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**Controlling the Dead: an Analysis of the Collecting and
Repatriation of Aboriginal Human Remains**

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ABSTRACT

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CONTROLLING THE DEAD: AN ANALYSIS OF THE COLLECTING AND
REPATRIATION OF ABORIGINAL HUMAN REMAINS

by Cressida Fforde.

Australian Aboriginal human remains were widely procured during the colonial era for scientific research conducted within the race paradigm. The history of the collecting and interpretation of these remains was embedded within, and contributed to, power relations between the West and Australia's indigenes. The study of Aboriginal remains reified pre-existing concepts of racial hierarchy by constructing the Aboriginal body as inferior to that of the European and, in doing so, contributed to what has been termed 'Aboriginalism', a mode of discourse which constructs, guides and constrains European knowledge about the 'Aborigines'. A 'social history' of collected human remains - from their initial collection to their repatriation to Aboriginal communities - reveals how these items have accumulated layers of meaning and are invested with power, a power intricately linked with knowledge and the construction of identity(ies). This power and the integral association of Aboriginal human remains with the identity(ies) of those groups which contest their ownership is shown to lie at the core of the reburial issue and contributes to how the return of ancestral remains has impacted upon Aboriginal people.

The examination and analysis of the procurement, interpretation and repatriation of Aboriginal human remains, supported by a detailed case study of one major British collection and the remains of two known individuals, fills a distinct gap in the historical record. It also contributes to an understanding within the academy of the contemporary significance of human remains for Aborigines, scientists and the relationship between the two.

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Preface.

The object of my analysis is to elucidate the social significance and impact of the collecting and repatriation of Aboriginal human remains by examining the various meanings and values which have been attributed to these items as they have passed from one group of people to another. Central to this analysis is the notion that the meaning of any 'thing' is not intrinsic and fixed but is determined by the social context in which it is situated. As Thomas (1991: 125) has noted in reference to collected ethnographic artefacts:

As socially and culturally salient entities, objects change in defiance of their material stability. The category to which a thing belongs, the emotion and judgement it prompts, and the narrative it recalls, are all historically refigured. What was English or French, in becoming Inuit, is reconstituted socially through indigenous categorisation; similarly, what was Igbo or Javanese, in becoming American or Australian, now conveys something of our projects in foreign places and our aesthetics - something which effaces the intentions of the thing's producers.

As in Lahn's (1996) analysis of the events surrounding and preceding the return of the Kow Swamp fossils to the Echuca Aboriginal community in 1991, I have used Appadurai's (1986) notion, draw from the observations of Mauss (1976) that objects are actors in the social sphere and hence can be viewed as having social lives. This can be considered particularly apt given the manner in which Aboriginal human remains are frequently perceived as both 'objects' and 'people' by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people (see Chapters 3, 4 and 5).

In his reconceptualisation of 'commodity', Appadurai (1986) departed from a production-dominated definition and regarded commoditisation as simply one phase through which objects may pass. Thus, for Appadurai (1986: 9, 13) the important question was not 'what is a commodity?', but 'what kind of social situation defines an object as a commodity?'. Defining such a situation as existing when the exchangeability of an object is its socially relevant feature, Appadurai (1986: 13) shifted the analytical focus away from the object itself and concentrated instead upon its commodity potential as defined by the social contexts through which it moved. From such a perspective, therefore, it is analysis of the movement of human remains through different social contexts (their 'social history') that can elucidate the implications of shifts in their social meaning. From a "theoretical point of

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view human actors encode things with significance, from a methodological point of view it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context” (Appadurai 1986: 5).

My own interest in this subject has grown out of exposure to the views of both archaeologists and indigenous peoples, initially within World Archaeological Congress fora. Without such contact I doubt whether, as an archaeologist trained in the UK, I would have gained such an appreciation of different perspectives on the past. Throughout the course of my research I have been struck by the fact that there is little or no direct contact in the UK between the two groups of people who have the most interest in collected Aboriginal human remains - scientists and Aborigines. Although there have been sporadic visits by Aboriginal people to this country and sometimes confrontational meetings with museum curators, there have been no attempts by those in control of British collections at least to engage Aboriginal people in long-term discussions about the future of these collections. By contributing to an understanding within the academy of the contemporary significance of human remains collections, it is hoped that the relationship of science to its ‘data’ may be re-assessed, and the interests of others in collected human remains re-evaluated.

Although in this thesis Aboriginal human remains are once again integral to academic analysis, I have sought not to be complicit with past and present hegemonic discourse in which scientific interest in such items has objectified and imposed identities upon Aboriginal people (see Chapters 3 and 5). Rather, it is my intention that this thesis contributes to an ‘oppositional’ discourse (Attwood 1992: xiv) by examining the ways in which such objectification occurs and how Aboriginal human remains have been a locus for processes that have both disempowered *and* empowered Aboriginal people. The collecting and repatriation of human remains is therefore presented as one in which Aboriginal people are active participants rather than passive victims of European action. In so doing, I am aware of the sensitivity that may surround recording the names of the dead and descriptions of the treatment of Aboriginal human remains documented in this thesis. I have retained these details in the text both on the advice of Aboriginal people and in the belief that the dissemination of documentation about the history of collecting and collections is of crucial importance given the general scarcity of such information and its

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great significance not only for Aboriginal people but for archaeologists and anthropologists also. For if these two disciplines are to understand their present relationship with Aboriginal people they must be aware of this relationship's historical context. I have included a short warning at the beginning of the thesis advising readers of the sensitive nature of its contents.

Throughout the text 'remains' and 'Aboriginal remains' refer to Aboriginal human remains unless otherwise indicated. ID numbers refer the reader to entries in Appendix 1.2.7., the analytical catalogue of Aboriginal human remains sent to the University of Edinburgh. The term 'scientists' is used to cover *only* those individuals in existing or past professions which have held a scientific interest in Aboriginal human remains (archaeologists, comparative anatomists, phrenologists, physical anthropologists, osteologists etc.) and does not refer to practitioners in any other scientific fields. As has become apparent throughout my research, the term 'tradition', when applied to Aboriginal ceremony and culture, is problematical and even misleading. Nonetheless, given its extensive usage in modern parlance I have retained the term, although placing it within inverted commas throughout the text. For practical purposes I have used the term 'reburial' even though returned remains may never have previously passed through funerary ceremony and may be accorded final disposition that does not involve burial. Finally, except where indicated, all interviews with the Palm Island community are referenced by the letters 'P.I.' and a number in Roman numerals followed by the date on which the interview took place (e.g. "Interview P.I.v 1.10.1995"); other interviews are referenced by a letter and the date on which the interview took place (e.g. Interview D 4.8.1995).

Note.

Readers are warned that this thesis includes information of a sensitive nature about the treatment of the human remains of named and unknown Aboriginal people.

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Chapter 1. Objects of Science: human remains and the analysis of human difference.

The physical variety of humankind has long been a subject of description and interpretation, contributing to Western definitions of human difference since at least the time of the ancient Greeks. This history is characterised by the persistence of, and tension between, two conceptual approaches to human diversity. The first, and most orthodox, advocates the essential unity of the human species and has traditionally explained variety as the product of external factors. The second places more emphasis on the differences within humankind, considering these to be both innate and immutable. Until the mid-twentieth century, each approach has always assumed a fundamental connection between biology and culture, an assumption that has commonly led to the attachment of human 'worth' to physical characteristics; belief in the unity of humankind did not, as might be expected, necessarily imply an egalitarian attitude towards other peoples.

As Stocking (1988: 3) and Stepan (1982: xi) have noted, in the fourth century B.C. the Hippocratic Corpus employed environmental causation to explain the differences in physical and mental characteristics of various peoples in Europe and Asia (Lloyd 1978: 148-169). The Corpus provides what may be the earliest record of characteristic headform being used to define a group of people: the Macrocephali, so called because "no other race has heads like theirs" (Lloyd 1978: 161). This shared feature was believed to have been caused by both nature and nurture - initially the result of artificial deformation, elongated headshape had eventually become an inherited characteristic. Although the Hippocratic Corpus assigned the finest temperament to the Greeks, allegedly because they were exposed to the 'best' climate, in general the text takes a relativist approach to human diversity and there is little use of the tenets of biological determinism or the ascription of inferiority to other peoples. Indeed, as Gould (1981: 19-20) has observed, in Plato's Republic (Book III 414d-415d), Socrates recognised the notion of innate social worth to be a "lie".

The Hippocratic Corpus restricted its observations to the Mediterranean region, and did not describe the various monstrous peoples believed to inhabit areas much further east. Recorded by a succession of Greek writers, descriptions of the strange and remarkable inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent became widely available to the Latin world through the work of Pliny the Elder. Employing both physical and cultural criteria, some of the 'monstra' in Pliny's *Natural History* were defined by their bodily features while others were distinguished by their unique behaviour (Friedman 1981: 5-25). Although some of the beings are now known to be fantastic, such as the Blemmyae (who had their faces in their chests) and the Cyclopes (giants with a single eye found in the centre of their forehead) others, such as the Pygmies, actually existed beyond the boundaries of the Classical world (Friedman 1981: 5-25; Stocking 1988: 3-4).

In his analysis of the monstrous races, Friedman (1981: 9-19) describes how Pliny's compendium continued to be used as a record of human difference throughout the Middle Ages, its descriptions - or variations thereof - surfacing in the literature and art of that period. The lack of any mention of the Plinian races in the Old Testament meant that they were "denied an ancestry in both classical and Hebrew thought" (Friedman 1981: 87) and Medieval scholars were therefore curious as to their origin and meaning. There was speculation, for example, as to whether the monstra were human, whether they were part of God's creation or victims of divine punishment, whether they were signs from God, and whether they were descended from Adam - perhaps the evil and deformed progeny of Cain (Friedman 1981: 87-130). As the geographical boundaries of the known world expanded, the location of the monstrous peoples shifted accordingly, so that they maintained their position at the outermost ends of the earth. Always distanced from European civilisation in physical form and/or culture and geography, monstrous peoples were quintessentially alien.

As noted by Stocking (1988: 4), the first European travellers to the Americas did not find the Plinian races they had expected. However, the indigenous groups that they did encounter soon became the target of debates that had previously surrounded the origin of the 'monstra'. Affirming orthodox belief in the unity of mankind, the Church debated and in 1550 eventually accepted the humanity of the Indians (Stocking 1988: 4). It was also in the mid-sixteenth century that physical differences between European populations

began once again to be a subject of scientific observation. For the first time, distinctive physical characteristics shared by human groups were observed in their skeletal remains. Thus, included within anatomist Andreas Vesalius' *De Humani Corporis Fabrica Libri Septem* are descriptions and depictions of distinct skull shapes allegedly exhibited by the various inhabitants of different European nations. In a similar fashion to the Hippocratic Corpus, Vesalius attributed these differences to tradition. For example, the wide heads and compressed occiputs of German crania were believed to have been produced by the practice of swaddling infants and placing them to sleep on their backs (Blumenbach 1775: 114-15).

In the later seventeenth century, further encounters with different indigenous populations coupled with a new analytical approach to plant and animal diversity facilitated the scientific classification of humankind. Instead of following the biblical tradition and separating humans into three lineages fathered by Ham, Shem and Japheth, the earliest classifications usually contained four or five divisions (Stocking 1988: 4). Thus, as noted by Stocking (1988: 4-5), in 1684 Francois Bernier proposed a system of classification that was the first to employ explicitly 'racial' divisions. He observed that while humans exhibited extensive individual variety there were still "four or five species or races of men in particular whose difference is so remarkable that it may be properly made use of as the foundation for a new division of the earth" (Bernier 1684: 361). Although Bernier did not contemplate the origins of human diversity, this topic continued to be the subject of debate which, as before, could be divided between those who advocated unity and those who advocated plurality. An essay written in 1695 by "L. P." of Oxford illustrates the lack of consensus on the issue at the end of the seventeenth century, discussing the advantages and disadvantages of both approaches, for:

the West Indies, and the vast regions lately discovered towards the south, abound with such variety of inhabitants and new animals, not known or even seen in Asia, Africa, or Europe, that the origin of them doth not appear to be clear, as some late writers pretend (L.P. 1695: 365).

The next major step in the history of human classification was the work of monogenist Carl von Linneaus which, for the first time, placed humans within the animal kingdom. Demonstrating the tenacity of the Plinian tradition, Linneaus' *Systemae Naturalae* (1735-1760) classified 'wildmen' and 'monsters' within *Homo sapiens*. The rest of humankind

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was divided into four 'varieties' which used physical and cultural criteria as distinguishing characteristics. Thus, *Homo Sapiens Americanus* was reddish, choleric, obstinate, contented and regulated by customs; *Europeanus* was white, fickle, sanguine, blue eyed, gentle and governed by laws; *Asiaticus* was sallow, grave, dignified, veracious, and ruled by opinions; and *Afer* was black, phlegmatic, cunning, lazy, lustful, careless, and governed by caprice (Haller 1971: 4 and see Bendyshe 1865: 421-458).

Although Linneaus was the first to provide a taxonomy of the human species, his classification of humankind was not widely accepted. Even at this early stage, there was considerable disagreement about the number of human varieties and the criteria that should be used to define them. As the comparative anatomist, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1775: 99) was to comment, "very arbitrary indeed both in number and definition have been the varieties of mankind accepted by eminent men". Thus, for example, Georges Louis Le Clerc, the Count de Buffon, divided humankind into six varieties and employed colour, disposition, figure and stature to distinguish between them (Buffon 1785: 57). Unlike Linneaus, Buffon was judgmental in his descriptions of various non-European peoples, his observations of Australian Aborigines illustrating early assumptions of a racial hierarchy as well as what may be a continuation of the Greek and Medieval tradition of viewing peoples at the 'outermost ends' as inferior and bestial: "the natives of the coast of New Holland ... are perhaps the most miserable of the human species, and approach nearest to the brutes" (Buffon 1785: 94).

Whatever number of varieties they defined, Linneaus and Buffon only employed discernible external physical features for their respective classifications of humankind - an approach used in the 'systematic' method of taxonomy widely employed at that time. Indeed, zoology as a whole was largely dominated by the classification and description of organisms by their outward appearance. However, there were a small group of eighteenth century zoologists who rejected this approach and instead advocated the prime importance of anatomy to an understanding of the animal organism (Visser 1985: 1, 23). This group pioneered the new morphological school of zoology, usually termed comparative anatomy, which emerged in the second half of the eighteenth century. Prominent amongst this circle were the Dutch anatomist and artist Petrus Camper,

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English surgeon-anatomist John Hunter and the German Professor of Medicine, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (Visser 1985: 23-24; Stocking 1988: 5).

1.1. Quantifying human difference.

Camper's interest in comparative anatomy began in the 1740s, when as a student at Leiden University he had disassociated himself from the practice of classifying organisms purely by their external features, regarding anatomy as the key to understanding the natural history of the animal kingdom (Visser 1985: 24). Camper observed that Africans had frequently been mistakenly depicted as black Europeans with no attempt made to represent the underlying differences in cranial structure. Having "contemplated the inhabitants of various nations with greater attention" Camper (1794: 8):

conceived that a striking difference was occasioned, not merely by the position of the inferior maxilla, but by the breadth of the face and the quadrangular form of the maxilla.

Although other scholars had previously observed that various groups of people exhibited distinctive head forms (Visser 1985: 107), Camper was the first to employ systematically a quantitative method to distinguish between them. In addition, he invented what may have been the first tool of craniometry - a device which held skulls in a specific position so as to facilitate their measurement (Camper 1794: 32-44). Using the facial angle (or Camper's Angle), an index that expressed the degree of facial slope, Camper arranged human and animal skulls on an hierarchical scale:

When in addition to the skull of a Negro, I had procured one of a Calmuck, and had placed that of an ape contiguous to them both, I observed that a line drawn along the forehead and the upper lip indicated this difference in national physiognomy; and also pointed out the degree of similarity between a Negro and the ape. By sketching some of these features upon a horizontal plane, I obtained the lines which mark the countenance, with their different angles. When I made these lines to incline forwards, I obtained the face of an antique, backwards, of a Negro; still more backwards, the line marks the ape, a dog, a snipe etc. This discovery formed the basis of my edifice (Camper 1794: 9).

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As well as quantifying racial difference, the perceived similarity between apes and Africans, and the hierarchy inferred by this gradation of humans and animals, the facial angle carried with it an implicit measurement of intelligence. Camper was aware that Greek artistic tradition had always represented deities with a facial angle of 100 degrees - denoting wisdom - and that stupidity was widely associated with a decrease in facial slope (Haller 1971: 10-11). Nonetheless, Camper's works contain little of the negative descriptions of indigenous groups which other scholars, such as Buffon, commonly employed.

Although the facial angle initially met with severe criticism from Blumenbach (1795: 235-236) and later the naturalists William Lawrence (1844: 246) and James Cowles Prichard (1843: 46, 53; Stepan 1982: 34), both of whom questioned its reliability as a guide to racial difference, by the mid-nineteenth century it is believed to have been the "most frequent means of explaining the gradation of the species" (Haller 1971: 11) and the "standard parameter in the physical description of man" (Visser 1985: 107). Facial slope was simple to measure and, as Stepan (1982: 34) suggests, the endurance of Camper's Angle is probably related to the ease with which it 'attached' skull shape to racial worth.

Despite observing a morphological similarity between apes and Africans, Camper (1794: 32) strongly opposed the view that "the races of blacks originated from the commerces of the whites with ourangs and pongos; or that these monsters by gradual improvements became men". Instead, he believed that all human races were of one species descended from a single pair "formed by the immediate hand of God" (Camper 1794: 16). Rejecting the role of cultural practices, Camper (1794: 17, 22-31) contended that variety of headshape, and of other physical characteristics, was solely due to environmental causation.

Employing comparative anatomy to illustrate the principles of unity (today generally known as 'monogenism') Camper took the opportunity afforded by his public dissection of a "Negro lad" in Amsterdam's anatomical theatre to demonstrate "all those diversities in the cranium which nature has effectuated [sic]" (Camper 1794: 23). To facilitate his research into racial diversity he also assembled a collection of crania:

Exclusive of several skulls of my countrymen, and of the adjacent nations, I possess two English Negroes (the one was a young person, the other advanced in years) - the head of a female hottentot, and of an inhabitant of Mogul, a Chinese, a youth of Madagascar, a Celebean, and finally the head of a Calmuck, that is of eight different nations (Camper 1794: 4)

In addition, Camper had acquired an African human foetus and the skins of Italians, Moors and a Dutch woman, and used these specimens to demonstrate the insignificance of variations in skin colour when compared to the overall similarity of the human species. Thus he observed that although the foetus exhibited African features it was white in colour (Camper 1794: 23), and that because the “*membrana reticularis*” of all the skins was “to a greater or lesser degree of a dusky hue” (Camper 1794: 16) this was proof that no essential difference existed between them.

Camper’s collection of human crania was amongst the first to be amassed for the purpose of analysing racial difference. Collections of human remains were common by this time, but they invariably contained only European material. Indeed, by the late seventeenth century, the interests of medical gentlemen and the fashion for curiosity cabinets had combined to produce extensive private collections of European human remains (see Lunsingh Scheurleer 1985: 119). Collections of such material were also often associated with anatomy theatres either at universities, such as Altdorf, Copenhagen and Leiden, or in surgeon’s guilds such as those at Rotterdam and Delft (see Schupbach 1985). Human remains of non-Europeans had figured in collections before the late eighteenth century, but had never before been procured for research into human diversity. Examples include the skin of a Moor which was housed at the Royal Society of England in 1681 (Grew 1681: 4), and an African foetus, various pieces of black people’s skin and “part of the hide of a Bashaw that was strangled in Turkey” (Day 1995: 71) which were collected by Sir Hans Sloane.

Camper’s small collection of ‘race’ crania was surpassed in size and variety by that of his British contemporary, John Hunter. Hunter’s small collection of human remains from around the world demonstrates his interest in human diversity and, in his famous portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds, he is depicted at his desk on which is propped a folio of

drawings illustrating - in a graded series - the skull of a European, an Australian Aborigine, a chimpanzee, a monkey, a dog, and a crocodile (Turnbull forthcoming). The relative status of the Aboriginal race appears to have already been decided by the time the quantitative study of humankind had begun.

By the time of his death in 1793, Hunter's collection of human and animal anatomical specimens (see Dobson 1969) included a number of European crania as well as at least two crania from the Caribbean, nine from various regions of Africa, two from New Zealand, six from Australia (including the skull of a Tasmanian) and one from Malaysia (Clift 1831). Eventually bought by Government in 1799, in 1806 the collection was moved to the premises of the Incorporation of Surgeons (later the Royal College of Surgeons, England) where a museum was built to accommodate it (Grey Turner 1945: 360). This museum formed the nucleus of the College collections which, by the end of the nineteenth century, contained the greatest number of race crania in Britain (see Fforde 1992a).

The collections of Camper and Hunter are historically significant because they represent the beginning of a science that aimed to quantify human difference by systematic analysis of the dead. From this time onwards, indigenous remains were scientific desiderata and not merely items of curiosity. However, although important precursors of the collections amassed during the next 150 years, those of Hunter and Camper were, in fact, negligible in terms of size and variety, containing only a few skulls from only a small number of different countries. The first collection assembled with the aim of representing *all* the different varieties of humankind with as many crania as possible was the "Golgotha" (Marx 1865: 8) at the University of Gottingen. Amassed by Johann Friedrich Blumenbach while Professor of Medicine from 1779 until his death in 1840, the collection contained 82 race skulls, including two from Australia donated by Sir Joseph Banks (Blumenbach 1795: 155; Wagner 1856; and see Turnbull forthcoming).

As noted by Turnbull (forthcoming), Blumenbach's primary interest was the classification of humankind, a topic which he first tackled in his doctoral dissertation of 1775. From the start, Blumenbach disagreed with Linneaus' inclusion of humans within the same 'natural order' as the apes, believing that this distorted Man's spiritual and moral integrity (Haller

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1971: 6). Instead Blumenbach classified humans in a separate category - *bimana* - to denote their unique “external conformation, namely, the *freest use of two most perfect hands*” (Blumenbach 1795: 171). Initially, Blumenbach followed Linneaus’ quadripartite division of humankind (Blumenbach 1775: 99-100), but by the third edition of *De Generis Humani Varietate Nativa* (1795) had concluded that there were, instead, five varieties of humans. Nonetheless, Blumenbach agreed with Linneaus’ taxonomic boundaries and upheld the unity of humankind, proposing that diversity had been produced by degeneration from a common primordial stock (Blumenbach 1795: 264-276). Considering white to be the autochthonous skin colour since “it is very easy for that to degenerate into brown, but very much more difficult for dark to become white”, and noting that the “beautiful” Georgian skull in his possession was the mean from which all others diverged, Blumenbach (1795: 269) argued that the Caucasians (named after Mount Caucasus in Georgia) had been the original peoples. The Americans and Malays were transitional forms between the Mongolians and Ethiopians respectively, the last two varieties being “most remote and very different from each other” (Blumenbach 1795: 265). Although Blumenbach (1795: 275) assigned New Hollanders to the Malayan category, he noted that Aborigines “graduate so insensibly towards the Ethiopian variety, that, if it was thought convenient, they might not unfairly be classed with them”.

Along with skin colour, features of the face and body, stature and constitution, skull shape was a principle criterion in Blumenbach’s classification system. From examination of the skulls in his collection he believed that each human variety had a distinctive cranial shape (1795: 236-238). However, unlike Camper, he did not rely upon one measurement to distinguish between the skulls of different races:

the more my daily experience and, as it were, my familiarity with my collection of skulls of different nations increases, so much the more impossible do I find it to reduce these racial varieties - when such differences occur in the proportion and direction of the parts of the truly many-formed skull, all having more or less to do with the racial character - to the measurements and angles of any single scale (Blumenbach 1795: 236).

Instead, Blumenbach assessed the skulls qualitatively, comparing their shape as viewed from one position only, the *norma verticalis*. From this perspective - above and behind

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the crania - he believed that all the racial characters manifested in a skull could be seen “distinctly at one glance” (Blumenbach 1795: 237).

Like other monogenists, Blumenbach attributed racial variation to the influence of environmental factors. However, his analysis of racial difference in skull shape also considered the effects of national custom, the process that Camper had previously so categorically rejected (Blumenbach 1775: 115-121; 1795: 239-243). From observation of “pathological phenomena and physiological experiments”, Blumenbach (1795: 239) concluded that the bony structures were as “liable to perpetual mutations [as] the soft parts of the body” and suggested that unique cultural practices which deformed the skull, whether through design or chance, were responsible for producing distinctive racial characteristics (see Turnbull forthcoming). Therefore, he considered it “credible” that the Aboriginal custom of inserting a piece of wood through the nasal septum could explain, because of the continuous pressure that the peg would exert, the conspicuous smoothness of the front section of the upper jaw of an Aboriginal skull in his collection. However, although in his original dissertation Blumenbach (1775: 121) was willing to agree with the Hippocratic contention that, over time, features produced by artificial means could be inherited, by the third edition of *De Generis* (1795: 203-204, 243) he was not so sure:

I have not at present adopted as my own either the affirmative or the negative of these opinions [whether physical characteristics acquired in life are passed to the next generation]; I would willingly give my suffrage with those on the negative side, if they could explain why peculiarities of the same sort of conformation, which are first made intentionally or accidentally, cannot in any way be handed down to the descendants, when we see that other marks of race which have come into existence from other causes which up to the present time are unknown, especially in the face, as nose, lips and eye-brows are universally propagated in families for few or many generations with less or greater constancy, just in the same way as *organic* disorders, as deficiencies of speech and pronunciation, and such like! Unless perhaps they prefer saying that all these occur also by chance (Blumenbach 1795: 204).

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1.2. The great debate: monogenism vs. polygenism.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the heterodox contention that human diversity was the product of multiple Creations was becoming increasingly prevalent. The theory of plurality, or 'polygenism', asserted that race differences were too great to have been produced by environmental factors and that, as separate species, the races must have been created already adapted to their specific habitats. As has been shown, this plural approach was not new, but until the early nineteenth century it had never received serious widespread attention (Stocking 1968: 42-68). Contradicting the Scriptures, polygenism had never gathered sufficient support to challenge monogenism as the dominant theory of human origins, but by the second half of the eighteenth century it was sufficiently current to be refuted by both Camper (1794:16,59) and Blumenbach (1775: 98). In 1778, Lord Kames (Henry Home) the Lord Commissioner of Justiciary in Scotland, strongly questioned Buffon's definition of species and the efficacy of environmental determinism, arguing that, "certain it is, that all men are not fitted equally for every climate. Is there not then reason to conclude that as there are different climates, so there are different species of men fitted for these different climates?" (Kames 1778: 18). By 1799 Charles White was convinced that the theory of unity could no longer be maintained.

White, a Manchester physician who acquired an interest in anthropology during his later years, was renowned for his 'discovery' that the Negro forearm was longer, in relation to the upper arm, than that of the European (White 1799; Cunningham 1908: 22).

Measurements of skeletal remains were used to support his assertion that there were "numerous varieties of race, but wherever, and whatever feature, there is gradation from European to Ape in skelet[al] and other features" (White 1799: 56). For White (1799: 134), quantitative evidence proved that the European was most removed from "brute creation" and, being superior in all ways, could be considered "the most beautiful of the human race". As Tucker (1994: 10-11) has demonstrated, data that did not conform to White's proposed gradation were manipulated into the 'correct' place. Although declaring that his purpose was not born out of malice towards the black race but purely to "discover what are the established laws of nature" (White 1799: 136), White's preconceived notions of European superiority are apparent:

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Where shall we find, unless in the European, that nobly arched head, containing such a quality of brain, and supported by a hollow conical pillar, entering its centre? Where the perpendicular face, the prominent nose and round projecting chin? Where that variety of features, and fullness of expression; those long flowing graceful ringlets; that majestic beard, those rosy cheeks and coral lips? Where that erect posture and noble gait? In what other quarter of the globe shall one find the blush that overspreads the soft features of the beautiful women of Europe, that emblem of modesty, of delicate feelings, and of sense? Where that nice expression of the amiable and softer passions in the countenance; and that general elegance of features and complexities? Where except on the bosom of the European woman, two such plump and snowy white hemispheres, tipped [sic] with vermilion? (White: 1799: 135).

