



French Anthropology in 1800

George W. Stocking, Jr.

Isis, Vol. 55, No. 2 (Jun., 1964), 134-150.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0021-1753%28196406%2955%3A2%3C134%3AF%3E2.0.CO%3B2-F>

Isis is currently published by The University of Chicago Press.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/ucpress.html>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating and preserving a digital archive of scholarly journals. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

French Anthropology in 1800

By George W. Stocking, Jr.*

I. The *Société des Observateurs de l'Homme* and the Baudin Expedition to Australia

THE *Société des Observateurs de l'Homme* is today almost unknown to professional "observers of man" outside of France.¹ Such a fate was hardly envisioned by the secretary of the *Société* on the evening of August 24, 1800, when he offered to a distinguished company of scientists and explorers a toast "to the progress of anthropology": "May our society some day be honored for its useful researches and its illustrious correspondents!"² And indeed the world's first anthropological society deserves better of its descendants than its present oblivion. Regardless of the current estimate of the utility of its researches, a look at them may tell us something about subsequent developments in 19th-century anthropological thought.

The *Société* was founded late in 1799 by Louis François Jauffret (1770–1850), a minor French literary figure whose romantic, pedagogic bent and popular scientific interests are reflected in the title of his *Promenades in the country . . . made with the purpose of giving to young people an idea of the happiness which can result for man from the study of himself and from the contemplation of nature*. As its motto ("connais-toi toi-même") sug-

* University of California, Berkeley. The research and writing of this essay were facilitated by fellowship support from the University of California, Berkeley. The author would also like to acknowledge the helpful suggestions of John Greene, Roger Hahn, Robert Heizer, and Thomas Metcalf.

¹ Dismissed as "shortlived" in T. K. Penniman, *A Hundred Years of Anthropology* (London: Duckworth, 1935), p. 365, the *Société* goes unmentioned in A. C. Haddon, *History of Anthropology* (London: C. A. Watts & Co., Ltd., 1949), R. H. Lowie, *The History of Ethnological Theory* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1937), and W. Mühlmann, *Geschichte der Anthropologie* (Bonn: Universitäts-Verlag, 1948). Around the turn of the century, the papers of L.-F. Jauffret, which included some of the manuscript records of the *Société*, were given to the *Société d'Anthropologie de Paris*, and Georges Hervé published several of them: "Le Chinois Tchong-A-Sam à Paris; note et rapport inédits de L.-F. Jauffret et de Le Blond à la Société des Observateurs de l'Homme (an VIII)," *Bulletins et mémoires de la Société d'Anthropologie de Paris*, 5^e série, 1909, 10:

171–179; "Le premier programme de l'anthropologie," *Revue scientifique*, 47^e année, 2^e semestre, 1909: 521–528; "Les premiers cours d'anthropologie," *Revue anthropologique*, 1914, 24: 255–260. However, Dr. Henri Vallois, in gracious response to my written inquiry, has informed me that when he became secretary of the *Société d'Anthropologie* in 1938, an inventory of its archives revealed no trace of the papers. My account is based primarily on the records published by Hervé and on references to the activities of the *Observateurs* in the French government newspaper, *Le gazette nationale ou le moniteur universel*, as well as on biographies of several of its leading figures. I have referred also to the account by Mlle. M. Bouteiller, "Le Société des Observateurs de l'Homme, ancêtre de la Société d'Anthropologie de Paris," *Bulletins et mémoires*, X^e série, 1956, 7: 22–42. The latter, although the best existing record of the *Société* itself, is concerned to the point of overemphasis with their physical anthropological work and does not go on to consider the story of the Baudin expedition.

² *Gazette nationale*, an IX, p. 1422.

gested, the *Société* was animated by a similar spirit. It called on the "profound metaphysician and the practicing physician, the historian and the voyager, he who studies the spirit of languages, and he who guides and protects the first developments of childhood" to free themselves from "all passion, all prejudice and above all from all spirit of system" and to join in a comparative study of man in "all the different scenes of his life." Among those who answered were the biologists Cuvier, Lamarck, Jussieu, and Geoffrey Saint-Hilaire, the physicians Cabanis and Pinel, the chemist Fourcroy, the explorers Bougainville and Levillant, the linguists Destutt de Tracy and Sicard.³

The breadth of their interests is evident in the range of the projects suggested by Jauffret in his introduction to a proposed but never published volume of the *Société's* memoirs: a *Comparative anthropology* of the customs and usages of peoples; an *Anthropological topography of France* to help determine the precise influence of climate on man; a *Comparative dictionary of all known languages*; a "methodical classification of races" based on a complete comparative anatomy of peoples; and a museum of comparative ethnography. Jauffret even proposed an experiment — which he considered possible only in "a century as enlightened as ours" — to determine the characteristics of "natural man" by observing through adolescence infants "placed from their birth in a single enclosure, remote from all social institutions, and abandoned for the development of ideas and language solely to the instinct of nature."⁴

That the *Observateurs* were in the tradition of Newtonian social science and the materialist psychological school of Condillac, Cabanis, and Destutt de Tracy whom Napoleon was to stigmatize as "*idéologues*" is evident both from the names of their members and the reported contents of their public meetings. Theirs was a still undifferentiated anthropology of the broadest scope. It included observations on government, religion, language, customs, material culture, and social and individual psychology. The *Observateurs* were only beginning to be interested in "race," but the "natural history" tradition which nourished 19th-century "ethnology" is clearly evident. Their subject, like that of a twice-weekly lecture series offered by Jauffret in the winter of 1803, was "The Natural History of Man": "the different races of the human genus, the origin and migrations of peoples . . . [and] the physical and moral characters which distinguish them," illustrated, "as often as possible," with "their arms, their tools, their cloths, and other products of their industry."⁵

Although the *Société's* subsequent demise suggests an ill-starred fate, its

³ R. M. Reboul, *Louis-François Jauffret, sa vie et ses oeuvres* (Paris, 1869), esp. p. 34; Hervé, "Le premier programme," p. 521.

⁴ Hervé, "Le premier programme," pp. 522-528; cf. Psammetichus' ancient experiment in to aboriginal race and language, Herodotus, *Histories*, vol. II.

