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# SCOTTISH MEDICAL ETHNOGRAPHY: COLONIAL TRAVEL, STADIAL THEORY AND THE NATURAL HISTORY OF RACE, c.1770–1805\*

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*This paper will present a comparative analysis of the ethnographic writings of three colonial travellers trained in medicine at the University of Edinburgh: William Anderson (1750–78), Archibald Menzies (1754–1842) and Robert Brown (1773–1858). Each travelled widely beyond Scotland, enabling them to make a series of observations of non-European peoples in a wide variety of colonial contexts. William Anderson, Archibald Menzies and Robert Brown in particular travelled extensively in the Pacific with (respectively) James Cook on his second and third voyages (1771–8), with George Vancouver (1791–5) and with Matthew Flinders (1801–3). Together, their surviving writings from these momentous expeditions illustrate a growing interest in natural-historical explanations for diversity among human populations. Race emerged as a key concept in this quest, but it remained entangled with assumptions about the stadial historical progress or “civilization” of humanity. A comparative examination of their ethnographic writings thus presents a unique opportunity to study the complex interplay between concepts of race, savagery and civilization in the varied colonial contexts of the Scottish Enlightenment.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Between 1772 and 1801, the Royal Navy sponsored four monumental voyages of exploration into the Pacific Ocean. These were the voyages of Captain James Cook aboard HMS *Resolution* between 1772 and 1775, and his return voyage aboard the *Resolution* and *Discovery* from 1776 to 1779; Captain George Vancouver's expedition aboard the *Discovery* and *Chatham* from 1791 to 1795; and finally Captain Matthew Flinders's circumnavigation of Australia aboard the *Investigator* between 1801 and 1803. These voyages resulted in the publication of official journals that presented each expedition and their leaders as forgers of new frontiers in natural-historical and ethnographic knowledge in regions hitherto largely unknown to Europeans. In each case also, the official journals cemented a shared legacy that took shape around the humane advancement of knowledge. While this much is common knowledge, it has curiously been little remarked that the natural-history credentials of all four of these voyages rested very largely on the labours of three Scotsmen who shared a remarkably similar educational background. William Anderson (1750–78), who accompanied Cook on the *Resolution* in 1772 and again in 1776; Archibald Menzies (1754–1842), who travelled with Vancouver; and Robert Brown (1773–1858), who sailed with Flinders, were all trained in medicine as a branch of natural history at the University of Edinburgh. Each of them was also the author of his own journals and notes from their respective expeditions that also remained unpublished in their lifetimes. In this paper, I will conduct the first comparative study of the ethnographic observations contained in these writings. Together, they offer us a unique window onto the significance of colonial contexts in the formation and circulation of Scottish Enlightenment concepts of human diversity.

Scholarship on the Scottish Enlightenment has rightly drawn attention to the eager anticipation of its leading writers and thinkers of a world drawn together as never before by ties of global trade, travel and communication.<sup>1</sup> The implication of this anticipation was that the world itself was rapidly changing as the dynamism of trade and more efficient exploitation of nature gave rise to “civil” societies in Britain and Europe, drawing distant peoples and nations around the world into closer contact, softening ancient prejudices and polishing manners on a global scale.<sup>2</sup> Though many of Scotland's leading Enlightenment

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<sup>1</sup> Larry Wolff, “Discovering Cultural Perspective: The Intellectual History of Anthropological Thought in the Enlightenment,” in Larry Wolff and Marco Cipolloni, eds., *The Anthropology of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, 2007), 3–34; John G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 2, *Narratives of Civil Government* (Cambridge, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> Fania Oz-Salzberger, “Civil Society in the Scottish Enlightenment,” in Sudipta Kabiraj and Sunil Khilnani, eds., *Civil Society: History and Possibilities* (Cambridge, 2001), 58–83.

intellectuals were critical of or at least ambivalent about empire and colonization, the historian William Robertson (1721–93) spoke for some in arguing that these globalizing trends had delivered to the nations of “Europe” a “visible ascendant.”<sup>3</sup> What he meant by this was not only that Europeans were at the forefront of global trade and communication, but also that they had been able to marshal forms of knowledge that appeared to open to them new vistas of historical and social analysis and explanation.<sup>4</sup> At the heart of this intellectual framework was a distinctly Scottish pattern of thought, now regularly described as stadial theory. Stadial thought was built on the assumption that humans were universally endowed with the same creative and intellectual capacities that drove progress through the major stages of social development.<sup>5</sup> While humanity was universal, it was also internally graduated into more or less historically developed societies.<sup>6</sup> Although scholarship on the Scottish Enlightenment has long emphasized the global significance of stadial theory, a building body of work has charted its imbrication with European colonization.<sup>7</sup> Not only did intellectuals within Scotland draw on the testimony of colonial travellers in formulating stadial ideas, as an intellectual framework it also provided a vital tool enabling travellers in a variety of

<sup>3</sup> William Robertson, *An Historical Disquisition Concerning the Knowledge which the Ancients had of India* (London, 1791), 167; S. J. Brown, “William Robertson, Early Orientalism, and the *Historical Disquisition* on India of 1791,” *Scottish Historical Review* 88/2 (2009), 289–312.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Wood, “The Natural History of Man in the Scottish Enlightenment,” *History of Science* 28/1 (1990), 89–123.

<sup>5</sup> The key stages included, “savage” hunting, “barbarous” pastoralism, settled agricultural villages, and commercial “civilisation.” See, for example, Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of Commercial Society in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, 2013); Silvia Sebastiani, “Barbarism and Republicanism,” in James A. Harris and Aaron Garrett, eds., *Oxford History of Scottish Philosophy: The Scottish Enlightenment* (Oxford, 2015), 323–60. Aaron Garrett, “Anthropology: The ‘Original’ of Human Nature,” in A. Broadie, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 2003), 79–93; 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, 1987), 253–76.

<sup>6</sup> Silvia Sebastiani, “National Characters and Race: A Scottish Enlightenment Debate,” in Thomas Ahnert and Susan Manning, eds., *Character, Self, and Sociability in the Scottish Enlightenment* (New York, 2011), 187–205.

<sup>7</sup> Silvia Sebastiani, *The Scottish Enlightenment: Race, Progress, and the Limits of Progress* (New York, 2013); Neil Hargraves, “Beyond the Savage Character: Mexicans, Peruvians and the ‘Imperfectly Civilised’ in William Robertson’s History of America,” in Wolff and Cipolloni, *The Anthropology of the Enlightenment*, 103–18, at 104–5, 108; Frederick Whelan, *Enlightenment Political Thought and Non-Western Societies* (New York), 2009.

locations to interpret the peoples before them.<sup>8</sup> In the last decades of the eighteenth century, stadial assumptions became entwined with other accounts of human diversity, as notions of race and human variety began to predominate.<sup>9</sup>

Stadial assumptions enabled Scottish moral philosophers and historians to interpret descriptions of the Indigenous peoples of Africa, the Americas and especially Australia as exemplifying the supposed historical origins of society.<sup>10</sup> Within the context of stadial thought, the evident diversity among humanity as a whole could be explained as a function of the universal process of development each society undergoes at rates that varied with the environmental and historical circumstances in which a people found themselves, instead of having reference to well-established differentiations between peoples on the basis of their blood.<sup>11</sup> The precise causes and effects of this progress remained subjects of debate. Baron de Montesquieu's (1689–1755) argument that climatic conditions (the heat of the sun, the coldness of winter or the humidity of the air) conditioned the individual and collective capacities of human beings, explaining their activity or lethargy, their vices and their virtues, was influential across Europe.<sup>12</sup> What remained ambiguous were the exact interactions between climatic and moral factors, as well as the precise causes and effects that climate and sun, heat and cold, were thought to exert on human societies.<sup>13</sup> Just as unclear were the effects that these factors had on the human frame itself, embodied in the physical and possibly anatomical differences between human populations, traceable not only in the supposed differences of blood, but in the skin color, hair, facial characteristics, skull morphology and physical stature among “human varieties.”<sup>14</sup> In Scotland in particular, speculations about climatic influences allowed intellectuals to blend

<sup>8</sup> C. Marouby, “Adam Smith and the Anthropology of Enlightenment: The ‘Ethnographic’ Sources of Economic Progress,” in Wolff and Cipolloni, *The Anthropology of the Enlightenment*, 85–102.

<sup>9</sup> Bruce Buchan and Linda Andersson Burnett, “Knowing Savagery: Australia and the Anatomy of Race,” *History of the Human Sciences* 32/4 (2019); John Gascoigne, *Encountering the Pacific in the Age of Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 2014), 285–90; Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia, 2000), 179–80.

<sup>10</sup> Gascoigne, *Encountering the Pacific*, 288.

<sup>11</sup> Jean-Frédéric Schaub, *Pour une histoire politique de la racie* (Paris, 2015), 61, 82.

<sup>12</sup> Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws* (1748), ed. Anne M. Cohler, Basia Carolyn Miller and Harold Samuel Stone (Cambridge, 1989), Book 14, chaps. 1–15, 231–45; Sebastiani, *The Scottish Enlightenment*, 23–44.

<sup>13</sup> Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race*, 182–3.

<sup>14</sup> Felicity Nussbaum, *The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race, and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2003), 136–9.

stadial assumptions about universal humanity with environmental explanations of human variety: a blending also embodied in the reciprocity between the teaching of medicine and of moral philosophy at the University of Edinburgh. In the second half of the eighteenth century, then, Scottish intellectuals and colonial travellers were able to draw on two powerful means for explaining human diversity: stadial theory with its emphasis on historical differences between societies, and ideas of race and variety which relied on physical distinctions between peoples and nations derived from climatic and environmental circumstances. Attention has rightly been given to the interplay of these orientations in the thought and writings of intellectuals who never left Scotland or Europe.<sup>15</sup> Comparatively little attention, however, has been given to their students who struggled to adapt those ideas in diverse global contexts and complex colonial encounters.<sup>16</sup> Rarer still has been sustained study of a surprisingly large group of travelling natural historians sharing an educational background in medicine at the University of Edinburgh. Between the 1770s and early 1800s, members of this group produced a wide range of ethnographic reflections in diverse colonial contexts, from Southern Africa to South East Asia, Australia, India and the Caribbean.<sup>17</sup>

In this paper, I focus on three members of this group who each exemplified the absorption and the colonial application of stadial and racial modes of analysis across this period. It is not the case that race replaced stadial thinking, but that the two forms of analysis remained adaptable and complementary in their writings. Throughout most of the eighteenth century, the term “race” was used to denote common origin or membership of nations or societies, and did not always imply a more or less fixed position in a hierarchy of races until near century’s end.<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, as other scholars have noted, the application of

<sup>15</sup> László Kontler, “Mankind and Its Histories: William Robertson, Georg Forster, and a Late Eighteenth-Century German Debate,” *Intellectual History Review* 23/3 (2013), 411–29 ; Bronwen Douglas, “Philosophers, Naturalists and Antipodean Encounters, 1748–1803,” *Intellectual History Review* 23/3 (2013), 387–409.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Suman Seth, *Difference and Disease: Medicine, Race and the Eighteenth-Century British Empire* (Cambridge, 2018), pp. 167–206; Bronwen Douglas, “Seaborne Ethnography and the Natural History of Man,” *Journal of Pacific History* 28/1 (2003), 3–27.

