3–13, 27–30, 52, 58) identified ‘timidity and fear’ as the ‘dominant nuances of their character’, in practice these traits produced a ‘good, hospitable’ demeanour and ‘good faith’, to the great relief of a navigator in dangerous waters. In contrast, the self-confidence and ‘very bellicose air’ of a large party of ‘Malays’ from Gebe – first encountered at sea manning a fleet of proas and then during a subsequent visit to Rawak by ‘one of their Kings or Captains’ and his entourage (Figure 5.2) – triggered uneasy thoughts of piracy. The ‘captain’, called Abdalaga Fourou, appeared to inspire such ‘great terror’ in the Waigeo men that they ceased visiting the ship to trade. Freycinet explained that the sultan of Tidore (Maluku) had devolved his suzerainty over Waigeo to Gebe. The leaders of that island who visited Waigeo from time to time to levy ‘taxes’ in sago, slaves, tortoiseshell, and so forth, were ‘a little harsh’. Freycinet, however, gleaned valuable information on regional geography, politics, and languages from Abdalaga and praised his ‘lively, open, witty’ character, ‘dignified air, intelligence and aplomb in command’, and literacy in Malay though it was not his first language. Arago (1822, I:361–5) thought him ‘extraordinary’ but resented ‘imperious’ behaviour in ‘a savage’ and the ‘air of independence, or rather superiority’, of his men. In an ironic display of civilized smugness, he complained that, while both sides gained from their exchanges, ‘the difference between us, is that we thought we were obliging them’ but their ‘mocking laughs’ showed that ‘they were congratulating themselves on taking us for dupes’. The contingency and multiplexity of agency in encounters is neatly encapsulated here.<sup>23</sup>

All observers contributed impressions of the hair of the men of Waigeo. Freycinet (1825–39, II:21) noted its ‘astonishing thickness’. Rose de Freycinet (1927:69) found their combination of small bodies and ‘baroque’ hair style ‘bizarre’. Quoy (1817–20:141) declared that their hair was ‘not very woolly & black, naturally curling & very bushy, which gave the whole head an enormous volume’. In ‘striking’ contrast, a few had ‘lank, smooth, very long’ hair falling to their shoulders. Pellion (Freycinet 1825–39, II:47) explained how the ‘voluminous mane’ worn by the majority was achieved: ‘carefully combed,



Figure 5.3 J. Arago ([1818–19]), ‘Manière de faire du feu des naturels Waigiuou [Waigeo]’. Ink. State Library of New South Wales, Sydney, PX\*D 150, a2309019

backcombed, spiked in all directions, it makes, with the help of a greasy coating which holds it together, an almost spherical girdle around the head’. Arago (1822, I:353–4) used a different metaphor and embodied it in a sketch: ‘some have so much hair on their heads, that it might be said they wore a scaffolding of wigs’ (Figure 5.3).

### ‘Physical qualities’ of the ‘human species’

Whereas Freycinet (1825–39, I:450–4, 480–1, 729) narrated in detail the fleeting ‘encounter with the savages’ at Shark Bay, the inconsequence of physical anthropology in his overall schema is evident in his consigning the ‘human species’ to less than one of 17 pages of scientific ‘remarks’. He concluded globally that they were ‘perhaps the most wretched beings in existence’. Similarly, fewer than five of 65 pages on the Papuan Islands refer to human ‘physical qualities’ observed in the men from Gebe and the Waigeo people. Quoting Gaimard, Freycinet (1825–39, II:7–9) depicted the Gebe men as somatically very diverse, with again no consistency in the key racial diagnostic of hair: ‘black or brown, smooth or frizzy, long or short’, it varied ‘according to the races of individuals’.<sup>24</sup> This tautological remark is absent from the extant copy of Gaimard’s journal (1817–19:346). Freycinet added a statement about facial angles

and a table of Gaimard's detailed bodily measurement of a man named as 'Aïfolā'.<sup>25</sup> The French 'saw' in the Gebe fleet 'several Papous or New Guinea negroes, remarkable for their black, woolly, frizzled hair as well as the character of their face'.<sup>26</sup> Quoy (1817–20:132), in contrast, identified them simply as 'islanders of New Guinea' on the a priori basis of their hair and 'lightly flattened' nose. On similarly presumptive grounds, he placed them 'among the slaves' serving on the Malay proas.

Freycinet's (1825–39, II:47–50) parallel section on 'the Papous' of Waigeo starts with the claim, on Abdalaga's authority, that they were 'of the same race as the natives of New Guinea' and 'call themselves *papouas*'.<sup>27</sup> Then follows a lengthy citation attributed to Pellion. Phrased in the ethnographic present, in the purportedly objective but value-laden language of the science of race, this passage is at odds with the work's overall tone. It blends negative general impressions ('generally ugly', 'an assemblage of hideous, frightful traits') with typification in 'distinctive' physical 'characters' ('flattened' forehead, 'not very protuberant' skull, 'prominent' cheekbones, large nose 'squashed at the tip, and collapsing on the upper lip', 'very large' stomach, 'spindly' lower limbs). Yet, while the 'voluminous' hair style worn by many Waigeo men dominated first impressions, overall their hair defied typology. Freycinet linked Pellion's observation that in some it 'is agreeably curly like in our European countries' to Quoy's 'remark' that others combined a 'much sharper facial angle' with 'short, woolly' hair like that of the 'negroes of Guinea', while still others 'wear it smooth and long like the Malays'. Sébastien Leroy's watercolour of Pellion's Waigeo portraits (Figure 5.4) confirms the marked pillar diversity that confounded raciological classification.

Freycinet (1825–39, II:48–50) deduced that all these 'differences' had originated in the 'diversity of the primitive races' and been 'multiplied by the alliances and crossings inseparable from the merging of these men into a single people'. But he left the thesis of racial mixing in abeyance, deferring in a footnote to the introductory chapter of Quoy and Gaimard's *Zoologie* (1824a) of the voyage. Freycinet (1825–39, II:48, note 1) finished his brief physical survey by reproducing Gaimard's (1817–19:359, 362–3) tables of the bodily dimensions of an unnamed *Papou* – to be compared with those of 'Aïfolā' of Gebe – and the pelvic dimensions of a skeleton found in a tomb on Rawak.

### **Man as zoological object: Race mixing and 'the' *Papous***

Quoy and Gaimard (1824a:[i]) acknowledged that natural history was 'only a secondary concern' in the scientific work of Freycinet's voyage.



Figure 5.4 S. Leroy after A. Pellion ([c. 1819]), [Iles des Papous: divers portraits de naturels vus sur l'Ile Rawak]. Watercolour. National Library of Australia, Canberra, an3099610

And in quantity, the study of man is a minor element in their natural history. Only 10 of 712 pages of text in the *Zoologie* (1824a:1–11) and two of 96 engravings in the volume of zoological *Planches* ('Plates') (1824b: plates 1–2) are devoted to human beings. However, the positioning of those pages and plates at the head of each volume qualifies any implied insignificance. The first chapter of the *Zoologie* is a brief scientific paper 'On Man: Observations on the Physical Constitution of the Papous', written by Quoy and subsequently republished with minor changes of wording (Quoy and Gaimard 1824c, 1826). Without Quoy's (1864–8:132) knowledge, Gaimard (1823) had earlier read a version to the Académie des Sciences and published a long 'extract'. Though both men are credited as co-authors of the *Zoologie*, Quoy (1864–8:144) claimed responsibility for the text: 'on my *honour*', he declared years later, 'I can say that it belongs to me entirely'.<sup>28</sup>

The personalities of scholarly collaborators and their division of labour are pertinent elements in the production of knowledge. Quoy was evidently the main writer in the partnership with Gaimard and

during Dumont d'Urville's voyage of 1826–9 he also produced more than 6,000 exquisite zoological drawings.<sup>29</sup> Gaimard was an indefatigable natural history collector, a task Quoy (1864–8:135, 150–1) shared and systematized since, he quipped, his friend lacked any sense of classification: 'I don't even know if he could distinguish a species from a genus.' Everywhere, Gaimard took primary responsibility for anthropological, ethnographic, and linguistic fieldwork and its reportage in his journal. Pierre-Adolphe Lesson (1826–9, III:549–52), younger brother of René-Primevère and second surgeon–botanist under Gaimard with Dumont d'Urville, appended to his own journal several acerbic but astute pen-portraits of his fellow officers. Quoy, an 'incessant' worker with an 'astonishing memory', was 'serious', 'exact', 'active', 'courageous', and had a high opinion of himself. He evinced a powerful 'sense of duty', a *feu sacré* ('passion') for science, a resolute will, and a strong sense of 'human dignity', shared with Gaimard. On board, Gaimard served as amanuensis and research assistant for Quoy (1864–8:151) who was often prostrated by seasickness. It was thus, Lesson remarked, 'and through his excursions' ashore, that Gaimard contributed to their 'common work' while Quoy did 'almost all the rest'.

Everyone liked Gaimard. Quoy (1864–8:101) recalled him as an 'excellent fellow' with a 'happy character'. Dumont d'Urville (1830–3, V:158), an exacting commander, praised his 'zeal, activity and the good opinion he usually enjoyed amongst savage nations'. Lesson (1826–9, III:557) assessed his nature as 'lively', 'pleasure-loving', 'courageous', 'enterprising', 'loyal', 'obliging', and generous, 'even with savages' who greatly appreciated his 'largesse'. Much of that bounty was lavished on sexual partners since, Quoy (n.d.b:1, 6, 7, 8, 15, 29) averred in an 'erotic biography' of his friend, women were Gaimard's 'dominant passion' and 'he had in him an aptitude and a power rarely combined to the same degree'. Dumont d'Urville (1830–3, IV:453) remarked ironically that he 'always obeyed his penchant for the fair sex, even when it scarcely deserved the name'. Lesson (1826–9, III:558) and Quoy (n.d.b:13, 15, 31) both alluded archly to Gaimard's 'original' project to distinguish human races on the basis of 'hair from a part of the body other [than the head]', collected exclusively from women, carefully preserved and labelled as both zoological specimen and keepsake, but later 'lost by negligence'. The best of Quoy's (n.d.b:15) many anecdotes about Gaimard is set in New Zealand:

The vigilant d'Urville ... spying through his telescope a very animated group, asked a sailor returning from the beach: 'What's going on there?'



'Commandant,' touching his hat, 'The [surgeon-]Major ....' (let's tone down the crude language of the fo'c'sle) .. 'is making love in public.'

'What! Coram populo (sic I was beside him) in front of everyone?' 'yes, Commandant.'

'Like a billygoat then?'

'Yes, Commandant.'

And that in fact is just how it happened ..., the natives forming a ring and clapping their hands. Our ardent Voyager called it Preserving the honour of the flag....

The scene began again that very evening by torchlight.<sup>30</sup>

Relations with local women seem to have served both Gaimard's carnal desires and his intellectual interests while also endearing him to at least some Indigenous people. An enthusiastic anthropologist, he carefully measured the facial angles and bodies of men or women – 'better still', said Quoy (n.d.b:8) – and conducted dynamometric experiments everywhere he could. Detailed results of mensuration and experiment are recorded throughout Gaimard's *Uranie* journal but entirely without comment or racial inference, in contrast to Péron (see Chapter 3).<sup>31</sup> The zoologist Isidore Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, member of the Institut de France, later assured Gaimard that 'no one lately has contributed more than you to increase anthropological knowledge'.<sup>32</sup> A gifted linguist, Gaimard collected systematic local vocabularies whenever possible during both his Oceanic voyages including, it would seem, from sexual partners (see below).<sup>33</sup> These word lists formed an indispensable basis for the comparative linguistic studies of Dumont d'Urville who repeatedly acknowledged Gaimard's research in the *Philologie* of the voyage.<sup>34</sup>

Normally, few traces of authorial experience, personality, or idiosyncrasy survive the translation from less formal to scientific genres. Yet Quoy and Gaimard's chapter 'On Man' (1824c) to an extent breaks that mould. Unlike Freycinet's *Historique* and the taxonomic efforts of later naval naturalists, including Quoy, this text makes no attempt to survey, compare, or classify the great range of human beings encountered during the voyage. Rather, it retains an empirical focus on the *Papous* of Waigeo and its generalizations are explicit inductive distillations from personal observations and Gaimard's encounters. The authors (1824c:1) clearly aspired to the physicalist bias expected in zoology and already entrenched in anthropology – their subject was man as the 'first link in the animal chain' and their main concern the skull as 'the bony envelope' for the organs of intelligence. Yet the chapter strays repeatedly into ethnographic territory ('moral and intellectual faculties'). However, the work's modest, eclectic contours belie its twofold anthropological

significance – as an authoritative, if confounding statement about *Papous* and as a very early treatment of racial mixing in relation to Oceania.

The chapter begins on a humanist note with a defensive subtext. Quoy and Gaimard (1824c:1–3) rued the difficulty of procuring human bones from ‘savage peoples’ whose respect for their dead proved their belief in ‘a destined future’ and their immense distance from the ‘alleged state of nature’. Nonetheless, while the funerary rites practised by the *Papous* showed that they had ‘ideas of another life’, their ‘religious dogma’ of vengeance saw them decorate tombs with the skulls of vanquished enemies. These grisly ‘trophy’ might be collected by the travelling naturalist ‘without profanation’. This disingenuous moral logic unfolds in a sequence of passages in Quoy’s and Gaimard’s journals. Quoy (1817–20:146) described seeing six human skulls aligned ‘as offerings’ before a tomb near the French camp in reportedly uninhabited Rawak. Arago depicted the scene (Figure 5.5). Gaimard (1817–19:358) reported that the skulls lacked bottom jaws and the tomb was probably that of ‘some Raja’ since it was better decorated than others and contained a skeleton whereas the other tombs had no human bones – as



ÎLE RAWAK: TOMBEAUX DES PAPOUS.

Figure 5.5 E. Bovinet after J. Arago (1825), ‘Île Rawak: tombeaux des Papous’. Engraving. National Library of Australia, Canberra, PIC S7267 LOC NL shelves 576

he confirmed by excavating them to a 'depth of several feet'.<sup>35</sup> 'We learn', added Quoy, that the heads belonged to 'enemies of the dead man'. Finally, Gaimard (1817–19:345) stated that, on the day of the ship's departure from Rawak, he had the six skulls and the skeleton taken from the tomb on 'the Commander's orders'. Given strong contemporary disapproval of graverobbing in the service of anatomy, it is unsurprising that this sequence registers a guilty sense of the impropriety of desecrating graves, in uneasy emotional liaison with professional lust to acquire human bodily remains; or that the zoologist–anthropologists (1824c:3) should deflect primary agency for their vandalism on to the commander's orders and the 'barbarous observance' expediently taken to justify it.

Though avowedly empirical rather than taxonomic, the chapter 'On Man' reveals the uncertain interface of inchoate racial categories with recalcitrant facts. Papuan was and remains an ambiguous term. I earlier tracked its varied usages in the wake of the 16th-century Iberian adoption of the local toponym *Papua* to refer to the 'black' inhabitants of Gilolo (Halmahera), the Papuan Islands (Raja Ampat group), and the nearby New Guinea mainland. Savants such as Blumenbach (1806:72) and Cuvier (1817a:99) generalized *Papus* or *Papous* to denominate 'black' Oceanians collectively – the modern Melanesians, Papuans, and Aboriginal Australians. René-Primevère Lesson's tortured reasoning on the matter is detailed in Chapter 4. But Quoy's journal (1817–20:132, 136) and zoological chapter (Quoy and Gaimard 1824c:3–4, 6) both limit *Papous* to the inhabitants of Waigeo and neighbouring islands who reputedly called themselves *Papoua*. Inland dwellers in Waigeo's mountains were said to take 'the name of *Alifourous*'. Quoy sharply differentiated the *Papous* as a race separate from the similarly coloured but otherwise dissimilar race reported in New Guinea itself, said to be 'true Negroes', though he had personally seen only 'isolated individuals', including the 'slaves' on the Gebe fleet and some residents of Waigeo.<sup>36</sup>

The *Papous* posed a conundrum for Quoy and Gaimard (1824c:4–6). Mentally hamstrung by presumption of the reality of discrete races, Quoy complained that he could not work out their 'distinctive characters' (but proceeded anyway to list their 'general' characters). He concluded that the 'mélange of individuals' in a dense cluster of islands had produced a 'multitude of nuances' that made it hard to determine some of the races, since the key differentiae of physiognomy and language had been 'denatured' by 'fortuitous crossings'. Thus, in facial features and hair, the *Papous* lacked the traits of the Malays but were not Negroes either. They seemed 'to occupy the middle ground' between Malays and

Negroes in these respects but their skull form was close to the Malays while their facial angle corresponded to that of Europeans. Two nearly white-skinned persons, with long, smooth hair, more delicate features, and a 'sharper nose', were perhaps offspring of 'the commerce of a Chinese or a European with the Papous'. But all varieties, from 'white' to 'Negroes', belonged 'freely' to the 'tribe' which often visited the *Uranie* during the ship's stay in Rawak.

The circumstantial account in Quoy's journal (1817–20:136, 141–2) shows that the idea of racial mixing had come to mind at his first sighting of a canoe-borne group of men from Waigeo as the ship approached the island: 'Overall they were Malays; but we could also distinguish inhabitants of New Guinea, & perhaps also physiognomies stemming from their *mélange*' with inhabitants of nearby islands. A subsequent anthropological passage anticipates his later mental wrestling with the disjuncture between his professional task of racial characterization and the actual human physical diversity he saw at Waigeo – embodied in the aforementioned 'striking contrast' between the 'very bushy' hair of the majority and the 'smooth, flat, very long' hair of other residents which suggested, 'at first sight, that these individuals might be of another race than that of the Papoux'. Equally dissimilar was an *espèce* ('kind, species') of people with very different characters: 'shorter, more curly hair quite similar to wool, the nose very flat, & in some the facial angle much sharper than that of the Papoux'. Yet these seemingly discrete races 'lived together as if forming only one people'. All 'these differences' led Quoy to hypothesize that 'mixings between the peoples of two islands as close as New Guinea & Waigiou' must have resulted in 'crossings of races' which produced the 'different physiognomies' he had seen.

Two engraved plates of *Papou* skulls illustrate the chapter 'On Man' (Coutant 1824). Quoy and Gaimard submitted the crania plundered from Rawak 'for examination' by the German physiologist Gall, founder of the science of the plurality and localization of cerebral functions known ultimately as phrenology (see Chapter 6). Gall's influence on the chapter clearly outstripped that of their patron Cuvier, Gall's professional enemy (Gall and Spurzheim 1809). Quoy and Gaimard (1824c:7–11) juxtaposed Gall's general cranial diagnoses with their own ethnographic 'observations', adjudged 'favourable' to Gall's 'doctrine'. I here synthesize that discussion with variant material in Gaimard's earlier extract (1823:121–6).<sup>37</sup> These confident summaries of the 'moral and intellectual faculties' of the *Papous* show how readily phrenological terminology ('faculty', 'instinct', 'disposition', 'penchant') could slide

into racial essentialism, notwithstanding the small cranial sample available and the obvious physical variation already acknowledged. According to Gall's 'system', the 'bony projections' on the skulls signified certain 'faculties'. One was *la circonspection* ('caution') leading to 'mistrust' – allegedly an 'instinct' in 'half-savage men' and animals alike but with an acknowledged experiential basis here in slave raids from neighbouring islands. Another craniological character suggested 'manifest dispositions to theft' – this 'vicious inclination' was evidently 'innate' in all the 'peoples' of the region. The most marked character denoted an *instinct carnassier* ('destructive instinct') so strong as to induce a 'penchant for murder' – 'probably' the source of the skulls themselves. Moreover, Abdalaga of Gebe had 'assured' the French that there were 'anthropophagous tribes' in the interior of the Papuan Islands. Yet another character suggested religious 'exaltation' which 'by abuse' could become 'the tendency to superstition' – as with 'other more civilized peoples'. Here, the naturalists reiterated their sympathetic appraisal of the careful gravemaking that testified to the *Papous*' 'ideas of another life'.

Like their commander, Quoy and Gaimard (1824c:5) were generally complimentary about the *Papous*: although 'the nose' was 'a little flat, the lips thick and the cheekbones broad', their features were 'in no way unpleasant', and their laughter was 'not coarse'. Their chapter (1824c:11), but not Gaimard's extract (1823:126), concludes on an optimistic note, a reminder that phrenology also offered a radical technology for personal and racial improvement. The *Papous* were 'wrongly considered by clever naturalists to be close to the Apes',<sup>38</sup> whereas they were 'capable of education' and only needed 'to exercise and develop their intellectual faculties in order to hold a distinguished rank among the numerous varieties of the human species'. I sense that, for Quoy (1817–20:132, 141–2), the idea of racial crossing provided a conceptual circuit-breaker enabling him at once to rationalize chaotic experience and to distance relatively admired people and those he had actually seen from the reviled stereotype of 'the Negro'. Thus, he stressed that 'the nose' of the *Papous* was 'very different' from that of the African Negro. Similarly, the so-called 'slaves' from New Guinea on the Gebe fleet had a 'more agreeable physiognomy' than the 'Negroes of Africa' whom they closely resembled. Quoy and Gaimard (1824c:2) explained in Buffonian or stadial terms the condition of 'one of the most wretched *peuplades* in the world', seen by the French at Shark Bay. Though their 'development' and 'perfection' were supposedly blocked by the 'most dreadful' soil, their 'state' was nonetheless far from 'that of the brutes'

since they possessed the (human) faculty of speech and were thereby able ‘to communicate their thoughts’.

In writing about Indigenous people encountered during Freycinet’s voyage, Quoy adhered to ‘environmentalist’ rather than innatist explanations throughout the textual trajectory from journal preface to published zoology. This discursive consistency doubtless owed much to Freycinet’s influence and directives, to Quoy’s reading of Scottish stadial theorists, and to his and Gaimard’s engagement with Gall and the optimistic contemporary science of phrenology. Yet the maintenance of that humanist logic through the emotional vicissitudes of personal encounters is also an Indigenous countersign, testament to the range of prudent tactics adopted by local inhabitants to handle, welcome, exploit, or shun the ship’s presence without recourse to overt menace or violence. Thus managed, Quoy and his shipmates experienced and recorded their Oceanian encounters in largely positive terms. The dominant collective noun used in these texts is not race but people. In contexts such as Gebe or Waigeo, people is a nominalist ethno-historical marker of physically disparate communities which nonetheless ‘lived together’ as ‘a single people’ (Freycinet 1825–39, II:48; Quoy 1817–20:141).

### **Embracing the science of race**

Five years after his return to France, now professor of anatomy at Rochefort’s *Ecole de Médecine navale*, Quoy asked ‘as a favour’ to join Dumont d’Urville’s (1830–3, I:xxxiv, 3) expedition to Oceania on the *Astrolabe* to which Gaimard had been posted as senior surgeon–naturalist. ‘It was’, recalled Quoy (1864–8:149), ‘a reason to link up with this brave lad, and, more experienced, to seek to do better than we had done’. Dumont d’Urville accepted ‘with delight the offer of so distinguished a colleague’ in natural history and Quoy was duly appointed ‘professor and naturalist’. Once again, he and Gaimard jointly produced the *Zoologie* (1830–5) of the voyage, with Quoy’s official brief to write the text and Gaimard’s to oversee ‘the engravings and the press’ – production of the zoological *Atlas* (1833) and publication of the whole work.<sup>39</sup> In four volumes of more than 3,000 pages and an *Atlas* of 210 plates, man again figures briefly but prominently. The 44-page first chapter (1830b) is ‘On Man’ as the highest of the mammals. A draft in Quoy’s (n.d.a) handwriting, incorporating large slabs of his journal, is in his archived papers. The first five plates in the zoological *Atlas* comprise engravings of Sainson’s portraits of 25 Indigenous men and

women from New Zealand, the western Pacific Islands, New Guinea, and New Holland.

Quoy and Gaimard's two chapters 'On Man' are the same genre of text – initial sections of post-voyage zoological treatises. They are similar in at least two other respects (1830b:17, 18, 59) – the mostly justified claim to empirical rectitude ('constant precaution to speak only about our own observations'); and the vain efforts to skirt 'lifestyle and customs' and limit coverage to 'simple zoological remarks' on 'physical organization'. However, in discourse, mode, scope, and tone, this renewed consideration of man's 'zoological relationships' in the *Grand-Océan* is very different from its precursor.

Discursively, the disparities between the chapters attest to the aforementioned sclerosis in European attitudes to human difference during the 1820s. Explicitly taxonomic in mode, broadly comparative in scope, and deeply racist in tone, the later text subordinates climate theory to zoological determinism. The authors (1830b:71) at once endorsed Forster's 'divisions' of the South Sea Islanders as 'natural' and froze his fluid 'two great varieties' into 'two very distinct races', 'yellow' and 'black'. The engraved portraits in the zoological *Atlas* (Quoy and Gaimard 1833: plates 1–5) are arranged to exemplify these 'two pronounced types' and are labelled either 'yellow race' or 'black race' in the table of contents. Quoy and Gaimard (1830b:46–7) characterized the races in terms reminiscent of Malte-Brun (1813:244):

We have seen great physical uniformity in the yellow race ... Everywhere they are the same men: tall, robust, with open physiognomy and pleasing features;... they present fine proportions, far from those generally seen in the black species ... Their long, wavy black hair ... contributes not a little to their agreeable appearance. The black race, in contrast, tortures its hair in all directions, covers it with multicoloured powders, and forces it into that unkempt form which, at first sight, looks so peculiar.... Independently of colour, the features of these two races are not comparable. Broad cheekbones, a narrow, laterally compressed forehead, thick or protruding lips, a flattened nose, eyes a little oblique and sometimes bulging: such are the facial characters of the blacks ... It is true that the yellow men also have slightly enlarged nostrils; but some of them have a well made nose.

This formulation is typical of enunciative practice in the science of race which reifies its own taxonomic categories and persistently camouflages aesthetic opinions as dispassionate facts. In this passage, races are no longer nominalist entities; the word choices are emotive; the grammar rhetorically depersonalizes 'the blacks' by singularizing them as a race or species while pluralizing 'the yellow men'; and the syntactical

juxtaposition of purportedly collective traits amounts to a tacit racial ranking.

The differences between the two races, Quoy and Gaimard (1830b:16–17, 18–46, 50–3) now insisted, were real ‘zoological characters’ embodied in the ‘fundamental base’ of physical organization which made the races ‘so distinct’ as to be unmistakable. Their sole anthropological task was therefore to ‘grasp the varieties’ which were ‘only nuances’ produced by external ‘modifiers’ such as ‘latitudes’, ‘soil’, and ‘customs’. They differentiated the yellow and the black races into the varieties they knew personally but avoided ‘attributing to climate what properly belongs to organization’. They now complained that Indigenous attachment to their dead – previously approved as evidence of religious belief – made it impossible to give ‘irrefragable proof’ for every field observation since ‘we could not violate their burial grounds without running grave dangers’. In rough notes archived with the manuscript of this text, Quoy (n.d.a:9–10) drew an explicit, Cuvierian causal linkage between the physical and the moral by attributing intellect and morality to biology. The ‘Negro race’, he asserted, had always been incapable of ‘progress’ because an ‘obstacle in its organization’ ensured a ‘degree of inferiority’ that could only be overcome by racial crossing. Now blatantly hierarchical, he vaunted the ‘superiority’ and ‘genius’ of the ‘white race’ and positioned the ‘yellow’ as ‘second’ in ‘ascending progression’ on a putative human ladder, with the ‘Negro race’ collectively located on the lowest rung and the inhabitants of New Holland at the very nadir.

Quoy’s embrace of an overtly racist stance entailed a professional dilemma for a French naval naturalist aspiring to metropolitan scientific recognition during the ultra-reactionary final years of the Restoration. He had to negotiate the tension between the moral and political inertia of monogenist orthodoxy – endorsed by a conservative naval administration and still *de rigueur* for the official genre of voyage publications – and the confident materialism of the science of race, including the growing attraction of polygenism. Cuvier and the naturalists of the Muséum remained monogenists, though perhaps conventional rather than committed. However, from the turn of the 19th century, some anatomists or zoologists such as White (1799) and Virey (1800, 1824) began openly to assert that the human genus was originally divided into distinct species – notably, that ‘the Negro’ must be a separate species with independent origin from ‘the European’. Influential taxonomies of multiple human species were published in the mid-1820s by Bory de Saint-Vincent (1825) and Desmoulins (1826). Labelled polygenism in the 1850s, such positions were usually associated with



harshly racist attitudes, though the general language of human difference steadily hardened and even staunch monogenists like Prichard and Quinet naturalized racial terminology and logic (Douglas 2008a).<sup>40</sup>

The tension between radical zoology and monogenist respectability inflects Quoy's (Quoy and Gaimard 1830b:29–30) discussion of the New Hollanders in the later chapter. A convoluted passage insinuates that they constituted a distinct human species:

Notwithstanding our repugnance for anything hypothetical or only obscure, we cannot however deny our belief that the black race originates in New Guinea.... With respect to the *species* which inhabits New Holland, we cannot regard it as the same. Its distinguishing characters are too striking to try ever to link it to the Papuans. We state the facts without engaging in any conjecture on their origin. We ask only that account be taken of our reservations in expressing zoological opinions which, given the actual state of the science, could be taken too far and end up causing many problems.<sup>41</sup>

The term *espèce* ('species') was loaded in this context. Quoy admitted as much in a handwritten marginal comment on a personal copy of the volume: 'here I am not too clear. I apparently have in mind the unity of the human species, *in which I do not believe*.'<sup>42</sup>

Quoy's draft (n.d.a) of the 1830 text arbitrarily interchanges the taxa species and race, as was typical in early 19th-century polygenist classifications. However, in preparing the volume for publication, either Quoy, or Gaimard, or their editors backed away from this overt challenge to the doctrine of essential human unity. The printed text systematically uses the word race with a few pointed exceptions (1830b:29, 35, 47) – a reference to 'the species which inhabits New Holland' and two to 'the black species'. Writing his autobiography more than thirty years later, Quoy (1864–8:175) clearly did not doubt the plurality of human species. He firmly rejected the ideas 'on the unity of human races' long expressed by Blumenbach and other *hommes de cabinet* (armchair savants) as a 'system' based on the study of collections. He invoked in rebuttal the ocular authority of experience:

when one has seen them [races] at close quarters and their degradation in New Holland and Van Diemen's Land, one cannot refuse to believe that the creator made several species of men just as he made two species of Elephants ... if we asked an academician: 'Could this black, miserable race, living in the woods like animals, one day achieve a seat at the Institut?' His response would be beyond doubt.

