

# THE LURE OF TEXTS AND THE DISCIPLINE OF PRAXIS

Cross-Cultural History in a Post-Empirical World

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## PROLOGUE: NARRATIVE AND TEXTS

The main aim of this paper is to tell stories about interactions between European voyagers and Aboriginal people in New Holland (mainland Australia) and Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) at the end of the eighteenth century. I start, however, with the terms in the title. First, "texts" and "discipline of praxis".<sup>1</sup> The discipline of praxis is, of course, history, which by professional convention is empirical and objectivist. In the 1940s, R.G. Collingwood outraged this orthodoxy with his "idealist" proposition that history is inseparable from the historian and "the here-and-now" and that "the past" is a creation of "the historical imagination".<sup>2</sup> Since the further outing of history as thoroughly text-bound by Roland Barthes, Hayden White and other textual theorists,<sup>3</sup> historians with any claim to anti-positivism have been teased by the challenge of how to juggle the tension between narrative and texts: between their core brief to tell interesting stories about the past and the need to incorporate at least some textual analysis — because the past is only accessible through texts of one sort or another.<sup>4</sup>

Textual analysis requires an historically contextualized grasp of the ideologies, discourses, language, protocols and experiences which informed authors' perceptions and thinking, but it can clot a narrative and make it less readable.

Second, "post-empirical world". The discovery of the past by anthropologists and non-empirical "new historicists" in a wide range of "studies" formats — literary, cultural, gender, media, colonial, postcolonial, indigenous, and so forth<sup>5</sup> — has at once made history fashionable and marginalized conventional practitioners of the discipline as, at best, utilitarian suppliers of historical background and, at worst, boring empiricists devoid of flair or theory. Historians in turn often lament the lack of detailed, particularistic archival research by such interlopers and typecast them as dangerous postmodernists, obsessed with texts at the expense of messy realities and often just plain wrong.

So much for insulting stereotypes. As an historian of cross-cultural encounters in Oceania (including Australia) in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, I have a foot in both camps. I derive much of my theoretical and methodological momentum from anthropology, feminism,

literary studies and Subaltern Studies: notably, the concept of culture itself; a concern for the politics of language, representation and narrative construction; and techniques of textual critique. Yet those techniques complement rather than supplant the principles for the collection and rigorous comparative scrutiny of documents which I learned as an apprentice historian. I am committed to writing about particular past human interactions and the gendered ambiguities of agency in actual encounters.<sup>6</sup> That pragmatic orientation privileges persons and actions over the teleology of imagined structures and outcomes but its inductive logic is analogous to the ethnographic inductivism of anthropologists — typically, our generalizations depend on particularities, either past events or observed human behaviour. Indeed, in cross-cultural research, the relative emphasis on inductive or deductive reasoning constitutes a major fault line. It differentiates the empirical disciplines of history and anthropology from more textualist or formalist approaches in cultural studies, literary critique and art history which focus primarily on the objectified representation of indigenous people in colonial texts, images and collections — on signifiers rather than referents, the indigenous settings and the personal interactions represented which are of special interest to historians.

Furthermore, my theoretical perspective proposes an intimate liaison between indigenous actions or contexts and their representation by foreign observers — between referents and signifiers. Such representations should be read not merely as reflexes of dominant metropolitan discourses and conventions but also as personal productions generated in the stress

and ambiguity of actual encounters. By this reasoning, the behaviour, appearance or lifestyle of particular indigenous people attracted, intimidated or repelled observers, affected their perceptions, challenged or confirmed their predispositions, and left distorted countersigns in what they wrote and drew. Without empirical grounding, history tends to be little more than *a priori* background noise. Yet weaving an imaginative, accessible, but faithful narrative out of the fragmentary gleanings of archives and memories is hard work, especially if you care about indigenous agency and therefore also need ethnographic expertise and sensitivity — which is also useful in trying to decipher past Europeans. I, too, find it easier to stick to texts, with their built-in limits to enquiry, but writing stories about actual pasts remains a key goal.

## CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

The final problematic term in the title is “cross-cultural”, which I overuse because it is a handy shorthand for encounters, interactions and mutual (mis)conceptions between indigenous people and foreigners. Yet “cultural” is among the least transparent of words and has at least three strikes against it in this context. First, it is abstract: “culture” is a concept, not a thing; and cultures don't meet or encounter each other, people do. To reify such interactions as cross-cultural assumes that dramatic differences in language, thinking, history and way of life between two seemingly homogeneous communities are what matters when their members come together. This distanced binary perspective has its points, especially politically, but in principle it essentializes each side as permanent

and monolithic and in practice privileges elite male perspectives, taken as opposed. By contrast, a close look at particular past situations may also reveal multiple alliances between local inhabitants and foreigners whose respective unstable groupings intersected ambiguously and fractured internally along lines of gender, age, vocation, place, and rank, class or status. I still use “culture” strategically, but pluralized to imply flux and diversity rather than fixity or uniformity.<sup>7</sup>

Second, cultural is ethnocentric: in the social sciences and increasingly in popular usage, culture has the naturalized anthropological connotation of a bounded, collective pattern of belief, thought and behaviour. Yet, so far as we can tell, Oceanian people did not usually objectify their total way of life in this fashion, even in confrontation with Europeans, though indigenous people these days often appropriate the term in oppositional political rhetoric.

The third problem with cultural is anachronism: in English, culture only acquired its naturalized modern anthropological meaning (Edward Burnett Tylor’s “complex whole”<sup>8</sup>) from the mid-to-late nineteenth century. This usage emerged out of an ambiguous raft of earlier senses, literal and metaphoric, substantive and abstract, as traced in Raymond Williams’s outline of the convoluted history of the word and its cognate term “civilization”.<sup>9</sup> Already multivocal at the end of the eighteenth century, culture denoted the process of “cultivation”, both literally in animal or crop husbandry and metaphorically in development of the human intellect: “The mind is strengthened by the cultivation of the arts and sciences”, pro-

nounced the English translator of La Pérouse’s narrative in 1798.<sup>10</sup> However, a detailed search turned up few uses of culture or its derivatives by Oceanic voyagers before the 1830s and those always in the primary physical sense of husbandry. It is entirely absent from the *Endeavour* journals of the Englishmen James Cook (1728–79) and Joseph Banks (1743–1820) and from the *Investigator* and other journals by Matthew Flinders (1774–1814).<sup>11</sup> In the published narrative of the *Endeavour* voyage, though, Cook’s editor John Hawkesworth (1715?–73) replaced Cook’s wording “rais’d with very little labour”, said of the “produce” of Tahiti, with the phrase “with so little culture”. *Culture* also occurs in passing in the published narratives of the French voyagers Jean-François de Galaup de La Pérouse (1741–88) and Antoine-Raymond-Joseph de Bruni d’Entrecasteaux (1737–93), with the same incorrect and demeaning implication that the people in question — the Samoans and the Kanak of New Caledonia, respectively — had no or little familiarity with “the art of culture”.<sup>12</sup>

Embedded in these casual assertions that Pacific Islanders ignored agriculture is a tacit shift from purportedly empirical fact to loaded judgement. This verbal slippage betokens a universalist but profoundly ethnocentric developmentalism which was given detailed expression with respect to Oceania by Johann Reinhold Forster (1729–98), the German naturalist who sailed on Cook’s second voyage of 1772–75 and in 1778 published a treatise on natural philosophy. For Forster, the “cultivation” — or its synonym “culture” — of crops and animals was a prerequisite for “progress” in “civilization”:

...mankind, in a pastoral state, could never attain to that degree of improvement and happiness, to which agriculture, and the cultivation of vegetables, will easily and soon lead them. I do not, however, ...insist that mankind should entirely neglect the culture, and domestication of animals;...it is the joint care of animals and agriculture, which leads mankind to the highest degree of content, and paves the way to perfect happiness.<sup>13</sup>

The presumption of a critical causal nexus between agriculture and civilization was a standard trope in developmentalist or social evolutionary theories from the Enlightenment onwards.<sup>14</sup> Forster's version drew on the idea of a common stadial or graded development of civil society from savagery to civilization proposed by Scottish philosophers such as Henry Home, Lord Kames (1696–1782), whose treatise on the "progress towards maturity of knowledge and civilization...in different nations" included an equally loaded allegation about "Negroes": "[T]hey live upon fruits and roots, which grow without culture."<sup>15</sup>

By the late-eighteenth century, the abstract noun "civilization" denoted both the Enlightenment idea of a general secular process of human development from a primordial state of savagery and the ultimate outcome of that trajectory: a condition of refinement or social order, of being "cultivated" or "civilized" — "civil society" in English — which was supposedly realized in (European) modernity and was set in binary opposition to "savagery" or "barbarism". In German, *Zivilisation* and

*Kultur* were synonymous whereas by the early-nineteenth century the English term culture was increasingly reserved for intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic advance, in opposition to the perceived materialism of civilization. However, the anthropological application of culture to mean a particular way of life came via the German conflation of civilization and culture as a general human process: indeed, Tylor's celebrated definition referred to "culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense".<sup>16</sup>

Men of their time, European travellers undoubtedly regarded Oceanian people, as Roy Porter put it, "through eyes already trained in seeing stereotypes about the savage and the civilised".<sup>17</sup> Yet the term "civilization" was not often used by British voyagers before 1830,<sup>18</sup> though from time to time they mentioned "civil" behaviour or "civility", often connoting relief that nothing nasty had happened. Thus Sydney Parkinson (1745?–71), Banks's artist, commented that some Maori men "behaved very civil to us" in New Zealand (Aotearoa) in 1769.<sup>19</sup> Banks, the well-bred naturalist, often used the word "civil" and showed his concern for refinement of manners and social rank in frequent references to the exchange of "civilities", usually with "the Better sort of people".<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, a familiar ambivalence about the civilized state — "we Europeans" — was implicit in Banks's well-known primitivist description of the inhabitants of eastern New Holland in 1770 as "these I had almost said happy people, content with little nay almost nothing, Far enough removed from the anxieties attending upon riches, or even the possession of what we Europeans call common necessaries".<sup>21</sup> Cook, the farm

labourer's son, endorsed the sentiment but added feelingly: "They live in a Tranquillity which is not disturb'd by the Inequality of Condition", a reminder of the entanglement of the ideas of civility and class. In the journal of his second voyage, Cook explicitly referred to "our Shame [as] civilized Christians" in venting an elegiac outburst against the negative impact on the Maori, especially on their sexual morality, of "the commerce they had with Europeans".<sup>22</sup>

In contrast to the British, French voyagers made far greater use of *civilisation*, in both its abstract senses.<sup>23</sup> They explicitly located particular Oceanian groups along a universal trajectory bridging the opposed poles of savagery and civilization — but always towards the savage end. However, the moral implications of that opposition were fiercely contested, ranging between triumphalist acclaim for civilization as unequivocal progress and nostalgic disgust for aspects seen as degenerate and contrary to nature. Experience of Oceanian people provided grist to both rumour mills; indeed, both extremes were enunciated at different stages in the course of a single narrative, that of Bruni d'Entrecasteaux's voyage in search of La Pérouse in 1791–93.

I have argued elsewhere that the rhetorical somersaults in d'Entrecasteaux's evaluations of particular indigenous people were at least in part a product of their perceived behaviour towards the French — that the content and wording of his narrative were infused with indigenous countersigns, that referents could impinge on signifiers.<sup>24</sup> Thus, in Van Diemen's Land, the inhabitants' "peaceable dispositions" showed him that "these men

so close to nature...are good and trusting" and provided "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 at once "less advanced in civilization" than the Maori of New Zealand (Aotearoa) but also less "fierce".<sup>25</sup> In contrast, though Tongans were not "naturally ferocious", the seemingly arbitrary brutality of chiefs towards ordinary Islanders horrified d'Entrecasteaux and produced the global assertions that "sentiments of humanity are unknown to them" and they "attach no value to human life".<sup>26</sup> For their part, the Kanak of New Caledonia so appalled him with a single "act of ferocity" — cannibalism — that he denied them "the least degree of civilization" and deemed the Tongans "much more advanced".<sup>27</sup> Yet, in Tonga, 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".<sup>28</sup> Finally, his colleagues' accounts of vivid insults exchanged between two warring parties in the Louisiade Archipelago (Papua New Guinea) saw d'Entrecasteaux damn entire groups as "cannibals" and deplore "the excesses in which the human species can indulge when customs are not moderated and softened by civilization". Rhetorically, this was a long way from the natural charms of the "simple and good" inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land.<sup>29</sup>

These fluid, late-eighteenth-century representations of particular Oceanian people were moulded by cumulative exper-

iences of indigenous reception of foreigners — local actions and demeanour — which the author tried to square with his general values, preconceptions and desires, and with place-specific precedents derived from reading voyage literature. The moral universalism of d'Entrecasteaux's developmentalist discourse remained intact across the spectrum of his representations but the specific moral valence of his words shifted dramatically in response to particular indigenous actions. However, his vocabulary did not yet signify the racialization of observed human differences and is inappropriately read in terms of the now familiar named racial phenotypes into which the people of the region were shortly to be classified. In principle at least, eighteenth-century humanism, both neoclassical and Christian, allowed the potential for progress or salvation to all human beings while construing both in thoroughly ethnocentric ways.

## VOYAGERS AND TEXTS

I now turn to narrative history, to stories about encounters between particular Aboriginal people and outsiders during three voyages. My main focus is the young Englishman Matthew Flinders, then second lieutenant on HMS *Reliance*. In six expeditions between 1795 and 1799, some in open boats, Flinders and his friend George Bass (1771–1803?), the ship's surgeon, between them explored half the east coast of New Holland, from Hervey Bay (Queensland) to Westernport (Victoria), plus Van Diemen's Land.<sup>30</sup> I discuss episodes during their joint visit to Van Diemen's Land in December 1798 and during Flinders's fifteen-day stay at Moreton Bay (Queensland) in July 1799

accompanied by Bungaree, a Broken Bay man who became the key protagonist in what ensued.

The texts used are undoubtedly both ethnocentric and élitist. They comprise contemporary journals and later, more polished narratives: manuscript copies, seemingly abridged, of Flinders's journals of his two voyages;<sup>31</sup> accounts of the same voyages "taken from" the journals of Bass and Flinders and published in volume two of *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales* by the Marine lieutenant-colonel David Collins, who had been judge-advocate and colonial secretary at Port Jackson and would be the founder and lieutenant-governor of Hobart Town; Flinders's brief coastal *Observations* published in 1801 to accompany the charts of his early surveys; and, finally, the long historical introduction to his *Voyage to Terra Australis*, on "Prior Discoveries".<sup>32</sup>

The third voyage, mentioned only briefly for comparative purposes, is that of the Frenchman Nicolas Baudin (1754–1803), who explored western and southern New Holland on the *Géographe* and the *Naturaliste* in 1801–03, in direct competition with Flinders, who was then surveying the New Holland coast in HMS *Investigator*. I refer to an episode during the French visit to southeastern Van Diemen's Land in early 1802, drawing on Baudin's shipboard journal (1974), a contemporary official report by Baudin (1978), and the later published narrative of the voyage by the young naturalist François Péron (1775–1810).<sup>33</sup>

