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'It is scarcely possible to conceive that human beings could be so hideous and loathsome': discourses of genocide in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America and Australia¹

NORBERT FINZSCH

ABSTRACT Finzsch's analysis of Australian sources of the late Enlightenment and Romantic period, written between 1788 and 1850, shows that racism did not begin with the scientific biologism of the mid-nineteenth century. In these texts, the indigenous Australian populations are portrayed as non-religious, indolent, idle, hideous and as uncivilized cannibals. Aborigines, according to these sources, did not own the land because they did not till it; they allegedly had no respect for property rights and lived as nomadic hunter/gatherers without fixed abode and useful implements. Their number was thought to be decreasing rapidly due to their cultural backwardness. Their presumed lack of a proper language with a developed vocabulary made them less than human, almost on a level with primates. These early racist discourses formed the necessary preconditions for two centuries of discrimination, dissolution and genocide of indigenous peoples in the absence of scientific racism. One would be drawing a false dichotomy between 'ideology' and 'reality' if one insisted that these discourses were purely theoretical and had nothing to do with genocidal practices. The discourses analysed by Finzsch *were* the reality of British/indigenous relations for the British, and thereby constituted the limits of their imaginative capacity to address those relations. British settlers obviously perceived Aborigines as an abject Other, a view particularly prominent among frontier settlers who had to contend with ferocious indigenous resistance. Some of these settlers tended to endorse brutal suppression in the form of genocidal massacres. The wilful blindness to or impotent disapproval of such unauthorized settler actions on the part of colonial authorities can be construed as their implicit acceptance of the destruction of the indigenes.

KEYWORDS Aborigines, colonialism, genocide, Native Americans, settler imperialism, Tasmanians

¹ I wish to thank the two anonymous referees for constructive criticisms in the preparation of this article. The quotation in the title is from Charles Sturt, *Two Expeditions into the Interior of Southern Australia, during the Years 1828, 1829, 1830, and 1831: With Observations on the Soil, Climate, and General Resources of the Colony of New South Wales* (London: Smith, Elder and Co. 1834).

*Et on tuera tous les affreux*²
*Exterminate all the brutes*³

In the discussion about European colonialisms, it has become a commonplace to assume that modern racism emerged with Darwinism and with the modern nation-state in the second half of the nineteenth century. Through Darwinian thinking, racism acquired both a biological and a scientific basis, and 'culture' ceased to be a decisive factor in the presumed difference between human 'races'. Stephen Jay Gould expressed the conventional wisdom when he remarked that, following the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* in 1859,⁴ 'subsequent arguments for slavery, colonialism, racial differences, class structures, and sex roles would go forth primarily under the banner of science'.⁵ Nationalism, so this account continues, was racialized, just as racism was nationalized.⁶ For this reason, the 'age of scientific racism' witnessed major genocides, such as the annihilation of the Hereros by German troops in South-west Africa in 1904–5, the slaughter of Armenians in Turkey in 1915, and the mass murder of Jews and other groups during the Holocaust in Europe.⁷

2 Boris Vian, *Et on tuera tous les affreux* (Paris: Le Terrain vague 1965).

3 Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness and the Secret Sharer* (New York: New American Library 1950), 123.

4 Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (London: John Murray 1859).

5 Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: Norton 1981), 72. Darwinian ideas reached both Australia and North America right after 1859; see Barry W. Butcher, 'Darwin down under: science, religion, and evolution in Australia', in Ronald L. Numbers and John Stenhouse (eds), *Disseminating Darwinism: The Role of Place, Race, Religion, and Gender* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press 1999), 39–59 (41–3); Jon H. Roberts, 'Darwinism, American Protestant thinkers, and the puzzle of motivation', in Numbers and Stenhouse (eds), *Disseminating Darwinism*, 145–72 (146–8). Even if Darwin treated human development fully only in 1871 in his treatise *The Descent of Man*, references to human biology abound in *On the Origin of Species*. Referring to the idea of constant struggle for survival, for instance, Darwin notes: 'There is no exception to the rule that every organic being naturally increases at so high a rate, that, if not destroyed, the earth would soon be covered by the progeny of a single pair. Even slow-breeding man has doubled in twenty-five years, and at this rate, in a few thousand years, there would literally not be standing room for his progeny' (Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, 45). The inclusion of humankind in Darwin's consideration is by no means exceptional, since Malthus treated humanity already as a biological entity. Another word of caution: the dates 1859 and 1871 only denote a discursive threshold after which it became acceptable to include humans into the biological realm; the question of when and where this idea of human development emerged is beyond the point I want to make.

6 Etienne Balibar, 'Racism and nationalism', in Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London and New York: Verso 1991), 37–67 (42–4).

7 Samuel Totten, William S. Parsons and Israel W. Charny, *A Century of Genocide: Critical Essays and Eyewitness Accounts*, 2nd edn (New York: Routledge 2004); Jürgen Zimmerer,

There are good reasons, however, not to limit the concept of genocide to the application of racial theories in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. After all, the period before 1860 witnessed genocidal wars in both North America and Australia.⁸ Then there is the fact that immigrants from various parts of the world settled in places like North America and Australia, where they drove the indigenous peoples from their lands by high and low intensity wars, infectious diseases, ecological shifts, government policies and in a process of more or less peaceful expansion of settlers and squatters that Carl Schmitt has called the 'taking of the land'.⁹ White/indigenous interaction and subsequent white settlement are virtually simultaneous with processes of invasion and displacement of indigenous populations, notwithstanding that in both societies the relations between indigenous and settler societies went through periods of peaceful interaction, cultural accommodation and mutual adjustment.