⁵ *Gazette nationale*: an X, pp. 368, 865; an XII, p. 60. See also Hervé, "Les premiers

cours," which reproduces one of Jauffret's lectures. Cf. F. Picavet, *Les idéologues: essai sur l'histoire des idées et des théories scientifiques, philosophiques, religieuses, etc. en France depuis 1789* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1891), *passim*, and C. H. Van Duzer, *Contribution of the Idéologues to French Revolutionary Thought* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1935), *passim*.

early months were favored by an almost providential conjunction of events. Early in March, 1800, Captain Nicholas Baudin (1754–1803) presented to the *Institut national*, the focal institution of French science, a plan for an expedition of scientific and geographical discovery. As revised by a committee of the *Institut* and approved by Napoleon, the primary purpose was to explore the southwest coast of New Holland to settle once and for all the still-mooted question of the unity of the Australian continent; but a whole range of scientific investigations was also envisioned, including studies of Australian man. Not surprisingly, the planning committee turned to the anthropological society to which several of them belonged for help in the more detailed planning of this aspect of the expedition's work. When asked if the *Société* would prepare instructions for studying the "physical, intellectual, and moral" aspects of savage man, Louis Jauffret responded with ecstatic exhortations. The *Observateurs*, rising to this magnificent "occasion to perfect anthropology," produced two memoirs to guide the anthropological activities of the expedition: one by citizen Degérando, "Considerations on the methods to follow in the observation of savage peoples"; one by citizen Cuvier, "An instructive note on the researches to be carried out relative to the anatomical differences between the diverse races of man."⁶

Despite these auspicious beginnings, good luck soon deserted both the *Société* and the expedition to Australia. On October 19, 1800, Baudin's ships set their sails for the antipodes—and for disappointment. Although an able captain, Baudin found himself at constant odds with the unusually large contingent of scientists. By the time the ships reached the île de France (Mauritius) in the Indian Ocean, there was so much dissension that a number of the scientists disembarked and forty-six sailors deserted. But these were nothing to the difficulties which lay ahead. Despite careful outfitting and the preparation of a memoir on diet by a member of the *Institut*, supplies ran low and the ships were racked with scurvy and dysentery. Like many of his men, Baudin did not live to see France again.

The expedition largely failed in its geographical and political purposes, and although its scientific accomplishments were considerable, its important anthropological collections were eventually lost to science. A large portion of these had been intended for the proposed museum of the *Société*. But when the expedition returned in 1804 the *Société* was dead or dying, and these materials, along with others which had been expressly collected for her, became part of the collection of the Empress Josephine. Partially destroyed in 1814, the collection was sold and dispersed in 1829.⁷

⁶ Institut de France, Académie des Sciences, *Procès-verbaux des séances de l'Académie, 1800–1804*, 2: 119. Cf. J. P. Faivre, *L'Expansion française dans le Pacifique, 1800–1842* (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions latines, 1953), pp. 100–104, and Georges Hervé, "À la recherche d'un manuscrit: les instructions anthropologiques de G. Cuvier pour le voyage du 'Geographe' et du 'Naturaliste' aux Terres Australes," *Revue de l'École d'Anthropologie de Paris*, 1910, 20:

296–297. Reboul (*Jauffret, op. cit.*, pp. 38, 127) indicates that Sicard and Halle were also involved in the preparation of instructions. Cuvier's "Note" is reproduced by Hervé; Degérando's "Considerations" are reprinted as "Documents anthropologiques: l'ethnographie en 1800," *Revue d'anthropologie*, 2^e série, 1883, 6: 152–182.

⁷ The most reliable account of the expedition is in Faivre, *op. cit.*, pp. 76–183. See also

After its bright beginning, the *Société des Observateurs de l'Homme* had faded quickly from the historical scene. Although it seems to have split over the proclamation of the Empire, Jauffret in June, 1804, asked Napoleon for permission to add the adjective *impériale* to the *Société's* name. In view of the political antagonism which had developed between him and the *idéologues* as he moved further and further from the revolutionary, anti-clerical liberalism which they epitomized, we may assume that he responded unfavorably. In any case, the *Société* did not last out that year, by the end of which Jauffret, in financial straits, was forced to leave Paris.⁸ A further explanation of the demise was offered in 1869 by Paul Broca, then dean of French anthropology. When the Napoleonic wars deprived it of the anthropological contributions of voyagers, the *Société* turned instead to questions of historical and psychological ethnology: "Natural history was neglected for philosophy, politics and philanthropy."

After about three years of a languishing existence, it was absorbed by the *Société Philanthropique*, leaving in the history of science but faint traces of its having ever existed. . . . The naturalists who had founded it were too eager to coalesce with the schools of pure philosophy and belles-lettres. Anthropology had not yet a sufficiently firm foundation; it was not yet strong enough to gather to itself and use for its own benefit the extrinsic powers it had called to its aid.⁹

Whatever this bit of fossilized reminiscence may tell us of the circumstances of the *Société's* end, it is doubtful that Broca had an adequate understanding of its character. On the contrary, the *Société's* interests were evidently broadly "ethnological" and its motives partially philanthropic from the start. However, Broca's comments do tell us something about the subsequent development of anthropology in France. But to see this development in context, we must look more closely at the two instructional memoirs of the *Société des Observateurs de l'Homme*.

II. Citizen Degérando and the Observation of Savage Man

Citizen Degérando, or Joseph Marie de Gérando (1772–1842), as he was known in less egalitarian times, was one of those more flexible and

R. Bouvier and E. Maynial, *Une aventure dans les mers Australes: l'expédition du Commandant Baudin (1800–1803)* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1947); E. Scott, *Terre Napoléon: A History of French Explorations and Projects in Australia* (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1910); the contemporary account by François Péron, *Voyage de découvertes aux Terres Australes* . . . (2 vols. and atlas, Paris: De l'Imprimerie impériale, 1807–1816); and E. T. Hamy, "Les Collections anthropologiques et ethnographiques du voyage de découvertes aux Terres Australes (1801–1804)," *Bulletin de Géographie historique et descriptive*, 1906: 24–34.

⁸ Bouteiller, *op. cit.*, pp. 463–464. Hervé,

"Les premiers cours," p. 257, and "Le premier programme," p. 521. In 1803, Napoleon reorganized the *Institut* so as to eliminate entirely the *Classe des Sciences morales et politiques*, which had been the *idéologues'* stronghold [Jules Simon, *Une Académie sous le Directoire* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1885)].