## FIRST HISTORY: VAN DIEMEN'S LAND, DECEMBER 1798

Late in 1798, Flinders and Bass in the 25-ton colonial sloop *Norfolk*, with a volunteer crew of eight, sailed through Bass Strait and around Van Diemen's Land, thereby proving it to be an island. They saw signs of human presence at several points but interacted with only one local inhabitant. At Port Dalrymple — the Tamar estuary — they saw three or four people "at a great distance", who according to Flinders walked away, "most probably at our approach", whereas Bass said that they "ran off into the woods" and made the incident emblematic of the "extreme shyness" of the inhabitants which "prevented any communication".<sup>34</sup> But in the upper Derwent they came face to face with two women and a man. The women "scampered off" (said Bass) "screaming" (said 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 strategy and "jealousy" about "his women" — but they parted "in great friendship".<sup>35</sup>

**Exegesis:** This fleeting individual contact — so typical of the serendipitous, almost spectral quality of early voyagers' reports of meetings with the elusive and enigmatic inhabitants of Van Diemen's

Land — was loaded with considerable interpretive weight by Bass and Flinders, as indeed it is by this historian given the relatively few such meetings reported. In a classic slippage, they made a single human specimen 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.<sup>36</sup> Their reportage is a prime sample of a rhetorical trajectory I have previously identified in voyage texts:<sup>37</sup> from relief at approved conduct by indigenous people to positive depictions of their essential character or appearance and explicit distancing from a standard compendium of supposedly Negro traits. Such representations are oblique reflexes of actual indigenous behaviour, processed by European travellers in the light of the profound insecurity of sailing in unfamiliar waters and their usual distaste for Negro physiognomy. Consider these sequences in Flinders's two extant reports of the meeting at the Derwent. In 1801: the man "seemed to be devoid of fear"; "his countenance was more expressive of benignity and intelligence, than of ferocity or stupidity"; "his features were less negro-like than is usual in New South Wales". And in 1814: "the quickness with which he comprehended our signs spoke in favour of his intelligence"; his hair "had not the appearance of being woolly" — code for "Negro".<sup>38</sup> It is difficult to say much about the actual encounter except that the local man was evidently alert, wary and sought to control and profit from the meeting on his own terms while the women avoided it, possibly through fear of the strangers, or the man, or all three.

Flinders's reference to New South Wales exemplifies a persistent sub-text in

all these accounts: a comparative — what would now be called ethnological — agenda which sought empirical evidence of the relative “condition” of different groups, always pivoting on the authors’ claim to expert knowledge of Port Jackson. Thus, the young men in a party encountered at Twofold Bay en route to Van Diemen’s Land were “better made, and cleaner in their person than the natives of Port Jackson usually are”. Even the invisible people of Port Dalrymple were deduced to be “much inferior in some essential points of convenience to...the despised inhabitants of the continent”, a judgement based on only three elements of material culture: the leakiness of their habitations, their apparent lack of canoes and the “roughness” of the marks they left on trees, suggesting a less “sharp-edged tool” than that used on the mainland. “But”, added Bass, yoking pragmatic relativism to a tacit developmentalist philosophy, “*happiness...exists only by comparison with the stage above and the stage below our own*”.<sup>39</sup>

## SECOND HISTORY: MORETON BAY, JULY 1799

Six months later, Flinders set out in the *Norfolk* to examine the coast north of Port Jackson, without Bass but accompanied by Bungaree,<sup>40</sup> “whose good disposition and manly conduct” had attracted Flinders’s “esteem” and who for the next 30 years would be among the best-known and oft-portrayed Aborigines in the colony.<sup>41</sup>

On 16 July, at a sandy point east of the mouth of Moreton Bay — Flinders’s Point Skirmish, still so named, on the southern tip of Bribie Island<sup>42</sup> — Flinders and

Bungaree conversed “by signs” with several apparently unarmed local men. Bungaree went ashore, also unarmed, and engaged in the first of several exchanges — his yarn belt for a kangaroo fur band — by which both parties presumably sought to establish, maintain or develop a relationship. Bungaree was the key figure in these transactions. Flinders eventually landed, armed against “treachery” with a musket, but his own efforts at exchange failed when he refused to give up his cabbage-tree hat on demand. As Flinders and Bungaree retreated to the boat, crowded from behind by the men, one tried good-humouredly to take the hat by ruse but failed. The situation then deteriorated. Firewood was thrown at the boat, fell short, and was “treated as a joke” but one man hurled a spear, which narrowly missed. Alarmed, Flinders shot at “the offender” and continued to do so through two misfires until he finally wounded him. Another man was reportedly shot in the arm by a seaman and the Aborigines fled.<sup>43</sup>

Although Flinders professed satisfaction at “the great influence which the awe of a superior power has in savages”, his journal also tells another story, of ongoing apprehension and jumbled emotions: 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 remain in the bay to do his survey and repair the sloop. For five days, he cautiously avoided further contacts despite repeated Aboriginal invitations. His prudence seemed justified on 18 July when the *Norfolk* was assailed by “a party of natives...who appeared to be standing



up in their canoes, and pulling toward them, with all their strength, in very regular order...after the manner of the South Sea islanders". Then, as "about 20 of them were counted, and seemed to be coming on with much resolution", the decks were cleared, the men armed, and the sloop bore away towards the attackers who had surprisingly come no closer. Flinders recounted the denouement with wry retrospective 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".<sup>44</sup> Yet dark imaginings about savage hordes were standard fare for sailors in a region offering notorious precedents in the real or assumed fates of Cook, La Pérouse and numerous lesser figures. Flinders knew from personal experience as a midshipman with William Bligh (1754–1817) in the Torres Strait Islands in 1792, when the ships were twice attacked by men in canoes and a seaman died, how lethally unstable the equation between the "superiority of our arms" and "great differences of numbers" could be.<sup>45</sup>

From 21 July, Flinders's tension gradually eased as Bungaree, "in his usual undaunted manner", facilitated relations with the local people, who welcomed him enthusiastically 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 dancing, presumably an Aboriginal strategy to pacify or control the dangerous strangers who thought they were being "entertained". Flinders found their dan-

cing "not ungraceful", especially in contrast to the "clumsy" efforts of three Scottish sailors who had earlier been ordered to dance a reel without "music" and had not impressed the local audience. Their singing was "musical and pleasing" in contrast to Bungaree's reciprocal offering, which "sounded barbarous and grating" and "annoyed his auditors" — but he was accounted "an indifferent songster, even among his own countrymen". These "friendly interchanges" culminated in a name exchange — they called Flinders "Mid-ger Plindah" and he recorded three of theirs — which he took for an important "ceremony" on the analogy of Cook's account of a similar practice at Endeavour River in 1770.<sup>46</sup>

**Exegesis:** In a later brief history of his 15-day visit to Moreton Bay, Flinders attributed the eventual "friendly" relations to "a salutary change" induced in Aboriginal attitudes by "the effect of our firearms". But the content and wording of his own journal suggest that the most potent element in local responses to the strangers and repeated expressions of eagerness to communicate with them was Bungaree. Though he "could not understand" the Moreton Bay language, the local people persistently sought him out, while his mediatory skills were much valued by the Europeans with whom he did share a *lingua franca*.<sup>47</sup> Flinders represented him as the key agent in three of the four exchange situations which succeeded the initial violence. On 21 July, "about six miles" from Skirmish Point, two men signalled for them to land but fled when Flinders approached, only to return when they saw Bungaree. He "made a friendly exchange" with them and went to the boat for additional items, "to make the exchange

equal".<sup>48</sup> There was a more elaborate transaction four days later, with Bungaree again the main player:

Presents were made them of yarn caps, pork, and biscuit, all of which they eagerly took, and 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 their visitors consisted only of two, the natives were lively, dancing and singing in concert in a pleasing manner; but the number of white men having imperceptibly increased to eight, they became alarmed and suspicious.<sup>49</sup>

On 28 July, members of the crew chopped down a tree and the noise of its fall greatly "startled" several local men. Flinders, ever pragmatic, thought it "might probably assist in giving them a higher idea of the power of their visitors". Bungaree — "gallant and unsuspecting" according to Flinders but the second epithet is surely wrong — made amends for their fright by giving them a spear and a throwing-stick and showing them the use of the latter, of which they appeared "wholly ignorant".<sup>50</sup> I take this tutorial as a genuinely *cross-cultural* act which symbolized a reciprocal rather than a hierarchical relationship and belies the reified idea of the cross-cultural as a binary divide between opposed, homogenized cultures. It is likely that the Moreton Bay people took Bungaree for the leader of the expedition and the white men for his followers — which might explain why the modern town near Skirmish Point is called Bongaree and not Flinders.