<sup>17</sup> Though individual Scottish medicos have been studied, comparative analyses of their ethnographies are rare. Two such figures (John Leyden and John Crawford) are discussed by Jane Rendall as “Scottish Orientalists.” J. Rendall, “Scottish Orientalism: From Robertson to James Mill,” *Historical Journal* 25/1 (1982), 43–69.

<sup>18</sup> María Elena Martínez, “The Black Blood of New Spain: Limpieza de Sangre, Racial Violence, and Gendered Power in Early Colonial Mexico,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 61/3 (2004), 479–520, at 492.

“race” tended to narrow across the latter half of the century, transforming it into a “biological category” that became a taxonomic verity in the methods of natural history.<sup>19</sup> Both race and stadial theory enabled European colonial travellers and natural historians to conceptualize a global humanity as classifiable into historical gradations and physical variations that began to suggest not merely correlation, but causation.<sup>20</sup> Their writings show how stadial and physiological interpretations of human diversity were entangled with assumptions of a universally shared humanity, even as race began to assume a discursive predominance toward century’s end.

### I. EDINBURGH’S MEDICAL ENLIGHTENMENT: THE NATURAL HISTORY OF SENSIBILITY

Though he studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh in 1766 and 1769, William Anderson did not complete his studies there. In 1768 he enlisted in the Royal Navy, completing his examinations at Surgeon’s Hall in London in 1768 and 1770, before being posted as surgeon’s mate to the *Resolution* in 1771.<sup>21</sup> Archibald Menzies studied medicine, surgery, chemistry and botany at the university between 1771 and 1780, before he too joined the Royal Navy as assistant surgeon in 1782.<sup>22</sup> Though Robert Brown’s path took him into the army rather than the navy in 1794, he also studied medicine, as well as natural history and botany, at the university between 1790 and 1793.<sup>23</sup> Menzies and Brown attracted the notice and patronage of the leading Linnaean scholars at the university, the former patronized by the professor of botany, John Hope (1725–86), the latter by the professor of natural history, the Reverend John Walker (1731–1803).<sup>24</sup> Both Anderson and Brown studied with the influential

<sup>19</sup> Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (Washington, DC, 1996), 1–6; Snaith Gissis, “Visualising ‘Race’ in the Eighteenth Century,” *Historical Studies in the Natural Sciences* 41/1 (2011), 41–103, at 88–93.

<sup>20</sup> Linda Andersson Burnett and Bruce Buchan, “The Edinburgh Connection: Linnaean Natural History, Scottish Moral Philosophy and the Colonial Implications of Enlightenment Thought,” in K. Nyberg, H. Hodacs and S. van Damme, eds., *Linnaeus, Natural History and the Circulation of Knowledge* (Oxford, 2018), 161–86.

<sup>21</sup> A. W. Beasley, “Promise Cut Short: The Career of William Anderson,” *Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh* 42/1 (2012), 75–80, at 75–6.

<sup>22</sup> James McCarthy, *Monkey Puzzle Man: Archibald Menzies, Plant Hunter* (Dunbeath, 2008), 27–30.

<sup>23</sup> M. D. Eddy, “The University of Edinburgh Natural History Class Lists 1782–1800,” *Archives of Natural History* 30/1 (2003), 97–117. Brown was enrolled in Walker’s class in natural history in 1792.

<sup>24</sup> Andersson Burnett and Buchan, “The Edinburgh Connection,” 169–70.

professor of anatomy, Alexander Monro “Secundus” (1733–1817), the second in a dynasty of three Monros to hold that post.<sup>25</sup> Most importantly, though, all three men imbibed the university’s blending of natural-historical and stadial approaches to the study of humanity and nature.<sup>26</sup> Linking them was an orientation toward the classification of natural phenomena according to the taxonomic arrangement of differences. Monro “Secundus,” for example, incorporated this approach into his teaching of surgery with lectures on comparative anatomy structured around Linnaean taxonomy and speculation on human varieties.<sup>27</sup> The mania for natural-historical classification and collecting linked elite and scholarly endeavours with a more popular engagement in the study of nature across Europe.<sup>28</sup> While natural-historical study demanded a close observation of plants and animals *in situ*, so too, its proponents claimed, did stadial historical analysis of human societies. Both forms of knowledge were built on arranging differences according to inferences drawn from the variety of circumstances exhibited in nature and among humanity. This kind of situational analysis of humanity was also exemplified in the teaching of medicine at the university, which was presented as a systematic study of the human body and the effects wrought upon it by both natural and non-natural causes.

By mid-century, the University of Edinburgh was well on the way to becoming one of the most vibrant and influential institutions of learning in Britain and Europe.<sup>29</sup> Through the close association between the city and the university, and the impressive range of its leading appointments, Edinburgh provided a focal point for the intellectual life of an exceptionally vibrant community of Scots scholars, many of whom clustered around the School of Medicine. Over the second half of the eighteenth century the Medical School garnered a world-leading reputation, attracting students not only from Scotland, but also from all over Britain and Ireland, from Europe, and from various colonial

<sup>25</sup> Monro “Primus,” “Secundus,” and “Tertius.” Brown also referred to Monro “Secundus” in his diary. Robert Brown, *Nature’s Investigator: The Diary of Robert Brown in Australia, 1801–1805*, ed. T. G. Vallance, D. T. Moore and E. W. Groves (Canberra, 2001), 54.

<sup>26</sup> Alan Bewell, *Natures in Translation: Romanticism and Colonial Natural History* (Baltimore, 2017); Fredrik Albritton Jonsson, *Enlightenment’s Frontier: The Scottish Highlands and the Origins of Environmentalism* (New Haven, 2013).

<sup>27</sup> For instance, the notes of Monro’s lectures: “Lectures by Dr Alexander Monro on Anatomy and Surgery, Edinburgh, January 31, 1778, scriptum Jas. Pennington,” ff. 703–20, esf. 706. RAMC 293, Wellcome Library.

<sup>28</sup> Pietro Corsi, “Systèmes de la nature and Theories of Life: Bridging the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” *Republics of Letters* 6/1 (2018), 1–27, at 13.

<sup>29</sup> Lisbeth Haakonssen, *Medicine and Morals in the Enlightenment: John Gregory, Thomas Percival and Benjamin Rush* (Amsterdam, 1997), 15–16.

societies in America.<sup>30</sup> In the earlier decades of the century, the medical curriculum was dominated by the reformism of the “Dutch Hippocrates,” Herman Boerhaave (1668–1738), which led to an emphasis at Edinburgh on mastering “practical medicine” as a “general practitioner” able to synthesize divergent ideas and diagnostic practices within a system of clinical rationalism.<sup>31</sup>

There was no necessarily sequential order to the curriculum. Students could attend any number of classes inside or outside the school and in any given order. Attendance in the Reverend Walker’s natural-history class and Dugald Stewart’s (1753–1828) course in moral philosophy were also recommended.<sup>32</sup> The parallels between medicine and moral philosophy were not merely coincidental. Throughout the later decades of the eighteenth century, both disciplines were understood as progressive sciences based on the articulation of universal principles derived from an intimate study of nature, human nature and human health.<sup>33</sup> Not only were medical students likely to have studied some moral philosophy, but the Edinburgh Medical Faculty itself took a lively interest in the links between morals and medicine, pioneering the teaching of medical ethics, medical jurisprudence and medical police.<sup>34</sup>

Because it was not necessary to obtain a full degree in order to practice medicine, it has been estimated that as few as 20 percent of students (between 1765 and 1825) actually graduated.<sup>35</sup> This meant that while the school produced a small number of highly qualified graduates, many more students passed through with one or more years of study undertaken to improve their knowledge or round out their education. Medicine was considered a field of knowledge with wide application that led significant numbers of former students into a range of travelling professions as surgeons and physicians in the military, the navy and the East India Company, and throughout Britain’s

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<sup>30</sup> Lisa Rosner, “Thistle on the Delaware: Edinburgh Medical Education and Philadelphia Practice, 1800–1825,” *Social History of Medicine* 5/1 (1992), 19–42, at 20–21; Roger Emerson, “Science and the Origins and Concerns of the Scottish Enlightenment,” *History of Science* 26 (1988), 33–66.

<sup>31</sup> Andrew Cunningham, “Medicine to Calm the Mind: Boerhaave’s Medical System, and Why It Was Adopted in Edinburgh,” in A. Cunningham and R. French, eds., *The Medical Enlightenment of the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1990), 40–66, at 65–6.

<sup>32</sup> J. Johnson, esq., *A Guide for Gentlemen Studying Medicine at the University of Edinburgh* (London 1792), 72–4. Also Guenter Risse, *New Medical Challenges during the Scottish Enlightenment* (Amsterdam, 2005), 67–104.

<sup>33</sup> Haakonssen, *Medicine and Morals in the Enlightenment*, 56.

<sup>34</sup> John Chalmers, “Medical Jurisprudence and Public Health: The Role of Andrew Duncan Junior,” in Chalmers, ed., *Andrew Duncan Senior: Physician of Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, 2010), 100–13.