As a rhetorical appeal to experience, this passage is disingenuous since Quoy had 'seen' no one at Shark Bay, only two persons reportedly from

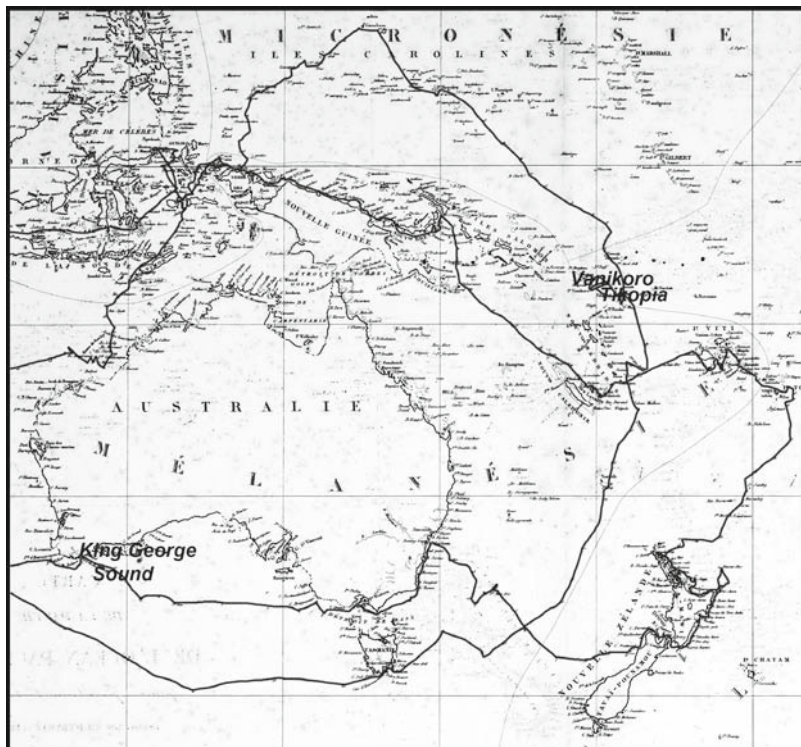
Van Diemen's Land, and a handful of people at King George Sound. It is a far harsher judgement than any pronounced in Quoy's earlier texts.

The vacillations sampled in this section are partly a function of genre and personality. Indeed, the frankness of Quoy's drafts, marginalia, and mature recollections throws light on ambiguities in the published official text. The shifts are also discursive in that they intimate the mounting racialization of human difference and often covert acceptance of polygenism in the 19th-century science of race in France, as well as the ambivalent resistance of conventional opinion. However, I suggest that the change in tone between Quoy and Gaimard's two texts 'On Man' is not solely a discursive product of hardening racial theory in the metropole but also registers disconcerting French experience of the unpredictable behaviour of certain Indigenous people during the voyage of the *Astrolabe*.

### Encounters, agency, and experience of races

At this point, I move from the history of ideas to ethnohistory by investigating two problematic sets of encounters between French naturalists and local inhabitants in the course of Dumont d'Urville's expedition. A return voyage via the Cape of Good Hope rather than a circumnavigation, it was geographically more restricted than those of his predecessors and ethnographically more intense because much longer periods were spent on land and in inshore navigation rather than traversing 'immense maritime spaces'. The planned itinerary included a detailed exploration of the little-known New Guinea coastline and a further search for traces of the lost vessels of La Pérouse.<sup>43</sup> In the event, the expedition visited southwest and southeastern Australia, New Zealand, Tongatapu (Tonga), Ambon, Hobart-Town (Van Diemen's Land), Tikopia, Vanikoro, Guam, Batavia, and Manado. The New Guinea segment was limited to a rapid but thorough survey of the north coast, bracketed by landings at already familiar Carteret Harbour and Dorey Bay (Map 5.1).<sup>44</sup>

My exemplary episodes were located at King George Sound in October 1826 and at Tikopia and Vanikoro in February and March 1828. I found no original journals from this voyage, save that of Pierre-Adolphe Lesson (1826–9) and Dumont d'Urville's completely illegible 'Private journal' (1825–8).<sup>45</sup> However, manuscripts exist of several of his official reports (1827, 1828) written during the expedition while his *Histoire du voyage* (1830–3) includes lengthy illustrative extracts from his officers' journals, printed integrally as endnotes rather than interpolated loosely in the main text as was Freycinet's practice. Sainson's remarkable



Map 5.1 J. Dumont d'Urville and V.C. Lottin (1833), 'Carte de la partie de l'Océan Pacifique parcourue par la corvette l'Astrolabe', detail. National Library of Australia, Canberra, MAP NK 2456/74. Annotation B. Douglas

iconography of the voyage spans the gamut from sketches to watercolours to lithographs to engravings.<sup>46</sup> Dumont d'Urville (1834–5, I:viii) praised the 'accuracy' and 'truth' of his depictions. Quoy's several texts, already considered, are pertinent. A close reading of varied mediums, genres, and modes of representation shows how racial attitudes were enacted, confirmed, or challenged in situ, in response to compelling Indigenous presence and agency – the appearance, conduct, and way of life of local men and women.

### King George Sound, October 1826

Figure 5.6 depicts a meeting between French and Nyungar men at King George Sound. This was the expedition's first anchorage in Oceania and



Figure 5.6 A. Maurin after L.A. de Sainson (1833), 'Port du Roi Georges (Nouvelle-Hollande): un naturel montre à ses compagnons les cadeaux qu'il a reçus à bord de l'Astrolabe'. Lithograph. National Library of Australia, Canberra, PIC U1732 NK3340 LOC NL shelves 577

the first naval visit there for nearly five years, though the harbour was sometimes frequented by sealers from the early 1800s when Flinders and Baudin landed there. The drawing is one of 13 done at King George Sound by Sainson and lithographed in the historical *Atlas*. Naturalist and romantic, they comprise the earliest visual representations of people and places in this locale. Sainson's spindly figures might seem to lampoon his Indigenous subjects but all his figures have a cartoonish quality while Quoy and Gaimard (1830b:41–2) specifically absolved him from a charge of 'caricature'. Though the 'characteristic emaciation' of these men was 'so marked' that it seemed 'truly extraordinary at first sight', it was a product of 'lack of sufficient food' rather than an inherent racial 'character'. By analogy, Sainson's (Raffet 1833) robust depiction of Indigenous people seen elsewhere on the continent suggests that his King George Sound figures at worst exaggerated a conspicuous local physical trait.

Figure 5.6 is a graphic narrative of a personal history. The Aboriginal man drawn in European dress had been a visitor on board the *Astrolabe* for a night and a day. Dumont d'Urville (1830–3, I:96) reported that he 'spent his time cheerfully, drinking, eating and warming himself at the fire in the galley. The sailors gave him gifts, and even dressed him.' He responded 'intelligently' to questions, 'so long as they did not bore him'. Sainson (Maurin 1833 [3 or 4]) also drew his portrait. On the evening of 11 October, the man returned home in company with Sainson, Gaimard, and another officer who wanted to sleep ashore 'to observe the manners of the natives more closely'. All three feature in Figure 5.6, the artist third from left and Gaimard at far left.

Sainson's (1830–3, I:187–91) narration of the encounter is not purely visual. His journal describes the scene he drew when he and his colleagues met a group of twelve men and two boys standing around a fire and subsequently spent the evening with some of them:

when they made out their compatriot covered in clothes, and decorated with necklaces, mirrors, and a thousand trifles given to him as gifts, there were no more bounds to their gaiety. All began simultaneously to howl and sing, and it was the strangest spectacle to see these thin black beings lit by the glare of the flames, leaping, jumping and making sounds like barks. From time to time a sharp, general cry seemed to serve as refrain to their songs, for all the voices joined in, and it was followed by a short pause. Our savage, however, was welcomed, fondled, examined by his friends; each time a new marvel struck them, the raptures revived in still noisier and more lively fashion: and he responded to all this courtesy with shouts of laughter, and joined energetically and deafeningly in the common joy.

Notwithstanding the young artist's naïve enthusiasm for the exotic, the passage inscribes key ethnohistorical markers of Indigenous protocols for greeting and incorporating strangers.<sup>47</sup> Sainson described subsequent phases of the encounter with increasing empathy as he shifted from the detached, hierarchical mode of ethnographic observation to the subjective, more egalitarian mode of personal participation and human rapport, symbolized in his inclusion of himself and his colleagues in the lithograph. It was '*for us* a singular scene, fertile in new emotions, which one would seek in vain to equal in those spectacles invented by civilization to amuse the mind'.<sup>48</sup>

Taken together, Sainson's written and visual narratives of this episode artlessly exemplify the vulnerability of objectifying preconceptions to the challenge of experience. He acknowledged that the Europeans themselves were objects of their interlocutors' gaze and touch: 'Their brilliant, expressive eyes observed us with curiosity and took in our

whole persons. Their hard, thin hands moved between our clothes and our skin, and every word we spoke provoked their astonishment and laughter.' The Frenchmen were in turn 'astonished' when their hosts – 'who seemed so poorly endowed with intelligence' – proposed a name exchange. This widespread Indigenous tactic to assimilate and control strangers by establishing fictive kinship links with them was, to the French, a custom associated with an 'already improved social state', as in the Pacific Islands, rather than with a 'wandering horde in this savage land'. Sainson and the third officer then sang a 'very merry duet' which the men applauded by clapping, inspiring further ethnocentric amazement that 'this miserable people' should express contentment in a manner 'also used in our Europe'.

Existential indices of disjuncture between presumption and experience are not confined to immediate first-hand representations but recur in Quoy and Gaimard's chapter 'On Man' as a tension between global scientific system and personal anecdote. This text intersperses generalized information on human zoology with excerpts from Quoy's journal which sometimes juxtapose racial typification with stories about particular encounters.<sup>49</sup> A discussion of New Holland (1830b:40) begins with broad denigration of the continent's inhabitants: 'If they belong to the [black] race', they comprise 'a very distinct and extremely degraded variety of it'.<sup>50</sup> Then follows a long journal extract (1830b:41–3) which takes the men seen at King George Sound as synecdoche for the 'general type', starting with an impersonal catalogue of physical characters:

Their head is rather large, the face a little broad across; the eyebrow ridge very prominent, much more so perhaps because their small, slanting, black eyes ... are very deep-set. Their nostrils are more or less flat and wide apart; the lips not especially thick, gums pale; the very large mouth, embellished with very fine, regular, close-packed teeth, forms an ensemble exactly like those artificial dentures one sees at Paris dentists ... the hair brown or black, curly without being woolly ... the colour of their complexion is a reddish black ... but the black dominates.

As always in racialist discourse, tense is significant, with the anthropological claim to objectivity underpinned by the universalizing scientific authority of the ethnographic present. These men are abruptly rehumanized by insertion of an anecdotal paragraph particularized by the past tense and inspired by the approved conduct of Gaimard's and Sainson's hosts during their evening ashore. The subjective mode of enunciation of this circumstantial passage (1830b:43–4), with

its powerful Indigenous presence, destabilizes the aura of scientific objectivity of Quoy's entire text:

But they are not stupid ...; their smile and manners show sagacity and shrewdness. Our presence inspired a kind of gaiety in them, and they tried to communicate their feelings to us with a loquacity to which we could not respond, for we did not understand their language.... Soon the name exchange took place ... During a night spent amongst them ashore, we quite easily obtained the most common words of their vocabulary, and they did not cease to show us the most kindly dispositions.

The manifold textual impact of this single encounter shows once again that, while travellers' representations were more or less overdetermined by racial and social preconceptions, such apriority could be unsettled by perceptions of local people's demeanour which left signs and countersigns in what the visitors wrote and drew. As previously discussed, portraiture was especially susceptible to personal imprint because voyage artists usually needed to respect the desires, whims, and demands of potential subjects in order to negotiate a working relationship with them. This was so in the case of Sainson's fine naturalist portraits of named persons met during the evening encounter at King George Sound, including one of a man called Mokoré (Maurin 1833 [6]). Sainson (1830–3, I:188–9) described his 'open countenance and more lively manners than any of his companions'. Mokoré would be much loved by members of a British military garrison established at King George Sound shortly after the French visit and his memory as a 'Man of Peace' is honoured by a statue in the modern city of Albany.<sup>51</sup>

The French visit to King George Sound also left an ambivalent ethnohistorical legacy from beyond the immediate vicinity. Another lithograph of Sainson's portraits (Garnier 1833) depicts three young women and a young man from southeastern Australia who were living and working at King George Sound with a group of English-speaking sealers, including a young Māori (Dumont d'Urville 1830–3, I:97–107). This polyglot community testified to the growing potential mobility of Oceanian people, both voluntary and forced, with the advent of regular foreign visits. Two of the women, drawn by Sainson in full face and profile (Figure 5.7), were from Van Diemen's Land and later identified as Mooney and Dinah (Clarke 1998:31, 33).<sup>52</sup> Dumont d'Urville (1830–3, I:105) described them as 'short, squat, quite well built, but with very coarse features, the front of the face very protuberant, and a blackish complexion like those of Sydney'. In their zoological journal, Quoy and Gaimard (1830a:198–9) animalized and racialized this unflattering

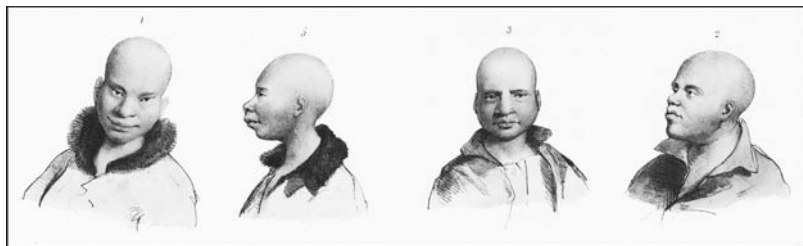


Figure 5.7 H.L. Garnier after L.A. de Sainson (1833), 'Ile des Kangaroos: femmes de l'île', composite. Lithograph. National Library of Australia, Canberra, an8133372

impression as 'thick, protuberant lips, lengthening into a kind of snout [*museau*]', a forehead that 'did not recede too far backwards', and a facial character 'almost' like that of the Negro, notwithstanding 'real differences' from the 'negro type'. In their chapter 'On Man' (1830b:45–6), an exaggerated personal facial feature seen on only *two* women becomes characteristic of a 'distinct race' in Van Diemen's Land. This sequence epitomizes the counterfeit logical trajectory – a priori typification with intellectual slippage from particular to type – on which the science of race depended.

Yet here, too, Indigenous agency perturbed racial system. Quoy and Gaimard (1830a:198; 1830b:44–5) reported the sealers' acknowledgement that they depended on their wives for food and 'that without them they would probably have died of misery'. Quoy (1830–3, I:206) also recognized the naturalists' own debt to the 'skill and industry' of these women in procuring natural history specimens – oysters, other shells, and large lizards. Wiser perhaps than they knew, given Gaimard's enthusiastic sexuality, the Nyungar men consistently refused to allow the French to meet local women.<sup>53</sup> Undaunted, he quickly made friends with the sealers, especially – Quoy (n.d.b:12–13) claimed sardonically in his erotic biography – 'with their wives' who contributed to Gaimard's bizarre hair collection. One of these women, either Dinah or Mooney, also supplied the vocabulary of more than 100 words of the Port Dalrymple (Launceston, Tasmania) language published by Dumont d'Urville (1830–3, I:105–6; 1834:9–10). Perhaps revealingly, it includes the terms *cul* ('arse'), breast, penis, testicle, and vulva. Dumont d'Urville allowed that this woman was 'quite intelligent', despite corresponding 'in the highest degree to her racial type', and added that her English lover had interpreted for her and Gaimard.

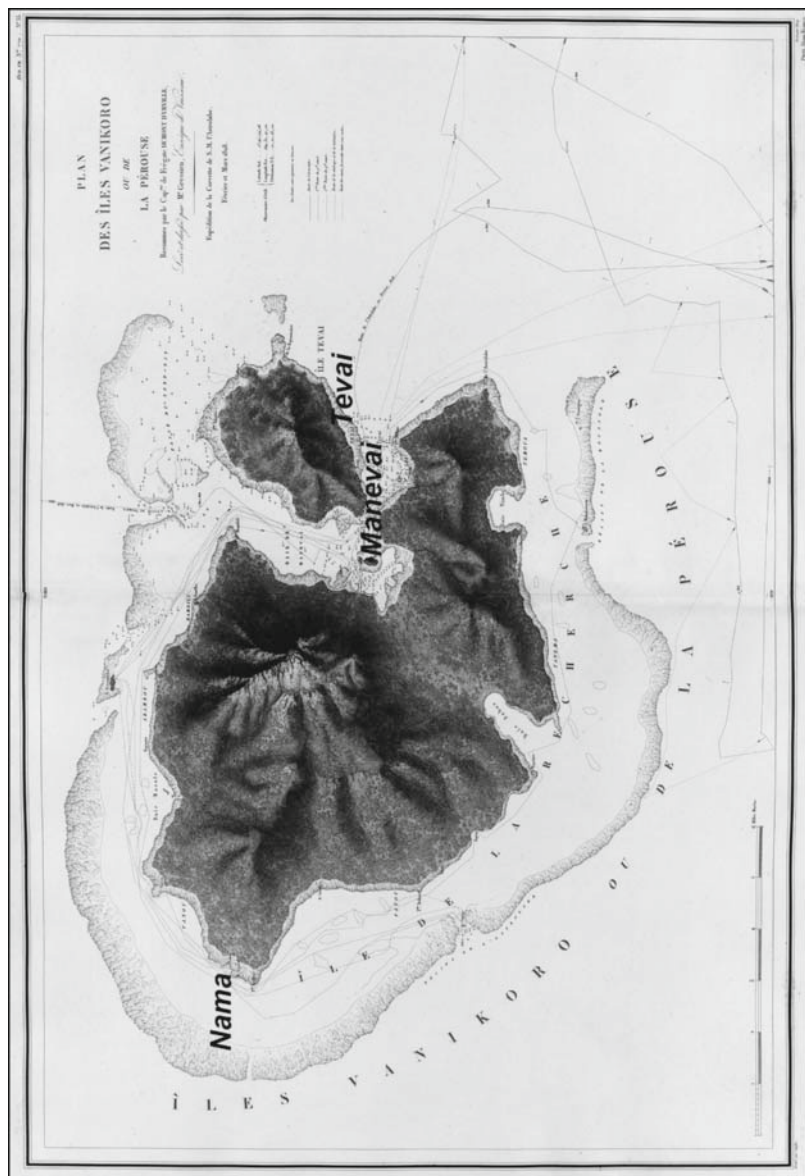


## Tikopia and Vanikoro, February–March 1828

On 10 February 1828, the *Astrolabe* hove to off the small island of Tikopia (Map 5.1) seeking information on the whereabouts of the remains of La Pérouse's expedition, recently located in nearby waters by the Irish trader Peter Dillon (1829). The French at once identified the inhabitants as a unexpected enclave of the 'beautiful *yellow*' or 'Polynesian race' amid the mostly 'black' populations of surrounding islands. Their language seemed familiar to travellers who had spent some weeks in the Tongan group. Moreover, several seamen who had lived there for some time were eager to inform and interpret for the visitors.<sup>54</sup> The various mediums and modes of French representation of Tikopians are remarkably uniform in tone – the voyagers' responses are unanimously positive, whether written or visual, in first-person anecdotal passages in the past tense, or third-person anthropological generalizations in the ethnographic present.

The stopover lasted barely a day but Dumont d'Urville (1830–3, V:111), convinced there was no danger, sent Gaimard, Sainson, and Lesson ashore for a couple of hours 'in the interests of natural history and drawing'. Their accounts of the visit are ecstatic. Gaimard (1830–3, V:305) exulted over their 'extremely gracious' reception, led by the hand to the beach across treacherous coral and given gifts of coconuts and other vegetables. Sainson (1830–3, V:312, 314) delighted in the 'joy and mildness' radiating on every face that seemingly betokened 'the innocent gaiety of a young and carefree nature'. Lesson (1826–9, III:15) had never seen a 'savage population so cheerful, so amiable and so trusting. Not one of them was armed.' Writing in categorical racial mode in the chapter 'On Man', Quoy and Gaimard (1830b:23–4) characterized 'the Tikopians' as 'tall, robust, cheerful, trusting, talkative like all men of that race'. In a nominalist ethnographic passage, Sainson (1830–3, V:314) enthused that 'the race of Tikopia is handsome', 'not very dark' in colour, 'tall and slender', 'agile and fit', with generally attractive faces and even some 'of a perfectly regular beauty'. Similarly favourable impressions pervade the graphic archive which is again personalized by Sainson's presence. His original watercolour of the landing (n.d.) places the artist among the group wading to shore, though Arago's lithograph (1833) omits him. Another lithograph (Adam and Tirpenne 1833) of Sainson's drawing of the visitors' formal ceremonial welcome by the island's 'chiefs' shows him at work in the middle foreground.

Ten days after sailing from Tikopia, the *Astrolabe* finally anchored at the island group of Vanikoro (Map 5.2), 200 kilometres away, where



Map 5.2 V.A. Gressien (1833), 'Plan des îles Vanikoro ou de La Pérouse ...', février et mars 1828'. Photograph and annotation B. Douglas

La Pérouse's vessels had reportedly foundered. Dumont d'Urville's official report on the visit (1828) and his published *Histoire du voyage* (1830–3, V:214, 221) reiterate the complaint that 'these savages' were 'naturally fierce and suspicious, like all those of the black Oceanic race'. Communication was problematic as the three local languages were unknown to the French and are distinct from the Polynesian language of Tikopia, though Tikopians resident on Vanikoro ensured some mutual comprehension (Rivers 1914, I:355). The French used two interpreters – an English seaman said to speak 'quite fluently the language of these islands' (presumably Tikopian) and to know 'quite well the language and customs' of Vanikoro, though he had never lived there; and a man from Uvea (Wallis Island) who had survived a drift voyage to Tikopia and been stranded aboard the *Astrolabe* when she sailed.<sup>55</sup>

French experience during a stay of almost a month in Vanikoro was often sharply at odds with that of their brief stopover in Tikopia. The voyagers' representations emphasize empirical differences which not only confirmed, but amplified their racial prejudices and finally congealed into the opposed stereotypes of the yellow and the black races, previously outlined. To an even greater extent than at King George Sound, these representations show marked disjunctions in tone between artwork, anecdotes, and scientific generalizations and within particular mediums, genres, or texts. Such dissonances were an ambiguous product and countersign of French encounters with incomprehensible, unpredictable, uncontrollable Indigenous agency.

In another vibrant graphic narrative, Sainson depicted the reception of a boat from the *Astrolabe* off the village of Nama on 27 February 1828 as a scene of energetic but friendly Indigenous activity (Figure 5.8). On the left, a man is helping a sailor rig an awning to protect the officers from the burning sun; on the right, another man is making an exchange with a sailor while still others waded out to the boat bearing objects for barter. Quoy's (1830–3, V:316) journal entry describing an earlier visit to Nama initially confirms Sainson's positive visual impression of the residents' conduct: 'They all came towards us, unarmed', while some brought debris from the shipwreck to exchange. Quoy then admitted the vulnerability and trepidation common to voyagers navigating in poorly known seas amongst independent, warlike, alleged savages: 'However good their apparent intentions, we did not dare to land, we had learned to our cost to mistrust all these people in general.' This cautionary moral was experiential rather than specifically racist since the lesson had been forcibly delivered by Tongans whom Quoy (1830–3,

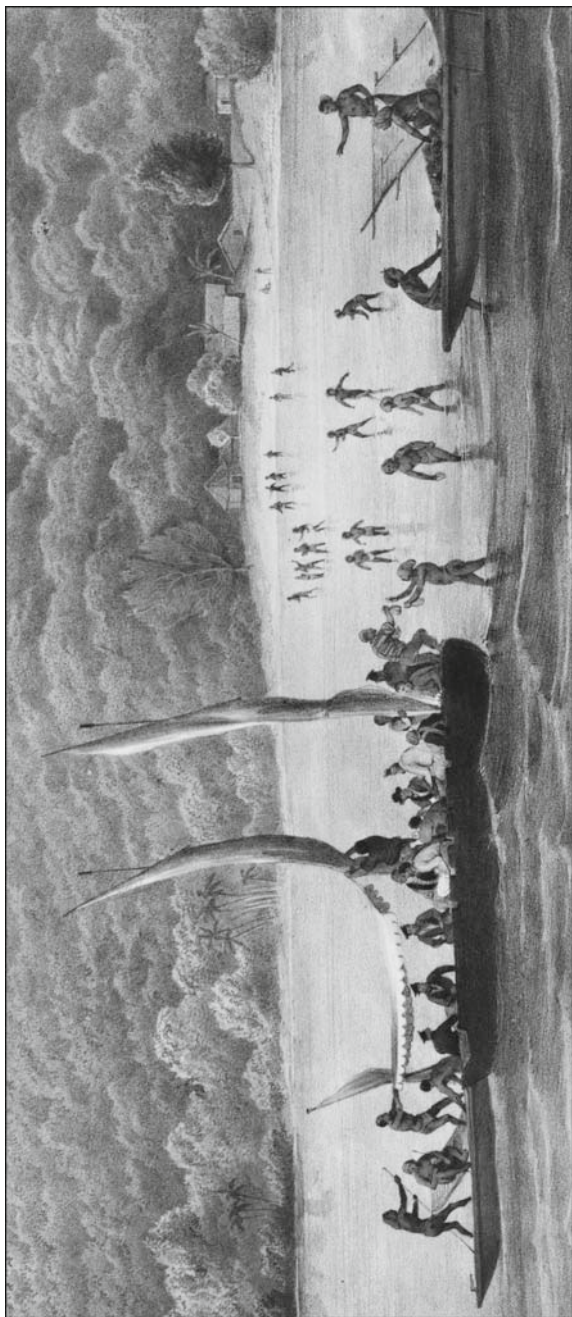


Figure 5.8 L.A. Asselineau after L.A. de Sainson and J.V. Adam (1833), 'Vanikoro: vue du village de Nama', detail. Lithograph. National Library of Australia, PIC U1892 NK3340 LOC NL shelves 578

IV:347) much admired as 'a fine type of the yellow or Polynesian' race. In May 1827, at the end of the *Astrolabe's* visit to Tongatapu, one of the ship's boats had suddenly been attacked and its crew seized by 'a compact mass of savages' more than 500 strong. Dumont d'Urville (1830–3, IV:129, 166, 221, 228, 231), too, had at first been charmed by Tongans, their 'agreeable' physiognomies, 'comparable' to those seen in Europe, and their 'generous, obliging, hospitable' character. But this unexpectedly violent conduct provoked an about-face and led him to denounce them as 'versatile', 'treacherous' savages, 'covetous, audacious, and above all profoundly hypocritical'.

Narrating his visit to the village of Tevai, close to the ship's anchorage in Vanikoro, Dumont d'Urville (1828; 1830–3, V:150–3) was initially disappointed by the 'indifference' of the inhabitants who 'seemed neither gratified nor angry' to see the French. He was then unhappy about the exigent demands and 'bad faith' of the 'chief' who astutely negotiated an exchange. He ended up intimidated by the 'greedy, turbulent dispositions' of these 'alert, resolute, well armed savages' and by their so-called 'perfidy', given that the French had gone there 'without arms' – his words recall those ultimately evoked by Tongan behaviour. Gaimard (1830–3, V:326) remarked the sharp trading and 'very doubtful' attitude of the men of Tevai. In striking contrast, Dumont d'Urville (1830–3, V:175–83) rejoiced in his reception at the nearby small island of Manevai in terms reminiscent of his shipmates' accounts of their welcome by the Polynesians of Tikopia: 'the inhabitants ran to meet us, without arms, manifesting an extreme joy to see us'; an old *ariki* ('chief') 'took me amicably by the hand, and led me into a kind of public hut in which food was being prepared. We sat down amongst the people and beside the chiefs.' Dumont d'Urville repeatedly praised the residents of Manevai and his 'particular friend' Moembe, the 'first ariki and religious chief' who was supposedly 'very ugly' but also 'mild', 'peaceable', 'decent', 'reserved', 'polite', and 'honest'. His portrait, sketched by Sainson, was finely lithographed for the historical *Atlas* but also appropriated by a less naturalistic reproductive process – engraving rather than lithography (Bann 1989:109–11) – to serve a very different discursive end, objectified as a mammalian type within a zoological taxonomy in the zoological *Atlas* (Figure 5.9).