Bungaree also served Flinders as a datum point in the continuation and extension of the comparative agenda previously noted with respect to Van Diemen's Land. At the mouth of the Clarence River, en route to Moreton Bay, they had seen three large, well-built habitations which Bungaree "readily admitted...were much superior to any huts of the natives which he had before 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 more complex: "not merely in the diatonic scale, descending by thirds, as at Port Jackson: the descent of this was waving, in rather a melancholy soothing strain". On the other hand, 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" — a classic instance of a personal relationship transcending a demeaning stereotype.<sup>51</sup>

These piecemeal contrasts were specific and empirical rather than systemic. However, at the end of the account of his stay in Moreton Bay, Flinders outlined an inductive environmentalist theory of the development of civil society which is pertinent to this paper. In his 1814 narrative, he summarized the situation thus: "They fish almost wholly with cast and setting nets, live more in society than the natives to the southward, and are much better lodged."<sup>52</sup> Here is his contemporary explanation of why this should be so as rendered by Collins, but the ideas are clearly Flinders's:

[T]he inhabitants of this bay appeared to possess in general a very pointed difference from, if not a superiority over, those of New South Wales, particularly in their net-works... There was no doubt but they were provided with nets for catching very large fish, or animals... [T]his mode of procuring their food would cause a *characteristic difference between the manners, and perhaps the dispositions, of these people, and of those who mostly depend upon the spear or fiz-gig for a supply.* In the one case, there must necessarily be the *co-operation of two or more individuals; who there, from mutual necessity, would associate together.* It is fair to suppose, that this association would, in the course of a few generations, if not much sooner, produce a favourable change in the manners and dispositions *even of a savage.* In the other case, the native who depends upon his fiz-gig or his spear for his support depends upon his single arm, and, requiring not the aid of society, is indifferent about it, but prowls along, *a gloomy, unsettled, and un-social being [Bungaree?]*...

The net also appearing to be a more certain source of food than the spear, *change of place will be less necessary.* The encumbrance too of carrying large nets from one place to another will require a *more permanent residence;* and hence it would naturally follow, that their houses would be of a better construction...; this *superiority Mr. Flinders attributed to the*

*different mode of procuring fish which had been adopted by the inhabitants. He likewise supposed that the use of nets... arose from the form of the bay...* <sup>53</sup>

### **THIRD HISTORY: SOUTHEASTERN VAN DIEMEN'S LAND, JANUARY–FEBRUARY 1802**

I leave commentary on this passage to the conclusion and turn to my brief third history of incidents during Baudin's six-week sojourn in southeastern Van Diemen's Land in January–February 1802. Since I have discussed the episode in some detail in other papers,<sup>54</sup> I limit myself here to a few relevant points.

Baudin arrived in Van Diemen's Land with favourable preconceptions about the people he would meet, derived from the Cook and d'Entrecasteaux voyage reports, and bound by both his instructions and his inclinations to avoid violence against them except in extreme self-defence. He wrote at the outset that "the people of this country do not appear to be savage, except when provoked".<sup>55</sup> His contemporary journal gives a dispassionate empirical account of frequent, mostly amicable relations with local people, broken by two sudden, unexplained assaults on shore parties by men at Bruny Island who had been amicably interacting with the French and been "loaded with presents": the first time, a single spear wounded a midshipman in the neck; the second time, a "hail of stones" wounded Baudin "fairly sharply" on the hip.<sup>56</sup> Despite these contretemps, the tone of the journal is matter-of-fact and even-handed about the indigenous people, including the attackers.

In sharp contrast, in an official report written later in the year, Baudin emphasized the violence of the encounters and deplored the “fickleness” of “primitive men of nature...at the furthest degree possible from civilization”, whose unpredictable mood shifts back and forth from amity to aggression made it impossible to form “a clear idea of their character” and left sailors dangerously exposed.<sup>57</sup>

However, even Baudin’s report is relatively restrained and empirical in comparison to the exaggerated language of the official voyage narrative written by Péron, the expedition’s zoologist and anthropologist. Before the voyage, he had professed a qualified primitivist idealization of people “closer to nature”, contrasting “degenerated and debased man of [civilized] society” to the “robust majesty of natural man”.<sup>58</sup> In the event, any residual primitivism was rapidly dispelled in fears provoked by trying experience of so-called “natural man” in Van Diemen’s Land. Within a few pages, the rhetoric of Péron’s narrative shifts from romantic approval of the “affectionate” and “frank” demeanour of “our good Diemenlanders” to vilification of “these fierce men”. Within the text, this discursive shift is a direct response to the spear- and stone-throwing incidents and suggests a tortuous passage from referents to signifiers. “Men of nature” are no longer “good and simple” but “wicked”. “After all we have seen”, he proclaimed, “one cannot sufficiently mistrust *men whose character has not yet been softened by civilization.*” He wrote subsequently of the people of Maria Island, with whom Baudin had found no fault, that “all their *actions* bore the stamp of treachery and ferocity”. These actions goaded him to a diatribe on “the diffi-

culties faced by travellers in communicating with savage peoples, and the impossibility of overcoming the natural ferocity of their character and their prejudices against us”.<sup>59</sup> Péron’s ambivalence and outrage were epitomized in his reaction to the man the French knew as Bara-Ourou, whom Péron praised as “the handsomest man in the band” but also damned as the most threatening (see Figure 1).<sup>60</sup>

## CONCLUSION

These particular histories of interactions between shipborne strangers and Aboriginal people in Van Diemen’s Land or New Holland at the end of the eighteenth century both mirror and illuminate the problematics of my title. My artificial and partial separation of stories from exegesis is a metonym for the tension between narrative and texts that plagues anti-objectivist history. Narrative is necessary because small histories speak to large issues. So too is textual analysis but it must be contextualized. In this paper, historicizing authors, their ideas and their experiences highlights the ambiguity of the concept “cross-cultural” with reference to periods and contexts in which it was clearly anachronistic or inappropriate. Close attention to the words voyagers used to describe their experiences and the indigenous people they saw makes it clear that whatever they thought were doing, it was normally *not* engaging in cross-cultural encounters. Their key trope was not culture but *civilisation* (in the French case) and civility or civil society (in the British case).

