Discourses of Genocide in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century America and Australia

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Abstract:
I suggest that Australian sources of the late Enlightenment and Romantic period, written between 1788 and 1850, do portray Indigenous Australian populations as nonreligious, indolent and idle, hideous and uncivilized cannibals. The men are portrayed as less repulsive than the women, who are constantly under the oppressive power of their men. On the other hand, promiscuity and loose morals on the side of women seemed to demand a firm hand of the men over the women. Aboriginals represented in these sources do not own the land because they do not till it, they disrespect property rights and live as nomadic hunter/gatherers without fixed houses and useful implements. Their number was thought to be rapidly decreasing, due to their cultural backwardness. Their lack of a proper language with a developed vocabulary made them less than human, almost on one level with primates. If one takes these discursive entities together, there evolves an image of a 'creature' that is utterly rejected and excluded from humanity.

1. Theory

1 My initial contention is grounded in the notion that colonial projects have their own mindset and although specific colonialisms differ in respect to time, place, and agents, as a phenomenon of the eighteenth century, they would have certain things in common (see Elbourne 29). These commonalities constitute the basis for a comparison of British expansion in North America and Australia. As I have argued elsewhere, historical judgments tend to be implicitly comparative, especially if historians insist on the singularity of events or structures. Comparative history as a method therefore seeks to bring out and expose the implicit structure of comparative categories residing in historical evaluations (see Finzsch, "Reconstruction" 4). The basis for a comparison of North American with Australian discourses of genocide is based on the following assumptions:[1]

2 Immigrants from various parts of the world have settled both countries, but English language, customs, and British laws and institutions, subsumed under the term *Anglosphere*, influenced the underlying cultural and political structures for the first decades, if not centuries, after settlement. Both settler societies were affected deeply by the existence of peoples of non-European descent that had settled the country a long time before Europeans arrived, and in both societies European settlers perceived these peoples as savage, barbaric, wild, or uncivilized. Although in both societies the relations between indigenous and settler

[1] Geoffrey Bolton makes a convincing argument for a comparison of English expansionism in Australia with the American case in "Reflections on a Comparative Frontier History" (see Bolton). I must insist, however, that the use of the "frontier" concept in both areas is problematical, since it supposes the idea of an empty land.

societies went through periods of peaceful interaction, cultural accommodation, and mutual adjustment, in the long run these indigenous peoples were eventually driven from their lands, both by high and low intensity wars, infectious diseases, ecological shifts, government policies, and by more or less peaceful expansion of settlers and squatters called the "taking of the land." This process/expression was clearly gendered (see Romaine 238). The progression of expansion pushed indigenous populations further into the backcountry. Therefore, I suggest that the practice of white-indigenous interaction and subsequent white settlement is virtually identical with simultaneous processes of invasion and displacement of indigenous populations. These processes of interaction were always and inevitably gendered in the sense that the social hierarchy, which allowed for the submission of the colonial Other, always referred to gender as a hierarchical stratum defining the place of humans on the great chain of being of the seventeenth century or the nested hierarchy of the eighteenth century (see Marks 6).

3 One has to bear in mind the differences as well: 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 on the height of "Enlightenment" (see Gascoigne). 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. This historical specificity helps to explain why it was possible that both military men and convicts had had some previous knowledge about indigenous peoples without ever having actually seen Aboriginals before their ships anchored in Port Jackson. British soldiers and officers had been fighting in the French and Indian Wars of North America as well as during the American Revolution, and in both colonial conflicts, Native American troops had played a major part, both as allies and as enemies of the British troops.

2. Dispositive/Discourse

4 Any policy of genocide, extermination, colonialism, or expansion rests on two pillars. It needs agents and perpetrators who serve as carriers of this 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 power in the repertoire of colonialism and imperialism. The foci of this essay are not actual acts of killing, dispossession, dispersal, or cultural oppression of indigenous populations. I will not deal with the way British colonials, bureaucrats, officers, and settlers treated Native Americans and

Australian Aboriginals. Instead, I focus on the discourses of primitivism and exclusion that abounded in the *Anglosphere* after 1788. These discourses are part of a greater dispositive of colonialism, which prevailed before the impact of scientific racism in the 1860s.