However, this pragmatic anecdotal diversity had no echo in the bitter catalogue of moral signifiers assembled by Dumont d'Urville (1830–3, V:166, 214) in the *Histoire* (though not in his earlier report) to characterize the people of Vanikoro: 'En masse, like all those of the black Oceanian race, this people is disgusting, lazy, stupid, fierce, greedy

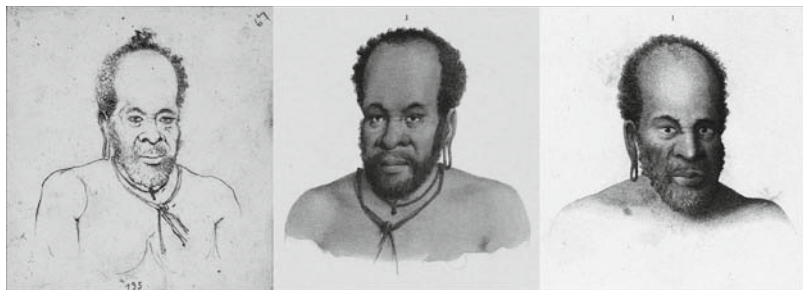


Figure 5.9 L.A. de Sainson [(1828)], ‘Vanikoro: Monbê chef à Manévé’. Pencil. State Library of New South Wales, Sydney, PX\*D 150, a2309054; L.A. de Sainson (1833), ‘Monbai’. Lithograph; A.J.B. Coupé after L.A. de Sainson (1833), ‘Mondé, chef de Manévé’. Engraving. National Library of Australia, Canberra, an8390147 and GMMef 910.4 DUM

and has no known qualities or virtues. Our force alone inspires their respect’. Moreover, they ‘are timid, mistrustful, and naturally hostile to Europeans.’ These scathing generalizations were partly inspired by a dire imagined precedent which permeates accounts of the *Astrolabe’s* visit to Vanikoro – the spectre of the presumed awful fate of La Pérouse and his men. So, in the *Histoire*, Dumont d’Urville (1830–3, V:166–7) lamented:

it was without doubt very cruel for our illustrious Lapérouse to have succumbed so unfortunately at the end of his brilliant expedition; but if he had the time to know, before perishing, the hideous beings into whose hands his bad luck had precipitated him, his shipwreck must have seemed ten times more deplorable to him. Everywhere else, among peoples of the Polynesian race,... he could have negotiated with them, and received consideration and even help and food.... But in Vanikoro Lapérouse’s companions must have found only greed, barbarity and betrayal.

In this passage, not only did Dumont d’Urville uphold the teleological predetermination of events by race but he also rewrote history along racist lines. In fact, as La Pérouse knew only too well, it was the *Polynesians* of New Zealand, Hawai’i, and Samoa who had to that point committed the most notorious acts of violence against Europeans. Moreover, Dumont d’Urville’s own memory of the clashes in Tonga the previous year, in which a sailor had died, ought to have been perfectly fresh.

Especially harsh dissonances of tone and content are evident in and between the physical representations of Vanikoro people by the commander, his naturalists, and his artist. According to the general physical

description in Dumont d'Urville's *Histoire* (1830–3, V:214), 'the elongated cut of their face, the height of their forehead and especially the narrowing of that part at the top of the temples gives these savages a bizarre and quite particular appearance'. In a journal passage recycled for the chapter 'On Man', Quoy (1830–3, V:358–9; Quoy and Gaimard 1830b:35) confirmed this impression as an objective zoological fact. The 'variety of the black species' resident in Vanikoro displayed the singular character of a 'natural lateral compression of the head produced by the prominent frontal bulging of the coronal and by the strong ridge described by the curved temporal line'. Yet Sainson's original sketches of mostly named persons scarcely depict this allegedly typical cranial constriction (Figure 5.10). And Quoy himself had to add a footnote conceding: 'This very apparent narrowing is however only relative, as was obvious from measurements taken with a curved compass on fifteen individuals, and then compared with the dimensions of this part in men of our crew.' Lesson (1826–9, III:189; 1876:255–6), who did the measuring, reported much the same thing in his journal and in contemporary notes transcribed in a much later scientific paper: 'the narrowness of the forehead was real' but it was 'more prominent to the eye than to the compass'.

The volte-face is especially ironic since it resulted from the contradiction of racially partial personal observation by unexpected proofs of Indigenous reality supplied by craniometry – the concrete but fundamentally subjective science which underpinned 19th-century raciology. Quoy (1830–3, V:359), moreover, was obliged to acknowledge an element of fashion and choice – agency – in the putative height of the

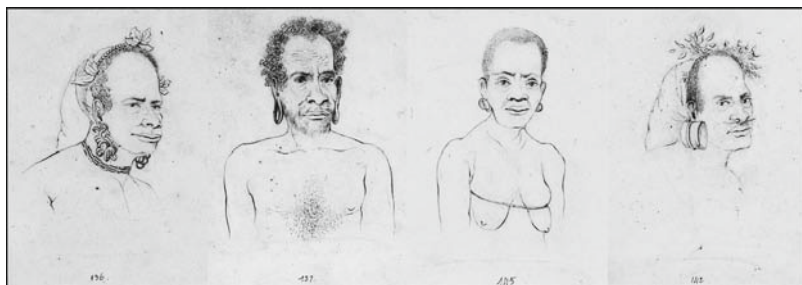


Figure 5.10 L.A. de Sainson [1828], 'Vanikoro: Valié chef à Nama'; 'Meriko chef à Manévé'; 'Femme du chef Pouka à Manévé'; 'Naturel de Manévé'. Pencil. State Library of New South Wales, Sydney, PX\*D 150, a2309054, a2309055, a2309058, a2309057

forehead: 'Their hair does not grow forward at all on the brow, and the care they take to pull it up and throw it back makes all these parts very visible.' Lesson (1876:255), too, commented that 'the hair style adopted renders the head more elongated than in the other races'.

These threats to the core of his zoological system in no way deflected Quoy's project of racial typification – a synthesis of prejudice, African and simian analogies, and dissatisfaction provoked by Indigenous behaviour and appearance, essentialized in the ethnographic present and dehumanized by the singular. This dialectic of discourse and experience culminated in his reinvention of the black race of the *Grand-Océan* for which the inhabitants of Vanikoro served variously as model, synecdoche, and extreme (Quoy and Gaimard 1830b:35–7):

We must admit that here the variety of the black species is ... as close to the negro type in the strict sense as to the papou ... Another not less remarkable character is the depression of the bones of the nose which makes this organ look squashed at its root: singular resemblance to that of the Orang-Outang. As a result, the orbital protuberances, already very bulging, appear still more so. The nose itself is very flat ... The bulging form of the forehead makes the facial angle not too acute.... The eyeball is prominent and in form and colour resembles that of the Negroes; the lips are thick, the chin is small ... the calcaneum [heel bone] in many individuals is quite remarkably prominent, which is a new link with the Negro, not presented by the Polynesian race. Their hair is frizzy ... The women are frighteningly ugly.<sup>56</sup>

In a contemporary anti-polygenist polemic, the antiquarian Claude-Charles Pierquin de Gembloux (1840:34) aptly quipped that 'the last race [of the human genus] has recently been discovered, that's the proper word, by MM. Quoy and Gaynard ... scattered in Oceania'.

I pose the question: 'Why such aversion for *these* particular Islanders?' Contemporary texts provide clear indices of the dismay, contempt, and at times fury inspired in *these* voyagers by the appearance, attitudes, and actions of the Indigenous people encountered in Vanikoro – the obstinacy and egoism of the men, their omnipresent arms, their extravagant body decorations, and especially their determination to dominate exchanges. Dumont d'Urville (1830–3, V:166–7) sneered that, when dressed for ceremony, the men were 'ridiculously overlaid with white shell or tortoiseshell rings, interlinked and hung from the ears, from the nostrils, from the arms, the wrists, the belt, the knees, as far as the ankles'. He specifically complained that at Tevai, notwithstanding the objects offered by the French, they could obtain 'only coconuts and a few bananas', so 'excessive' was the charge for other goods; 'as for pigs', the inhabitants were evidently 'determined not to give any up,



whatever the price proposed to them'. This passage immediately follows and instantiates Dumont d'Urville's lurid racial fantasy about the fate of La Pérouse and his men in Vanikoro.

Dumont d'Urville's fury at the Islanders' reluctance to trade for provisions also registers the impasse consequent on the arrival of a European vessel, with an 80-strong crew desperate to revictual, at a group of small, thinly populated islands with limited surplus food supplies. Both the French and the inhabitants of Vanikoro expressed their own imperatives and material desires but Dumont d'Urville (1830–3, V:145–6) insisted on seeing local disinclination to trade as further proof of moral faults inherent in race:

always unreasonably demanding, the savages have sold almost nothing. Today they brought some bows and arrows that they obstinately refused to exchange, at any price whatsoever. These men continue to show a mistrust foreign to peoples of the Polynesian race. It appears to stem from a kind of natural antipathy of the black races against the whites, the dire effects of which have been felt by a crowd of voyagers.

Raciology's dubious logic, oscillating between abstract generalization and empirical fact, is again patent in this passage's sequence from particular Indigenous actions, explained by a naturalized racial comparison which is in turn amplified by historical hyperbole.

A parallel trajectory and some of the stresses driving it are evident in Gaimard's (1830–3, V:331–50) journal of six nights and five days he spent ashore at the village of Nama, with no companion other than the English interpreter. Gaimard sought to elicit precise information on the shipwreck of La Pérouse's vessels and what happened to the survivors but also to inquire into local languages and customs. At the outset, his journal (1830–3, V:331) expresses the grim emotional blend of apprehension and racial distaste with which he embarked on this enterprise: 'I was putting myself at the disposition of men evidently badly disposed towards us, black, ugly, malicious [*méchans*], envious men', in an island lacking 'those gracious compensations' available in 'all the archipelagos inhabited by the yellow race'. Communication was doubly problematic for him. Dumont d'Urville (1830–3, V:158) regretted that, since Gaimard knew 'no English at all', the interpreter would be of doubtful value. Gaimard (1830–3, V:349–50), always the optimist, acknowledged that even 'ordinarily' he did not understand the sailor 'very well'; but when the man was excited and spoke 'very quickly', he 'no longer understood him at all'. With respect to the local residents, Gaimard admitted: 'I no longer understand the language, when, in

their fury, they speak with unbelievable volubility.’ Years later, Quoy (n.d.b:19) confirmed that ‘in ignorance of the language our active and dedicated companion could learn nothing’ during this sojourn ashore.

On three occasions during his stay in the village, Gaimard (1830–3, V:330, 334, 337, 345–6, 349–50) reported sudden, incomprehensible explosions of rage centring on a man known to the French as Védévéré, their ‘guide’ or ‘pilot’ and Gaimard’s particular host at Nama. His abrupt switches from ‘ordinary humility’ to the ‘most offensive arrogance’ affronted Gaimard whose social pretensions were gratified by his own denomination as ‘chief Gaimard’ (‘l’aligui Kaima. They always call me that’) but whose racial pride expected humble compliance from ‘these savages’. Seeking motives for the outbursts, he surmised that Védévéré was insulted when the interpreter twice had the ‘imprudence’ to accuse him of theft; or that he erupted ‘through jealousy’ that others apparently received gifts he coveted himself. More reflexively, Gaimard wondered whether, ‘without wanting to’, the Europeans had somehow displeased the Islanders collectively or outraged ‘their religious ideas’. The racially inflected spectre of these paroxysms overshadowed his entire experience in Nama and becomes the dominant motif in his journal, as in the vivid immediacy of this passage (1830–3, V:346):

the anger of these black men is terrible; and when a whole populace resembles those who were annoyed, the sight is not reassuring, if one lacks sufficient numbers to oppose an energetic resistance, and has not at least a chance of success. Here, sang-froid is the only weapon I have to use. I keep my gun under my arm and I am writing these lines at the moment when the turmoil is still at the highest pitch.<sup>57</sup>

The dramatic intensity of the threatening moments all but effaces the import of more mundane interactions noted by Gaimard (1830–3, V:334, 335, 337, 344), such as the gifts of food brought regularly to him at mealtimes or the evening dance sessions in which, on one occasion, he took ‘an active part’, ‘to the great satisfaction of all the natives’.

One other journal episode has an equivalent, but quite dissimilar emotional weight to that of times of imminent ‘peril’. Unsurprisingly, given Gaimard’s (1830–3, V:331, 347) predilection for ‘gracious compensations’, it involved a potential sexual encounter, narrated with wry self-deprecation and glimmering appreciation of Indigenous irony. He had noticed a ‘quite nice’ young woman called Bilo in a neighbouring house. ‘Unknown’ to him, his English companion invited her to stay with Gaimard while he was in the village. She agreed ‘very graciously’ and offered to meet him the following day in the house of Gaimard’s

'friend', 'the chief Tan-Halaou'. Unable 'to refuse such an opportunity to study the Islanders' customs', Gaimard was also excited by the 'truly extraordinary circumstance' that a rendezvous with 'a woman of the black Oceanian race' should be arranged 'with the approval of the men who are almost all brutally jealous'. He duly turned up on three successive days, each time politely welcomed by Tan-Halaou or his wife with the news that Bilo was fishing or had gone to another village. Amused at his own expense by 'this singular disappointment', Gaimard conceded that it probably worked to his advantage: 'I would have given this young girl most of the objects that I meant to use as gifts; the chiefs would thus have been deprived, and this circumstance might have led to my ruin.'

Gaimard's (1830–3, V:349, 351) sang-froid and self-avowed 'attraction' to 'useful peril' finally failed in the face of 'perpetual danger' and the distress of 'seeing his life continually compromised among these savages'. He returned to the vessel, as Dumont d'Urville (1828; 1830–3, V:185–6, 191) put it, outraged by their 'greedy, turbulent, irascible character'. He was also in 'the most pitiful state', prostrated by 'very painful boils' and a 'quite violent' fever – presumably malaria since it took a long time and frequent relapses before he recovered, 'no longer the same man' according to Quoy (n.d.b:20) who had treated him. The following day, Dumont d'Urville (1830–3, V:191–2, 206, 236, 239–40, 256) himself succumbed to the malady and in less than a fortnight 40 crew members were afflicted, including Quoy and Lesson.

The ambiguous actions and volatile demeanour of the inhabitants of Vanikoro catalysed French expression of a jumble of personal and shared emotions. Starting from general aversion to blacks, stoked by febrile imaginings about La Pérouse, these passions were complicated by specific experience of Indigenous agency and by the debilitating effects of the real fever contracted by half the crew in what contemporary medical knowledge (Quoy 1830–3, V:320) classed as 'this very unhealthy soil'.

### **Classifying 'savages' in *Océanie***

In long retrospect, Quoy (n.d.b:19) made Gaimard's plight following his stay ashore in Nama the product of a racist equation – he had gone 'unthinkingly to stay among these natives of the black race, very mistrustful and especially jealous of their women; in that very different from the yellow species'. Much earlier, Quoy and Gaimard (1830b:48) had generalized the formula in the chapter 'On Man', bracketing

Quoy's stark physical dichotomy of the yellow and the black races of the *Grand-Océan* with 'not less fundamental distinctions' in their 'morals' and 'customs'. The yellow race, 'so confident and joyful', rushed to welcome voyagers with the offer of exchanges and 'even the favours of its women'. In contrast, the black race lived in small, isolated groups, bellicose, 'mistrustful', and 'excessively jealous of their women'.

This rhetorical opposition represents 'yellow' hospitality and 'black' suspicion as *natural* racial characters rather than behavioural choices. According to Dumont d'Urville (1830–3:V:112, 145–6), the inhabitants of Tikopia were '*naturally* mild, joyful and friendly' while those of Vanikoro manifested 'a kind of *natural* antipathy of the black races against the whites'. He had earlier (1830–3, IV:578–9) reckoned the *Papous* of Dorey Bay 'very different from the peoples of Tahiti, of New Zealand, of Tonga' in that, even when communicating 'freely' with the Europeans, they maintained 'a kind of reserve, we could say *innate* mistrust'.<sup>58</sup> The 'extreme jealousy' of the black race with respect to 'their women' was a recurrent French grievance which here provoked invective: 'It is very odd that, in the whole Pacific Ocean, the black races, where the women are commonly hideous, are the only ones in which the men are so keen to hide their women, married or not, from the eyes of Europeans.'<sup>59</sup> Once again, I read Indigenous hospitality and suspicion as particular tactics adopted contextually to control or profit from the presence of foreigners. Yet Quoy and Gaimard (1830b:49) drew an ominous corollary from the so-called 'characters specific to these two peoples': that 'under European influence', the yellow race 'is striding rapidly towards civilization, while the other, refusing all contact, remains stationary in its ignorance and barbarism'. This stark (and inaccurate) racialist prophecy was a long way from their previous optimism as to the likely future of the *Papous*.

Quoy's project of racial taxonomy, previously outlined, anticipated that of his commander Dumont d'Urville (1832:2–13, 15–16, 18–19) who reworked his rambling 1826 manuscript into a seminal paper read to the Société de Géographie and published in the Société's *Bulletin* with an illustrative map (Map 0.1). This work superimposes a dual racial classification on a quadripartite regional geography that divides *Océanie* into *Polynésie*, *Micronésie*, *Malaisie*, and the overtly racialist neologism *Mélanésie* for 'the homeland of the black Oceanian race'. Like Quoy, Dumont d'Urville froze the 'immortal' Forster's labile varieties of South Sea Islanders as 'two truly distinct races', one 'black', the other 'copper-coloured'. His innovative racial nomenclature is now classic. 'Melanesian' was his general name for the 'black race', regarded as the

'veritable natives' of *Océanie* or at least the 'first occupants'. The 'tanned or copper-coloured Polynesian race', comprising 'the Polynesians' and 'the Micronesians', was contrued as the progeny of 'conquerors' from the west who had widely expelled or destroyed the 'primitive race of Melanesians', or colonized, co-existed, and intermixed with them to generate the myriad 'nuances' characteristic of particular populations.<sup>60</sup>

Having named his races, Dumont d'Urville (1832:3, 11–20) generalized selective personal experience by colligating skin colour and physical appearance with language, institutions, religion, intellect, and morality to produce an abstract racial hierarchy. He characterized the Melanesians as 'hideous' and 'unpleasant' to look at; 'rarely well built'; linguistically 'very limited'; without regular government, laws, or religious rites; 'natural enemies of the whites'; and 'generally very inferior' in 'dispositions' and 'intelligence' to the Polynesians, Micronesians, and Malays. He positioned the Australians and the Tasmanians at the 'last degree' of the Melanesian race as its 'primitive natural state', 'probably the most limited and stupid of beings', and 'essentially closest to the unreasoning brute'. Not only did he rehearse Brosses's and Forster's conjectural histories of ancient migrations and racial displacements but, like Quoy, transformed speculative history into biological reality and modern colonial fact – it was a 'law of nature', resulting from 'organic differences' in the 'intellectual faculties' of the diverse races, that the black 'must obey' the others 'or disappear' and that the white 'must dominate'.

Rejecting the by then fashionable 'multiplication of races', epitomized in Bory de Saint-Vincent's (1825) 15 human species, Dumont d'Urville (1832:18–21) sketched a tripartite global hierarchy in which the 'white' race explicitly ranked 'first', the 'yellow' race 'second', and the 'black' race 'third', in line with his aforesaid law of nature. In a footnote, he marvelled that a dozen years of 'study' and 'observations' around the globe had brought him unwittingly to the same opinion reached earlier by the 'famous physiologist' Cuvier but only recently come to his own attention through a 'careful' re-reading of Bory de Saint-Vincent. Dumont d'Urville slotted his two Oceanian races into this universal schema as 'branches', respectively, of the 'black race of Africa' and the 'yellow race native to Asia'.

Although his streamlined racial synthesis was anchored in his experience of multiple encounters in situ, there is nothing nominalist about Dumont d'Urville's categorical use of the term race in this paper. The labels Melanesian, Polynesian, and Micronesian are racial taxa imposed on actual groupings but reified as real and true. In this context, the incidence and shifting status of race in his *Histoire* are instructive. In the

first two volumes, focussed respectively on Australia and New Zealand, race is used rarely and almost always in a nominalist sense, as in his reference (1830–3, I:127) to the particular ‘race of humans’ inhabiting the environs of Western Port (Victoria). That, at least, is the case until the final 20 pages of the second volume (1830–3, II, 611–30) which reprint Dumont d’Urville’s paper on the races of *Océanie* and set an altered tone for the rest of the work by providing a new mode of discourse – taxonomy – with a novel lexicon. In eight chapters at the core of the two final volumes (1830–3, IV: chs 25–8; V: chs 31–4), including footnoted excerpts from Quoy’s and Gaimard’s journals, the word race is used repeatedly, categorically, and often in rhetorical conjunction with assertions of gross, innate racial difference – I have cited several such instances with reference to Vanikoro. Significantly, these chapters relate the expedition’s varied, at times confronting encounters with Indigenous people in Tonga, Fiji, New Ireland, New Guinea, Tikopia, and Vanikoro. In contrast, parallel extracts from Sainson’s journal (1830–3, IV:349, 350, 359, 361; V:314) use race either as a genealogical mass noun (‘the royal race’ in Tonga) or as a nominalist collective noun (‘the race of Tikopia’), befitting the artist’s humanist mindset, existential immersion, and seeming disregard for racial taxonomy.

Dumont d’Urville’s contemporary reports to the Minister of the Navy pinpoint the experiential element in his ultimate recourse to categorical racial terminology. Until very late in the voyage, the word race appears very seldom and always in a nominalist sense – ‘the fine [New] Zealand race’ (1827:4). Only in Batavia in August 1828, relating the anxieties and frustrations of his visit to Vanikoro, did he insert racially categorical phrases into an official report. Now Dumont d’Urville (1828) berated the inhabitants as ‘naturally fierce and mistrustful savages like all those of the black Oceanic race’ and attributed proximity to ‘the true Polynesian race’ to two ‘very intelligent young chiefs’ who claimed ‘with vanity’ to be the offspring of Tikopian men and Vanikoro women.<sup>61</sup> Both passages are restated in the *Histoire* (1830–3, V:221, 222).

These regional racial taxonomies are noteworthy in three further respects. Like raciology generally, their facade of scientific rationality is rooted in a visceral race pride that takes for granted the objective factuality of the racial rankings sprung from its own insecurities and deeply ethnocentric aesthetics. Blumenbach’s (1806:60, 70) opinion that the ‘Caucasian race’ was the ‘most cultivated’ in facial features and cranial form was relativized by the qualifier, ‘according to the European conception of beauty’. But relativism is rare in the proliferation of absolute racial verdicts after 1800. Virey’s (1800, I:145–7) initial classification

divided mankind into 'beautiful white' races and 'ugly or brown and black' ones; he ranked 'the European' as 'man par excellence, and the head of the human genus'. Cuvier's (1817a, I:94–5) global racial hierarchy conjoined an encomium for the 'beauty' of the 'most civilized' race, 'the Caucasian, to which we belong', with implicit deprecation of the physical appearance and 'stationary' civilization of the 'Mongolic' race and overt contempt for the purportedly simian features and 'barbaric' *peuplades* of the 'Negro race'.

The texts produced by Quoy and Dumont d'Urville during and in the wake of the *Astrolabe's* voyage reinscribe in regional contexts the unqualified universalization of Eurocentric standards of comparative racial beauty and perfection. A single example underlines the point. According to Dumont d'Urville's *Histoire* (1830–3, IV:228–9), the inhabitants of Tongatapu combined 'agreeable' features with 'a variety of traits comparable to those seen in Europe', including an 'aquiline' nose, 'quite thin' lips, and 'not very dark' skin colour which gave some 'a still more marked resemblance to southern Europeans'. Not coincidentally, he saw in them 'less mixing with the black Oceanian or Melanesian race than in Tahiti or New Zealand', notwithstanding their proximity to Fiji which 'remained in the power of the black race'. His racial taxonomy (1832:7) ranks the Tongans with the Hawaiians and the Tahitians as those Polynesians who had made 'the most progress towards civilization'. It should be recognized, however, that the vaunted regional superiority of yellow race over black, Polynesian over Melanesian, was embedded within a more or less finely graded, a priori global hierarchy. In Tikopia, the French met a man they called 'Lascar Joe', a Bengali seaman who had lived for years in the Fiji Islands and in Tikopia. They took him to be Tikopian because 'at first sight' he looked just like them and wore similar chest tattoos. But a 'closer' look told Dumont d'Urville (1830–3, V:117) that his face was of 'a different type' and his 'features' proclaimed 'a more intelligent race'. Contemporary racial taxonomies, the more minimalist of them at least, usually ranked subcontinental Indians as a branch of the white or Caucasian race.<sup>62</sup> *Ipsa facto*, however much Lascar Joe had 'taken on all the habits of the Polynesians', he must not be mistaken for one.

Another notable aspect of many of the travellers' representations considered in this chapter is the entanglement of physical differentiae with ideas about station or class, often worked into a familiar narrative of autochthony, migration, and racial conquest. Broad moral judgements about national character or levels of civilization were characteristic of racial discourses, as has been mentioned. The earliest genealogical

uses of the word race as a mass noun connoted breeding and station: for instance, ‘Dukes ... of regall race’ in 1563 or *homme de noble race* (‘man of noble race’) in 1606.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, initial recourse to race as a collective noun was closely associated with aristocratic pretensions in pre-revolutionary France: for example, ‘the three races of the Kings of France’.<sup>64</sup> However, the conflation of race with rank differentials within particular Indigenous communities is a peculiarly salient theme in the ethnographic or anthropological works of naval officers, professionally hypersensitive to nice distinctions of rank and to the dignity or power they were presumed to entail. So, on the one hand, Dumont d’Urville (1828; 1830–3, V:222) contemptuously dismissed ordinary Tikopian ‘men of the people’ as ‘devoid of intelligence’ and no use to him as informants; while, on the other hand, in Vanikoro he acknowledged three ‘chiefs’ and the aforesaid two ‘very intelligent’ half-Tikopian ‘chiefs’ as his best sources of information about La Pérouse.

The categorical racial divisions posited by Dumont d’Urville in his 1826 manuscript are to an extent undermined by perceived differences in station (see Chapter 4). But his narrative of the *Astrolabe*’s voyage (1830–3, II:25–6, 387–8; IV:229) leaves no doubt that race ultimately determined his estimation of grade. Tattooed New Zealanders with ‘fine forms’ and a ‘distinguished expression’ were ‘of superior rank’ while those lacking tattoo and with ‘common, insignificant’ features were slaves or of ‘low class’ and might be ‘of another race’. The population of New Zealand was split between ‘two quite distinct varieties’ or ‘races’: a ‘darker’ coloured race of ‘true aborigines’ or earliest arrivals and a ‘white’ race of ‘conquerors’ who came ‘much later’. Tongans admired for their ‘noble’ bearing, ‘perfect’ build, and almost white’ skin were ‘the chiefs’ and ‘those of a superior rank’, especially women. In his human taxonomy, Dumont d’Urville (1832:15) connected the dots of this racial puzzle by hypothesizing that ‘the Melanesian race’ must originally have occupied most of the islands of Oceania since he had seen persons among the ‘base classes’ in Tahiti who in colour, body shape, and facial features were very close to the ‘Melanesian type’ while individuals with ‘perfectly’ Melanesian physical characters were also to be found among the inhabitants of New Zealand.

Dumont d’Urville’s (1830–3, IV:603–7) clearest outline of a causal linkage between race and class is in a ‘succinct résumé’ of the inhabitants of Dorey Bay, in far northeast New Guinea, which he had visited on the *Coquille* in 1824 and where the *Astrolabe* anchored for 12 days in August 1827. Despite their apparently ‘very mixed origins’ and ‘endlessly varied physiognomy’, he discerned ‘three main nuances’ – one,



*Papou*; the second, *métis*; and the third, *Harfour* who recalled the 'Oceanians of the black race' and were undoubtedly the 'real natives'. Having characterized each 'variety' in detail, he concluded: 'To these nuances of colour and constitution, the influence of various individuals in the social order seemed to me to be directly linked.' Thus, the second, mixed variety produced 'all the chiefs' and 'genuine traders' who spoke Malay and whose 'superiority' was patent in their relations with 'men of the other classes'. The *Papous* comprised the 'mass of the people', had little 'positive authority', and usually knew only a few words of Malay. The 'natives' were the 'most miserable' – slaves or domestic servants, they were probably the descendants of 'a conquered race'.