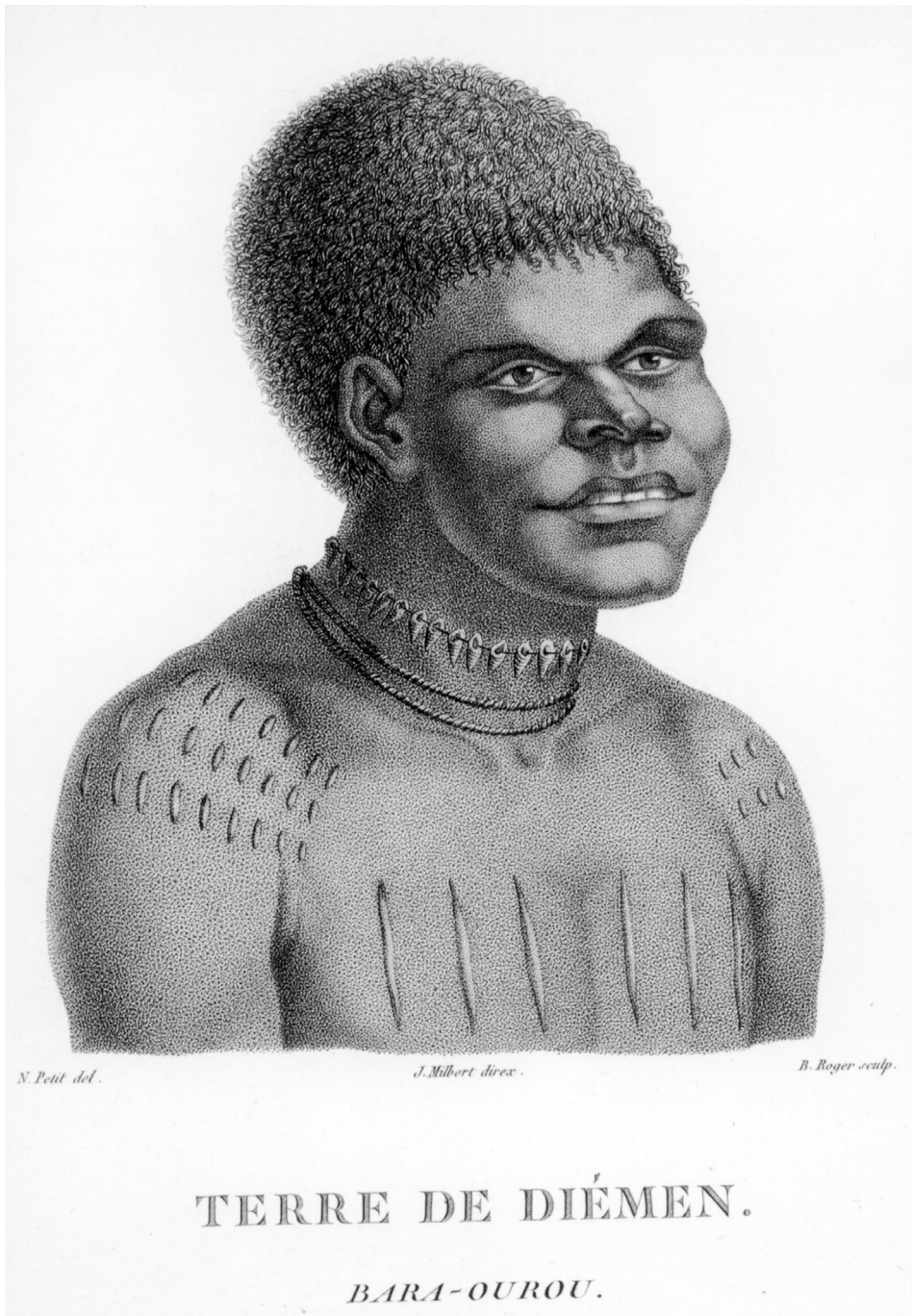


Figure 1: Barthélémy Roger after Nicholas-Martin Petit, 'Terre de Diémen. Bara-Orou', stipple engraving, 31.8 x 24.2 cm, in Charles-Alexandre Lesueur and Nicholas-Martin Petit, *Voyage de découvertes aux terres australes exécuté par ordre de S.M. l'Empereur et Roi. Partie Historique. Atlas* (Paris : Imprimerie impériale, 1807): plate 8.

That said, civilization is no more transparent than culture. Its discursive instability, in conjunction with that of the idea of “race”, was nicely captured by George Stocking: “in the later eighteenth century, the idea of ‘civilization’ was seen as the destined goal of all mankind, and was in fact often used to account for apparent racial differences. But in the 19th century more and more men saw civilization as the peculiar achievement of certain ‘races’”.<sup>61</sup> I have written elsewhere about broad discursive transitions at the end of the eighteenth century with particular reference to race.<sup>62</sup> The texts considered here are on the cusp of this shift in the meaning of civilization which is exemplified in the similarity and contrast between d'Entrecasteaux's and Péron's narrativized responses to volatile indigenous behaviour in Oceania. It was the spectre of cannibalism — an offence against humanity — which led d'Entrecasteaux (writing in 1793 but edited for posthumous publication in 1808) to deplore “the excesses in which the human species can indulge when customs are not moderated and softened by civilization”; it was particular insult at the “violent aggression” directed against his colleagues that saw Péron (publishing in 1807 about events in 1802) use the same trope: “[O]ne cannot sufficiently mistrust men whose character has not yet been softened by civilization.” Both envisaged the need to respond with force but for d'Entrecasteaux it was a council of despair rather than a prescription: compare his lament that “we must renounce visiting [Pacific Islanders]..., or we must inspire respect in them by very great severity” with Péron's dogma that “one must only approach these peoples armed with sufficient means to curb their ill will or repel

their attacks”.<sup>63</sup> “Curb” is a key term which spoke to a paradox at the heart of Enlightenment humanism: that its moral universalism was at once inclusive, philanthropic, and optimistic about all human beings, including so-called savages, but also ethnocentric, hierarchical, paternalist, prescriptive and acquisitive. These latter strands, which would not accommodate other people's assessments and exercise of their rights, desires and autonomy, came steadily to dominate the discourse of civilization. Colonization was in the air and in September 1803, 18 months after Baudin's visit, it became a grim fact in Van Diemen's Land.

The particular wording of these passages also signals a semantic instability in the word “civilization”, noted by Williams: a slippage from the idea of civilization as “refinement of manners and behaviour” to its preferred modern connotation of “social order”.<sup>64</sup> D'Entrecasteaux used the term in the earlier sense, lyrically celebrating indigenous sociality in Van Diemen's Land as “evidence” of the “first natural affection” and a “school of nature”.<sup>65</sup> Péron did so in the later sense: these same people — “so close to the zero point of civilization”,<sup>66</sup> the “children of nature *par excellence*” — epitomized “non-social man” who must be “curbed”. There is, moreover, overt racialization in his assertion that they “differ *essentially* [and perhaps originally?] from all other known peoples” and in his conclusion that they were “the most savage [people] of all”, consigned by physical deficiencies to the bottom of a hierarchy of races whose relative “physical strength” he claimed to have established “by direct experiments”. A passionate advocate for “the progress of civilization” and the superiority of “civil-

ized" over "savage man", Péron argued for a close causal nexus between "physical constitution" and "social organization" or its purported "absence" — between race and civilization: the "peculiar conformation" and the alleged physical "weakness" he discerned in the inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land were products of inadequate diet and lifestyle which were in turn "an immediate and necessary result of the savage state in which these unhappy peoples vegetate".<sup>67</sup>

Williams, furthermore, suggested a national difference in the usage of "civilization": "From [early] C19 the development of *civilization* towards its modern meaning...is on the whole earlier in French than in English."<sup>68</sup> The shift in French was presumably fuelled by the experience of revolution, whereas its later English manifestation related more to colonialism. My sample of voyage texts, though too small to be conclusive, partly bears out Williams's observation. Civilization is only implicit in most of the British texts but for Bass it meant relative "convenience" and "happiness", in Forster's sense, which were corollaries of refinement. Flinders's primary concern was to explain "a characteristic difference between the manners, and *perhaps* the dispositions" of the Port Jackson and the Moreton Bay people — "manners" came first — and he did so in terms of a simple environmentalist developmentalism which also reads like a distillation of Forster: it was ultimately "the form of the bay" which produced "more...society" at Moreton Bay.<sup>69</sup>