Neither the doctrine of gradation nor White's assertion of European supremacy were innovative, and both were shared by polygenists and monogenists alike. Nonetheless there was an important distinction between the racialism set forth by the two paradigms: while the theory of unity contended that the 'lower' races had the potential to attain the physical and intellectual level of the European, for the polygenists the races were distinct species and their position on the hierarchical scale of humanity was thus innate and immutable.

Although the growth of polygenism was hampered by its seemingly anti-Biblical stance, in fact its advocates rarely denied the accuracy of the Scriptures. As one of polygenism's most ardent supporters contended, "the plurality of species in the human race does no more violence to the Bible than the admitted facts of Astronomy and Geology" (Nott 1844: 5). Instead, polygenists attempted to incorporate their theory within an orthodox framework, often suggesting that while the Bible had only recorded one instance of creation - Adam and Eve - this did not prove that others had not taken place (e.g. Nott 1844: 6-7, 29). Kames (1778: 23), for example, posited that God had equipped the different races with unique features necessary for their survival in different climates following their dispersal after the destruction of the Tower of Babel. White (1799: 136) even argued that the Old Testament provided implicit evidence of additional Creations: if Adam and Eve had only begotten sons, where had Cain's wife come from? The opinion of the eminent American anatomist and craniologist, Samuel Morton (1839: 2-3) was perhaps more typical. He argued that scholars had "hastily and unnecessarily" inferred that racial diversity had resulted from environmental factors only, asking:

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Is it not more consistent with the known government of the universe, that the same Omnipotence that created Man, would adapt him at once to the physical, as well as to the moral circumstances in which he was to dwell upon the earth? It is indeed difficult to imagine that an all-wise Providence, after having by the Deluge destroyed all mankind excepting the family of Noah, should leave these to combat, and with seemingly uncertain and inadequate means, the various external causes that tended to oppose the great object of their dispersion. We are left to the reasonable conclusion, that each Race was adapted from the beginning to its particular local destination. In other words, it is assumed, that the physical characters which distinguish the different races are independent of the external causes.

Polygenism's popularity advanced during the first half of the nineteenth century, in part because environmental determinism increasingly appeared to lack empirical support (Stocking 1968: 42-68; Stepan 1982: 2,35-40). It was becoming apparent that racial characteristics did not alter when exposed to a different environment (e.g. Lawrence 1819: 10-124; Stepan 1982: 37-38). Consequently, some monogenists began to rely less heavily on environmental causation. Thus, Georges Cuvier, France's leading comparative anatomist, considered there to be little evidence to support the role of environment in biological variation (Stepan 1982: 39), while in Britain, the eminent naturalists and monogenists James Cowles Prichard (1813) and William Lawrence (1823) both argued that racial variation had resulted from spontaneous and inheritable alterations in physical form that were preserved by isolation and interbreeding (see Stepan 1982: 35-40). Such alterations were thought to be the products of civilisation, for:

The savage may be compared to [wild animals], which range the earth uncontrolled by man; civilised people to the domesticated breeds of the same species, whose diversities of form and colour are endless. Whether we consider the several nations, or the individuals of each, bodily differences are much more numerous in the highly civilised Caucasian variety, than either of the other divisions of mankind (Lawrence 1823: 100).

If proving (or circumventing) the efficacy of environmental determinism was the main obstacle faced by monogenists, advocates of polygenism had to demonstrate that the human races were indeed separate species. For some, the evidence supplied by the

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differences in human crania was sufficient. Thus for one of the later polygenists, Joseph Barnard Davis (1867: viii), the “proofs” of man’s diversity of origin:

are derived from the essential peculiarities which are seen in the skulls of most races of people, and the distinguishing diversities of different races - for example, the crania of Europeans of African negroes, those of Australians, those of New Hebrideans etc. The sharpness of these distinctions may be said to be ethnognomic, and is most impressive when we compare the skulls of neighbouring races: - for instance, those of Guanches and Negroes of the West Coast; those of Boschemans and Kafirs; those of Negritos and Bisayans; those of Hindoos and the sub-Himalayan tribes on the one side, and the natives of the Indian archipelago on the other etc.

However, skull differences clearly did not provide irrefutable proof of polygenism as monogenists had looked at similar data and had incorporated it within the theory of unity, as even Davis (1867: viii) admitted:

The examination of the crania of infants and of children of these and other peoples puts the diversities alluded to in a striking light. Blumenbach, with his usual discrimination, made good use of this indelible impress of race-peculiarities in early life for the establishment of his quinary division of mankind, in the plate of his *Decas Tertia*, although its force as an evidence of something very like specific difference was wholly at variance with his system and was not attended to by him.

Most nineteenth-century biologists accepted Buffon’s definition that species were groups of organisms that could only produce fertile offspring with their own kind. If the differences between the races were not in themselves conclusive evidence of polygenism, its advocates had to redefine the species concept and/or prove imperfect fertility between the races (Stocking 1968: 48). Thus, the American polygenists Josiah Nott and George Gliddon (1854: 375) suggested that the term ‘species’ should define a “type, or organic form, that is permanent; or which has remained unchanged under opposite climatic influences for ages” while their contemporary, Samuel Morton (1839: 82) proposed that if different “organic types” could be traced as distinct entities far enough back in time to a “primordial organic form”, they should be treated as separate species, even if they were interfertile. Evidence for the permanence and longevity of the races was taken from Egyptian art which, it was argued, distinctly depicted the differences between blacks, whites, and Jews “upwards of three thousand years ago as they are now” (Morton 1839:

2-3). Bishop Usher's calculation that the world had been created in 4004 B.C. therefore allowed only 2,000 years for human diversity to have developed, a time period that the polygenists argued was vastly inadequate - especially as the races had shown no sign of subsequent change (Nott 1844: 8; Stanton 1960: 30).

As for human hybridity, most polygenists contended that physically similar races could produce fecund offspring, but those which were dissimilar, if they could interbreed at all, would only produce progeny that were to varying degrees either degenerate, sterile, or both (Nott 1844: 30-34; Nott & Gliddon 1854: 276-397; Walker 1866; Stocking 1968: 48-49; Stepan 1985: 104-112). Monogenists, meanwhile, continued to assert that races were inter-fertile and merely represented different varieties of the same species, often citing domestic animal breeds as analogous examples (Prichard 1813: 17-32, 39-40; Lawrence 1822: 473; Stepan 1982: 33-35).

The question of 'acclimation' (acclimatisation) - whether races could adapt to foreign climates - also tested the central maxims of both monogenism and polygenism. Polygenists argued that because each race had been created to inhabit one particular environment, as immutable species they would be unable to survive in, or adapt to, any other. Thus Nott (1844: 19) cited the lack of successful European settlement in Africa and the detrimental effect of increasing latitude on the mortality rate of blacks in America as evidence that "the White man can not live in tropical Africa, nor the African in the frigid zone", further observing that "a cold climate so freezes [African] brains as to make them insane or idiotical". Monogenists, on the other hand, relying on the already tenuous efficacy of environmental determinism, contended that initial problems would be overcome and races would eventually successfully adapt to their new surroundings (Stocking 1968: 54).

1.3. Polygenism and politics.

By the 1830s, the polygenist assessment of acclimation and hybridity and its relegation of blacks to a position of innate inferiority had found particular favour in America amongst those who opposed the growing abolitionist movement (Haller 1971: 76-79). The polygenist contention that blacks would perish outside the tropical climate of the

southern states and that biological assimilation would be detrimental to both races, bolstered the belief that blacks were ‘naturally’ suited to slavery and would eventually die out if emancipated. South Carolina physician Josiah Nott, a slave owner who gave lectures on ‘Niggerology’ (Gould 1981: 69), was particularly vociferous in his use of polygenism as a scientific rationale for slavery (Stanton 1960: 66-72; Banton 1977: 57). With his colleague George Gliddon, previously the American Vice Consul in Cairo, he wrote the leading polygenist text Types of Mankind (1854). Declaring that “I belong not to those who are disposed to degrade any type of humanity to the level of brute creation”, Nott nonetheless considered that:

a man must be blind not to be struck by similitudes between some of the lower races of mankind, viewed as connecting links in the animal kingdom; nor can it be rationally affirmed, that the Orang-outan and chimp are more widely separated from certain African and Oceanic Negroes than are the latter from the Teutonic or Pelagic types (Nott & Gliddon 1854: 457).

As well as employing such ‘self-evident’ visual data, Nott found scientific proof of black inferiority in measurements that apparently demonstrated their smaller brain size. Constrained by their anatomy, black people were thus biologically unable to rise from servility, a position in which Nott, amongst others, argued they had achieved their most perfect state (Tucker 1994: 12-22).

Nott made use of the first set of empirical data to be produced on the brain size of various races. This had been formulated by Samuel Morton who, by the late 1930s, had calculated average cranial capacities for the skulls in his collection at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. Morton, Professor of Anatomy at Pennsylvania Medical College, had become interested in collecting crania when unable to locate any skulls to show to his students during an introductory lecture on racial characteristics (Patterson 1854: xxxi). Aiming to determine “ethnic resemblances and discrepancies by a comparison of crania” (Patterson 1854: xxviii), Morton set out to amass as many skulls as possible. Using an extensive network of friends and collaborators, in twenty years Morton accumulated over 1,000 specimens - the largest anthropological collection of human remains at that time (Morton 1839: v).

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In classifying his collection, Morton (1839: 3-4) adopted Blumenbach's separation of humankind into five varieties although, in accordance with his belief that each was a separate species, he renamed these divisions 'races' and their sub-divisions 'families'. In a collection predominantly North and South American in origin, but which contained representative samples of all five 'races', Morton took, on average, thirteen different measurements of each skull and subjected the results to statistical analysis. In particular, he used his data on cranial capacity to rank races on a scale that placed Caucasians at the top and the Mongolian, Malayan, American and Ethiopian races in descending order beneath (Morton 1839: 260), a hierarchy that was widely adopted, the French physical anthropologist, Paul Topinard (1890: 229) stating over fifty years later that, "the inferior races have a less [sic] capacity than the superior. Australians are the lowest on the scale in this respect".

Cranial capacity was a measure of the internal volume of the skull obtained by a painstaking process that involved filling the cranium with white pepper seed, sand or lead shot, decanting the contents into a tin cylinder filled with water and measuring the displacement produced (Stanton 1960: 31-32). Due to the generally held assumption that brain size was indicative of intelligence (Haller 1971: 18), cranial capacity, more explicitly than Camper's Angle, quantifiably linked skull form to mental ability. Morton's data was therefore extremely useful to those interested in scientifically 'proving' black inferiority, and while Morton himself rarely promulgated his results in the political arena, Josiah Nott was not the only pro-slavery scientist to do so. As Morton's obituary in the American South's leading medical journal stated:

we of the South should consider him as our benefactor, for aiding most materially in giving to the negro his true position as an inferior race. We believe the time is not far distant, when it will be universally admitted that neither can 'the leopard change his spots, nor the Ethiopian his skin'
(Gibbes 1851 in Stanton 1960: 144).

Nonetheless, denial of the Scriptures was often perceived as too high a price to pay for scientific backing, and polygenism did not occupy the primary position in the ideology of slavery in mid-nineteenth century America (Gould 1981: 69). Most of those defending slavery employed the teachings of the Bible which, interpreted in a certain way, provided ample 'evidence' to support their point of view (Gould 1981: 69-72).

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By the 1830s the leading text in the field of craniology, Blumenbach's substantial treatise on the Gottingen Collection (*Decas Prima (- sexta) collections suae Craniorum Diversarum Gentium* 1790-1838) was becoming redundant; its deficiency in "absolute and relative measurements" and its use of the "defective three-quarter and other oblique views of many of the skulls" rendering it "highly unsatisfactory to the practical cranioscopist" (Maury *et. al.* 1857: 215). Furthermore, Blumenbach's results were increasingly considered unsound, being "invalidated by the small number of specimens generally relied upon by him" (Patterson 1854: xxviii). Morton's approach, to take numerous detailed measurements from each skull in a collection that was considered large enough to compensate for individual variation, superseded that of Blumenbach and revolutionised the study of human diversity. Where there had only been aesthetic judgement and speculation, Morton, it was claimed, provided empirical data and 'objective' fact (Gould 1978: 503). However, as Gould (1978, 1981) has demonstrated in his detailed re-examination of Morton's data, the Philadelphian anatomist was far from objective in his method and analyses. Instead, Morton's results were a "patchwork of assumption and finagling" (Gould 1978: 504) that consistently - through a variety of omissions and statistical errors - favoured his pre-conceptions about racial inequality. Yet Gould (1978: 509) could discern no evidence of conscious data manipulation, finding only an "*a priori* conviction of racial ranking so powerful that it directed [Morton's] tabulations along pre-established lines". However, while it may have been implicit in his statistical analyses, Morton's subjectivity is clearly apparent in his descriptions of the defining moral characteristics of each race and family. Thus, Ethiopians were "joyous, flexible, and indolent" and some tribes in this category constituted the "lowest grade of humanity" (Morton 1839: 7), while the Circassians (members of the Caucasian race), surpassed all other peoples "in exquisite beauty of form and gracefulness of manners" (Morton 1839: 8). For all Morton's computations, his racial distinctions were as much qualitatively based as they were quantitatively expressed.

1.4. Phrenology.

Morton was one of the only craniologists publicly to consider using the principles of phrenology, the so-called ‘science of the mind’. Although he did not wish to base his first analytical work, *Crania Americana*, on phrenology alone but to instead “present the facts unbiased by theory, and let the reader draw his own conclusions” (Morton 1839: i), Morton clearly regarded phrenology of sufficient potential to include a list of pertinent measurements in this volume and an essay on the subject by George Combe, one of phrenology’s chief protagonists at the time.

Developed in the last years of the eighteenth century by Franz Gall and subsequently popularised by Johann Spurzheim and George Combe, phrenology contended that the brain was the seat of the mind. Instead of being an homogenous unity the brain, according to Gall, was composed of different ‘organs’ that controlled different mental attributes. For example, the organ of *Causality* found in “the second frontal convolution underneath the frontal eminences” was thought to define “the capacity to trace cause and effect”; and that of *Acquisitiveness* located “in the front part of the first convolution of the temporal lobe” was believed to control the “instinct of providing, covetousness, and the propensity to theft” (Hedderley 1970: 51, 54). Organ size reflected the degree of the associated function and, since the cranium was believed to mirror the shape of the brain, an examination of skull or head shape could be used to determine mental character (Cooter 1984: 3).

By isolating all mental phenomena in the brain and ascribing each a cerebral location, Gall was the first to use a purely biological approach to the study of mind and emotions. Perceived as undermining the Cartesian rationale for the existence of God, Gall’s innovation was initially highly controversial (Cooter 1984: 5). Phrenology was also renowned for its reformist principles, teaching that the various ‘faculties’ could be improved with increased usage (e.g. Combe 1835:89-99, 119-120). Appealing to a wide range of interests, phrenology had attained enough influence in the first half of the nineteenth century to effect reform in areas of education, penology and the treatment of the insane (Cooter 1984: 7).

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Phrenological societies proliferated; by 1836 there were 29 in Britain alone (Cooter 1984: 88-89) and for demonstration and research purposes, most phrenological societies acquired specimens of human and animal crania, busts, models and casts (Watson 1836: 113-166; Hollander 1920: 357). For example, extensive collections of such material were maintained by the Edinburgh Phrenological Society (see Appendix 1) and by James Deville, a commercial phrenologist practising in London (Erikson 1979: 36).

As well as procuring the skulls of the famous and infamous, phrenologists were particularly eager to obtain indigenous crania in order to ascertain the typical mental character of each race (see the Phrenological Journal 1825 II: 1-19, 264-268, 533-543). Thus, in 1825 the Phrenological Journal (Vol II: 268) published a request that its readers:

going to distant countries ... avail themselves of the facilities which the science affords for the accurate and minute appreciation of character, and to collect skulls in elucidation of the origin, dispositions and talents of foreign nations.

Phrenology therefore provided an additional market for indigenous crania to that already established by the comparative anatomists. Phrenologists concurred with the widely held assumption that a positive correlation existed between brain size and intellect, and used cranial capacity as one method of determining racial character. Indeed, according to Combe (1835: 275-6) it was a fundamental principle of phrenology that large brains were always associated with “individuals and nations distinguished for great aggregate force of mind, animal and moral and intellectual”. Like the craniologists, phrenologists could ignore or manipulate data that did not fit in with their pre-conceived notions of the racial order. Thus, for example, unable to equate the small cranial capacity of Morton’s Peruvian skulls with the degree of civilisation this race was believed to have attained, Combe suggested that they had either been misidentified or artificially deformed, eventually concluding that the Peruvian skull depicted in Crania Americana was not typical of its kind (Stanton 1960: 38).

Along with the early anthropologists, phrenology therefore also conceptualised racial difference in terms of rank:

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The New Holland skull rises a little above the Carib, but indicates a lamentable deficiency in the regions of the intellectual and sentimental organs. The organs of Constructiveness, Reflection and Ideality are particularly deficient while those of animal propensities are fully developed (Anon 1825: 9).

Rejecting environmental determinism as inadequate to account for the diversity in racial character, phrenology contended that the mental attributes specific to each race had been “received from nature” and were, “in exact accordance with the development of their brains” (Anon 1825: 17). However, although this approach appeared similar to that employed by the polygenists, phrenology neither considered the races to be separate species nor their mental abilities fixed and immutable (Stanton 1960: 36). Instead, like monogenism, it maintained that ‘lower’ races had the capacity to attain a higher position in the racial hierarchy. However, to the monogenists such improvement was really only a theoretical possibility - the environment effecting change so slowly that, for all intents and purposes, the status of each race was permanent (Haller 1971: 77). Phrenologists, on the other hand, believed that changes could occur over a relatively short period of time if members of the ‘degenerate’ races were encouraged to ‘exercise’ their ‘weaker’ mental faculties. Convinced that all races had the ability to ascend the racial scale, Combe (1841 Vol. I: 254) condemned slavery as a “canker in the moral constitution of [America], that must produce evil continually until it is removed”. According to Combe (1841 Vol. II: 77), although black slaves appeared to have small brains - explaining their submissive attitude towards slavery, those of free blacks were notably larger, leading him to conclude that, “the greater exercise of the mental faculties in freedom has caused the brain to increase in size; for it is a general rule in physiology that wholesome exercise favours the development of all organs” (Combe 1841 Vol. II: 112).

This reformist approach to the racial hierarchy is apparent in Sir George Mackenzie’s phrenological assessment of the skull of Carnambeigle, an Aboriginal leader shot in 1816 (see Appendix 1.3). Mackenzie, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and of London, became interested in the ‘science of the mind’ in 1816 and joined the Edinburgh Phrenological Society four years later. One of Scotland’s most active supporters of phrenology, Mackenzie tried for many years, unsuccessfully, to gain its acceptance by the Royal Society (De Guistino 1975: 49-59; Cooter 1984: 55-57). While his examination of

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Carnambeigle's skull and the casts of two others from Australia led him to conclude that there was little hope that Aborigines would advance intellectually, Mackenzie saw potential for improvement, under proper direction, in their religious and moral 'faculties':

Although, therefore, the progress of these people may be slow, and although their reasoning powers are not such as to lead us to think that their lower propensities can be under perfect control; still by working on love of appropriation, the sense of justice, and veneration; and by exciting the organ of attachment by acts of kindness, much may be done for these miserable beings in improving their religious and moral condition. Their lower propensities do not seem considerable when compared with foreheads that indicate more intelligence than they seem to possess, although they are large in proportion to their own. The first step towards improving such a people is to give them confidence, before any attempt is made to work upon their feelings. As their reasoning powers are weak and their self-esteem strong, much patience must be bestowed on them; and firmness being well developed, renders the necessity of patience and perseverance more apparent (Mackenzie 1820: 235-236).

Although phrenology shared a similar approach to racial difference with both the monogenists and the polygenists, used the same data set and analysed crania quantitatively, it was distinctly different in its conceptualisation of the association between biology and intellect. Anthropologists assumed that skull size and shape reflected mental capacity and thus racial worth. Phrenologists, on the other hand, considered cranial morphology to be essentially plastic, responding in shape to alterations in the contours of the brain which had themselves been caused by changes in circumscribed mental attributes. Thus according to phrenology, the 'lower' races were constrained by their social and cultural environment and not by their anatomy.

Phrenology's popularity proved to be relatively short lived (Cooter 1984: 88-89). Increasing marginalisation from the scientific world (which included exclusion from the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1834) meant that membership of a phrenological society began to mitigate against entry into those with more scientific standing. Lack of credibility, religious opposition and divisive internal politics led to phrenology's decline in the 1830s and within a decade it had almost disappeared (Erikson 1979: 7; Cooter 1984: 89-94). However, while its principles and teachings were largely abandoned, phrenology's collections of crania remained, many becoming

incorporated into those already assembled for anthropological study. Thus the Department of Anatomy at the University of Edinburgh received the collection of the Edinburgh Phrenological Society on loan in 1866 (see Appendix 1) and in 1861 the private collector and craniologist Joseph Barnard Davis bought that of the London phrenologist, James Deville.¹

Phrenology did re-emerge in the later nineteenth century but by this time was entirely divorced from conventional science and orientated instead towards such popular alternatives as astrology and mesmerism. Nonetheless, whatever ideological differences this later 'pseudoscience' had with its earlier counterpart, its advocates continued to collect crania. Thus the Fowlers, a family largely responsible for phrenology's rebirth in Britain in the 1860s (Stern 1971), had a large collection of human skulls at the Fowler Institute in London. These items were probably acquired by the commercial phrenologist Stackpool O'Dell when he bought the Fowler Institute building in the 1890s. The collection may then have passed into the hands of the British Phrenological Society which still possessed skulls, kept with a storage company, in 1963 (BPS Council Minutes 2.9.1963, WI GC/17/1) but its fate after the Society disbanded in 1966 is currently unknown.

1.5. The impact of Darwinism.

By the mid-nineteenth century, scientific research into human difference had for over fifty years already generated the acquisition of human remains from around the world. Consequently, by this time collections of such material were extensive (see Meigs 1858; Davis 1867: i-x). Attached to most scientific institutions and medical colleges, anthropological collections existed throughout Europe and were beginning to be amassed in the colonies (see Gould 1978: 503; Sheets-Pyenson 1988; Sutton 1986).

In Britain, by the 1850s there were extensive collections in the anatomy departments of the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Edinburgh; in the Royal College of Surgeons, England; in the British Museum (Natural History); and in the Army Medical College at

¹ Davis' collection was acquired by the Royal College of Surgeons, England. The College museum was bombed in 1841 and what survives of its collection is now believed to be in the Natural History Museum,

Fort Pitt, as well as in various private collections of which the largest was that of Joseph Barnard Davis. Prominent collections elsewhere in Europe included that amassed by George Cuvier in the Musée de l'Homme in Paris; that in the Koniglichen University in Berlin; that of Anders Retsius in the Caroline Institute in Stockholm; that in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam and that of Karl Von Baer in the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in St Petersburg.

Before 1859, research on skeletal remains had been undertaken in order to define and structure human diversity. Comparative anatomy contributed to the monogenist/polygenist debate about the *origins* of humankind only in so far as it supplied evidence that could be used to support or contradict the contention that races were separate species. However, after 1859 a new purpose for quantifying human diversity emerged. With the introduction of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, comparison between different races, between humans and apes, and between modern *Homo Sapiens* and archaic forms of humankind, took on a new significance.

In 1859 Darwin first proposed that species had evolved through a gradual process of natural selection. Darwin's theory was highly controversial for it not only denied the role of a Creator but assumed a degree of shared ancestry between humans and the animal kingdom. Although Darwin did not specifically address the issue until 1871, the application of his theory to human origins and in particular racial diversity rapidly became a topic of debate in anthropological circles. For example, advocates of Darwinism, in particular Alfred Wallace and Thomas Huxley, contended that the theory of natural selection embraced elements of monogenism and polygenism and could reconcile the two schools by "showing that both were right" (Wallace 1864: clxxxiv). According to Wallace's interpretation, in the remote past members of a homogenous race of proto-humans had slowly dispersed from their original habitat. As they encountered new environments their morphology had gradually altered "in accordance with local conditions" (Wallace 1864: clxv) and they had evolved the "striking characteristics and special modifications which still distinguish the chief races of mankind" (Wallace 1864: clxvi). When their mental faculties had advanced to a stage in which changes in behaviour rather than morphology enabled individuals to adapt to new environments, the

London (see Fforde 1992a).

University of Southern California

“mind” became the principle target of natural selection. ‘Human’ mental faculties then quickly evolved, in particular the capacity for speech, and from this moment the various physical forms of the different races had remained stationary. Wallace (1864: clxvi) concluded:

If, therefore, we are of opinion that he was not really man till these higher faculties were developed, we may fairly assert that there were many originally distinct races of men; while, if we think that a being like us in form and structure, but with mental faculties scarcely above the brute, must still be considered to have been human, we are fully entitled to maintain the common origin of mankind.

Most polygenists were unconvinced. James Hunt, President of the Anthropological Society of London, an organisation which, unlike its rival the Ethnology Society, was predominantly polygenist in membership, was particularly derisive (Hunt 1866, 1867). However, his criticism lay not in the theory of natural selection *per se*, but in the presumption of its “disciples”, particularly Huxley, that modern races all belonged to the same species (Hunt 1866: 320; 1867: 118). Appreciation that Darwin’s hypothesis provided a radically new theory of human evolution appears to have been largely subsumed by the necessity of fitting it within the circumscribed limits of either monogenism or polygenism. Thus Hunt (1866: 339) contended that no advance could be made in the “application of Darwinian principles to anthropology” until the subject was freed “from the unity hypothesis which has been identified with it”. In fact, as was already being demonstrated by German anatomist Carl Vogt, a polygenist and Darwinite, the theory of natural selection could easily be used within a strictly polygenist framework by arguing that the different races had evolved separately from different species of anthropoid apes (Hunt 1866: 339). Vogt’s interpretation of Darwinism persisted, for example, in the work of the French physical anthropologist Paul Topinard (1890: 531-532).

While Darwin had used palaeontological evidence to support his theory of the evolution of animal and plant species, by the 1870s no transitional forms of fossil humans had been discovered. Indeed, Wallace (1864: clxvi - clxvii) had used the similarity exhibited between available fossils and modern crania in support of his contention that human evolution from ape-like ancestors had taken place in “a much more remote epoch than

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has yet been thought possible” (Wallace 1864: clxvi). For Wallace, the lack of transitional fossils was not proof that intermediary forms had never existed but merely reflected gaps in an as yet incomplete fossil record.

Instead of using palaeontology to provide evidence of a clear gradation from ape to human, Darwin looked to anthropology. Combining the concept of racial hierarchy with theories of social evolutionists such as Lubbock and Tylor (Stocking 1968: 113-132), Darwin (1871:66) arrived at the conclusion that each race represented a separate stage through which the human species had evolved:

Differences ... between the highest men of the highest races and the lowest savages are connected by the finest gradations. Therefore it is possible that they might pass and be developed into each other.

And:

At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilised races of man will almost certainly exterminate, and replace, the savage races throughout the world. At the same time the anthropomorphous apes ... will no doubt be exterminated. The break will then be rendered wider, for it will intervene between man in some more civilised state, as we may hope, than the Caucasian, and some ape as low as a baboon, instead of as at present between the Negro or Australian and the gorilla (Darwin 1871:201).