The third and final theme worth further comment in the racial systems proposed by Quoy and Dumont d'Urville is their recourse to the *deus ex machina* of racial mixing in order to explain away human variation or exceptions ('nuances'), to circumvent the impossibility of cramming diverse experience into neat racial pigeonholes, and perhaps to deflect threats to their own race pride. In his *Uranie* voyage texts, Quoy (1817–20:136, 141–2; Quoy and Gaimard 1824c:3–6) idiosyncratically limited the term *Papou* to a distinct but oddly 'variable' race resident in and near Waigeo. He seized on the idea of racial 'crossings' to rationalize the 'multitude of nuances' he had seen in this 'one people'. Dumont d'Urville's reliance on the notion of mixing in his *Astrolabe* voyage texts was just as opportunistic but racially more emotive and less systematic. At King George Sound in 1826, the French saw a young man and woman from the mainland coast opposite Kangaroo Island (South Australia). The man gave Gaimard a list of 168 words of the Kurna language of this region (Dumont d'Urville 1834:6–8). They were probably known as Harry and Sally (Amery 1998:51–4) and were portrayed by Sainson (Garnier 1833 [4, 6]). According to Dumont d'Urville (1830–3, I:106; 1834:6), they were 'passably proportioned' and 'darker' in colour, with 'regular features, quite fine eyes, and very smooth black hair'. Far from being 'repulsive like most of the natives of Australia', they seemed 'to belong to a less degraded race' while the man's face 'itself proclaimed at first glance' his 'superior intelligence'. Dumont d'Urville's response to this challenge to his racial presumptions was to wonder if the man was 'of European race on his father's side'. With respect to New Zealand (1830–3, II:388–9), he attributed the 'crowd of diverse nuances' in the 'physical characters' of the population to the 'continual mixing' of its two constituent races.

Surprisingly, given the prominence of the theme of racial mixing in Quoy's earlier work, it is not mentioned in the published extracts

from his *Astrolabe* journal and receives very summary treatment in the chapter ‘On Man’ (Quoy and Gaimard 1830b:28, 50). He characterized the present population of Guam, long colonized by Spain, as a ‘handsome’ métis race in no way ‘damaged’ by ‘crossing’. He remarked that he had seen ‘métis chiefs’ in Fiji and Vanikoro, that ‘this mélange’ was readily recognizable, and that it was ‘all to the advantage of the black race’ because they acquired ‘the form and character of the yellow race’. Dumont d’Urville’s racial taxonomy (1832:12–13) in turn allows Melanesians no prospect of improvement except through ‘communications’ and racial ‘crossing’ with Polynesians. The Fijians occupied the ‘first rank’ of the Melanesian race but only thanks to their proximity to Tonga and ‘frequent’ relations with Polynesians. Acknowledging that earlier navigators had reported ‘many nuances’ in these islands – an allusion to Quirós in particular – Dumont d’Urville first classified them into ‘Negroes, mulattos and whites’, as Blumenbach had done nearly forty years before (see Chapter 1), and then racialized them: ‘The first were the Melanesians, the last Polynesians, and the mulattos Hybrids, offspring of the crossing of the two black and copper-coloured races.’

## Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated marked variation in the representations of human difference by Quoy, his commanders, and his colleagues. They differ according to period, author, and the intersections of discourse, medium, genre, and mode. They also differ in line with voyagers’ diverse experiences of their reception in situ and ambivalent perceptions of the physical appearance, behaviour, lifestyle, morality, and milieu of local inhabitants. Signs and more or less oblique countersigns of the presence and agency of Indigenous people populate the journals of eyewitnesses and participants, leach into their more formal texts, and pervade ethnographic art. By the late 1820s, congealing racial prejudice had complicated but not effaced the impact of particular Indigenous agency on the responses, representations, and classifications of foreign travellers.

The chapter also highlights a series of related tensions confronting early 19th-century French naval naturalists. One pitted the demands of a military vocation against the lure of wider scientific renown. Another compelled field anthropologists to perform to metropolitan audiences of an abstract, dehumanizing science while claiming the empirical authority of baffling personal encounters which defied racial system. These tensions came together in the late 1820s in the furtive but

steadily growing appeal of polygenism for savants across the political spectrum, in the face of monogenist dogma. Quoy's efforts to manage this dilemma are discussed above. Dumont d'Urville's racial taxonomy (1832:19), directed to a scientific audience, is noncommittal as to whether the three major human races might belong to 'different or successive creations or formations'. Yet, in reprinting the memoir in his official voyage narrative – a very conventional genre – he added a footnote (1830–3, II:628, note 1) endorsing the orthodox 'opinion' that all races derived from the 'same primitive stock'. Such equivocations simultaneously register widening acknowledgement of the radical notion of multiple human species and anxiety to meet the often incommensurate demands of experience, intellectual fashion, and moral conformity, epitomized respectively for French naval naturalists in their field encounters, their scientific ambitions, and their career.

By the late 1820s, from different perspectives, metropolitan savants and field naturalists were engaged in projects of human taxonomy that objectified actual people as racial types. Yet, whereas raciology often all but obliterated the imprint of encounters, voyagers' regional classifications were always threatened by the mismatch of theory and praxis – the challenge of trying to force personal experience of a highly varied mix of human physical features, modes of life, and behaviours into preconceived racial slots.

# 6

## Raciology in Action: Phrenology, Polygenism, & Agency in *Océanie*

*Voyage of Dumont d'Urville 1837–1840*

Late 18th-century developments in comparative osteology prefigured the growing importance of the skull, initially for its own sake and ultimately as signifier of the size and qualities of the brain. Concurrently, the Zwinglian minister, mystic, and poet Lavater (1781–1803, I:vi) reconstituted physiognomy – the ancient ‘art of knowing a person’s morals and dispositions by inspection of the face’ – as a ‘Science inherently true, based in Nature’.<sup>1</sup> An impassioned monogenist, Lavater (1781–1803, II:36, 129, 134, 139) recruited comparative anatomy to his cause. Physiognomy, he wrote, must rest on the ‘osseous system’ because it is ‘always *solid, fixed, durable, recognizable*’ and bears the ‘marks’ of the ‘more invariable’ aspects of man’s character.<sup>2</sup> He envisaged the skeleton as the ‘plan of the human body’ with the skull as its ‘base & summary’, just as the face was ‘result & summary of the human form in general’. Flesh, then, was only the ‘colour that enhances’ the drawing and, since knowledge of man began with knowledge of the skull, the physiognomist should start by inspecting the ‘bones of the skull, their form & contours’.

Lavater (1781–1803, II:144–5; IV:128–9, 164) further maintained that national physiognomies, national characters, and their ‘prodigious differences’ were undeniably real, though ‘easier to see than describe’. Since each people’s ‘particular character’ and ‘soul’ were imprinted on the ‘structure of the face’, the scientific study of national physiognomies should be grounded in natural history. However, he left this ‘still obscure matter’ to men of ‘genius’ like Camper (see Chapter 3) and confined himself to general impressions distilled from his study of individuals (mainly Europeans), portraits, and the works of Buffon, Kant, Blumenbach, and other savants. As a sentimental Christian humanist, Lavater (1781–1803, II:35–42; IV:164) did not doubt the singularity

of the human species or the climatic determination of all national variation. Secure in the *bonheur* ('good fortune') of nations like his own, placed by Providence in a climate conducive to 'development of every physical & intellectual faculty', he commiserated with other 'beings disadvantaged by nature' who lacked such benefits – though all were 'children of a single Father'. Yet his garbled, ethnocentric surveys (1781–1803, II:145–6; IV:156–7, 161) of national skull forms, physiognomies, and characters relentlessly stereotype and demean non-Europeans. 'Indian' skulls announced a 'sensual & uncouth' individual. The 'African' skull bespoke 'stupidity'. The 'very disagreeable', 'apelike' forehead of the 'nomadic Tartar or Kalmuck' signified 'cowardice & rapacity'. A portrait of a Tierra del Fuegian was scarcely credible as being 'too close to the brute'.

Lavater and Camper both saw variation in national physiognomies as primarily aesthetic, with anatomical knowledge the key to accurate portraiture, though Lavater lacked Camper's professional credentials in both the science and the art. The English translation of Camper's treatise (1794; 1791:94–103; plates 1–5) is subtitled 'on the Connexion between the Science of Anatomy and the Arts of Drawing, Painting, Statuary, &c', and he mobilized his own anatomical drawings of dissected skull sections as teaching tools in portrait-making. In contrast, a single 'fragment' in Lavater's rambling work (1781–1803, II:214–23) addresses the 'Art of the portrait'. He challenged artistic and physiognomic orthodoxy by maintaining, first, that portraiture demanded the careful study of nature alongside the works of old masters; and second, that 'the solid parts, independent of the movement of the flesh, are the fundamental basis of the sketch & the painting'.

Physiognomy's ancient equation of countenance and moral character continued to be (and to an extent still is) widely taken for granted, as shown in the ongoing popularity of Lavater's work throughout the 19th century. The highly subjective aesthetic or moral significance attributed to human cranial difference was a persistent sub-text in emergent racial discourses, though increasingly denied by pretensions to scientific objectivity. In a seminal work, the German anatomist Samuel Thomas Soemmerring (1784:4, 24, 32; 1785:79) inferred from comparative craniometry and physiology that 'the brain of a Negro is smaller' than a European's and consigned 'the Moors' (Africans) to 'a lower echelon at the throne of mankind', since they were somewhat closer to the 'ape genus'. He nonetheless rejected polygeny, averring that 'the Negro is not only human but of the same species with us' and widely separate from the 'true four-footed beasts'. Blumenbach (1785)

took tacit issue with his friend Soemmerring's ambivalence about Negro capacities (Dougherty 1985). Yet Blumenbach (1795:198), too, relied on comparative cranial anatomy to chart human varieties or races. Taking an avowedly ethnocentric aesthetic perspective (1795:303–4; 1806:60, 70), he made the 'beautiful' skull of a young Georgian female his metonym for the most 'beautiful human stock' – the 'Caucasian' variety or race that he took to be man's 'medial and original form'. Nonetheless, Blumenbach (1776:68; 1795:213) long contended that 'almost all' human cranial diversity was the product of 'climate', 'mode of life', or 'art' and refused to correlate it with intelligence.

Such assumptions about the significance of the skull were appropriated and reworked from the end of the 18th century by physiologists and comparative anatomists, notably Gall and Cuvier whose important links to scientific voyaging in Oceania have been discussed. Lavater (1781–1803, II:134, 144–5) had argued for the 'impression' of personal and national 'character' on the osseous system and the form of the face. Gall (1810:xxxiii) brought the brain into play by opining that its 'form', 'which is soft', is imprinted on the skull 'which is hard'. Cuvier (1857:265; 1817a:54–5, 94–5) inverted these equations by postulating the 'influence' of cranial structure on the 'moral and intellectual faculties' of whole races and ultimately drew a causal nexus between cranial capacity, brain size, and degree of 'intelligence' (see Chapters 3 and 4).

## Phrenology and race

Phrenology, mentioned in Chapter 5, was the highly contentious science of the cerebral localization of mental and moral faculties developed from the late 18th century by Gall (1810:xi) who called it 'organology'. It was popularized as phrenology by his disciple and sometime collaborator Johann Gaspar Spurzheim (1818). Following Gall (1810:vii–xxxiii), phrenologists believed that the propensities and intellectual and moral faculties of every individual were localized within particular organs of the brain (Renneville 2000:40–1). Thus, since the development of each faculty was in proportion to the volume of its organ, their relative development could be diagnosed through palpation of the skull, hence the derisive English label 'bumpology' (Thompson and Anon. 1842:414).

Gall's religious and political enemies condemned him as a materialist and a dangerous radical. His professional opponents belittled his ideas and called his method 'cranioscopy', a term Gall (1798:330) rejected since the 'object' of his study was the brain rather than the cranium per se, which was but a 'faithful imprint' of the brain's external surface.<sup>3</sup>

Cuvier (et al. 1809:110–11) condemned Gall's 'doctrine' as unscientific because of its reliance on observations of individual 'moral and intellectual dispositions' and its 'rather remote relationship' with anatomy. In the first edition of *Précis élémentaire de physiologie*, François Magendie (1816–17, I:155) acknowledged Gall's work on the brain without comment. In the third edition (1833, I:247, note 1), he denounced phrenology as a '*pseudo-science*' on a par with astrology, necromancy, or alchemy, and Gall as a mere 'craniologist' whose ad hoc claims pandered to popular enthusiasm but defied scientific logic.<sup>4</sup>

Critics notwithstanding, phrenology seemed to promise contemporary anthropology a more precise technique for correlating cranial structure with mental faculties than had earlier methods – such as Camper's facial angle or Cuvier's cranio-facial ratio – because the skull itself was read as both product and map of intelligence and morality. However, its signature 'vacillation between cerebral determination and the power of education' – Staum's (2003:65) phrase – gave it ambitious but paradoxical social, political, and racial implications. On the one hand, especially in Britain (Combe 1819:299–342), it allowed an attack on inherited privilege and promised individual self-improvement through cultivation or suppression of particular faculties. On the other, especially in France, it sanctioned political control by persons of supposedly superior intellect and race and underwrote social control by purporting to identify and treat criminals or the mentally defective. Despite many detractors, phrenology was wildly popular in Britain and the United States before 1850, especially among the upwardly mobile. Its general appeal in France was uneven but it attracted considerable interest and support amongst physicians, naturalists, and political progressives, only to decline abruptly in the late 1840s.<sup>5</sup> Despite the charlatanism in Gall's method, he is acknowledged to have made some key contributions to neurological science – by establishing firmly the dependence of the mind on the brain; by identifying the importance of the cortex; and by clarifying previously woolly notions about the localization of brain function.<sup>6</sup>

In theory, phrenology privileged individuality and the mental potential of all human beings within limits set by 'natural endowment of faculties', modified by 'circumstances' ([Combe] 1824:1). According to Marc Renneville (1996:102–3), adherents of phrenology generally studied 'peoples' in more specific and less racialized ways than did most of their contemporaries. Most were monogenist. They should therefore have been at least neutral on the question of races. However, many connived in the burgeoning thesis of permanent, innate racial inequality by claiming to provide empirical proof of the deficient cerebral geometry that allegedly

made some savages uncivilizable and others capable of only limited advance (Staum 2003:58–64). ‘Man is the same everywhere’ proclaimed Gall (1810:xlvi, lv) but his opinions on non-Europeans are hard to decipher. He avoided doing research ‘in another hemisphere’ because it was easier and ‘more useful’ to limit his enquiry to readily available European skulls. His occasional remarks on ‘Negroes’ are generally complimentary. Thus, while bitterly attacking the concept of the facial angle, Gall (Gall and Spurzheim 1810–12, II:332) claimed to have known ‘several Negroes who, with very prominent jaws, have very distinguished intellectual faculties’. Nonetheless, he routinely essentialized ‘the different nations’ and no doubt shared prevailing European prejudices. In his lectures, he reportedly demeaned the national dispositions of ‘Kalmuks’ (‘theft and ruse’) and ‘Caribs’ (‘cruel, superstitious, and stupid’) (Staum 2003:56). In an early letter outlining his theory (1798:330), he linked the question of ‘national heads’ to the cryptic but implicitly deterministic statement: ‘you might see here, why some of our brothers cannot count more than three; why others will not accept the concept of private property’.

Phrenology’s preoccupation with Europe usually relegated the rest of the world to parenthesis. Yet two works by leading phrenologists of different nationality and political persuasion variously illustrate the arrogant global stereotypes produced when hereditarian determinism meets race pride and arrested stadial thinking. The liberal Scottish lawyer and educational reformer Combe (1824), founder of phrenology in Britain, rejected standard environmental or social explanations for the ‘distinct and permanent’ variations he discerned in national character. Rather, such diversity signalled ‘*natural* differences’ in the ‘mental constitutions’ of different ‘varieties of men’.<sup>7</sup> Whereas Europeans were always inclined ‘towards moral and intellectual improvement’ and ‘elasticity of mind’, the inhabitants of most of the rest of the world were variously constrained by cerebral deficiencies which affected morality and limited intelligence. Combe blended selective quotation with confident cranial diagnosis to validate a series of blanket judgements on the denizens of Asia (‘early arrived at a point comparatively low in the scale of improvement which they never pass’), Africa (‘one unbroken scene of moral and intellectual desolation’), native America (still ‘enveloped in all their primitive barbarity’), and Van Diemen’s Land and New South Wales (‘in the most wretched poverty, ignorance, and degradation’). In blatant contrast, he had no doubt that the ‘decidedly larger’ brains of the various European nations determined their ‘superior force of mental character’.

The authoritarian French military surgeon and physiologist Broussais mapped the phrenology of racial difference along similar contours but



with harsher words and stark prognoses. In a wildly popular course of lectures at the Paris Faculty of Medecine in 1836,<sup>8</sup> Broussais (1836:754, 789–95, 802) correlated 'faculties' with 'race' – 'heredity' could not be denied since unmixed 'nations' exhibited 'predominant organs' which determined humanity's 'progressive movement'. Proclaiming 'ignorance' to be man's 'primitive state', he found contemporary models of such 'brutish men' in New Holland and New Zealand where, on Gaimard's authority, language was said to be 'extremely limited'. On the one hand, Broussais sketched a conventional stadial trajectory from 'hunting and fishing peoples', to 'nomadic' herders, with discovery of 'agriculture' the 'essence' for further development. On the other, he froze the potential of certain 'peoples' on physical grounds – all were 'not equally fitted to *progress* in civilization' and some remained 'stationary'. He demonstrated the 'main causes' of such differential advance by dramatic display of a 'multitude of heads'. That of the 'Caucasian race' ('of which we are part') was the 'most beautiful, the most complete', the best endowed with 'receptive and reflective faculties'. In total contrast, the 'immense' difference of a skull from New Holland ('intermediate between the ape and man') showed why 'this race' had not '*progressed*', but resembled 'our idiots', and why they would 'never' be civilized 'because' they lacked the 'necessary cerebral organs'.<sup>9</sup> In partial contrast, the head of the 'New Zealanders' was 'closer to ours' but, lacking communication with other peoples, they had so far progressed less and would perhaps continue to do so because they presented fewer cranial signs of 'intelligence' and 'superior sentiments' than did the Caucasian race.

Broussais's ongoing catalogue of racial deficit (1836:795–802) variously ranked 'the negroes', 'the Chinese nation', the 'Kalmuck', 'the Arabs', and the South Sea Islanders. He concluded with two chilling prophecies drawn from phrenological comparison of racial skulls. First, it proved that 'the races are distinct' and that some were 'made for moral and intellectual progress' while others were 'condemned to remain in the inferior ranks', intermediate between 'perfect man and the orangutan'. Second, it proved that further 'progress in civilization' was possible only for the 'best organized race', the Caucasian, which 'alone' possessed 'all the well developed encephalic organs'.

### Voyage of the *Astrolabe* and the *Zélée*

Dumoutier was already renowned as a practising phrenologist in France when he volunteered to accompany Dumont d'Urville's third (and final) voyage to Oceania with the corvettes *Astrolabe* and *Zélée*. Dumont

d'Urville, an enthusiast for Gall's 'doctrine', had proposed the expedition in order to 'complete' the results of his own and other voyages by further serving the interests of 'hydrography, commerce and the sciences'. They sailed in September 1837 with Dumoutier as phrenologist, natural history assistant, and auxiliary surgeon. Late in the voyage, following a deadly epidemic of dysentery which laid low the chief surgeon Hombron and killed many crew members, he took charge of health services on the *Astrolabe*.<sup>10</sup>

Primary responsibility for zoological research fell to Hombron and Honoré Jacquinot, second surgeon on the *Zélée* and younger brother of its captain Charles Hector. With zoology again insignificant in the voyage's scientific agenda, the official instructions prepared by the Académie des Sciences pay only racialized lip service to the natural history of man – urging the collection of complete skeletons as well as skulls 'of the main races or varieties of man' encountered and inquiry into the presence in New Guinea of 'a race of negroes amid men of other races'. Freycinet, whose formal brief was 'instructions concerning navigation and hydrography', typically extended it to insist on the need for systematic philological research and an in-depth, holistic 'study of man'.<sup>11</sup> Like Freycinet, Dumont d'Urville demanded a broader human focus. He asked the Académie des Sciences morales et politiques to provide further directions for the investigation of 'the races of men inhabiting the countries he would visit'. Drafted by a commission including Broussais and the ethnologist William-Frédéric Edwards, these instructions are not extant but reportedly sought to base anthropology, conceived as the science of races, on the 'double study' of man's 'physical' and 'moral' characters (Mignet 1841:xxxiii–xl). According to Dumoutier (1837–9:3–4), Edwards wanted the expedition to be the first to make a collection of busts of people living 'in the state of barbarism'. This desideratum was also addressed by Broussais in a session of the Société phrénologique de Paris attended by both Dumont d'Urville and Dumoutier (Renneville 1996:106).

The expedition spanned a vast tract of Oceania, with two cruises deep into Antarctic waters and landings in Mangareva, the Marquesas, and Tahiti (all Polynésie française); Samoa, Tonga, and Fiji; Vanikoro and Santa Isabel (Solomon Islands); Chuuk (Carolines) and Guam; Ternate, Ambon, Seram, and the Aru Islands (all Maluku); northern Australia; Triton Bay (West Papua); various ports in central Indonesia, Singapore, and the southern Philippines; and Hobart-Town, New Zealand, and the Torres Strait Islands. The ships returned to France in November 1840 bearing a huge natural history collection and what is arguably

the most enduring anthropological legacy of the classic era of scientific voyaging – Dumoutier's ([1838–40]) remarkable assemblage of 51 *moulages* (plaster busts) cast in situ from living Indigenous subjects. He also amassed 51 skulls, some nearly complete skeletons, and several brains. Systematically measured, photographed, and lithographed, these materials underpin the *Atlas anthropologique* of the voyage produced under Dumoutier's (1846) direction.<sup>12</sup> He published little about the journey but left a significant, if haphazard archival legacy of notes, drafts, and disjointed 'journal' entries.<sup>13</sup>

This chapter sets the several mediums of Dumoutier's work in the context of the 23-volume official voyage publication begun by Dumont d'Urville but completed under the overall direction of Charles Hector Jacquinot after Dumont d'Urville's death in a train smash in 1842. Apart from the *Atlas anthropologique*, the anthropological component comprises three variously racialized polygenist works. Hombron and Honoré Jacquinot (1846–54) co-authored the five-volume *Zoologie* but wrote separate volumes on man (Hombron 1846; Jacquinot 1846). The entomologist–zoologist Emile Blanchard (1854), not a member of the expedition, produced the *Anthropologie* volume on the basis of Dumoutier's *Atlas* and collections, especially the skulls. Dumont d'Urville (1842–6) wrote the first three volumes of the *Histoire du voyage* while the remaining seven were prepared by the engineer–hydrographer Clément Adrien Vincendon-Dumoulin as a 'faithful reproduction' of the late commander's shipboard journals, complemented by extracts from those of his officers (Dumont d'Urville 1842–6, IV:2–4). Collectively, this material confirms the pervasiveness of polygenist thinking in anthropology in France by the mid-19th century and further exemplifies the ambiguous complicity of many professed monogenists in the now dominant racialist agenda.

### Phrenologist in Oceania: Principle to practice

Intellectually, Dumoutier was a man of his calling and his time. He endorsed with simple fervour the phrenologist's credo that manifestations of emotion, intelligence, and morality in all 'peoples', whether 'savage' or 'civilized', were in constant relation with the 'development of the corresponding cerebral parts' in the dynamic context of 'external circumstances' (cited in Rivet 1930:32). Dumoutier's (1837–9:2–4; n.d.:82) main interest in embarking on a long and perilous voyage was the chance to pioneer the 'vast field', virtually unexplored by physiologists, of 'Phrenology applied to the study of the diverse races

of the human species'. He yearned to apply his 'new genre' of cranial impressions and busts made from living subjects in places 'still very far from the state of civilization'. Politically, he was a liberal or radical republican, a supporter of the 1830 revolution and subsequent critic of the July Monarchy (Renneville 2000:136). Morally and socially, he was committed to monogenism and the optimistic ideal of universal human improbability. Dumoutier (1837–40:310v) reproduced, without acknowledgement, Lesson's translation of Chamisso's (1825:41) dictum that 'all the languages spoken by man' are 'only different dialects derived from a common source' with a 'principal, unique origin' (see Chapter 4). He supposed (1843:303) that 'the organization of the brain is the same in all men' – with the ethnocentric qualification, redolent of Péron (see Chapter 3), that 'the development of the various cerebral organs and their activity depend on the social state in which man is placed'.

Notwithstanding a tinge of romantic primitivism, Dumoutier's writings on so-called savages are imbued with genuine empathy for fellow human beings. In the early 1830s, he intervened notably in a *cause célèbre* generated by the incarceration and exhibition in France, under appalling conditions, of four Indigenous Americans who had survived the massacre of most Charrúa people in Uruguay (Asenjo 2007; Rivet 1930). Dumoutier (1833), who met them in Paris, challenged contentious representations in the popular and scientific press, notably by Virey (1930) who also inspected them but rhetorically opposed Native American and European as 'the two extremities of the chain of social life'. Virey demeaned 'the Charrua' morally, social, and physically as 'big children', the 'most brutish of the American savages', without 'the vigour of Europeans', and with less developed brains 'than civilized men'. Dumoutier's riposte defends them historically against Virey's general moral and social aspersions – their rejection of civilization and 'implacable hatred' for Europeans resulted from two centuries of struggle against 'inhumane invaders' and colonial repression. But he also took specific physiological issue with Virey's adverse racial comparison of Charrúa and European cranial characters. Dumoutier denied that the individual Charrúa skulls he had examined were '*thicker, more solid, and less extended*' than those of 'the nations of the white race' – Virey's terms – since their average volume was 'rigorously similar' to that of skulls measured '*in the Caucasian race*'.<sup>14</sup> Dumoutier further insisted that 'the brain of a Charrua is neither less voluminous nor less weighty than that of a European' and that they manifested 'quite considerable sagacity'. His sentimental regard for 'a nation of centaurs' who had tenaciously 'defended their rights with the courage of despair' was

doubtless offended by Virey's revulsion for this 'barbaric', 'vagabond', 'Tartar of the New World', negatively dichotomized with 'artistic, cultivating, civilized man'. However, Dumoutier's text is also infused by a sense of shared humanity strikingly absent from Virey's.

In the highly empirical archive of Dumoutier's voyage, humane and primitivist strands intertwine with phrenological reasoning and conventional racial assumptions. His remarks (1837–40:327–51) on 20–30 Indigenous persons encountered at the Cobourg Peninsula in northern Australia in April 1839 typify this discursive pot pourri. In his earlier paper (1833:96), he had contrasted the 'intelligence' of the Charrúa with the alleged mindlessness of 'the idiots of New Holland'. Now, meeting actual people, he exclaimed: 'But they are men!' He deplored 'the stinginess with which we treat' them and expressed shame at 'our abundance in the face of their poverty'. Their 'little industrial and artistic inventions' (spear throwers, bark canoes, baskets) were 'proof' of man's universal capacity 'to raise himself spontaneously above his state of nature' and 'the tendency of his faculties to perfect themselves progressively in response to external stimuli'. Yet he denigrated their bodies as 'unsightly and badly proportioned' while their 'bearing' was 'without dignity or nobility'. He also dabbled in racial classification – these people 'differ much from the Papouas by their hair and ugliness'.

As his Charrúa paper attests, Dumoutier could be highly critical of Europeans and their civilization. His voyage texts (1837–40:231v; n.d.:47v) include several elegiac passages blaming Europeans for the apparent moral and physical decline of 'these men of nature' in areas frequented by whites. Fijian men yielded 'nothing in sagacity to Europeans' and if they were less 'advanced in intellectual culture, in the arts of industry', they had not yet attained the 'degree of corruption of civilized nations'. In contrast, many New Zealand Māori, like the Tahitians and the Marquesans, had been 'debilitated by contact' with the supposedly civilized. However, Dumoutier's (1837–40:335v, 463; 1843:303; n.d.:48v) assessments of the relative impact of European encounters were shaped by racial and class prejudices. He reserved a naïve romantic nostalgia for the 'savage virtues and heroism', the embryonic 'arts' and 'industry' of Polynesian warrior cultures and a corresponding contempt for the 'scum of civilized societies' – 'English sailors[,] deserters, or escaped convicts from Sydney', 'Europeans more brutish than the savages and who have come to corrupt them and infect them with their vices and their ills'. In double contrast, the 'hapless' inhabitants of northern Australia could only benefit from interaction with 'civilized people' at the British military settlement of Port

Essington because it would ‘provoke their desires, excite the faculties necessary to make them industrious’.

In the event, Dumoutier’s core dogmas of human unity and general perfectibility were repeatedly compromised by unsettling experience of encounters with local people. Signs and countersigns of their agency permeate his writings and collections. His professed humanism often jars with complacent assurance of European superiority and with racial ambivalence aggravated by independent or threatening Indigenous behaviour or by purported Negro physical appearance.