⁹ P. Broca, "Histoire des progrès des études anthropologiques depuis la fondation de la Société en 1859," *Mémoires de la Société d'Anthropologie*, 1869, 3: cvii–cviii. Cf. Bouteiller, *op. cit.*, pp. 463–464, and E. T. Hamy, "Un chapitre oublié de l'histoire de l'anthropologie française," *Association française pour l'avancement des sciences, Compte rendu de la 30^{me} session*, Première partie, 1901: 75–76.

eclectic *idéologues* who were able to adjust to the increasingly conservative atmosphere of the Napoleonic era. He found his calling in 1799 when the *idéologues*, from their stronghold in the *Classe des Sciences morales et politiques* of the *Institut*, proposed a contest on the "influence of symbols on the formation of ideas." Degérando, who had traveled a circuitous route from a royalist background to a place in the ranks of the army of the Republic, submitted the prize-winning memoir. Called to Paris, he soon became an associate member of the *Classe . . . morales*, entered the service of the government, and began a long and active career as philosopher, publicist, philanthropist, and *Observateur de l'Homme*.¹⁰

The "Considerations on the methods to follow in the observation of savage peoples" is a fascinating document. Degérando, at this point thoroughly within the *idéologiste* tradition, maintained that the "science of man" shared the method of the natural sciences: beginning with careful observation, one proceeded to comparative analysis, and from there to the "general laws" of human development and behavior. And among men, savages were especially suited to such study, since man in a more primitive state was subject to fewer modifying influences, and it was thus easier "to penetrate nature and to determine its essential laws."¹¹

Unfortunately, the science of man had so far foundered on the inadequacy of past observations. Whether because of the brevity of visits or the whims of attention, most existing accounts of savages were extremely unsystematic and incomplete. But worse than this, their content was of uncertain validity. Frequently misjudging a nation by a single individual, or on the basis of an initially hostile reception, past voyagers had been guilty of all sorts of "doubtful hypotheses," which often resulted from their tendency to judge savage customs by analogy to their own. "Thus, after certain actions, they attribute to . . . [savages] certain opinions, certain needs, because in us . . . [these actions] ordinarily result from these needs or opinions. They make the savage reason in our manner, when the savage has not himself explained his reasoning. So it is that they often pronounce such severe sentences on a nation, that they have accused them of cruelty, of theft, of debauchery, of atheism." Worst of all was the almost universal failure to learn the savage language. How else could one appreciate their "manner of seeing and feeling," or record "the most secret and essential traits of their character," or interpret their traditions for information on the peopling of the earth and the "diverse causes for the present state in which nations are found?" Small wonder that most travel accounts "transmit to us bizarre descriptions which amuse the idle curiosity of the vulgar, but which furnish no information useful for the scientific spirit."¹²

Part of the difficulty of adequate observation could be overcome by the use of "regular tables" on which observations could be recorded in proper order, in precise and nonevaluative descriptive terminology. But the

¹⁰ J. F. Michaud, *Biographie universelle, ancienne et moderne* (2nd ed., Paris, 1880), vol. XVI, pp. 276-279.

¹¹ Degérando, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-155; Picavet, *op. cit.*, pp. 498 ff.

¹² Degérando, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-159.

problem of language was crucial; the best way to understand savages was to become "like one among them," and only by learning their language could one become their "fellow-citizen." To do so one started from scratch — or from *tabula rasa* — and followed an orderly progression based on the assumptions of *idéologue* psychology. Since the articulate language of the savage was no doubt "composed of symbols as arbitrary and conventional as our own," one must begin, as with children, "with the language of action," learning and recording first indicative, then descriptive, and finally, metaphorical gestures. Contact thus established, the observer used gestures to learn the words of articulate language in the order of "the generation of ideas": from sensible objects to sensible qualities (e. g., colors) to sensible actions (e. g., walking), and only then to terms of relationship (e. g., adverbs). From simple associations one advanced to complex and thence to abstract ideas, of which even "savages cannot be utterly deprived." Starting with those based on the least repeated comparisons, one progressed through more complex ideas to the summit of associationist epistemology: the reflective idea, always guarding against ascribing to savages "the reasonings of our *philosophes*."¹³

Even before mastering the savage language, one could begin observations of the savage individual and his society. These too were to be ordered within a similar *idéologue* framework. Materialist and environmentalist in outlook, the *idéologues* viewed human societies as systems of atomic individuals related by Newtonian laws of social attraction; one began therefore with a description of physical environment, and then of the physical characteristics of a typical individual: his bodily strength, movements, health, longevity, etc. From body one advanced to mind over the bridge of sensation, which Degérando apparently intended to explore by a series of psychophysical tests of the savage's sensory apparatus. From sensation the observer followed once more the same associationist progression through simple and complex ideas on ultimately to the savage's "faculties," still in genetic sequence: imagination, attention, memory, foresight, and (perhaps) reflection. Only thus could one determine the precise position "which this individual occupies in the scale of intellectual perfection."¹⁴

After thus defining the individual elements—with suitable regard for variation due to age, sex, or individual circumstance—one observed them in social interaction. On the level of "domestic society" one must observe

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 156, 159–162. Degérando's approach to language was not idiosyncratic; neither is it outdated. At that time, one of the burning topics among Parisian intellectuals was Victor, a "wild" boy who had been found in the Caune Woods in 1799. The physician J.-M.-G. Itard took the boy in hand and made considerable progress teaching him to speak, using a method based on the same principles as those of Degérando. See Itard's *Rapports et mémoires sur le sauvage de l'Aveyron* (1801, 1806), trans. by G. and M. Humphrey as *The*

Wild Boy of Aveyron (New York/London: The Century Co., 1932); cf. Georges Hervé, "Le sauvage de l'Aveyron devant les Observateurs de l'Homme (avec le rapport retrouvé de Philippe Pinel)," *Revue anthropologique*, 1911, 21: 383–398, 411–454. Roger Brown, in *Words and Things* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1958), p. 4, described Itard's work as "founded on an analysis of the basic psychology of language which is the same" as his own.

¹⁴ Degérando, *op. cit.*, pp. 164–171.