According to Darwin, the ‘primitive’ races were no longer degenerate forms of Caucasians nor separately created inferior species, but humans who occupied the lower rungs of the evolutionary ladder. As such, they would be unable to compete with the more advanced races and, according to the principle of natural selection, would become extinct on contact with civilised nations (Darwin 1871: 282). This process had, Darwin (1871: 284-287) contended, already occurred in Tasmania and was current in mainland Australia, New Zealand and other countries that had experienced European colonisation (and see Darwin 1859: 321-322, 329). According to Wallace (1864: clxv), Caucasians would displace the ‘savage’ races: “just as the weeds of Europe overrun North America and Australia, extinguishing native productions by the inherent vigour of their organisation, and by their greater capacity for existence and multiplication”.

Darwin's new conceptualisation of the racial order had drawn heavily upon assumptions prevalent in both the monogenist and polygenist schools. Moreover, as the work of Wallace and Vogt demonstrated, even though the theory of natural selection made the dispute over the existence of single or multiple Creation episodes irrelevant, far from supplanting the unity/plurality debate, Darwinian theory had merely modified it. Monogenism and polygenism essentially represented contrasting attitudes towards human diversity, and both attitudes survived the Darwinian revolution. Thus the old subsidiary issues of hybridisation, miscegenation and acclimation persisted well after 1859 (e.g. Hunt 1870; Topinard 1890: 375; Stocking 1968: 47).

Although Darwinism has more in common with monogenism than the theory of plurality, it was the polygenist attitude which dominated physical anthropology (as this field was increasingly known by the end of the nineteenth century) for many decades after the publication of The Origin of the Species (Stocking 1968: 42-68). Physical anthropologists continued to accumulate data about human *difference*, and did so on a scale far greater than ever before. Indeed, once freed from the Creation model, it was easy for the later polygenists to assimilate concepts of the 'survival of the fittest' into their own basic assumptions about the innate inferiority of the 'lower' races. As Joseph Barnard Davis (1867: 265) wrote of item 1261 in his skeletal collection:

This skull is an excellent exemplification of Australian peculiarities, and most decidedly opposes the depreciators of craniological science. The superficial portions of the brain are very imperfectly developed in the race, and this gives rise to all their marked properties. Hence they have been rendered, by nature, utterly devoid of the power to receive that which is designated 'civilisation' by Europeans, i.e. an extraneous and heterogeneous cultivation, for which they have no taste or fitness, but which has to be thrust upon them by the high hand of presumed philanthropy, and under the influences of which their own proper endowments are constantly injured, and they themselves are inevitably destroyed.

In response to Darwinism, physical anthropology began to shift its focus away from taxonomy towards identifying evidence of human evolution in the bodies of modern peoples. As Darwin (1871: 404) had looked upon Tierra del Fuegians and remarked "such were our ancestors", so others scanned the 'lower' races for physical and cultural evidence that they were the modern representatives of past European populations that, like Pliny's

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monsters, had been “expelled and driven to the uttermost parts of the earth” (Sollas 1911: 382). For example, W. J. Sollas, Professor of Palaeontology and Geology at the University of Oxford asserted that the Tasmanians were survivors of an “eolithic” (pre-palaeolithic) race (Sollas 1911: 70), that Australian Aborigines were the “Mousterians of the Antipodes” (Sollas 1911: 170), that the ‘Bushmen’ were survivors from the Aurignacian period (Sollas 1911: 271-306), and that the Magdalanian people were represented by the “Eskimo on the frozen margin of the North American continent and as well, perhaps, by the Red Indians” (Sollas 1911: 383). Archaeology provided corroborative evidence, showing how the material culture of modern ‘primitive’ races compared with artefacts from the European palaeolithic (e.g. Dawson 1880; Tylor 1894).

A major avenue of research concentrated on examining the human remains of ‘lower’ races, in particular the Australian Aborigines and ‘Bushmen’ (see Skotnes 1996:15-23; Morris 1996: 67-79), for ‘primitive’ characteristics - normally ‘simian’ features and/or those exhibited by fossil humans - in order to provide evidence of their close evolutionary link to the anthropoid ancestors. In order to determine the “Place in Nature of the Tasmanian Aboriginal”, Berry and Robertson (1911) of the Anatomy Department at Melbourne University compared measurements from 52 Tasmanian crania with those of fossil humans, primates, Negroes, Europeans, Veddahs and Kalmucks. Although admitting that the Tasmanians had morphologically progressed “very much further” from “Homo primogenius and the anthropoid apes” than “most writers would seem to believe”, they still concluded that “of recent man the Tasmanian stands nearest to Homo fossilis” (Berry & Robertson 1911: 67).

The search for the physical evidence of Darwinian theory spread to the soft-tissue remains of indigenous peoples as, by the late nineteenth century, these became increasingly available to scientists in the West (e.g. Turner 1878, 1879, 1897; Berry 1911; and see Chapter 2). Although there had been notable exceptions (e.g. Camper 1794; Soemmering 1784), prior to the late nineteenth century comparative anatomy had almost exclusively concentrated on skeletal material and, in particular, on the skull as, since Camper, the cranium had always been regarded as that part of the skeleton which best illustrated racial characteristics. As James Aitken Meigs (1858: 4), curator of Samuel Morton’s collection, explained:

The human skull is so positively distinctive of race, that it claims at the hands of the student of Anthropology the most minute examination. The receptacle of the brain, of the organs of the senses and the masticatory apparatus, it exhibits race-characters more striking and distinguishing than those presented by any other part of the bony system.

However, the collecting and study of crania to the exclusion of soft-tissue material had not gone unnoticed. In their account of the dissection of a 'Bushwoman', Flower and Murie (1867: 189) bemoaned the lack of available specimens and the consequent paucity of information about racial anatomy:

with very few exceptions the arrangement of the muscles, vessels, viscera, and even the brain and nervous system constitute at present an unexplored field; and numerous well marked races of our species are passing away from the face of the earth without the slightest record being left on any one of these points. And yet in discussing questions, daily becoming of greater interest, relating to the unity or plurality of Mankind, and the amount of divergence of races, data such as these afford, whether their testimony be negative or positive, whether they tend to show absence or presence of variation from a given standard, cannot be neglected by the conscientious inquirer.

By the later nineteenth century, Aboriginal brains were being analysed to locate anatomical evidence for the assumed lack of intellectual development of Aboriginal people. For example, in 1888 H. D. Rolleston (1888: 32), Junior Demonstrator of Physiology at the University of Cambridge, examined an Aboriginal brain to establish the differences "between the brain of an educated moral man and that of a sensual animal like savage" and to determine the correlation between "the physical conformation of the cerebral hemispheres and the mental development of their owner". Rolleston (1888: 33-34) concluded that the Aboriginal specimen exhibited much greater "simplicity" than that of the European in the areas of the brain traditionally associated with mental capabilities.

In 1907 Daniel Cunningham (1907: 51), Professor of Anatomy at Edinburgh University, concluded that the outline of the preserved head of Pokallie, an Aboriginal man from South Australia (see Appendix 1.3) recalled that of a Neanderthal, and that to a small degree his ear exhibited "certain anthropoid characters". In 1908, Dr W. L. H. Duckworth of Cambridge University's Department of Anatomy, examined four

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Aboriginal brains (one of which was the specimen previously analysed by Rolleston) in research which aimed not to prove the 'low' evolutionary status of Aborigines, for this was an accepted fact, but to find its anatomical manifestations. As Duckworth (1908: 69-70) explained:

One of the chief points of interest concerning the brains of Australian aborigines is their consideration in the light of evidence derived from the other anatomical systems of these natives. That evidence points to their lowly status, because of the frequent characters very rare in the white races of mankind, but at the same time normal in the ape tribes. In fact, simian characters are frequent, though the Australian aboriginal has by no means a monopoly on these. But the brains of these natives have seldom been studied, owing to the difficulty of procuring material. The question at once arises then, does the conformation of the brain support the general conclusions (as to lowliness of status) suggested by the skeletal and other systems?

Although careful to point out that the Aboriginal brains in his possession could not be mistaken for "anything but human specimens", and recognising the tendency for observers to see simian characteristics in all "anomalous conditions of an anatomical nature", Duckworth noted that the four Aboriginal brains in his possession were recognisably different from those of Europeans and that, from the characters of "lowly morphological value" which they exhibited, they could be assigned to members of a "lowly and probably darkly-coloured race". However, while he believed that it might be possible with more specimens to distinguish between indigenous Africans and indigenous Australians he concluded that "beyond this it does not seem to me probable that anatomical investigation will confer any power of racial diagnosis" (Duckworth 1908: 287).

For both skeletal and soft tissue material it was thought crucial to obtain the remains of 'full-bloods' in order to ensure that they exhibited 'pure' racial traits. Thus collections contain few remains of Aboriginal people thought to have European ancestry. The priority placed on obtaining the remains of 'full-bloods' is evident in an apologetic letter written on 29.5.1907 by Ramsay Smith to Professor Cunningham in Edinburgh (ELSC Ms 608):

As to the brain I send, I am sorry there is doubt about the purity of the owner's blood. I have been assured that she was a pure blood, and as certainly assured on the other hand that she was a half-caste. I shall try to solve the problem first hand, but this will take time and opportunity. I have hopes of sending you some undoubted examples.

1.6. The metric torrent.

In the later nineteenth century, physical anthropology entered what Stocking (1968: 47) has called the "period of its efflorescence". The quantification of human difference became more precise and extensive (one scientist taking 5,000 measurements from each skull (Stocking 1968: 163)) and the number of remains in collections rapidly increased, largely in the continuing effort to distinguish between racial and individual variation (e.g. Davis 1867: xii-xiii). Thus, for example, the anatomy department at the University of Cambridge increased its holdings from 82 skulls, 12 skeletons and 36 bones in 1862 to 1402 skulls, 13 skeletons, 1800 bones and 280 specimens in spirit in 1891 (Macalister 1892: 936).

After the introduction of the facial angle in the late eighteenth century, numerous indices for quantifying the skull and skeleton had been devised (Meigs 1861; Topinard 1890: 204-297; Hoyme 1953). Along with cranial capacity, probably the most extensively used general measurement of skull shape was the cephalic index. Introduced by the Swedish anatomist Anders Retzius in 1844, this index was the ratio between the breadth of the skull and its length (Stepan 1982: 97). If a skull's cephalic index was less than 75 then it was long-headed or 'dolichocephalic'; if over 80 it was round-headed or 'brachycephalic'; if between 75 and 80, it was intermediary in form and termed 'mesocephalic'. Retzius' initial argument that primitive Europeans - all brachycephals - had been replaced by more highly advanced dolichocephals (Aryans) established the enduring principle that 'higher' races had longer heads. However, this principle became increasingly problematical as it was discovered that many 'primitive' peoples - such as Africans and the Australian Aborigines - had cephalic indices on a par with the Nordic and Teutonic races. Paul Broca, a professor of clinical surgery and the leading French physical anthropologist in the mid-nineteenth century resolved the problem by arguing that the skulls of the 'lower' races were elongated at the back (occipital dolichocephaly),

in the area of the brain that was believed to control involuntary movement, emotions and sensations, whereas the skulls of higher races were elongated at the front - the cerebral location of intellect and the higher mental functions (Gould 1981: 97-100). Once again, anomalous data had been manipulated to conform with *a priori* convictions about a racial order. By 1906 the plethora of different measurements for skeletal material and the living body and the lack of standardisation in either led the thirteenth International Congress of Prehistoric Anthropology and Archaeology to appoint a Commission to establish an International Agreement for the Unification of (a) Craniometric and Cephalometric Measurements, (b) of Anthropometric measurements to be made on the living subject (Duckworth 1913).

However, as more quantitative data about human difference became available, so the distinctions between the races became harder to define. Far from facilitating the definition of racial characteristics, the application of more metric techniques to larger samples of crania only demonstrated that individual variation within each race was as great as the variation between them. Some craniologists disregarded this phenomenon. Davis (1867: xiii) for example, criticised Professor Theodor Waitz for asserting that “small collections of race-skulls exhibit different forms of skulls strikingly, whilst rich collections fill up the apparent intervening gaps and show a continual transition from every one to every other”, by arguing that this observation was only “partially correct” and was more “characteristic of a Professor of Philosophy than a Professor of Anatomy, essentially a science of observation”. According to Davis (1867: xiii):

Although large collections, philosophically considered, must of necessity, by containing skulls which have some intermediate forms, tend to lessen distinctions, they, at the same time, serve to develop [sic] race characters more fully and to define the play of diversities round these race characters with more precision.

However, many other scientists soon began to recognise the difficulty in accurately defining races by physical characteristics. Thus, in his President’s address to the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland in 1885, William Flower (1885: 378-79) explained that, while:

the most ordinary observation is sufficient to demonstrate the fact that certain groups of men are strongly marked from others by definite characters common to all members of the group, and transmitted regularly to their descendants by the laws of inheritance ... Nevertheless, the difficulty of parcelling out all the individuals composing the human species into certain definite groups, and of saying of each man that he belongs to one or other of such groups is insuperable. No such classification has ever, or indeed can ever, be obtained. There is not one of the most characteristic, most extreme forms ... from which transitions cannot be traced by almost imperceptible gradations to any of the other equally characteristic, equally extreme forms, the relative numbers of which are continually increasing, as the long-existing isolation of nations and races breaks down under the ever-extending intercommunication characteristic of the period in which we live.

Faced with such evidence, the fundamental principle that racial characteristics were exhibited in the morphology of each individual became increasingly tenuous.

Consequently, in the later nineteenth century the concept of 'race' received some modification as the idea of the racial 'type' gained ground (Stocking 1968: 56-59).

According to French physical anthropologist, Paul Topinard (1890: 446), "by *human type* must be understood the average of characters which a human race supposed to be pure represents". 'Type' therefore shifted the focus of racial characterisation from the individual to the group. Thus:

It is more by the preponderance of certain characters in a large number of members of a group, than by the exclusive or even constant possession of these characters, in each of its members, that the group as a whole must be characterised (Flower 1885: 380).

In theory, only in isolated homogenous races would the features of the particular human type be discernible in each individual (Topinard 1890: 446). However, while homogenous races may have existed at one time, subsequent intermixture had made each type a "physical ideal, to which the greater number of individuals in the group more or less approach, but which is better marked in some than in others" (Topinard 1890: 446-447). The task set by some physical anthropologists was therefore to recreate these primordial types from the confusing blend of modern races (e.g. Topinard 1890: 442-511; Stocking 1968:58), an enterprise that required collections on a "far larger scale than [had] hitherto been attempted" because "it is only by large numbers that the errors arising from individual peculiarities or accidental admixture can be obviated, and the

prevailing characteristics of a race or group truly ascertained” (Flower 1881: 246).

Although the target of analysis had been modified, the data set and the desire for more specimens had therefore remained the same.

By the 1900s, the “metric torrent” propagated by physical anthropology in the previous half century had therefore unexpectedly weakened one of the fundamental underpinnings of the scientific conceptualisation of human difference (Stocking 1968: 163). It could no longer be accepted with confidence that ‘race’, defined in this way, was an empirical reality or that headform was an accurate indicator of human difference. The transition to analyses of human ‘type’ had circumvented these problems by relegating pure races to the remote past with the hope that examination of modern peoples would provide evidence of their racial history and that, by doing so, the original ‘types’ could be ascertained. However, the efficacy of this method, and indeed the validity of physical anthropology as a whole, relied upon the age old assumption that all racial characteristics were hereditary, a generalisation that was soon to be successfully challenged by the work of Franz Boas.

Theoretically, a race of people were physically alike because they shared a common ancestry. However, while eighteenth century concepts of human difference had been preoccupied with lineage and genealogies, the comparative anatomists had been less interested in this aspect and as the study of physical characteristics had taken precedence, so consanguinity became “almost a gratuitous assumption” (Stocking 1968:165).

Nevertheless, defining a race by the physical features shared by its members required these features to be stable and hereditary. Franz Boas was an unorthodox physical anthropologist who approached the discipline not from medicine or anatomy but from a background of mathematics and an understanding of biology which was orientated more towards process than taxonomy (Stocking 1968: 166-194; 1974: 1-20). As Stocking (1968: 170) notes, from an early stage Boas (1894a, 1894b, 1940) had been highly critical of the racial formalism which so invested the study of human diversity. With an approach that insisted upon strict empiricism, Boas systematically investigated many ‘classic’ anthropological issues, not to determine the classification of humankind but more to gain an understanding of the process of race formation. The results of his analyses went against many of the fundamental assumptions of physical anthropology. For example, his

research into the 'half-breed' American Indian revealed that, contrary to the long held polygenist belief, individuals with Indian and White descent appeared to be more fertile than 'pure' Indians and thus intermixture had a beneficial effect (Boas 1894a:193-194, 1940: 18-27, 138-148 and see Stocking 1968: 172-173).

Boas began to study the inheritance of headform in the early 1900s, and his most important research on this topic was conducted between 1908 and 1910 on behalf of the United States Immigration Commission. Initially aiming to investigate changes in headform in immigrant children born abroad and those born inside the USA, the initial results of Boas' research caused a shift in his focus of study. Expecting the headshape of immigrant children to reflect that of their parents, his pilot study data unexpectedly revealed marked changes in cephalic index (Boas to Jenks 3.9.1908 reproduced in Stocking 1974: 206-210; Boas 1903, 1911: 216-217, 1940: 28-85). Further research on a sample of almost 18,000 individuals confirmed these results, and Boas (1911: 218) concluded that although he could not explain what caused the changes in headform, "the old idea of absolute stability of human types must ... evidently be given up, and with it the belief of the hereditary superiority of certain types over others"

1.7. The Tenacity of 'Race'.

By the 1920s, with the foundations of over a century's research into human difference increasingly suspect, there was a growing dissatisfaction with the quantitative analysis of the human remains of different peoples (see Stepan 1982: 162-169). It may have been such dissatisfaction, coupled with a proclamation by the Australian Government in 1913 that prohibited the export of all "aboriginal [sic] anthropological specimens, including articles of ethnological interest, unless the exportation is by the accredited representative of an officially-recognised scientific institution and the permission of the Minister for Trade and customs is obtained to such exportation" (Commonwealth Gazette 22.11.1913), which led to the rapid decrease in the amount of Aboriginal human remains sent to museums and institutions in the West. However, while some leading anthropologists were ready to admit that "a race type exists mainly in our own minds"

(Haddon 1924: 1)², the study of 'race' continued, finding a particular niche in the socio-political sphere first within the Eugenics movement and later in the racist ideology of Nazi Germany (Proctor 1988; Tucker 1994). Scientific rationale for the latter was provided predominantly by German physical anthropologists, who interpreted anthropometric and craniological data as support for the doctrine of Aryan supremacy and the innate biological (and thus cultural) inferiority of various other peoples, in particular the Jews.

Like other European countries Germany had amassed extensive collections of human skeletal material (e.g. Spengel 1874; Broesike 1880; Ecker 1880; Schmidt 1886). However, in 1942, Wolfram Sievers, a Colonel in the SS, Reich Manager of the 'Ahnenerbe' Society and Director of its Institute for Scientific Research in Strasbourg, complained to Rudolf Brandt, Himmler's personal administrative officer, that the collection at Strasbourg contained "only very few specimens of skulls of the Jewish race ... with the result that it is impossible to arrive at precise conclusions from examining them" (in Taylor 1946: 84). To address this situation, Sievers suggested and implemented a course of action that provides an extreme example of the racist atrocities perpetrated to collect human remains. In 1943, after various anthropometric measurements, photographs and personal details had been taken from 115 inmates at Auschwitz, these people were murdered and their remains sent to the Strasbourg Institute for study and eventual inclusion within its skeletal collection. In late 1944, because of the imminent arrival of the allies, Sievers was advised by Brandt to reduce to skeletal remains (which would be inconspicuous amongst the rest of the Institute's skeletal collection) the considerable number of bodies which still lay in the morgue. However, Brandt's instructions were not carried out in full and the corpses were later discovered by the Allies. Appearing in the 'Doctor's trials' at Nuremberg for what the chief counsel described as "perhaps the most utterly repulsive charges in the entire indictment" (Taylor 1946: 84) Brandt and Sievers were charged with War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity and sentenced to be hung (Annas & Grodin 1992: 84-101).

² A. C. Haddon had collected many human remains from the Torres Strait in 1888-89 (see Haddon 1901: 92-93, 120-121, 337, 141-142, 180-181, 185).

Outside Germany, the tenacity of 'race' and the concept of racial hierarchy is evidenced by the difficulty with which various anthropologists tried to mobilise their colleagues to condemn the scientific rationale behind Nazi racism. Barkan (1988, 1992: 279-340), for example, has documented in detail the considerable efforts of Franz Boas who, throughout the 1930s, endeavoured to organise British and American scientists to formulate a consensus of opinion on the race issue that would counter Nazi propaganda. However, his attempts were largely unsuccessful, for while influential physical anthropologists may not have explicitly supported the Nazi racial doctrine, many continued to accept the basic reality of race and its role as a fundamental determinant of cultural and mental capacity (e.g. Keith 1931). Moreover, as demonstrated by Barkan (1988, 1992: 279-340), many of those who privately dismissed Nazi scientific racism were disinclined to air their views in public or to take an active role in combating its dissemination.

In Britain the lack of scientific consensus on the race issue was highlighted when, after two years of deliberation, the Race and Culture Committee established by the Royal Anthropological Institute in 1934 had failed to agree on even a definition of 'race' let alone to fulfil its mandate to determine the degree to which race could be linked to culture (Barkan 1988: 194, 1992: 285-296). Nevertheless, British scientists were not completely silent on the issue. For example, in We Europeans Haddon and Huxley drew upon the recent work of geneticists and biometricians to demonstrate the fallacy of 'race' as a valid scientific term and suggested that its application to human groups "should be dropped from the vocabulary of science" (Haddon & Huxley 1935: 107). Going one step further, Firth (1938: 21) argued that "purity of race is a concept of political propaganda, not a scientific description of human groups today".

Despite further attempts to organise scientists into a united front against Nazi racism (see Barkan 1992: 318-340), it was not until the growth of anti-Nazi sentiment during the Second World War, fuelled by revelations of the extremes to which German State policy had taken the doctrines of race theory, that a public scientific consensus on race was forthcoming (Stocking 1988: 11). This was achieved by UNESCO in 1950, which issued the first of a series of statements on the concept of race. Opening with the statement that, "scientists have reached a general agreement in recognising that mankind is one: that all

men belong to the same species, *homo sapiens*” (UNESCO 1952: 98 in Harraway 1988: 211), the UNESCO declaration represented the return of the monogenist tradition to the primary position of scientific and moral authority (Stocking 1988:11). However, unlike its nineteenth century manifestation, the monogenism re-affirmed by UNESCO was fundamentally egalitarian: the declaration stated that there was no scientific proof that human groups differed in their innate mental capabilities nor that miscegenation was biologically detrimental. This new theory of unity did not, therefore, conceptualise human diversity as a degenerating gradation from a European norm, but as a product of the “operation of evolutionary factors of differentiation such as isolation, the drift and random fixation of the material particles which control heredity (the genes), changes in the structure of these particles, hybridisation, and natural selection” (UNESCO 1952: 98 in Harraway 1988: 211).

The idea of ‘race’ and the racial order which had been assumed, studied and reified by physical anthropology throughout its historical development was therefore now largely irrelevant to the new, more relativist, approach to human origins affirmed by UNESCO. Not only had the measurement of human remains failed to answer the questions posed by physical anthropology, but even the questions themselves were now considered inappropriate. The raw data which had been amassed - the remains of thousands of individuals collected throughout the world - was therefore largely surplus to requirements. Nor could these remains be used by the ‘new’ re-oriented physical anthropology which emerged after the Second World War. There were few fossils for the palaeoanthropologists, and the studies which aimed to reconstruct the demography and pathology of past populations required not only well provenanced remains in sufficient numbers to form a random representative sample of the population in question, but sufficiently advanced excavation techniques to ensure “complete and accurate recovery of skeletal parts and information on their associations with one another and with other items” (Ubelaker 1989: 3). Few, if any, of the remains which had been gathered in the nineteenth and early twentieth century to help classify and elucidate human diversity could match any of these criteria. Consequently, since the Second World War, collections have received much less, if any, scientific attention (see Appendix 1). Reflecting this post-war disinterest, Oxford University disposed of much of its anthropological collection of human remains by transferring it to the British Museum

(Natural History)³ in 1945 and 1946. Similarly, the Royal College of Surgeons, England did not attempt to replace the skeletal material lost when its museum was bombed during the Second World War. Although the College did retain the surviving Hunterian remains and in 1946 accepted over 50 Australian and Papuan crania donated by its then Conservator, Frederick Wood Jones (as well as various other indigenous human remains supplied by E. W. Fish), it did not keep the vast majority of material that had survived the bombing and, like Oxford, transferred these remains to the British Museum (Natural History) in the immediate post-war years, where they are still housed today. With a few notable exceptions hardly any indigenous human remains were donated to British collections after the Second World War. However, in colonised countries the remains of their indigenous populations continued to be placed in museums, usually after discovery through archaeological excavation or chance disturbance.

1.8. Conclusion.

It is clear from the history of physical anthropology how subjective has been the quantitative analysis and interpretation of human remains. Despite assertions by many nineteenth and early twentieth century scientists that their research was conducted without prejudice, results consistently supported pre-conceived notions of a racial hierarchy. Quantitative analysis thus reified a pre-existing social concept. Data that did not conform was either ignored or re-interpreted to 'fit' as required. Just as numerical data often attains the status of objective fact and in doing so lends authority to scientific theory, so it is also exceptionally sensitive to unintentional manipulation. Gould proved this phenomenon when in his recalculation of Morton's data, he not only discovered the craniologist's own errors but later realised that on one occasion he had himself unwittingly 'chosen' a clearly incorrect number because it provided him with a 'good' result (Gould 1981: 66).

Analysis of human remains simply set out to discover the physical manifestations of what was already an accepted fact. Reflecting the 'low' position ascribed to Australian Aborigines, first their skeletal and later their soft tissue material was perceived as 'simious', 'brutish' and/or primeval in form. Perhaps this was partly due to the

³ Now the Natural History Museum.

geographical location of Aborigines at the 'uttermost ends', the traditional home of all human beings considered uncivilised and bestial (see Gamble 1992; Bowler 1992).

That social concepts of race and racial hierarchy dominated physical anthropology is apparent in the tenacity of the race paradigm in science despite evidence within the academy which proved it to be false. Instead, the scientific establishment only turned away from this paradigm when, after the Second World War, it became socially and politically untenable. That is not to say that popular notions of race were also rejected at this time - they were simply no longer upheld by mainstream science. Moreover, analyses of 'race' in its nineteenth century guise was not completely abandoned after the Second World War (see Tucker 1994: 180-268). Such studies, which bear the characteristic hallmarks of a plural approach to human diversity: biological determinism, racial formalism, a concentration on human *differences*, and the implicit or explicit assumption of racial hierarchy (e.g. Coon 1962; Baker 1974; Rushton 1994a, 1994b), have nevertheless received severe criticism whenever they have appeared in reputable literature (e.g. Montagu 1964, 1974; Chisholm 1994). The polygenist approach has not, therefore, disappeared, it has simply reassumed a radical position in the scientific world.