5 Michel Foucault developed a methodology of the analysis of power. In his methodology he invokes five precautionary measures that ought to be observed in any history of power relations. One precaution is to conceive of power as a strategy without a strategist, as unintentional, meaning that there is no global strategy that allows for the manipulation of discourses, introduces practises, or founds institutions. Another precondition is to conceive of power as having no center. The "ruling class" or "international capitalism" are not external to power, but they, too, are subject to that power. Power is not something that one group possesses and other groups do not. Power has to be understood as permeating all institutions, discourses, and practises. The third axiom of the analysis of power is to study it as rising from below, from the smallest elements and mechanisms, up to the more general forms of domination. The fourth precaution is to understand power as something that is present in the body of subjects, although differing in distributions and quantities. The fifth and final precaution posits not to analyze power from the perspective of ideology because the microtechniques are more and less than formalized ideologies, effective instruments for the collection and generation of knowledge, methods of observations, techniques of recording, procedures of investigation and retrieval of information. They are, in fact, apparati of verification (see Foucault, *Faut Défendre* 25-30; Foucault, *Discipline* 174).

6 In my analysis I want to take Foucault's precautions seriously and I will therefore only speak of a small part of that dispositive of colonialism, i.e. the discourses. We conceive of dispositives as conditions for the acceptance of certain knowledge. The very fact that this colonialist knowledge was accepted as "self-evident" or self-understood is an effect of a dispositive that tended to naturalize power relations. Often early travelers, observers, ethnographers, and amateur anthropologists provided the arguments for a classification of human groups and their subsequent subjection to a hierarchy of qualities. Charles Darwin's mentor John Stevens Henslow wrote 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 [sic], 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. (Henslow 115)

7 Observation was not only a way of reifying the objects of the visible world, it was also a way of giving the colonial gaze the character of scientific truth. Discourse and genocide are

connected. Discursive formations do not suppress or mystify social relations but rather establish them, by defining what is real and true (see Cloud). 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 kidnapping of children. General Jeffery Amherst, commander-in-chief of the British forces in North America, expressed that wish very clearly, when he wrote in 1763: "I wish there was not an Indian Settlement within a thousand miles of our Country, for they are only fit to live with the Inhabitants of the woods: (i.e., *wild beasts*), being more allied to the *Brute* than the *human* Creation" (Parkman 647). Amherst did not only wish the extermination of the Indians, he acted accordingly and ordered all Native Americans who participated in the uprising against British colonial forces to be put to death. He also saw to it that Native Americans who participated in an uprising against the British in 1763/64 were contaminated with the smallpox virus and died in the thousands (see Amherst; Fenn).Before acts of violence and dispossession could be committed, perpetrators and silent witnesses had to agree on a taxonomy of primitivism that would allow viewing Native Americans and Aboriginals as somewhat less than equal, somewhat less than civilized and somewhat less than human. I argue that the indigene best fits Giorgio Agamben's description of the *homo sacer*, a human being that could not be ritually offered, but whom one could kill without incurring the penalty of murder and who is defined by the possession of his bare life (see Agamben). I am aware of the limitations of this approach because it voluntarily blocks out the multiple forms of interaction, mutual dependency, economic cooperation, and intermarriage of white and indigenous populations (see Attwood and Forster 22-23).[2] The crucial question is, nevertheless, how killings and dispossession of the Native Americans and Aboriginals would have been possible, had it not relied on abjection and consequent violence during a large part of European-Aboriginal interaction. What I want to suggest is a discourse on assumed qualities of Aboriginal populations, in the language of the time, the "character" of the indigene that transcended the narrow space of the tiny colony in Sydney because it was common knowledge about the "Savage" in the Anglosphere at the time (see Elbourne 29-33). In order to make my argument, I used primary sources of white people that actually went to Australia, saw indigenous people with their own eyes, and came to conclusions about the "character" of "Savages." The evaluation of the "Savage" however, although developed through first hand observation and interaction, was not inscribed on a *tabula rasa* but was based on an episteme of colonial knowledge about what was to be expected on the borders of

[2] Unfortunately, Attwood and Foster do not give a correct quotation for Rowse's statement. As for the problems inherent in both Lemkin's and the United Nations' definition see Hinton.

the civilized world.