The question is how killings and dispossession of the Native Americans and Aborigines before the 1860s was possible and legitimizable, given that the 'age of Enlightenment' is usually perceived as a relatively benign period for the interaction of western and indigenous populations. In this article, I argue that Darwinian thinking was preceded by and overlapped with an archaic racism with genocidal potential, constituted by the visual othering of indigenous populations in America and Australia. This contention does not exclude the possible co-existence of scientific racism and archaic racism after 1859 or early forms of scientific racism before 1859. My assertion rather tries to establish the existence of a racism based on the body, aesthetic categories and

Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner: Staatlicher Machtanspruch und Wirklichkeit im kolonialen Namibia, 3rd edn (Münster and Hamburg: LIT 2003); Richard G. Hovannisian, *Looking Backward, Moving Forward: Confronting the Armenian Genocide* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers 2003); Dan Stone (ed.), *The Historiography of the Holocaust* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2004); Eric D. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 2002).

8 Henry Reynolds, *Frontier: Aborigines, Settlers and Land* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin 1996), 23. Reynolds answers the question of whether these warlike acts constituted genocides in the negative because '[the] Aborigines survived the invasion', and thus falls prey to a frequent misunderstanding of the term 'genocide' and its meaning (53). Tony Barta, 'Discourses of genocide in Germany and Australia: a linked history', *Aboriginal History*, vol. 25, 2001, 43.

9 Carl Schmitt suggested that the history of peoples is the history of taking land (*Landnahme*) and that every real *Landnahme* produces a new *nomos*; a pre-state order of society is therefore based on land; Carl Schmitt, *Der Nomos der Erde im Völkerrecht des Jus Publicum Europaeum* (Cologne: Greven 1950). Pertaining to the 'taking of the land' in North America, see Ward Churchill, *Indians Are Us? Culture and Genocide in Native North America* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press 1994). A broad, if somewhat general, overview is presented in Robert A. Williams, *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought: The Discourses of Conquest* (New York: Oxford University Press 1990). For a Native American perspective, see Robert A. Williams, *Linking Arms Together: American Indian Treaty Visions of Law and Peace, 1600–1800* (New York: Routledge 1999).

culture.¹⁰ This visual ideology constructed a racialized and gendered abject Other on the basis of aesthetics and an assessment of the Other's economic, societal and linguistic achievements.¹¹ By placing the indigenous Other at the very bottom rung of humanity, this discourse justified the Other's expulsion from native lands, economic exploitation, destruction of the indigenous ecosphere and even eventual genocide.¹² A racism emerged at the end of the eighteenth century, then, but a racism not defined by scientific definitions of 'race', as in the case of post-Darwinian biology. Accordingly, this analysis focuses on the years between 1788 and the 1850s, the crucial period of early colonialism before the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*.¹³

Eighteenth-century colonial projects had their own historic pattern and, although specific colonialisms differ in time, place and agents, they share certain attributes.¹⁴ These commonalities constitute the basis for a comparison of British expansionism in North America and Australia.¹⁵ English language, customs and British laws and institutions influenced the underlying cultural and political structures for the first decades, if not centuries, after settlement. And both settler societies were influenced deeply by the existence of peoples of non-European descent that had settled the country a long time before Europeans arrived. To be sure, primitivism was one of many colonial ideologies, and it does not necessarily entail a genocidal potential. Montaigne's 'On Cannibals' or Tacitus' 'Germania' do not constitute genocidal discourse, for instance. But, in the primitivism in both these settler societies, the Europeans perceived the indigenes as savage, barbaric, wild and uncivilized.¹⁶ I draw on primary sources by white people

10 Thomas Jefferson is a prime example of how aesthetic judgements and proto-scientific data converge in early racisms. In his justification of slavery in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, written in 1781, he makes both aesthetic and scientific observations on the corporeal and mental abilities of Africans; Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Boston: Wells and Lilly 1829), 144–51, 169–71.

11 Elizabeth Elbourne, 'Domesticity and dispossession: the ideology of the "home" and the British construction of the "primitive" from the eighteenth to the early nineteenth centuries', in Wendy Woodward, Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley (eds), *Deep hiStories: Gender and Colonialism in Southern Africa* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi 2002), 29–33.

12 On the intellectual origin of the stage theory, see David Armitage, 'The New World and British historical thought' and Peter Burke, 'America and the rewriting of world history', both in Karen Kupperman (ed.), *American in European Consciousness* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1995).

13 Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*, 2 vols (London: John Murray 1871), i.184; Butcher, 'Darwin down under'.

14 Elbourne, 'Domesticity and dispossession', 29.

15 Geoffrey Bolton, 'Reflections on a comparative frontier history', in Bain Attwood and Stephen Foster (eds), *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience* (Canberra: National Museum of Australia 2003), 161–7.

16 Terry Goldie, *Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures* (Kingston, Ontario: McGill–Queen's University Press 1989).

who actually went to Australia, saw indigenous people with their own eyes and came to conclusions about the 'character' of 'savages'.

Why focus on such perceptions? Since a nation-state and a war machine capable of carrying out secret genocides did not exist before 1850, the early colonial genocides had to be brought about by 'people on the ground', meaning the discoverers, soldiers, settlers and squatters that filled the 'wilderness' by conquering, surveying, buying and ploughing native lands. 'Settler imperialism' was at the very core of premodern genocide.¹⁷

This is not just a story of parallels. Whereas colonial expansion in North America started as early as the seventeenth century, in Australia it began only in 1788 after the American colonies had gained their independence from England and at the height of 'the age of Enlightenment'.¹⁸ Whereas in North America settlers were looking for political and religious freedom, in Australia the first colonizers were convicts accompanied by a detachment of British marines. Yet both military men and convicts had some previous knowledge about indigenous peoples without ever having actually seen Aborigines before their ships anchored in Port Jackson: British soldiers and officers had been fighting in the French and Indian Wars of North America (1755–63) as well as during the American Revolution and, in both colonial conflicts, native troops had played a major part, both as allies and as enemies of the British soldiers. The British in Australia, having the American experience in their heads, were ready to perceive the Aborigines as just another variety of North American Indian; in fact, they used the very same words to describe them.¹⁹

Discourses and *dispositives*

Any policy of genocide, extermination, colonialism or expansion rests on two pillars. It needs agents and perpetrators who serve as carriers of the

17 A. Dirk Moses (ed.), *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books 2004). For an elaboration of the concept of 'settler imperialism', see my chapter in A. Dirk Moses (ed.), *Genocide and Colonialism* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books 2006, forthcoming).