### Strategies and exchanges

Dumoutier (n.d.:82–8) claimed that novel methods developed during years of taking plaster impressions of living or dead human heads enabled him to achieve finer detail, greater accuracy, and superior results. But, whereas his famous or remarkable European subjects were inspired by ‘love of science or art’, the process of moulding Indigenous heads in the field demanded new, flexible strategies, persistence, and tact in order to establish personal intimacy with potential subjects. In other words, he had to shape his own expectations and behaviour to fit their interests or desires. To this end (1837–40:212), he went on shore as much as possible to observe and interact with local residents and sometimes spent the night in their houses. He engaged in long, patient negotiations to induce people to submit to the unpleasant, intimidating, perhaps sacrilegious process of having their heads shaved and swathed in plaster. Dumoutier (1837–9:4) explained that the phrenologist needed a quite different approach:

to make his intentions understood by a man whom he cannot speak to in his language; or to dissipate his fears aroused by the sight of the apparatus and by ignorance of the methods. It is necessary to inspire enough confidence to persuade him to put himself in the operator’s hands, to overcome the religious prejudices and pride that would not suffer the contact of a profane hand on his head.<sup>15</sup>

At first, Dumoutier sought with little success to obtain imprints of Indigenous heads. In January 1838, at the Strait of Magellan, he spent a night ashore under canvas. He complained (n.d.:3–4) that the inhabitants ‘obstinately refused to allow impressions to be taken of their heads’ and ‘only by surprise and against their will’ were a few portrait sketches made, though they were ‘heaped with presents, and all sorts of good deeds’. According to Dumont d’Urville (1842–6, I:158–9), these

'credulous, mistrustful, fearful savages' suspected the phrenologist 'of magic' and one stole his craniometer while he was trying to convince a woman to undergo *moulage*. Dumoutier subsequently refined his techniques of persuasion and thereafter cooperation was often forthcoming from either the models themselves or their governors. At Mangareva in August 1838, Dumoutier (1837–9:7; 1837–40:116–117v; n.d.:8, 67–72) was much struck by the 'unbelievable' moral transformation of a now fervently Catholic population. He spent seven days on land and 'gathered a mass of information and observations', thanks to the 'influence over the natives' of the resident French priests. One of them persuaded four men to allow moulds to be made of their heads, sacrificing their hair but receiving in return 'presents appropriate to their needs' – shirts and handkerchiefs. However, a fortnight later at Nuku Hiva (Marquesas), Dumoutier (1837–40:140–140v; 1843:303; n.d.:8–9) encountered far less obliging people, long familiar with Europeans but 'turbulent', 'treacherous', and aggressively pagan. He was again forced to lament: 'Despite all our means of seduction it was not possible to make any life busts of these savages.' They were, however, happy to sell skulls kept as trophies (1837–9:10) and several sat for portraits (Figure 6.1).

Dumoutier recorded a variety of his subsequent acquisitive triumphs in diverse textual genres (journal entry, random note, draft, report) and several discursive modes (catalogue, anecdote, parody). He recounted (n.d:12) soberly how the inhabitants of the Fijian islands of Bau and Ovalau 'cooperated with good grace' in French research and observations in October 1838, while two 'chiefs' and their wives 'allowed an impression of their head to be taken' (Figures 6.2, 6.10). Tui Levuka, the 'Chief or King' of the settlement of Levuka (Ovalau), personally took Dumoutier (1837–40:217, 228) to abandoned grave sites and aided his exhumation of skeletal remains, on condition of secrecy, in return for a much valued *tabua* (sperm whale's tooth). Similarly, Dumoutier (n.d.:21–2) noted without further comment or explanation that at Raffles Bay (Cobourg Peninsula) a few months later, 'several chiefs' came on board the *Astrolabe* and 'cooperated readily in all our observations', including 'taking imprints of the face of two of these savages'. In addition, 'sketches, notes, utensils' were collected, together with two incomplete human skulls found 'on the ground with some bones'. Four busts and two skulls from Levuka and two Aboriginal skulls are reproduced in the *Atlas anthropologique* (1846: plates 4, 5, 33, 35), but no busts of the moulds taken at Raffles Bay. There is no such bust in the extant Dumoutier collection ([1838–40]). I know of only two representations of Indigenous Australians in the rich visual corpus of this

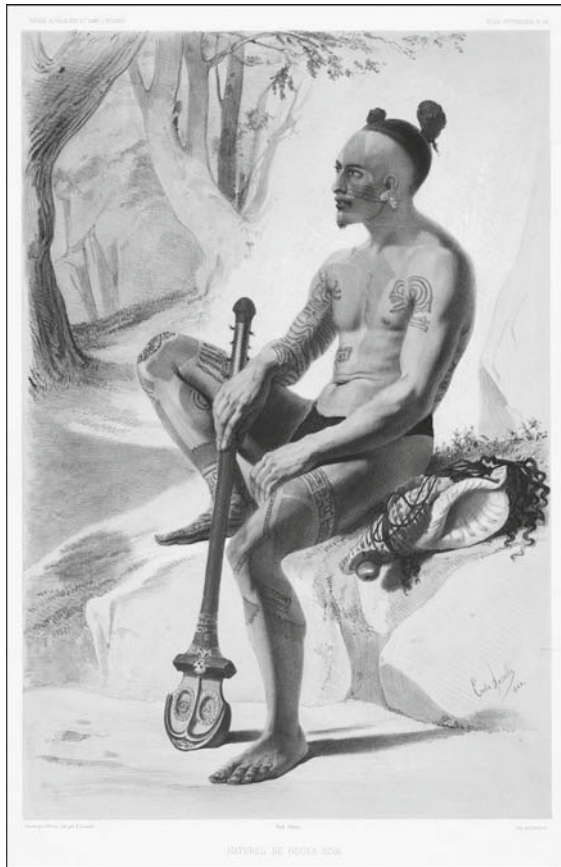


Figure 6.1 E. Lassalle after L. Le Breton [after E.A. Goupil] (1846), ‘Naturel de Nouka-Hiva [Marquesas]’. Lithograph. National Library of Australia, Canberra, an9000439

expedition – a pencil sketch by the artist Goupil (1839) and another probably by the *enseigne*-artist Eugène Marescot-Duthilleul (1839). Both men died from dysentery during the voyage and neither drawing was lithographed for the *Atlas pittoresque* (Dumont d’Urville 1846).

An episode in Santa Isabel in November 1838 looms large in variant versions of Dumoutier’s success narrative, all of which lampoon a ‘subaltern chief’ referred to as Fouly or Foli. In a post-voyage presentation to the Société phrénologique de Paris, Dumoutier (n.d.:73–5) displayed Fouly’s bust and ridiculed him as ‘the most imitative monkey’ he had



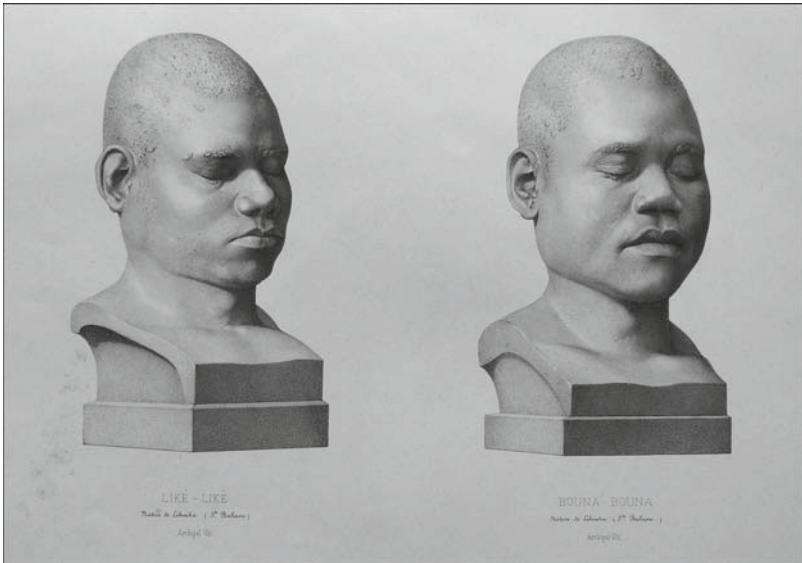
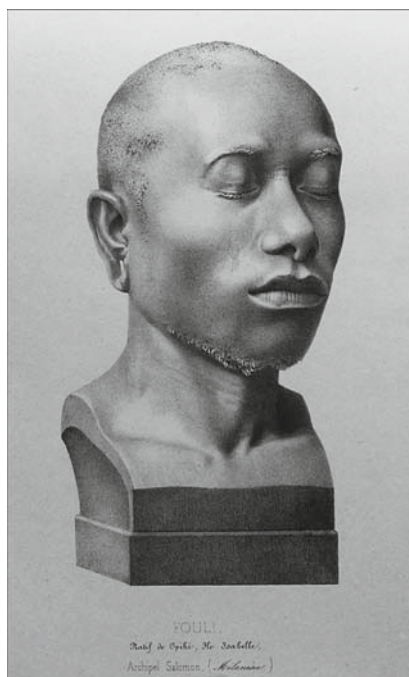


Figure 6.2 H. Raunheim after L.A. Bisson after P.M.A. Dumoutier (1846), 'Liké-Liké, Bouna-Bouna: native[s] de Lébouka [Levuka] (1<sup>er</sup> Balaou), Archipel Viti [Fiji]'. Lithographed photographs. Photograph B. Douglas

ever seen. The crew had dressed Fouly in a sabre, cloak, and three-cornered hat, then mocked his self-satisfaction 'with risible gravity', and finally tricked him into firing a cannon. The noise so shocked him that his 'coppery' face 'paled very visibly' – 'the only time we saw a savage whiten'. Dumoutier concluded this public parody by making Fouly the butt of a tale of a failed *moulage*. He was 'seized with such terror on feeling the plaster run over his face that in a single bound, he rose to his feet and leapt over the rail into the sea'. Dumont d'Urville's *Histoire* (1842–6, V:34) gives a hearsay account of this incident which makes fun of both phrenologist and unnamed 'savage' who had agreed to have his head cast, fled when he felt the plaster on his face, and struck his head on the ship's bulkhead 'to rid himself of his hard envelope, leaving only the debris for our desolated phrenologist'. In his 'journal' (1837–40:236–237v), Dumoutier sardonically described his subsequent stratagem to overcome Foli's trepidation. He contrived a 'means of seduction' by rehafting, cleaning, and decorating a large axe which was so irresistible that Foli steeled himself to undergo the operation and remain 'in the most complete immobility' throughout (Figure 6.3). But his fright was



*Figure 6.3* H. Raunheim after L.A. Bisson after P.M.A. Dumoutier (1846), 'Fouli: natif de Opihi, Ile Isabelle, Archipel Salomon [Solomons] (Mélanesie)'. Lithographed photograph. Photograph B. Douglas

such when the plaster covered his face that he lost consciousness, to his friends' consternation, and had to be revived with a whiff of ammonia. Then follows a more detailed account of the crew's derisive adornment of Foli and the affair of the cannon: 'His hat had rolled on the bridge and the poor native, so swaggering a moment before, had become the most inveterate poltroon.'<sup>16</sup>

The episodes discussed so far involve diverse encounters of ambiguous local and foreign agencies. However, Dumoutier (1837–40:324–324v; 1839–40:8–9) sometimes took advantage of a subject's disadvantaged status. In Ambon, a teenaged 'slave' called Orion, reputedly born 'of pure Papoua parents', was forced by his Dutch master and a Dutch military doctor to have his head shaved and moulded (Figure 6.4). The master, a local entrepreneur, also gave Dumoutier 'phrenological information' from which he distilled a long, ambivalent inventory of Orion's

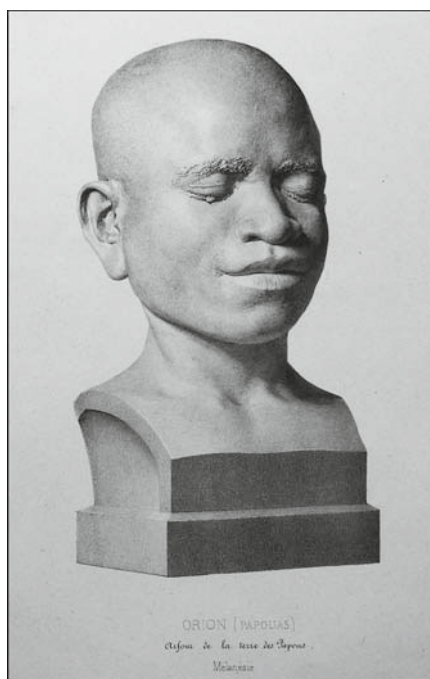


Figure 6.4 J.H. Léveillé after L.A. Bisson after P.M.A. Dumoutier (1846), 'Orion (Papouas): Arfour de la terre des Papous, Mélanésie'. Lithographed photograph. Photograph B. Douglas

'character'. It includes the claim that, if given the chance to return to his own family, 'he rages, cries, begs his master not to send him away'. In Hobart-Town, where Dumont d'Urville purchased copies of Benjamin Law's superb busts of the Indigenous leaders Trugananner (Truganini) and Wooraddy, a local doctor contributed a native skull to Dumoutier's collection. This man also enabled Dumoutier to take *moulages* of a young Tasmanian woman and five males who probably exercised limited agency in the matter because they were prisoners in the Hobart gaol (Terry 2002:32). Three skulls and a brain from Van Diemen's Land feature in the *Atlas anthropologique* along with six busts, including those by Law (1846: plates 22–4, 36, 47).

In a draft account of his strategies, Dumoutier (n.d.:83–8) represented himself as the central figure and the active agent in initiating and controlling transactions with likely models. However, his descriptions of particular situations tell or imply other stories of haggling, desire, exchange,

and reciprocity. In his strategic scenario, a chief or person of note needed to be flattered with pomp and ceremonial and offered a ‘very attractive bait’ that would appeal to his dignity, vanity, or cupidity – ‘In two words he must be offered honour and profits.’<sup>17</sup> Dumont d’Urville could help the cause by inviting targeted chiefs to his cabin to show them plaster or wax models of distinguished men, including himself, and promise them gifts in exchange for their own image, including a gaudily decorated medallion bearing the effigy of their fellow ruler, the king of France.

Susceptible to status, Dumoutier (1837–9:7–8; n.d.:12–15, 21, 73, 79) identified several of his subjects as ‘chief’ – either ‘subaltern’ or ‘attached’ to a high chief’s personal guard. But no high-ranking chief consented to undergo the operation – unsurprisingly, given the gross breach of *tapu* it would involve. Some, though, took Dumoutier’s ‘bait’ and designated ‘a very inferior subaltern or a slave’ in their place. He blamed his failure with respect to persons of high rank on his limited supply of suitable items of exchange which he was forced to supplement from his own resources. Ordinary people were lured by the display of ‘objects we supposed might be of immediate utility’, such as iron implements, cloth, or clothes, and were promised the one they most admired. Fouly/Foli, labelled a ‘young chief’ but Dumoutier’s archetype of the gullible savage, was clearly delighted with the outcome of their transaction, his acquisition of a handsome axe. He doubtless reckoned the balance of esteem in their negotiations and exchange very differently from the phrenologist’s tone of amused contempt. On this and several other occasions, the sight of such an object encouraged another person to offer himself spontaneously as a subject for *moulage*.

Dumoutier’s rendition of an episode in Otago Harbour in March 1840 exemplifies the gendered emotional economy of mutual desire, compulsion, and reciprocity which motivated such transactions. When several Māori came on board, Dumoutier (1837–40:462–3) took the opportunity:

to propose that one of them allow his head to be moulded. After my offer of all sorts of gifts failed[,] my old uniform jacket is what appeals to him above all else ... and finally he makes up his mind. At once the scissors make a breach in his hair and an hour later I was the owner of the impression from life of quite a fine looking Zealander whose deeply grooved tattoo showed up perfectly in relief.– The first step taken, I could hope to entice several others, and in fact I succeeded in doing so in the following days.– For this same man ... allowed me to perform the same operation on his wife’s head, and another who had almost dislocated his shoulder firing a gun and to whom I had given treatment also entrusted his head to me and completed my collection of impressions of the inhabitants of Otago (Figure 6.5).

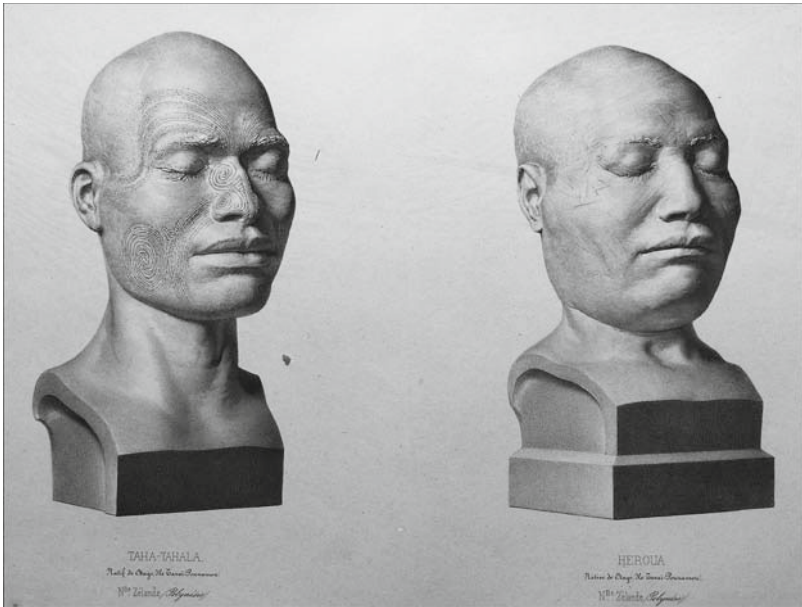


Figure 6.5 J.H. Léveillé after L.A. Bisson after P.M.A. Dumoutier (1846), 'Taha-Tahala: natif de Otago; Heroua: native de Otago, Ile Tavai-Pounamou, N<sup>lle</sup>. Zélande (Polynésie)'. Lithographed photographs. Photograph B. Douglas

A similar range of methods, motivations, and ambiguous agency, with the addition of the dubious tactic of graverobbing, enabled Dumoutier (1837–9:10; 1837–40:155; n.d.:22, 62–3) to amass a rich assemblage of human remains. Two skulls were found 'on the ground' in 'abandoned' *marae* (temples) in recently Christianized Mangareva. That of a renowned Marquesan warrior, whose memory was still actively honoured, was removed from a functioning *marae* by an officer from the *Astrolabe*. Two skulls 'found' at Raffles Bay, already mentioned, were deemed to be of 'too much interest' to be disdained. And the skulls of two Hawaiian seamen who had died in Chile and been 'buried according to the usages of their country' were 'exhumed and taken back on board'. More often, though, Dumoutier (1837–9:3; n.d.:4) obtained crania and other remains by purchase or exchange from local people or through the good offices of 'enlightened' resident European doctors, naturalists, officials, or missionaries.<sup>18</sup> Clearly sensitive to the problematic contemporary ethics and local offensive potential of graverobbing, Dumoutier (1837–40:217) rationalized his collection of body

parts in Fiji in connivance with the Tui Levuka. The chief ensured that Dumoutier ‘replaced everything’, ‘took the greatest care not to leave the least trace’ of his actions, and did his best ‘to cause no scandal’. Dumoutier (1839–40:3) implicitly contrasted his own virtuous dealings for skulls in the interest of science with the superstition and inhumanity of savages – in Fiji, Santa Isabel, and Jolo (Sulu Archipelago, Philippines), people refused to allow him to exhume their ancestors’ bodies but casually offered to find him skulls by decapitating enemies.<sup>19</sup>

There was an exception to this relatively impersonal pattern of procuring human anatomical specimens. Mafi, a high-ranking Tongan, took refuge from local political strife in Vava’u by joining the *Astrolabe* as a seaman in October 1838. He became a great favourite of the crew, acted as the captain’s boatman, fought alongside the French, and generally made himself ‘useful’. His death nearly a year later off the east coast of Borneo (Kalimantan, Indonesia), probably of pulmonary tuberculosis and pneumonia, inspired general grief. Dumont d’Urville eulogized him as ‘of a rare intelligence’, ‘much loved by us all’, and ‘sincerely mourned’.<sup>20</sup> In an address to the Société phrénologique, Dumoutier (n.d.:80–1) contrived a dramatic finale to his emotional panegyric for Mafi: ‘Here he is’ – displaying either bust or skull – ‘Maphy was our friend!’ The body of ‘our friend’, Dumoutier (1839–40:5) reported, was ‘conserved in alcohol’ and would ‘add to the riches of the Museum of Natural History in Paris’, together with moulds ‘of his head and brain’. A photograph of his skull is lithographed in the *Atlas anthropologique* (1846: plate 31). A phrenologist could pay no greater homage to an exceptional man. When Dumont d’Urville (1839) thought he was dying late in the voyage, he wrote a codicil to his will bequeathing his head to Dumoutier to ‘prepare and conserve as subject of phrenological study’.

### Race, gender, agency

Like most phrenologists, Dumoutier readily generalized the findings of his science to entire, reified races, notwithstanding phrenology’s individual bias and theoretical egalitarianism or his own humanism and reliance on inductive logic.<sup>21</sup> In a report written during the voyage for the Académie des Sciences morales et politiques (1837–9:5–6), he explained the statistical basis of his racial anthropology in response to Broussais’s questions:

observations were made on a great number of individuals of the same tribe, or of the same race, in civilized and non-civilized countries. Moreover, synoptic

tables showing the age, sex, height, rank or caste, and the development of each cerebral organ measured approximately by ordinary means, provide a kind of statistics of these organs and express in figures their varied degrees of relative development and average activity: from which we can conclude what are the dominant faculties constituting the basic character, or the intellectual capacity of each individual observed. By comparing these synoptic tables, we can discover the dominant organs, or the preponderant faculties of the individuals of the same caste, and the same country who have undergone observation.<sup>22</sup>

Dumoutier's (1837–40:140v, 326, 341, 560) language and terminology not only echoed conventional racialist thinking but hardened during the voyage as he processed his experience of actual Indigenous behaviour and appearance in the light of his reading and presumptions. He took for granted the anatomical reality of racial types, peppering his 'journal' with phrases like 'beautiful Arab-European type', 'narrow-headed negro type', 'habitual gauntness' of the most widespread 'Melanesian type'. Like numerous predecessors, he routinely resorted to conjectural histories of racial displacement or hybridization to resolve conundrums of physical diversity. At Banda (Maluku) in February 1839, he racially classified three men who came in a canoe to sell coconuts – two, with 'short head wide at the back', were of 'the conquering race probably Makassans'; the third, with 'narrow head negro type', was *esclave papouas* ('Papoua slave'). He adjudged the 'Australians' he saw at the Cobourg Peninsula to be 'the blackest of all the inhabitants of Oceania', along with 'the Tasmanians' whom he had not yet seen but who reminded him of 'the inhabitants of the Congo or the coast of Mozambique'. He duly inferred that 'if the first possessors [of New Holland] were of the Negro race per se[,] the last traces that can be found of them today are in the wretched Tasmanians', while 'the Australians represent the 1st degree of crossing of the Negroes with the Malays[,] themselves métis of Negroes and Javanese or Negroes and Indians' from the east coast of the subcontinent.

Dumoutier's blanket appraisals of Indigenous people (1837–40:213, 433v; 1843:302–3; n.d.:53–7) were always patronizing, usually demeaning, and frequently racialized. Along the Strait of Magellan, the inhabitants displayed 'the state of physical and moral degradation' inevitable in such unfavourable climatic conditions. The people of Nuku Hiva were 'big children' living in 'the infancy of societies'. The 'frizzy state of the head and body hair of the Oceanian Blacks [*Noirs*]' was a 'certain sign' that they originated in 'the black African race'. The 'coarse', 'repulsive' facial features of most Tasmanian men signalled 'the Negro closest to animality'. Two of the final three sections of his

'journal' (1837–40:429–48, 544–70), covering the expedition's visits to Van Diemen's Land and the Torres Strait Islands, comprise his notes of other people's potted racial descriptions interspersed with confused speculations about racial origins, interrelationships, and displacements and garbled efforts to classify the 'Tasmanians', 'Australians', *Harfours* ('Alfuros'), *Papouas*, 'austral Negroes', and so forth, in the light of existing racial taxonomies.

Dumoutier's representations of certain Indigenous women were particularly offensive. According to his 'journal' (1837–40:231), Fijian women were 'little, shrivelled, ugly and seemed to be of another race[,] their face looks much more like that of the Negro than that of the men'. These harsh words sharply contradict the aesthetic evidence of his own *moulages* (Figure 6.2) and lithographed sketches by Goupil (Figure 6.6). Even Dumont d'Urville (1842–6, IV:247–8) was more generous, if stereotyped as to gender relations: 'The women are like the men, tall, well built and well constituted; but their faces seem less intelligent, which no doubt results from the state of slavery in which the men keep them.' Dumoutier (1837–40:240v, 344, 433–4, 549) maligned women seen in Santa Isabel as 'little[,] ugly and unintelligent'. Those he saw in northern Australia were 'puny' and their body shape 'incomparably more frightful' than the men's. He met a single living Tasmanian woman. Yet, on the basis of colonial paintings, sketches, and busts, he damned them as 'much more repulsive than the men' and added that, after nurturing one or two babies, they looked 'more like harpies or furies than human creatures'. He elaborated his conflation of race and gender with regard to Tudu (Torres Strait Islands) in a passage showing the tension between racialist and phrenological presumptions. Here, he again found the women 'small, very ugly, and very inferior in every respect to the men who would seem to be of another race'. Yet he stressed that 'this peculiarity', noted elsewhere, was not innate but a result of the 'state of abjection, poverty, fatigue, and the premature, perhaps abusive sexual intercourse to which these unfortunate women are exposed from their infancy'.

However, the tension in Dumoutier's writings between the metropolitan discourses of racial innatism and 'environmentalist' phrenological humanism is only part of his representational equation. His collective judgements were not simply a priori but vacillated according to local rank, gender, and his specific encounters with Indigenous conduct. As a phrenologist, he was more than usually sensitive to the enmeshed particularities of individual physiognomy and actions. His prose is impregnated by signs and countersigns of Indigenous agency, especially





Figure 6.6 A.J.B. Bayot after E.A. Goupil (1846), 'La Reine de Pao [Bau] – femme et jeune fille de Pao (Iles Viti)'. Lithograph. Photograph B. Douglas

in his 'journal', the genre closest to experience. Invincibly ethnocentric, a snob, and evidently rather timid, Dumoutier (1837–40:138–40, 147–9) extolled the 'benevolence', 'dignity', and 'respectable' demeanour of Marquesan chiefs while admiring the 'richness', 'elegance', and 'regularity' of their tattoo designs. He praised the 'grace', 'sweetness', and 'beauty' of the so-called 'queen' whose tattoos 'in no way diminished the elegant contours of her shoulders, arms, and hand', depicted in Goupil's somewhat prurient sketch (Figure 6.7). The foregoing words are markers of Indigenous appearance or tacit countersigns of behaviour.



Figure 6.7 A.J.B. Bayot after L. Le Breton [after E.A. Goupil] (1846), 'La princesse Patini (Iles Nouka-Hiva)'. Lithograph. National Library of Australia, Canberra, an21014129

The following are overt signs of selective local agency. Dumoutier deplored the 'familiar', 'noisy', 'impertinent', often dishonest conduct of the people, especially 'arrogant' young men whose 'brutal passions', 'pride', and 'vanity' led them *'to think they are your equals'*.<sup>23</sup> Ordinary Marquesan women were 'sly, coquettish, voluptuous, immodest in public, and reserved at home', but seemed 'very intelligent'.

In Fiji, Dumoutier (1837–40:225v; n.d.:11–12) condemned as 'fierce cannibals' the people of Viwa Island whom he did not see but whose abandoned empty settlement was razed and looted by the French in retaliation for the killing of the crew of a French trading vessel. In contrast, the neighbouring Bau Islanders earned his warm praise – they were 'no less cannibals but more hospitable', received the ships' officers 'with much pomp', observed 'the respect due to age and rank better than many civilized peoples', and consented to have moulds taken of their heads (Figures 6.2, 6.10). In this passage, the active voice is a grammatical countersign of Indigenous diplomatic agency which is overtly

signalled in a sketch of the reception by the junior surgeon Le Breton, later a renowned marine painter (Figure 6.8). Dumoutier (1837–40:217) reported Dumont d'Urville's opinion that the Levuka people were 'quieter, less intrusive[,] more dignified than those of the yellow race'. In another passage blending ethnohistorical marker with countersign, he praised their 'fine' taro plantations and 'very skilful' irrigation works ('much superior to any of the other islands'), deemed them 'far more agricultural' than any other people seen, but belittled their 'cordiality' as the 'easy' attachment of 'big children amused by a trifle'. In New Zealand, by his own account, Dumoutier (1837–40:486–8) was seriously intimidated by the behaviour of Māori encountered in Poverty Bay. As in the Marquesas, his 'journal' entries oscillate wildly between admiration for their appearance – 'tall, robust, active', 'not lacking in nobility', 'rich tattoo' – and outrage at their conduct – 'turbulent', 'audacious', 'vociferous', 'importunate', 'insolent'. Since leaving the Marquesas two and a half years previously, no 'savage scene' had so reminded him of Nuku Hiva or provoked such vituperation. Here again are blatant signs of Indigenous agency:

this greedy, curious, tactless rabble which crowds together pushes presses and grasps at every foreign individual isolates him from the others, conceals him,



*Figure 6.8* A.J.B. Bayot after L. Le Breton (1846), 'Réception des Français à Pao (Iles Viti)'. Lithograph. National Library of Australia, Canberra, PIC S11218 LOC NL shelves 593 (Atlas pittoresque)

and would finally dispossess him with astonishing speed if he did not quickly clear himself a space by using his fists to drive off all these vermin who swarm and mill around him ... otherwise he would soon be cruelly insulted.