<sup>35</sup> Rosner, “Thistle on the Delaware,” 22.



rapidly expanding empire.<sup>36</sup> Not only did medicine provide insight into the sickness and health of the human frame, it was also based on the idea that diagnosis required a mind trained in the techniques of studying humans *in situ*. Physicians were supposed to apply their knowledge of medicine to the unique characteristics of the patients they treated and the specific conditions of life that had a direct bearing on their health and ill health. Those conditions included everything from climate and diet to habits and dispositions. “Perhaps no profession requires so comprehensive a mind as medicine,” wrote Dr John Gregory (1724–73), waxing lyrically on the physician’s “acute, penetrating genius ... clear, solid judgement ... quickness of apprehension,” coupled with “humanity”: that “sensibility of heart which makes us feel for the distresses of our fellow-creatures.”<sup>37</sup> In speaking of “sensibility” here, Gregory adverted to a guiding principle of medical thought in the Scottish Enlightenment.

European scientific thought had been fundamentally recast in the seventeenth century when mechanics had been thought to provide a universal guide for natural-philosophical knowledge of the natural world, including the human body.<sup>38</sup> The idea of the human body as machine had gradually replaced the older Galenic discourse in which human health was understood as a function of the “amorphous slush of fluids” (the four humors) whose balance was perpetually imperilled by a multitude of environmental and astrological factors.<sup>39</sup> By the mid-eighteenth century, as Stephen Gaukroger explains it, the discourse of mechanism was itself falling into decline in favor of an emphasis on sense and sensibility.<sup>40</sup> In medicine, this led to the articulation of a diagnostic perspective in which the health of the human body was held to depend on sensory engagement with the immediate environment oriented toward an equable condition of healthy balance.<sup>41</sup> The sensory activation of an attitude of feeling, of sensibility uniquely prone to environmental and social effects, became the cornerstone or “fixed point” in Enlightenment perceptions

<sup>36</sup> Roger L. Emerson, *Essays on David Hume, Medical Men and the Scottish Enlightenment: “Industry, Knowledge and Humanity”* (Farnham, 2009), 190–92.

<sup>37</sup> John Gregory, *Lectures on the Duties and Qualifications of Physician*, new edn, corrected and enlarged (London, 1772), 12–14, 16, 19.

<sup>38</sup> Stephen Gaukroger, *The Collapse of Mechanism and the Rise of Sensibility: Science and Shaping of Modernity, 1680–1760* (Oxford, 2010), 293–4.

<sup>39</sup> Kevin Siena, “Pliable Bodies: The Moral Biology of Health and Disease,” in C. Reeves, ed., *A Cultural History of the Human Body in the Age of Enlightenment* (Oxford, 2010), 33–52, at 35.

<sup>40</sup> Gaukroger, *The Collapse of Mechanism*, 364–5.

<sup>41</sup> Jessica Riskin, “Medical Knowledge: The Adventures of Mr Machine, with Morals,” in Reeves, *A Cultural History of the Human Body*, 73–92; Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race*, 28.

of human nature and human health.<sup>42</sup> This orientation prioritized the nerves as sites at which the health of the individual could be affected by environmental stimulants that “irritate the body’s tissues.”<sup>43</sup> Among those irritants were the properties of the so-called “non-natural” factors, most notably climate, diet and the action of the passions.

One of the medical school’s most celebrated teachers and physicians, William Cullen (1710–90), formulated this perspective into a systematic theory of nervous disorders corresponding to a precise classification or nosology of disease agents.<sup>44</sup> As Cullen’s former student and biographer, John Thomson (1765–1847), described his mentor’s views, the nervous system was not merely “the organ of Sensation,” but was considered to be “the connecting medium between the soul and body” regulating our “Intellectual operations, Memory and Judgment” and animating our “animal economy.”<sup>45</sup> The manifestation of pathology, Cullen argued, was a product of sensibility: the vulnerability of our nervous system to sensations.<sup>46</sup> Sensibility may manifest pathologically as “excess” or as “defect,” and could be elicited not only by the surrounding environment, but also by habits or “customs.” By emphasizing the role of custom Cullen taught his students that physical and mental health could be treated by regulating the causes that stimulated an individual’s sensibility.<sup>47</sup> Hence a healthy state of sensibility was one where a balance was accomplished between the urgent sensations of physical needs and appetites, channelled and directed by sociable virtues.<sup>48</sup> According to Rosalie Stott, Cullen thereby

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<sup>42</sup> Gaukroger, *The Collapse of Mechanism*, 381.

<sup>43</sup> Siena, “Pliable Bodies,” 36.

<sup>44</sup> In his lectures on physiology, Cullen declared that “the human body is a machine that must be governed by the laws of matter and motion that affect every part of nature.” William Cullen, *The Works of William Cullen, M.D., containing his Physiology, Nosology, and First Lines on the Practice of Physic*, ed. John Thomson, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1827), 10. Risse, *New Medical Challenges during the Scottish Enlightenment*, 77. Christopher Lawrence, “The Nervous System and Society in the Scottish Enlightenment,” in B. Barnes and S. Shapin, eds., *Natural Order: Historical Studies of Scientific Culture* (London, 1979), 20–27. See Cullen’s “Physiology” in *The Works of William Cullen*, 137.

<sup>45</sup> John Thomson, *An Account of the Life, Lectures and Writings of William Cullen, M.D.*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1832), 1: 269.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 345.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 322–4.

<sup>48</sup> This is apparent in the voluminous case notes Cullen kept on his consultations with patients. These notes have been made available by the Cullen Project, at [www.cullenproject.ac.uk](http://www.cullenproject.ac.uk). See also Jeffrey Charles Wolf, “Our Master and Father at the Head of Physick”: The Learned Medicine of William Cullen (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, 2015), 240.

sought a kind of therapy of virtue animated by the principle of “Stoic self-command.”<sup>49</sup> His teachings were the medical counterpart to the moral philosophy and political economy of his fellow Scottish Enlightenment intellectuals. They in turn imbibed anatomical authority in searching out the corporeal dimension to moral philosophy in the “state of the animal organs ... under a change of diet, of air ... of exercise ... [and] climate.”<sup>50</sup>

This entanglement of moral philosophy, medical science and natural history was a central feature of Enlightenment thought in Scotland. As Silvia Sebastiani has pointed out, the teaching of moral philosophy at Edinburgh was framed as a “science of man,” analogous to “natural history” in classifying the natural rather than divine causes behind the development of societies.<sup>51</sup> Physicians, such as John Gregory, and natural historians, such as John Walker, each applied stadial ideas in accounting for human diversity.<sup>52</sup> Moral philosophers construed the historical progress of human societies as a product of the application of universal human qualities (such as reason, ingenuity and creativity) in the variety of physical circumstances in which humans found themselves. For that very reason, Adam Ferguson (1723–1816) presented his lectures on moral philosophy at Edinburgh as “[p]neumatics ... or the physical science of mind,” and employed taxonomic methods drawn from both Linnaeus and Buffon to study human diversity.<sup>53</sup>

Different models of taxonomy circulated among the intellectuals of Edinburgh, linking them to wider currents of thought and different bodies of knowledge.<sup>54</sup> Cullen’s nosology, for instance, was said to have been modelled on his interest in mineralogy in collaboration with John Walker.<sup>55</sup> Thomson credited Cullen with “ascertaining the Classes, Orders, and Genera of Diseases,” but claimed he “regretted that neither his opportunities nor his life

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<sup>49</sup> Rosalie Stott, “Health and Virtue: Or, How to Keep out of Harm’s Way. Lectures on Pathology and Therapeutics by William Cullen c.1770,” *Medical History* 31/2 (1987), 123–42, at 140.

<sup>50</sup> Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (Edinburgh, 1967; first published 1767), 117–18.

<sup>51</sup> Sebastiani, *The Scottish Enlightenment*, 133–4.

<sup>52</sup> See, for example, John Walker, “An Inquiry into appearances that generally precede the downfall of states, Jan 1774,” *Dr Walker’s Papers*, EUL CRC: M.S.S.Dc. 1. 59.

<sup>53</sup> Adam Ferguson, *Institutes of Moral Philosophy* (Basel, 1800; first published 1769), 10, 13, 16–17. See, for example, Paul B. Wood, “The Science of Man,” in N. Jardine, J. A. Secord and E. C. Spary, eds., *Cultures of Natural History* (Cambridge, 1996), 197–210, at 205.

<sup>54</sup> On the complicated reception of Linnaean taxonomy in Britain see Jonsson, *Enlightenment’s Frontier*, 62–4.

<sup>55</sup> Thomson, *An Account*, 2: 2–3.

were sufficient to ascertain the species.”<sup>56</sup> The question of species was a key matter of debate among European natural historians inspired by the taxonomic system of Carl Linnaeus (1707–78).<sup>57</sup> Whereas all of the classifications from classes to species were thought to indicate the invariable criteria endowed by nature, the “varieties” within species were thought to be distinguished by modifications of nature thanks to “contingent forces such as climate and soil,” enabling further variation by mixing to create “hybrids.”<sup>58</sup> When applied to the classification of human beings in particular, the identification of variety was held to depend on the variable effects of climate, air, diet or manner of life that manifested in the skin color, hair, stature and size, and above all in the facial structure and skull morphology of the different varieties.<sup>59</sup> The Comte de Buffon (1707–88) had claimed in his “Of the Varieties in the Human Species” of 1749 that climate, nutrition and manners and customs were the active principles in leading to the changes in skin color and hair, all of which he understood as indicators of degenerative descent from humanity’s monogenic origins.<sup>60</sup> Speculation on the nature and causes of these varieties was a feature of Scottish Enlightenment thought and the teaching of both medicine and moral philosophy at Edinburgh.<sup>61</sup> In using skulls to map the distinction between nations and races, the Monros (both “Secundus” and “Tertius”) followed the precedent established by Petrus Camper (1722–89), who used skull morphology to derive measurements of “facial angle.”<sup>62</sup> In his *De Generis Humani Varietate Nativa* in 1775, Johann

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 693. M. Eddy, “Set in Stone: Medicine and the Vocabulary of the Earth in Eighteenth-Century Scotland,” in D. M. Knight and M. D. Eddy, eds., *Science and Beliefs: From Natural Philosophy to Natural Science, 1700–1900* (Abingdon, 2016), 77–94.

<sup>57</sup> Matthew D. Eddy, *The Language of Mineralogy: John Walker, Chemistry and the Edinburgh Medical School, 1750–1800* (Aldershot, 2008), 25.