3. Enlightenment

8 This episteme of colonial knowledge antedates modern forms of knowledge as defined in Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things*. Eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century knowledge was not yet fragmented in the way that modern science is. Eighteenth-century knowledge was organized as different forms of a "homogeneous science of order" with knowledge arranged in two-dimensional tables of identities and varieties.[3] At the end of the eighteenth century an epistemological transition occurred. With the expansion of European powers into the remotest corner of the world, the body became the focus of new technologies of power that tried

> a) to subject the individual body to a reign of discipline, and
> b) to focus on the population as a whole, as bio-mass. This technology witnessed the birth of racism at the end of the eighteenth century, a racism that was not defined by scientific definitions of "race" as in the case of the post-Darwinian biology, but a racism that aimed at the regulation of the bodies as it claims the right to let live and let die. Racism, thus defined, fragments the biological field and constitutes a method by which to differentiate groups within the bio-mass of the population: "Race, racism is the acceptance of killing in a normalizing society. Wherever you find a normalizing society, wherever you find a power that is primarily a bio-power, racism is the necessary condition for the killing of another person, to be able to kill another person" (Foucault "Leben machen", 18; see Magiros and Bernauer).

9 At about the same time, the foundations for a second epistemological shift were laid, i.e. the replacement of the two-dimensional arrangement of knowledge as "identities versus differences," conveyed through a system of classification of visible objects, by " an area made up of organic structures " (Foucault, *Order* 218). Whereas the "character" of things and people, defined as the essential "nature," had hitherto been determined by analyzing the spatial form (pheneticism), the emerging science of biology broke with the fundamental visibility of classical natural history. It posited organic structure as the fundamental means of determining character, instead.[4] This epistemological shift in the life sciences, based on the idea of functions of organs and evolution, only broke through with Georges Cuvier and Charles Darwin and its impact in quotidian discourses was felt no sooner than in the 1860s.[5] My remarks are therefore limited to the period between 1788 and the 1850s, dubbed the

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[3] Other than in the modern age, in which knowledge becomes a "volume of space open in three dimensions," at the end of the eighteenth century knowledge is still arranged two-dimensionally in tables (Foucault, "Leben machen" 347).

[4] Jean-Baptist Lamarck, one of the key players in this new field, however, continued to insist on the notion of character as representation of place of a species in a table of identities and differences (see Ereshefsky 60-65; 199-237).

[5] For the later periods see Wolfe.

"romantic Age" by Iain McCalman, the period before the onslaught of Darwin's theories as summed up in the *Origin of Species* (1859) (see McCalman; Butcher). I shall not address the second half of the nineteenth century, which witnessed the emergence of a new scientific racism that relied on biological explanations for human differences. This part of the story is well researched for Europe and North America and it is safe to claim that scientific racism held much of Europe, North America and Australia in its sway until the middle of the twentieth century (see Finzsch, "Wissenschaftlicher Rassismus"; Allen; Baker; Barkan). It should, however, not dilute the importance of that earlier thread of racial thinking, which was instrumental in setting up colonialism in its early stages.