Although collections have fallen into general disuse since the Second World War, the value of human remains as scientific specimens has recently been reaffirmed within the academy. Considerable technical advances in the field of molecular biology have meant that human remains collected in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are again being considered essential for the study of human evolution and human diversity. In the early 1990s it was claimed that the development of techniques which enabled DNA to be extracted from ancient bone, and possibly even from fossils, had the potential to answer many 'classic' questions posed by archaeology and anthropology, not least the relationship between modern humans and the Neanderthals (see Hagelberg *et. al.* 1989; Brown & Brown 1992; Hagelberg 1990, 1992; Hermann & Hummel 1994). Hagelberg (1990) predicted that, "opening up new avenues of research into the genetics and demography of our ancestors" the extraction of DNA from ancient bone would enable scientists to "test hypotheses about human evolution, migrations and disease". However, since the initial results achieved in the late 1980s and early 1990s, studies in ancient DNA did not advance as rapidly as expected, the main hurdle being the problem of

contamination and the consequent difficulty in authenticating results (Brown & Brown 1992; Richards *et. al.* 1995). In 1994, one researcher pondered whether, “many archaeologists and archaeological scientists will be wondering if all the scientific excitement, media interest, and funding attracted by ancient DNA is a reflection of progress or merely self-deluding hyperactivity” (Hedges 1994: 861) and noted “the enormous gap between the achievement of recovering one short ancient DNA sequence and the gleam in the eye of the palaeodemographer tracking migrations”. Nonetheless, more recently there has been progress in reducing the contamination of specimens (e.g. Richards *et. al.* 1995) as well as some advances in the field of European palaeodemography through the analysis of modern DNA and its comparison with ancient DNA taken, for example, from the 5,000 year old ‘Ice Man’ found in the Italian Alps in 1991 (Powledge & Rose 1996: 41-44). And in July 1997 it was reported that a sample of DNA has been successfully extracted from a Neanderthal skeleton (The Independent 11.7.1997). Reportedly showing that modern humans are not descended from Neanderthals, the research lends support to the theory that all modern humans originated in Africa and are not the result of separate and local evolutionary processes. The development of ancient DNA research indicates that collected human remains may never be redundant as scientific specimens while the reported discussions surrounding the conclusion drawn from the claimed recent analysis of Neanderthal DNA demonstrates how the two conceptual approaches to human origins - unity and plurality - persist in current scientific debate.

Chapter 2: Collecting the Dead: method, motivation and Aboriginal response.

From the early days of European settlement in Australia Aboriginal bones were collected and sent to museums in the West. One of the first skulls to reach European shores was that given to J. F. Blumenbach by Sir Joseph Banks in 1793. In view of the history of oppression in which the scientific use and procurement of Aboriginal remains is situated this was indeed a portent, for the skull was that of a young man who had been attacked and killed by English settlers at Botany Bay (Spengel 1874: 77).

Aboriginal remains were taken from a variety of sources. Whether discovered by chance, perhaps through building or other construction work¹, or more commonly through design, the vast majority of remains were obtained from areas where Aboriginal people had placed their dead. Thus, collections were usually supplied with bones taken from caves², removed from trees³ or, most commonly, procured from burial grounds⁴.

However, some remains were acquired before they had passed through funerary rites. For example, Aboriginal bodies lying in morgues or hospital and university dissecting rooms were easily accessible to members of the medical profession interested in acquiring 'specimens'. Perhaps the best known case is the skull taken by Dr William Crowther from the corpse of the so-called last 'full-blooded' male Tasmanian, William

¹ For example, in 1882 the Royal College of Surgeons, England received from Robert Oldfield the skull of an Aborigine "of the Murray River Tribe, South Australia, found while excavating the foundation of a house at Courmamount, 74 miles N.E. of Adelaide" (Flower 1907: 327). This skull is believed to have been destroyed when the College was bombed in 1941.

² For example, at the turn of the century James Smith gave the Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow three partial crania taken from a cave near Mount Morgan, Queensland. These remains were repatriated to Australia and buried near Mount Morgan in November 1990 (see Chapters 4 and 5).

³ For example, an Aboriginal skull lent to Joseph Barnard Davis by the phrenologist L. N. Fowler had been found "in the fork of a tree, a situation in which some tribes dispose of the dead" (Davis 1867: 265). Unless this skull was returned to Fowler it would have passed into the collection of the Royal College of Surgeons, England, and is believed to have been destroyed in 1941. Also presumed to have been destroyed at that time was, "the complete skeleton of a male Australian taken from a tree, where the body had been placed after drying" which the College had been given by Simmons Clark in 1882 (Flower 1907: 327).

⁴ Examples include the remains given by Ramsay Smith to the University of Edinburgh in 1907 which had been taken from a "big burying ground at Lake Victoria" (see Appendix 1, ID199), and the bones from "the known burial place of a tribe of Shoalhaven Blacks settled in the Illawarra district, on the south coast of New South Wales" given to the Royal College of Surgeons, England by Dr Charles Taylor in 1876 (Flower 1907: 322). The former were not returned to Australia with the rest of the Edinburgh Collection in 1991 and their current whereabouts are unknown. The latter was presumably destroyed when the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, England was bombed in 1941.

Lanne, as it lay in the Hobart Hospital morgue in March 1869 (Ellis 1981: 133-144; Ryan 1981: 214-217; Fforde 1992b). However, while this may have been a unique incident in Hobart, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the bodies of Aboriginal people who had died in Adelaide were more frequently dissected and their skeletal and soft tissue remains donated to collections overseas⁵. Ideally placed to exploit such a 'resource', many of the eminent anthropologists in Adelaide were also leading members of the Adelaide medical establishment (see Jones 1987), in particular Edward C. Stirling, Director of the Adelaide Museum and Professor of Physiology at the University of Adelaide, Archibald Watson, Elder Professor of Anatomy at the same university, and William Ramsay Smith who as well as being Chairman of the Central Board of Health, City Coroner, Inspector of Anatomy and a doctor at the Adelaide Hospital, was a collector on behalf of the Anatomy Department at his old university in Edinburgh (see Appendix 1). These individuals took remains from the Adelaide Hospital morgue as well as the University of Adelaide's dissecting rooms which sometimes received Aboriginal corpses from the nearby Parkside Lunatic Asylum (see Appendix 1.2, ID 251, 254, 338, 339, 366). Ramsay Smith was not the only Adelaide Coroner to have sent Aboriginal remains overseas. In 1881, coroner Thomas Ward donated to the Royal College of Surgeons, England the bones of two Aboriginal people which had been discovered while laying foundations for the local Adelaide exhibition (Flower 1907: 330). These were presumably destroyed when the College was bombed in 1941.

Certainly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Aboriginal bodies from Parkside Lunatic Asylum appear to have been sent to Adelaide University as a matter of course. Acquiring official permission was only a formality and was often obtained after the body had already been transferred, as in the cases of Pokallie and Wanamuchoo (see Appendix 1.3). Securing the necessary licence required the asylum's medical officer to certify that neither the deceased nor his/her spouse or nearest relative had objected to dissection. However, it is doubtful whether asylum inmates realised that their corpses were to be given to the university and, even if they did, it is highly unlikely that Pokallie or Wanamuchoo, given their case histories, would have been able to register an objection. To all intents and purposes, the medical officer's authorisation was a foregone

⁵ Aboriginal remains may also have been taken from the Hospital in Melbourne - the British craniologist Joseph Barnard Davis received the skull of a man who had died in this institution (Davis 1867: 261).

conclusion. Involved in a professional capacity with the transfer of bodies to the dissecting rooms, both Ramsay Smith and Watson were in perfect positions to obtain any soft tissue or skeletal remains they desired.

Although Watson collaborated with Ramsay Smith in supplying Aboriginal body parts to the University of Edinburgh, he also donated similar material to other collections in Great Britain. As early as 1888, three years after his appointment to the University of Adelaide, Watson sent the head of an Aboriginal man, who had apparently died of peritonitis in Adelaide Hospital (Rolleston 1888: 32), to Alexander Macalister, Professor of Anatomy at the University of Cambridge (Rolleston 1888: 32). By 1908, Watson and Stirling, a graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, had sent Macalister four Aboriginal brains (Duckworth 1908: 69), while Stirling had previously donated Aboriginal crania and at least three Aboriginal heads in spirit to the same institution (Macalister 1892: 937, 1897: 1037). In 1909, the Royal College of Surgeons, England received an Aborigine's brain and the entire preserved body of an Aboriginal woman from Watson, a Fellow of the College since 1884, the latter having been brought as "personal luggage" by Dr Plummer of Adelaide (Keith diary entry 20.11.1909, RCSEL; and see Keith 1950: 344-345). In 1906 and 1913 Watson also sent Aboriginal body parts to Professor Arthur Thomson in the Department of Human Anatomy at the University of Oxford (NL 1682/33/2260; NL 1682/36/2328).

Perhaps reflecting competition amongst curators of British collections, or an assumption that donors should remain loyal to one institution, Ramsay Smith appears to have been uneasy about Watson supplying remains to establishments other than the University of Edinburgh. Consequently, on 29.1.1908 he wrote apologetically to Daniel Cunningham, Professor of Anatomy at Edinburgh:

The skull belonging to Watson should go to you, only he says he has promised it to Macalister, who was kind to him in some matter. He has been also giving some specimens to Thomson of Oxford, whose brother is one of the best known Queensland doctors. I think one can hardly grudge such men a few good specimens (ELSC Ms 621).

Certainly, Watson is among only a very few people who donated Aboriginal remains to more than one collection in the UK. Unlike Stirling and Ramsay Smith, past students of

Cambridge and Edinburgh respectively, Watson owed no particular allegiance to any British university, having been educated in Germany and France.

Compared to the number of Aboriginal bones in UK museums, soft tissue remains were rare since, as has been shown (see Chapter 1), the study of comparative anatomy between races had almost exclusively concentrated upon skeletal material. By the late nineteenth century, the lack of available specimens and an increasing interest in “racial anatomy” (Berry 1911: 604) meant that body parts sent from Adelaide - almost the only source of such material - were highly valued. As Thomson wrote to Watson on 4.12.1906, acknowledging receipt of an Aborigine’s preserved head:

You can not see what a prize this specimen is to me. As I am much interested in physical anthropology it will be the means of providing me with a variety of rare specimens for my museum (NL 1682/33/2260).

Curators were keen to obtain soft tissue remains, and wrote to their suppliers accordingly. Ramsay Smith replied to such a request from Cunningham on 31.10.1906,

As for soft parts - I shall do my best, and try a few places soon. I shall make a strong effort to get a whole young subject if I can. Much material is allowed to waste for lack of somebody on the spot to secure it (ELSC Ms 599).

Other Aboriginal human remains procured before burial were those of individuals killed by Europeans, and remains of this sort were donated to most major British collections. Examples include a skull now believed to be in the Natural History Museum, London, of “Jackie”, a “Buckinbah aboriginal” of the “Bogan River tribe” who was “killed in a fight with natives”, which was donated to Oxford University by H. M. Rowland in 1869 (Hull 1960) and the cranium of a “man killed by a musket shot” from Kangatong in South Australia which was donated to the Royal College of Surgeons, England by Dr G. A. F. Wilks in 1878 (Flower 1907: 324) and is presumed to have been destroyed when the College was bombed in 1941. Obtaining the remains of people who had died in violent circumstances seems to have been an acceptable practice. Indeed, the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland advised travellers that the heads of “natives” could be readily obtained after battle or “other slaughter” (*Notes and Queries* 1874: 142). As Turnbull (1991: 115) has documented, in 1882 the Director of the Australian Museum in

Sydney even appears to have lamented the reduction in frontier conflict because it diminished his supply of Aboriginal remains⁶.

Collectors deliberately sought out massacre sites as a source of Aboriginal remains. For example, Richard Semon (1899: 266), an amateur naturalist who travelled in Queensland at the end of the nineteenth century described how he had heard:

that in the neighbourhood of Cooktown a quantity of blacks had been slaughtered for some reason or another by the black police, and that their remains had for a long time been left to bleach in the open bush. My humanity did not go so far as to prompt me to exert myself in order to obtain an honourable burial for their bones. On the contrary, I had the ardent desire to secure the remains of these poor victims for scientific purposes, the study of a series of Australian crania being of considerable anthropological interest. I therefore communicated with several people likely to know the whereabouts of the slaughter but all in vain. The bones had been scattered or covered up some way or other - in short we were not able to find anything.

Other collectors were more successful. By 1820 the Edinburgh Phrenological Society had received the skull of an Aboriginal leader named Carnambeigle shot and killed in 1816 by soldiers carrying out punitive raids in the Sydney area⁷. A century later the Royal College of Surgeons, England was given the remains of two Aborigines of “the North West Territory ... near the Victoria River shot early in 1900 in a punitive expedition in which forty natives, male and female, were killed” (Flower 1907, annotated copy HMRCSE)⁸. Although a skull from “Myall Creek Station” was given to the University of Edinburgh in 1888, there is insufficient documentation to ascertain whether or not this belonged to a victim of the 1838 Myall Creek massacre, or whether its donor,

⁶ Across the world, battlefields were common sources of indigenous human remains. For example, ‘Dervish’ skulls were taken from the Omdurman battlefield and given to the Anatomy Department at the University of Edinburgh (Wellcome to the Secretary 9.12.1901, EADL) and the remains of Zulu warriors killed at Rorke’s Drift were sent to the Fort Pitt Army Medical Museum in Chatham, Kent (Williamson 1857: 87). The collection at Fort Pitt (commonly known as the ‘Williamson Collection’) was subsequently housed at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Netley, Southampton, then at the Royal Army Medical College in Millbank from whence it was transferred to Oxford University. It is now in the Natural History Museum, London (Fforde 1992c). While the Williamson Collection appears to have been amassed by the good will of servicemen who obtained human remains while they were overseas, in 1868 army medical officers in the United States were ordered by the Assistant U.S. Surgeon General to collect Native American human remains for the Army Medical Museum in Washington (Bieder nd: 36).

⁷ Along with the rest of the Phrenological Society’s collection Carnambeigle’s skull was lent to the Department of Anatomy at the University of Edinburgh. It was returned to Australia in 1991 and is currently believed to be in the National Museum of Australia in Canberra (see Chapter 4, ID 192 and Appendix 1.3).

“William Anderson esq.” was the Corporal William Anderson who, also in 1838, took part in the punitive expedition at nearby Waterloo Creek (Millis 1992; and for further examples of Aboriginal human remains collected from massacre sites see Gunson (1974: 49) and Monaghan (1991: 33))⁹.

Aboriginal lives may have been in danger solely because of the scientific value placed on their remains. After he had failed to obtain bones from the massacre site near Cooktown, Semon (1899: 267) was told by a local settler:

‘A pity that H. is dead, he would have procured you as many skulls as you might have wished for’. I asked how H. would have managed this, and received the cool answer, ‘oh, he would have shot them.’ The man in question was generally known to kill the blacks in the bush wholesale.

Semon was sufficiently persuaded that Aboriginal people might be murdered for their value as scientific specimens that he advised caution in the purchase of human remains, suggesting in his travelogue that collectors should “closely examine both their black and white purveyors before entering into commercial relations with them” (Semon 1899: 267). Certainly, many collectors showed extreme prejudice towards Aboriginal people, regarding them as less than human, an attitude exemplified in a letter published in the April 1866 edition of the Popular Magazine of Anthropology, supposedly received from a station in west Queensland:

I will do my best to get some black’s skulls. I have already mentioned it to several fellows, in case they should have any accident in that way. I hear they shot two blacks at the next station, twenty-five miles off, only a day or so ago, whom they caught killing one of the working bullocks; this is the result of letting the blacks be up at the station. They are the most degraded race of beings. I cannot possibly regard them as men and brothers; in fact, I do not think they are, although I cannot elucidate the mystery of their origin (in Turnbull 1994: 17).

Oral history recorded by Sumner (1993: 5-6) provides evidence that the German collector, Amalie Dietrich, may have believed that obtaining Aboriginal remains justified murder. Dietrich spent ten years (1863-1872) in Australia employed by the merchant J.

⁸ These remains are presumed to have been destroyed when the College was bombed in 1941.

C. Godeffroy to collect natural history specimens for his private museum in Hamburg. In January 1865, Godeffroy is supposed to have asked Dietrich to collect ethnographic objects and Aboriginal human remains during her forthcoming trip to Queensland (Godeffroy to Dietrich 20.1.1865 in Bischoff 1931: 259). However, according to Sumner (1993), Dietrich's daughter, C. Bischoff, fabricated much of the correspondence between Godeffroy and her mother that she published in 1931. Nonetheless, shortly after Dietrich's arrival in Rockhampton, oral history records that she asked an employee of William Archer, a leading pastoralist in the area, to shoot an Aborigine so that she could obtain the remains - in particular the skin. Incensed at her suggestion, Archer is said to have ordered Dietrich to be driven back to town immediately. Whether obtained in this manner or acquired, as suggested by Turnbull (1993a: 23-24), from local Aboriginal people who practised *post mortem* flaying, Dietrich did acquire an Aborigine's dried skin. In addition, she also sent Godeffroy eight Aboriginal skeletons collected in Bowen and one skull collected from Rockhampton, all of which were taken from funerary sites (Sumner 1993: 3). The current whereabouts of these remains are unknown (see Sumner 1993).

Museums also contain the remains of Aboriginal people killed for alleged offences against settlers. For example, in 1880, Oxford University received the skull of "Tin Pot Billy", an Aboriginal man hanged for the murder of colonists near Bathurst, New South Wales (Jenkins to Rolleston, Rolleston Papers AML; Hull 1960) which is now believed to be in the Natural History Museum in London. The scaffold could be a ready source of remains which, on at least one occasion, was systematically used to obtain specimens for scientific study. In the early 1880s, the Russian anthropologist Nicolai Miklouho-Maclay procured the corpses of criminals hanged at Brisbane Jail, including the body of the Aboriginal bushranger Johnny Campbell. The scientific importance of Campbell's remains appears to have so greatly outweighed the value placed upon his life that, according to Prentis (1991: 138) the execution was brought forward for Miklouho-Maclay's convenience. After two months of examination by Miklouho-Maclay, the cadaver was shipped to Professor Virchow in Berlin, who complained not only of the smell of the corpse, but that it lacked its brain and internal organs. Miklouho-Maclay

⁹ This skull was returned to Australia in 1991 with the rest of the Edinburgh Collection and was collected from the National Museum in Canberra by Moree Land Council in April 1992 (see Chapter 4 and

had removed these parts in Brisbane for comparison with similar specimens taken from the bodies of Chinese and Phillipino criminals obtained in a similar fashion (Sumner 1980: 120; Prentis 1991: 149-150). Other bones, like the skull which Benjamin Rix gave to the Royal College of Surgeons, England in 1917, of Tooma, a Tasmanian man pursued and shot in 1825 “having killed two shepherds on a Mr King’s land” (Flower 1907, annotated copy, HMRCSE), were the outcome of a different type of ‘law enforcement’ on the frontier.

From the first years of European settlement in Australia, UK Museums also received the remains of ‘hostile’ Aboriginal leaders. The earliest known example is that of Pemulwoy from the Sydney area whose preserved head was dispatched to Sir Joseph Banks by Philip Gidley King, Governor of New South Wales, in June 1802. In April 1803, Banks wrote to King thanking him for the head, describing how it was “said to have caused some comical consequences when opened at Customs House, but when brought home was very acceptable to our anthropological collectors, and makes a figure in the museum of the late Mr Hunter, now purchased by the public”. Although Hunter’s collection was moved to the premises of the Royal College of Surgeons, England in 1806, there is no record of Pemulwoy’s head in any of the College catalogues. There is, unfortunately, no way of ascertaining whether the manuscript entry of “two human heads from N.S. Wales”, donated by Everard Home in December 1802, in a list of donations to the museum refers to the remains of this historic figure. Other examples include the preserved head of Yagan from the Swan River settlement in Western Australia which reached Britain in 1834 (see Appendix 2) and the skull of Jandamarra (Pigeon) from the Kimberleys which is believed to have been sent to the UK soon after he was shot in 1897 (Pedersen 1995).

Museums were also given the remains of Aboriginal people infamous for their role in the murder of well-known Europeans. For example, the University of Oxford was given the skull of Gwarinman, who had supposedly been involved in the widely publicised killings of Fred Panter, James Harding and William Goldwyer in November 1864 as they journeyed in the Roebuck Bay area, Western Australia. The trio’s remains were discovered in April 1865. Shortly afterwards, two Aboriginal prisoners implicated in the

murders were shot by the Aboriginal guide attached to the search party while reportedly trying to escape. One of these men may have been Gwarinman, whose skull was later transferred from the University of Oxford and is now housed in the Natural History Museum, London (Perth Gazette and Western Australian Times 19.5.1865; 26.5.1865; Illustrated London News 7.10.1865). Another example is the skull of Carbon Will which was given to the London phrenologist James Deville in the early nineteenth century. Carbon Will had allegedly killed Captain Logan, the Commandant of Moreton Bay penal colony (see Hughes (1987) for an account of Logan's life and death). This skull was subsequently acquired by Joseph Barnard Davis and then passed into the collection of the Royal College of Surgeons, England. It was apparently destroyed when the College was bombed in 1941.

Although ostensibly collected for scientific purposes, the skulls or heads of notorious Aborigines (the vanquished enemy) may also have been taken as trophies - symbols of successful conquest. It is even possible that this type of collecting may have been motivated by the tradition of acquiring animal trophies after a successful hunt. While it would be untrue to describe all the 'posses' sent to kill 'hostile' Aborigines as hunting parties, a quote from Lieutenant Hill which provides one account of the death of Carnambeigle (see ID 192 and Appendix 1.3) demonstrates that Aboriginal people were sometimes perceived as quarry:

I may observe, that Carnambeigle was a most determined character, one of the few who were hostile to settlers and annoyed them very much by destroying their cattle. A party of the military were sent out against him and his confederates, but he could not be found until they procured two native guides. *He was then traced to his den and, being placed at bay, he died manfully having received five shots before he fell* (Hill in Mackenzie 1820: 240, my emphasis).

There may have been other reasons for sending the remains of notorious Aborigines for scientific examination. Thus, the skull of an Aboriginal elder of the Shoalhaven district appears to have been donated to the British Phrenological Society in 1825 in part as retribution and recompense for the violence he had inflicted against the local settlers:

although this man escaped punishment and died in peace, yet mark eternal justice his bones have not been allowed to rest in their grave and it is to be

hoped that his skull will throw such light on science as may sufficiently expiate the crimes which he committed (A. Berry, quoted in Turnbull 1993a: 21).

Aboriginal human remains were acquired from a variety of different sources. Some collectors appear to have taken advantage of any opportunity in their pursuit of bones and soft tissue material. Thus Hermann Klaatsch, the German physical anthropologist, took remains from burial grounds, procured brains from the hospital in Broome and, while measuring Aboriginal prisoners at Wyndham jail in 1906, obtained skeletal material from the morgue as and when the prison doctor informed him of new deaths (Stehlik 1986: 63). In addition, Klaatsch acquired skeletal material from W. E. Roth, Chief Protector of the Aborigines in Queensland who had a personal collection of Aboriginal skulls and artefacts (Milicerowa 1955:257)¹⁰. Protectors, like medical doctors, were well placed to obtain Aboriginal remains, and Roth was not the only member of his profession to engage in this practice. Matthew Moorhouse, for example, the first permanent Protector of Aborigines in South Australia, sent Aboriginal skeletal remains to his brother-in-law, the British craniologist Joseph Barnard Davis (1867: 258-260). Ramsay Smith may also have attempted to secure the assistance of the Protector in Adelaide:

I have interested him [the Protector] in our department of the subject. We went together to Point McLeay where there are over 200 natives, and I took the opportunity of going to the Coorong and doing some bone gathering (Ramsay Smith to Cunningham 28.4.1908, ELSC Ms 620).

By the early 1900s, Ramsay Smith had established a network of people across Australia to collect human remains on his behalf. For example, in New South Wales he arranged that staff at the Government Survey should “collect carefully all specimens they come across” (Ramsay Smith to Cunningham 20.2.1907, EADL), while in 1906 he was anxious to obtain the skulls collected by his friends in the Northern Territory lest they were taken by Klaatsch instead (Ramsay Smith to Cunningham 31.10.1906, ELSC Ms 599).

¹⁰ Klaatsch's collection of Aboriginal remains, including those he received from W. E. Roth, were housed in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Wroclaw (then Breslau), where Klaatsch was Professor from 1907 until his death in 1916 (Milicerowa 1955: 257). Other skulls collected by W. E. Roth are housed in the Australian Museum in Sydney, a considerable number of which, such as those from

From Blumenbach in Gottingen to Turner in Edinburgh (see Appendix 1), university collections were largely assembled by past students or staff who, often as members of the medical profession, had taken posts in the colonies or were travelling abroad. The Department of Anatomy at the University of Cambridge was no exception, and its Professor, Alexander Macalister (1893: 960), used the University's magazine to recruit potential donors:

Our cranial collection is now the second largest in Great Britain; and, as the ethnological value of such a series depends directly on the number of comparable specimens, I am earnestly desirous of making it as complete as possible; and shall be deeply indebted to any members of the University who may be able to furnish us with additional specimens. If the members of the University who are scattered over the world were willing to aid us in this direction we should have the most perfectly equipped school of physical anthropology in Britain.

In a similar fashion, the Anthropological Society of London used its international membership to assemble a considerable collection of indigenous human remains. Thus, for example, Robert Peel, a Fellow since 1866, presented the Society with two Aboriginal crania in 1870 (Anthropological Review and Journal of the Anthropological Society 3: xxxi)¹¹.

Curators also recruited the assistance of their friends and relatives. William Turner, for instance, received three skeletons from Queensland from his friend Sir Arthur Mitchell (see Appendix 1), and Professor George Rolleston at the University of Oxford was given Aboriginal crania collected on his brother's property on the Comet River, 200 miles inland from Rockhampton (Rolleston Papers, AML)¹².

Keppel Island, have been returned to relevant Aboriginal communities (see Donlon & Pardoe 1991; Pardoe & Donlon 1991).

¹¹ The Anthropological Society (which, by 1871, had become the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland) sold its collection of non-European human remains to the Royal College of Surgeons, England for £100 in 1894, except for the articulated skeleton of a Tasmanian which it had received from Morton Allport in 1871. The Institute eventually sold the Tasmanian skeleton for £100 to the British Museum (Natural History) in 1898, where it is still housed today. The crania donated to the Society by Peel are believed to have been destroyed when the Royal College of Surgeons, England was bombed in 1941.

¹² Another brother, William Rolleston, lived in Christchurch, New Zealand, and supplied George with Maori skulls, those of the Moriori from the Chatham Islands, and natural history specimens, receiving essays, lectures and donations for the local museum in return. Other members of Rolleston's family contributed less directly to George's collecting of human remains. For example, his niece wrote to Rolleston's sister:

Without the international contacts available to universities, societies and institutional museums, private collectors, such as Joseph Barnard Davis, relied heavily on purchase and the efforts of “friends in many countries” (Davis 1867: vi). If Davis’ pursuit of Sir George Grey while he was successively the Governor of New Zealand (1845-1853) and of Cape Colony (1854-1861) is typical, considerable time and effort could be invested in establishing such ‘friendships’. This method did produce results: in response to Davis’ letters, Grey sent the calvarium of a Maori and, later, those of two “Kaffirs” and four “Bushmen” (e.g. Davis to Grey 13.1.1854 and 27.6.1857, GGAL; Davis 1867: 214, 216,316)¹³.

Many European institutions also profited from the nineteenth century voyages of discovery and exploration. Since the voyage of the *Endeavour*, it had become acceptable practice to include parties of scientists in the ship’s company to observe, record and collect specimens of the new environment and people they encountered (Mackay 1985: 8). The French expedition to Australia (1800 to 1804) commanded by Nicolas Baudin was the first to officially include anthropology amongst its scientific objectives, Georges Cuvier (1800: 175) providing instructions on where to acquire and how to preserve the human remains which the crew were to collect:

Les voyageurs ne doivent-ils négliger aucune occasion lorsqu’ils peuvent visiter les lieux où les morts sont déposés, lorsqu’ils seront témoins de quelque combat ou qu’ils y prendront part ... La préparation de ces objets ne fera, sans doute, point de difficultés. Faire bouillir les os dans une dissolution de soude ou de potasse caustique et les débarasser de leurs chairs, c’est l’affaire de quelques heures.

My dear Aunt Grace, I had a long letter from Uncle William the other day in which he sent a message to Uncle George so I think I ought to send it to you - it was about bones of course! Here it is: ‘I have got a box of Maori bones and skulls for him, and a Mr McInalanger (this word was quite illegible so I have just copied it!) a friend of Dr Flower’s is finding him a quantity from Napier; fresh killed in the Maori war’. This is all, they seem to be in a very flourishing state out there (Rolleston Papers, AML).

¹³ These remains passed into the collection of the Royal College of Surgeons, England. The Maori skull - that of Ngatiawa from Taranaki, North Island - is now believed to be in the Natural History Museum, London. If the African remains survived the bombing of the College in 1941, they are presumably also in the Natural History Museum’s collection.