Yet the distinction between refinement and social order was not simply linear but was also one of emphasis, degree and pragmatic context: if manners mattered

more aesthetically and in the abstract, "superior power" — Flinders's phrase — came to the fore when the always-lurking spectre of savagery materialized into real or threatened action. In an ironic passage, Flinders acknowledged the intimate linkage of power and refinement: having failed to impress the Moreton Bay people with "the effect and certainty of his fire-arms" when he shot at a hawk and only broke its leg, he recalled wryly how:

...ineffectual had been some former attempts...to impress them with an idea of the superior refinement of his followers. Bong-ree, his musician, had annoyed his auditors with his barbarous sounds, and the clumsy exhibition of his Scotch dancers...had been viewed by them without wonder or gratification.<sup>70</sup>

I approached these texts with the working hypothesis that they would disclose a broad contrast between English pragmatism and French abstraction. It was partly confirmed in the distinction between explicit French and implied English usages. However, again the question is more complex and ambiguous. Class and occupational differences were at least as salient as national ones. In many respects, sailors like Cook and Baudin — an *officier bleu*, of non-noble birth, he had no real career in the French *Marine* until after the Revolution — had far more in common with each other, as their pragmatic, empirical language showed, than either did with their more sophisticated naturalists Banks and Péron. Furthermore, if French sailors fulminated more about *civilisation*, they also fired less often on indigenous people than did the British. Unlike Flinders at

Moreton Bay, Baudin was “not obliged to fire” on his stone-throwing assailants in Van Diemen’s Land because when he aimed his firearm at one man, they all scattered — they had prior experience of muskets whereas the Moreton Bay people seemingly did not. But for Baudin, it was also a matter of principle: “experience” had taught him that “superior force” was not always the only guarantee against “the traps of the man of nature” and that “prudence” could avert endless alarms.<sup>71</sup>

As they made their way around the New Holland coast, voyagers of both nations evinced a keen predatory interest in the resources offered by the land and its potential for pasture and agriculture but the British, already ensconced, did so more systematically, persistently and, in the end, effectively.<sup>72</sup> The initial British settlement in Van Diemen’s Land was placed at Risdon Cove on Bass’s recommendation and the definitive settlement at Hobart Town that followed in February 1804 was led by Collins, the amanuensis of Bass and Flinders. I conclude by suggesting that whereas “cross-cultural” is in principle an egalitarian, relativist concept which acknowledges the specificity and validity of particular ways of life, the idea of civilization, in all its manifestations, is hierarchic, universalist and assimilationist. From this perspective, the only named cross-cultural actor in my histories was Bungaree.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> For aesthetic reasons, I make minimal use of inverted commas: they are included on first mention of an English term in its contemporary sense and then omitted, except for direct quotations; non-English words are italicized; inverted commas are implied in the case of now problematic terms such as “race”, “civilization”, “savage”, “Negro”.

<sup>2</sup> R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), pp.242, 248.

<sup>3</sup> Roland Barthes, “Le discours de l’histoire”, *Informations sur les sciences sociales*, vol. 6 (1967), 65-75; Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

<sup>4</sup> In principle, I use the term “text” in the widest sense to mean any vehicle for representation — written, drawn, photographed, made, performed, spoken, remembered. In practice in this paper, the texts considered are all written and visual representations are used mainly for illustration.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Aletta Biersack (ed.), *Clio in Oceania: Toward a Historical Anthropology* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991); Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (eds), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); H. Aram Veiser (ed.) *The New Historicism* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

<sup>6</sup> The problematic concept of “agency”, particularly that of indigenous, female and other historically suppressed categories of persons, here neither necessarily infers intention nor presumes a modernist notion of the individual as a bounded, autonomous subject. Rather, I take it as given that there is a general human potential to desire, choose, and act strategically which must be historicized within the limits and possibilities of unstable assemblages of ideas, systems, personalities and circumstances.

<sup>7</sup> The anthropologist Francesca Merlan proposed the term “intercultural” as the most effective way to conceptualize “difference-yet-relatedness within an increasingly expanding social field” in a “globalized world” (Francesca Merlan, “Explorations Towards Intercultural Accounts of Socio-Cultural Reproduction and Change”, *Oceania*, vol. 75 (2005), 167-82). However, attentiveness to “complex articulations within and across particular social groups” rather than emphasis on “an ‘interface’ between separately conceived domains” is an equally apt strategy for historians of early encounters between indigenous people and Europeans (Melinda Hinkson and Benjamin Smith, “Introduction: Conceptual Moves towards an Intercultural analysis”, *Oceania*, vol. 75 (2005), 157-66, pp.157-8).

<sup>8</sup> “Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology*,



*Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom*, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1871), vol. 1, p.1).

<sup>9</sup> Raymond Williams, *Keywords: a Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983 [1976]), pp.57–60, 87–93; see also Claude Blanckaert, “La naturalisation de l’homme de Linné à Darwin: archéologie du débat nature/culture”, in A. Ducros, J. Ducros, and F. Joulain (eds), *La culture est-elle naturelle? Histoire, épistémologie et applications récentes du concept de culture* (Paris: Editions Errance, 1998), 15–24, pp.19–23.

<sup>10</sup> Anon., “The Translator’s Preface”, in J.-F. de Galaup de La Pérouse (L.-A. Millet-Mureau, ed.), *The Voyage of La Pérouse Round the World, in the Years 1785, 1786, 1787, and 1788 ...*, vol. 1 (London: John Stockdale, 1798), [1]–[7], p.[3].

<sup>11</sup> See the transcriptions of Cook’s and Banks’s journals by the Australian National Library’s South Seas Project, <<http://southseas.nla.gov.au/>>, and Flinders’s journals in the Matthew Flinders Electronic Archive of the State Library of NSW, <<http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/flinders/archive.html>>.

<sup>12</sup> James Cook (J.C. Beaglehole, ed.), *The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery*, vol.1, *The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768–1771* (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1955), p.121; Antoine-Raymond-Joseph de Bruni d’Entrecasteaux (E.-P.-E. de Rossel, ed.), *Voyage de D’Entrecasteaux envoyé à la recherche de La Pérouse...*, 2 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1808), vol.1, p.355; John Hawkesworth, *An Account of the Voyages Undertaken by the Order of His Present Majesty for Making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere...*, 3 vols. (London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1773), vol.2, p.186; [Jean-François de Galaup de La Pérouse] (L.-A. Millet-Mureau ed.), *Voyage de la Pérouse autour du monde...*, 4 vols (Paris, Plassan, 1798), vol. 3, p.236. In the Endeavour journal, Cook elaborated his assumption that Tahitians did not need to practise agriculture: “in the article of food these people may almost be said to be exempt from the curse of our fore fathers; scarcely can it be said that they earn their bread with the sweet of their brow, benevolent nature hath not only supply’d them with necessarys but with abundance of superfluities” (*Journals*, vol. 1, p.121). By contrast, in the journal of his second voyage on HMS *Resolution*, Cook defended the Tahitians in this respect in a careful empirical passage challenging the ethnographic expertise of his French predecessor Louis-Antoine de Bougainville (1729–1814): “it is true some things require but little labour, but others again require a good deal, such as roots of every kind and Bananas and Plantains will not grow spontaneously but by proper cultivation, nor will the Bread and Cocoa nutt trees come to perfection without” (James Cook, *Journals*, vol. 2, *The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure 1772–1775* (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1961), p.235).