4. Axes of Classification

10 What does this have to do with the history of genocide within American and Australian colonialisms? In order to understand the mind-set of white people, discoverers and settlers, military officers and officials that came in contact with the indigene, one has to ask the sources about the categories used in describing the indigenous objects of white scrutiny. Two basic models of description had been developed during the seventeenth century, the Ignoble or Primitive Savage and the Noble Savage. Without going into detail, I would decidedly argue that the concept of the Noble Savage, although widely used in anti-feudalist critique during the eighteenth century, had been discarded by the end of the eighteenth century and was only resuscitated after Indigenous populations, in both America and Australia, ceased to constitute a threat to colonial societies.[6] The image of the Primitive Savage, on the other hand, continued to be used throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a justification for chattel slavery, colonial domination, and economic exploitation.[7] The assessment as "Savage" was largely based on observation, i.e. the European gaze on 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," a term

[6] James Cook kept switching uneasily between both stereotypes, when he wrote in 1770: "They may appear to some to be the most wretched people upon Earth, but in reality they are far 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 Tranquillity [sic!] which is not disturb'd by the Inequality of Condition." (Cook, Journals, vol. 1, 399 quoted in Hughes, 54) I cannot give all the references to the genealogy of the Noble Savage. It may suffice to refer my readers to the following books: Alexander; Cro; Ellingson; Fairchild; LeBlanc; Woolmington.

[7] Literature on the image of the "ignoble savage" is less abundant. See Barnett; Meek. In order to avoid lengthy quotes from verbose eighteenth-century sources, I "outsourced" my sources into an online-text. These sources can be accessed under Norbert Finzsch, Genocidal Discourses: A Selection of Texts Pertaining to 18th- and Early 19th-Century Racisms, http://www.uni-koeln.de/phil-fak/histsem/anglo/html_2001/Finzsch/genocide.xls, March 11, 2005.

borrowed from Laura Mulvey, denoting as male gaze that cannot be returned by the object of inspection, thus perpetuating sexual (and racial) inequality by forcing the viewer to identify with and adopt a perspective which objectifies and dehumanizes women/indigenous people (see Mulvey; *Schroeder*). In Walter Johnson's book *Soul by Soul* the power of the male white gaze over black female bodies is palpable in extreme ways, since it is clear that this gaze is backed up by the power to buy and "take" the body of the slave and since the gaze is discursified in the writing about this gaze (see Johnson).

11 Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713), described the virtuous man as a "spectator," devoted to "the [disinterested] very survey and contemplation" of beauty in manners and morals (Shaftesbury, vol. 2, 45). His conception of beauty resonates his conception of virtue. Indeed, Shaftesbury posits that proper taste in morals and proper taste in art turn out to be much the same thing, and that this is because the beautiful and the good are identical. This concept of καλοκαγαθηα originated with Plato, exerted great influence during the Middle Ages; it was revived by Shaftesbury and the German Christoph Martin Wieland (see Norton 116-120; Guyer 439-40). Beauty meant virtue and hideousness meant sin (see Norton 176). For the European gaze at the indigenous body this implied that inner morality and ethics of the indigene could be measured by its external beauty or ugliness, by shapes of limbs, wooliness of hair, and complexion. In his seminal work on the history of European racism, George L. Mosse gave a very simple, but useful definition. Speaking about the eighteenth-century foundations of racism, he delineated racism as a "visual ideology based upon stereotypes" (Mosse xii). At the heart of racism, according to Mosse, lay a visual ideology based on observed stereotypes, meaning that the appearance, the looks of indigenous peoples would carry a specific meaning. In the history of pre-scientific racisms, aesthetics played a crucial role, since it relied on the visible only. Mosse also left no doubt that visual ideology ultimately led to the mass killings of Jews in the twentieth century (see Hinton).

12 In the eighteenth century, complexion meant more than just skin color. It included temperament and disposition, since they, too, were deriving from climate and interaction of the climate with bodily humors. Complexion also entailed moral judgments, especially after 1770, when the old distinction between Christians and Pagans gave way to aestheticised judgments based on skin color (see Wheeler). Intimately connected with this aesthetic theory was a theory on the origin of humanity and its speech abilities. Scottish Enlightenment philosophers, going back to Hugo Grotius and Samuel von Pufendorf, developed a taxonomy of cultures that imagined a process of civilization, consisting of four stages (see Barnard; Hont). The lowest stage was marked by an economy based on hunting, followed by the next