“the state of women” (did the sex retain even among savages “something of its sweet and secret empire” ?); “modesty” (was there “such a degree of brutalization among some savages that the women . . . go [naked] in front of men without blushing” ?); “love” (did it fix itself “on a single individual” ?); “marriage” (which would only exist “in a society already somewhat developed”); and “the moral education of infants.”¹⁵

The “general society” which Degérando saw as an “aggregation of families” was then to be observed in its four major aspects: political, civil, economic, and ethical-religious. Were there partial intermediate aggregations or distinctions in rank? While a pastoral or hunting people would doubtless have no idea of property in land, did they have an idea of property in the tools or products of their labor? Up to what point were they sensible of the affections which unite men in larger groups? Did they love liberty? Did they regard an exterior cult as a necessary link to a Supreme Being? Were their priests interested only “in maintaining their nation in ignorance and barbarism”? Finally, and most difficult to penetrate, were the “traditions” of the savages, which could “cast a precious light on the mysterious history of these nations.” And as the capstone to all observation in the field, the *voyageur-philosophe* might bring back to France a family of savages: “We would then possess in microcosm the image of that society from which they had been carried away.”¹⁶

Degérando’s memoir is fascinating simply as a capsule summation of the anthropology of the French Enlightenment. But it is of much more than antiquarian interest to the history of anthropology. For all their empirical rigor, his instructions take for granted a conception of the nature of social change and the method of its proper study which was to become part of the heritage of assumption of late-19th-century social evolutionist ethnology.

For Degérando, the broad outlines of all social change were given in advance. Human nature was fundamentally the same in all times and places, and its development was governed by natural laws: man developed from his earliest state in a slow, unilinear evolutionary progress whose highest present manifestation was Western European society. The exact nature of these laws and the exact course of historical development might be the subject of empirical investigation, but that their existence and essential character were assumed in advance is evident from the manner in which the early “conjectural” history of man was to be reconstructed: the “comparative method.” For whatever mysterious reason, not all human groups had progressed at the same rate, and it was therefore possible to construct “an exact scale of the various degrees of civilization and to assign to each the properties which characterize it,” and thus to reconstruct “the first epochs of our own history.” Why?: because the various societies coexisting in the present *represented* the various stages of this sequence (which was thus in fact assumed in advance). “The *voyageur-philosophe* who sails toward the extremities of the earth traverses in effect the sequence of the ages; he travels in the past; each step he makes is a century over which he leaps.” As Fred-

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 165, 171–173.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 175–180.

erick J. Teggart and his students have pointed out, these assumptions, rooted in classical tradition and elaborated by participants in the quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns, were widespread in late-18th-century social thought. Transmitted to the 19th century through the work of writers such as Comte, they were to become an integral part of the theorizing of Victorian ethnologists.¹⁷

For Degérando, however, these assumptions had even broader significance: they provided a link between his science and his philanthropy. Science outlined the normal course of human development; philanthropy, aided and guided by science, would raise the mysteriously retarded savage to the level of his European brother. If he had not climbed the scale of civilization to its highest point, there was no question of his capacity to do so. "What more touching purpose than to reestablish the holy knots of universal society, than to meet again these ancient parents separated by a long exile from the rest of the common family, than to extend the hand by which they will raise themselves to a more happy state!" Commerce was the key to savage progress, but its role had a scientific rationale. Trade would create in the savages new "needs" and new "desires," and these would lead them on to higher stages. "Always well received, well treated, witness of our happiness, our riches, and at the same time of our superiority, perhaps . . . they will call us to their midst to show them the route which will conduct them to our state. What joy! What conquest!"¹⁸

Degérando was no cultural relativist. Both his analytic categories and his evaluative standards were derived from European culture, which in every important respect was to him the highest expression of human perfectability yet achieved. Just as he felt that savages would benefit from the introduction of European science and economy, so he felt that they would benefit from the introduction of European clothing.¹⁹ But if his own civilization was unquestionably superior, it was not a civilization unique to any ethnos. It was not only French, but European, and in a sense it was more than this: it was human, and all humans could achieve and enjoy it.

What is utterly lacking in Degérando's "Considerations" is any concept of "race," any notion of permanent hereditary differences between the groups of the human family. True, Degérando was preparing the instructions for the observation of man in his "moral" or cultural aspects, but he did not fail therefore to consider the relations of mind and body, or the

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 155; F. J. Teggart, *Theory of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), pp. 99-128; Kenneth Bock, *The Acceptance of Histories: Toward a Perspective for Social Science*, University of California Publications in Sociology and Social Institutions (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956), vol. III; Gladys Bryson, *Man and Society: The Scottish Inquiry in the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1945); and Margaret Hodgen, *The Doctrine of Survivals: A Chapter in the History of*

Scientific Method in the Study of Man (London: Allenson & Co., Ltd., 1936); cf. Arnold van Gennep, "Le Méthode ethnographique en France au XVIII^e siècle," in *Religions, moeurs et légendes, essais d'ethnographie et de linguistique*, 5^{me} série (Paris, 1914), pp. 93-215; and Frank Manuel, *The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959) and *The Prophets of Paris* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962).

¹⁸ Degérando, *op. cit.*, pp. 155, 177.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

effects of individual bodily differences, or the existence of differences between savage groups. But these groups were always "peoples" or "nations," never "races"; and their differences were environmental rather than hereditary. In this Degérando was not completely representative of the *Observateurs*. But he was perhaps representative of something broader: the optimistic and embracing egalitarian humanitarianism of the French Revolutionary tradition.

III. Georges Cuvier and the Preservation of Savage Skulls

To go from Degérando's "Considerations" to Cuvier's brief "Instructive note on the researches to be carried out relative to the anatomical differences between the diverse races of man" is to move in a sense from the 18th into the 19th century. Although they were contemporaries, Degérando was clearly part of a declining tradition accommodating itself to a changed milieu, while Cuvier (1769–1832) represented, indeed might even be said to have promulgated, the point of view which largely dominated biology in the first half of the 19th century: the essentially static, nonevolutionary tradition of comparative anatomy.²⁰

Cuvier's memoir began with a brief summary of the state of physical anthropological thought. Although it had long been known that human races differed in the color of their skin and in the quality of their hair, it had been thought that skeletal differences were due to mechanical environmental causes. Daubenton had even stated that the skulls of Negroes and Chinese did not seem to him sensibly different from those of Europeans. But Camper's method of measuring the facial angle had shown that there were in fact clear-cut racial differences, and the influence that different cranial structures could have on moral and intellectual faculties was beginning to be appreciated. Blumenbach had begun the investigation of 100 crania of different nations and had established "the limits of the variability of the great races of the ancient continent": the black, the yellow, and the white. But he had not enough skulls to distinguish other races so precisely. Neither description nor portraiture, however careful, would suffice for this purpose; it was necessary also to collect the various anatomical specimens in a single location for detailed comparison. But as yet, the material for human comparative anatomy was so scanty that Cuvier described an "entire skeleton" as "infinitely precious."²¹