Francois Péron, appointed to the expedition as zoologist, collected Aboriginal human remains in Western Australia and Tasmania¹⁴. Later expeditions commanded by Jules Dumont D'Urville in the *Astrolabe* and *Zéleé*, the second of which (1837 to 1840) included Pierre Marie Dumoutier as official phrenologist, also obtained Aboriginal remains, which are now housed in the Musée de l'Homme in Paris (Plomley 1962: 9; Pietruszewsky to Lambert 2.12.1975, AIATSIS pMs 2976).

British expeditions were equally successful. For example (and see below), the Royal College of Surgeons, England received Aboriginal remains from Captain Philip King collected during the voyage of the *Mermaid* (1818 to 1822) (Flower 1907: 333), an almost complete skeleton collected in Dampier Land and presented by George Grey, Captain aboard *HMS Beagle* (1837 to 1839) (Flower 1907: 314, Stokes 1846: 115-116) and the remains of seven Aborigines and 5 Torres Strait Islanders donated by Captain Blackwood and geologist Joseph Bete Jukes collected while *HMS Fly* twice circumnavigated Australia and conducted a maritime survey from the south-east coast of New Guinea and the Torres Straits to the southern tip of the Great Barrier Reef (1842 to 1846) (Flower 1907: 316-317). However, the scientific voyage to bring the greatest number of indigenous human remains to the UK was that of *HMS Challenger*. Charged with surveying various sections of the world's ocean floor from 1872 to 1876, *Challenger* returned to England with skeletal remains collected in the Admiralty Islands, Hawaii, the Chatham Islands, New Zealand, Australia, Tierra del Fuego, Patagonia and South Africa (Turner 1886: 20). Analysed by Sir William Turner (1886), these remains augmented the collections at the Department of Anatomy, University of Edinburgh¹⁵.

2.1. Aboriginal response.

Early European historical sources describe a variety of ways in which Australian Aboriginal people 'traditionally' disposed of their dead, and archaeological excavations,

¹⁴ According to Wallace (1984), Peron's collections (including Aboriginal artefacts; live animals; seeds; zoological, botanical and geological specimens) were divided between the Musée d'Histoire Naturelle and the Malmaison. The latter was partly destroyed in the rioting which followed Napoleon's abdication in 1814.

¹⁵ The Aboriginal remains collected by the *Challenger* were returned to Australia in 1991. The non-Aboriginal remains collected by the *Challenger* are presumably still housed in the Department of Anatomy, University of Edinburgh.

such as those at Broadbeach (Haglund 1976), have increased knowledge of pre-contact funerary rites (for a survey of 'traditional' Aboriginal mortuary practices see Meehan 1971). Since colonisation, Aboriginal people have continued to carry out many different funerary practices, although burial in Christian cemeteries has often supplanted - or been amalgamated with - many 'traditional' methods. Throughout the history of the collecting of human remains in Australia there is evidence of Aboriginal objection and opposition to the removal of their ancestors' remains. Such resistance indicates - at least in the areas in which collecting was common - a prevalent concern that the dead should receive appropriate funerary ceremony and not be disturbed from their place of final disposition. The need to accord Yagan's father, Midgegooroo, appropriate funerary rites was perhaps the reason why his kin attempted to exhume his body shortly after it had been buried by the military after his execution in May 1833 (see Appendix 2).

An early example of Aboriginal concern that the head of a corpse might be removed by Europeans is provided by the missionary Lancelot E. Threlkeld who described in 1825 how one of the mourners at a burial ceremony:

came to me and requested in broken English that I would not disclose where the body was laid. Upon enquiring why I would be so particular, they answered that they were afraid lest 'whitefellow should come and take the head away' (in Gunson 1974: 48).

Truganini, the so-called 'Last Tasmanian', was so distressed by the prospect of her skull becoming a scientific specimen that seven years before her death in 1876 she asked a friend, the Reverend Atkinson, to throw her remains into the deepest part of the d'Entrecasteaux Channel (see Chapter 4).

In 1903, revelations concerning the treatment of Aboriginal corpses in the Adelaide Hospital (see Appendix 1) were reported by the Secretary of the South Australia Aboriginal Friends' Association to have "created anxiety amongst the natives at Point McLeay mission station, and they are manifestly disinclined to be sent to the Adelaide Hospital in case of sickness" (Adelaide Advertiser 25.9.1903). Presumably prompted by an approach from the Point McLeay community - in what may be the earliest example of a request for the repatriation of remains - the Secretary of the Friend's Association wrote to

the Government asking that the remains of Tommy Walker, whose head and unmacerated skeleton were taken from the morgue by Ramsay Smith and sent to Edinburgh University, “should, if possible, be recovered for burial in South Australia”. In addition, the Association suggested that the Government should “consider the advisability of recovering and reinterring the skeletons which Veterinary-surgeon Desmond states that he obtained from Hindmarsh Island” (Adelaide Advertiser 25.9.1903)¹⁶.

Other accounts indicate that Aboriginal people feared that great danger would result from remains being taken from their resting place. For example, Herbert Basedow (1904: 35), an anthropologist who collected skeletal material in north west Australia in 1903 commented that:

The fact that I had collected a native’s skull, which had been disinterred by the dingos at Opparinna Spring, was quite sufficient to induce an old blackfellow and family camped close by to desert the locality in terror.

Because of the resistance often encountered from local people, collecting indigenous remains was widely recognised as a hazardous activity. In the 1840s the crew members of *HMS Fly* and *HMS Rattlesnake* approached graves in the Torres Straits with extreme caution. In 1844, the *Fly*’s geologist, Joseph Bete Jukes (1847: 149-150) visited a grave near Port Lihou on Muralug and was “careful not to disturb or leave any other trace of our presence than our foot prints in the sand around”. Inspecting a similar burial site a few years afterwards, the *Rattlesnake*’s zoologist, John Macgillivray (1852: 32), reported:

On the occasion of our visiting the grave in question ... Gi’om told me that we were closely watched by a party of natives who were greatly pleased that we did not attempt to deface the tomb; had we done so - and the temptation was great to some of us, for several fine nautilus shells

¹⁶ In 1991, Tommy Walker’s skull was eventually returned to Australia with other Aboriginal remains in the Edinburgh Collection. Although Walker’s skeleton had also been sent to Edinburgh, the post-cranial bones were not repatriated. In September 1996 Walker’s descendants were informed of the fate of their ancestor’s remains. Saddened at the news, they now wish to bury all Walker’s remains together. To this end, they engaged a lawyer who approached Edinburgh University about the whereabouts of the rest of Tommy Walker’s skeleton. As of July 1997, the University has located some, but not all, of the missing bones (see Appendix 1.3 and ID 254). The fate of the Hindmarsh Island skeletons collected by veterinary surgeon Desmond, is unknown. One skull from Hindmarsh was sent to Edinburgh by Ramsay Smith and was repatriated to Australia in 1991 (see Appendix 1.2, ID 347). Other remains from Hindmarsh Island in British collections include those given to the Royal College of Surgeons, England by Doris Johnson in 1914 which were among the Aboriginal remains presumed to have been destroyed when the College was bombed in 1941 (Flower 1907, annotated copy HMRCSE).

were hanging up, and some good dugong skulls were lying upon the top - one or more of our party would have been speared.

The Royal Geographical Society, while advising travellers that “native skeletons, and especially skulls, should be sent home for accurate examination” (Tylor 1889: 373), also warned potential collectors of the violent opposition they might encounter. Some years earlier, craniologist Carl Vogt (1864: 8-9) even suggested that indigenous resistance was a major reason why collections in European museums were, he believed, so inadequately provisioned:

Many naturalists, like Blumenbach at Gottingen, Morton in America, and others, have devoted much of their time to the formation of collections of crania, representing the various types of races of mankind. Even here the difficulties we meet with are great. It is hardly feasible in the times we live in to cut off the heads of the living; and to despoil the graves of the dead is in most civilised countries considered a crime, and severely punished. Pious ignorance even now declaims against dissection, and it is not so very long since English anatomists were driven to employ resurrection men, and were directly the cause of murders being committed. We must, therefore, not wonder that the procuring in uncivilised countries is not unattended with danger, and that we succeed only in exceptional cases in collecting a sufficient number of skulls of any stock to enable us to draw just inferences from comparison.

In Australia, there are a number of recorded incidents in which Aborigines reacted with hostility to the removal of their ancestors' remains. For example, in 1904 Hermann Klaatsch had to make a hasty departure from Normanton when the local community became aware of his objectives and, calling him 'Devil Devil', threatened to spear him (Stehlik 1986:62). In September and October 1906, Klaatsch spent fourteen days on Melville Island keen, as usual, to augment his skeletal collection. He obtained the remains of a young girl, disinterred by a Tiwi man at Klaatschs' request:

Luckily we remained unnoticed by the blacks during our grave violating enterprise. However they must have soon noticed what happened because, after we had finally stowed away our spoils on the boat and had continued with our journey, we wanted to stop at an appropriate place to pick up water; it had already got dark, when our blacks turned our attention to little flashes of light that started to appear in the thickets of the shore. These were the fire sticks in the hands of the natives who followed us. Cooper postponed the landing until the next morning, remarking dryly

that he did not wish to give the blacks any ‘opportunity’ (Klaatsch 1907a: 69).

Cooper, Klaatsch’s European assistant, was later killed by the Aborigines in what Klaatsch presumed to be “vengeance for the damage done to the graves” (Klaatsch 1907a: 75). In 1842, when *HMS Fly* was docked in Hobart, the assistant surgeon, Archibald Sibbald, and the naturalist, John Macgillivray, ventured to secure the remains of Tasmanians from graves on Bruni Island. *En route* to the island several of the accompanying party died: “I will not speak of our labours and dangers in the adventure: it was the painful occasion of the loss of two out of three boats, with their crews of nine men” (Sibbald 1854 in Flower 1907: 341). Whether, as Turnbull (1994: 15) suggests, these crew members were killed by Aborigines, or whether they died in other circumstances, this incident demonstrates that collecting Aboriginal human remains could even sometimes produce European fatalities¹⁷.

Aware of the risks associated with obtaining remains, which in settled areas included the possibility of antagonising and losing Aboriginal employees, collectors were often at pains to carry out their work in secret. Turnbull (1993a: 24-25) describes how the Director of the South Australian Museum, Edward C. Stirling, attempted to covertly acquire Aboriginal remains from burial sites on the property of his brother, John, at Mundi Mundi in 1892, for presentation to various British institutions. John Stirling asked the South Australian Museum to send two museum employees to obtain the remains as secretly as possible in case his Aboriginal workers left, they “being shy of remaining where their last resting place may be disturbed” (in Turnbull 1993a: 24). However, Robert Kay, the Secretary of the South Australian Museum and Library Board, refused to sanction the expedition because he feared retaliation from the local people (Turnbull 1993a: 24).

As well as threatening violent retaliation, Aboriginal people sometimes used the white administration to object to grave robbing. Thus, while members of the Point McLeay community may well have solicited the help of the South Australian Aboriginal Friends’ Association, in other instances Aborigines contacted the local judiciary. For example, as

Turnbull (1993a: 25) has described, in 1893 local Aborigines were furious at the clandestine removal of remains in the Burrigong area by Robert Etheridge, Assistant Curator at the Australian Museum. Unjustly accused of the crime, one H. J. McCooey complained to the museum in November of that year:

The Aborigines of Burrigong are terribly annoyed about the remains of that blackfellow which Mr Etheridge dug up and took to Sydney some few weeks ago. They blame me for doing it; but I can prove I was in Goulburn at the time. They complain bitterly about the outrage - and they undoubtedly regard it as such - and have threatened to do personal violence to whoever committed it.

In matters of this kind even the most sensible or 'tame' aborigines are singularly morose, superstitious, and treacherous - more so, in fact, than Europeans.

They have gone to Picton to see the Police Magistrate ... (McCooey in Turnbull 1993a: 25).

Perhaps anxious to play down the incident, Etheridge was dismissive of McCooey's concern, writing on the letter, "Mr McCooey appears indignant over a very small matter. I am quite prepared to return to the District and investigate several other interesting occurrences known to be there"¹⁸.

Although Aboriginal objection to the removal of their ancestors' remains is documented from the early nineteenth century onwards, not all collectors encountered opposition from the local population. Reflecting how widespread such resistance was considered to be, collectors were often surprised when Aborigines did not oppose their activities or, as in some cases, assisted in the acquisition of remains (e.g. Basedow 1918: 227). John Lort Stokes (1846: 115-116), Commander of *HMS Beagle*, was so puzzled by the fact that a watching group of Aborigines did not intervene while members of his crew disinterred a skeleton in Cygnet Bay, Dampier Land, that he suggested two reasons why this might have been the case. Perhaps significantly, neither explanation entertained the possibility that the group simply did not care about the removal of the bones:

¹⁷ The remains collected on this expedition were donated to the Royal College of Surgeons, England, and are presumed to have been destroyed in 1941.

¹⁸ In 1992 these remains were returned by the Australian Museum to the Aboriginal community concerned (Turnbull 1993a: 25).

We named this Skeleton Point from our finding here the remains of a native, placed in a semi-recumbent position under the wide spreading gum tree, enveloped, or more properly, shrouded in bark of the papyrus. All the bones were closely packed together, the larger being placed outside, and the general mass surmounted by the head, resting on its base, the fleshless, eyeless skull [sic] 'grinning horribly' over the right side. Some of the natives arrived shortly after we had discovered this curious specimen of their mode of sepulchre; but although they entertain peculiar opinions upon the especial sanctity of 'the house appointed for all living,' - a sanctity we certainly were not altogether justified in disregarding - they made no offer of remonstrance at the removal of the mortal remains of their dead brother. Whether here, as in the neighbourhood of Freemantle, they regarded us as near kindred of their own under a new guise, and so perhaps might suppose that we took away the dry bones in order to rebuild the frame of which they before formed the support, and to clothe the hideous nakedness of death with the white man's flesh; or whether, deeming us indeed profane violators of that last resting-place of suffering humanity, which it seems an almost instinctive feeling to regard with reverence, they left the office of retribution either to the spirit of the departed, or the more potent "boyl-yas" - to be found upon the testimony of Miago in the wicked north - I know not; certain it is that under the superintendence of Mr Bynoe the removal was effected, and that the skeleton itself, presented by that officer to Captain [George] Grey, was by him bestowed upon the Royal College of Surgeons, in whose museum it is now to be found.

Captain Grey (1841: 257) also described this skeleton being collected and noted the lack of opposition from watching Aborigines. However, unlike Stokes, he passed no comment. This skeleton is presumed to have been destroyed when the Royal College of Surgeons, England was bombed in 1941.

Knut Dahl, a Norwegian who travelled in Northern Australia in 1893, appears to have believed that the Aborigines' move away from a 'traditional' lifestyle explained why some were apparently willing to exchange skeletal material for goods. Dahl did not even try to purchase bones from Aborigines living on the Daly River, fearing reprisals, but was optimistic that he could buy some from dispossessed Aborigines at Arenbarra Station on the Adelaide River. According to him (Dahl 1926: 158), these Aborigines no longer buried "the bones in hollow trees after the flesh had rotted away", but interred the dead in the ground:

The demoralised state of the blacks aroused my hopes that among these people I should be able to obtain a collection of skulls. On the Daly

Upon my questioning a native he immediately declared himself ready to procure some skulls, and disappearing in the forest he shortly returned with a female skull which one of the girls at the station declared to be that of her aunt. The price obtained and my further encouragements induced him to undertake a longer expedition to some place of burial whence he returned with five highly interesting skulls, all belonging to deceased members of his family. For these I paid him fifty pounds of flour besides a quantity of tobacco, on which articles all the blacks of the neighbourhood held a carouse.

Perhaps it was because collectors expected opposition to the removal of human remains that they were often contemptuous of indigenes who sold such material - little questioning the morality of their own role in the transaction. For example, Thomas Huxley, assistant surgeon and naturalist aboard *HMS Rattlesnake* commented in his diary after having purchased skulls from local people on Darnley Island in 1849:

I went with the party and this time we did really land. Dooutou was there and took charge of me, giving up all attempts at barter to be my escort. I sketched the houses inside and out, saw the dead houses but could not get a peep inside for love or axes. Nevertheless Dooutou had no objection to pilfer his ancestors' skulls [sic] and basely sell them. I got three (Huxley 1935: 235)¹⁹.

In 1903, Basedow (1935: 235) failed to obtain a desiccated Aboriginal body from the Cairns district, later writing, "my friend the late Professor Hermann Klaatsch in 1906 was more successful, for he not only discovered a beautiful specimen, but, by handsomely bribing the natives, managed to 'bag' it". The dried body was, according to Klaatsch (1907b: 578), that of "'Naicha' of 'Boonje' (Upper Russel [sic] River)", a 'chief' in the Bellenden Ker mountains, North Queensland. Perhaps because he did not wish to be associated with 'corrupting the natives' or simply because he did not view the transaction in this light, Klaatsch (1907b: 578), made no mention of bribery in his paper to the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, instead describing how "negotiations with the relatives for the possession were difficult, but successful". As he reportedly told the Royal Society of Tasmania in January 1907,

¹⁹ the current location of these skulls is unknown. However, the body of a mummified child which Huxley also purchased at this time is now in the Liverpool City Museum (West 1984).

Klaatsch's main hindrance had been an old woman, who objected strongly to parting with the body:

[Klaatsch] went to interview the relatives with his pockets full of tobacco, etc. and made an offer for the mummy. The weed appealed to the young members of the family, but the mother strongly objected to the whole proceeding. However, material prevailed over sentimental considerations, and the professor obtained possession of the mummy. But even then he was not out of the wood, for next day the young people, instigated by the importunate mother, demanded the return of the body. It was then the Professor's turn; he demanded the return of the tobacco, and before anything further eventuated, left the district (Anon 1906-1907: xxvi).

The account given to the Royal Society of Tasmania (and Klaatsch's 1907b spelling of the 'chief's' name and tribe) differs slightly from that provided by Klaatsch (1923: 215-216) fifteen years later:

The mummy I brought from Australia was the body of a great warrior, Narcha, a very important person of the tribe known as the Bunji. The gold-diggers, who had nearly exterminated the tribe, called him the 'king of Boonjie'. I heard of the mummy, and got the diggers to take me to the natives, whom I persuaded to sell me their 'king' and 'father', for a few handkerchiefs and other things bought at a bush-store. Each of the natives bade farewell to the mummy by a sort of spitting on the bare skull. Roth calls this a 'kiss', but the Australians (like most savages) do not kiss in the European way. The diggers advised me to hide the mummy, as the blacks would certainly try to steal it during the night. At all events they came next morning and asked for its return. They had no rest during the night, and now offered two skulls for it. But I gave them presents and hurried away; and the mummy is now in the Berlin Academy of Science.

Whichever account is true, Klaatsch's removal of the body despite requests for its return exemplifies his disregard for the concerns of Aboriginal people. The second account also demonstrates the high value Klaatsch placed on the 'mummy', allegedly refusing to accept the two skulls in exchange. Although there are few details of the Aborigines' offer, it may demonstrate, for example, that their attitude towards the dead could differ depending upon the identity of the deceased, or perhaps that the 'mummy' was so important that the community was willing to part with the remains of other people in order to secure its return.

The acquisition of the corpse was clearly well known to settlers in the Cairns district, and while the 'gold-diggers' were unconcerned at its removal, others were not happy that it had been taken away. In 1907, Dr. E. E. Webster, medical officer in Cairns from 1904-1905 wrote to a Dr Donald Thomson²⁰ about Klaatsch's "star exhibit", "I thought at the time it should not have gone out of the country but nobody else seemed to give a damn. It would be a very small portion of reparations if it were returned" (AIATSIS Library pMs 4081).

2.2. European attitudes towards collecting.

If Aborigines differed in their attitude towards collecting, so too did the collectors²¹. While many (like Klaatsch or Semon above) appear unconcerned at the prospect of grave-robbing, others clearly felt uneasy about their involvement in this practice. Thus John Lort Stokes did not feel "altogether justified" in disinterring the skeleton at Cygnet Bay (see above).

In 1817, during an expedition which he led along the Lachlan and Macquarie Rivers, John Oxley, then Surveyor General of New South Wales, opened two Aboriginal "tumuli". While recording their structure and contents in his diary, Oxley expressed his reservations at opening the second "tomb" in which he discovered the partly decayed body of a middle aged man:

I hope I shall not be considered as either wantonly disturbing the remains of the dead or needlessly violating the religious rites of an harmless people in causing the tomb to be opened that we might see its interior construction.... Having satisfied our curiosity the whole was carefully reinterred and restored as near as possible to the state in which it was found (NSWSA AO Fiche 3278).

But at the same tomb another member of the expedition, botanist Allan Cunningham, recorded in his diary, "this skull Mr Oxley intends to take with us, as a subject for the study of craniologists" (NSWSA mf 6034). If Cunningham's account is correct, the

²⁰ Unfortunately, there is no documentation to verify whether or not this Donald Thomson is the renowned Queensland doctor who was the brother of Professor Arthur Thomson at the University of Oxford.

²¹ For a comparison with the attitudes of nineteenth and twentieth century archaeologists towards the excavation of burial sites in Europe and the Middle East see Bahn (1984).

scientific value of the skull appears to have outweighed Oxley's concerns about grave-robbing, concerns that appear to have been strong enough to make him misrepresent this incident in his diary.

Collectors such as Stokes and Oxley may have been concerned about removing Aboriginal remains from funerary sites because of their own, European, traditions which accorded respect to the dead and recognised the sanctity of the grave. Others within the wider (non-Aboriginal) Australian population also sometimes disagreed with the procurement of Aboriginal remains, particularly if they were taken from areas in which European bodies could also be obtained²². In such cases, settlers not only reacted because grave-robbing ran contrary to European cultural norms, but from fear that their own remains and those of their kin might be similarly desecrated. For example, in 1862 an Aborigine named Kipper Billy was shot dead whilst trying to escape from Brisbane jail (QSA Col A26/62/739). His body was buried in an area adjacent to the Church of St John's, in land "granted to the Church of England for burial purposes, though not yet fenced in" (QSA Col A29/62/996). The Wardens of the church, Henry Buckley and Shepherd Smith, later heard that Billy's skull was on display at the house of Thomas Symes Warry, a Magistrate, Member of Parliament and amateur scientist. To confirm these rumours, they disinterred the body and, finding it headless, complained to the Colonial Secretary on 29 March:

It has become our painful duty to report to the Government that an act alike of wanton outrage to ourselves and revolting to the good feeling of the whole community has been lately perpetrated by the violation of the sanctity of our Burial Ground, and the mutilation and part removal of the dead from within its precincts ... That the whole Colony is deeply interested in the suppression of such repulsive misdeeds we are fully satisfied; the treatment of the remains of this Aboriginal may be the treatment of ourselves, our relatives or friends: and the offence in question we submit should be made the subject of public condemnation so marked as to prevent the probability of its occurrence (QSA Col A29/62/996).

²² It was not only in Australia that Europeans objected to the removal of indigenous remains. Ramsay Smith wrote to Professor Cunningham on 11 September 1907 complaining about the increasing difficulty of obtaining 'Kanaka' remains from the New Hebrides because of the opposition of the Roman Catholic missionaries who "everywhere have such a hold over the people that a *post mortem* even is an impossibility". However, he still believed he could obtain remains because he had "got among some traders who ply to places where skulls may still be bought for a stick of tobacco; and since I have been good to many people there, I hope for some skulls at all events" (ELSC Ms 615).

Providing an explanation of his actions to the Colonial Secretary, Warry did not deny his involvement in the incident but pleaded ignorance of any legal or moral transgression:

I was ignorant of any law existing to protect the bodies of persons dying in the manner of this criminal and buried in unconsecrated ground and without the sites of the church. I may remark that during my residence in Queensland I have frequently had skulls of blacks given to me which have been used by me for scientific purposes in my profession and believed there was no harm in receiving them (QSA Col A29/62/1358).

The fears of men like Shepherd and Buckley may not have been unfounded. On several occasions it appears that European skeletal remains were collected under the misapprehension that they were Aboriginal. The Rev. Joseph King, for example, was uncertain of the identity of a skull he sent to the University of Oxford in 1877, which had been discovered while foundations were being dug for an outhouse on the estate of a member of his congregation:

I hope it is the skull of a *bona fide* aboriginal [sic] that I have sent you. I discovered the other day that some white settlers were buried about twenty years ago near to the spot where [sic] the skull was obtained. I tried to ascertain the exact spot where the Englishmen and Women were buried and my informant could give me no more definite information that that it was at, or very near, to the place where the skull was exhumed.

So far as I could tell it appeared to me that it was an undoubted specimen of a New Hollander. The appearance of the teeth seemed to afford conclusive evidence, irrespective of the general conformation. You would notice that the teeth were worn down as natives teeth often are by eating gritty food (Rolleston Papers, AML).

Possibly because of the doubt surrounding the origin of the remains, the rest of the skeleton was left in the ground and the outhouse built over it.

As the practitioners of dissection, a procedure as detested by the public as the body-snatching with which it was associated (see Richardson 1988), the medical profession commonly disregarded wider European cultural concerns about how the dead should be treated. Popular outrage at the procurement of Aboriginal remains from hospital morgues was an expression of this hatred (Richardson 1988; Wilf 1989) and, once again, was fuelled by apprehension that non-Aboriginal bodies might be similarly violated. The

extent of public feeling against the 'indecent' treatment of Aboriginal bodies in Hospital morgues was considerable, and helped to ensure government enquiries into the mutilation of William Lanne's corpse by Dr William Crowther in 1869, and the collecting of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal body parts from the Adelaide Hospital by Dr William Ramsay Smith 34 years later. Although Crowther was suspended from his duties as Honorary Medical Officer, Ramsay Smith was found innocent of all eighteen charges that had variously accused him of acting illegally and in violation of his duty as Coroner (see Appendix 1). His acquittal was largely achieved because the Ministerial Board of Enquiry upheld the needs of science over popular concerns that the dead should be accorded respect and receive a proper burial. Ramsay Smith's defence persuaded the Board that the collecting of anatomical specimens did not contravene the Anatomy Act and, more significantly, had not been undertaken for personal profit but was instead a necessary activity for scientific research. Because, they argued, Ramsay Smith had always acted with the necessary "propriety and decency" (Adelaide Advertiser 15.9.1903), his actions could not be considered desecration. However, the Board could not entirely dismiss Ramsay Smith's treatment of the body of Tommy Walker, reports of which had been responsible for igniting public outrage in the first place and had been prominent during the press coverage of the trial. Yet even in this case it was accepted that scientific considerations largely excused Ramsay Smith's actions, and the Board only admonished the accused for being "indiscreet in removing the specimen under the circumstances, and allow[ing] his zeal in the cause of science to outrun his judgement" (Buchanan *et. al.* 1903: 2)²³.

In a letter to Cunningham (13.3.1907, ELSC Ms 605), Ramsay Smith described the trial in the following terms:

You are right about my troubles in connection with these specimens.
What I had to fight the battle for as pathologist to the Hospital and

²³ Turnbull (1991: 116-117) describes a strikingly similar case in which anatomist James Wilson obtained the body of a Chinese man who died in the Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney in 1892. Wilson arranged for the corpse to be taken to the hospital *post-mortem* room where the skeleton was removed, leaving the flesh sufficiently unchanged so that friends could view the open coffin before it was sealed. The skeleton was then articulated and placed in Sydney University's anatomical museum. The incident became public and Wilson was asked to explain his actions to the University Senate. In his defence, Wilson did not deny that he might have contravened the Anatomy Act but argued that his actions were in accordance with Hospital rules and were the accepted method of obtaining specimens. Wilson also stressed that he had always taken precautions to prevent publicity and scandal. The University Senate took no further action.

criminal expert for the Crown was my right to have in my possession any specimens whatsoever, whether anatomical or pathological public or private. It was a big fight and an expensive one, but it was done once and for all, and I had the sympathy of everyone except the very few who instituted the prosecution and wanted me out of public service at any cost.