step of evolution, an economy of herding. Then came cultivation, defined as labor on the land on a fixed residence, and the final and highest stage was industry and commerce, only lately achieved by the members of European nations. Carl Linnaeus had invented a species that he called "Orangutan," which in his definition had included imaginary cave people, chimpanzees, and the Asian Orangutan. Based on Linnaeus, Edward Long claimed that Africans were closer to primates than to humans and that Africans were in fact interbreeding with apes. Thus, Africans and Europeans belonged to different species (see Long). At about the same time, the eccentric James Burnett, Lord Monboddo, published two works that flatly contradicted Long, in so far as Monboddo stated that apes could be taught to speak, since humans had evolved from apes. Without going into the details of that controversy, what I have said so far may suffice to explain why the question of language and speech capability was paramount for a definition of humanity or barbarism (see Monboddo 1776; Monboddo 2001). I therefore included speech acts about the linguistic abilities of the "observed" Aboriginals in my analysis.

13 By looking at the indigenous body and listening to indigenous speech, it was thus possible for the European observer to place this body in a matrix of progress and civilization, morality and ethics, growth or extinction. The ethnographic text that was the result of this observation, and discourse had the same effect as a peephole for the gaze of a male observer: It fixed the gaze and transformed it into a tool of power. This thinking was not biological racism in the sense that it attributed internal characteristics to unchangeable races, but it was a culturalist racism because what "distinguished the different races was culture not biology" (Gascoigne 149). Racial variation was attributed to environmental rather than biological factors (see Gascoigne 150). But this also meant that the "savage environment" (geology, botany, climate, society and family) had to be described and evaluated much more rigorously than for the later theories of scientific racism, which 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" (Certeau xxv).

14 The allegory of America, the continent depicted as a nude woman in many pictorial representations, exposed for the European gaze in books and pamphlets since Johannes Stradanus, "draws on a long tradition of male travel as an erotics of ravishment" (McClintock 22). The image of the nude America has been so pervasive that even in seventeenth-century Dutch Bibles, America is shown as demi-nude woman (see Visscher; Vrient). This European gaze is not only a yard stick for the establishment of 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" (Montrose 178). This gaze interprets nudity as a sign of low evolutionary status and as a promise of effortless access at the same time. 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 (Zamora 157). European consciousness, in both America and Australia, is encoded as masculine. In Stradanus' book Vespucci discovers an uncovered woman; America is a male "voyeur's paradise" (Mason 171). Territorial conquest equals possession of the abstract and literal female body and rape often follows gaze. What does the "persistent gendering" (McClintock 24) of imperial conquest have to do with America's and Australia's discoveries and settlement? Gender is a way of portraying "relationships of power" (Scott 42). Woman, as allegory and as subject, has no name, no identity, no history of any real value before man arrives and gives her a name and her life — for his purpose and his possession.

Fig. 1.: Stradanus America

5. "Hideousness" and Gender

15 In Stradanus' picture, there is one other very important element of difference, albeit in the background. There is a cannibal meal going on in the center background. This reference to America as a continent of female cannibals lays bare "the mark of unregenerate savagery" (Hulme 3). America is, according to Anne McClintock, "simultaneously naked and passive and riotously violent andcannibalistic," a combination that requires European intervention in order to restore male mastery (27). America and Australia, as the ultimate opposites of the European way of life and the source of male anxiety, must be subjugated/penetrated (see McClintock 26-27). Thus, it becomes understandable that a lot of the American as well as Australian sources are obsessed with the question whether indigenous populations were indeed cannibals or not.