18 John Gascoigne, *The Enlightenment and the Origins of European Australia* (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press 2002).

19 Jacob Abbott, *American History*, 8 vols (New York and Boston: Sheldon, Gould and Lincoln 1860). Volume 1, entitled *Aboriginal America*, refers to Amerindians as 'American Aborigines' (60, 61, 144, 153, 257, 275, 277). Watkin Tench, referring to Australians, states: 'Like ourselves, the French found it necessary, more than once, to chastise a spirit of rapine and intrusion which prevailed among the Indians around the bay'; Watkin Tench, 'A narrative of the expedition to Botany Bay', in Tim F. Flannery (ed.), *Two Classic Tales of Australian Exploration: 1788 by Watkin Tench; Life and Adventures by John Nicol* (Melbourne: Text Pub 2002), 62.

policy, and it needs a discourse that endows these agents with the knowledge/power, justification and rationale for their practices. Mind-management necessarily complements military and economic domination in the repertoire of colonialism and imperialism. This article addresses the discourses of legitimization, namely, the 'discourses of genocide'.²⁰ I will not deal with the way British colonials, bureaucrats, officers and settlers treated Native Americans and Australian Aborigines *realiter*, but focus instead on the discourses of primitivism and exclusion that abounded in the Anglosphere after 1788. These discourses are part of colonialism in the form of a *dispositive*, that is, an apparatus of power relations that backs up types of knowledge and that is in turn supported by them. This apparatus consists of a network of various and heterogeneous elements, such as discourses, laws, prescriptions, buildings and institutions.²¹

Before the impact of scientific racism in the 1860s, these discourses helped to define not only the superiority of western explorers, colonialists and imperialists over the colonized, but lay the ground for the latter's exploitation, enslavement and eventual genocide. When I use the concept of genocide in a colonial context, I refer to the international legal definition of the crime of genocide as found in Articles II and III of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. Article II describes the two elements of the crime of genocide: the *mental element*, meaning the 'intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such', and the *physical element*, which includes a range of five acts, namely, killing members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part, imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group, or forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. According to this definition, a crime must include *both elements* to be called 'genocide'.²² Since the intent, defined as 'anticipated outcome', precedes actual acts of killing or harming, it is safe to say that any form of genocide requires anticipation and discursive preparation.

20 Here I follow Barta, 'Discourses of genocide in Germany and Australia'.

21 Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain 1800-1860* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books 1982), 47-9; Michel Foucault, 'Ein Spiel um die Psychoanalyse', in *Dispositive der Macht: Über Sexualität, Wissen und Wahrheit* (Berlin: Merve 1978), 123; Michel Foucault, 'Le Jeu de Michel Foucault', in Michel Foucault, *Dits et Écrits*, 3 vols (Paris: Gallimard 1994), iii.299; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. from the French by Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books 1977), 174.

22 United Nations, *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide: Adopted by Resolution 260 (III) A of the U.N. General Assembly on 9 December 1948*, United Nations Treaty Series, no. 1021, vol. 78 (New York: United Nations Treaty Series 1951), 277.

Such preparation was laid by early travellers, observers, ethnographers and amateur anthropologists who provided 'evidence' for a classification of human groups and their subsequent subjection to a hierarchy of qualities. Thus Darwin's mentor John Stevens Henslow could write in 1837:

To obtain a knowledge of a science of observation, like botany, we need make very little more exertion at first than is required for adapting a chosen set of terms to certain appearances of which the eye takes cognizance, and when this has been attained, all the rest is very much like reading a book after we have learned to spell, where every page affords a fresh field of intellectual enjoyment.²³

Observation was a way not only to reify the objects of the visible world but also to bestow on the colonial gaze the character of scientific truth.

Visual abjection

Central to the definition of genocide is the concept of intent, the paramount wish that the other group should cease to exist, be it as a consequence of adverse economic and ecological conditions or the kidnapping of children. Before acts of violence and dispossession could be committed in the period before the 1860s, perpetrators and silent witnesses had to agree on a taxonomy of primitivism that would allow perpetrators and witnesses to view Native Americans and Aborigines as less than equal, less than civilized and less than human. These discursive entities coalesce into an image of a 'creature' that is utterly rejected and excluded from humanity.²⁴ This position of abjection is analysed by Giorgio Agamben, who shows how political power is most effective when it does not deal with politics *per se*, but with human existence as an object of bio-power.²⁵ Bio-power constitutes a form of power/knowledge that is inscribed on bodies and that becomes

23 John Stevens Henslow, 'On the requisites necessary for the advance of botany', *Magazine of Zoology and Botany*, vol. 1, 1837, 115.

24 The 'exclusionary matrix by which subjects are formed requires the simultaneous production of a domain of abject beings', who hint at the 'unlivable [*sic*] and uninhabitable . . . zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of subject, but whose living under the sign of the "unlivable" [*sic*] is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject'; Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge 1993), 3. Jonathan Swift uses the term *abject* when he discusses the Yahoos, the human 'slave race' in the country of the Houyhnhnms; Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* [1726], ed. Herbert John Davis, vol. 11 of *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift* (Oxford: Blackwell 1941), 265–7.