<sup>58</sup> Christine Lehleiter, *Romanticism, Origins, and the History of Heredity* (Lanham, 2014), 192.

<sup>59</sup> Joanna Bourke, *What It Means to Be Human: Reflections from 1791 to the Present* (London, 2011), 213.

<sup>60</sup> Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, *Natural History, General and Particular*, translated into English by William Smellie, 2nd edn, vol. 3 (London, 1785), 60–70, 170–80, 205–7.

<sup>61</sup> Colin Kidd, *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600–2000* (Cambridge, 2006). Ferguson wrote that there was “much to be learned from ... the varieties of aspect under which the species has appeared in different ages and nations.” Adam Ferguson, *Principles of Moral and Political Science; Being Chiefly a Retrospect of Lectures delivered in the College of Edinburgh*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1792), 6.

<sup>62</sup> See for example: Alexander Monro “Tertius,” *Essays and Heads of Lectures on Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology, and Surgery by the late Alexander Munro Secundus, M.D.* (Edinburgh, 1840), xcix. Petrus Camper, *A Treatise on the Natural Difference of*

Friedrich Blumenbach (1752–1840) argued that the human varieties were arbitrarily defined, dependent on the effects of climate and soil on complexion and stature, an imprecision he sought to overcome in mapping differences in human skull morphology.<sup>63</sup> By century's end, inferences about invariant racial difference drawn from skull morphology had become an established feature of European natural history, demonstrated in the work of Georges Cuvier (1769–1832).<sup>64</sup>

In the last decades of the eighteenth century in Scotland the notion of race was still considered an effect not so much of firm physical endowments, but of the slow action of variable factors such as climate, diet and social modes of life.<sup>65</sup> In Walker's own "Natural History of the Inhabitants of the Highlands," he reflected that only by "slow Degrees" is any "considerable alteration of aspect" achieved in "any Race of Men"; hence their correct observation and classification according to a systematic scheme was an important indication of the deep history of a people.<sup>66</sup> Where race featured in the medical curriculum at Edinburgh toward the end of the century, it was not always considered the determinant of a person's physical and intellectual capabilities, nor was it uniformly presented as a subject for pathological enquiry.<sup>67</sup> Rather, these were propositions that constituted a conceptual field for speculation on race in

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*Features in Persons of Different Countries and Periods of Life*, in *The Works of the Late Professor Camper*, ed. Thomas Cogan (London, 1821), 59–64. Miriam Claude Meijer, *Race and Aesthetics in the Anthropology of Petrus Camper (1722–1789)* (Amsterdam, 1999), 168.

<sup>63</sup> Johan F. Blumenbach, *De Generis Humani Varietate Nativa* (Goettingen, 1775), in Thomas Bendyshe, trans., *The Anthropological Treatises of Blumenbach and Hunter* (London, 1865), 65–144, at 98–9, 101, 117–19.

<sup>64</sup> Georges Cuvier, *Tableau elementaire de l'histoire naturelle des animaux* (Paris, 1798), 71. Bronwen Douglas, "Climate to Crania: Science and the Racialization of Human Difference," in Bronwen Douglas and Chris Ballard, eds., *Foreign Bodies: Oceania and the Science of Race 1750–1940* (Canberra, 2008), 33–96.

<sup>65</sup> For example, John Hunter, *De Hominum Varietatibus et harum causis ...* (Edinburgh, 1775), in Bendyshe, *The Anthropological Treatises of Blumenbach and Hunter*, 357–94, at 375, 387.

<sup>66</sup> John Walker, "Natural History of the Inhabitants of the Highlands," Walker Papers, Edinburgh University Archive, Dc.1.118.

<sup>67</sup> Suman Seth, *Difference and Disease*, 241–76, has recently argued for a "locality-specific" analysis of the development of pathologies of race ("race-medicine") in the colonies. The American physician and former student of the university, Benjamin Rush, developed a theory of disease in America which drew on both race and a stadial account of national manners. B. Rush, "An Inquiry into the Natural History of Medicine Among the Indians of North America, and a Comparative View of their Diseases and Remedies, with those of Civilized Nations," *Medical Inquiries and Observations* (Philadelphia, 1789). My thanks to Dr. Sarah Irving-Stonebreaker for this reference.

which textual antiquity, learned authority and colonial testimony vied for attention. Race and variety were discussed as features essential to studying the natural history of humanity, a form of knowledge based on classifying the physical, intellectual and cultural differences between peoples. In that sense, Scottish natural historians continued to identify both physical and social and even moral criteria as indexes of racial classification.<sup>68</sup> Race was a concept of use in the Scottish “science of man,” intersecting with others such as war, language, law and government. Each was subject to natural variation due to climate and geography, but also to variations produced by human action traceable to manners and morals. It was with this kind of training in “practical natural history” that the Medical School at the University of Edinburgh produced “several generations of Scottish physicians” who were later to apply and adapt a mix of taxonomic and stadial ideas in a wide variety of colonial contexts.<sup>69</sup> In what follows I explore the ethnographic writings of three of these medically trained natural historians from the University of Edinburgh: William Anderson, Archibald Menzies and Robert Brown. In each case, their writings exemplify the tangled emergence of race from the struggle to adapt stadial and natural-historical approaches to human variety in relentless itineraries of travel and encounters with non-European and Indigenous peoples in the Pacific.

## II. “A CASE OF SEA SHELLS”: WILLIAM ANDERSON

Almost ten years after his death at sea in 1778, William Anderson’s effects were finally inventoried for sale. Among those effects was a chest of drawers containing, among other assorted items, a “case of sea shells.”<sup>70</sup> It is just possible that this humble item might have been deposited in Scotland after his return in 1775 from Cook’s second voyage into the Pacific, during which he had served as surgeon’s mate and amateur naturalist aboard the HMS *Resolution*.<sup>71</sup> If so, this box of shells might have been a symbol of Anderson’s

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<sup>68</sup> See also Walker’s posthumously published *Economical History of the Hebrides and Highlands of Scotland in two volumes*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh, 1808), 154, 157, 409, 411.

<sup>69</sup> Richard Drayton, “Knowledge and Empire,” in P. J. Marshall, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 2, *The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1998), 231–52, at 240.

<sup>70</sup> Papers in Connection with the Estate of William Anderson, Surgeon, Edinburgh, 1787 (RH15/174), National Register Office, Edinburgh. “Inventory of the Effects found in Peebles lately possessed by William Anderson, Surgeon in Edinb., 5th April 1787.”

<sup>71</sup> Anderson had so impressed Cook on this journey that he selected him as surgeon for his ill-fated third Pacific expedition aboard the *Resolution* and *Discovery*. Frank McLynn, *Captain Cook: Master of the Seas* (New Haven, 2011), 357. See also Anne Salmond, *The Trial of the Cannibal Dog: Captain Cook in the South Seas* (Albany, 2003), 304.

pursuit of natural history that so irritated Johann Reinhold Forster (1729–98), the scholar and naturalist appointed to Cook’s second voyage, who wrote bitterly,

One of the surgeon’s mates, who went on this excursion, collected a prodigious variety of new and curious shells upon the island of Ballabeca [New Caledonia], and likewise met with many new species of plants, of which we did not see a single specimen in the districts we had visited; but the meanest and most unreasonable envy taught him to conceal these discoveries from us, though he was utterly incapable of making use of them for the benefit of science.<sup>72</sup>

Forster’s ire is emblematic of the disregard in which Anderson, his intellectual background and his natural-historical thought have languished.<sup>73</sup> During his education at the university, Anderson formed a strong connection to his former teacher of anatomy and surgery, Monro “Secundus,” to whom he presented a folio of bird illustrations from Cook’s second voyage, bound with a map charting the *Resolution*’s path with place names annotated in Anderson’s hand.<sup>74</sup> He also arranged through Monro that a series of items he collected on that voyage be lodged with the keeper of the university’s Natural History Museum, Professor Robert Ramsay (1735–78).<sup>75</sup> This all implies that Anderson’s natural-historical interests were shaped by his university experience, but other evidence suggests he also imbibed a familiarity with the methods of Scottish historical and moral thought. Among the scant papers relating to the posthumous sale of his effects is

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Beaglehole points out that the official journal of Cook’s third voyage, *Voyage of the Pacific Ocean ... for Making Discoveries in the Northern Hemisphere* (1784), edited by John Douglas, incorporated “considerable interpolations” from Anderson’s journal. John C. Beaglehole, *The Life of Captain James Cook* (London, 1974), 691.

<sup>72</sup> *The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure, 1772–1775, volume II of the Journals of Captain James Cook on his voyages of discovery*, ed. J. C. Beaglehole (Cambridge, 1961), xlvii n. 1.

<sup>73</sup> Nicholas Thomas, *Discoveries: The Voyages of Captain Cook* (London, 2004), 307–8, for example, speculates that Anderson learned a great deal about natural history from the Forsters.

<sup>74</sup> Averil Lysaght, “Some Eighteenth Century Bird Paintings in the Library of Sir Joseph Banks (1743–1820),” *Bulletin of the British Museum (Natural History) Historical Series* 1/6 (1959), 251–371, at 261–2. The folio was passed on by Monro in 1785 to the University’s Natural History Museum, and its keeper, John Walker. I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Ms Antje Denner (principal curator, Oceania, Americas and Africa, Department of World Cultures at the National Museum of Scotland) in tracing the provenance of this item, and Ms Georgia Rogers of the National Museum of Scotland for supplying me with a copy of Anderson’s map.