16 A second concept is crucial for the understanding of both American and Australian colonial expansionism: the idea that the conquered continent was virtually uninhabited and had no owner, a concept expressed in the Australian context as terra nullius. Over time, the colonialists systematically downplayed the number of Indians and Aboriginals, thereby echoing Cook's description of the land as thinly populated, and increasingly conceived of indigenous peoples as a "dying race," as they also did in North America (see Kennedy; Dippie; Lyman). The question of the indigenes' right to their lands thus became salient in the early years of colonization and the ensuing process of taking over the lands formerly possessed by Aboriginals and Amerindians. Legal arguments centered on the issue of settlement versus conquest. Settlement of Australia rested on the premise 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, they forced Amerindians to give up the titles to their lands through military conquest and through fraudulent sales. In the Australian case, Aboriginals were defined as occupants — not owners — of the land. In 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. Both cases share the notion that white settlers are entitled to indigenous lands because the original owners/occupants did not use it, but remained in a state of migrants. I argue that even before the legal concept of terra nullius was legally formalized in Attorney-General v. Brown (1847), colonials had virtually adopted this legal doctrine from 1788 on, as it had been previously laid out in both international law and Blackstone's commentaries to the Common Law (see Vattell §§207-210; Blackstone vol. 11, 104).

17 I reconstructed a matrix of fifteen categories of racial observations from a number of sources dealing with the Australian indigenous populations (see Gascoigne; Mosse; English and Van Toorn). 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. It entailed extensive research on Native American History. The matrix constitutes a system of references that follows the logic of eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries "observations" of indigenous peoples. They presuppose a set of types of "institutions" including family, law, religion, political system, and economy, which do not fit the ways in which Indigenous communities within nation states dominated by settler populations structured their societies.[8] In this matrix of observations I inserted remarks about the fields of religion/spirituality, work, the imagery of bodies, observations on the level of "civilization," descriptions of clothes, evaluations of gender and sexual relations among the indigenes, glimpses at the "morality" and "ethics" of Aboriginals, portrayals of their relationship to property and food, comments about their language and their demography, and conclusions about their houses, weapons, alleged cannibalism, and diseases. In short, I tried to reduplicate exactly the same types of statements as the ones that had been made by the contemporary observers at the time under consideration. This "happy positivism" (Foucault, *L'Ordre* 72) as displayed in Foucault's *L'Ordre du Discours* serves the purpose of describing the discourses and their basic units, the enunciations. Rather than remaining in the field of Foucauldian archeology, I shall also develop a crude genealogy by attempting to reconstruct the origins and development of the discourse of pre-scientific racism by showing its rootedness in a field of forces. This coarse genealogy displays two stages, one in the period of 1788-1800, with a rupture at the very end of the eighteenth century. The earlier phase supports an almost "neutral" image of the indigene, whereas the later period (1800-1860) is marked by contemptuous and continuing

[8] There is something singular in the Conduct of these Evites, for if ever they deign to come near You, to take a Present, they appear as coy, shy, and timorous, as a Maid on her Wedding Night […] but when they are, as they think out of your Reach, they hollow and chatter to You, Frisk, Flirt, and play a hundred wanton Pranks, equally as significant as the Solicitations of a Covent-Garden Strumpet. […] indeed, if it were not for the nauseous, greasy, grimy appearance of these naked Damsels, one might be said to be in a state of Tantalism, whenever they vouchsafe to permit US to come near them; but what with stinking Fish-Oil, with which they seem to besmear their Bodies, & this mixed with the Soot which is collected on their Skins from continually setting over the Fires, and then in addition to these sweet Odours, the constant Appearance of the excrementitious Matters of the Nose which is collected on the upper pouting Lip, in rich Clusters of dry Bubbles, and is kept up by fresh Drippings; I say, from all these personal Graces & Embellishments, every Inclination for an Affair of Gallantry, as well as every Idea of fond endearing Intercourse, which the Nakedness of these Damsels might excite one to, is banished. And I can assure You, there is in some of them a Proportion, a Softness, a roundness, and Plumpness in their Limbs & Bodies, were they but cleanly, that would excite tender & amorous Sensations, even in the frigid Breast of a Philosopher" (Worgan 47-8). Texts like the one quoted are also found in North American texts dealing with native American women (see Finzsch, "Meriwhether").

attacks on aboriginal individuals and cultures.