25 Michel Foucault, 'Body/power', in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, ed. and trans. from the French by Colin Gordon (Brighton: Harvester Press 1980), 55–62.

visible on the body, especially through a panoptic gaze. Groups and individuals that remain outside of the desired effects of bio-power are 'unliveable', and are defined as unworthy of life.²⁶

Two basic models for describing the indigenous had been developed during the seventeenth century: the Ignoble or Primitive Savage, and the Noble Savage.²⁷ The concept of the Noble Savage had been discarded by the end of the eighteenth century and was only resuscitated after indigenous populations, both in America and Australia, ceased to constitute a threat to colonial societies.²⁸ The image of the Primitive Savage, by contrast, continued to be used throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a justification for chattel slavery, colonial domination and economic exploitation.²⁹ The assessment as 'savage' was based largely on observation, that is, the European gaze directed at the indigenous body. This gaze did not only constitute the obvious instrument of contemporary scientific research; it also served as a microtechnique of power in the sense that it empowered and engendered colonial conquest through the 'dominant gaze'.³⁰ With the rise

26 Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. from the Italian by Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 1998). See also Attwood and Forster (ed.), *Frontier Conflict*, 22–3.

27 See the special issue of the *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, vol. 54, no. 1, 1997, on the construction of race in colonial America. On pre-Darwinian racial discourse in North America, see Alden T. Vaughan, *Roots of American Racism: Essays on the Colonial Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press 1995); Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea* (Washington, D.C. and Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center Press 1996); Joyce E. Chaplin, *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier, 1500–1676* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2001).

28 Socorro Babaran Cario, 'Eighteenth Century Voyagers to the Pacific and the South Seas, and the Rise of Cultural Primitivism and the Noble Savage Idea', Ph.D. thesis, University of Illinois, 1970; Terry Jay Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2001); Jean Woolmington, *Aborigines in Colonial Society, 1788–1850: From 'Noble Savage' to 'Rural Pest'* (Armidale, NSW: University of New England Press 1988). In the field of morals/ethics, a trajectory of the Noble Savage was still visible, fitting the genealogical division of an older and a younger discourse; see James Cook's remarks about New Holland, in 'James Cook's Journal of Remarkable Occurrences aboard His Majesty's Bark Endeavour, 1768–1771', online edition of the original journal at the National Library of Australia, http://southseas.nla.gov.au/journals/cook_remarks/092.html (viewed 10 February 2005). However, most of the time, Aborigines are portrayed as fickle, treacherous and thieving; see Tench, 'A narrative of the expedition to Botany Bay', 59, 190. For the same mindset, see Sturt, *Two Expeditions into the Interior of Southern Australia*.

29 Louise K. Barnett, *The Ignoble Savage: American Literary Racism, 1790–1890* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press 1975); John K. Lodewijks, 'Rational economic man and the Ignoble Savage', *History of Political Economy*, vol. 32, 2000, 1027–32; Ronald L. Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press 1976); Beulah V. Thigpen, 'The Indians of *The Leather-Stocking Tales*: A Study of the Noble and the Ignoble Savage', Ph.D. thesis, East Texas State University, 1982.

30 Laura Mulvey, 'Visual pleasure and narrative cinema', *Screen*, vol. 16, no. 3, Autumn 1975, 6–18.

of 'the regime of the scopic', possession was experienced through the act of looking.³¹

Consider Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713), who described the virtuous man as a 'spectator', devoted to the disinterested 'survey and contemplation' of beauty in manners and morals.³² His conception of beauty resonates with his conception of virtue.³³ Beauty meant virtue, and hideousness meant sin.³⁴ For the European gaze directed at the indigenous body, it meant that the inner morality and ethics of the indigene could be measured by its external beauty or ugliness, by the shape of limbs, flatness of breasts, wooliness of hair and complexion.³⁵ Speaking about the eighteenth-century foundations of racism, George L. Mosse called it a 'visual ideology based upon stereotypes',³⁶ meaning that the appearance, the looks of indigenous peoples, carried a specific meaning. In the eighteenth century, complexion meant more than just skin colour. It also entailed a moral evaluation, especially after 1770 when the old distinction between Christians and pagans gave way to aestheticized judgements.³⁷ As in the case of antebellum slave markets, where slaves were looked at and examined through a (male) gaze, the aboriginal body 'was made racially legible' through inspection.³⁸

Colonial gaze and indigenous speech

Intimately connected with this aesthetic theory was a theory of the origin of humanity and its ability to speak. Scottish Enlightenment philosophers developed a taxonomy of cultures that imagined a process of civilization

31 Gargi Bhattacharyya, *Tales of Dark-Skinned Women: Race, Gender and Global Culture* (London: University College London Press 1998), 337.

32 Anthony Ashley Cooper Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, 2 vols (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press 1999), ii.45.

33 Paul Guyer, 'Beauty and utility in eighteenth-century aesthetics', *Eighteenth-century Studies*, vol. 35, 2002, 439–53 (439–40).

34 Cf. the depiction of the animal-like, abject Yahoos in Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, 266–7 and also ch. 1.

35 Claude Rawson, *God, Gulliver and Genocide: Barbarism and the European Imagination, 1492–1945* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press 2001), 98–108.

36 George L. Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press 1985), xii.

37 Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-century British Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2000), 54–5.