<sup>75</sup> Dale Ildien and Chantal Knowles, “Cook-Voyage Collections in Edinburgh, 1775–2011,” in Jeremy Coote, ed., *Cook-Voyage Collections of “Artificial Curiosities” in Britain and Ireland, 1771–2015* (Oxford, 2015), 191–218, at 192. The contents of the boxes were inventoried in 1780 by John Walker. His list of the contents can be seen on pages 205–6.



a “List of Books belonging to W. Anderson Surgeon 1787.” Anderson’s library, predictably, included a wide range of medical texts littered with authorities such as Cullen, Lind, Boerhaave and Sydenham. He also owned volumes that may well have been used as textbooks during his study at the university, namely “Cullen’s practice 2 vols”; Monro “Primus,” “An Essay on Comparative anatomy”; and “Buffon’s [Natural] History 8 vols.” Among the collection, however, were a range of texts by leading lights of Scottish Enlightenment philosophy featuring stadial approaches to the study of human history, such as “Hume’s works 7 vols,” Kames’s “Elements of Criticism vol 3,” and Monboddo on the “origin of Language 1 vol.”<sup>76</sup>

The only firm evidence that we have for Anderson’s efforts to combine the taxonomic methods of natural history with the stadial ideas of moral philosophy now lies in the sadly incomplete journal he kept during Cook’s third expedition to the Pacific commencing in August 1776.<sup>77</sup> He clearly began the journey with a keen interest in searching out the physical traces of human diversity laid down and altered across generations, noting at the *Resolution*’s first port of call in Tenerife, “None of the natives found here on discovering the islands remain, having intermarried with the Spaniards; but their descendants are known from their being remarkably tall, large boned & strong.”<sup>78</sup> In Van Diemen’s Land (Tasmania), Anderson assumed that the people he fleetingly encountered (over two days in late January 1777) were unaltered by prior contact with others. Tellingly his physical descriptions were framed by racial comparisons with “African Negroes” or the so-called “Hottentots,” the name Europeans frequently used to denote the Khoikhoi people of Southern Africa.<sup>79</sup> Anderson’s journal of subsequent encounters with peoples in the Pacific conformed to a closely ordered pattern emphasizing racial characteristics.<sup>80</sup> First he would usually describe their stature, skin color and hair. Then he would describe their facial features or “countenance,” noting things such as teeth, eyes and the shape of the nose, mouth or lips. This would be followed by observations on the stature, size, shape and proportion of the people he encountered. Only once this physical

<sup>76</sup> Papers in Connection with the Estate of William Anderson, Surgeon, Edinburgh, 1787 (RH15/174), National Register Office, Edinburgh.

<sup>77</sup> Glyn Williams, *Naturalists at Sea: Scientific Travellers from Dampier to Darwin* (New Haven, 2013), 57.

<sup>78</sup> “A Journal of a Voyage Made in His Majesty’s Sloop Resolution May 16th 1776 Wm Anderson,” in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery in IV Volumes*, vol. 3, *The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery 1776–1780, Part Two*, Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1967, 721–986, at 733.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 785.

<sup>80</sup> See, for example, his descriptions of the peoples of van Diemen’s Land (*ibid.*, 785–6), New Zealand (*ibid.*, 809), Manuae (*ibid.*, 846–7), Tonga (*ibid.*, 925–6).



description was complete would he then make comments about the manners, customs or distinctive social forms of the peoples before him.

Of all these physical signs, Anderson seems to have taken a special interest in the variety of skin color, which he took the trouble to describe as precisely as he could, noting “different casts from a pretty deep black to a yellowish or olive tinge.”<sup>81</sup> Yet even here, Anderson grappled with the possible influences on racial criteria of stadial factors such as manners, social structures and the systems of labor and production that underlay them. Skin color was not a given but a variable quality. He noted the “whiter cast” or “fairer” complexion of those whose status accustomed or entitled them to spend a greater period of time sheltered from the sun.<sup>82</sup> Stature and musculature were also contingent upon the relative levels of activity or labor that individuals or social groups were obliged to undertake.<sup>83</sup> Perceiving these contingent variations was, for Anderson, a part of the natural historian’s task of correctly interpreting the physical attributes of a people together, allowing him to identify the human “stock” in question and their approximate relation to others.<sup>84</sup> Anderson’s approach in this respect was heavily influenced by the itinerary of his travels, a matter determined by his captain. The brevity of his stay in Van Diemen’s Land, for instance, was reflected in his cursory observations, which tended to emphasize a lack of civilization, considering the inhabitants a veritable instance of “what the ancients tell us of fauns and Satyrs.” In contrast, he spent a month on the island of Tonga, and a further six weeks among neighboring islands, where he encountered individuals he named, such as the chiefs “Maree’wagee” and “Too’bou.” Anderson’s long and detailed descriptions of Tongan society, dance and dress, house building, canoes, tools and food preparation indicated a very different kind of appraisal of the influence of manners and customs on the characteristics of race or “stock.”<sup>85</sup>

Manners and customs operated independently of nature, and were thus signs of the universally human capacity for invention and ingenuity. Anderson provided ample evidence of Tongan ingenuity in his account of the lively interactions between the islanders and the ship’s crew, of his own admiration for the intricacies of Tongan dance, and of the Tongans’ eager discernment of the reciprocal performance of the ship’s marines on shore. He sensed his own lack of understanding of the subtleties of islander “taboo” prohibitions, or of

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 809, 926.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 840, 926. Complexion here was, in Nussbaum’s words, “an indelible indactor” not just of race, but of social rank and status. Nussbaum, *The Limits of the Human*, 149.

<sup>83</sup> “Anderson’s Journal,” 925.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 788.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 896–7, 935–43.

their understandings of divinity and the immortality of the soul.<sup>86</sup> Tellingly, he accounted for these signs of cultural and spiritual complexity in stadial terms, by using the language of historical development as measured by social indices such as the treatment of women:

I cannot help relating here an observation which may have been made before, though not to my knowledge, which is that in all the places I have visited in these seas the degree of civilization that has taken place amongst them may be known by the attention they pay to the fair sex. Those in a very barbarous state treat their women with such a degree of rudeness or rather brutality and at the same time indifference ... as civilization has advanc'd we find them not only eas'd of those laborious employments ... but treated with that respect to which they are often more justly entitled than their lordly masters ...<sup>87</sup>

He interpreted manners and customs as universal signs of the “genius” of a people in being able to adapt and thrive in the climatic and geographical circumstances in which they found themselves.<sup>88</sup> Anderson’s closing comments on the Tongans are instructive in this respect:

the natives of Tonga and the isles around it are upon the whole arrivd at as much perfection in their manual works, as much regularity in their government, at as high a pitch in their agriculture ... as any nation whatever under the same circumstances ... they are in every respect almost as perfectly civiliz'd as it is possible for mankind to be. They seem to have been long at their ultimum ...<sup>89</sup>

For all his emphasis on describing racial variety, Anderson interpreted manners as ethnographic devices, stadial indices of historical progress and civilization. Even where he dismissed a people’s manners as “barbarous,” nowhere more stridently than where he supposed people practiced cannibalism, he was careful not to describe this as vicious subhumanity.<sup>90</sup> On other occasions Anderson argued forcefully that apparently vicious practices, such as human sacrifice, were not indications of any inherent savagery, barbarity or “inhumanity,” but merely of the rigid adherence to “old superstitious customs.”<sup>91</sup>

By focusing on the role of manners and customs alongside the classification of the physical attributes of human varieties, Anderson reflected the close

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 897–9, 947–9.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 933. On the role of women in eighteenth-century social and medical theory see Ludmilla Jordanova, “Sex and Gender,” in Christopher Fox, Roy Porter and Robert Wokler, eds., *Inventing Human Sciences: Eighteenth-Century Domains* (Berkeley, 1995), 152–83; Londa Schiebinger, “The Anatomy of Difference: Race and Sex in Eighteenth-Century Science,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 23 (1990), 387–96.

<sup>88</sup> “Anderson’s Journal,” 787.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 959.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 814–15.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 917.

association in Scottish Enlightenment thought between racial and social modes of analysis. When Anderson himself studied medicine at the university in the 1770s, Adam Ferguson exhibited the combination of these two modes in his popular lectures on moral philosophy.<sup>92</sup> Ferguson believed that “race” may be useful as a taxonomic concept but not as an explanation for progress or lack of it.<sup>93</sup> The purpose of studying the “physical science of mind” alongside stadial, moral philosophical analysis, Ferguson argued, was to understand that historical progress was driven by the universal influence of human ingenuity, unconstrained by the racial or other physical qualities of a people.<sup>94</sup> In that sense, Anderson’s journal should be interpreted as a product not simply of Scottish natural history, but of Scottish moral philosophy as well. Anderson appeared to view the physical attributes of a people as criteria for an accurate taxonomic classification of peoples, but sought in their social and moral qualities a means to understand their relative placement in a stadial scheme of civilization.<sup>95</sup> A symbol of this imbrication of natural history and stadial theory, race and civilization was the focus placed on tracing linguistic affinities between nations. In the decades to follow, the search for linguistic origins was to become (like the avid quest for river headwaters) an analogue for the identification of racial types. In compiling his own vocabularies in Van Diemen’s Land, Aotearoa (New Zealand), A’Ua’U Enea (Mangaia) and Tonga, Anderson suggested the usefulness of this approach: “we may depend upon the affinity of Languages as a clue to guide us in discovering the origin of nations.”<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Ferguson, *Institutes of Moral Philosophy*, 10, 13, 16–17.

<sup>93</sup> Blumenbach cited the authority of Anderson to claim that difference in facial structure was one of the distinguishing markers of each of the human races—a feature he named “racial face.” Johan F. Blumenbach, *De Generis Humani Varietate Nativa*, 3rd edn (Goettingen, 1795), in Bendyshe, *The Anthropological Treatises of Blumenbach and Hunter*, 145–276, at 227, 229.

<sup>94</sup> It is noteworthy in this regard that John Hunter’s 1775 Edinburgh medical thesis, *De Hominum Varietatibus et harum causis*, concluded with this observation (at 392): “Travellers have exaggerated the mental varieties far beyond the truth, who have denied good qualities to the inhabitants of other countries, because their mode of life, manners, and customs have been excessively different from their own.” Among the authorities Hunter cited for this view was Adam Ferguson’s *Essay on the History of Civil Society*.

<sup>95</sup> In that sense, he could compare the governmental structures on Tahiti to those thought to prevail in feudal Britain. John Gascoigne, *Captain Cook: Voyager between Worlds* (Hambledon, 2007), 137.

<sup>96</sup> “Anderson’s Journal,” 789.