To obtain one, Cuvier suggested that when the voyagers witnessed or took part in battles with savages, they should not fail to visit "the places where the dead are deposited." Once obtained — "in any manner whatever"

²⁰ E. Nordenskiöld, *The History of Biology: A Survey* (New York/London: A. A. Knopf, 1928), pp. 331–343, 352, 359; Joseph Chaine, *Histoire de l'anatomie comparative* (Bordeaux: E. Daguerre, 1925), pp. 236, 264–291, 379 ff.; J. Viénot, *Georges Cuvier: le Napoléon de l'intelligence, 1769–1832* (Paris: Fischbacher, 1932);

L. Roule, *Cuvier et la science de la nature* (Paris: E. Flammarion, 1926).

²¹ Cuvier, "Note instructive," p. 303; for the state of physical anthropology at this time, see D. J. Cunningham, "Anthropology in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 1908, 38: 10–35.

— each skeleton should be boiled in caustic potash for several hours to remove the flesh, after which the bones were to be put in a bag, labeled, and sent back to Europe where they might be reassembled. It would also be desirable to bring back some skulls with the flesh still intact. One had only to soak them in a solution of corrosive sublimate, set them out to dry, and they would become as hard as wood, their facial forms preserved without attracting insects. True, the sailors might oppose all this as barbarous, but the leaders must remember that a scientific expedition should be “governed only by reason.”²²

Without questioning the scientific utility of such techniques, one must still observe that this was a very different approach to savage peoples from that of Degérando — different in focus, in assumption, and in attitude. Cuvier’s focus was “race,” the permanent inherited physical differences which distinguish human groups. He assumed that “race” was an important factor in determining peculiar cultural characteristics. And for the scientific purpose of this short “Instructive note,” his attitude toward the savage was that of the grave-robber rather than the philanthropist.

IV. François Péron and the Measurement of Savage Strength

The self-styled “anthropologist” who was to carry out the instructions of Cuvier and Degérando was a young medical student named François Péron (1775–1810). Péron had done work in zoology and comparative anatomy under Cuvier at the *Muséum d’histoire naturelle*; and when the girl he loved rejected him, he abandoned his studies in 1800 and resolved to enlist in the Baudin expedition, which was then being fitted out in Le Havre. To bolster his candidacy for the expedition’s scientific roster, Péron circulated a paper with the rather pointed title “Observations on anthropology, or the natural history of man, the necessity of being occupied with the advancement of this science, and the importance of admitting to the fleet of Captain Baudin one or more naturalists specially charged with making researches to this end.” When a last-minute vacancy occurred, Péron, with Cuvier’s support, was appointed to the expedition as *Élève zoologiste*.²³

Péron’s “Observations” are of interest because they present a hypothesis which was to govern his field work quite as much as the memoirs of the *Société*. His specific interest was in the environmental, cultural, and physical factors affecting the characteristic diseases of the polar regions. But in a broader sense his assumptions might be loosely called Rousseauesque. Voyagers and doctors alike documented the “incontestable” fact that savages were generally superior physically to the civilized European. But with this superiority went a physical and moral “insensibility” which ex-

²² Cuvier, “Note instructive,” pp. 305–306.

²³ J. P. F. Deleuze, “Éloge historique de François Péron,” in Péron, *Voyage*, vol. II, pp. 437–439; M. Girard, *F. Péron, naturaliste, voyageur aux Terres Australes; sa vie, appréciation des ses travaux* . . . (Paris: J. B.

Baillière, 1856), pp. 18–21; Émile Guillaumin, *François Péron: enfant du peuple* (Paris, 1937); Institut, *Procès-verbaux*, p. 196; Hervé, “A la recherche,” p. 300; cf. Hervé, “Les premières armes de François Péron,” *Revue anthropologique*, 1913, 23: 1–16.

pressed itself in the savage's ability to withstand pain, and to consume with impatient relish the "still palpitating members" of his unhappy human victims. Could it be, asked Péron, that "moral perfection must be in inverse ratio to physical perfection?"²⁴

Armed with this hypothesis, the two instructive memoirs, and limitless zeal for the advancement of science, Péron set out for Australia. Unfortunately, desertion and death thrust on to him the whole burden of the expedition's zoological work, and his anthropological investigations apparently suffered as a result. Although Péron brought back a human skeleton from Mozambique, there is no evidence in the surviving partial list of anthropological specimens of any systematic attempt to carry out the instructions of Cuvier. And if he collected a considerable body of artifacts and word lists from several languages, there is no indication that he followed Degérando's instructions any more systematically, although his published account of the voyage is interspersed with ethnographic material.²⁵

Péron was much more systematic in testing his own theories on moral and physical perfection through a series of "Experiments on the physical strength of the savage peoples of Diéman's Land [Tasmania], of New Holland, and of the inhabitants of Timor." Here, a century before Haddon's expedition to Torres Straits, is a comparative, quantitative, experimental study of the capacities of native peoples. Péron felt that the results disproved the hypothesis he had brought from France, and in recording them he now attacked those "vain sophists" who would idealize the state of nature and the physical strength of savage man. Basing himself on researches of the physicist Coulomb and employing a dynamometer invented by Regnier, Péron felt he had found a way to test experimentally the conception of the "Noble Savage" by comparing the measured physical strength of Tasmanians, Australians, the Malayans of Timor, and Europeans. The Tasmanians, closest to "un-social man," "children of nature par excellence," represented the very bottom rung of the ladder of civilization, one step below the Australians. For lack of New Guineans, New Zealanders, and Polynesians, Péron had to skip to the Malayans on the sixth rung. The Europeans were of course on the top. And indeed, the physical strength of each group of subjects, scientifically measured and recorded in detailed tables for all to see, varied in direct relation to their degree of civilization.²⁶

In interpreting his results, Péron argued that the lush bounty of their natural habitat made the Malayans lethargic. But only the poverty of their social status could explain the weakness of the Australians and the Tas-

²⁴ Péron, *Observations sur l'anthropologie* . . . (Paris, 1800), pp. 2-7, 9-12 (reprinted in Hervé, "Les premières armes"); A. O. Lovejoy, "The Supposed Primitivism of Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality*," reprinted in *Essays in the History of Ideas* (New York: Putnam, 1960), pp. 14-37.