38 Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press 1990), 161. Lynette Russell shows how this scopism made its way into British museums after 1850; Lynette Russell, "'Well nigh impossible to describe": dioramas, displays and representations of Australian Aborigines', *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, vol. 2, 1999, 35–45.

consisting of four stages.³⁹ According to these philosophers, the lowest stage was marked by an economy based on hunting; this was followed by the next evolutionary step, an economy of herding. Then came cultivation, defined as labour on the land and fixed residence; the final and highest stage was industry and commerce, only lately achieved by the members of European nations. Early modern theories of language supplement the stage theory. Questions of language and speech capability were paramount for a definition of humanity. It is only fitting, then, that those at the lowest stages lack a proper language, since they are devoid of humanity: statements like Arthur Bowes Smyth's that 'their Language is excessively Loud & harsh & se[e]ms to consist of a very short Vocabulary' very much sum up what observers had to say about the indigenes.⁴⁰

By regarding the indigenous body and listening to indigenous speech, it was possible for the eighteenth-century English-speaking spectator to place this body in a matrix of progress and civilization, morality and ethics, growth or extinction. The ethnographic episteme that was the result of this observation and discourse had the same effect, for the observer, as a peephole: it limited the gaze and transformed it into a tool of power. This thinking was a form of cultural racism, because what 'distinguished the different races was culture not biology'.⁴¹ Racial variation was attributed to environmental rather than biological factors.⁴² But this also meant that the 'savage environment' (geology, botany, climate, society and family) had to be described and evaluated much more rigorously than in the later theories of scientific racism that focused on inherent biological qualities of groups. Once fixed in written texts and published in books and journals, destined for consumption in England, this descriptive and classifying discourse became 'writing that conquers'.⁴³

The allegory of America depicted as a naked woman exposed to the European gaze in many pictorial representations in books and pamphlets

39 See Alan Barnard, 'Hunting-and-gathering society: an eighteenth-century Scottish invention', in Alan Barnard (ed.), *Hunter-Gatherers in History, Archaeology and Anthropology* (Oxford and New York: Berg 2004). Istvan Hont, 'The language of sociability and commerce: Samuel Pufendorf and the theoretical foundations of the "four stages theory"', in Anthony Pagden (ed.), *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press 1990), 253–76.

40 Paul G. Fidlon and R. J. Ryan (eds), *The Journal of Arthur Bowes Smyth: Surgeon, Lady Penrhyn, 1787–1789* (Sydney: Australian Documents Library 1979), 58; James Grant, *The Narrative of a Voyage of Discovery Performed in His Majesty's Vessel the Lady Nelson, of Sixty Tons Burthen, with Sliding Keels, in the Years 1800, 1801, and 1802 to New South Wales* (Adelaide: Libraries Board of South Australia 1973), 157.

41 Gascoigne, *The Enlightenment*, 149.

42 *Ibid.*, 150.

43 Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History* (New York: Columbia University Press 1988), xxv.

'draws on a long tradition of male travel as an erotics of ravishment'.⁴⁴ This European gaze is not only an index for a position of the indigenous Other on a scale of acculturation, but it is also a 'projection into the New World of European representations of gender—and of sexual conduct'.⁴⁵ This gaze interprets nudity at once as a sign of low evolutionary status and as a promise of effortless access. This 'coherent hermeneutical strategy of feminization and eroticization' that makes 'gendered difference' one of the meanings of the New World can also be observed in the travel descriptions of Australia after 1788.⁴⁶ In both America and Australia, European consciousness is encoded as masculine. In Johannes Stradanus's image, an emblematic Vespucci discovers an *uncovered* woman: America is a male 'voyeur's paradise'.⁴⁷ Territorial conquest coincided with the possession of the abstract and literal female body.⁴⁸

What does the 'persistent gendering' of imperial conquest have to do with the discovery and settlement of America and Australia?⁴⁹ Gender is a way of portraying 'relationships of power'.⁵⁰ In Stradanus's picture, there is an important iconographic element in the background: a cannibal meal is taking place. This element refers to America as a continent of female cannibals, thus laying bare 'the mark of unregenerate savagery'.⁵¹ America is 'simultaneously naked and passive *and* riotously violent and cannibalistic', a combination that requires European intervention in order to restore male mastery.⁵² America and Australia as the ultimate opposites of the European

44 Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge 1995), 22.

45 Louis Montrose, 'The work of gender in the discourse of discovery', in Stephen Greenblatt (ed.), *New World Encounters* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1993), 197–217 (178).

46 Margarita Zamora, *Reading Columbus* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1993), 157.

47 Johannes Stradanus [i.e. Jan van der Straet], *New Discoveries: The Sciences, Inventions and Discoveries of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance as Represented in 24 Engravings Issued in the Early 1580s* (Norwalk, CT: Burndy Library 1953); Peter Mason, *Deconstructing America: Representations of the Other* (London, New York: Routledge 1990), 171.

48 See Susan Morgan, *Place Matters: Gendered Geography in Victorian Women's Travel Books about Southeast Asia* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press 1996), 11. Morgan asserts the importance of gender as a structuring principle of colonial discourse. See also Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London and New York: Routledge 1991); Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge 1992).

49 McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 24.

50 Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press 1988), 42.

51 Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492–1797* (London and New York: Methuen 1986), 3.

52 McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 27.

way of life and a source of male anxiety must be subjugated/penetrated.⁵³ Thus it becomes understandable that many American as well as Australian sources are obsessed with the question of whether or not indigenous populations were cannibals. Again the chronological structure seems to be that of a split between an older generation of texts that flatly deny the existence of cannibalism among the Aborigines and a younger set that imply that anthropophagy was rampant among them.⁵⁴

Dying races and the land

A second concept is crucial for the understanding of both American and Australian colonial expansionism, namely, the idea that the conquered continent was either virtually uninhabited or uncultivated and, therefore, lacking an owner, a concept expressed in the term *res nullius*. Over time, the colonialists systematically downplayed the number of Indians and Aborigines, thereby echoing Cook's description of the land as thinly populated. They also conceived increasingly of indigenous peoples as 'dying races'.⁵⁵ The

53 *Ibid.*, 26–7.

54 Tench, 'A narrative of the expedition to Botany Bay', 53–4; William Bradley, *A Voyage to New South Wales: The Journal of Lieutenant William Bradley RN of HMS Sirius, 1786–1792* (Sydney: Public Library of New South Wales 1969), 142; Peter Miller Cunningham, *Two Years in New South Wales: A Series of Letters, Comprising Sketches of the Actual State of Society in That Colony; of Its Peculiar Advantages to Emigrants; of Its Topography, Natural History, &c. &c.*, 2 vols (London: H. Colburn 1828), ii.15, 36–7.