### III. “A TRAVELLER WANDERING OVER THESE UNFREQUENTED PLAINS”: ARCHIBALD MENZIES

When Captain George Vancouver was commissioned to undertake his voyage into the Pacific, Joseph Banks (1743–1820) arranged that the expedition would be accompanied by Archibald Menzies as surgeon and naturalist. Menzies carried instructions from Banks which urged “an investigation of the whole of the natural History” of the regions visited, as well as an “enquiry into the present state & comparative degree of civilization of the Inhabitants.”<sup>97</sup> “At all places where a friendly intercourse with the Natives is established,” Banks urged, “you are to make diligent inquiry into their manners, Customs, Language and Religion ... Manufactures, particularly the Art of dying, in which Savages have frequently been found to excel.”<sup>98</sup> It is likely that this last observation reflected the collection of Tapa cloth and other fabrics by Anderson and by Johan Reinhold and Georg Forster, some of which were sent to the new professor of medicine at Göttingen, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach.<sup>99</sup> A number of items Anderson collected on Cook’s third voyage were left to Banks in Anderson’s will. It seems that some of these artefacts were sent in 1783 to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and the university’s Natural History Museum.<sup>100</sup> Vancouver’s expedition, however, ended in a great deal of acrimony between him and Menzies and the other officers, which eventually put paid to Banks’s plan for an authoritative natural-history collection and publication from the expedition.<sup>101</sup> To this day, Menzies’s journal has not been published in full.

What is notable from the journal is that he referred to the peoples of the Pacific as “natives,” or as “tribes,” or merely as “Indians,” but not as a race.<sup>102</sup> It is also

<sup>97</sup> Joseph Banks, “Instructions to Archibald Menzies from Sir Joseph Banks prior to the Voyage of HMS *Discovery* 1791–95,” dated Soho Square, 22 February 1791, in McCarthy, *Monkey Puzzle Man*, 200.

<sup>98</sup> Banks, “Instructions to Archibald Menzies,” 201–2.

<sup>99</sup> Brigitta Hauser-Schäublin and Gundolf Krüger, “Pacific Cultural Heritage: The Göttingen Cook–Forster Collection,” in T. Weber and J. Watson, eds., *Cook’s Pacific Encounters: The Cook–Forster Collection of the Georg-August University of Göttingen* (Canberra, 2006), 15–28, at 20–21.

<sup>100</sup> Idiens and Knowles, “Cook-Voyage Collections in Edinburgh,” 199.

<sup>101</sup> These circumstances are discussed in more detail in McCarthy, *Monkey Puzzle Man*, 161–7, 173–5; David Mackay, *In the Wake of Cook: Exploration, Science and Empire, 1780–1801* (London, 1985), 109–10; W. Kaye Lamb, “Banks and Menzies: Evolution of a Journal,” in Robin Fisher and High Johnston, eds., *From Maps to Metaphors: The Pacific World of George Vancouver* (Vancouver, 1993), 227–44, at 238.

<sup>102</sup> Archibald Menzies, *Menzies’ Journal of Vancouver’s Voyage April to October, 1792*, ed. C. F. Newcombe (Victoria, 1923), for example 14–15, 40–42, 127. See also Menzies, *Hawaii Nei 128 Years Ago* (Honolulu, 1920).

striking that Menzies did not provide anywhere near the same degree of physical description of the peoples he encountered as Anderson had. The physical descriptions he did provide were typically perfunctory and sometimes derogatory.<sup>103</sup> He did not seem to share Anderson's interest in describing skin color, but rather seemed far more preoccupied with descriptions of "native" dress, ornaments, habitations and canoes. In short, he seemed more motivated to describe ways of life, which he often portrayed dismissively, as if convinced that such people occupied a lower level of social development despite the obvious advantages of their surroundings.<sup>104</sup> As a trained botanist Menzies seemed especially attuned to environmental circumstances, and his observations made between April and October 1792 on the Pacific northwest coast of present day Canada, in the vicinity of Nootka Sound, are especially revealing. Of the natural advantages of this region he left no doubt:

A Traveller wandering over these unfrequented Plains is regaled with a salubrious & vivifying air impregnated with the balsamic fragrance of the surrounding Pinery, while his mind is eagerly occupied every moment on new objects & his senses riveted on the enchanting variety of the surrounding scenery where the softer beauties of Landscape are harmoniously blended in majestic grandeur with the wild & romantic to form an interesting & picturesque prospect on every side. The Climate appeared to us exceeding favourable ... The Soil tho in general light & gravely would I am confident yield most of the European fruits & grains in perfection, so that it offers a desirable situation for a new Settlement ...<sup>105</sup>

Indeed, it is precisely these physical advantages that seem to have had a determinative influence over Menzies's thought.

In general, Menzies exhibited a stadial view of the inhabitants in which the chief explanations for the present state of the inhabitants he encountered were sought not in the physical properties of their bodies, but in the patterns of social and economic life based on their environment. One of the matters on which the members of the Vancouver expedition speculated was the size of local populations and the possible implications of finding scattered skulls and

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<sup>103</sup> For example, Menzies, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage*, 82; Archibald Menzies, "Archibald Menzies Journal of Vancouver's Voyage April to October 1792," British Library Add. MS. 32641, ff. 161, 247–9. In this respect, Menzies's observations were on par with those of other natural historians who maintained that "savages" had a particular kind of "countenance." See, for instance, Samuel Stanhope Smith, *Essay on the Causes of the variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species* (Philadelphia, 1787), 125. A more positive physical description was provided for Pacific islanders: Dorothy Shineberg, ed., "Archibald Menzies' Account of the Visit of the *Discovery* to Rapa and Tahiti 22 December 1791–25 January 1792," *Pacific History* 9/2 (1986), 59–102, at 67–8.

<sup>104</sup> Consider, for example, his description of Indigenous dress and ornaments (42), and his dismissive account of Indigenous hygiene (67) in *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage*.

<sup>105</sup> *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage*, 48.

bones or deserted village sites. Vancouver himself seemed eager to conclude, on Hawaii and on the Pacific northwest coast, that local populations were in a state of relatively recent decline.<sup>106</sup> He was unable to provide an explanation for this supposed phenomenon, but considered disease, conquest and even cannibalism (the latter of which he dismissed as a factor in Nootka Sound). Menzies joined in this speculation and shared Vancouver's scepticism of the wild "conjectures" and "allegations" of cannibalism entertained by some of his crew-mates.<sup>107</sup> To Menzies's mind, there was no "rational proof" of such conduct. On the contrary, he supposed that, because the skulls and bones they found at Nootka seemed evenly decayed and randomly scattered, a battle "had been fought here at a period not very remote & that the vanquished on that occasion suffered by the refined cruelties of their Conquerors ... for it is a known practice of the American Tribes on the opposite coast to burn their vanquished enemies & it is not improbable that the same horrid custom prevails here." Robin Fisher argues that this incident demonstrates Menzies's intellectual "caution."<sup>108</sup> I suggest, however, that Menzies's mention of battle and "horrid custom" was more indicative of his stadial cast of mind. Stadial thinkers such as Ferguson, Hume and Robertson argued that supposedly "savage" peoples waged war with an unremitting fury that checked their capacity for progress.<sup>109</sup> Indicative here was that Menzies reflected that despite the advantages of soil and climate, the native population was sparse:

The Inhabitants of this extensive Country did not appear to us on making every allowance of computation from the different Villages & strolling parties that were met with to exceed one thousand in all, a number indeed too small for such a fine territory; but when we reflect that the hunting state is by no means a favourable state for population, & that in this Country neighbouring tribes are generally at War with each other, which from their savage disposition & inexorable cruelties makes great havock amongst the weakest Tribes, our surprise at the fewness of Inhabitants will in some measure cease.<sup>110</sup>

Indeed, Menzies uniformly traced the scale of Indigenous population to the "manners & modes of living of the Natives"—an overt reference to their

<sup>106</sup> George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World 1791–1795*, ed. W. Kaye Lamb, 4 vols. (London 1984), 2: 538–9, 551–3, 629.

<sup>107</sup> *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage*, 22. Following quote from this page also.

<sup>108</sup> Robin Fisher, "Vancouver's Vision of Native Peoples: The Northwest Coast and Hawai'i," in A. Frost and J. Samson, eds., *Pacific Empires: Essays in Honour of Glyndwr Williams* (Melbourne, 1999), 147–63, at 153.

<sup>109</sup> Bruce Buchan, "Pandours, Partisans and *Petite Guerre*: Two Dimensions of Enlightenment Discourse on War," *Intellectual History Review* 23/3 (2013), 329–47.

<sup>110</sup> *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage*, 49–50.

means of subsistence and the social life it was capable of supporting.<sup>111</sup> As a consequence, Menzies spoke of the peoples of Nootka Sound, for instance, not as a race, or even as a human variety, but as a “nation” whose identity was to be known through their dress and ornaments, their habitations, ways of life and government. Most importantly in this latter respect, Menzies (and Vancouver) spoke of the Nootkan people as subjects of a great chief, Maquinna, who controlled both territory and trade.<sup>112</sup> Menzies spoke of the boundaries of Maquinna’s authority coinciding with the extent of the Nootkan dialect.<sup>113</sup> In the emphasis here on language a faint echo can be heard of Anderson’s own recommendation that linguistic affinity was a telling indication of the origins and development of peoples.<sup>114</sup>

#### IV. “LITTLE DOUBT OF THEIR BEING THE SAME RACE”: ROBERT BROWN

It was Banks who once again promoted another natural historian trained in medicine at Edinburgh to the proposed voyage of circumnavigation of Australia (then referred to as Terra Australis Incognita, or as New Holland) by Captain Matthew Flinders aboard HMS *Investigator*.<sup>115</sup> The voyage had been planned as a way of forestalling French claims to both scientific discoveries and possible colonial possession of stretches of coastline. A French expedition under Captain Nicholas Baudin and his vessels, the *Naturaliste* and the *Géographe*, had been dispatched with orders to chart the coast. In common with Anderson and Menzies, Brown kept a record of his observations, notes and collections. With the exception of a long essay on the flora of New Holland included as an appendix to Matthew Flinders’s *Voyage to Terra Australis* of 1814, Brown’s notes were not published in his lifetime. Sketchy though his surviving notes are, they provide some telling insight into the pattern of discursive change in the study of human variety.

As is well known, the Flinders and Baudin expeditions met on 9 April 1802, in what became known as Encounter Bay on the southern coast of present-day

<sup>111</sup> Menzies’ *Journal of Vancouver’s Voyage*, 63.

<sup>112</sup> Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery*, 2: 612–13.