²⁵ Hamy, "Les Collections anthropologiques"; Cuvier, "Rapport fait au gouvernement par l'Institut impérial, sur le voyage de découvertes aux Terres Australes," in Péron, *Voyage*,

vol. I, pp. vi, xi, xii-xiii; Péron, *Voyage, passim*. Hervé noted that a folio of Péron's anthropological manuscripts was preserved in the Bibliothèque du Muséum du Havre ("Les premières armes," p. 9).

²⁶ Péron, *Voyage*, vol. I, pp. 446-447, 470-484; A. C. Haddon, ed., *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits*, vol. II (*Physiology and Psychology*), (Cambridge: The University Press, 1901-1935).

manians. If these “disinherited children of nature” were to give up “their ferocious and vagabond customs,” and to gather in villages, if “the right of property excited in them a happy emulation” — then the effective resources of their physical environment would multiply, their social state improve, and their “temperament become more robust.” Nor were these the only virtues of the civilized state. Commenting elsewhere on the surprise evinced by Tasmanians at the sexual virility of a French sailor, Péron hypothesized that their own desire was periodic like the animals’. The sustained ability and interest of the European were the product of warm rooms, good food, spiritous liquors, more complex social relations, and leisure.²⁷

Abandoning the ambivalent tradition of Rousseau, Péron seems to have embraced the unqualifiedly optimistic social evolutionism of Degérando; but there is also evidence in his work of an emerging tradition which may be associated with Cuvier. Unlike Degérando, Péron was not indifferent to race. He refers often to the peculiar physical characteristics of different human races, and in fact prepared a memoir on the genital peculiarities of the female Hottentot, which he had investigated on his return trip to France. Indeed, it can be argued that there is in Péron’s second volume the hint of a position which went beyond that which Cuvier himself was able to accept: racial polygenism, or the assumption that human racial differences were aboriginal and dated from man’s first appearance on earth. In a memoir “On certain phenomena of the zoology of southern regions applicable to the physical history of the globe and to that of the human species,” Péron speculated on the then contending geological theories of Vulcanism and Neptunism and on the antiquity of the separation between Tasmania and Australia. Despite their geographical proximity, Péron felt that there was an “absolute difference in the races which people each of these lands.” But for their physical weakness, they were hardly at all similar — neither in “their customs, their usages, their rude arts, nor in their implements for hunting and fishing, their habitations, their pirogues, their arms, nor in their overall physical constitution, the form of their skull, the proportions of their fat, etc.” Péron used these “racial” differences, along with geological and zoological data, to support the view that Tasmania and Australia had been geographically separated since “before the epoch of the population of these countries.” But in view of the title of his memoir, and his further unelaborated comment that these facts offered new proof “of the imperfection of our systems on the communications of peoples, their transmigrations, and the influence of climate on man,” it would seem to me that Péron entertained the then radical — but not unheard of — idea that these two absolutely dissimilar races, whose differences were not easily explained either in terms of migration or climate, were in fact aboriginally distinct.²⁸

²⁷ Péron, *Voyage*, vol. I, pp. 466–467; E. T. Hamy, “Nicolas-Martin Petit, dessinateur à bord du ‘Géographe,’ 1801–1804,” in *Études historiques et géographiques* (Paris, 1896), pp. 404–405.

²⁸ Péron, *Voyage*, vol. II, pp. 304 ff.; 163–165, 182–183.

V. The Decline of the Noble Savage

Péron and Degérando were both gnawed by the problem of the peopling of the earth, or "the mysterious history of these nations." Involved in this mysterious history was the ultimate "why" of the cultural differences among human groups. For Degérando the question remained unanswered. He merely hoped that a study of their traditions would cast light on the "diverse [and presumably adventitious] causes for the present [i. e. backward, and hence abnormal] state in which nations are found." For Péron there is an inkling of a different answer. In the 19th century the answer was increasingly to be found in "race."

The change is evident within the life of Georges Cuvier. In 1790 young Cuvier had chided a friend for believing "some stupid voyagers" who alleged that the Negro and the orangoutang were interfertile, and for attempting to explain "intellectual faculties" on the basis of differences in brain structure. But in 1817, Cuvier maintained that Egyptian civilization had not been created by "any race of blacks" but by men of "the same race as ourselves," who had "an equally large cranium and brain," and who offered no "exception to that cruel law which seems to have condemned to an eternal inferiority the races of depressed and compressed skulls." That same year, in placing man at the head of the *Animal Kingdom*, Cuvier described his "moral" development in much the same social evolutionary terms as had Degérando. But he concluded with a crucial qualification: "There are, however, also certain intrinsic causes which seem to arrest the progress of certain races, even in the most favorable [environmental] circumstances." In the description of three "Varieties of the Human Species" which followed, Cuvier maintained that the civilization of the Mongolian race had remained always stationary and that Negroes had never progressed beyond utter barbarism.²⁹

As it emerged in the later 18th century, the idea of civilization was seen as the destined goal of all mankind. But in the 19th century, more and more men saw it as the peculiar achievement of certain "races." To account for this change is beyond the scope of this paper; here we can do no more than speculatively to suggest several broader contexts. On the level of the logic of ideas, the characteristically "diversitarian" impulse of Romanticism had, as A. O. Lovejoy has pointed out, an important racial potential.³⁰ On a

²⁹ *Lettres de Georges Cuvier à C. M. Pfaff sur l'histoire naturelle, la politique et la littérature, 1788-1792*, trans. by Louis Marchant (Paris, 1858), p. 201, letter of December 31, 1790; Cuvier, "Extrait d'observations faites sur le cadavre d'une femme connue à Paris et à Londres sous le nom de Vénus Hottentotte," *Mémoires du Muséum d'Histoire naturelle*, 1817; 3: 273; *Le Règne animal distribué d'après son organisation . . .* (20 vols.; Paris, 1836), vol. I, pp. 96-99.