55 'The aboriginal inhabitants of the country were of races formed with constitutions, both physical and mental, adapting them to obtain their livelihood by fishing and the chase—modes of life by means of which North America might sustain perhaps twenty or thirty millions of inhabitants. The Caucasian race, which was introduced from Europe, is endowed with constitutions adapting them to gain their livelihood by agriculture, commerce, and the manufacturing arts, a mode of life by which the same territory is capable of supporting *many hundred* millions—we know not how many. Under these circumstances it was an inevitable, and as much in fulfillment of the designs of divine Providence, that the old races should be supplanted by the new, as that the horse and the cow should displace the alligator and the elk, and brakes and bulrushes yield their native ground to corn'; Abbott, *American History*, i.275–6. The plantation owner and US statistician Joseph Camp Griffith Kennedy predicted both the extinction of Native Americans and of emancipated African Americans; Joseph Camp Griffith Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860: Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office 1864), xi–xii. See also Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press 1982); Patrick Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings: Discourse on the Extinction of Primitive Races, 1800–1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 2003); Reynolds, *Frontier*, 54; Barry W. Butcher, 'Darwinism, social Darwinism, and the Australian Aborigines: a reevaluation', in Roy Macleod and Philip F. Rehbock (eds), *Darwin's Laboratory: Evolutionary Theory and Natural History in the Pacific* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1994), 371–94.

question of the indigenes' right to their lands became salient in the early years of colonization and the ensuing process of taking over the lands formerly possessed by Aborigines and Amerindians. Legal arguments centred on the issue of settlement versus conquest. The settlement of Australia was predicated on the notion that the native inhabitants held no territorial claims to the lands they occupied. In the American case, although both the British colonial as well as the American governments recognized the land rights of Native Americans, the latter were forced to give up the titles to their lands through military conquest and fraudulent sales.⁵⁶ In the Australian case, Aborigines were defined as occupants—not owners—of the land.⁵⁷

By contrast, in North America, at least in the legal fiction that served as the basis for Indian treaties, Amerindians were the initial owners of the land that they subsequently sold or lost to the colonial and American governments. Yet both cases share the idea that white settlers were entitled to indigenous lands because the original owners/occupants did not use them and remained in a state of migration. It is arguable that, from 1788 onwards, well before the legal concept of *res nullius* was formalized in 1847,⁵⁸ colonials had virtually adopted this doctrine as it had been laid out previously in both international law and Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*. In the introduction to the latter, Blackstone outlined the relationship of the 'more distant plantations in America' to England, arguing:

Plantations, or colonies in distant countries, are either such where the lands are claimed by right of occupancy only, by finding them desert [deserted] and uncultivated, and peopling them from the mother country; or where, when already cultivated, they have been either gained by conquest, or ceded to us by

56 Charles D. Bernholz, 'American Indian treaties and the presidents: a guide to the treaties proclaimed by each administration', *Social Studies*, vol. 93, September–October 2002, 218–27. The legal basis for the denial of indigenous land rights in both America and Australia was almost identical: in the 1823 US Supreme Court case *Johnson v. McIntosh* (8 Wheaton, 543), Chief Justice John Marshall argued that, by reason of conquest, native lands became the property of the US government and Indians were to be considered occupants. In 1831 the same court ruled in *Cherokee Nation v. State of Georgia* (5 Peters, 1, 16–19) that tribes were 'sovereign nations' but not 'foreign nations', establishing a guardian relationship between Indians and the government.

57 Reynolds, *Frontier*, 133–8.

58 In *Attorney-General v. Brown* (1847) one finds confirmation for the suggestion that, upon the settlement of New South Wales, the unqualified legal and beneficial ownership of all land in the colony was vested in the Crown. Arguably, the judgement of the Supreme Court of New South Wales in this case seems ambiguous in that the judges confined the proposition to 'waste lands', which they defined as 'all the waste and unoccupied lands of the colony'. Careful reading of the judgement makes it clear that it implicitly assumed all the lands of the colony to be vacant at the time of its establishment in 1788. See *Attorney-General v. Brown* (1847) 2 SCR (NSW) APP 30 (FC).

treaties. And both these rights are founded upon the law of nature, or at least upon that of nations.⁵⁹

Evidence

In order to come to grips with genocidal discourses, I constructed a matrix of fifteen categories of observations from a number of sources dealing with Australian indigenous populations.⁶⁰ This matrix is based both on the research of Australian and American scholars on the importance of Enlightenment discourse for the development of European racism, and on the connection of colonial discourse and gender. (Extensive work on Native American history is implicitly included.⁶¹) The matrix constitutes a system of references that follows the logic of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century 'observations' of indigenous peoples. These references presuppose types of 'institutions'—including family, law, religion, political system and economy—that do not fit the ways in which indigenous communities in nation-states dominated by settler populations structured their societies.

This coarse genealogy falls into two stages, the first being the period 1788–1800, with a rupture at the very end of the eighteenth century. This earlier phase shows an almost 'neutral' image of the indigene, whereas the later period (1800–60) is marked by contemptuous and continuing condemnations of Aboriginals and their cultures. Of the fifteen categories of observations, it turns out that those pertaining to the 'looks' and the body types of the indigenes are the most prevalent. Take the following quotation by William Dampier (1691):

59 William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1765–9), i.104.

60 The complete collection of sources can be accessed online at www.uni-koeln.de/phil-fak/histsem/anglo/html_2001/matrix.htm (viewed 11 February 2005).

61 On cannibalism as a traditional European reference to Indians, see Rawson, *God, Gulliver and Genocide*, 17–91; Francis Barker, Peter Hulme and Margaret Iversen, *Cannibalism and the Colonial World* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press 1998); David English and Penelope Van Toorn, *Speaking Positions: Aboriginality, Gender and Ethnicity in Australian Cultural Studies* (Melbourne: Victoria University of Technology 1995); Terry Goldie, *Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Literatures* (Kingston, Ontario: McGill–Queen's University Press 1989); Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire Building* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press 1997); Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books 1979).