<sup>113</sup> Menzies’ *Journal of Vancouver’s Voyage*, 30. Menzies, “Archibald Menzies Journal of Vancouver’s Voyage April to October 1792,” ff. 159–60.

<sup>114</sup> Interestingly, Vancouver paid tribute to Anderson’s study of the language of the Tahitians, but noted (as did Menzies) that their language was subject to certain word substitutions on the death of their rulers, for reasons the newcomers could not fully fathom. Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery*, 1: 427.

<sup>115</sup> D. J. Mabberly, *Jupiter Botanicus: Robert Brown of the British Museum* (Braunschweig, 1985), 28–9.

South Australia (a coast the French called Terre Napoléon). Baudin hosted a visit from Flinders, who, not speaking French, took along his botanist and natural historian, Robert Brown. As the two parties talked warily but cordially, the subject of their conversation turned to the native inhabitants of the land. Both parties in fact had come to regard the Indigenous Australians as a curiosity; an inferior branch of the family tree of humanity.

Flinders believed it proper to call all the peoples his expedition encountered in Terra Australis “Australians,” a name derived from the one he wanted to give to the land itself: “Australia.” This suggests that as far as the British were concerned, the inhabitants they met throughout their journey were of one race. The French for their part took a lively interest in the humanity of the Indigenous peoples, and produced some of the most remarkable and sympathetic images of named Indigenous people ever produced in Australia.<sup>116</sup> On being shown a selection of these drawings, Brown recorded his surprise: “[aptain] Baudin shewd us coloured figures of the natives of van Diemen’s land. They appear to be characteristic but not well executed. There were figures of their huts, of their tombs & of their canoes ... All the natives were painted with woolly hair & C [aptain] Baudin, on being questiond on this ... assurd us that it was really so.”<sup>117</sup> Brown doubted French testimony because the portraits appeared to disturb his own racial classification of the Indigenous peoples of Van Diemen’s Land and the mainland of Australia/New Holland. Above all, he wondered about “the woolly appearance of the hair—it seems at least extremely improbable that the natives of New Holland should have merely curld hair while their more southern neighbours, in other respects exactly resembling them so as to leave little doubt of their being the same race, should have the wool of the negroe.” Neatly encapsulated here in Brown’s discomfort lay the traces of what was rapidly becoming a much firmer European language of racial identification. Brown’s doubts were a product of the emergent discourse of race that suffused his reading on board the *Investigator*. Brown took an extensive library along with him that he read systematically in the early months of the expedition. The account of his reading is one of the most fulsome details we have from his frustratingly terse and abbreviated diary. Brown’s reading indicated an interest not only in human variety, but also in racial characteristics. He began, on Wednesday 8 July 1801, by reading from

<sup>116</sup> Nicolas Baudin, *The Journal of Post Captain Nicolas Baudin Commander-in-Chief of the Corvettes Géographe and Naturaliste*, trans. C. Cornell (Adelaide, 2004; first published 1974), 379–80; François Péron and Louis de Freycinet, *The Voyage of Discovery to the Southern Lands*, vol. 1, 2nd edn, trans. C. Cornell (Adelaide, 2016; first published 1824), 257–58.

<sup>117</sup> Brown, *Nature’s Investigator*, 178–9.



John Hawkesworth's publication of Cook's first Pacific expedition, taking care to note the significant incidents from the journey.<sup>118</sup> His attention then turned to human variety, skin color and the general question of the purported physical and intellectual degeneracy of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas in de Pauw's *Recherches philosophiques sur les américains*. Brown noted specifically that he read "with more care both as to subject & language" the first part of the *Recherches* dealing with the climatic effects on human complexion: "Du Climat de l'Amérique de la complexion alterée de ses habitants de la découverte du nouveau Monde."<sup>119</sup>

On 9 July he read more of Cook's first voyage, and took special notice of the physical description of the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego, both of their bodies and of their ornamentation.<sup>120</sup> He followed this by reading the Comte de Buffon's *Discours sur le style* and then his "Théorie de la terre," as well as a variety of botanical and other sources, including Lamarck and Cuvier.<sup>121</sup> He also read Johann Reinhold Forster's *Observations Made during a Voyage round the World* (1778), compiled from Cook's second Pacific voyage, for guidance on various aspects of natural history.<sup>122</sup> On 28 July, now at sea, his reading interest turned to the question of human diversity. He approached this question through Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. What might he have been searching for here? He was no doubt reflecting on the figure of Caliban, that "strange fish," a "poor credulous monster" not "honoured with human shape" residing on a remote island. Might Brown have been considering the nature of savagery evinced by isolated, island peoples? Perhaps he also considered the possibility, maintained long before by St Augustine but more recently also by Carl Linnaeus, that humanity might be broad enough to encompass monstrous peoples, part-human, part-beast? We cannot be certain of either of these speculations, but he records that he turned next to Forster once again for insight into "the varieties of the Human Species. Relative to Colour. Size. form. Habit & Natural turn of Mind in the Natives of the South Sea Isles."<sup>123</sup>

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 25–32. Brown must have been reading John Hawkesworth's *Account of the Voyages...in the Southern Hemisphere*, 3 vols. (London, 1773).

<sup>119</sup> Brown, *Nature's Investigator*, 33. Cornelius de Pauw's *Recherches philosophiques sur les Américains, ou Mémoires intéressants pour servir à l'Histoire de l'Espèce Humaine. Avec une Dissertation sur l'Amérique & les Américains* (London, 1771).

<sup>120</sup> Brown, *Nature's Investigator*, 34.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 35, 37. Buffon's *Discours sur le style* was originally delivered to the Académie française in 1753 and subsequently published. His "Théorie de la terre" was included as part of his monumental thirty-six-volume *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière*.

<sup>122</sup> Brown, *Nature's Investigator*, 49–50.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 52.

On 29 July it is tempting to think that Brown was still reflecting on savagery and monstrosity, and that his mind was working on the possibility that humanity consisted in the capacity for improvement. It is highly significant that he turned to one of the latest French authorities, Joseph Marie de Gérando (1772–1842), whose *Des signes et de l'art de penser considérés dans leurs rapports mutuels* of 1799 Brown appears to have taken on the voyage.<sup>124</sup> Eventually, Brown recorded that he returned to and completed *The Tempest*. Perhaps his mind still worked on the effects of geography on the capacity that de Gérando memorably described as the “perfectibilité de l'esprit humain”? It is notable here that he turned to Saussure on mountains and volcanoes, and then again to Forster “On the Causes of the Difference in the Races of Men in the South Sea, their origin & Migrations.”<sup>125</sup>

Between 11 and 13 September, as the *Investigator* crossed the Equator, Brown once again returned to Hawkesworth's edition of Cook's voyages, before considering on 17 September “White on the gradation of man &c.”<sup>126</sup> The physician Charles White (1728–1813) published his *An Account of the Regular Gradation in Man, and in different Animals and Vegetables* in 1799, arguing for a polygenist interpretation of human origins not from the single biblical pair, Adam and Eve, but from our nearest animal cousins, the primates. White was also critical of Buffon's contention that the human varieties were unquestionably part of the same species, and argued that each race was a separate species. Citing the supposed differences in skull morphology between African and European types, and denying any active influence from climate, White affirmed a clear racial hierarchy or “gradation.”<sup>127</sup> In late September, Brown wrote that he was still reading Cook, as well as the translator's preface to, and various chapters in, “Billardiere's Voyage” in search of Lapérouse.<sup>128</sup> This was followed on Tuesday 29 September, his diary records, by “the 2 first chapters of Ferguson on Civil Society. On the State of Nature & on Self preservation.”<sup>129</sup> The final notes on his reading mention that he followed Ferguson with “Blairs Lectures on Rhetoric Introduction & part of Chap 1,” on

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 63–4, 66.

<sup>127</sup> Charles White, *An Account of the Regular Gradation in Man, and in Different Animals and Vegetables* (London, 1799), 55, 106, 125, 134.

<sup>128</sup> Brown, *Nature's Investigator*, 68. This was Jacques-Julien Houtou de Labillardière's *Relation du voyage à la recherche de La Pérouse* (1800).

<sup>129</sup> Brown, *Nature's Investigator*, 72–3. The editors note that Brown probably possessed the latest, sixth edition of Ferguson's *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1793), originally published in 1767.

1 October, accompanied by more Cook, and on 3 October he read White on the “gradation of man” again.<sup>130</sup>

Brown’s reading list provides strong evidence that he was engaged with questions then central to the natural history of humanity—questions about skin color, about the effects of climate and isolation, and the appropriate methods to be employed in understanding human diversity. His list also suggests that he was familiar not only with European and Scottish natural history, but with Scottish moral philosophy and stadial theory also. Brown’s incorporation of Ferguson’s *Essay on the History of Civil Society* gives that text the unique (if questionable) distinction of being the only work of Scottish Enlightenment moral philosophy to have accompanied both the First Fleet of European convict settlers to Australia in 1788, and the continent’s first recorded circumnavigation in 1801–3. Thus intellectually equipped, Brown’s own encounters with Indigenous Australians were frequently brief. In his first encounter, on 14–15 December 1801 at King George Sound on the southern coast of what is now Western Australia, he recorded tentative but cordial interactions with the ship’s crew. Brown’s description of the men he encountered was shaped by the brevity of their interaction. He noted their dress, weapons, ornamentation and ritual scarring in a perfunctory way, and surmised the meaning of their gestures and speech as wariness at their initial meeting, inquisitiveness to know the sex of the European sailors, and astonishment at the loading of the ship. Brown took particular note of racial criteria such as the stature, facial features and bodily proportions of the Indigenous men, their scalp and facial hair, and their skin color.<sup>131</sup> In subsequent encounters throughout the journey, Brown’s notes evinced a similar mix of physical, material and behavioral observations and suppositions, but he made a particular point of stipulating that all the Indigenous people he met with, no matter how different their ornamentation, were of one race across the entire landmass (and, as he later surmised, in Van Diemen’s Land).<sup>132</sup> Brown’s interest in the question of race was also reflected in his collecting of skulls—though he recorded precious little of these activities.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Brown, *Nature’s Investigator*, 74. He refers no doubt to Ferguson’s colleague and professor of rhetoric at the University of Edinburgh Hugh Blair’s *Lectures on rhetoric and belles lettres* in three volumes (1783).