³⁰ A. O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (New York:

Harper, 1960), pp. 288-314, esp. p. 313. On the development of racial thought within and outside anthropology, see, among others: Jacques Barzun, *Race: A Study in Modern Superstition* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1937); Hannah Arendt, "Race-thinking before Racism," in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (2nd enl. ed., New York: Meridian Books, 1958); John Greene, "Some Early Speculations on the Origin of Human Races," *American Anthropologist*, 1954, 56: 31-41; T. Simar, "Étude critique sur la formation de la doctrine des races au XVIII^e siècle et son expansion au

general political level, the change may perhaps be viewed as part of the conservative reaction against the egalitarian optimism of the French Revolution. More specifically, it has been suggested that the idea of race arose as a defensive ideology when slavery and the slave trade came under serious attack toward the end of the 18th century.³¹ Negroes seem to have been the last of dark-skinned peoples to be subsumed in the image of the "Noble Savage," which had developed over the past several centuries primarily in relation to the savages of the Americas. Their nobility was tenuous at best, and the bloody history of San Domingo must have led others beside Chateaubriand to ask "who would now plead the cause of the blacks after the crimes they have committed?"³²

Chateaubriand's query was an appeal to changing experience. And indeed, on another level, the change we are discussing may reflect the impact of the developing experience of racial contact. A certain type of "empirical data"—the visible "degradation" of the Tasmanians—seems to have helped undermine Péron's belief in the virtues of savage life. After 1800, when the major exploration and colonization of black Africa had not yet really begun, the "evidence" of such "degradation" was to accumulate as the carriers of a constantly advancing European civilization thrust bodily, and often bloodily, into the remaining "savage" areas of the globe. Such "empirical" data are of course notoriously subject to ideological or conventional distortion. But this is precisely the point. In the late-18th-century heyday of the Noble Savage, the Polynesians of Cook's journals were transformed into the exotic natural men of Hawkesworth's *Voyages*. In the 19th century both the circumstances of racial contact and the conventional framework in which contact was perceived had changed. Hawkesworth's literary transformation became increasingly difficult; observers themselves were more prone to see savages as "degraded." As this happened, the Noble Savage, of whatever hue, led an ever more precarious existence in the imagination of Western Europe and white North America.³³

The change we are discussing can also be seen as a development of the idea of civilization itself. In the 18th century the recently emergent notions of "progress" and "civilization" had existed in tension, often in a single

xix^e siècle," in Académie Royale de Belgique, Classe des Lettres et des Sciences Morales et Politiques, *Mémoires*, 1922, 16; and Walter Scheidt, "The Concept of Race in Anthropology and the Divisions into Human Races from Linnaeus to Deniker," in Earl Count, ed., *This Is Race: An Anthology Selected from the International Literature on the Races of Man* (New York: Schuman, 1950).

³¹ M. F. Ashley Montagu, *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race* (3rd ed.; New York: Harper, 1952), pp. 13-14, 21-22.

³² Quoted in Gaston Martin, *Histoire de l'esclavage dans les colonies françaises* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1948), p. 247, from *Le génie du Christianisme* (1802); cf.

Hoxie Fairchild, *The Noble Savage: A Study in Romantic Naturalism* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1961), pp. 10, 117; Katherine Oakes, "Social Theory in the Early Literature of Voyage and Exploration in Africa," doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1944, p. 229.

³³ Fairchild, *op. cit.*, pp. 106, 299, 362-364; cf. Gilbert Chinard, *L'Exotisme Américain . . .* (Paris: Hachette et C^{ie}, 1911) and *L'Amérique et le rêve exotique . . .* (Paris: Hachette et C^{ie}, 1913), esp. pp. 431-433, and R. H. Pearce, *The Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1953), *passim*.

mind, with older primitivistic ideas which were embodied in the Noble Savage tradition.³⁴ But as the idea of civilization was elaborated simultaneously with the social and material reality which it symbolized, this coexistence became increasingly difficult. With the expansion of industrial civilization, the widening visible gap between savage man and civilized European was no longer so easily to be bridged, nor the former's backward state to be explained simply as "mysterious history." When the ideas of primitivism and of progress in civilization separated, "civilization" lent itself quite easily to — indeed, seemed to some even to call for — a racial interpretation.

This development was explicit as early as 1803 in the writings of Saint-Simon, who was one link between Comtean social evolutionism and its 18th-century antecedents. Saint-Simon felt that the revolutionaries erred in applying to Negroes "the principles of equality." If they had consulted the "physiologists" — among whom Saint-Simon included the *idéologue* Cabanis — "they would have learned that the Negro, because of his basic physical structure, is not susceptible, even with the same education, of rising to the intellectual level of Europeans." If the 18th century thought in terms of a generic human civilization, it was in part simply a reflection of the level of knowledge of human physical differences. Towards 1800, this knowledge was reaching a level which suggested to some men modifications of the 18th-century conception of human nature. These were especially manifest in the work of Cabanis; and indeed, *idéologue* psychology, with its strong physiological bias, was not ill-suited to racial interpretation. In Saint-Simon, these forces came together; and the idea of civilization was seen now in racial terms.³⁵

But if the 19th century thought more in terms of "race," "race" itself had still to be explained. Here the diversitarian and antiegalitarian impulses clashed head on with resurgent religious orthodoxy and the Biblical unity of mankind. The religious conservative could accept "race" as a causal force in history; but at the same time he was forced to explain it as the product of historical environmental processes. All human races had to be reduced to a single Adamic root.

The more daringly heterodox advocates of "race" embraced a doctrine which came later to be called "polygenism": the physical differences between men were too great to be explained as the product of environment within the limited Biblical span of man's existence on earth or to be encompassed within a single species; therefore God must have created other species of man besides Adam. Foreshadowed in classical speculations, advanced in

³⁴ Lois Whitney, *Primitivism and the Idea of Progress in English Popular Literature of the 18th Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1934), *passim*, and the foreword to the same volume by A. O. Lovejoy. On "progress" and "civilization," see J. B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry into Its Growth and Origin* (New York: Dover Publications, 1955); L. Febvre et al., *Civilisation: le mot et l'idée*

(Paris, 1930); and Charles and Mary Beard, *The American Spirit: A Study of the Idea of Civilization in the United States* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1942), pp. 63 ff.

³⁵ *Lettres d'un habitant de Genève*, quoted in Frank Manuel, *The New World of Henri Saint-Simon* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 408. See also pp. 130–138, 158–162, 236, 295–304.