Despite his actions having been vindicated and the Government's tacit acceptance of the collecting of human specimens from the morgue, Ramsay Smith remained cautious when acquiring material by this method. He was careful not to accept any payment for remains shipped to Edinburgh, as previous refusal of monies was, he believed, "what knocked the bottom out of the accusation I was doing wrong in collecting and exporting pathological specimens" (Ramsay Smith to Cunningham 18.12.1907, ELSC Ms 617), or to publicly acknowledge the help of Professor Watson, who continued to supply him with Aboriginal body parts. For example, Ramsay Smith wrote to Cunningham on 11.11.1907 about the head of an Aboriginal man (ID 251, and see Appendix 1.3) sent to Edinburgh by Ramsay Smith, but acquired by Watson in the dissecting room at Adelaide University:

If the description is published I don't mind; but if it is not, and if the name of Pokallie and Boco appears you might suppress it in case somebody might use the fact to anyone's hurt or annoyance by tracing the ownership through me to Watson and the Anatomy rooms in this particular case (ELSC Ms 615).

In a separate incident Watson may also have encountered difficulties for having sent Aboriginal remains overseas. Shortly after the preserved body of an Aboriginal woman had arrived at the Royal College of Surgeons, England (see above), Sir Arthur Keith received a cable from its donor, Watson, instructing him not to dissect the corpse. Keith noted in his diary: "is [Watson] in some kind of political trouble?" (Keith diary entry 29.12.1909, RCSEL).

Doctors were clearly aware of the popular feeling against dissection and took elaborate measures to hide incriminating evidence from the public, often ensuring that the corpse looked complete when viewed by family and relatives. Thus, instead of simply decapitating Lanne's body, Crowther removed the skull and replaced it with one taken from a nearby cadaver (Ellis 1981: 137; Ryan 1981: 216; Fforde 1992b: 64). Later inspection of the corpse by various gentlemen "to satisfy their minds that the ceremony

of burial was not altogether a ‘vain show’” (*Hobart Mercury* 8.3.1869), does not appear to have raised any suspicion that the body was incomplete.

The need to maintain a corpse’s outward appearance was also recognised by Joseph Barnard Davis who wrote to the artist Alfred Bock in Tasmania asking him to find a local medic who would be willing and able to obtain Tasmanian remains, noting that:

Were I myself in the colony I could with very little trouble abstract skulls from dead bodies *without defacing them at all*, and could instruct any medical gentleman to do it (Davis to Bock 4.10.1856 quoted in Ellis 1981: 133, my emphasis).²⁴

If the scientific value of remains could overcome European cultural mores that upheld the sanctity of the grave, and in the cases where collecting was brought before a court the “law so readily deferred to science” (Turnbull 1991: 118), there was little chance that Aboriginal concerns for their dead would be accorded any respect. By the latter half of the nineteenth century there was a considerable body of literature which described Aboriginal burial practices (see Meehan 1971) and there can be no doubt that most collectors were well aware of the great significance which Aboriginal people commonly attributed to the remains of their ancestors. Thus while Basedow was moved by the sacredness of burial caves - “whenever I entered these places a feeling of respect came over me, for the relatives had done their best to decorate the walls with ochre drawings of a personal and religious nature” (Basedow 1935: 237) - he still collected Aboriginal human remains.

Like Basedow, many anthropologists involved in the collecting of human remains are today remembered as individuals outspoken in their support of Aboriginal people. Most believed that anthropology was the means to further understanding of this ‘race’, an

²⁴ European sensitivities about collecting human remains from the morgue was brought home to Davis when in 1859 his medical contact (Dr Guyton Athertone, medical officer of the jail) in Graham’s Town, South Africa, was unable to obtain the remains of indigenous South Africans because of a recent order issued by the Lieutenant Governor that prohibited interference with bodies lying in the jail morgue. In an attempt to have the order rescinded, Davis wrote to Sir George Grey, then Governor of Cape Colony, complaining that the order would slow the progress of science and that “if the minds of the natives be not sufficiently enlightened to allow of any use being made of the lifeless body, surely those of Europeans, settled in South Africa, should overcome such prejudices”, adding that, if carried out discretely, dissection need not injure public feeling. “in carrying on anatomical investigations there is no need to shock the prejudices of anyone. They are best conducted without any special notice” (Davis to Grey 5.1.1859, GGAL).

understanding which, it was hoped, might help stop their maltreatment at the hands of the colonists (e.g. Ramsay Smith 1907a: 575, see Appendix 1). Professor Frederick Wood Jones, the renowned anatomist and physical anthropologist, was frequently critical of the treatment received by Australia's indigenous population. Significantly, in his Presidential Address to the eighteenth meeting of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science in 1926, he (Wood Jones 1928: 54) placed the desecration of the dead at the top of a list of examples given to demonstrate his argument that Aboriginal people would be accorded greater respect if those responsible for their management were less ignorant of Aboriginal culture.

If those in charge of our aborigines [sic] were somewhat more informed concerning the prejudices of primitive man we would not have an officer in charge of the native police recording in his own publication such incidents as the following: 'then we made a fire in the cave and warmed up the old warriors in the vault. I screwed two of the skulls off, but my boys shuddered at the action. They were afraid to touch them'.

However, even Wood Jones' more humanitarian convictions appear to have been overridden by the scientific value he attributed to human remains. Writing in the same Address that "although a great deal has been written concerning the ceremonials and the tribal organisation of the Australian native, we are still profoundly ignorant concerning him as a distinctive psychical and physical type", Wood Jones was to collect 44 Aboriginal skulls which in 1946 he donated to the Royal College of Surgeons, England, the year after he became its Conservator of Museums and Sir William Collins Professor of Human Anatomy²⁵. It is possible that Wood Jones placed such a high value on these remains that he knowingly contravened the Australian Act (1913) which prohibits the export of 'anthropological specimens' (see Chapter 1), as he wrote to Sir Arthur Keith on October 5 1926:

Before I leave Australia I will break the law and send you home some material which I have hoarded - but I shall have to leave a terrible lot of stuff behind - and no one may care for it" (Keith letter file, RCSEL).

²⁵ These skulls (from South Australia, Victoria, 'Central Australia', Northern Territories, and New South Wales) were transferred to the Odontological Museum in the Royal College of Surgeons, England in 1951. Three are now apparently missing, the others are still in the Odontological Museum.

2.3. Motives to collect.

As has been seen, for both museum curators and those who gathered bones on their behalf, the collecting of Aboriginal human remains could involve considerable time, effort and financial expense, and, if donating to overseas museums after 1913, might entail breaking the law. The actual procurement of bones was often fraught with difficulty and physical hardship, and at times placed collectors at significant personal risk. What, then, led people to engage in this activity?

The scientific importance of Aboriginal human remains, coupled with their relative inaccessibility to scholars in Europe and the belief that the Australian 'race' was on the verge of extinction, meant that such items were rare and valuable commodities that could be exchanged for a variety of goods and services. As noted by Bowes (1914: 153), "[the Australian Aboriginal] is today, so to speak, the most valuable product in the human market for scientific purposes; for he may fairly claim to be the most primitive living representative of prehistoric man among the surviving tribes". The bones of Tasmanians, a people believed to have become extinct in 1876 with the death of Truganini, were particularly highly prized, as Macalister (1893: 960) commented:

Another remarkable addition [to the Anatomy Department at the University of Cambridge] is the skull of a Tasmanian which has been presented by J. Bonwick esq. As this race is extinct the difficulty of obtaining any of their crania is very great; and as they have been supposed by Dr Tylor²⁶ to have been in some sort the last representatives of palaeolithic man, they are as interesting as they are rare.

The value placed on human remains could be translated into financial worth, leading some settlers to use burial sites on their properties as an economic resource. In 1914, for example, a pastoralist in Western Australia wrote to the British Museum (Natural History):

I take the liberty of addressing these few lines to you with the object of ascertaining whether you, by any chance, desire to secure any skulls of the Australian aboriginal [sic].

²⁶ Macalister is referring to the work of E. B. Tylor, who was shortly to publish his theories on "The Tasmanians as Representatives of Palaeolithic Man" in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* 1894. Vol XXIII: 141-152.

This particular portion of the South West Coast of Western Australia was, in the old days, a favourite haunt of the natives, who established themselves in the coast hills or such places as provided good water in the shallow sand hills. Their favoured burying grounds were presumably in and around the drift sand hills which, in course of time, have been blown away thus exposing the remains of natives so buried.

I am not a 'professional' collector of such relics but hold this portion of the country for pastoral and grazing purposes, and have stumbled across these human remains during my rounds amongst the stock.

It is not possible to obtain complete skeletons as the bulk of the small bones have become re-covered or been carried away by crabs. The three or four skulls I have are in a very fair state of preservation and should you feel inclined to negotiate with a view to purchase, I shall be most happy to forward same to your care. Could you give me any idea of the possible value? (Farrar to Fleuyon, Pycroft papers, NHM).

At the turn of the century Aboriginal skulls appear to have fetched anything up to £5 in the UK, and the remains of Tasmanian Aborigines were worth considerably more. Thus in 1898 the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland sold the Tasmanian skeleton it had been given by Morton Allport in 1871 to the British Museum (Natural History) for £100, the same amount that the Royal College of Surgeons, England had paid for the rest of the Institute's non-European human remains collection four years earlier. In 1912, Tasmanian skulls were sufficiently in demand for one collector to offer, albeit unsuccessfully, his small collection to the British Museum (Natural History) for £200 a piece (Anon. to Pycroft 12.8.1912; Pycroft Papers, NHM). If human remains were purchased they were usually bought from dealers, or as part of entire collections sold by one institution to another. Auction houses, especially that of J. C. Stevens in Covent Garden, plied a significant trade in natural history specimens and the skeletal remains of indigenous peoples (see Allingham 1924: 211). Stevens' Auction House advertised its upcoming auctions in London newspapers. In March 1866 it had a particularly unusual human remain to sell, that of a "petrified" Aborigine:

Mr J. C. Stevens will include in his sale of natural history ... a REMARKABLE SPECIMEN of a Native Australian found in a limestone cave, on Mosquito Plains, South Australia, and brought to this country at great trouble and expense. It is the only specimen of its kind known to the scientific world, and is besides of considerable value as a curiosity. It is

believed to be of great antiquity, and is almost perfect in every detail (The Athenaeum March 1866: 352).

Stevens omitted to inform the public that the 'mummy' had been taken from the Naracoorte Caves in South Australia and exhibited around Europe by a showman named 'Craig'. The theft of this 'mummy' was remembered by those in the Naracoorte area and nearly a century later, on 11.7.1952, acting on a rumour that the it had been seen at the British Museum, the then Curator of Naracoorte Caves Reserve, W. G. Trotman, wrote to this museum enquiring whether the 'mummy' was indeed amongst its collections, keen to be enlightened on "a subject that has been clouded in mystery since 1859" (NHM Fraser Papers CL 1952/55). The Deputy Keeper answered on 21 June 1952 that the only 'mummies' in the collection were from the Torres Strait, New Guinea and Peru, and suggested that Trotman's informant had mistaken one of these as Aboriginal (NHM Fraser papers CL 1952/55). The current whereabouts of the Naracoorte 'mummy' are unknown²⁷.

However, although there are exceptions, the majority of European collections were assembled predominantly by donation and thus, despite the high prices that Aboriginal human remains could attain, most people collecting in the field do not appear to have supplied museums merely for economic gain.

Those who donated Aboriginal bones to institutions in the UK were usually members of the medical profession and/or had an interest in anthropology. Consequently, most donors appreciated the scientific importance of Aboriginal human remains and the perceived necessity of gathering an adequate number together for comparative analysis. However, a desire to contribute to what Turnbull (1991: 110) has described as one of the most prestigious areas of scientific enquiry - the field of human origins - was not the only incentive that motivated the donation of Aboriginal human remains to overseas

²⁷Of course, the auction of indigenous human remains did not cease at the beginning of the nineteenth century. For example, in 1988 Bonham's advertised a Maori Mokomakai preserved head to be sold at their London auction in May of that year. The proposed sale aroused controversy and anger in New Zealand and Britain. The President of the New Zealand Maori Council, armed with a High Court of New Zealand Order stating that he was the legal administrator of the deceased warrior's estate, successfully obtained a British High Court injunction against Bonham's to prevent the sale. A subsequent agreement was reached to return the head to New Zealand, where it arrived in July 1988 for burial on the Karikari Peninsula (O'Keefe 1992: 393-394).

museums. The expropriation of Aboriginal remains and their subsequent donation to museums held further considerable and diverse advantages for curators and collectors alike.

Until the latter half of the nineteenth century there were few, if any, collections of Aboriginal human remains in Australia. However, even after Australian State museums and university anatomy departments had begun to collect the bones of the indigenous population (see Turnbull 1991, 1993a, 1994), many colonists continued to supply museums in Europe. An important contributory factor was the peripheral role played by the colonies in nineteenth century science. The colonies were invariably regarded as no more than a source of data for scientists residing in the mother countries and Europe was still widely considered the centre of scientific learning (MacLeod 1982, 1988; Mackay 1985; MacLeod & Rehbock (eds) 1988; Sheets-Pyenson 1988; MacKenzie (ed.) 1990; Moyal 1993). Thus, William Crowther was critical of George Stockell's suggestion to retain the remains of William Lanne for the Royal Society of Tasmania, commenting that "[Stockell was] a fool to keep it in a paltry place like Tasmania, when it ought to be sent to a place like London" (Hobart Mercury 13.3.1869). Almost forty years later, a similar opinion was expressed by Ramsay Smith, who considered most Australian scholars both uninterested in, and largely ignorant of, the science of physical anthropology:

[Baldwin] Spencer was saying it was a pity to let such specimens leave Australia. I told him that all I had collected had been going to waste for want of someone to gather and describe them, and that where specimens were given to museums in Australia nobody took any interest in them until some German or other foreigner came along with scarcely a 'thank you'. Spencer showed me a 'rare condition of the tooth in the lower jaw' which he has never seen referred. It was one of our old and common friends - 'dislocated tooth'. He had not seen a third trochanter in the aboriginal until I directed his attention to a beautifully marked instance in the femur of a skeleton which he used for teaching purposes. Now what can one do in anthropological work with such people? (Ramsay Smith to Cunningham 18.11.1908, ELSC Ms 625).

However, although allegedly living on the sidelines of the scientific world, interested colonists were in control of the major source of important data. Consequently, Aboriginal remains were precious commodities which were often used as a means of gaining entry into scientific circles in the West. For example, Morton Allport, Vice-

President of the Royal Society of Tasmania, used Tasmanian skeletons to establish and maintain links with various scientists in the metropolis. In 1873 he wrote to the British craniologist Joseph Barnard Davis:

The skeleton was such a perfect one that I could scarcely make up my mind to part with it at the last moment but my better feelings predominated and I shall now be very anxious to hear of its safe arrival and to learn what you think of it.

I hope our correspondence may not cease altogether now that the main object of it is so far fulfilled as I am still much interested in collecting every record of the lost Tasmanian race and may from time to time learn something worth communicating (Allport to Davis 24.2.1873, ALH).

Donation of Aboriginal remains not only commanded the attention of influential patrons, but sometimes facilitated entrance into prestigious scientific societies. Upon election as a corresponding member of the Anthropological Society of London, Allport assured the Secretary that “no effort shall be wanting on my part to forward the interests of the society” adding that “before the receipt of your letter I had forwarded a skeleton of a Tasmanian Aborigine to the society” (Allport to Pim 29.1.1871, ALH). However, the most common and tangible rewards that donors received in exchange for human remains were items of scientific literature. Thus, the second Tasmanian skeleton which Allport sent to Davis was accompanied by the following instructions:

Please accept this as a present and expend anything you would have been willing to give for it in the articulating and figuring [of] it, our only bargain being that I am to have three copies of any publications referred to it, one for myself, one for our Royal Society’s library and one for our public library (Allport to Davis 23.7.1873, ALH).

William Ramsay Smith appears to have been adept at using the remains of Aboriginal people to further his own interests and standing as an anthropologist. Donations to the University of Edinburgh enabled Ramsay Smith to discuss anthropological matters with Professors Turner and Cunningham, leading and influential scholars in the field of physical anthropology at that time. In addition, Cunningham edited and arranged at least six papers by Ramsay Smith for publication in leading British scientific journals, supplying him with 200 reprints of each, along with various other relevant publications (Ramsay Smith to Cunningham 11.9.1907, ELSC Ms 615; 29.5.1907, ELSC Ms 608).

At Ramsay Smith's request, Cunningham successfully proposed Ramsay Smith's membership of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and later arranged his Fellowship of the Royal Anthropological Institute (Ramsay Smith to Cunningham 28.5.1906, ELSC Ms 598; 11.9.1907, ELSC Ms 615). Moreover, when Ramsay Smith's son began to study medicine at Edinburgh University it appears that Cunningham may have stood, to an extent, in *loco parentis* (Ramsay Smith to Cunningham 25.6.1908, ELSC Ms 622; 19.8.1908, ELSC Ms 624; 18.11.1908, ELSC Ms 625; 16.12.1908, ELSC Ms 626). The exchanges between Ramsay Smith and Edinburgh University continued after Cunningham's death in 1909. Responding to the receipt of more human remains and a hint from Ramsay Smith, Professor Arthur Robinson (Cunningham's successor) wrote:

You say you lack some good books on anthropological measurements and methods. If you will tell me what you already have and give me the titles of those you want I will see if I can advise anything to fill the blanks and as I am in touch with one or two people who know where to look for older editions I may be able to get the volumes you wish to have, if so it will give me great pleasure and I will let you have them as soon as they come to hand.

I need scarcely say, as custodian of the Museum, how very much I am indebted to you for the last and previous consignments nor how gladly I shall receive any other specimens you send (Robinson to Ramsay Smith 7.3.1911, EADL).

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Ramsay Smith had donated a sufficient amount of human remains to the University of Edinburgh for its Aboriginal collection to be the largest in Britain. On occasion Ramsay Smith appears to remind Cunningham of this fact (e.g. Ramsay Smith to Cunningham 18.12.1907, ELSC Ms 617) as well as the considerable hardship endured while collecting on the University's behalf. Comments such as, "no one living at home, which means England or Scotland, can possibly have the least conception of what scientific work, that is original work of collecting, involves in this country" (Ramsay Smith to Cunningham 23.10.1907, ELSC Ms 616), suggest that Ramsay Smith felt unappreciated, perhaps one reason why, by 1908, he wished the collection to stand as a monument to his contribution to science:

This collection is getting so large now, beyond anything even in Australian museums, that I begin to think it might be well to keep it as a separate 'contribution' to the museum along with what I shall send in the

future. I have done something as a collector and suffered much as an investigator, and the collection might be associated with my name as some testimony to the fact that nothing has stood in the way of my working in this particular field despite all persecution and opposition (Ramsay Smith to Cunningham 28.4.1908, ELSC Ms 620).

Curators of colonial museums also used Aboriginal remains as commodities. As Turnbull (1991: 114) has demonstrated, such items were a “unique and persuasive currency” which could be used to obtain specimens of natural history or the bones of other indigenous races from museums all over the world. Thus, for example, the Curator of the Australian Museum, E. P. Ramsay offered to trade Aboriginal skulls for Moriori remains with the Colonial Museum of Auckland in 1882 (Turnbull 1991: 115). By the late nineteenth century, curators of European collections approached their Australian colleagues for Aboriginal remains. George Rolleston of Oxford University unsuccessfully attempted to procure such items from E. P. Ramsay in 1881, but Enrico Giglioli of the Zoological and Vertebrate Museum at Florence’s Institute for Higher Study may have been more fortunate, perhaps because he promised to obtain Ramsay a knighthood for his efforts (Turnbull 1991: 115-116). Giglioli also approached E. C. Stirling at the South Australian Museum, looking to form a “small collection of types of modern stone implements and weapons or ornaments, specimens which illustrate the modern stone age” for which he could supply in exchange “specimens of the vertebrata of south Europe or other parts of the world” or other items that Stirling might require. Although human remains were not within his stated desiderata, Giglioli appended his letter:

Could you give me any information on the drinking vessels made out of human skulls used by some of the native tribes of South Australia. If you can you will greatly oblige me. Have you any specimens of such?
(Giglioli to Stirling 31.7.1890, Stirling Papers, SAM).

2.4. Conclusion.

The history of collecting shows how the development of scientific knowledge in Europe made a very direct impact upon Aboriginal people and demonstrates the extent and nature of the influence of one branch of science on individual lives in a distant continent. Although this history is characterised by implicit or explicit acts of European oppression

it is also, as Turnbull (1993: 18) has noted, clearly one of indigenous resistance, demonstrating that Aboriginal people were not passive victims but people who frequently objected and often actively opposed the removal of their ancestors' remains.

The scientific interest in Aboriginal human remains invested such items with considerable value for non-Aboriginal people. A value which caused the removal of thousands of Aboriginal human remains to institutions in Europe, converted the dead into commodities, persuaded collectors not only to ignore their own cultural mores and those of Aboriginal people but to endure physical hardship to obtain skeletal material, was considered by the judiciary to be of greater importance than European popular concern and, as will be explored in Chapter 3, contributed to the hegemonic relationship between European and Aboriginal societies.

Chapter 3: Power, knowledge and identity.

Following Said's (1978) critique of Orientalism, Attwood (1992) has examined what he has termed "Aboriginalism", a mode of discourse that constructs, guides and constrains European knowledge about the 'Aborigines'. According to Attwood (1992: i), Aboriginalism encompasses several interrelated practices but in particular: the academic production of knowledge about Aborigines; a way of thinking that is rooted in a distinction between 'Us' and 'Them'; and a corporate institution that "exercises authority over Aborigines by making statements about them, authorising views of them and ruling over them". Supported by colonial bureaucracies, scholarship, social thought and other aspects of European culture, Aboriginalism is thus a "hegemonic system of theory and practice" (Attwood 1992: iii) that pervaded colonial power structures and had a profound impact upon Aboriginal people.

In Attwood's (1992: ii) analysis, Aboriginalism's critical role in the colonial enterprise derived largely from its construction of an identity *for* 'the Aborigines'. Central to this contention is the notion that prior to European settlement, the people who lived in Australia were "not the homogenous group implied by the name 'Aborigines'" (Attwood 1989: x). Rather, they were defined and have redefined themselves in various ways "only in the context of colonisation and their ensuing relationship with Europeans who, conversely, came to be 'Australians'" (Attwood 1989: x; and see Cowlshaw 1986, 1987; Hollinsworth 1992; Myers 1994: 681). What Attwood (1989) has called the 'making of the Aborigines' was therefore a process determined more by the West than the people who were the object of definition. How Europeans imagined 'the Aborigines' had little to do with how Australia's indigenes saw themselves, leading to a situation in which, "much European knowledge of the autochthonous people is peculiarly dependent on representations which construct 'the Aborigines' in their absence" (Attwood 1992: ii, and see Beckett 1988: 191-192). Such representations were, according to Attwood (1992: v), "inseparable from the colonists' exercise of power".

However, placing the formation of 'the Aborigines' entirely in the hands of Europeans runs the risk of side-lining, or still worse ignoring, the role that Australia's indigenous people have played in the construction of their own identity(ies) since colonisation. The

fact that Europeans had constructed and imposed the category 'Aborigines' does not mean that indigenes perceived and defined themselves in this way. Rather, as recent studies have shown (e.g. Reynolds 1981, 1990; Cowlishaw 1986, 1987; Keeffe 1988) the self-identity(ies) of Australia's autochthonous peoples developed actively in relation to the colonial encounter. As Weaver (1984) has suggested, there is a clear distinction between what she has called 'private' and 'public' Aboriginal identity - the former deriving from Aboriginal perceptions of self and the latter defined by the 'outside' i.e. European Australia. Nonetheless, while 'Aborigine' was only one identity, it had wide-ranging significance because it played a fundamental role in European/Aboriginal relations, imposing on the colonisers "very real limits on what could be thought, said, or even done about Aborigines" (Attwood 1992: ii, and see Weaver 1984).

Both Orientalism and Aboriginalism are particularly reliant on, and productive of, the European conceptualisation of an 'Us' set against a non-European 'Them', a division which, according to Said (1994: xxviii) formed the "core of cultural thought during the era of Imperialism". However, although perceived as essentially opposite to, and radically different from, one another, 'Us' and 'Them' are not separate, isolated entities. Instead, both derive from the European construction of 'Self'. Thus, as Attwood (1992: iii) notes, the making of European identity since at least the early eighteenth century has been identified as intricately linked with the construction of an antithetical 'Other' (e.g. Foucault 1970: 46-77). Furthermore, as Wiss (1990) has demonstrated, because it is fashioned by those in a "privileged defining position" (Wiss 1990: 6), the identity of this 'Other' is consistently devalued in its difference to what was perceived as the normal European 'Self' (see also Urla & Terry 1995). The relationship between 'Us' and 'Them' is therefore not only mutually supportive but nearly always hierarchical (Attwood 1992: iii). Forever 'attached' to that of the West as its "outside and opposite" (Attwood 1992: ii), the identity prescribed for Aborigines could therefore *never* be independent or equal.

Aborigines were therefore disempowered not only because they were represented as inferior but because the construction of this identity was outside their control. In essence, the West had appropriated Aboriginal identity, subsuming it within its own conceptualisation of a superior 'Self'. Such appropriation strengthened European

identity, dominance and control over the Aboriginal 'Other' and, as a process of colonisation, has been compared to the naming and mapping of the Australian landscape by European settlers and government agents (Attwood 1992: v).

3.1. The construction of identities.

3.1.a. Collecting.

Over the past fifteen years there has been an increase in literature devoted to examining the Western practice of collecting and the nature of the collected object (e.g. Stewart 1984; Stocking 1985; Clifford 1985, 1988; Benedict 1990; Pomian 1990; Hooper-Greenhill 1992; Pearce 1992, 1994a). These texts have concentrated on the collecting of *artefacts* and, as a general rule, have been less concerned with other types of collected material. Pearce (1994b: 1) has already pointed out that although their nature does not preclude them from being analysed in the same manner as other collected things, there is a distinct shortage of literature which examines the collecting of natural history specimens. Moreover, while there has been considerable interest in the collecting of ethnographic objects, hardly any attention has been paid to the human remains obtained for the purposes of what, in its broadest sense, can be called anthropological study (see Chapters 1 and 2).

One conclusion shared by numerous authors (e.g. Stewart 1984; Clifford 1985, 1988; Benedict 1990; Hooper-Greenhill 1992; Pearce 1992) is that collecting of any sort acts as a process of Western identity formation. Central to this claim is the notion that Western identity is a "kind of wealth" (Clifford 1988: 218) and that both individuals and groups perceive themselves to a degree by the nature and sum of their possessions, whether these be material things or more abstract 'belongings' such as ideas and experiences. Pearce (1992: 55), for example, has argued that "objects acts as reminders and confirmers of our identities", and that collections can therefore be viewed as the "extended self" of the collector. Thus she contends that, "we want things in order to enlarge our sense of self, and ... the only way in which we can know what we are is by observing what we have" (Pearce 1992: 56). Having an identity, in these terms, presupposes some kind of

gathering about the self (Clifford 1988: 218) and hence to collect must be one process by which 'Self' is constructed.

Some anthropological collections of human remains (i.e. those of private collectors such as Joseph Barnard Davis) are the direct result of the effort and interests of a particular individual. Most collections are attached to institutions and have been managed by a succession of curators. All, however, were amassed in response to the perceived needs of science and are a particularly Western phenomenon. Such collections may therefore be seen to be associated with the construction of many different identities: those of individual collectors; those of groups defined by their common scientific interest in such material (e.g. 'physical anthropologists', 'comparative anatomists', 'phrenologists'); and that of Western society in general.