18 Out of the fifteen types of enunciations, it turns out that observations of the "looks" and the body types of the indigenes are among the most prevailing. Here, early descriptions that seem almost to be purely descriptive and resonate the image of the Noble Savage are replaced by later utterances that reinforce the image of abject hideousness (see Dampier; Bradley 87; Collins 2, 180). Equally dense is the discourse about "civilization" of aboriginal culture. As in the case of physical appearance, observations shift from the earlier image of the Noble Savage to that of utter abjection (see Cook 92; Tench 59, 62, 252-253, 257-258; Grant 158, 167-170).

19 The same can be shown for the discursive field of aboriginal gender relations: Whereas the buccaneer Dampier in 1691 flatly admits to his ignorance about how marriage is organized among aboriginal peoples, Watkin Tench in 1789, praised as "extraordinary" by his editor Tim Flannery, goes into lengthy details about the cruelty of indigenous men against their wives, a pattern to be reproduced over and over again in the following forty years (see Tench 161-162, 264). The discourse on gender is accompanied by intensive discussions about clothing and nudity. Again, a shift seems to be apparent, as early sources comment on the lack of clothes with a passing remark, whereas enunciations after 1800 are performed with rhetorical means that resonate with the eroticized hints of boudoir novels (see Dampier; Cook 84; Worgan 2, 6, 18; Sturt). In the field of ethics and morality, enunciations are generally less frequent. The only thing that is repeated over and over again is the perception of indigenous people as deceitful thieves, a consequence of the evident cultural differences in relation to personal property, as experienced by numerous Europeans and Indigenous (see Sturt).

6. Labor

20 Another discursive field is that of work. According to the mentioned theory of the four stages, the kind of work performed by a group determined its evolutionary stage. Hunter/gatherers had remained in a lower state of development than people working the land and constituted little more than human animals. William Robertson's influential *History of America* (1777) had reinforced the notion that North American Indians were examples of arrested development because of their supposed lack of agriculture. This argument was very strong throughout the beginning of the nineteenth century and was consequently taken up and refined by the French liberal Charles Dunoyer in 1825 (see Dunoyer 146-147). 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 (see Greeley). In the early sources

on Aboriginals this argument figures prominently and is connected with the apparent lack of fixed habitations (see Darwin 462, 469).

7. Civilization and government

21 General evaluations of indigenous civilization and government are closely connected to statements about the stages of development in relation to the forms of labor performed. The argument goes as follows: since Aboriginal societies have not evolved beyond the stage of hunters and gatherers, there is no government in the form of hereditary chiefs or elders. By the same reasoning, the low state of civilization reflects the animal-like state of existence and vice versa. The following excerpt sums up this assertion quite nicely since it explicitly compares the Aboriginals 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. (Cunningham vol. 2, 46-47, 49-50)

8. Morals/Ethics

22 These arguments are intimately linked to other discursive fields, like morals/ethics, gender relations and sexuality, about which I shall speak next. In the field of morals and ethics, a certain trajectory of the "noble savage" is still tangible, fitting the genealogical division of an older and a younger discourse (see Cook, *General Descriptions* 86). However, most of the time, Aboriginals are portrayed as fickle, treacherous and as thieves (see Sturt).

9. Sexuality and Gender Relations

23 People who allegedly had such low regard for honesty and decorum were also supposed to have very low morals when it came to marital affairs. In general, gender and marriage relations among the indigenes were perceived as violent domination of the men over the women. This judgment is completed by Aboriginal sexual deviance, as exemplified by the alleged exchange of women, bordering on prostitution. The following quote is a

representative example.

> One of the surest marks of the low position of the Australian savage in the scale of the human species, is the treatment of their women. The men walk along with a proud and majestic air; behind them, crouching like slaves, and bearing heavy burdens on their backs, with their little ones stride on their shoulders, comes [sic!] the despised and degraded women. They are the drudges in all heavy work; and after their lords have finished the repast which the women have prepared for them, these despised creatures contentedly sit at a distance, and gather up the bones and fragments, which the men throw to them across their shoulders, just as we should throw meat to a dog. (Angas 82-83)

Primitivist discourses have cast Aboriginal women as rampantly sexual and uninhibited in their desires, thereby following the example of the colonialist thread in other areas of the world. In North America, African American women were portrayed as voluptuous "jezebels" and Native American women as "easy squaws." This ideological tradition, although stemming from the earliest days of the European colonial project and applied previously both to Native American women and African slave women, persisted in Australia throughout the nineteenth century and was still in force in the twentieth century (see Lake 382).