They have great Bottle Noses, pretty full Lips, and wide Mouths. The two Fore-teeth of their Upper jaw are wanting in all of them, Men and Women, Old and Young; whether they draw them out, I know not: Neither have they any Beards. They are long visaged, and of a very unpleasing Aspect, having no one graceful Feature in their Faces. 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, both of their Faces and the rest of their Body, is coal black, like that of the Negroes of Guinea.⁶²

The following quotation is by David Collins and was published in 1802:

Of those who last came, three were remarkable for the largeness of their heads; and one, whose face was very rough, had much more the appearance of a baboon than of a human being. He was covered with oily soot; his hair matted with filth; his visage, even among his fellows, uncommonly ferocious; and his very large mouth, beset with teeth of every hue between black, white, green, and yellow, sometimes presented a smile, which might make one shudder.⁶³

Here, early descriptions that seem almost to be purely descriptive and resonate with the image of the Noble Savage are replaced by later utterances that reinforce an image of abject hideousness.

Equally rich is the discourse about the 'civilization' of Aboriginal culture. As in the case of physical appearance, observations shift from the earlier image of the Noble Savage to one of utter abjection. Compare the three following statements by James Cook (1771), Watkin Tench (1789) and James Grant (1803) that seem to indicate a rupture in the discursive regime around 1800:

From what I have said of the Natives of New-Holland they may appear to some to be the most wretched people upon Earth, but in reality they are far more happier than we Europeans; being wholly unacquainted not only with the superfluous but the necessary conveniencies so much sought after in Europe, they are happy in not knowing the use of them. They live in a Tranquillity which is not disturb'd by the Inequality of Condition: The Earth and sea of their own accord furnishes them with all things necessary for life; they covet not Magnificent Houses, Houshold-

62 William Dampier's account of his 1691 voyage in the *Cygnet* was published in Ernest Scott (ed.), *Australian Discovery*, 2 vols (London: Dent 1929), vol. 1, ch. 9, available online at www.gutenberg.net.au/ausdisc/ausdisc1-09.html (viewed 11 February 2005).

63 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*, 2 vols (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies 1798–1802), ii.180.

stuff &C^a. they live in a warm and fine Climate and enjoy a very wholesome Air, so that they have very little need of Clothing and this they seem to be fully sensible of, for many to whome we gave Cloth &C^a. to, left it carlessly upon the Sea beach and in the woods as a thing they had no manner of use for. In short they seem'd to set no Value upon any thing we gave them, nor would they ever part with any thing of their own for any one article we could offer them; this, in my opinion argues that they think themselves provided with all the necessaries of Life and that they have no Superfluities—⁶⁴

Less than twenty years after Cook, Tench writes:

If they be considered as a nation whose general advancement and acquisitions are to be weighed, they certainly rank very low, even in the scale of savages. They may perhaps dispute the right of precedence with the Hottentots or the shivering tribes who inhabit the shores of Magellan. But how inferior do they show when compared with the subtle African; the patient watchful American; or the elegant timid islander of the South Seas. Though suffering from the vicissitudes of their climate, strangers to clothing, though feeling the sharpness of hunger and knowing the precariousness of supply from that element on whose stores they principally depend, ignorant of cultivating the earth—a less enlightened state we shall exclaim can hardly exist.⁶⁵

Writing shortly after Tench, here is James Grant in 1802:

As there is thought to be a chain in Creation, beginning with the Brute and ending with Man, were I inclined to pursue the notion, I should be at a loss where to place my Bush Native, whether as the next link above the monkey, or that below it.⁶⁶

The same pattern can be seen with regard to the subject of Aboriginal gender relations: Dampier in 1691 admits flatly to ignorance about how marriage is organized among Aboriginal peoples, whereas Watkin Tench in 1789 goes into lengthy detail about the cruelty of indigenous men towards their wives, an attitude reproduced over and over again in the following forty years.⁶⁷ The following remark by Charles Sturt is typical in its combination of empathy for the oppressed women's plight and disgust of their physical features:

64 James Cook's *Journal of Remarkable Occurrences aboard His Majesty's Bark Endeavour, 1768–1771*, online edition of the original journal at the National Library of Australia, http://southseas.nla.gov.au/journals/cook_remarks/092.html (viewed 10 February 2005).

65 Tench, 'A narrative of the expedition to Botany Bay', 252–3.

66 Grant, *The Narrative of a Voyage of Discovery*, 158.

67 Tench, 'A narrative of the expedition to Botany Bay', 161–2, 264.

Like all savages, they consider their women as secondary objects, oblige them to procure their own food, or throw to them over their shoulders the bones they have already picked, with a nonchalance that is extremely amusing; and, on the march, make them beasts of burden to carry their very weapons. . . . An old woman, a picture of whom would disgust my readers, made several attempts to embrace me. I managed, however, to avoid her, and at length got rid of her by handing her over to Fraser, who was no wise particular as to the object of his attention.⁶⁸

The assessment of the Aborigines as savages was to a large extent based on the perceived treatment of indigenous women. At the same time, the colonial gaze and a desire for indigenous women shaped gender relations of the male colonialists with Aboriginal women. The latter represented not only sexual gratification, but also symbolized Australian land and its conquest. Indigenous women thus were othered in a double sense, as part of a 'savage' society and in relation to their gender, since Enlightenment theory in large part construed European women as savages.⁶⁹ Australian sources that raise the problem of Aboriginal gender relations are often marked by a tone of tacit complicity and ironic complacency. On the one hand, Aboriginal bodies must not be objects of desire because of their abject status; on the other hand, a male-writer-to-male-reader understanding is conveyed, implying that the white male colonialist could 'possess' the indigenous woman if he wanted, because of her low morals and the promiscuity rampant in indigenous society.⁷⁰

Another discursive field is that of work. According to the aforementioned theory of the four stages, the kind of work performed by a group determined its evolutionary status. Hunter/gatherers remained in a lower state of development than peoples working the land and were little more than human animals. William Robertson's influential *History of America* (1777) reinforced the notion that North American Indians constituted a case of arrested development because of their supposed lack of agriculture.⁷¹ In the middle of the nineteenth century, this contention was fortified by the prediction that, because of their lack of work ethic, Native Americans would soon die out.⁷² In the early sources on Aborigines, this argument figures prominently and is connected with the apparent lack of fixed habitations.