Indigenous presence and agency are insistent elements in Dumoutier's representations of encounters but their textual imprint varies markedly between genres, depending on degree of immediacy and empirical content. As this book repeatedly demonstrates, the same event or person or group might be represented quite differently in a contemporary journal, an official report, a scientific paper, a published narrative, a retrospective history, and so forth. In a nice instance of such discordance – in this case between conforming to a scientific discourse on race and circumstantially describing an individual who made a good impression – Dumoutier depicted in drastically opposed terms a Solomon Islander known to the French as Pitani (Figure 6.9). In his report to the *Académie des Sciences morales et politiques* (1837–9:8), he racially objectified Pitani and three other men whose heads he had moulded in Santa Isabel as 'typifying exactly the stunted, unattractive shapes of a tribe of Melanesians'. Yet in his 'journal' (1837–40:240),

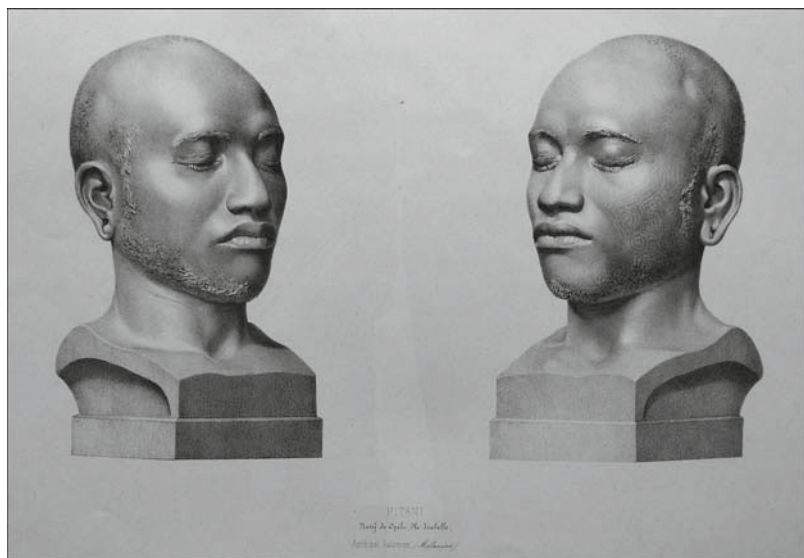


Figure 6.9 H. Raunheim after L.A. Bisson after P.M.A. Dumoutier (1846), 'Pitani: natif de Opihi, Ile Isabelle, Archipel Salomon (Mélanesie)'. Lithographed photograph. Photograph B. Douglas

under the immediate impact of Pitani's pleasant appearance and behaviour, Dumoutier humanized and ameliorated his description: 'his facial features are somewhat more regular and closer to the Arab' than those of his compatriots; his body shape and proportions are 'attractive'; 'his manners are relaxed; he has dignity without affectation'.

Other historians have discussed patent inconsistencies in Dumoutier's representations of people he met during his voyage but explained them in terms of discourse or authors' dispositions and largely overlooked their grounding in encounters with Indigenous agency. Staum (2003:61, 112–17) aimed to dispute phrenology's reputation for racial tolerance. Marc Rochette (2003:252, 256, 266–8) focussed on Dumoutier's personal approach and failings. Renneville (1996:111–12, 121–7) noted that Dumoutier, unlike his fellow voyager Hombron, saw Indigenous people 'with a rather tolerant and relatively open eye', the 'double result' of his egalitarian phrenological precepts and a dialogic field practice unusual for the era. Renneville remarked in passing that 'different field experiences' had a 'direct repercussion in the theoretical elaboration' of subsequent published accounts but his textual survey elides encounters and is mainly discursive, highlighting Hombron's personal hostility to Dumoutier's materialism.

### Anthropology and the lure of polygenism

Though Dumoutier (1837–40:438, 441, 561; 1843:295, 303; n.d.:89–89v) proffered no systematic explanation for the differences he discerned in the cerebral development of various Oceanian populations, he clearly did not see them as innately organic since 'the organization of the brain is the same in all men'. Instead, like the later Buffon, Brosses, and Forster, he represented 'physical and moral' diversity as the indirect product of external influences – 'climate', 'social state', 'mode of existence', and ancient histories of migration by 'conquering strangers' who had displaced and dispersed 'two primitive black races'. Significantly, however, the jumbled notes on the 'Negro race' and on 'Papous, or Austral Negroes', which are bound with Dumoutier's 'journal', include the following deductions. First, that the 'two primitive black races' were '*original* to the torrid zone' and were doomed by 'their destiny' to 'nonexistence'. Second, that one of them was 'a particular race' that inhabited most of New Holland, was positioned 'at the lowest degree of civilization', and spoke many different languages that '*resemble no dialect of any other human race*'.<sup>24</sup> These hypotheses fly in the face of Dumoutier's professed adherence to the principles of original human

physical and linguistic unity and general improvability. If not his own, he did not refute them and they match the tenor of this section of the 'journal'.

Such monogenist gestures towards polygenism are rehearsed with a distinctive twist in a 'Special report' by a commission of the Académie des Sciences lauding Dumoutier's collections and their anthropological implications. It was written by Serres (1841:645) who held the Muséum's chair in human anatomy and the natural history of man. On the contentious issue of the unity or plurality of human types, he argued for a 'double character' – the human species is 'unique' anthropologically, with respect to generation, but definitely plural zoologically, with respect to 'the hereditary transmission of characters'. Serres (1841:648–50, 657) spliced this relativizing tactic to a teleological theory of physical, intellectual, and moral 'improvement' through asymmetric racial crossing in successive colonial settings. Because the characters of the 'superior' race in hybrid reproduction supposedly effaced those of the 'inferior', the process served as the creator's 'natural means' to unify, or reunify, all human races. The climax of this 'fact' of general human history – the onset of vastly 'superior' European civilization and imminent racial 'fusion' – was still 'in full swing' in Oceania, embodying the universal pattern. The illusions of primitive autochthony and racial displacement feed Serres's scenario (1841:650, 653, 656–7). By allowing that the inhabitants of the 'Australasian continent' were conceivably autochthonous, Serres raised the spectre of separate origin for this allegedly 'most inferior' of Oceanian races. In reasoning, with Dumont d'Urville, that the 'black race' was the 'mother stock' of the region's 'primitive inhabitants', he endorsed the hoary myth of their physical and racial obliteration with successive 'invasion' by 'more advanced' races.

As with Dumoutier, Serres's (1841:650) equivocal monogenism jostles with ambivalence about the 'black race' and smug conviction that the European race 'dominates all the others by the superiority of its physical and moral characters'. However, the racialism is blatant and the race pride fervent in the polygenist works produced by Dumoutier's surrogate Blanchard, who lacked any field or anthropological credentials, and by Hombron (1846:275) who claimed wide experience in south America and Oceania. Drawing on Dumoutier's *Atlas* and skull collection, Blanchard (1854:9, 12–13, 19, 30, 45, 49, 201, 256–7) divided the human genus into 'several species'. Since they were necessarily 'created in the very countries' they currently occupied, there must have been 'a considerable number of original stocks'. Races were permanent and their 'physical' characters 'rigorously determined'. There was no

'equality' between men since those whose heads were 'contracted on top and in front and elongated behind' and whose jaw bones 'projected' were bereft of 'genius or even talent, in the European sense'. These 'anthropological' characters coincided with certain 'moral' and 'intellectual' traits, a particular 'state of civilization', and a 'degree of intelligence' modifiable 'only within certain limits'.

In Oceania, Blanchard (1854:93–4, 112–36, 199–218) distinguished six 'very distinct types'. Five were autochthonous while the 'half-civilized' Malays had migrated from the Asian mainland and supplanted or annihilated the original inhabitants of the islands they colonized. Taking as his 'departure point' the 'European type' whose 'physical characters' coincided with the greatest 'mass of intelligence', Blanchard proclaimed an a priori hierarchy of relative physical and moral 'superiority' and 'inferiority'. Dumoutier's skulls showed that the 'Malay type', if 'very imperfect' in civilization compared to Europeans, was 'greatly superior' to the Micronesians who in turn had 'the advantage' over the Polynesians. The skulls of the *Papous* closely resembled the Polynesian type but the *Papous* in general comprised an 'inferior anthropological type', a 'more degraded race', and remained at 'one of the last degrees of human civilization'. The Fijians, the 'finest of all the Oceanian blacks', were 'inferior' to Polynesians but surprisingly more 'industrious'. The Australians and Tasmanians were anthropologically 'at the last rank among men' – their 'physical inferiority' matched by intellectual, they were comparable only to 'the Negroes of Africa', lived 'almost like animals', and lacked any 'trace of civilization' or capacity to achieve it.

Hombron's (1846:98–105, 130–3, 267, 279, 395–401) prolix treatise on 'Man in relation to the creation' is an idiosyncratic effort to reconcile polygeny with divine creation. He identified 'several' distinct 'species of men' clustered into three 'natural families' distinguished by 'degree of intelligence' and formed sequentially to occupy particular locales or 'centres of creation'. The 'family of blacks' ranked lowest as 'inferior species' of the 'primitive human creations' and continued to occupy 'the most arid and inaccessible' places where their 'conquerors' had not bothered to follow them. The 'copper-coloured' family, including the eastern Oceanians or Polynesians, was created next and ranked more highly. The 'Aryan race' of the 'great white human family' was created last. Ranked first as the 'logical consequence of the union of matter and intelligence', it was 'destined' to serve as link between 'the most material man', at the 'last echelons of the human series', and the 'supreme intelligence'.

The theme of 'hybrids' is a keystone of Hombron's (1846:85, 275–84, 365–6) theoretical stance. He regarded Oceania as the global epicentre

of human specific ‘mixing’ and the ideal site to study racial ‘crossing’. He contended that only parents of proximate species could produce fertile offspring and that the ‘fruits’ of unions between species low in the human series were ‘truly a kind of monstrosity’. Seduced by ‘the Polynesians’ he encountered first in Oceania (1842–6, IV:360–77), he predicted that their crossing with Europeans would produce a ‘magnificent métis race’. Similarly impressed by ‘handsome’ Fijian men (1846:291, 304–7), he attributed their fine ‘physical qualities’ to ‘amelioration’ consequent on ‘hybridity’ – repeated interbreeding of ugly aboriginal blacks (*Endamène* species) with attractive Polynesian women from Tonga. Overall, Hombron’s (1846:275, 277–8, 284, 301–2) verdicts on Oceanian hybrids were arbitrary and often damning. For example, he vilified ‘Malay–Chinese métis’ as ‘very disagreeable in aspect’ and the progeny of Malays and *Endamènes* as ‘frightful’, notwithstanding his professed admiration for the Fijian offspring of a purportedly similar admixture. Like Serres, but with overt advocacy of racial obliteration, Hombron (1846:104–5) envisaged a future whitewashed by sustained crossbreeding in which man comprised a ‘single’ race, ‘civilization’ was general, and ‘inferior races and species’ were dispatched to the ‘archives of history’.

The anthropological results of Dumont d’Urville’s final voyage, in contrast to those of his two previous expeditions, offer limited potential for systematic comparison. Dumont d’Urville himself contributed little while Dumoutier’s production is mismatched in medium and genre with that of the surgeon–naturalists. Dumoutier’s major legacy is material and visual – his collections of *moulages* and human skeletal remains and the *Atlas anthropologique*. He published virtually nothing and most of what he wrote is empirical, muddled, and impressionistic. The main extant materials by Hombron (1845, 1846) and Jacquinet (1845, 1846) are theoretically opposed scientific treatises. These are highly deductive works, notwithstanding the authors’ claims to the imprimatur of experience. A handful of journal entries transcribed in the *Histoire* (Hombron 1842–6) thus provide a rare means, in the context of this voyage, to investigate the endemic tension between field experience and scientific representation.

In April 1839, the expedition anchored for a week in Triton Bay at the southwestern end of New Guinea. The French saw only a handful of local men whom Dumont d’Urville (1842–6, VI:111–13) described as black, small, with frizzy hair, though ‘several’ were lighter and closer to Malays in colour, suggesting ‘mixed blood’. In his writings on the subject, Hombron generalized these few individuals into a taxonomic category by invoking the specious deductive logic of the science of race.



He thus harnessed particular material presence to an a priori system that disguised emotion as objectivity. In his journal, Hombron (1842–6, VI:311) admitted that he saw only a ‘small’ number of inhabitants at Triton Bay. He assumed that a lighter-coloured ‘few’ were ‘the chiefs’ and reified them as a ‘métis race’ of Malays and *Papous*, better built, better looking, and more ‘vigorous’ than either of the parent races. In his treatise on ‘Man’ (1846:278, 301), he classified them as *la race malaïo-papoue*.

In both journal (1842–6, VI:312–13) and treatise (1845:1573; 1846:278, 283–4, 290–307), Hombron explicitly differentiated the people he observed at Triton Bay from the ‘Waigeo Métis’ reported by Quoy and Gaimard, while classing both within the *Malaïo-Papou* race. He did so on the grounds of the greater ‘beauty’ of the inhabitants of Triton Bay and sought its ‘cause’ in ‘different origins’. He thereby combined recollections of ephemeral encounters with a personal racial aesthetic and a conjectural racial history, the whole packaged as objective science. By this dubious reasoning, Quoy’s Waigeo *Papous* were the offspring of the mélange of *Papous* with Malays of the Moluccas (Maluku) who were ‘the most crossed’ and therefore the ‘ugliest’ and ‘brownest’ of Malays. The Moluccans, then, were themselves ‘creoles’. Their ‘brown skin’ and ‘very coarse’ features betrayed frequent mixing with the *nègres endamènes* or ‘ancient aborigines’ who supposedly occupied the interior of New Guinea and the larger East Indian islands and had spread eastwards into the western Pacific Islands (modern Melanesia). In contrast, argued Hombron, the inhabitants of Triton Bay were ‘infinitely more isolated’ and their external contacts were limited to a few visiting fishermen of the ‘purest type’ and ‘least unattractive’ of western Malay Islanders. His *hybrides malaïo-papous* of Triton Bay stood in the same relationship to the Malays as his *Endamène*–Polynesian hybrids of Fiji did to the Polynesians. While bearing the physical marks of their ‘double origin’, each had acquired obvious characters of the more ‘beautiful’ type.

For Hombron (1842–6, VI:313; 1845:1572; 1846:291, 302), this ‘simple rapprochement’ between physical appearance, geographical location, and hybrid origins was an heuristic breakthrough of the highest order. It provided the key to disentangle the ‘confusion of species and races’ in Oceania by distinguishing races from their parent species. Such linkages, he stated, could only be made in situ by someone who had *beaucoup vu* (‘seen a lot’). On this ostensibly empirical basis, Hombron (1846:283–4, 296, 302–3) reconstituted the *Papous* as a distinctive species characterized less by their striking bouffant hair style than by reasonably ‘agreeable’ facial features and body forms and their ‘intellectual dispositions’.

In his view, they were quite different from the ‘very ugly’ race of *hybrides endamo-malais* widespread in the Moluccas. Hombron thus refuted earlier authors – by implication Quoy and Gaimard, Lesson, and Garnot – who had classified the *Papous* of Waigeo as Negro–Malay hybrids. Hombron also argued that he had proven the ‘error’ of indiscriminate Moluccan application of the term *Papou* to anyone from New Guinea or neighbouring islands. There is clear irony in Hombron’s oblivious deployment of his science to correct the long-established Indigenous usage of a term which that science had indirectly appropriated from that usage.

Apart from the pragmatic validation provided by his brief encounters with so-called hybrids in Fiji and Triton Bay, Hombron’s anthropological edifice rests materially on Dumoutier’s ‘anthropological gallery’. This ‘fine work’, Hombron (1846:293, 304, 306) declared, established ‘indubitably’ the nature of Fijian hybridity by enabling the juxtaposition of Fijian with Polynesian and *Endamène* heads (Figure 6.10; cf. Figures 6.4,

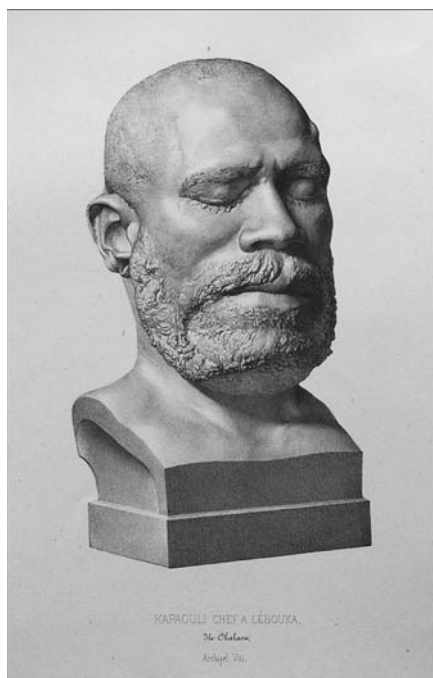


Figure 6.10 J.H. Lévillé after L.A. Bisson after P.M.A. Dumoutier (1846), ‘Kapaouli chef à Lébouka, Ile Obalaou, Archipel Viti’. Lithographed photograph. Photograph B. Douglas

6.5, 6.9). To his racially sensitized eye, the exercise demonstrated the precise modifications entailed in 'the Polynesian species' by the union with *Endamènes* and proved his contention that Fijian physiognomy retained all the 'characters' of both Polynesian and *Endamène* parents. To my modern antiracist eye, these products of Dumoutier's craft are poignant, three-dimensional individual portraits and Hombron's indelible physical characters signify fervid racial imagining rather than actual human types.

Honoré Jacquinot's polygenist treatise on 'anthropology' and 'the human races' of Oceania is written from a radical materialist perspective at odds with that of his pious colleague Hombron. Jacquinot (1846:1–7, 36, 103, 173–83) classified the human genus zoologically into three 'distinct' and 'unalterable' species corresponding to the classic monogenist division of the human species into three 'great races', usually called Caucasian, Negro, and Mongol. Each species was further subdivided into races. He, too, claimed the ocular authority of having 'visited many peoples' during the voyage – to do anthropology, he averred, *il faut avoir vu* ('one must have seen'). A zealous advocate for the 'persistence of primitive types', Jacquinot took a notably hard line on human hybridity. While Hombron (1846:85) allowed in principle that offspring of the crossing of animal species belonging to the same genus or sub-genus could reproduce themselves 'indefinitely', Jacquinot (1846:90–104, 109) condemned all interspecies sexual relations as a 'perversion of the generative impulse' and their human product, the 'métis', as 'abnormal, monstrous', and 'very limited' in fertility. He claimed that, without the 'shameful exploitation' of female slaves, such mixing would be 'non-existent, or nearly so', as it allegedly was between 'Australasian' and European in New Holland. By his own admission, Jacquinot's case lacked statistical rigour but he asserted that the sterility of interspecific crossbreeds was both a 'known' fact in the colonies and the 'impression' gained from his own observation. With blatant circular logic, he found 'incontestable' proof of the 'difference of species' in the purported absence of métis between 'two peoples living in contact' in the vicinity of Port Jackson, where he had never been.

The attribution of differential fertility to hybrids was a cornerstone of contemporary debates on human specific unity or plurality which split anthropology in France (Blanckaert 2003b; Douglas 2008a:58–71). In a seminal text yoking confident prescription to tacit race pride, the polygenist Broca (1859–60:616–25, 392–429) deduced a taxonomy of 'very unequal degrees of hybridity' according to the imagined relative fecundity of first-generation hybrids. The tactic allowed him, on the

one hand, to defend the ‘crossed’ races of France against purist accusations of hybrid degeneration. On the other, it served to dissociate the ‘highest’ races in the ‘human series’ (the Anglo-Saxons) from the ‘most inferior’ (the Australians and Tasmanians) by claiming that their union was *peu fécond* (almost sterile). In opposition to Broca but no less a priori, the monogenist Quatrefages (1868–9:238–9, 272) refuted polygenism by arguing that crossings of the most ‘distant’ human groups, such as Tasmanians or Australians with Europeans, were proven to produce fertile, viable mixed races. In the process, he derided Jacquinet’s claim to first-hand knowledge about the ‘absence of *métis*’ in Australia on the basis of Jacquinet’s own admission that he had actually seen only 20 Indigenous men on the north coast. Jacquinet (1846:348) justified his spurious generalization on the grounds that the inhabitants of New Holland were everywhere ‘identical’. According to Dumoutier (1837–40:347v), just such advice was received from the English at Port Essington. But Dumoutier’s inductive caution (1837–40:341), unusual in raciology, saw him preface his own assessment of ‘the Australians’ with the qualification ‘insofar as it is possible to prejudge’ the race from a handful of individuals.

In concluding his treatise, however, Jacquinet (1846:162, 375–6) provided a fleeting instance of the power of personal observation to dislodge ingrained stereotypes. While in no way contesting the zoological reality of races and species, he nonetheless posed a pragmatic challenge to the conventional ethnological wisdom of ‘cabinet’-based theorists. ‘Most authors’, he noted, wrongly represented ‘the black races of Oceania as composed of brutish *peuplades*, without industry or intelligence’, condemned to a ‘miserable’ nomadic life. In Jacquinet’s contrary opinion, the description hardly applied to the ‘most brutish tribes’ of New Holland whose ‘miserable state’ he attributed to the ‘sterility of the soil’. Elsewhere, including Port Jackson, they had shown themselves to be ‘intelligent’ and as educable as the children of English settlers. In his experience, the western Pacific Islanders, Bory de Saint-Vincent’s *Mélanien*s, ceded ‘nothing’ to the Polynesians and ‘even’ sometimes surpassed them. Jacquinet rated the Fijians as ‘certainly superior’ to the Tongans, the ‘most advanced’ of the Polynesians, in the quality of their houses, fortified villages, arms, and canoes and as equal to them in religion. He praised the ‘industry’ of Islanders across the region from New Guinea to the Solomons, New Caledonia, and Fiji, especially their pottery-making which outdid ‘everything’ the Polynesians could produce. Finally, as early navigators had found to their cost, the Polynesians ‘yielded nothing’ to the *Mélanien*s in ‘ferocity and perfidy’.

## Conclusion

The final chapter interweaves several discursive, theoretical, personal, and empirical strands, some recurrent, some new. Discursively, it shows how the science of race and its taxonomic armature had been normalized in anthropology in France by the mid-19th century, as the prevailing moral and political conservatism of the Restoration era gave ground to confident intellectual modernity and vociferous race pride, often camouflaging deep racial anxiety. Polygenists were forceful voices in this process and in the societies of geography (1822), ethnology (1839), and eventually anthropology (1859) which provided important avenues for debate and publication in the new social sciences (Blanckaert 1988; Staum 2003). Whereas in 1830 Quoy had to obfuscate his polygenist leanings in the *Zoologie* of the *Astrolabe's* voyage (see Chapter 5), by the mid-1840s such opinions were openly expressed in official naval publications. Indeed, as this chapter amply demonstrates, polygenism is the dominant discourse in the printed anthropological literature emanating from Dumont d'Urville's final expedition. Embattled Muséum monogenists like Serres and Quatrefages naturalized racial terminology and categories, combining equivocal belief in original human unity with firm commitment to the scientific worth of craniometry and no doubt about the inequality of races, regarded as permanent biological types (Douglas 2008a:53–8).

Theoretically, the chapter develops a brief earlier reference to phrenology by examining its emergence around 1800 and its premises and practices before the rapid decline of the late 1840s. This discussion brings phrenology's heterogeneous but distinctive perspective to bear on key themes that thread through the book. The first is the supposedly immutable physical correlates of human intelligence and potential perfectibility. In principle, phrenology's signature mix of cerebral physiology and cranial anatomy allowed both personal and racial improvement but practice was often another matter, as in Broussais's belief that Australians were uncivilizable and Dumoutier's gloom about the 'destiny' of the 'primitive black races'. A second theme is the ongoing friction between the savants who controlled learned institutions, societies, and scholarly publication and the travellers who supplied the facts to prove their deductions. A third is the logical slippage from individual to a priori racial type – Hombron and Honoré Jacquinot both resorted to this staple tactic of the armchair theorist despite their empirical pretensions, as did some phrenologists who in theory should not have done so.

Phrenology's comet-like intellectual and political trajectory is embodied personally in Dumoutier's career. A widely respected luminary in

his discipline in the 1830s, he was enthusiastically welcomed aboard by Dumont d'Urville in 1837. Warmly praised by both commanders for his 'zeal', 'dedication', and 'fine conduct', he was decorated with the Légion d'Honneur in 1841.<sup>25</sup> In 1842, he formally identified Dumont d'Urville's charred skull following the train crash which killed him and his family. But after the publication of the *Atlas anthropologique* in 1846, Dumoutier vanishes from view, though he lived until 1871. He made no direct contribution to Blanchard's (1854) *Anthropologie* volume. Blanchard relied on Dumoutier's collections for evidence but ignored phrenology in favour of the polygenist physical anthropology which, under Broca, dominated the discipline for at least three decades after 1850.

Empirically, the chapter injects a novel material element into my histories of encounter, interaction, and representation – that of *moulage*, both process and product. Dumoutier's technique of *moulage* required personal tolerance and prolonged intimacy with Indigenous interlocutors whose wilfulness, belligerence, or confronting appearance at times shook his universalism and provoked him to harsh or racialized words. Nonetheless, his recourse to racial language was usually conventional or incidental and never approached the systemic acrimony of Blanchard or Hombron. It is fitting to celebrate the sheer humanity of Dumoutier's failings and his candid revelation of the trials inflicted on voyagers by Indigenous agency. The importance of his anthropological legacy is incontestable. The powerful named individual presence preserved in the busts – 'as it were, the Oceanians in person' marvelled Serres (1841:650) – still has great power to move, as I found when permitted to view and photograph them at the Musée de l'Homme in 2004. That vital presence inspired the New Zealander Fiona Pardington to recuperate a selection of Dumoutier's Oceanian busts for her much acclaimed photographic exhibition in 2010, 'Ahua: a Beautiful Hesitation'.

I conclude by suggesting two entwined implications for a history of science rooted in ethnohistory. First, global paradigms such as 19th- and 20th-century raciology (and its 21st-century reincarnation), because of their very ubiquity, must be endorsed or colonized by multiple political and moral positions, including antithetical ones. All are necessarily tinged by the dominant discursive colouring which is itself not immune to reciprocal shading. Second, discourse is not everything. European representations of their encounters with Indigenous people are also touched by fallout from the emotions and double entendres generated in the encounters themselves, by signs and countersigns of Indigenous agency. In the resultant shifts, fractures, and tensions resides the ethno-historical potential of even the most refractory of such texts.

# Conclusion

# Conclusion: Race in 1850/ Oceania in 1850

Dates are historians' tools. Continuity, rupture, turning point, transition, watershed are historians' artefacts, however compelling their apparent reality. I conclude this book by reflecting on the status of its primary concept and the condition of its main spatial focus in about 1850. This end date for my study marks the culmination of the era of seaborne exploration under sail, the book's principal historical ground. However, 1850 is also a useful standpoint from which to survey global ideas of human difference and the regional situation of Indigenous Oceania. In historical retrospect, both conceptually and spatially, this looks like a liminal period, a hiatus before portentous events. But a more existential, non-teleological stance can leave space for other possible outcomes.

## **Race in 1850**

From a raciological perspective, 1850 saw the publication of Knox's (1850:7, 10, 13–14, 23) startling dictum, 'race is everything'. This reiterated phrase encapsulates his theory of history which traces 'human character, individual, social, national, to the all-pervading, unalterable, physical character of race'. Only five years before, Knox recalled, his views had been ignored by the London press. The humanitarian disposition then prevailing in British ethnology is epitomized in Prichard's (1833:534–44) earlier challenge to categorical usage of the term race. On nominalist and philological grounds, he targeted 'staggering anomalies' in Cuvier's skull-based classification of mankind into three 'distinct races'. On the one hand, Cuvier's races lumped together 'several groups



or classes of nations distinguished by the most permanent and indelible characters'. On the other, his races did not 'coincide with the divisions of languages'. Outside France, such denial of the existence of 'permanently distinct', physically constituted races in the 'one human species' still had wide currency in the mid-1840s. In *Kosmos*, the German traveller, geographer, and naturalist Alexander von Humboldt (1845:383, 385) disputed application of the 'somewhat indeterminate word races' to human 'varieties', preferring the concept of 'small families of peoples'. On moral grounds, he rejected 'the disagreeable presumption of higher and lower races' and asserted the principle of the 'perfectibility of the whole species'. Yet Knox (1850:13, 24) observed in 1850 that, since the outbreak of the 'war of race' in continental Europe and Ireland – the social and political upheavals of 1848 – the word race was in 'daily use' and his own ideas had been appropriated by a 'leading journal'. This sea change in general attitudes to human difference was unhappily acknowledged by Knox's *bête noire* Prichard (1850:147), who also noted the sudden 'importance in public attention' of 'human races, and their division in the population of Europe', as a novel basis for political groupings and demands 'for separation and hostility'. In France, mainstream scholarly opinion had long followed Cuvier in maintaining that racial characters were 'real and profound' and that the 'one indivisible' human species comprised 'numerous, very diversified races which keep their characters' (Lesson 1847:14). A few years later, Blanchard (1854:32) confidently stated that 'the racial instinct is innate in man's heart'.