1655 in the *Prae-Adamitae* of Isaac de la Peyrere, the polygenist position was outlined—although in qualified terms—by Lord Kames in his *Sketches of the History of Man* in 1774, and advocated in the last two decades of the 18th century by a handful of other scholars.³⁶

But if it had its 18th-century precursors, polygenism was more widespread in the more congenial social and scientific milieu of the 19th century. Indeed, given the static, nonevolutionary, classificatory point of view of Cuvierian comparative anatomy, polygenism followed easily for those sufficiently uninhibited by religious orthodoxy. On one level, the debate between monogenists and polygenists can be interpreted as one between “lumpers” and “splitters” of the genus *homo*. Both took Cuvier’s definition of species as their starting point, and if Cuvier’s own orthodoxy kept him from embracing polygenism, it can be argued that in important respects the comparative anatomical point of view he developed was congenial to polygenism. Like Cuvier, the polygenists placed narrow limits on the efficacy of environmental forces in modifying living forms; like Cuvier, some of them sought to base their classification on precise measurement of skeletal, and especially cranial, structure; like Cuvier, they all saw cranial differences as the correlates of mental differences which determined racial achievement.³⁷

By 1859, polygenism, despite its heterodoxy, was perhaps the dominant current in physical anthropological thought in France, England, and the United States. If it had never been able to claim the allegiance of such major figures as Blumenbach and Prichard, it nevertheless largely defined the scope of their anthropological thought, which was one long and frequently defensive attempt to prove the unity of mankind. In this sense, polygenism—or, more broadly, the problem of race—was a central concern of pre-Darwinian anthropology.³⁸

Structured by the categories of pre-evolutionary comparative anatomy and Biblical orthodoxy, the debate between monogenists and polygenists did not long survive in a Darwinian milieu. But anthropology had not passed through the turbid waters of pre-Darwinian race thought without undergoing sea-changes of the most profound character. In France, these changes were such that Paul Broca, heir to both the French and American traditions of polygenist thought and founder of the *Société d'Anthropologie de Paris*,

³⁶ H. H. Kames, *Sketches of the History of Man*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: W. Creech, 1788), vol. I, pp. 3–84. On polygenism, see William Stanton, *The Leopard's Spots: Scientific Attitudes Toward Race in America, 1815–1859* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960); T. Bendyshe, “The History of Anthropology,” *Memoirs Read before the Anthropological Society of London, 1863–1864*, 1: 335–360; and the historical chapters of Paul Topinard, *Éléments d'anthropologie générale* (Paris: A. Delahaye et É. Lecrosnier, 1885).

³⁷ Topinard, *op. cit.*, p. 80, *passim*; Stanton, *op. cit.*, *passim*; on Cuvier’s emphasis on skeletal and cranial structure, see H. Daudin,

Cuvier et Lamarck: Les classes zoologiques et l'idée de série animale, 1790–1830 (2 vols.; Paris: F. Alcan, 1926), vol. I, p. 96.

³⁸ According to Topinard, whose sympathies were polygenist, the monogenists and the polygenists were both numerous in the later pre-Darwinian period, but “the polygenists carried the day by the brilliance and celebrity of their publications” (*op. cit.*, p. 86).

³⁹ On Broca, see Topinard, *op. cit.*, pp. 92–97, and Broca’s *On the Phenomena of Hybridity in the Genus Homo* (trans. and ed. by C. C. Blake; London: Longman, Green, Longman, & Roberts, 1864).

could no longer accept the *Société des Observateurs de l'Homme* on their own eclectic "natural historical" terms. By 1859, "anthropology" in France had been largely remodeled along comparative anatomical lines: it was in the first instance physical anthropology, and it was, above all, craniology.³⁹

But by 1860 the impact of race thought had reached even further to affect the tradition of evolutionary ethnology as well. For however similar in method and theory to the writers of the late 18th century, the Victorian ethnologists differed in important respects. By the time European expansion entered its climactic period in the late 19th century, social evolutionism had been largely purged of its primitivistic elements. As Sir John Lubbock put it: "the true savage is neither free nor noble; he is a slave to his own wants, his own passions; . . . ignorant of agriculture, living by the chase, and improvident in success, hunger always stares him in the face, and often drives him to the dreadful alternative of cannibalism or death." For Degérando, the extent of the savage's ability to conceive *abstract ideas* had been an open question. For Herbert Spencer, the issue was no longer in doubt: "Conditioned as he is, the savage lacks *abstract ideas*." The savage mind had been "investigated" and found wanting; human mental differences were now conceived in racial terms. If the Victorian evolutionists still propounded a more or less unilinear scale of social evolution, it was no longer assumed that all men would ascend it to the top. Péron's Tasmanians had vanished from the face of the earth, and many writers foresaw a like fate for other "savage races." As the American Spencerian sociologist Franklin Giddings put it, "There is no evidence that the now extinct Tasmanians had the ability to rise. They were exterminated so easily that they evidently had neither power of resistance nor any adaptability."⁴⁰ Even E. B. Tylor, whose work has been interpreted as an effort to rehabilitate the 18th-century "comparative method" after a half century "period of doubt," differed in important ways from Degérando. For both men, the science of anthropology was "essentially a reformer's science." But the object of their reform was not the same. For Degérando it was the uplift of savage peoples; for Tylor it was the eradication of the last survivals of savagery and barbarism from civilized European society.⁴¹

³⁹ J. Lubbock, *Pre-Historic Times, as Illustrated by Ancient Remains, and the Manners and Customs of Modern Savages* (London: Hertford, 1865), p. 484; H. Spencer, *The Principles of Sociology* (3rd ed., 3 vols.; New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1895-1897), vol. I, p. 78; F. Giddings, *The Principles of Sociology: An Analysis of the Phenomena of Association and of Social Organization* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1896), p. 328.

⁴¹ Hodgen, *Survivals*, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-35;

E. B. Tylor, *Religion in Primitive Culture* (New York: Harper, 1958), p. 539. On the Victorian ethnologists and race, see G. W. Stocking, Jr., "American Social Scientists and Race Theory" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1960), and "The Persistence of Polygenist Thinking in Post-Darwinian Anthropology" (read before the Southwestern Anthropological Association, Berkeley, California, April 21, 1962).