<sup>13</sup> Johann Reinhold Forster (N. Thomas, H. Guest and M. Dettelbach, eds), *Observations Made During a Voyage Round the World* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996 [1778]), pp.234–5, 238.

<sup>14</sup> Thus, for example, the French comparative anatomist Georges Cuvier (1769–1832) discerned: “very different degrees in man’s development...Man has really only succeeded in multiplying his species to a high degree, and in advancing very far his knowledge and his arts, since the invention of agriculture...Mild climates, soils naturally watered, and rich in plants, are veritable cradles of agriculture and civilization” (Georges Cuvier *Le règne animal distribué d’après son organisation, pour servir de base à l’histoire naturelle des animaux et d’introduction à l’anatomie comparée*, 4 vols (Paris: Deterville, 1817), vol.1, pp.91–4); Charles Darwin (1809–82) applied similar logic to the particular case of Aboriginal Australians: “they appeared far from such utterly degraded beings as usually represented. — In their own arts they are admirable... — They will not however cultivate the ground, or even take the trouble of keeping flocks of sheep which have been offered them; or build houses & remain stationary. — Never the less, they appear to me to stand some few degrees higher in civilization, or more correctly a few lower in barbarism, than the Fuegians” (Charles Darwin (R.D. Keynes, ed.), *Charles Darwin’s Beagle Diary*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.398).

<sup>15</sup> Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Sketches of the History of Man*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: W. Creech and London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1774), vol.1, pp.32, 43.

<sup>16</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol.1, p.1; Williams, *Keywords*, pp.58–9, 89–90.

<sup>17</sup> Roy Porter, “The Exotic as Erotic: Captain Cook at Tahiti”, in G.S. Rousseau and R. Porter (eds), *Exoticism in the Enlightenment* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 117–44, p.122.

<sup>18</sup> A notable exception was George Vancouver (1757–98), who twice sailed as a midshipman with Cook and commanded a major surveying expedition to the Pacific Ocean in 1791–95. In a journal passage extolling a Hawaiian man who had retained a piece of Vancouver’s hair given to him four years previously, Vancouver invoked two ethnocentric tenets of contemporary humanism: first, that the man’s “pledge of friendship” arose from “principles innate and common to the species” and showed the “similarity in the human mind” in “every stage of civilization”; and second, that “the untaught inhabitants of...the uncultivated world” and “the civilized and polished states of the world” represented starting point and culmination of a unilinear historical trajectory (George Vancouver (W. Kaye Lamb, ed.), *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World 1791–1795*, 4 vols. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1984), vol.3, p.862).

<sup>19</sup> Sydney Parkinson (Stanfield Parkinson, ed.), *A Journal of a Voyage to the South Seas in his Majesty's Ship, the Endeavour... Embellished with Views and Designs, Delineated by the Author, and Engraved by Capital Artists* (London: Stanfield Parkinson, 1773), p.97.

<sup>20</sup> For example, in Raiatea (French Polynesia) in August 1769, "we all went to see the great king [of Borabora] and thank him for his civilities" (Joseph Banks (J. C. Beaglehole, ed.), *The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks 1768–1771*, 2 vols. (Sydney: Public Library of NSW with Angus and Robertson, 1962) vol.1, p.327; vol.2, p.124).

<sup>21</sup> Banks, *Endeavour Journal*, vol.2, p.130.

<sup>22</sup> Cook, *Journals*, vol.1, p.399. The later passage runs: "we debauch their Morals already too prone to vice and we interduce among them wants and perhaps diseases which they never before knew and which serves only to disturb that happy tranquillity they and their fore Fathers had enjoy'd" (Cook, *Journals*, vol.2, p.175).

<sup>23</sup> For example, the idea of *civilisation* as a universal human process underwrote the acknowledgement by La Pérouse's editor that the piecemeal introduction of its trappings was a mixed blessing for people he placed at the level of "savages". His preferred strategy was "to raise them by degrees in order to civilize them, by making orderly communities [*des peuplades policées*] before making polished people [*des peuples polis*], and only giving them new needs and new procedures along with the means to supply the first and make effective use of the second. This will prepare their descendants for and guarantee them the happy results of the development of the human faculties" (Louis-Antoine Milet-Mureau, "Discours préliminaire du rédacteur", in La Pérouse, *Voyage*, vol.1, xix–lxviii, p.lxvi).

<sup>24</sup> Bronwen Douglas, "Art as Ethno-historical Text: Science, Representation and Indigenous Presence in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Oceanic Voyage Literature", in N. Thomas and D. Losche (eds), *Double Vision: Art Histories and Colonial Histories in the Pacific* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 65–99, pp.73–83; Bronwen Douglas n.d., "In the Event: Indigenous Countersigns and the Ethno-history of Voyaging", in M. Jolly, S. Tcherkezoff, and D. Tryon (eds), *Oceanic Encounters* (in preparation).

<sup>25</sup> d'Entrecasteaux, *Voyage*, vol.1, pp.230–2, 242, 243.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p.308.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, pp.333, 343.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, pp.298, 305–12.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, pp.421–3, cf. p.234.

<sup>30</sup> For a chart of Flinders' voyages, see: 'Matthew Flinders, General chart of Terra Australis or Australia showing the parts explored between 1798 and 1803 by M. Flinders Commr. of H.M.S. Investigator', State Library of NSW, Sydney, <[http://img.agsl.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/ebind-show.pl?doc=flinders\\_maps/a125;seq=16](http://img.agsl.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/ebind-show.pl?doc=flinders_maps/a125;seq=16)>.

<sup>31</sup> Matthew Flinders, Narrative of the Expedition in the Colonial Sloop Norfolk, from Port Jackson through the Strait which Separates Van Diemens Land from New Holland; and from thence round the South Cape back to Port Jackson, Completing the Circumnavigation of the Former Island, with some remarks on the Coasts and Harbours, MS copy, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 1798–99, viewed 24 April 2004 <<http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/flinders/manuscripts/1.html>>; Matthew Flinders, A Journal in the Norfolk Sloop, 8 July–12 August 1799, MS copy, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 1799, viewed 24 April 2004, <<http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/flinders/manuscripts/2.html>>.

<sup>32</sup> Bass's original journal of the voyage to Van Diemen's Land in 1798–99 is to my knowledge no longer extant and so the accuracy of Collins's rendition cannot be verified. However, a comparison of parallel passages in Collins's version of Flinders's 1799 journal and in the manuscript copy of this journal suggests that Collins did not take undue liberties with his material. Strikingly, the copies of Flinders's journals, made for Governor Philip Gidley King, only refer to the *absence* of indigenous people at particular places. They entirely omit any mention of the two episodes of interaction between voyagers and local inhabitants at the River Derwent in 1798 and Moreton Bay in 1799 which are the main focus of this paper. The episodes are described in detail in Collins's published version of Bass's and Flinders's journals (David Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales, from its First Settlement, in January 1788, to August 1801: with Remarks on the Dispositions, Customs, Manners, &c. of the Native Inhabitants of that Country. To Which are Added... An Account of a Voyage Performed by Captain Flinders and Mr. Bass; by which the Existence of a Strait Separating Van Dieman's Land from the Continent of New Holland was Ascertained. Abstracted from the Journal of Mr. Bass*, 2 vols (London: T. Cadell Jun. and W. Davies, 1802), vol.2, pp.187–8, 231–56) and briefly by Flinders in his two publications (Matthew Flinders, *Observations on the Coasts of Van Diemen's Land, on Bass's Strait and its Islands, and on Part of the Coasts of New South Wales; Intended to Accompany the Charts of the Late Discoveries in Those Countries* (London: John Nichols, 1801), p.8; Matthew Flinders, *A Voyage to Terra Australis; Undertaken for the Purpose of Completing the Discovery of that Vast Country, and Prosecuted in the Years 1801, 1802, and 1803 in His Majesty's Ship the Investigator, and Subsequently*

in the *Armed Vessel Porpoise and Cumberland Schooner...*, 2 vols. (London: G. and W. Nicol, 1814), vol.1, pp.clxxxvi–clxxxvii, cxcvi–cxcviii).