In 1857, the United States Egyptologist George Robins Gliddon (1857a:402, 428–31) crystallized the bitter debate that had long polarized the science of man by inventing the terms 'monogenism' and 'polygenism' to label 'the doctrines of schools professing to sustain dogmatically the unity or the diversity of human races'. Sympathetic to polygenism and unequivocally racialist, Gliddon (1857a:429; 1857b:625, 637) asserted that 'the existence of "*superior and of inferior races*"',<sup>1</sup> with the Tasmanians 'the lowest', was 'simply a fact in nature'. That 'fact' was allegedly demonstrated by his 'Ethnographic Tableau' of graphic 'specimens' of the human genus which, remarkably, centralizes 'Baron Cuvier' as the fifteenth of 54 racial portraits borrowed from ethnological and voyage texts. Positioned between 'Icelander' and 'Bulgarian', 'Cuvier' serves presumably as synecdoche for the 'German race' to which, in Knox's terms (1852:18), he belonged by birth, rather than to the 'Celtic' or French race.

In 1850, the bitter divide between monogenists and polygenists and between environmental and hereditarian explanations for human

diversity seemed permanent and irreconcilable. Yet within 15 years, both conflicts had been largely neutralized by the extension to man of the Darwinian concept of speciation through natural selection. Darwin (1871, I:231, 235) himself expressed 'indifference whether the so-called races of man are thus designated, or are ranked as species or sub-species' and predicted the 'silent and unobserved death' of the dispute over human specific unity.<sup>2</sup> He joined environment to heredity by representing races or species as unstable products of very long-run adaptations to milieus, decided by natural selection and transmitted by generation. But in the raciologial hiatus of 1850, Darwin was still gestating his theory while Wallace (1858:54, 57; 1905, I:361-3) was yet to embark on his seminal field trip to the Malay Archipelago. There, prostrated by fever in Ternate in 1858, he had the insight which forced Darwin (1859:1-2) to publish *On the Origin of Species* – that in the natural 'struggle for existence', the 'best adapted' species would thrive while 'the weakest and least perfectly organized must always succumb'.

In 1850, the thesis that primitive dark-skinned autochthones faced severe depopulation or extinction in the face of racially superior colonizers was widely held in Europe. Rooted in understandings of Spanish colonial history and anticipated in displacement histories like those of Brosse and Forster, this outcome was demanded by the doctrine of progress and seemingly confirmed by recent experience in North America and Oceania (Brantlinger 2003). The presumption of racial extinction as an empirical fact cut across ideological differences. The Presbyterian minister John Dunmore Lang (1834, I:38) saw 'Divine Providence' at work as 'uncivilized' races vanished 'before the progress of civilization' in colonized countries such as New South Wales. Philanthropic Prichard (1813:iii; 1839:496-7) denied 'religious predilections' but also deplored 'the extermination of human races' with the onset of European colonization, while taking it for granted as the inevitable outcome of encounters between 'simple' tribes and 'more civilised agricultural nations'. The polygenist Broca (1859-60:612) was equally 'certain' that numerous races had 'entirely disappeared' and predicted that 'all the black races of Malaysia and Melanesia' would soon die out and be supplanted by 'Malays and Europeans'.

By the mid-1860s, these inchoate mixtures of religion, history, developmentalism, and raciology were synthesized and explicated by the compelling theoretical edifice of Darwinism. Though many Darwinians were sincere humanitarians, the concept of natural selection reinforced the science of race since Darwin's 'great law' was profoundly racialist when applied to human groups. A passionate opponent of slavery,

Darwin (1871, I:34, 201, 232, 238–40) himself acknowledged his first-hand experience of the ‘mental similarity’ of the ‘most distinct races of men’. But he did not doubt the reality of a human racial hierarchy or the certainty that ‘the civilised races of men’ would eventually ‘exterminate and replace throughout the world the savage races’. An egalitarian socialist, Wallace (1864:clxiv–clxv, clxix) was likewise sure that the ‘struggle for existence’ doomed the ‘lower and more degraded races’ to ‘inevitable extinction’. He invoked the vegetable analogy of ‘the weeds of Europe’ which had obliterated native plants in North America and Australia due to their ‘inherent vigour’ and ‘greater capacity for existence and multiplication’.

### **Oceania in 1850**

In 1850, notwithstanding such dire prognostications, much of Oceania remained Indigenous space. Paradoxically, this situation was given graphic expression in Dumont d’Urville’s (1832) seminal map (Map 0.1), archetype for the arrogant racialization of Oceania in French and ultimately global cartography. The map is unevenly inscribed with dates and toponyms denoting European maritime ‘discoveries’ but has few traces of European colonialism, ‘Batavia’ and ‘Manille’ apart. Delimited by thick hatched lines and embodied in bold blocks of colour, Dumont d’Urville’s racial regions are also countersigns of the ongoing ubiquity of Indigenous presence in Oceania. Yet these communities were by no means ‘primitive isolates’, neither from each other over millennia nor from the swelling movement of global shipping through the great ocean’s waters, coasts, islands, and emerging multinational ports – Honolulu, Papeete, Kororareka, Apia, Levuka. By 1850, Indigenous Oceanians increasingly participated in this traffic, as hosts, traders, guides, seamen, labourers, and missionaries. Macassans and Malays, but few Europeans, had long paid regular visits to northern Australia and west New Guinea.

In 1850, patches of the western margins of Oceania were subject to varied European colonial régimes. Since the early 16th century, in the East Indies, the Philippines, and Guam, Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch maritime imperialisms had sought to monopolize trade via mercantile nodes, military superiority, and pacts with local rulers rather than significant territorial control. Since 1788, British convict and pastoral settlement had occupied all of Tasmania and parts of southeastern and southwestern Australia, expelling or subjugating Aboriginal people in the process. Further east, the British began to colonize New Zealand after 1840 while France gained strategic footholds in the Marquesas and

Tahiti in the early 1840s. Everywhere else, local rulers, élites, and communities held sway, exercising significant control over itinerant explorers, whalers, traders, and beachcombers, as well as resident Christian missionaries who had proselytized with varied, ambiguous success in parts of the eastern and central Pacific Islands after 1797. Even directly colonized people were by no means supine victims of irresistible European force or superior knowledge. Foreign ideas, objects, and technologies were enthusiastically appropriated. Vigorous, at times violent opposition was commonplace. Indigenous élites often actively collaborated in colonial authority which everywhere relied on local intermediaries and appointees to translate, police, and administer relations with colonized populations.

Contemporary European cartography of Oceania condenses a fleeting mid-century balance in the relative emphasis on spaces, races, and colonies. For example, maps of *L'Océanie* engraved in 1832 and 1850 for Andriveau-Goujon's *Atlas classique et universel* (1835, 1850) demarcate Dumont d'Urville's racial regions with brightly coloured hatched lines. A legend correlating colours with regions summarizes his 'Division of Oceania by peoples', including his conflation of place with race and unpleasant opinion of the inhabitants of Melanesia. Colonialism is a minor element, confined to an inset map of 'The English establishments of New South Wales'. Yet within a decade, a new edition of the *Atlas* supplanted this map with another version (1856) which blurs racial boundaries and replaces the racist legend with a key to the delimitation by colour of Europe's still sparse, often tenuous colonies – Dutch in much of the East Indies and the western third of New Guinea; Portuguese in east Timor; Spanish in the northern and central Philippines; British in Singapore, southeastern and southwestern Australia, and New Zealand; and French in New Caledonia, Tahiti, and the Marquesas. The great majority of Oceania's land areas remain uncoloured, denoting ongoing Indigenous sovereignty unacknowledged in the key. Henceforth, the European cartography of Oceania would steadily subsume racial nomenclature, with its subtext of local presence and control, within the acquisitive politics of burgeoning colonial rivalry (Douglas 2011b:18–21). But that is another story.

# Notes

## Introduction

1. I use 'discourse' in a loosely Foucauldian sense to denote embedded sets of taken for granted ideas, terms, and categories; and 'praxis' in a loosely Marxist sense to connote the synthesis of theory and action and practical expressions of discourse.
2. Archaeologists, historical linguists, and bioanthropologists roughly concur that the length of human settlement in island Southeast Asia, Australia, and Near Oceania (New Guinea, Bismarck Archipelago, and Solomon Islands) is at least 40,000–60,000 years. In Remote Oceania, the estimated length ranges from about 4,000 years in western Micronesia, around 3,000 years in southern Melanesia and western Polynesia, to fewer than 800 years in New Zealand (Higham et al. 1999:426; Kirch 2010; Spriggs 1997:23–6, 70; Stanyon et al. 2009).
3. See O'Gorman 1961:51–69; Wroth 1944:91–168.
4. See Douglas 2010; Schilder 1976; Wroth 1944:168–200.
5. *Australasie* from Latin *australis* ('southern'); *Polynésie* from Greek *poly-* ('many') and *nēsos* ('island'). See Douglas 2011b.
6. For example, Canzler 1795, 1813; Reichard 1803: [plates 2 and 3]; Streit 1817.
7. *Micronesia*, from Greek *mikros* ('small'), appears on an 1819 map by the Florentine cartographer Borghi (1826). *Malaisie*, from Malay *Malayu*, was suggested by the voyage naturalist René-Primevère Lesson (1826a:103, note 1).
8. Govor's survey was undertaken for my ARC Discovery project 'Naming Oceania' (DP1094562).
9. Other expeditions in Oceania left important legacies: those of the Dutchmen Tasman (17th century) and Roggeveen (18th century); the Englishmen Drake, Wallis, Bligh, Vancouver, Beechey, and FitzRoy (16th–19th centuries); the 18th-century expeditions of the Frenchmen La Pérouse and Marion du Fresne and the Spaniard Malaspina; the 19th-century voyages of the Russians Krusenstern and Lisiansky, Kotzebue, and Bellingshausen and the United States Exploring Expedition under Wilkes. Though I refer in passing to several, none meets my core criterion of broad comparative regional scope.
10. I use 'anthropology' in its dominant 19th-century sense of physical anthropology, focussing on races (Institut de France 1835, I:80; 1878, I:77). In French, the term retained this narrow meaning well into the 20th century but in English by the 1870s approximated its broad modern sense. See Stocking 1971; Vermeulen 2006; Williams 1985:38–40. I use 'ethnography' to mean systematic study and description of particular human groups and 'ethnology' to imply their comparison.
11. See Ballard 2008; Douglas 2008a:55–6, 64–73; MacLeod and Rehbock 1994.
12. See Boxer 1963:1–40; 1969:20–5, 88–9, 96–104, 249–72; Hannaford 1996: 17–126; Marshall and Williams 1982:33–7, 227–57.

13. The *OED* dates the earliest English usage of the substantive 'Negro' to 1555 (OUP 2013 [2003]: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/125898>).
14. Académie française 1694, II:364; Estienne 1539:411; Johnson 1756, II; OUP 2013 [2008]: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/157031>.
15. My emphasis.
16. My emphasis.
17. Blumenbach 1795:322; 1806:73–97; Buffon 1749:469–70, 529–30; Kant 1777:127; 1788:107–21. See also Zammito 2006.
18. Blumenbach 1795:viii–x; Kant 1777:126.
19. See Blanckaert 1988:24–34; 2003a; Topinard 1879; Williams 1985:248–9.
20. Original emphasis.
21. OUP 2013 [2008]: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/157031>.
22. My emphasis.
23. See Brantlinger 2003; McGregor 1997; Rivers 1922; Weir 2008.
24. Original emphasis.
25. Canzler 1813; Reichard 1816, 1822; Streit 1817. See also Lindner 1814:61–4.
26. See Blanckaert 2003a; Hannaford 1996:187–276; Stocking 1987:8–45, 142–3. On paradigm change in science, see Kuhn 1970:77–135.
27. See also Copans and Jamin 1978; Jones 1988:37–8. See Chapter 3.
28. See also Curtin 1964; Pagden 1986; Pearce 1953.
29. Original emphasis.
30. See also Greenblatt 1991; McClintock 1995; Todorov 1989; Torgovnick 1990.
31. For example, Banivanua-Mar 2010:258; Driver and Jones 2009:25; Edwards 2001:172; Hermkens 2007:14–15; Kerr 2001:93–102; Schaffer 2007:99.
32. For congruent strategies by postcolonial and feminist historians, see Chakrabarty 2000; Guha 1983, 1997; Mani 1991; Stoler 1992, 2009.
33. See also Pandey 1995.
34. See Langlois and Seignobos 1898:43–279.
35. See also Neumann 1992; Salmond 1991, 1997.
36. See Douglas 1999a, 2001, 2003, 2006, 2009a, 2009b, 2011a.
37. On 'ecstatic' dimensions of scientific travel and exploration as 'anything but rational in the sense of being self-controlled, planned, disciplined, and strictly intellectual', see Fabian 1998:80–1; 2000:194–9. On the mutual mimesis of Indigenous actions and colonial phobias in widely disparate settings, see Morris 1992; Stoler 1992; Taussig 1984; 1993:59–69.
38. Original emphasis. I thank Kirsty Douglas for alerting me to Benstock's use of the term countersign.
39. For the parallel image of "'watermarks in colonial history'", see Stoler 2009:5–8.
40. For similar elision of Indigenous presence with assumption of a closed cognitive circuit linking local experience and metropolitan knowledge, see Porter 1990:121–3; Rudwick 1997:114, note 2; Strack 1996:287.
41. The quintessential colonial activity of collecting was also profoundly, if covertly shaped by Indigenous agency. See Hermkens 2007; O'Hanlon and Welsch 2000.
42. See, for example, Douglas 1999a, 1999b, 2003, 2006, 2009a, 2011a; Gell 1993; Guest 2003, 2007; Hoorn 1998; Jolly 1992; Thomas 1997, 1999.
43. By rendering Bourdieu's (1990:50) term *irréductibles* as 'reducible', his authoritative English translator Richard Nice fatally distorted the sense of this passage for anglophone readers.

44. See also Thomas 1994:57–8.
45. For example, Barros and Couto 1777–88; Galvão 1563; Herrera y Tordesillas 1601–15.
46. For example, Battesti 1993; Fisher and Johnston 1979, 1993; Frost 1976; Jacobs 1995:80–103; Rennie 1995; Veit 1972, 1979; Williams 1979.
47. See, for example, Bhabha 1994; Mills 1991; Spivak 1988; Spurr 1993; Torgovnick 1990; Young 1995. For counter-critiques by Oceanic specialists, see Cowlshaw 2000; Dixon 2001:1–9; Thomas 1994:43–61; and by a south Asianist, Prakash 1990.
48. On the ‘Melbourne Group’ of ethnographic historians, see Geertz 1990:325–9.
49. Original emphasis.
50. See, for example, Anderson 2000; Ballantyne 2002, 2004; Lincoln 1998; Mackay 1999; MacLeod and Rehbock 1988, 1994; Raj 2000; Renneville 1996.
51. My emphasis.
52. National Library of Australia, ‘South Seas: Voyaging and Cross-Cultural Encounters in the Pacific (1760–1800)’ <http://southseas.nla.gov.au/>; University of Cambridge, ‘Artefacts of Encounter’ <http://maa.cam.ac.uk/aofe/>; University of Sydney, ‘The Baudin Legacy: a New History of the French Scientific Voyage to Australia (1800–04)’ <http://setis.library.usyd.edu.au/audin/>.
53. See Raj 2010.

## 1 Before Races: Barbarity, Civility, & Salvation in the *Mar del Sur*

1. See Chapter 4, note 46.
2. Blumenbach 1795:321, note z, referencing Dalrymple’s translation of Quirós (1770:164). The first edition of the *Diccionario de la Lengua Castellana* (RAE, 1726–39, IV:433) defines *loro* as ‘between white and black’.
3. Sanz 1973. See also Camino 2005:39–41; Kelly 1966, I:5.
4. Quirós (1990:37, 105) described the inhabitants of Fatuiva as *cuasi blancos* (‘almost white’) and those of Tahuata as *pardo* (‘brownish’) or *de color amulados* (‘like mulattos’). Cf. the Jesuit Acosta’s (1590:28–30) influential contemporary theory of the necessary proximity of islands to a *tierra firme*.
5. See Stuurman 2000; Thomas 1994:72–80.
6. See Wheeler 2000:2–38.
7. Folqman 1755:106–7, 321; Silva 1789, I:243; II:107, 280; Vieyra 1773, I.
8. See Venturino’s (2003:29) parallel discussion of the term *pureté* (‘purity’) in pre-revolutionary France: ‘the distinction between the pure and the impure is primarily religious and moral, with secondary consequences for the hereditary transmission of characters’.
9. Hill 2005; Lewis 2003; see also Martínez 2008; cf. Vacano 2012.
10. Covarrubias 1674, II: folio 155v; RAE 1726–39, V:500. Similarly, Covarrubias (1674, I: folio 170r) defined ‘old Christian’ as a ‘clean man who has no *raza* of a Moor or of a Jew’ whereas a ‘new Christian’ was ‘the opposite’. See also Hill 2005:204–7, 212–15; Lewis 2003:23–5, 180–1.
11. Hill 2005:200, 207, 210, 219–23; 2006:56–8; see also Lewis 2003:4–5.
12. See also Lewis 2003:30–1.
13. Pigafetta 1906, II:64.

14. Four 'Indians' also reached Seville on the *Victoria* while 13 more survivors of Magellan's expedition were eventually repatriated from Portuguese captivity (Spate 1979:52–3).
15. I use Robertson's 1906 transcription of the Italian version of Pigafetta's manuscript held in Milan's Biblioteca Ambrosiana.
16. In contemporary Spanish usage, *las Indias* denoted the entire hemisphere comprising the Americas, the Pacific Islands, and the East Indies (Headley 1995:630–3; Herrera y Tordesillas 1601:1–2)
17. For example, Pigafetta 1906, I:38, 93, 104, 126; II, 148, 150, 158.
18. Pigafetta 1995:110, 121; cf. Pigafetta 1906, II:144–7, 180–1, my emphasis.
19. An anonymous 16th-century manuscript known as the 'Boxer Codex' refers to and portrays *los negrillos* (Anon. [c. 1590]: folios 9a, 14). An English translation (Quirino and Garcia 1958:344, 392) renders *los negrillos* as 'Negritos'.
20. See Ballard 2000, 2008.
21. Cachey in Pigafetta 1995:153, note 146; 162, note 231; Robertson in Pigafetta 1906, II:195, note 379.
22. Díaz (2005:338) attributed a similar constellation of incentives to Cortés who lured potential followers with the chance 'to give service to God and to His Majesty and to get rich'.
23. See also Kelly 1966, I:15–23.
24. King, Clerke, et al. 1967:532–3.
25. *Mazaua* is officially identified as Limasawa, a small island south of Leyte (Bernad 2001).
26. My emphasis.
27. King, Clerke, et al. 1967:534–8.
28. For Pigafetta's maps, see 1906, I:82, 88, 98, 108, 132; II, 16, 24, 44, 52, 56, 60, 64, 114, 146, 152, 156, 160, 166, and 1995: plates 1–23; for his vocabularies, see 1906, I:44, 74–8, 182–92; II, 116–44.
29. Cachey 1995:xxvii–xxxvii.
30. For a semantic history of the vernacular toponym *Papua*, see Ballard 2008 and Sollewijn Gelpke 1993. Since *Papua* and its varied linguistic manifestations do not neatly correspond to the English words 'Papua' or 'Papuan', I consistently cite the term used in the original text rather than translate it.
31. My emphasis.
32. For example, Crawford 1820, I:17–30, plate 2; see Ballard 2008.
33. Cortés 1837; Galvão 1563: folios 56v, 66v, 76–77v; see also Spate 1979:62–5, 90–100; Wright 1939:472–4.
34. Sarmiento 1969:261–2; Vaz 1600:801–2; see also Amherst and Thomson 1901, I:iv–vi; II:465–8; Spate 1979:119–43.
35. This voyage is recorded in two short narratives by Mendaña (1965, 1967) and two accounts by or derived from Sarmiento (1969; Anon. 1969). They are unevenly translated in Amherst and Thomson 1901.
36. Quirós (1973b) wrote a brief report on this voyage in 1596. His narrative (2000:45–178) was recorded by his secretary Belmonte Bermúdez during or after Quirós's later voyage, published by Zaragoza (1876–82, I:1–195), and poorly translated by Markham (1904, I:3–146).
37. Kelly 1966, I:28–38, 46; Markham 1904, I:xx–xxii; Munilla 1963:21–2; Prado to Antonio de Arostegui, 24 December 1613, in Stevens 1930:239–40.
38. Quirós's narrative of this voyage (2000:178–314) was recorded by Belmonte Bermúdez and translated by Markham (1904, I:159–320; see Kelly 1960). See



- also the logbook of the pilot Gonçalez de Leza (1880), translated by Markham (1904, II:321–403); the journal of the chaplain and vicar Munilla (1963), translated by Kelly (1966, I:135–252); a signed holograph copy of Prado's *Relacion sumaria* of about 1615, held at the State Library of New South Wales and transcribed with a translation by Barwick (Prado 1930a); and Torres's (1878) letter-report to the King from Manila, transcribed by Zaragoza and translated by Barwick (Stevens 1930:214–37).
39. Amherst and Thomson 1901, I:xxiv; Kelly 1963–73, IV:XX; 1966, I:18–21, 82–3.
  40. Galvão 1563: folios 57v–58; see above. See also Douglas 2010:187–93.
  41. Jode [1593]; Langenes [1600].
  42. Amherst and Thomson 1901, I:133, note 2.
  43. See also Mendaña 1967:198–203, 206–7, 217–18, 223–4.
  44. Quirós 2000:100, presumably referring to crew members.
  45. See also Munilla 1963:54; Quirós 2000:241–3.
  46. For examples of such kidnappings in Rakahanga, Taumako, and Santo, see Quirós 2000:223–9, 241–3, 276–8; Torres 1878:18.
  47. Prado [1606b]; [1606c]; [1606d]; [1607b]; [1607c]; [1607d]; 1930a:144, 158, 170, 172.
  48. See also Kelly 1966, I:87; Parsonson 1966.
  49. Groesen 2009:77–8; La Fontaine Verwey 1973:87–8.
  50. The earliest narrative of this voyage appeared in Dutch under Schouten's name in 1618 (1945) with an English (1619) and other translations the next year. An almost identical account was published in Dutch and Latin in 1619 under Le Maire's name. A somewhat different narrative attributed unequivocally to Le Maire (1622) appeared in parallel Dutch, French, and Latin editions.
  51. *Volck* is modern *volk*; *Inwoonders* is *inwoners*; *Swarten* is *zwarten*.
  52. Original emphasis.
  53. *Schamelheydt* (modern *schamelheid*) is translated in Hexham's contemporary Dutch–English dictionary (1648) as both 'Shamefulness' and 'The Privities of a man, or of a woman'.
  54. See La Fontaine Verwey 1973:91–4; Schilder 1976:33–4.
  55. The widespread usage of betel or areca nut in south and southeast Asia and New Guinea gave it synecdochic status for Europeans who knew the region.

## 2 Towards Races: Ambivalent Encounters in the South Seas

1. See Blumenbach 1795:296; Boule 2003; Stuurman 2000.
2. Personal physician to the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb for 12 years, Bernier was the first known European to visit Kashmir. His Asian narratives were widely read and translated.
3. See Fenves 2006:13.
4. See also Broberg 1983:179–93; Hörstadius 1974:273–4.
5. My emphasis.

6. See Blumenbach 1795:297; Darwin 1871, I:226; Duchet 1995:271; Ryan 2002:168; Wheeler 2000:30. For interpretations parallel to mine, see Bernasconi 2001:x; Blanckaert 2003a:135–8; 2006:458–61; Montagu 1997:69.
7. My emphasis.
8. My emphasis.
9. See Beaglehole 1966:166; Burney 1803–17, IV:388; Spate 1983:157.
10. OUP 2013 [1989]: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/77647>.
11. Dampier's narratives span from about 1670 to 1701 but he circumnavigated the world twice more before his death in 1715.
12. Unless otherwise indicated, italics in my citations from Dampier are original.
13. See Chapter 4, note 47.
14. See also Cook 1955:312, 358, 395; 1967:52; Cook and King 1784, I:99–100; Hawkesworth 1773, III:227.
15. Author's deletion.
16. On absence and lack in historical and fictional voyage literature, expressed in the rhetorical device of litotes, see Lamb 2001:13, 111–13, 236–41.
17. My emphasis.
18. Preston and Preston 2004:7–8, 325–30; Spate 1983:157–8; Williams 2004.
19. My emphases.
20. Original emphasis.
21. See also Hall 1996.
22. My emphasis.
23. On Brosse's influence, see Dunmore 1965–9, I:45–50; Ryan 2002.
24. See also Mondragón 2007; Spriggs 1997:239–40.
25. See Bougainville 1771:258, 284; Burney 1803–17, IV:388; Cook 1955:417; Forster 1777, II:228; Forster 1982, IV:632.
26. Hoare called the inhabitants of Malakula (north Vanuatu) 'these Melanesian people'; endorsed Beaglehole's remark that "'Cook had sailed clean out of Polynesia into a new world – the world of Melanesia'"; and asserted that 'Forster is certainly correct in supposing that the southern New Hebrideans are a "mixed breed", in fact of Papuans or "Melanesians" and Polynesians' (Forster 1982, IV:570, note 4; 596, note 5; 597, note 2).
27. Original emphasis.
28. For example, Forster 1778:227–51; see Douglas 1999b:167–72.
29. The *Dolphin* under Wallis was the first European vessel known to have visited Tahiti during his circumnavigation of the globe in 1766–8.
30. 'Mustee', a 'person of mixed racial descent', abbreviated Spanish *mestizo* which historically denoted an 'animal with father and mother of different castas', L. *Hybris*, and technically refers to a mixture of Amerindian and white parentage (OUP 2013 [2003]: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/124249>; RAE 1726–39, IV:555–6).
31. The *Swallow* left Plymouth as the *Dolphin's* consort but the ships separated in the Strait of Magellan.
32. My emphasis.
33. Carteret 1965:201, note 3; Wallis 1965, I:60–3.
34. Robertson 1948:135–229; see also Pearson 1969.
35. Bougainville, commanding *Boudeuse* and *Etoile*, circumnavigated the globe in 1766–9.

36. See also Staum 1996:161.
37. See Buffon 1749–67, IV:388–9; 1766:313.
38. The term *cotonné* clearly insinuated resemblance to Negroes: applying only to hair, it meant ‘very short and very frizzy, like that of the Negroes’ (Académie française 1798, I:323).
39. My emphasis.
40. Original emphasis.
41. Bougainville 1771:247; 1977:346; [Duclos-Guyot and Commerson] [1766–8]: Cahier 1, 5–6, 7–8, 23–24 May 1768.
42. My emphasis.
43. Monboddo (1773:134, 289) argued that the ‘beginning’ of man’s ‘progress’ must be traced to ‘the mere animal’; insisted on the ‘resemblance’ between ‘the brutes’ and ‘the savages’; and maintained that ‘the Ouran Outangs’ were ‘proved to be of our species’ by indisputable ‘marks of humanity’.
44. My emphasis.
45. Joppien and Smith 1985–7, II:221–4; see also Jolly 1992.
46. My account of the landings at Niue amalgamates those of Cook (1961:433–8), Georg Forster (1777, II:163–7), Reinhold Forster (1982, III:536–40) and Sparrman (1953:129–30).
47. Cf. Williams 1837:295–6.
48. Original emphasis. See also Thomas 1991:88–93; cf. McLachlan 1982.
49. Bruni d’Entrecasteaux, commanding *Recherche* and *Espérance*, was sent to search for La Pérouse whose vessels had disappeared in the western Pacific after leaving Botany Bay in March 1788. Bruni d’Entrecasteaux died in July 1793 off the north coast of New Guinea and the voyage ended in disarray in Java in February 1794.