24 The assessment of the Aboriginals as Savages was to a large extent based on the perceived treatment of indigenous women. At the same time, gender relations of the male colonialists in relation to Aboriginal women were shaped by the colonial gaze and a desire for indigenous women who 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 substantial parts of enlightenment theory construed European women as Savages (see Rendall 7-32). Quite often, when Australian sources raise the problem of Aboriginal gender relations, there is a tone of tacit complicity and ironic complacency. On the one hand, Aboriginal bodies must not be the object of desire because of their status as abject, on the other hand, a male-writer-to-male-reader understanding is conveyed that the white male colonialist could "possess" the indigenous women if he wanted because of her low morals and the promiscuity rampant in indigenous society.

25 The fixed male gaze on Aboriginal bodies and its subsequent ossification in written texts is the single most reifying element in the construction of the ignoble savage. Its impact is reinforced by the notion of cannibalism. Again, the chronological structure seems to be that of a split between an older generation of enunciations that flatly deny the existence of cannibalism among the Aboriginals to a more recent set of speech acts implying that anthropophagy was rampant among them (see Bradley 142; Cunningham vol. 2, 15, 36-37; Abler). It is only fitting then that these people lack a proper language, since they were devoid

of humanity: Statements like "[…] 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 (see Fidlon and Ryan, 58; Grant 157).

10. Conclusion

26 In summing up, I suggest that Australian sources of the late Enlightenment and Romantic period, written between 1788 and 1850, do portray Indigenous Australian populations as nonreligious, indolent and idle, hideous and uncivilized cannibals. The men are portrayed as less repulsive than the women, who are constantly under the oppressive power of their men. On the other hand, promiscuity and loose morals on the side of women seemed to demand a firm hand of the men over the women. Aboriginals represented in these sources do not own the land because they do not till it, they disrespect property rights and live as nomadic hunter/gatherers without fixed houses and useful implements. Their number was thought to be rapidly decreasing, due to their cultural backwardness. Their lack of a proper language with a developed vocabulary made them less than human, almost on one level with primates. If one takes these discursive entities together, there evolves an image of a "creature" that is utterly rejected and excluded from humanity. In the introduction to *Bodies that Matter* Judith Butler describes the constitutive other, the abject as "those 'unlivable' and 'uninhabitable' zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the 'unlivable' is required to circumscribe the defining limit of the subject's domain" (3). This position of abjection is analyzed in Giorgio Agamben's *Homo Sacer*, which 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. Foucault's theory of bio-power described how knowledge/power institutionalizes some invented ideal body, which individuals then accept and begin to reproduce in their actions and everyday lives (see Foucault, "Body/Power"). Bio-power was also exemplified by the prison structure, the disciplining effects of schools, factories, armies, and mental institutions that paved the way for the regulation of populations. Bio-power constitutes a form of power/knowledge that is inscribed on bodies and that becomes visible on the body, especially through a panoptic gaze. Groups and individuals that remain outside of the desired effects of bio-power are "unlivable," threatened to be defined as unworthy of life. Both Agamben and Foucault did not reflect the possibility to perceive the Indigenous as *Homines Sacri*, the abject outlaws, human beings that can be legally killed because they are not part of civilization. In premodern western society, early forms of bio-power, as discussed

in my paper, allowed for the exclusion of Indigenous peoples in the absence of a racist discourse based on biology. Thus, these discourses formed the necessary, but not sufficient conditions for two centuries of dispossession, discrimination, dissolution and genocide of Indigenous societies in North America and Australia.

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