It has also been contended (e.g. Baudrillard 1994: 8; Pearce 1992: 48-50) that collections of any sort *articulate* identity, a characteristic derived from the way in which the predominant meaning of collected objects is extrinsic, determined and imposed by the collector. Thus, it has been argued that in a collection any former function (e.g. aesthetic, utilitarian) held by an object is of secondary importance to its new function as a member of a constructed series of items. Divorced from its previous spatial, temporal and social reality, the object now exists within a context which is "framed by the selectivity of the collector" (Stewart 1984: 152) and organised according to a particular system of classification. It is therefore a feature of collections that they physically represent the collector's conceptualisation of the order of the objects amassed and the relationship which exists between them.

Collections of human remains were arranged according to various systems for classifying humankind. A collection therefore articulated how those responsible for its organisation perceived the order of humanity. For example, human remains in the Museum of the Army Medical Department at Fort Pitt, Chatham, were arranged according to a system in which skull shape was used as a basis for distinguishing between four different races:

first, the oval shaped skulls [which included Europeans, Egyptians, Afghans, Hindu, and Singalese]; second, skulls with projecting alveolar processes, or with nasal bones on the same plane [which included the “Negroes” from the west coast of Africa, “Kaffirs”, “Hottentots”, and “Bushman”]; third, skulls with very prominent superciliary ridges [which included only the Sandwich Islanders]; fourth skulls with broad and flat face [which included the Burmese, Malays, Chinese, “Esquimaux”, and North American Indians] (Williamson 1857: 5).

However, the lack of agreement within the academy about human taxonomy (see Chapter 1) was sometimes a reason for *not* organising human remains according to racial origin. As William Flower (1879: viii) explained about the collection at the Royal College of Surgeons, England with which he was associated from 1861-1884, first as conservator and then as Hunterian Professor of Comparative Anatomy:

the arrangement of these specimens is one of considerable difficulty, partly owing to the present state of uncertainty as to the true classification of the varieties of species ... it has therefore been thought that these difficulties will be best overcome ... without committal to any theoretical view of the origins or affinities, by adopting a geographical arrangement, and placing all specimens according to the countries of which they are presumably native.

Although the organisation of the College’s collection articulated Flower’s early distrust of racial taxonomies, the later exhibition of human remains in the public galleries at the British Museum (Natural History) appear to represent a change in attitude. These cases were arranged according to the tripartite system (‘white’, ‘yellow’ and ‘red’, and ‘black’ races - see below) which Flower had adopted by 1885 (Flower 1885; Harmer 1912).

The very existence of collections of human remains articulated key nineteenth and early twentieth century Western assumptions about the nature of human diversity, in particular the idea that morphology was the primary criterion for distinguishing between different human groups. Furthermore, because of the assumed association between culture and biology, and the belief that each individual person literally embodied all the characteristics (mental and physical) of their particular race (see Chapter 1), collected human remains metonymically represented the society from which they were obtained (and see Stewart 1984: 162).

3.1.b. Power.

In his analysis of the collecting of ethnographic artefacts, Stocking (1985: 5) has observed that because most collections contain items that were once those of others there are associations inherent in the constitution of collections that can be identified as relations of power. These derive not only from the expropriation of material objects but from the way in which they and their meaning are recontextualised within the collector's domain. While perhaps at its most conspicuous when bones were removed despite objections from the local community, relations of power have therefore, following Stocking (1985), always been an integral feature of the collecting of human remains. Moreover, as described in Chapter 2, collectors sometimes directly benefited from the fatal effects of European settlement. Nonetheless, this is not to say that all collections necessarily represent Aboriginal people as passive victims. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, they also bear witness to a history of indigenous resistance. For example, although the preserved head of Yagan (see Appendix 2) is evidence of the violence often perpetrated by Europeans against Noongah people in the early nineteenth century, it is also a symbol of the active role - which included violent opposition - that Aborigines played in the colonial encounter.

As Stocking (1985: 4) has observed with reference to ethnographic artefacts, the collecting and scientific use of Aboriginal remains did not take place by "historical accident". Instead, this practice was embedded within large-scale historical processes, namely imperialism and colonial domination. Several authors have explored the relationship between anthropology and colonialism (e.g. Stocking 1968; Asad 1973; Huizer & Mannheim 1979; Fabian 1983; Thomas 1994), and it is now almost a truism that the development of anthropology was rooted in an unequal power encounter between the West and what might now be called the Third World. Colonialism provided anthropology with its target of study - primitive societies. Indeed, Asad's (1973: 17) observation that the "basic reality which made pre-war social anthropology a feasible and effective enterprise was the relationship between dominating (European) and dominated (non-European) cultures", is even more applicable to physical anthropology, given the frequent, but largely unsuccessful, indigenous opposition to the removal of human remains.

The collecting and study of human remains was therefore firmly situated within power relations that already existed between the West and its colonised peoples. Hence, the association between collections of Aboriginal human remains and relations of power is far more complex than one which stems solely from their status as expropriated objects which sometimes display physical evidence of European violence. For imperialism and colonialism were not simply techniques of accumulation and acquisition executed on a grand scale but wide-ranging political processes which, as Said (1994: 8) has commented, were sustained and:

perhaps impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination: the vocabulary of classic nineteenth century imperial culture is plentiful with such words and concepts as 'inferior' or 'subject' races, 'subordinate peoples', 'dependency', 'expansion' and 'authority'.

Thus, while in a practical sense colonialism facilitated the acquisition of Aboriginal human remains, a more essential association can be found in the inter-relationship between the interpretation of such material and the 'ideological formations' which supported and helped shape the colonial enterprise.

As discussed in Chapter 1, scientific analysis of European and non-European human remains provided copious amounts of data for the description and categorisation of human diversity, information which appeared to demonstrate that human groups were of unequal cultural, physical and intellectual status and could be assigned a place within an apparently 'natural' hierarchy according to allegedly distinctive morphological characteristics. Although a superficially reformist stance was adopted by the phrenologists and some early comparative anatomists, to all intents and purposes members of both the monogenist and polygenist schools compared Aboriginal human remains to those of Caucasians and concluded that the Australian race was inferior by virtue of its biology and thus its status in nature was innate and immutable.

Analysis of human remains also substantiated the widely held European perception that colonised peoples were as remote in time as they were distant in space: that so-called

'primitive' societies continued to occupy a position in the past through which the West had already developed (e.g. Sollas 1911). As Fabian (1983) has described in detail, anthropology has consistently employed a concept of evolutionary time to assign indigenous populations to graded positions in a "time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse" (Fabian 1983: 31). As described in Chapter 1, designated a position on the lowest rung of this temporal ladder Aborigines, along with Australia's flora, fauna and geology, were considered to be survivals from the primeval past (see Stafford 1990: 81). Thus while voyages to Australia were equated with time travel (see Stocking 1968: 26-27; Jones 1992), so physical characteristics of Aboriginal human remains were 'located' which demonstrated the 'early' morphological status of Australia's indigenous population. Such analysis scientifically denied Aborigines a place in the contemporary world while Darwinism further corroborated the notion that colonisation was a 'natural', and indeed biologically necessary, process. Nineteenth and early twentieth century analysis of collected human remains therefore provided 'hard' evidence that the colonised races needed European government because they were biologically unable to attain a higher level of civilisation and thus to govern themselves. Science therefore provided both a justification for colonialism and relieved imperial powers of moral responsibility for the decimation of indigenous populations.

However, scientific research was far from the objectivity that it espoused and was instead carried out within conceptual limits prescribed by European assumptions about human difference which had been in existence well before the advent of comparative anatomy (see Chapter 1). Thus while analyses purported to achieve independent and unprejudiced conclusions, they were as much a product of colonial ideology as they were integral to its existence. Nonetheless, although it is now apparent that racial categories were externally imposed by Western science, for scholars at the time they were accepted as fact and believed to exist 'in nature'. In the current analysis, it is therefore immaterial whether such alleged fact is now considered correct or incorrect. What matters instead is that the scientific interpretation of human remains provided the West with authoritative 'truths' about Aborigines, 'truths' that influenced how the dominant society perceived and acted towards Australia's indigenous population.

The knowledge produced by comparative anatomy and later physical anthropology permeated 'general society' in a multitude of different ways. For example, museum displays formed one site at which scientific racism was communicated to the public. While entire research collections were rarely open to non-scientists and, as noted above, could be stored/arranged according to a variety of classification systems that were not necessarily based upon racial origin, the exhibition of human remains in public galleries were commonly designed to illustrate different racial types (in accordance with whatever taxonomy was chosen) and the order of mankind. Thus in 1921 there were seven display cases in the Upper Gallery of the British Museum (Natural History) that contained specimens illustrating the "Races of Mankind". Cases 1 and 2 illustrated the "zoological characters of the Caucasian or White Races", cases 3 and 4 the "Mongol, or Yellow and Red Races" cases 5 and 6 the "Negro or Black races" (Regan 1921: 11-17). Having thus presented *Homo Sapiens* to the observer as a tripartite species, the museum exhibited in the remaining case, "some of the most important structural differences between Man and Apes; and likewise the different types of human skulls, and the mode of measuring the same, with their respective brain cases" (Regan 1921: 15). As evidenced by the following extract from the Museum's guide to the Upper Gallery, this seventh case was designed to represent the racial hierarchy:

Man's skull differs from that of the other Mammals by the great size of the brain-case, and the proportional reduction of the bones of the face, the result of the high development of the brain and the disuse of the jaws and teeth as weapons of offence and defence. It therefore follows that those races of mankind which have prominent jaws and small brain cases are of a lower type than those in which the jaws are more reduced in size and the brain case is larger. Australians and Tasmanians, for example, have a very small brain cavity, thick skull-bones, receding forehead, overhanging brows, flat nasal bones, long and low orbits, very broad and low nasal opening, forwardly projecting jaws, but receding chin, and large teeth: strongly contrasting in each of these respects with the skull of a European (Regan 1921: 13).

3.1.c. Anthropology and government.

Another area in which scientific knowledge about Aborigines entered the non-scientific sphere, and one which had perhaps a more immediate impact upon Aboriginal people, was in its relation to the governing of Australia's indigenes. However, although it is easy

to identify the importance of colonial structures to the practice of anthropology and to discern the significant role of science in the maintenance of imperial ideology, the *direct* participation of social and physical anthropology in the administration of the colonies appears to have been relatively limited. This was not because anthropologists shied away from the task. Indeed many prominent social and physical anthropologists espoused the importance of their work to the management of colonised peoples (see Kuklick 1991: 27-74). For example, in his presidential address to the Anthropology Section at the 1881 meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, William Flower (1898: 236) argued that:

The study of the true relationship of the different races of men is ... not only interesting from a scientific point of view, but of great importance to statesmanship in such a country as this, embracing subjects representing almost every known modification of the human species whose varied and often conflicting interests have to be regulated and provided for. It is to want of appreciation of its importance that many of the inconsistencies and shortcomings of the government of our dependencies and colonies are due.

However, despite various attempts by influential social and physical anthropologists to establish anthropology as an occupation which had practical applications for colonial administration, which included an unsuccessful campaign at the turn of the century to create an Imperial Bureau of Ethnology (see Kuklick 1991: 44-47), the British Government declined to engage the services of anthropologists for such purposes. As Kuklick (1991: 47) notes, its reluctance lay in the considerable gap between imperial ideology and the practical administration of the colonial empire. The colonies were supposed to be self-supporting and operated under economic constraints that could only afford to pay for a small number of staff. Lack of funds discouraged the employment of specialists of any kind, not just anthropologists.

As Sutton (1986: 47) has observed, although in Australia there is a "long and continuous thread connecting old-fashioned ethnographic fact collecting, professional anthropology, corporate and public policy, and administration", throughout this history there was again relatively little direct involvement of anthropologists in the management of Aborigines and little government support for their employment outside museums. According to Cowlshaw (1992: 21-22), such active participation only occurred for a short period after

1926 with the establishment of anthropology as an academic discipline at the University of Sydney (and see Cove 1995: 87-94). Successfully proclaiming the status of anthropology as an applied science, this department provided training for, amongst others, Northern Territory patrol officers, as well as suggesting improvements in the administration and management of Australia's indigenous population. However, in Cowlshaw's (1992: 22) analysis, by the 1940s and 1950s a distinct gap had re-emerged between the academic pursuit of knowledge *about* Aborigines and the application of such knowledge by academics to the management of Australia's indigenes, the latter enterprise having progressively lost its intellectual legitimacy. Nonetheless, if the active role of social, and still less physical, anthropologists in the development and implementation of government policy in the nineteenth and early twentieth century appears to have been relatively minor, their work greatly contributed to how Aboriginal society was understood by government agents and policy makers (Cowlshaw 1986; Sutton 1986: 47; Beckett 1988: 195-212; Thomas 1994: 6; Cove 1995: 70-139).

Although both social and physical anthropologists worked within (and can thus be said to have sustained) the race paradigm, it was the work of physical anthropologists which contributed most directly to the reification of the notions of race and the racial order, concepts that were increasingly used in the later nineteenth century and early twentieth century to develop definitions of Aborigines which were enshrined in Australian legislation (see Gilbert 1977: 5-31; Markus 1988; Attwood 1989, 1992; Hollinsworth 1992; Cove 1995: 70-94). For example, Attwood (1989: 81-103) has provided a detailed account of the ideology and effects of the 1885 'Half Caste Act' in Victoria which, in contrast to previous legislation in this State that defined Aborigines predominantly on cultural grounds, categorised Aborigines on the basis of 'genetic inheritance', paralleling a general shift in the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century towards defining Australia's indigenes by the percentage of 'pure' Aboriginal blood that ran in their veins (Attwood 1989: 81-103; Markus 1988). The Victorian Act legislated that 'half-castes' were to be removed from the missions and assimilated into wider European society while 'full-bloods' were to remain until, it was believed, they would eventually die out (Attwood 1989: 101-103). It appears that contrary to widely accepted scientific opinion at the time, which regarded 'hybrids' as inferior to both parent races (see Chapter 1), those who helped develop the Victorian Half-Caste Act believed that Aborigines of

mixed descent could be self-sufficient and would be able to 'fit in' with the European population. 'Full-bloods', on the other hand, continued to be regarded under this Act as inherently uncivilisable - there was, it was assumed, simply no point in trying to assimilate them into the wider community. The 1885 Act encoded a perception that only 'full-blooded' individuals were truly 'Aborigines' and in doing so, as Attwood (1989: 101) contends, succeeded in denying an Aboriginal identity, at least in legal terms, to many who defined themselves as such. Employing categories based upon race, the Half-Caste Act, like successive Acts and censuses in Victoria and other Australian States (Markus 1988: 53-69;) imposed a definition of 'Aborigines' that could be very different from (and indifferent to) how members of its target population perceived themselves. Similarly restrictive legislation was not repealed throughout Australia until the mid 1970s (Markus 1988: 56). As Elizabeth Pearce, a woman with Aboriginal and European ancestry who grew up in Queensland, told Kevin Gilbert in 1974:

Everyone who elected to come out from this ordinance of the time was not, in future, to claim they were Aborigines. Therefore they were no longer to be protected. They were virtually free. Now my father and others who had some dignity refused to be 'protected'. The authorities to this day say to tribal people that when the choice was given to such people - that's us - that we chose not to be known as Aborigines. It's not true! They were saying that for their own purposes! It was all caused by that repressive ordinance! (in Gilbert 1977: 9 and see also Kennedy 1985).

3.2. Objectification.

Scientific knowledge about the Aboriginal body has therefore been fundamental in sustaining and constructing relations of power. Through analysis of the Aboriginal body, comparative anatomy and later physical anthropology fashioned an identity for Aborigines, the effects of which reached far beyond the boundaries of the laboratory. However, power does not only derive from the fact that the Aboriginal body was analysed to produce knowledge, but also because during this process Aborigines became objects of knowledge. Amongst the more direct effects of such objectification was that it led, as Turnbull (1991: 110) observes, "professional scientists, scientific institutions, amateur naturalists and some ordinary colonists, to treat Aborigines as if they were endangered, though crucially important, scientific specimens".

The work of Michel Foucault on the objectification of the body through techniques of power and knowledge suggests an alternative perspective for analysing the power relations represented in collections of human remains which is related to, but independent from, the scientific interpretation of their contents. Foucault has brought into focus various interrelated modes by which relations of power and knowledge construct the body as object. He has, for example, considered the role of scientific classification and the scientific gaze in the objectification of the human subject (e.g. 1970, 1972-77: 208). However, perhaps of greater relevance to the present analysis is Foucault's (1977) contention that since the seventeenth century the body has increasingly become an object and target of power through a technique which employs scientific classification in conjunction with regulation and confinement.

According to this suggestion, the body as an object became the target of a new set of procedures - 'disciplinary technologies' - which aimed to produce "docile" bodies, or those which might be "subjected, used, transformed and improved" (Foucault 1977: 136). 'Docility' was achieved in a number of related ways (see Foucault 1977: 141-169), an important component of which was the organisation of bodies in space (Foucault 1977: 141-149). Such organisation enabled, "meticulous control of the operations of the body ... assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility - utility" (Foucault 1977: 137). Although existing before the seventeenth century, in, for example, monasteries, armies and workshops, Foucault (1977: 135-169) contends that disciplinary technologies became the "general formulas of domination" (1977: 136-137) during the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, occurring in such institutions as the prison, the asylum and the hospital.

Disciplinary technologies organised individuals in an enclosed area - each individual must have its own specific place, and, equally, each place must have its own specific individual: "disciplinary space tends to be divided into as many sections as there are bodies or elements to be distributed" (Foucault 1977: 143). Enclosed and partitioned, the disciplinary space is essentially cellular. In this way, at any moment, the conduct of each individual was under surveillance, and could be supervised, assessed and controlled. The disciplinary procedure was therefore aimed at "knowing, mastering and using" the subject.

Organised as an “analytical space”, the cell could also, therefore, provide a “useful space” (Foucault 1977: 143, 144).

According to Foucault (1977: 145-146), the location of each individual space is defined by its position in a series. Guided by classification, therefore, the space occupied by each cell is based upon rank. In organising the distribution of individuals into cells, places and ranks, disciplines therefore created “complex spaces that are at once architectural, functional and hierarchical”. In essence such spaces and their distribution physically embodied and enlivened the classification tables which were of such central concern to the “scientific, political and economic technology of the eighteenth century” (Foucault 1977: 148). However, as well as methods of rational arrangement, these “*tableaux vivants*”, transformed “the confused, useless or dangerous multitudes into ordered multiplicities”. Disciplinary technologies therefore stood at, and emerged from, the congruence of techniques of power and procedures of knowledge.

3.2.a. The collection as a disciplinary technology.

Viewed in this Foucauldian perspective, collections of human remains share many similar features with disciplinary technologies. First, that the body of the Other is expropriated and physically confined within the walls of an institution; second, within the institution collections of human remains are partitioned, each remain occupying its own place through having been assigned unique numbers and recorded and catalogued individually (each remain thus ‘inhabits’ its own specific cell); third, the position of each human remain is determined by its place within the collection as a ranked series in accordance with the system of classification that was used to order and organise the collection. Similar to other ‘disciplinary technologies’ collections of human remains can therefore be seen to be composed of complex spaces. Occupied by bodies, these spaces are ‘architectural’, because of the physical manner in which they are imposed, ‘functional’ and ‘useful’, because they allow and reflect systematic and ordered scientific analysis, and ‘hierarchical’ because they are determined by systems of classification implicitly or explicitly constructed within the race paradigm. The collection therefore produced, in Foucauldian terms, ‘docile’ bodies, which, subject to the control of Western science, could be manipulated and used for a variety of purposes (and see Chapters 1 and

2). Collections of human remains therefore correspond in structure, practice and outcome to the disciplinary technologies that objectify the living body. Indeed, collections and Foucault's carceral institutions often targeted *exactly* the same bodies. When, as was often the case, Aboriginal remains were obtained from prisons, asylums or hospitals, collections simply continued in death the disciplinary technology imposed upon the Aboriginal body in life. Examples are provided by Wanamuchoo and Pokallie (see Appendix 1.3), both of whom were committed to the Parkside lunatic asylum, one having been previously detained in Adelaide jail, both died in the asylum, and both, after their bodies had been dissected at Adelaide University, became part of the collection of human remains housed in the Department of Anatomy of the University of Edinburgh (see Appendix 1.3).

The identification of collections of human remains as a disciplinary technology is supported by the attitude of some Aboriginal people which holds that collections *are* prisons (e.g. The Melbourne Sun 11.11.1991)¹, a perception associated with the belief that human remains are not passive objects but active 'people' (see Chapter 4). Thus, museums are frequently referred to as places that incarcerate the ancestors, unco-operative museum curators have been equated with jailers - one such individual was nick-named after an infamous concentration camp officer - and campaigns for the return of such material have frequently employed language which implicitly or explicitly relates repatriation to liberation (e.g. Melbourne Morning Daily 23.11.1985; The Advertiser 10.5.1989, Interview A 4.8.1995).

The belief that collections inflict eternal torment on the dead may not be confined to Aboriginal people. There is historical evidence of a European attitude towards collections as a mechanism of punishment. Thus, as already seen in Chapter 2, in 1825, A. Berry, a settler in the Shoalhaven district, considered his donation of a skull to the British Phrenological Society as an act of retribution for the crimes this Aborigine had committed when alive (Turnbull 1993: 21). Furthermore, in January 1829 William Burke

¹ This is not only an Aboriginal belief. For example, in February 1987, Robert Cruz of American Indians Against Desecration told a meeting of the Arizona Inter Tribal Council in Phoenix about a recent reburial of skeletal remains in Arizona. "the ancestors came back, and said that they were happy to be released from their prisons - the museums were their prisons" (in Hubert 1989: 140). The idea that museums acted as prisons led Cruz to visit Death Row in an American gaol, and speak to the inmates in an attempt to understand what it was like for the ancestors to be incarcerated (Hubert 1989: 140).

(of Burke and Hare, the infamous murderers who sold the bodies of their victims for dissection at the Department of Anatomy, University of Edinburgh) was sentenced to public execution and public dissection with his skeleton being preserved for posterity (Richardson 1988: 131-143). It was the Department of Anatomy at the University of Edinburgh that acquired Burke's skeleton and indeed still keeps it articulated today.

The Western notion of retribution being exacted from the criminal body after death derives from the historical relationship that existed between dissection and punishment. Prior to the Anatomy Act of 1832, anatomists could officially only acquire the corpses of the condemned. Since the sixteenth century, medical schools had been allowed, by royal grant, to obtain a limited supply of bodies from the scaffold (see Richardson 1988: 30-32). As noted by Richardson (1988: 32), such grants represented the inception in Britain of "a relationship between the medical profession, the ruling elite and the judiciary on the one hand, and between dissection and exemplary punishment on the other".

The link between dissection and criminality was further established by the Murder Act of 1752, which enabled dissection to be served as a *post-mortem* form of punishment that could be substituted, at the discretion of the judge, for gibbeting in chains (Richardson 1988: 35-37). As Sawday (1995: 55) observes, the Murder Act was:

designed specifically to evoke horror at the violation of the body and denial of burial to the offender. The denial of burial, in particular, was intended to evoke an added dimension to capital punishment, in that it drew upon widespread belief that lack of a proper burial was not merely a disgrace to offenders and their families, but involved the posthumous punishment of the criminal's soul which would not rest whilst the remains lay ungathered within sanctified ground.

Enshrined in law, the relationship between dissection and punishment was direct and, as argued by Richardson (1988: 32) and Sawday (1995: 55), central to the history of anatomy in Europe. And although the Anatomy Act subsequently repealed the legislation that brought executed bodies to the anatomy table, the popular association of dissection with punishment persisted for many years afterwards (Richardson 1988: 159-192).

Whether or not Europeans widely associated collections of human remains with prisons, the very ability of dissection to attain the status of punishment demonstrates a belief that after death a relationship still existed between the 'person' and his or her mortal remains. Such an assumption may in part explain why scientists who donated and curated such material in the nineteenth and early twentieth century appear at times to have perceived at least the remains of known individuals and sometimes those covered in flesh, as more than simply material 'things'. Thus, human remains were often referred to as if they were alive, by their gender (as 'he' or 'she' rather than 'it) and the name which they held in life (rather than the catalogue number ascribed to them). For example, correspondence between Dr. Ramsay Smith and Professor Cunningham at the Department of Anatomy, University of Edinburgh, contains various references to a number of named individuals whose remains Ramsay Smith supplied to this institution. In one letter (29.1.1908, ELSC Ms 621) Ramsay Smith advised Cunningham that the Premier of Western Australia was to visit Edinburgh and wished to "see Tommy Walker". On another occasion (28.5.1906, ELSC Ms 598) he wrote that a friend, also about to visit Edinburgh, would be "pleased to see some of her old aboriginal acquaintance in the Museum". He also informed Cunningham on 23.10.1907 about an Aborigine's skeleton that he had recently supplied:

In Lydekker's article on Australian aboriginals ... you will see a photograph of our friend Wanamuchoo with his axe ... I told Lydekker that you have the skeleton and could give him information about 'Wannie' as we call him here (ELSC Ms 616)

A similar mode of language is employed by Sir Arthur Keith in his description of the arrival at the Royal College of Surgeons, England, of the preserved body of an unidentified Aboriginal woman supplied by Archibald Watson (see Chapter 2):

In 1910 'Lady Adelaide' arrived; a ship-surgeon delivered her to my keeping. Her every feature were as fresh as on the day on which she had died. Her body had been given to the dissecting room at Adelaide for the use of medical students, but our Professor thought it better that she should hand down the physical characteristics of her race to future generations in Europe. She was given a sarcophagus, which had been filled with preservative fluid, and became a 'private exhibit'. In due time Royalty were to gaze on her (Keith 1950: 345).

Keith's use of the term 'sarcophagus' suggests that he may have perceived the body's preservation in the museum as some kind of ritual internment as opposed to merely storage, emphasised by the fact that the container was described only as a "tank" by the Assistant Curator in 1933 (Waring 1933: 12).

While the dual status (as material object and 'person') which seems to have been attributed to human remains by both Aborigines and scientists, reinforces the identification of collections as disciplinary technologies, there is a significant difference between the frequent modern Aboriginal perception of human remains as persons and the attitude that Ramsay Smith and Keith appear to have held towards the remains of certain individuals. For the former, the remains are active 'people' who exist in the present. For the scientists, the remains were primarily scientific specimens and, even as 'persons', they were nonetheless passive objects.

3.2.b. Exhibition.

The story of Tambo (see Appendix 3) provides an example of an Aboriginal body being made object in life and death. As a circus exhibit in Barnum, Bailey and Hutchinson's Greatest Show on Earth, Tambo's living body was a thing of curiosity, a spectacle disempowered and made object through display (Poignant 1993: 37-39, and see Rydell 1984; Stewart 1984; Bennett 1995). The circus was designed to present to the public the various races of humankind; Tambo and his Aboriginal companions were only part of a larger troupe that included "'Bushmen', 'Zulus', 'Nubians', 'Sioux Indian Savages' and 'Fijian Cannibals'" (Poignant 1993: 49)². There can be little doubt that Tambo's group was represented as members of an inferior race - pamphlets advertising the Aborigines (both when they were attached to the circus and later when exhibited separately by Robert Cunningham) emphasised their savagery and brutishness by descriptions of cannibalism, infanticide and body mutilation (Poignant 1993:49), and, on at least one occasion, stated that they were the "lowest order of man" (promotional flier reproduced in Turnbull 1993c).

² According to Poignant (1993:49) one of the Fijians was a woman from Virginia. Cheating the public in this way may have been common practice for P.T. Barnum who, as Fausto-Sterling (1995: 30) notes, also billed an African American from Connecticut as "Zip the What-is-it", a member of a newly discovered race who had been captured in the Gambia.