<sup>33</sup> François Péron and Louis de Freycinet, *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. Historique*, 2 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1807-16).

<sup>34</sup> Bass in Collins, *Account*, vol. 2, p.168; Flinders, *Narrative*, p.[21].

<sup>35</sup> Bass in Collins, *Account*, vol. 2, p.187; Flinders, *Observations*, p.8; Flinders, *Voyage*, vol.1, p.clxxxvi–clxxxvii.

<sup>36</sup> Bass in Collins, *Account*, vol. 2, p.188.

<sup>37</sup> Douglas, “Art”, pp. 70-3; Bronwen Douglas, “Seaborne Ethnography and the Natural History of Man”, *Journal of Pacific History*, vol. 38 (2003), 3–27, pp.12, 17.

<sup>38</sup> Flinders, *Observations*, p.8; Flinders, *Voyage*, vol.1, p.clxxxvii.

<sup>39</sup> Bass in Collins, *Account*, vol.2, pp.169–70, my emphasis; Flinders, *Voyage*, vol.1, p.cxl.

<sup>40</sup> For a later portrait of Bungaree, see: Philip Parker King, 'Boong-gar-ree Aboriginal of New South Wales 1819 who accompanied me on my first voyage to the NW coast', watercolour, 16.2 x 10 cm., PXC 767 f.48, State Library of NSW, <<http://img.agsl.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/ebind-show.pl?doc=pxc767/a1084;seq=2>>.

<sup>41</sup> Flinders, *Voyage*, vol.1, p.cxciv.

<sup>42</sup> For Flinder's chart of Moreton Bay, see: Matthew Flinders, 'Chart of part of the coast of New South Wales from Ram Head to Northumberland Isles by M. Flinders, 2nd. Lieut. of H.M.S. Reliance, 1800', State Library of NSW, <[http://img.agsl.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/ebind-show.pl?doc=flinders\\_maps/a125;seq=14](http://img.agsl.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/ebind-show.pl?doc=flinders_maps/a125;seq=14)>.

<sup>43</sup> Flinders in Collins, *Account*, vol.2, pp.232–4.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, pp.239–44.

<sup>45</sup> This episode took place off Darnley Island in September 1792 and led Flinders to reflect: “Had the four [canoes] been able to reach the cutter, it is difficult to say, whether the superiority of our arms would have been equal to the great differences of numbers; considering the ferocity of these people, and the skill with which they seemed to manage their weapons” (Flinders, *Voyage*, vol.1, pp.xxi–xxvi).

<sup>46</sup> Flinders in Collins, *Account*, vol.2, pp.243, 245, 249, 250–3, 255.

<sup>47</sup> Flinders, *Voyage*, vol.1, p.cxcviii.

<sup>48</sup> Flinders in Collins, *Account*, vol. 2, p.243.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, p.245.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, p.249.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, pp.228, 238, 249, 250, 252.

<sup>52</sup> Flinders, *Voyage*, vol.1, p.cxcviii.

<sup>53</sup> Flinders in Collins, *Account*, vol.2, pp.253–5; my emphasis.

<sup>54</sup> Douglas, “Seaborne Ethnography”, pp.19-26; Bronwen Douglas, “Slippery Word, Ambiguous Praxis: ‘Race’ and Late 18th-Century Voyagers in Oceania”, *Journal of Pacific History*, vol. 41, 1-29, pp.23-5, 27-9.

<sup>55</sup> Baudin to Freycinet, 14 January 1802, in Nicolas Baudin (C. Cornell, tr.), *The Journal of Post Captain Nicolas Baudin Commander-in-Chief of the Corvettes Géographe and Naturaliste Assigned by Order of the Government to a Voyage of Discovery* (Adelaide: Libraries Board of South Australia, 1974), p.302.

<sup>56</sup> Baudin, *Journal*, pp.300–50, 304–5, 321, 345–6.

<sup>57</sup> Nicolas Baudin, “Des naturels que nous trouvions et de leur conduite envers nous [Baudin to Jussieu, 18 Nov. 1802]”, in J. Copans and J. Jamin (eds), *Aux origines de l'anthropologie française: les mémoires de la Société des Observateurs de l'Homme en l'an VIII* (Paris : Le Sycamore, 1978), 205–17, pp. 207–14.

<sup>58</sup> Péron, François, “Observations sur l'anthropologie, ou l'histoire naturelle de l'homme, la nécessité de s'occuper de l'avancement de cette science, et l'importance de l'admission sur la flotte du capitaine Baudin d'un ou de plusieurs naturalistes, spécialement chargés des recherches à faire sur ce sujet”, in Copans and Jamin (eds), *Aux origines de l'anthropologie française*, pp.183–4.

<sup>59</sup> Péron and Freycinet, *Voyage*, vol.1, pp.231, 237, 238, 285, 287; my emphasis.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, p.287.

<sup>61</sup> George W. Stocking, Jr., *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (New York: The Free Press, 1968), pp.35–6.

<sup>62</sup> Bronwen Douglas, “Science and the Art of Representing ‘Savages’: Reading ‘Race’ in Text and Image in South Seas Voyage Literature”, *History and Anthropology*, vol.11 (1999), 157–201; Douglas, “Seaborne Ethnography”; Bronwen Douglas, “Notes on ‘Race’ and the Biologisation of Human Difference”, *Journal of Pacific History*, vol.40 (2005), 331–8; Douglas, “Slippery Word”.

<sup>63</sup> d'Entrecasteaux, *Voyage*, vol.1, pp.359, 423; Péron and Freycinet, *Voyage*, vol.1, pp.238, 285.

<sup>64</sup> Williams, *Keywords*, p.58.

<sup>65</sup> d'Entrecasteaux, *Voyage*, vol.1, p.234.

<sup>66</sup> François Péron, *Île Maria: observations anthropologiques: entrevue avec les naturels de cette île et description d'un tombeau trouvé sur la côte nord de la Baie de l'Est. Ventose an Xe [February–March 1802], MS 18040, Collection Lesueur, Muséum d'Histoire naturelle, Le Havre, France, p.2.*

<sup>67</sup> Péron and Freycinet, *Voyage*, vol.1, pp.285, 446, 448, 452, 457, 458, 466, 471; vol.2, p.164; my emphasis.

<sup>68</sup> Williams, *Keywords*, p.58; original emphasis.

<sup>69</sup> Bass in Collins, *Account*, vol.2, p.169; Flinders in Collins, *Account*, vol.2, pp.253–4, my emphasis; Flinders, *Voyage*, vol.1, p.cxcviii.

<sup>70</sup> Flinders in Collins, *Account*, vol.2, pp.234, 252–3.

<sup>71</sup> Baudin, *Journal*, pp.x–xi, 346; Baudin, “Des naturels”, pp.210–11.

<sup>72</sup> For example, “The account of the Derwent river being now closed, and the whole of what was learned of Van Diemen’s land related, it may not be improper, says Mr Bass, to point out the manner in which this country and New South Wales appear to differ in their most essential quality, that of their soil” (Collins, *Account*, vol.2, p.189).