68 Sturt, *Two Expeditions into the Interior of Southern Australia*.

69 Jane Rendall, 'The Enlightenment and the nature of women', in Jane Rendall (ed.), *The Origins of Modern Feminism: Women in Britain, France and the United States 1780-1860* (New York: Schocken Books 1984), 7-32.

70 George Bouchier Worgan, *Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon* (Sydney: Library Council of New South Wales 1978), 47-8.

71 Charles Dunoyer, *L'Industrie et la morale considérées dans leurs rapports avec la liberté* (Paris: A. Sautet 1825), 146-7.

72 Horace Greeley, *An Overland Journey, from New York to San Francisco, in the Summer of 1859* (New York: Saxton, Barker and Co. 1860), 151.

Charles Darwin laid the ground for the evaluation of the Aboriginals' attitude on work in 1836:

They will not, however, cultivate the ground, or build houses and remain stationary, or even take the trouble of tending a flock of sheep when given to them. On the whole they appear to me to stand some few degrees higher in the scale of civilisation than the Fuegians. . . . The aborigines are always anxious to borrow the dogs from the farmhouses: the use of them, the offal when an animal is killed, and some milk from the cows, are the peace-offerings of the settlers, who push farther and farther towards the interior. The thoughtless aboriginal, blinded by these trifling advantages, is delighted at the approach of the white man, who seems predestined to inherit the country of his children.⁷³

General evaluations of indigenous civilization and government are closely connected to statements about the stages of development in relation to the forms of labour performed. The argument goes as follows: since Aboriginal societies have not evolved beyond the stage of hunters and gatherers, they do not possess government in the form of hereditary chiefs or elders. According to the same reasoning the low state of civilization reflects the animal-like state of existence and *vice versa*. The following excerpt neatly sums up this assertion since it compares explicitly the Aborigines with Native Americans:

We may, I think, in a great measure impute their low state of civilization, and deficiency in the mechanical arts, to the nature of the country they inhabit, the kind of life they lead, and the mode of government they live under. Civilization depends more upon the circumstances under which man is placed than upon any innate impulse of his own,—the natural inclinations of man tending toward the savage state, or that in which food is procured with the least possible effort; In primitive communities, generally speaking, the chiefs must be hereditary, and must have acquired power to control the others, before much improvement can take place; when, if these chiefs exercise their power with justice, and secure the inviolability of persons and property, industry will soon be encouraged, and various useful arts originated. . . . The North American tribes form an apt illustration of these observations,—the chiefs being mere advisers, as it were, possessing no power to enforce their counsel, and consequently no means of breaking up the old savage habits of the tribes, and impelling them onward in the path of civilization.⁷⁴

73 Charles Darwin, *Journal of Researches into the Natural History and Geology of the Countries Visited during the Voyage round the World of H.M.S. 'Beagle' under the Command of Captain Fitz Roy, R.N.* (London: John Murray 1913), 462, 469.

74 Cunningham, *Two Years in New South Wales*, ii.46–7, 49–50.

Between discourse and genocide

Australian sources of the late Enlightenment and Romantic period, written between 1788 and 1850, portrayed indigenous Australian populations as non-religious, indolent, idle, hideous and as uncivilized cannibals. The men were depicted as less ugly than the women, who were, according to these commentators, constantly under the oppressive power of their men. The promiscuity and loose morals of women seemed to demand a firm hand of the men. Aborigines represented in these sources did not own the land because they did not till it; they disrespected property rights and lived as nomadic hunter/gatherers without fixed abode and useful implements. Their number was thought to be decreasing rapidly due to their cultural backwardness. Their lack of a proper language with a developed vocabulary made them less than human, almost on a level with primates.

Early racist discourses, therefore, formed the necessary preconditions for two centuries of discrimination, dissolution and genocide of indigenous peoples in the absence of scientific racism. But what was the relationship between these discourses and genocidal practice? To distinguish sharply between 'theory' and 'practice' would be to draw a false dichotomy between 'ideology' and 'reality'. The discourses analysed here *were* the reality of British/indigenous relations for the British and thereby constituted the limits of their imaginative capacity to address those relations. In this respect, two points can be made in relation to the question of genocidal intention in early colonial contexts. The first is obvious in that the British view of the abject Other, which was particularly prominent among frontier settlers who had to contend with ferocious indigenous resistance, licensed brutal suppression in the form of genocidal massacres. The second is that the wilful blindness to or impotent disapproval of such unauthorized settler actions on the part of colonial authorities can be construed as an implicit intention to destroy the indigenes, despite the fact that they were often in thrall to humanitarian ideals of just treatment of the 'natives'. For the fact is that their commitment to theodicies of civilization and modernity meant that such enlightened humanitarians were prepared to accept, if in an agonized or resigned manner, the 'inevitable extinction' of the aboriginal peoples. After all, how could they justify halting the march of progress in the form of colonization in order to save such abject creatures?⁷⁵

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75 On this point, see A. Dirk Moses, 'Conceptual blockages and definitional dilemmas in the "racial century": genocides of indigenous peoples and the Holocaust', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 36, no. 4, 2002, 30.