### 3 Seeing Races: Confronting ‘Savages’ in *Terra Australis*

1. Sloan 1995:148, note 79; Poliakov 1982:56–8; Todorov 1989:126; Topinard 1879:592; cf. Blanckaert 1993:40; 2003:133–4; Malik 1996:54.
2. For example, Kames 1774, I:37–8; and subsequently, Blanchard 1854:18–19, 30, 213; Desmoulins 1826:6–7. See Blanckaert 1988:31; Douglas 2008a:49–53.
3. See Douglas 2008a:37, 58–73; Quatrefages 1892:35–8.
4. See Bernasconi 2001, 2006; Lagier 2004; Lenoir 1980:77–96; Sloan 1979:125–44; 2002:238–49; Strack 1996:290–9; Zammito 2006.
5. Original emphasis.
6. Cuvier 1858:201–3, 215–16. See Douglas 2008a:33.
7. Original emphasis.
8. See also Meijer 1999.
9. Kames 1758, I:144.
10. See Blanckaert 1988:24–30; 2003; Douglas 2008a; Stocking 1968.
11. Ferguson 1767:1–2; Stewart 1795:xl–xliv, original emphasis. On stadal or four-stages theory, see Meek 1971; Schmidt 1995:919–24; Skinner 1967:38–45; Staum 1996:26–7, 152–69; Wheeler 2000:33–8.
12. On the causal linkage of property and civility, see also Dalrymple 1757:86–8 (following Kames); Ferguson 1767:123–4; Millar 1779:81–2.
13. These heterodox views on human unity attracted racialist support from pro-slavery advocates (Long 1774, II:376, 477) but also stringent contemporary

- criticism (Blumenbach 1776:40, 45, 53; Hunter 1775:1–4; Smith 1787; Walckenaer 1798:7, note 1). See also Immerwahr 1992; Wokler 1988:162–3.
14. My emphasis.
  15. See Tcherkézoff 2008:56–68.
  16. I previously analysed this episode as ‘a deliberate and successful psychological assault’ by the Indigenous people to exploit evident French susceptibilities (1999a:79–83).
  17. Not all contemporary observers were oblivious to strategic Aboriginal use of fire (Baudin 1801–2:211, 238; Vancouver 1798, I:55–6). In the 1840s, the New South Wales surveyor-general Mitchell (1848:412) pinpointed the interdependence of ‘fire, grass, Kangaroos, and human inhabitants’ in Australia.
  18. See Cook’s instructions, 30 July 1768, in Cook 1955:cclxxxiii.
  19. On Dutch visits to New Holland, see Eisler 1995:68–9, 74–7, 93–6, 126–31; Schilder 1976.
  20. See Clendinnen 2003.
  21. See Hawkesworth 1773, III:171, 172, 179.
  22. [Claret de Fleurieu] [1800].
  23. See Bonnemains et al. 1988.
  24. Brown 2001:96, 97, 104; Flinders 1801–3, I:232–3, 237, 240; 1814, I:60; Good 1981:48, 52; Smith [2002]:32, 35.
  25. My emphasis.
  26. For Flinders’s heartrending catalogue of the deaths, see 1801–3, II:473, 502, 513, 520, 521, 528; 1814, II:262–72.
  27. On Macassan trepangers in northern Australia, see Clark and May 2013; Macknight 1976.
  28. There is extensive scholarship on Baudin’s expedition and encounters in Van Diemen’s Land: Anderson 2001; Bonnemains et al. 1988; Chappey n.d.; Copans and Jamin 1978; Faivre 1953:100–83; Fornasiero et al. 2004; Horner 1987; Hughes 1988; Jamin 1983; Jones 1988, 1992; Konishi 2004, 2007; Morphy 2002; O’Brien 1999; Plomley 1983; Sankey 2010; Sankey et al. 2004.
  29. La Pérouse 1797, I:13–61; *Ministre de la Marine et des Colonies to Baudin, 7 vendémiaire, an IX* [29 September 1800], in Baudin 2001:99–100.
  30. For names and territories of Indigenous Tasmanian groups during the early contact period, see Ryan 1996:12–44.
  31. A man was shot in March 1772 in clashes with nearby mainlanders during Marion du Fresne’s voyage (Duyker 1992:77, 86–7, 92–3, 97–8). Plomley (1983:12, 97, 212) argued for the frightening impact of encounters with ‘sealing gangs and kangaroo hunters’ from Port Jackson who often used firearms ‘without restraint’.
  32. See also Hamelin 1800–3, II:86–8, 94; Leschenault de la Tour 1983:131; Milius [1987]:34–5.
  33. Plomley (1983:104–9) published an English translation of the report’s ethnographic sections.
  34. The midshipman Breton (1800–2: 2 ventose an X [21 February 1802]) was certain that ‘the Natives took the young carpenter for a woman’, adding that ‘they never failed ... to feel inside the trousers of those without beards so that, to be at ease with them, it was necessary to show oneself without trousers’. See also Hamelin 1800–3, II:110.

35. See Girard 1857:23–4; [Malte-Brun] 1809:121–2; cf. Dunmore 1965–9, II:9–40; Faivre 1953:100–83; Horner 1987.
36. Anon. 1800:408–9; Jauffret 1875:89; Jauffret, n.d., in Hervé 1910:296. See also Bouteiller 1956; Chappey 2000; Copans and Jamin 1978; Faivre 1966; Hervé 1910:292–7.
37. See Anderson 2001; Copans and Jamin 1978:210–11, note 5; Hughes 1988.
38. Bureau des Ports, Rapport, 1<sup>er</sup> fructidor an VIII [19 August 1800], in France Marine nationale 1796–1815; see also Hervé 1913:1–6.
39. See also Plomley's English translation (1983:82–95).
40. See also Jones 1988:40; Konishi 2007:11.
41. Péron's contemporary journal is no longer extant (Hamy 1891:605–6).
42. Original emphasis.
43. See Jamin 1983:68–74; 1986.
44. See Freycinet's (1983:112–13) less extravagant description of the encounter.
45. My emphasis.
46. See also Breton 1800–2: 2 ventose an X [21 February 1802]; Hamelin 1800–3, II:110.
47. Baudin (1801–2:254–5), Hamelin (1800–3, II:88), Leschenault de la Tour (1983:136), Milius ([1987]:33–6), and Péron (1802:19, 25) variously noted the appeal of buttons and bottles which were broken to make scrapers.
48. Original emphasis.
49. See Copans and Jamin 1978:39; Jones 1988:46; Plomley 1983:95, 146. Lamarck's transmutationist classic (1809) was yet to appear and his ideas in this respect echoed Buffon.
50. My emphasis.
51. See also Stocking 1968:34.
52. Original emphasis.
53. Académie française 1694, II:109; Johnson 1756, II; Littré 1873–4, III:696; OUP 2013 [2003]: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/125303>.
54. Apparently deterred from applying his preferred name 'Australia' to the continent by Banks's weighty objection, Flinders slipped the term into his 'General Chart of Terra Australis or Australia' (1814, *Atlas*: plate 1) and by extension into his human nomenclature.
55. For example, Freycinet 1983:112–13; Hamelin 1800–3, II:96; Leschenault de la Tour 1983:130–2; Milius [1987]:30–8; see also Plomley 1983:129.
56. But see Brown 2001:238; Flinders n.d.:11, 13; Collins 1802:234, 254.
57. Institut de France 1835, II:404; Littré 1873–4, III:1091; Nicot 1606:478.
58. For example, Millar 1779:2–5.
59. This passage paraphrases one by the naturalist Anderson in Cook's third voyage narrative (Cook and King 1784, I:114–15).
60. My emphasis.
61. Original emphasis.
62. Original emphasis.
63. Original emphasis.
64. Here and elsewhere in this volume (1813:434), Malte-Brun misused the term *obtus* ('obtuse') instead of *aigu* ('acute'). An obtuse angle is greater than 90° whereas an acute angle is less. In racial theory, the more acute the facial angle the more 'Negroid' the features.
65. Copans and Jamin 1978:37–9, 47–8, 66–7; Douglas 2003:23–7; 2006:23–5, 27–9; Jamin 1983:69; Jones 1988:38–9; Stocking 1968:32–4, 39–41; cf. Chappey n.d.

66. Original emphasis.
67. See Douglas 2003, 2006, 2007, 2008c, 2009a.
68. Péron and Freycinet 1816:393–433; see also Faivre 1953:158–60; Horner 1987:269–70.
69. Baudin to King, 3 nivose an XI [23 December 1802], in Bladen 1892–1901, V:826–7.
70. Flinders 1814, I:8–12; Ministre de la Marine et des Colonies to Baudin, 7 vendémiaire an IX [29 September 1800], in Baudin 2001:99.
71. Flinders to Banks, 6 September 1800, in Banks 1767–1822: Section 13, Series 65.01.
72. See also Fornasiero et al. 2004:17–38, 381–6; Starbuck 2009.
73. Bowen to King, 20 September 1803; King to Banks, 9 May 1803; 14 August 1804, in Bladen 1892–1901, V:133–5, 224, 447; Ryan 1996:73–82.

#### 4 Meeting Agency: Islanders, Voyagers, & Races in the *mer du Sud*

1. Vancouver, a midshipman with Cook in 1772–5 and 1776–80, commanded HMS *Discovery* and HMS *Chatham* on a surveying expedition to the American northwest coast, also visiting New Holland, Tahiti, New Zealand, and Hawai'i. On the Russian voyages, see Barratt 1988–92; Govor 2010.
2. Beechey visited eastern Polynesia and Hawai'i during his voyage to the Arctic on HMS *Blossom*. FitzRoy visited Tahiti, New Zealand, and Australia during HMS *Beagle's* voyage of survey and circumnavigation. Belcher, who had accompanied Beechey, took command of HMS *Sulphur* at Panama and subsequently visited or surveyed many Pacific and Malay islands while completing his circumnavigation. Ross, accompanied by the young botanist Hooker, commanded HMS *Erebus* and HMS *Terror* in an extensive survey of Antarctic waters, visiting Hobart, Sydney, and New Zealand in the process.
3. Ministre de la Marine et des Colonies, Rapport au Roi, 4 décembre 1825, in France Marine nationale 1825–41.
4. For histories of these voyages, see Bassett 1962; Battesti 1993; Brosse 1983; Dunmore 1965–9, II:63–155, 178–227, 341–83; Faivre 1953; Morgat 2005; Rosenman 1987.
5. Cuvier 1825:7–13; Quoy and Gaimard 1824a:[i]; see also Blais 2005:97–111; Ollivier 1988:45–50; Staum 2003:105–17.
6. Secrétaires perpétuels de l'Académie des Sciences [Delambre and Cuvier] to Ministre de l'Intérieur, 11 novembre 1816, copy, in Ministre de l'Intérieur to Ministre de la Marine, 14 novembre 1816, in France Marine nationale 1815–44: BB<sup>4</sup> 998; Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire 1825:342–3, 351–2; Quoy to Julien-François Desjardins, [25 December] 1836, in Hamy 1906:457.
7. Cuvier to Gaimard, 18 avril 1821, copy, in Quoy [1820–70]: MS 2510, 'Cuvier'.
8. Arago et al. 1821–2:141–5; Cuvier 1825; Cuvier et al. 1830.
9. Blanckaert 2003a:147–9; Douglas 2008a:40–1.
10. Original emphasis.
11. For example, Arago et al. 1821–2:141–5; Cuvier 1825, 1857; Cuvier et al. 1806, 1830; Bureau des Ports, Rapport, 1<sup>er</sup> fructidor an VIII [19 August 1800],

- in France Marine nationale 1796–1815; Cuvier (Secrétaire perpétuel de l'Académie royale des Sciences de l'Institut de France) to Ministre de la Marine et des Colonies, 16 mars 1826, in France Marine nationale 1825–41.
12. See Garnot 1828:507–9; Hervé 1910:302; Lesson 1827:22–8; Quoy and Gaimard 1824a:[jii], 9; 1830b:50–3, 59; 1830–5, Ii.
  13. The term *museau* ('muzzle', 'snout') – routinely applied by the science of race to the stereotyped facial features of certain races – referred specifically to 'the dog and some other animals' and was sometimes 'popularly' extended to people, 'but only with contempt or in jest' (Institut de France 1835, II:247).
  14. Cuvier to Quoy, [11 April 1829], in Quoy [1820–70]: MS 2510, 'Cuvier'; Quoy to Julien-François Desjardins, [25 December] 1836, in Hamy 1906: 457–8, 467.
  15. Duperrey to Ministre de la Marine et des Colonies, 26 septembre 1821, in France Marine nationale 1809–35; Bureau des Ports to Duperrey, 19 juin 1822, draft, in France Marine nationale 1821–45.
  16. The Society Islands are in Polynésie française (French Polynesia); New Ireland is in PNG; West Papua, Maluku, and Java are in Indonesia; Kosrae is in the Federated States of Micronesia.
  17. Rolland 1993:68.
  18. See Duperrey 1823a; Garnot 1827:278; Le Jeune 1822–3:20.
  19. See also Le Jeune 1822–3:22. The Tahitian dignitaries formally met by Duperrey included two-year-old Te-ri'i-ta-ria, Pomare III, who became king of Tahiti on the death of his father Pomare II in 1821; his mother Te-ri'to'o-te-rai Tere Moe-moe Pomare-vahine and her sister Teri'i Tari'a II Ari'i-paea Pomare-vahine, the 'regent'; and his 16-year-old brother-in-law, known as Pomare-noho-rai'i, whom Pomare II had married to his 10-year-old daughter 'Aimatta Pomare-vahine-o-Punuateraitua. Pomare III died in 1827 and was succeeded by 'Aimatta as Pomare IV (Buyers 2001–11). The king's mother, his aunt the regent, and Pomare-noho-ra'i are portrayed by Le Jeune in Figure 4.1.
  20. See also Garnot 1836a:23, 24; Le Jeune 1822–3:21v; Lesson [1823–4], I.
  21. See also Anon. 1824; Garnot 1827:276; 1836a:11, 24, 26, 52; Le Jeune 1822–3:21v; Lesson [1823–4], I; Rolland 1993:68.
  22. The LMS missionary historian Ellis (1831a, III:202, 299) justified formal annual contributions to the king and the chiefs, replacing their arbitrary 'extortion and plunder', as a means to 'secure inviolate to the people the right of private property'. Annual contributions to the mission's auxiliary society supported evangelization elsewhere. See also Garnot 1836a:25–6; Bellingshausen 1945, II:274.
  23. Cf. the milder assessment of missionary influence in Tahiti by Beechey's first lieutenant Peard (1973:119–29) who complained only of 'their drawing a too highly coloured picture of the Natives, and giving them virtues which they do not possess'.
  24. See also Douglas 2001:44–5.
  25. See Maude 1968.
  26. See also Garnot 1836a:36.
  27. See also Ellis 1831a, II:388–405.
  28. On *tatau*, see Ellis 1831a, I:262–7; Garnot 1836a:36–9; Lesson 1839, I:380–2. On the codes of laws, including a 'Literal Translation' of the Huahine code of 1823, see Ellis 1831a, III:134–45, 155–7, 175–214.

29. See Beechey 1831, I:298, 305–6; Newbury 1967:16.
30. Martin's portrait of the woman is reproduced in colour in D'Alleva 2005:99.
31. The farflung Tuamotu group of atolls (Polynésie française) had longstanding exchange and political relations with Tahiti.
32. See, for example, Douglas 2001.
33. Duperrey 1823b:18.
34. See also Lesson [1823–4], II; 1839, II:12–66; Rolland 1993:82–98.
35. See also Rolland 1993:72–4. See Vanessa Smith's (2010:16, 20) subtle reading of *taio* as a 'complex compound of economics and affect' in encounters between disparate 18th-century Oceanian and European 'cultures of intimacy'.
36. Original emphasis.
37. See also Garnot 1827:289; Lesson 1839, II:34, 42, 55, Rolland 1993:86–96.
38. Rolland's journal repeatedly mentions his work with the naturalists, including Dumont d'Urville, while Lesson (1825b:258, note 1) praised his 'ardour', 'zeal', and 'skill in hunting'.
39. Original emphasis.
40. Original emphasis.
41. Dumont d'Urville [1826], 1832; Garnot 1828, 1836b; Hombron 1846:258–328; Jacquinot 1846:238–381; Lesson 1826a:31–113; Quoy and Gaimard 1830b.
42. The prize offered was a gold medal valued at 1,200 francs (Anon. 1822:65–6; 1825:215; 1830:174; see also Dumont d'Urville [1826]; Lesson 1826a:32–3).
43. See Chapters 2 and 3; Douglas 2008a.
44. Original emphasis.
45. In citing Chamisso, I translate his German text (1821:29–51) – the only one he would 'recognize' (1821: Vorwort) – rather than use the contemporary English version on which Lesson based his translation (Chamisso 1825). On Chamisso's milieu and work as a voyage naturalist, see Liebersohn 2006:58–76.
46. The Dutch orientalist Reelant (1708) deduced this striking linguistic affinity from comparison of published word lists. Banks (1768–71, I:404–10; II:527–30) empirically established several such likenesses during Cook's first voyage. Reinhold Forster (1778:276–84) systematized available South Sea Islands vocabularies and noted 'a very remarkable similarity' between words spoken by the 'fair tribe' of South Sea Islanders and 'some' Malays (Rensch 2000). Marsden (1782:155; 1784:162; 1812:xviii; 1834:3), expert in Sumatran languages, confirmed their 'manifest connexion' to the 'general language' spoken from Madagascar to the far eastern Pacific which he later named 'Polynesian'. In the 1830s, the German linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt called the language family 'Malayo-Polynesian' and in 1899, the German priest and linguist Schmidt proposed 'Austronesian' which has since become the standard linguistic term (Ross 1996).
47. Reports of so-called *Alfourous*, *Alfuros*, *Haraforas*, *Harfours*, etc., recurred from the 16th century in stories reportedly told by coastal dwellers about inland inhabitants of the larger islands of western Oceania. The terms usually signified paganism, autochthony, primitivity, and blackness (Ballard 2008:198, note 15; Douglas 2010:207–8; Sollewijn Gelpke 1993:326–30; Moore 2007) and were sometimes deployed as broad racial categories in 19th-century anthropology, particularly by Lesson (see below).



48. Chamisso's abiding interest in philology, a major focus in his memoir (1821), later produced the first grammar of the Hawaiian language (1839).
49. My emphasis.
50. Lesson's racial taxonomy cobbled together *mémoires* read to the Société d'Histoire naturelle during 1825 and 1826 under his and Garnot's names. The composite paper first appeared in the *Zoologie* of the *Coquille* voyage but Lesson claimed sole authorship of all but the short final section. He reissued the same text in *Races humaines* (1828:40–154) and again as an appendix to *Voyage médical autour du monde* (1829:153–230). I refer to the earliest published version.
51. My emphasis.
52. Original emphasis.

## 5 Races in the Field: Encounters & Taxonomy in the *grand Océan*

1. See also Palti 1999:334–5; Sloan 2002:242–53; Zammito 1992:33–44; 178–88; 2002.
2. For samples or critiques of such judgements, see Denby 2005; Dover 1952; Meinecke 1972:295–372; Palti 1999; Spencer 1997, 2007; Zammito 2002.
3. 'Ideas on the philosophy of the history of mankind'.
4. My emphasis.
5. Herder 1785:4.
6. See Chazin 1938; Heath 1881:67–81.
7. *die verschiedenen Erscheinungen* (Herder 1785:3; 1800:132; 1827–8, I:304).
8. *eine alte Sitte der Väter wurde* (Herder 1785:23; 1800:141; 1827–8, I:324).
9. *feine Nationen* (Herder 1785:31; 1800:144; 1827–8, I:332).
10. *das Temperament der Neger* (Herder 1785:48; 1800:152; 1827–8, I:350).
11. *ähnliche Schwarzen* (Herder 1785:50; 1800:153; 1827–8, I:351).
12. *die Arten und Abarten des Menschengeschlechts* (Herder 1785:51; 1800:153; 1827–8, I:352).
13. *die Geburt* ['birth'] (Herder 1785:52; 1800:154; 1827–8, I:353).
14. *die Farben* ['colours'] *verlieren sich in einander: die Bildungen dienen dem genetischen Charakter* (Herder 1785:81; 1800:166; 1827–8, II:9).
15. See also Herder 1800:152–3; 1827–8, I:349–53.
16. For Quoy's life and career, see Noël 1960; Ollivier 1988:45–50.
17. Arago et al. 1821–2:141–5; Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire 1825:351; Cuvier et al. 1830.
18. Hamy 1906; Quoy 1864–8:114–15, 175–82; Quoy to Ministre de la Marine et des Colonies, 7 avril 1840, in Fardet 1992:116; Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire to Quoy, 21 mai 1832, in Quoy [1820–70]: MS 2510, 'Autographes'; Directeur des Ports to Ministre du Commerce et des Travaux publics, copy, 3 octobre 1832; Quoy to Sa Majesté la Reine, 22 avril 1835, in France Marine nationale n.d.
19. Quoy 1817–20:[iii]
20. [Ministre de la Marine] to Freycinet, [Instructions], [24 August 1817], in France Marine nationale 1815–44, BB<sup>4</sup> 999:7–82v.
21. Freycinet (n.d.) modelled the questionnaire on a volume (Bouquériau 1803) in the *Statistique générale de la France*, a series produced by departmental prefects between about 1800 and 1808. He reminded his officers at least

- once of their duty to give him their transcribed notes on each shore visit (Freycinet to 'l'Etat-major de la corvette L'Uranie, en mer, le 2 8<sup>bre</sup>. [October] 1818', in Gaimard 1817–19:289).
22. See also Gaimard 1817–19:345.
  23. For similar testimony, see Freycinet 1927:67–8, 73–4; Quoy 1817–20:130–2, 147–8.
  24. My emphasis.
  25. Original emphasis. Gaimard (1817–19:346) measured their average facial angle at 77½° with a range from 74 to 81°; these figures should be compared with Camper's (1791:38–40) scale on which a 'young negro' scored 70° and a 'European' 80° (see Chapter 3).
  26. These words abbreviate a much more detailed physical description of these men in Gaimard's extant journal (1817–19:349).
  27. Original emphasis.
  28. Original emphasis.
  29. Many of Quoy's zoological drawings are held by the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle in Paris.
  30. Original emphasis. See also Lesson 1826–9, III:552, 559.
  31. See Gaimard 1817–19:310–17, 344, 346–9, 359, 362–3, 428–35.
  32. Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire to Gaimard, 10 avril 1835, in Gaimard and Robert 1838–50, I:85.
  33. Detailed vocabularies of the *Guébéens*, *Alifourous* (of Waigeo), *Papous* (of New Guinea), *Chamores* (of Guam), *Carolins* (met at sea), *Malais* (of Timor), and *Chinois* ('Chinese' of Timor) are recorded in Gaimard's *Uranie* journal (1817–19:351–7, 365–73, 436–55, 462–7, 469–70). His comparative vocabulary of Vanikoro dialects (1830–3, V:338–42) is reproduced in Dumont d'Urville's *Histoire* of the *Astrolabe's* voyage.
  34. See Dumont d'Urville 1834:1, 6, 9, 11, 137, 143, 146, 152, 157, 161, 165, 190, 193, 265.
  35. 'Unknown to the Papous, who doubtless would have looked askance at our curiosity', added Freycinet (1825–39, II:57).
  36. On *Alfourous*, see Chapter 4, note 47. A subsequent visit to Dorey Bay during Dumont d'Urville's voyage 'confirmed' Quoy's opinion that the *Papous* of the New Guinea littoral 'formed a distinct race, different from the Negro race properly so-called' (Quoy and Gaimard 1830b:30).
  37. The extract spells out the 'craniological' argument in detail, refers to 'the ingenious system' of the 'ideologue doctor' Gall, and concludes with an 'Editor's note' (by Malte-Brun) dismissive of 'the craniological system'. The later version refers less tendentiously to 'the doctrine of this celebrated physiologist' and sidesteps explicit phrenological linkages.
  38. This clause appears only in the republished version (Quoy and Gaimard 1826:38).
  39. Directeur des Ports, Note pour la Direction du Personnel, 31 mars 1832, in France Marine nationale n.d.
  40. See Stocking 1973 on Prichard's ambivalent engagements with the science of race.
  41. My emphasis.
  42. My emphasis. The annotation appears on Quoy's copy held by the Muséum d'histoire naturelle in La Rochelle.

43. Dumont d'Urville, 'Projet d'une campagne d'exploration à la Nouvelle-Guinée, à la N<sup>lle</sup>. Bretagne et à la Louisiade ...', 23 mai 1825; Dépôt Général des Cartes et Plans de la Marine, 'Mémoire pour servir d'instructions à M. Dumont d'Urville ... pendant la campagne de découvertes ...', n.d., draft, in France Marine nationale 1825–41.
44. Tikopia and Vanikoro are in Temotu Province, Solomon Islands; Manado is capital of Indonesia's North Sulawesi Province. The other places mentioned have previously been identified.
45. Dumont d'Urville's handwriting was famously hard to read and worsened with age. Charles Hector Jacquinot, who oversaw the official publications from Dumont d'Urville's last expedition after his death in 1842, complained that his writing was 'so unreadable that the typesetters at the printery, ordinarily so skilled in this type of work, have had to abandon it' (Jacquinot to Ministre de la Marine et des Colonies, 19 août 1842, in France Marine nationale 1837–48).
46. Sainson reportedly produced 866 sketches of places and people, including 153 portraits (Rossel et al. 1829:404–5). Many were lithographed for the historical *Atlas* (Dumont d'Urville 1833a) or engraved for the zoological *Atlas* (Quoy and Gaimard 1833: plates 1–5). His original pencil portraits of numerous Indigenous subjects are in the State Library of New South Wales (Arago and Sainson [1818–29]: folios 25–61). Two ink portraits and 17 original watercolours are in the Société de Géographie collection at the Bibliothèque nationale de France and another five drawings in the Archives de la Marine in Rochefort.
47. See Clendinnen 2003; Shellam 2009.
48. My emphasis.
49. In his draft chapter 'On Man', Quoy (n.d.a:12, 25, 29, 39) signalled several insertion points for sections from his journal – they comprise 9 of 44 pages, nearly 20 per cent of the published text.
50. My emphasis.
51. Ferguson 1987; Shellam 2009: passim, esp. ix–xii, 27–30, 191–5.
52. The lithograph caption assigns the women to Kangaroo Island but they came originally from Van Diemen's Land. Tasmanian women had reportedly lived with sealers on Kangaroo Island from the 1810s (Clarke 1998; Taylor 2002).
53. Quoy and Gaimard 1830a:192, 197; 1830b:41, 44; Sainson 1830–3, I:190, 191.
54. Dumont d'Urville 1830–3, V:109–22; Gaimard 1830–3, V:305–7, original emphasis; Lesson 1826–9, III:19, 49; Quoy 1830–3, V:304.
55. Dumont d'Urville 1828; 1830–3, V:113–14, 125, 129, 131, 140, 273; Gaimard 1830–3, V:322, 328, 338–42.
56. This passage is based on Quoy's journal (1830–3, V:358–60).
57. Gaimard (1830–3, V:331) had landed in Nama 'armed' with 'sufficient weapons': 'a double-barrelled percussion shotgun, a three-barrel pistol and a dagger'.
58. My emphases.
59. See also Dumont d'Urville 1830–3, V:164, 183, 214.
60. See the Introduction for the Greek root of *Mélanésie* and Chapter 4 for Dumont d'Urville's ([1826]) earlier appropriation of Bory de Saint-Vincent's term *Mélaniciens* as a synonym for *Australiens* or *Noirs*.

61. Original emphasis.
62. For example, Cuvier 1817a, I:96; Lacépède 1821:384; Virey 1817a:154–5.
63. Nicot 1606:534; OUP 2013 [2008]: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/157031>.
64. See Académie française 1694, II:364; Boulainvilliers 1732; Venturino 2003:26–36.

## 6 Raciology in Action: Phrenology, Polygenism, & Agency in *Océanie*

1. Académie française 1694, II:231. I use the first French edition of Lavater's text (1781–1803, I:x), allegedly derived not from the German edition of 1775–8 but from a manuscript revised and rearranged by the author in a 'better order', with 'new verdicts'.
2. Original emphasis.
3. See Bérard and Jenin de Montègre 1813; Gall and Spurzheim 1809.
4. Original emphasis.
5. See Parssinen 1974; Renneville 2000:83–120, 239–92; Staum 2003:49–84.
6. See Heeschen 1994; Young 1970:20–3.
7. Original emphasis.
8. See Renneville 2000:114–15.
9. Original emphasis.
10. Le Commissaire aux Revues, 'Corvette l'Astrolabe: rôle spécial des officiers, officiers-mariniers et marins', 20 octobre 1837; Dumont d'Urville to Ministre de la Marine et des Colonies, 9 avril 1841, in France Marine nationale 1837–48; Dumont d'Urville 1842–6, I:v–vi, xxxvi–xxxvii, lxxvi–lxxvii; VIII:77.
11. Blainville, Freycinet et al. 1835:377–80; Flourens to Ministre de la Marine et des Colonies, 'Instructions scientifiques ... pour le voyage de circum-navigation de l'Astrolabe et de la Zélée', 11 août 1837, in France Marine nationale 1837–48.
12. See Ackerknecht 1956:294–308; Blanchard 1854:7–10; Serres 1841:652, 658. Much of this material is still held by the Musée de l'Homme.
13. Dumoutier 1837–9, 1837–40, 1839–40, 1843, n.d.
14. Original emphasis.
15. See also Blainville et al. 1841:713.
16. See also Renneville 1996:135–8.
17. Original emphasis.
18. Apart from instances cited, see Dumoutier 1837–9:3, 9–11; 1837–40:132, 161; 1839–40:1–8; n.d.:8, 17, 18, 20, 24–8, 31.
19. See also Blainville et al. 1841:714; Vincendon-Dumoulin in Dumont d'Urville 1842–6, V:84–5.
20. For Mafi's background, engagement on the *Astrolabe*, subsequent activities, and death, see Dumont d'Urville 1842–6, IV:131, 195, 347–8; V:36–53; VIII:13–14; Dumoutier n.d.:76–81.
21. On phrenology's internal inconsistencies with respect to race and Dumoutier's in particular, see Renneville 1996:91, 102–3; Staum 2003:52–64, 81, 112–17.
22. Original emphasis.
23. My emphasis.
24. My emphasis.

25. Dumont d'Urville 1842–6, VIII:77; Jacquinet to Ministre de la Marine et des Colonies, 29 décembre 1843, in France *Marine nationale* 1837–48; Ministre de la Marine et des Colonies to Dumont d'Urville, 28 janvier 1841, in France *Marine nationale* 1837–40: 5 JJ 158*bis*.

## **Conclusion**

1. Original emphasis. This wording is Gliddon's rendition of the French version of Humboldt's phrase (1846:430) that I translated above from German as 'higher and lower races' (1845:385).
2. See also Huxley 1865:275; Wallace 1864:clviii–clxxxvii.

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