<sup>131</sup> Brown, *Nature’s Investigator*, 97. He also noted the men’s genitalia, possibly a sign of his interest in de Pauw’s contention that the inhabitants of the Old World were more fertile and virile than the inhabitants of the New.

<sup>132</sup> See for instance, *ibid.*, 231, 329, 469. Brown’s visit to Van Diemen’s Land occurred after the *Investigator* voyage was complete.

<sup>133</sup> See, for instance, *ibid.*, 231, 329, 337.

Although Brown's notes on Aboriginal Australians are typically sketchy, they were not unsympathetic. On one occasion he described a "skirmish with these poor unarm'd savages" but noted that they displayed greater "bravery" and "conduct" than he and the sailors he commanded, who had been forced into a precipitate retreat.<sup>134</sup> Sometimes, his observations were made only at a distance, and in only few instances was he able to offer any kind of detailed description of physical attributes, or of dress, weapons or language.<sup>135</sup> On the coast of Arnhem Land (present-day Northern Territory) in early February 1803, Brown had his best chance. Here he compiled a vocabulary and named ten of his Indigenous interlocutors. A shorter version of Brown's vocabulary was quoted by Flinders, with acknowledgment, in his *Voyage to Terra Australis*.<sup>136</sup> Flinders presented the list of words as a clue to the racial identity of the "Australians," noting the variety of different dialects but supposing on Brown's authority that there was at least one word (for "eye") shared between dialects. This focus on linguistic affinities and differences reflected the conviction then growing in European thought (and fed by both Anderson and Menzies) that they could be traced back to the origins of human populations. Yet the vocabulary is also of interest because Brown's full list of Indigenous words and names was dominated by those relating to his natural-historical interests, namely words for plants and for parts of the human body.<sup>137</sup>

On his subsequent journey to Van Diemen's Land (after the Flinders expedition had concluded) Brown compiled further vocabularies that were also dominated by words for body parts.<sup>138</sup> That Brown, a natural historian trained in medicine, should rely on anatomy and physiology as a framework for linguistic investigation is hardly surprising. Yet the link here, between physiology and language, reflected his underlying interest in both as means for racial classification. On 4 January 1804, for instance, during his trip to Van Diemen's Land, Brown encountered Indigenous peoples near present-day Hobart and provided a detailed account of their physiology: "In their persons & colour they exactly resemble the inhabitants of N[ew] S[outh] Wales. In stature they do not fall short of them & are rather better made especially in having fuller calves to the legs. Their hair however is wool[l]y tho I think not

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 238.

<sup>135</sup> Compare, for instance, Ibid., 244, 259.

<sup>136</sup> Matthew Flinders, *A Voyage to Terra Australis; Undertaken for the Purpose of Completing the Discovery of that vast Country and Prosecuted in the years 1801, 1802, and 1803, in His Majesty's Ship The Investigator...*, vol. 2 (London, 1814), 214–15.

<sup>137</sup> Brown, *Nature's Investigator*, 356–8.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 482–3.

so much crispd nor so full a black as the African negro.”<sup>139</sup> Brown’s language reflected the emergent discourse of race not only in focusing on specific physical features (such as hair or skin color), but also in his explicitly comparative comments which implied a broader system of racial classification. Tellingly, such criteria were not regarded as sufficient in themselves, and Brown still sought to describe Indigenous dress, ornamentation, tools and implements. In particular, he also sought to compile another vocabulary, though in doing so he unwittingly provided an insight into the insuperable difficulties he faced as an ethnographer. To him, nothing could be plainer than the physical signs of race and variety on and in the human bodies before him, yet he could not understand the reticence of those very Indigenous people to supply him with the information he sought. As he recorded of this interview, “I could not get them to understand that I wishd to have their names for the diff[eren]t parts of the body.”<sup>140</sup> Brown read this reticence as a frustration to his pursuit of an objective “science of man.” Yet Brown also testified that his Indigenous interlocutors reflected his enquiring gaze straight back by expressing their own “admiration & surprize at the colour of our skins, which we bar[e]d at their request.” Though he did not make the inference, the incident showed that complexions were merely incidental differences when compared to universal human curiosity in one another.

## CONCLUSION

Together, Anderson, Menzies and Brown offer us a window into the development and colonial application of Scottish Enlightenment thought in the late eighteenth century. Their fragmentary and incomplete writings provide an opportunity for us to gauge the influence of a remarkably similar educational immersion in Edinburgh’s Enlightenment. Yet were this all, it would merit no special attention. Each of them is of interest because they were part of a much wider group of medically trained Scottish travellers at the forefronts of Britain’s global and colonial expansion. By education and experience, this group imbibed both the stadial ideas of Scottish moral philosophy and the methods of natural history thanks to the melding of both by means of medicine. Taking this group as a subject of enquiry places the global reach of the Scottish Enlightenment in a different register, one that is not primarily focused on the percolation of Scottish texts through the rarefied world of elite culture. By focusing on this group, attention can be paid to how ideas and arguments travelled in the minds of medicos who applied and

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 469–70.

<sup>140</sup> This and following quote from *ibid.*, 470.

adapted them in a remarkably wide range of global and colonial contexts. This was no innocent intellectual endeavor for, as each was aware in different ways, the shadow of Britain's empire loomed. Though Anderson had derided Cook's performance of possession on Kerguelen Island as "ridiculous," Menzies explicitly recommended sites for future colonies on the Pacific northwest coast of Canada.<sup>141</sup> Regardless of their personal views on empire, however, each of them evinced a globalizing aspiration in pursuing a "science of man" which sought, as Brown's reading aboard the *Investigator* showed, to render the evident diversity of humanity within the terms of European thought. Here, then, is a colonial register of Scottish Enlightenment thought embodied, perhaps nowhere more ominously, than in the work of travelling medical ethnographers who consolidated the predominance of discourse on race.<sup>142</sup>

Over the course of years between Anderson's journeys with Cook in the 1770s, Menzies's travels in the 1790s, and Brown's in the very early years of the nineteenth century, this discourse took a harder form. All three men employed a language of physiological description of human diversity that reflected their medical education with its focus on the human subject forever prone to the baleful or beneficial effects of climate, food and exercise that animated, channelled, coarsened or sharpened sensibility. Each had been trained to understand this intimate relation in multiple ways: as surgeons mastering knowledge of the physical structure of bodies; as physicians diagnosing and treating by means of identifying cause and effect; as natural historians interrogating natural phenomena by comparison, contrast and classification; but also as moral philosophers interpreting the stadial historical development of societies. While Anderson and Menzies hedged their reliance on physical description with frank acknowledgments of stadial factors exhibited in manners and customs, in warfare and in habitations, by 1800 Brown had come to rely more heavily on physiological markers—skulls and skin color—which he explicitly tied to a comparative framework for classifying human races.<sup>143</sup>

Both British and French expeditions to circumnavigate Australia placed considerable importance on anatomical collecting. That importance attests to the hardening of European ideas of race as a means to explain human

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<sup>141</sup> "Anderson's Journal," 769.

<sup>142</sup> Silvia Sebastiani, "Anthropology beyond Empires: Samuel Stanhope Smith and the Reconfiguration of the Atlantic World," in László Kontler, Antonella Romano, Silvia Sebastiani and Borbála Zsuzsanna Török, eds., *Negotiating Knowledge in Early Modern Empires: A Decentred View* (New York, 2014), 208–11.

<sup>143</sup> On one occasion, Brown did record finding "what I suppose was the tomb of one or perhaps several of the natives ... the Skull being tolerably perfect. I brought it off." Brown, *Nature's Investigator*, 231.

diversity. It also attests to the close connection between the development of race and the spread of European colonization. On both expeditions, anatomical collecting was not negotiated or contracted, but conducted often by grave robbing, though sometimes by dint of violent contact between Indigenous people and the colonists. Emblematic here was a violent incident at a place Matthew Flinders named Blue Mud Bay (on the eastern coast of Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory of Australia) on 21 January 1803. Here, an unnamed Yolngu warrior was shot and killed near the shore, and Flinders commanded that his crew “bring off the body.”<sup>144</sup> This was in fact duly done, and the artist aboard the *Investigator*, William Westall, provided a sketch of the dead warrior upon the sand.<sup>145</sup> Westall depicted the prone warrior with his foot severed, and placed in the foreground, hinting that the recovery of the body was to serve what Flinders allusively described as “anatomical purposes.” The warrior’s body was anatomized on the beach by the ship’s surgeon, Hugh Bell. Brown accompanied the expedition ashore. It was Brown’s botanical assistant, Peter Good, who recorded that “the Surgeon Cut off [the Yolngu warrior’s] ... Head & took out his Heart & put them in Spirits.”<sup>146</sup> Afterward, the body was hove overboard, and seen being consumed by sharks trailing the ship.

Brown gave a detailed account of the confused encounter that ended with lethal violence that was broadly consistent with Flinders’s own description of the Yolngu man as “innocent.” Yet Brown recorded almost nothing of the anatomizing of the warrior’s body. Historians have been reluctant to draw clear lines of interpretation around this incident, contrasting the notes of confusion and “ambivalence” echoing in the written accounts, with the brutal dismemberment and disposal of the warrior’s body.<sup>147</sup> Brown’s own silence here echoes a reticence throughout his notes to speak of his own anatomical collecting. It is Westall’s image that fills Brown’s strange silence about this scientific dismemberment. His image serves to remind us that Brown’s reticence was an eloquent testimony to the intimate connections then intensifying between colonization and the Scottish Enlightenment’s natural-historical, medical and moral-philosophical “science of man.”

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 346–7; , *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, 175.

<sup>145</sup> “Blue Mud Bay, Body of a Native Shot on Morgan’s Island 1803,” National Library of Australia, PIC Solander Box B26 #R4357. See Elisabeth Findlay, *Arcadian Quest: William Westall’s Australian Sketches* (Canberra, 1998), 34.

<sup>146</sup> Peter Good, *The Journal of Peter Good, Gardener on Matthew Flinders’ Voyage to Terra Australis 1801–3*, ed. Phyllis Edwards (London, 1981), 112. Brown, *Nature’s Investigator*, 348, does not mention participation in anatomizing the body but did note the bullet wound.

<sup>147</sup> Bronwen Douglas, *Science, Voyages, and Encounters in Oceania, 1511–1850* (Basingstoke, 2014), 128–9.