Stewart (1984: 109-111) and Bennett (1995: 83-84) have observed that in the display of indigenous peoples in the various fairs, expositions and circusses of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the exotic body of the Other took on an identity comparable to that of the side show freak. Indeed, Stewart (1984: 109) notes that the freak has often been a cultural as well as natural aberration ("the Little Black Man, the Turkish Horse, the Siamese twins ... the Irish giants"). Perhaps unsurprisingly therefore, according to the promotional flier advertising Tambo's companions in England, the Aborigines were described as "distorted" in form and "with but a glimmering of reason and gift of speech" (reproduced in Turnbull 1993, and see Poignant 1993: 48). As in the exhibition of carnival freaks, the display of exotic humans 'normalised' the observer as it also constructed the cultural Other as both different and inferior (Stewart 1984: 109; Bennett 1995: 79; Stallybrass & White 1986:198-199). Just as collections arranged the bodies of the dead, so the Greatest Show on Earth organised living bodies to demonstrate scientific notions about human diversity and the racial order. In a conjunction of relations of power and knowledge, the show space therefore achieved through display of the living what science accomplished by measurement of the dead. As Bennett (1995: 84) has observed for similar exhibitions of other living peoples:

In their interrelationships ... the expositions and their fair zones constituted an order of things and of peoples which, reaching back into the depths of prehistoric time as well as encompassing all corners of the globe, rendered the whole world metonymically present, subordinated to the dominating gaze of the white, bourgeois, and ... male eye of the metropolitan powers.

Stewart (1984: 110-111) notes that as freaks were regarded as objects, it made no difference whether they were alive or dead. Indeed, there are many examples of exhibited individuals whose remains have subsequently become scientific specimens and/or museum exhibits³. After Tambo died in Cleveland, Ohio on February 23 1884, his body

³ For example, a man named Charles Byrne, often called O'Brien, the 'Irish Giant' travelled to London in 1782 and made a living by appearing before the public. According to Dobson (1971: 203), "shortly before his death Byrne requested that his remains should be thrown into the sea, in order that his bones might not be obtained by the surgeons, for it had come to his knowledge that several members of the medical profession were anxious to obtain his body". After he died on 1 June 1783, London newspapers reported the numerous attempts made by various surgeons to obtain Byrne's body (Dobson 1971: 203). However, it was John Hunter who allegedly managed to bribe the undertakers sufficiently, and instead of Byrne's coffin being thrown into the sea, it was delivered to Hunter's door (Dobson 1971: 204). Today, Byrne's skeleton

was embalmed and exhibited in Cleveland dime museum for the next 36 years. Preserved and displayed, Tambo's body continued to be the object of curiosity that it had been when alive and performing in the Greatest Show on Earth.

3.3. Conclusion.

The expropriation of Aboriginal human remains provides one facet of the various ways in which nineteenth and early twentieth century anthropological interest in such material is entangled within relations of power. Another facet was the authoritative 'truths' about Aboriginal people that were produced by the scientific analysis of Aboriginal human remains. Taken together, the collecting *and* interpretation of human remains formed a complex system of theory and practice that both helped sustain, and was the product of, the hegemonic relationship between European and Aboriginal societies.

The Aboriginal identity constructed by science would never have been realised without the adherence of nineteenth and early twentieth century anthropology to the concept of biological determinism. European pre-conceptions of racial hierarchy were 'mapped' onto human bodies, to be 'objectively' analysed as if they existed 'in nature'. As Urla and Terry (1995: 3) have observed, science does not simply interpret bodies but constructs them through "particular investigatory techniques and culturally lodged research goals". How we know bodies is thus part of our society's 'regimes of truth' (Foucault 1972-77: 131), and is inseparable from relations of power and knowledge (Foucault 1972, and see Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982: 184-204).

By reifying pre-existing notions of race and racial order, science effectively constructed the Aboriginal body as different and inferior to that of the 'normal' and 'superior' European body. A potent method of dividing 'Us' and 'Them', the analysis of human remains sustained one of the basic features of Aboriginalism. However, demonstrating

is still displayed in the Hunterian Museum in the Royal College of Surgeons, England (Richardson 1988: 57-58). Another example is the case of Saartje Baartman, the so-called 'Hottentot venus'. Brought from South Africa by Peter Cezar in 1810, she was displayed in London and then in Paris. After her death on December 1815, Baartman's body was dissected by Cuvier (1817) and her skeleton and genitals preserved in the Musée de l'Homme (see, amongst others, Gilman 1985; Wiss 1990; Fausto-Sterling 1995). According to Channel 4 news (11.2.1997), people claiming to be Baartman's descendants are currently, and as yet unsuccessfully, campaigning to have her remains repatriated to South Africa.

the co-dependence of 'Self' and 'Other', this division did not derive exclusively from the examination of Aboriginal remains but relied upon their comparison with those of other peoples, in particular those of the European. Thus the definition of one race was always dependent upon the definition of others. Furthermore, how to 'know' the Aboriginal body was the exclusive domain of specialists. Only comparative anatomists, physical anthropologists or phrenologists were assumed to have the skills and, more importantly, the authority, to discover, measure and interpret Aboriginal racial characteristics. Thus, and again symptomatic of Aboriginalism, there was no possibility for Australia's indigenes to have any control over how their 'public' identity was constructed. Scientific expertise about the Aboriginal body effectively silenced Aborigines as active subjects, a process of objectification complemented by its conjunction with regulation and constraint within the collection as a disciplinary technology.

The history of the collecting, curation and study of human remains is therefore saturated with relations of power and knowledge that are, in particular, associated with the construction of identities and the objectification of the Aboriginal body (and these two processes are in themselves inter-connected). Nor did these processes cease with the rejection of the race paradigm after the Second World War and the accompanying decrease in the study and collecting of Aboriginal human remains by European institutions. Although Aboriginal remains are no longer usually collected under the same conditions and collections are no longer used for the same purposes as they were in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this does not alter the reality that their contents were, and continue to be, appropriated items. Moreover, the current opinions of some Aboriginal people who view institutions which house their ancestors as prisons support a continuing interpretation of collections as disciplinary technologies, regardless of how the remains they contain are interpreted by modern scientists. Furthermore, although Australian legislation may no longer employ definitions of Aboriginal people based solely on genetic inheritance, an assumed association between biology and culture has been retained in the frequent popular and academic (and not exclusively non-aboriginal (see Myers 1994: 690)) division made between 'traditional' and 'non-traditional' or 'urban' Aborigines, and the widely held perception that only the former are 'real' Aborigines. Such definitions have had wide-ranging ramifications, not least the repeated denial of Aboriginality to those who do not exhibit what is perceived to be a 'pristine'

(i.e. pre-contact) Aboriginal culture (see Gilbert 1977: 5-31; Chase 1981; Langton 1981, 1993; Cowlshaw 1986, 1987, 1988, 1992; Beckett 1988; Eckermann 1988; Jacobs 1988; Hollinsworth 1992; Attwood & Arnold 1992). Modern anthropological discourse has frequently been at least complicit with the accordance of greater legitimacy to 'traditional' Aborigines, a stance that Chase (1981: 24) and Cowlshaw (1986, 1987, 1988, 1992), amongst others, have argued can be partly attributed to the implicit retention by modern social anthropology of some of the fundamental tenets of nineteenth century physical anthropology. Cowlshaw, for example, has shown how, even after social anthropology began to disassociate itself from theories of racial classification in the 1920s and finally rejected them in the 1940s and 1950s, a "submerged or implied definition of Aborigines as a race was retained" (Cowlshaw 1992: 23) and the Aboriginal 'race' came to be equated with 'traditional' Aborigines. The almost exclusive interest of early physical anthropologists in the remains of 'full-bloods' (see Chapter 1) is therefore perhaps echoed in the still frequent concentration by social anthropologists on the study of 'traditional' groups.

Chapter 4. Reburial: the development of an issue.

The past twenty years have witnessed the emergence of what is now widely, and loosely, referred to as the 'reburial' issue. As part of a growing movement to regain control over their heritage, Australian Aborigines, Native Americans and, increasingly, indigenous peoples from other parts of the world have campaigned for the right to determine the future of the remains of their cultural and/or biological ancestors. In particular this campaign has contested the ownership of human remains housed in museums and other scientific institutions, and has commonly demanded that such material be returned to the relevant indigenous community for final disposal. In addition, indigenous groups have sought to ensure that human remains found today, whether through archaeological excavation, construction work or chance discovery, are reinterred and not, as has often been established procedure in the past, automatically assigned to museum collections (e.g. Hammil & Cruz 1989; Richardson 1989, Turner 1989; Weatherall 1989).

Although some suggested arrangements allow for the possibility of future disinterment, for all intents and purposes reburial marks the loss to science, at least for the time being, of a unique source of information about the past. Consequently, indigenous claims for the return of their ancestors' remains have been opposed by many who study and curate such items. With present techniques human remains can provide archaeologists and biological anthropologists with data about such things as past diseases, social practices, population movement and human evolution. As we have already seen, with the possible development of more advanced techniques in the future, scientists may be able to elicit additional information from human remains (see Chapter 1), hence the potential of future research is a common argument put forward by scientists who wish to retain skeletal material against the wishes of indigenous groups (see Appendix 1). As Hagelberg noted in 1990, "just as the [ancient DNA] technology begins to bear fruit and scientists are in a position to embark on more comprehensive genetic surveys of the skeletal collections held in museum and other institutions, people are asking for the return of the remains of their ancestors" (THES 14.12.1990). Emerging from a fundamental clash of interests, by the 1980s the reburial issue had become the subject of intense debate, to the extent that, as one observer later commented, it had "grasped archaeologists in some areas of the world firmly by the throat - and [showed] no sign of letting go" (Hubert 1989: 131).

Recent demands for museums to return human remains have been heard from indigenous people from, amongst other places, the Arctic (e.g. Federal Archaeology Fall/Winter 1996: 35), South America (e.g. Podgorny & Politis 1992; El Dia, La Plata 18.4.1994), South Africa (e.g. Koch & Sillen 1996; The Observer 18.2.1997); New Zealand (e.g. Simpson 1994: 31), and North America (e.g. Hammil & Cruz 1989; Turner 1989; Bray 1996). In New Zealand and North America, reburial campaigns have prompted significant changes in museum policy and archaeological practice (e.g. Watt 1986; Ubelaker & Grant 1989: 260-261; Zimmerman 1992: 49-54). In 1990, following increasing pressure from Native American groups, and after unsuccessful attempts to secure the enactment of appropriate legislation in the late 1980s (see Raines 1992: 646-649; Gerstendblith 1995: 627), the United States passed the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). This legislation protects from removal and sale all Native America human remains, funerary and sacred objects and those of cultural patrimony discovered on federal, Native American and Hawaiian lands. In addition it required federally funded museums or other such agencies to compile inventories of their holdings of sacred objects and cultural patrimony within three years, and human remains and associated grave goods within five years. The former are then to be returned to "specified native claimants when the agency or museum does not have right of possession", while the latter are to be returned, on request, to culturally affiliated tribes or native groups (Monroe & Echohawk 1991: 6). Within two years of NAGPRA's enactment, over 30 tribes from across the United States had requested the return of tribal remains from the Smithsonian Institution alone (Raines 1992: 658) and by 1995 over \$23 million had been requested by museums and Indian groups to help implement the Act. Since 1993, an increasing number of museums and agencies have completed their required inventories (Federal Archaeology Fall/Winter 1995: 41-42, Fall/Winter 1996: 34). Although this Act has already facilitated the redistribution of indigenous human remains, such as the return of remains from the Phoebe Hearst Museum at the University of California to Native Hawaiians, the full impact of NAGPRA may be yet to be felt (McKeown 1995: 14).

Although Native Americans and Australian Aborigines have campaigned for the return of their ancestors' remains since at least the late 1960s¹ the very widespread nature of indigenous concerns on this issue first became evident at the first World Archaeological Congress (WAC) held in Southampton, UK in 1986 (Hubert 1992: 107). Following intense debate at the Southampton Congress, in 1989 WAC devoted an Inter-Congress held in Vermillion, South Dakota, to the discussion of 'Archaeological Ethics and the Treatment of the Dead'. The Inter-Congress had strong indigenous participation but, although many scientists were present (some "frankly shaken" by the strength of indigenous concerns (Doumas 1989: 21)), relatively few attended who had been outspoken against reburial (Zimmerman 1989a:26).

Proving that common ground could be attained through discussion, the plenary session at the Inter-Congress passed an accord (the Vermillion Accord, World Archaeological Bulletin 4, 1989: 18-19), a series of statements according respect to the wishes of the dead, their biological and/or cultural descendants and the legitimate concerns of science, with the belief that:

the express recognition that the concerns of various ethnic groups, as well as those of science, are legitimate and to be respected, will permit acceptable agreements to be reached and honoured.

After Vermillion, WAC continued to be pro-active in seeking solutions to the reburial issue. In 1990, it adopted a Code of Ethics drafted by members of its Executive's Indigenous Sub-Committee. The "First Code of Ethics (Members' Obligations to Indigenous Peoples)" (World Archaeological Bulletin 5, 1991: 22-23) introduced principles and rules to govern archaeological investigation of the indigenous cultural heritage "including sites, places, objects, artefacts [and] human remains". The Code acknowledged indigenous ownership of their cultural heritage and disallowed interference or removal of human remains without permission from the appropriate indigenous authority. In 1991, WAC funded research which located non-European

¹ As noted by Zimmerman (1987: 462) there are many parallels between "the attitudes expressed by the Aborigines and by Native Americans about the treatment of ancestral skeletons". Texts which document the reburial issue in the United States include: Hammil & Cruz 1989; Hubert 1989, 1992; Ubelaker & Grant 1989; Zimmerman 1987; 1989a, 1989b; 1992; Bray, T. L. & T. W. Wilson 1994; Federal Archaeology 1995 7(3); Bray 1996.

human remains in UK museums and, in its World Archaeological Bulletin 6 (1992), ensured that this information would be placed in the public domain.

The reburial issue is of sufficient importance to indigenous peoples world wide that it was addressed in the United Nations Draft Declaration for Indigenous Rights of 1985, and has been raised at the UN's Working Group on Indigenous Populations (e.g. Tickner 1994: 88). In 1993 the UN's Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities requested its 'Special Rapporteur' to draft principles and guidelines for the protection of the heritage of indigenous peoples. These principles recognise indigenous ownership and control of their cultural property (including human remains) and state that governments and international organisations should assist in the recovery and restitution of indigenous heritage, broadly defined. Article 21, for example, reads:

Human remains and associated funeral objects must be returned to their descendants and territories in a culturally appropriate manner, as determined by the indigenous peoples concerned. Documentation may be retained, displayed or otherwise used only in such form and manner as may be agreed upon with the peoples concerned (Daes 1995: 130).

4.1. Australia.

Whatever the particular religious beliefs held by Aboriginal people today, most attribute great significance to the bones of their ancestors. Of primary concern is the widespread belief that the dead can only enter the spirit realm and attain spiritual peace when they are returned to their birthplace and are given appropriate ceremony. For example, at the official handover ceremony of the Edinburgh Collection to Aboriginal representatives on 31.9.1991, Ngarinjin elder David Mowaljarlai (1991) spoke of the intimate attachment of each Aboriginal person with one area of land and the absolute necessity of that individual being buried there. Noongah elder Ken Colbung (1996: 1) has stated that:

The spiritual lore of all Aboriginal peoples dictates that spiritual peace for the dead is attained by the carrying out of full traditional burial rites, according to the dead person's specific tribal lore. Part of this lore is that the bodies of the dead must be returned to their birthplaces in order for full burial rites to take place. Another aspect of this lore, is that all body

parts be buried together, in that one place, for full spiritual transportation to the land of the spirits.

The collecting of human remains, whether before or after appropriate ceremony, is invariably considered to cause the ancestors great anguish, whose consequent unrest is highly dangerous and may cause misfortune within a community. As one man, who is his community's custodian of returned remains before they are reburied, explains:

When the body [is] placed in the ground, the spirit will stay with the body. Once it is removed, the spirit will rise up out of the ground and it can never rest. Once the spirit never rests it will attack or bother individual people in the community. ... A lot of [the community] have troubles, and they don't understand that it is the old ones ... now that [the remains] have been brought back ... there was great peace over them, even when they were handed back to me (Interview B 26.9.1995).

The storage of human remains in museums is often perceived as a period of torment for the ancestors, their distress compounded by, in particular, storage in artificial materials (e.g. plastic bags, cardboard boxes etc.), articulation of the bones using metal pins or other similar intrusive devices, and scientific examination of remains, especially if this employs destructive techniques, such as those required in DNA analysis or radio carbon dating (Interview A 4.8.1995; Webb 1995). Fundamental to many Aboriginal concerns about the collecting of human remains is therefore the belief that in some way the "living and the dead are the same" (Interview B 26.9.1995), that human remains are not material items but active 'people' who must be accorded appropriate treatment. As Cheryl Fulton remarked: "the scientific arena looks on our people as objects of curiosity ... we see them as still being Aborigine dead, with spiritual significance which must be taken care of" (Hobart Mercury 12.9.1985.). The perception that remains are, in some way, active 'people' is exemplified in the attitude of many in the Palm Island community towards the body of Tambo, the return of which was often viewed as an outcome of Tambo's *own* efforts (see Appendix 3).

Respect for the wishes of the dead is a primary consideration of those who support and advance the campaign for the return of Aboriginal remains. For example, the Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action (FAIRA), an organisation which continues to play a leading role in this campaign, asserts the fundamental rights of the dead to: "1)

receive their customary last rites; and 2) have their remains left in peace as dictated by custom" (Weatherall 1989: 2). The responsibility to ensure that these rights are fulfilled is believed to lie with the descendants of the dead, who thus "feel deeply obligated" (Weatherall 1989: 4) to retrieve their ancestor's remains from museums and other holding institutions. However, while the spiritual necessity of according the dead appropriate final disposition underpins the reburial campaign, other ethical considerations also play a significant role.

As discussed in Chapter 3, collections of Aboriginal human remains symbolise the past oppression of Aboriginal people, not least because of the manner in which much of their contents were obtained. As recognised by the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS):

Past unethical or insensitive treatment of Aboriginal human remains by collectors, researchers or institutions and general lack of consultation on these matters with the Aboriginal community has added to legitimate Aboriginal concerns in this area (Aboriginal Human Remains: Draft Policy Statement 1988).

Indeed, one reason that knowledge of the existence of collections has often been traumatic for Aboriginal people (e.g. West 1987: 1-2) is because collections provide evidence of the mistreatment, and sometimes the violence, endured by past generations. As one Aboriginal campaigner for the repatriation of ancestral remains described his own community's reaction to the news that the Queensland Museum contained remains collected from their area:

They were horrified. I didn't know how to tell them at first ... They've always known things [like this happened], it was just the evidence ... Kids were horrified, they were absolutely horrified about it. They were met with the hard facts. [Relationships between blacks and whites] were then tested in our area, because some of the remains were obviously hunted down and shot, bullet holes in the head (Interview A 4.8.1995).

Aboriginal people also object to the differential treatment which has, until relatively recently, been accorded to the newly uncovered remains of Aborigines and Europeans (the former having been automatically assigned to museums, and the latter reburied). Campaigners have often supported the argument for the reburial of Aboriginal remains

by criticising such double standards and questioning why European society, which respects its own dead, should accord such minimal respect to the human remains of other cultures (e.g. Australian Financial Review 25.10.1991).

The assumptions about race which surrounded, and were supported by, past scientific research on Aboriginal human remains is another major factor which motivates today's demands for their return. The contribution made by past research to the construction of an inferior identity for Aboriginal people (see Chapter 3), and the role that this played in the justification of their oppression by settlers and Government, has been central to many arguments for the repatriation of Aboriginal remains (e.g. Mansell 1990). As Turnbull (1993: 14) has pointed out, "in demanding control of remains Aboriginal people were articulating a politics which stressed the degree to which their identity had been forged through the historical experiences of colonialism".

The aims and results of modern scientific enquiry are also questioned by Aborigines, who argue that such research can negate Aboriginal concepts of their own history and in doing so continues to prescribe identities for, and thus disempower, Aboriginal people:

Your science, your findings and interpretations which are rooted in your own belief systems, constantly challenge our beliefs in our origins. Our beliefs become ridiculed, our confidence becomes undermined as a result of this cultural terrorism. Our people suffer from those who assume the power and the right to perpetrate the ultimate indignity - to interpret us to ourselves (Weatherall 1989: 12).

The campaign for Aboriginal control of their ancestors' remains is therefore also part of the wider criticism and refutation of the scientific monopoly over 'valid' interpretations of the indigenous past (Langford 1980; Weatherall 1989; Pardoe 1992: 135-136 and see McGuire 1992). As Mandawuy Yunupingu has explained (The Times 10.9.1990):

I am a Yolngu (Aboriginal) person from Australia and I know where my ancestry starts from. We have a living history that we practice, which provides us with information, just like your archaeological investigations. Our history is alive to us. We do not need archaeological investigations to tell us where we came from or from who we are descended. The remains of Aboriginal people must be returned to their rightful people and country. It's only just to do so.

The reburial campaign may be seen as one facet of wider Aboriginal demands to regain control of their heritage (Langford 1980) which also finds expression in Land Rights and campaigns for the return of cultural objects. Emerging from a “basic need ... to reclaim our history and our identity” (Weatherall 1989: 15), securing control of ancestral remains is critically a matter of empowerment and self-respect (e.g. Mansell in AAP News Report 23.9.1985). As Des Morgan of the Echuca Aboriginal community reportedly commented:

We are trying to take some control over our lives. After all this time we have to. But ... if you can't control your destiny in death, how can you do it in life? (Canberra Times 8.9.1990).

4.2. The development of the reburial issue in Australia.

Although Aboriginal opposition to the collecting of their ancestors' remains is evident throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (see Chapter 2), the roots of the reburial campaign appear to lie in the late 1960s. At the beginning of a decade in which Aborigines first held Australian citizenship and which witnessed the emergence of the Land Rights movement, Australian museums, archaeologists and physical anthropologists began to become aware of Aboriginal concern regarding the curation and scientific use of sensitive cultural material (see Lampert 1983; Hemming 1985; Jones 1985; Anderson 1986, 1990 and Specht & MacLulich 1996). In separate campaigns, yet part of a general drive for the restitution of Aboriginal cultural heritage, museums were approached by Aborigines to discuss the future of secret/sacred objects and the Aboriginal human remains housed in their collections.

In the early 1970s some Australian museums began to change their policies governing the accession and curation of Aboriginal human remains. For example, in 1972 the Queensland Museum resolved no longer to accept newly discovered Aboriginal bones (which, in most cases, had been the subject of police investigation) save in “exceptional circumstances and with the permission of the relevant Aboriginal community” (pamphlet, no date: *Some Information for Aboriginal People Concerning Human Remains Held in the Queensland Museum*. AIATSIS Library p15211). Previously such material had been automatically accessioned into the museum's collections. Although the

Australian Museum was legally obliged to accept remains found in New South Wales according to the National Parks and Wildlife Act (1974), it resolved to return all recently excavated material on request. In addition, this museum removed Aboriginal human remains from display and placed them in secure areas with access restricted to approved scholars only (see Lampert 1983: 20 and Specht & MacLulich 1996: 34-36).

An increasing awareness and acceptance by some scientists of Aboriginal concerns for the appropriate re-disposition of their ancestors' remains was illustrated in 1976 by AIATSIS (then the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS)) which took the initiative in returning the skeletal remains of a known individual, recently found in Melbourne, to the appropriate community on Groote Eylandt. After ceremony, these remains were placed in a rock shelter on Winchelsea Island (Hubert 1989: 154). However, probably the most significant single development in the 1970s was the successful campaign for the re-disposition of the remains of Truganini, the so-called 'last Tasmanian'. This campaign contained nearly all of the elements of those which were to follow in the 1980s and 1990s - press coverage, academic debate and the successful lobbying of Government by Aboriginal groups. The eventual cremation of Truganini's skeleton was the first sign that Aboriginal demands for the redispotion of remains collected in the past and believed to be of scientific value could gain the support of influential scientists and politicians. Moreover, the successful demands for Truganini's redispotion demonstrated for the first time the power of the reburial issue to unite the Aboriginal community.

Unlike any other reburial campaign which was to follow, demands for the return of Truganini's remains could cite the recorded wishes of this individual. Shortly after the death of William Lanne in 1869, Truganini asked her friend, the Reverend H. D. Atkinson, to take her by boat to "the Shepherds", the deepest part of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel. When they arrived at the spot, she broke down in tears and told Atkinson that, "all were dead excepting herself, and the people in Hobart had got all their skulls" and then implored, "bury me here. It's the deepest place. Promise me!" (Account by H. D. Atkinson, quoted in H. B. Atkinson to the Tasmanian Museum 16.12.1950, in Ryan 1974: 2). Seven years after her death, unsubstantiated reports also surfaced that Truganini had requested that she be buried behind one of the Hobart Mountains (see Ryan 1974:

4). Whatever her last wishes may really have been, it appears that Truganini did not want her skull to be taken by scientists.

Truganini died on 8 May 1876 and her body was conveyed to the Hobart Hospital. The next day, the Royal Society of Tasmania requested that it be given the corpse of Truganini, since its efforts to obtain the skeleton of William Lanne had been “frustrated”, and it was anxious that “a type of a race just passing away should be secured for the Colony for all future time” (Agnew to Gilmore 9.5.1876 AIATSIS Library pMs 1774). The request was denied, the Colonial Secretary believing that Truganini should receive a decent burial free from the “unseemly proceedings which took place subsequently to Lanne’s interment”. Truganini was then buried at midnight on 10 May 1876. However, following two further requests from the Secretary of the Royal Society of Tasmania, the Governor in Council authorised the exhumation and transfer of Truganini’s body to the Royal Society “on the understanding that the skeleton shall not be exposed to public view, but be decently deposited in a secure resting place where it may be accessible by special permission to scientific men for scientific purposes” (Moore to Agnew 6.12.1878, AIATSIS Library pMs 1774). Contrary to this description of events, Ellis (1981: 153-155) notes that an account by Fred Seager (a dispenser assistant at Hobart Hospital who allegedly had first-hand knowledge of what happened to the bodies of both Lanne and Truganini) given to J. W. Beatie in 1912 describes how Truganini’s skeleton had been secretly and illegally exhumed by the Royal Society long before they had been given permission to do so. According to Seager, by the time of its ‘official’ exhumation in December 1878, Truganini’s skeleton had already been in the Royal Society’s museum for some months.

Truganini’s skeleton was put on display at the Melbourne Exhibition in 1888, but otherwise remained in the vault at the Museum of the Royal Society of Tasmania until 1904 when her remains were again taken to Melbourne, this time by anthropologist Baldwin Spencer. Here her skeleton was articulated and a plaster cast taken. Contrary to the terms of the initial donation, on return to the Royal Society of Tasmania Truganini’s skeleton was placed on public display until 1947. Although the reaction of Aboriginal people to the museum’s display of Truganini’s remains is not documented, members of the non-Aboriginal community did object and in the 1950s two attempts were made by

the Church to persuade the museum (which had by then become the Tasmanian Museum) to reinter Truganini's remains. The first approach was made by Rev. H. B. Atkinson, Archdeacon of Launceston, in 1950, who asked the museum to honour the request which Truganini had made to his father, H. D. Atkinson (see above). The Museum replied that its Trustees had "no power to dispose of the body" (Pearson to Atkinson 6.4.1951 in Ryan 1974: 8). In 1953 the Bishop of Tasmania requested a meeting with the museum to discuss the possibility of reburying Truganini's remains. Before the meeting, the Director of the Museum sought the opinion of a number of eminent scientists, all of whom strongly rejected the Bishop's proposal (Ryan 1974: 8 and see Cove 1995: 143-145). In an argument similar to those which would be expressed by scientists opposing the reburial of other Aboriginal skeletons some thirty years later, Professor A. A. Abbie wrote that, to his mind:

any disposal of this unique material as suggested would be a scientific crime of the worst order and would receive world-wide condemnation as such. The commission of a crime of this nature could not in any way atone for the original crimes committed against the living Tasmanians (Abbie to Bryden 7.9.1954 in Ryan 1974: 8-9).

The museum decided to retain Truganini's skeleton, intending that it be placed in a specially constructed chamber which would form part of a planned Aboriginal section of the museum (Ryan 1974: 9). According to Ryan (1974: 11) there was little scientific analysis of Truganini's skeleton in all the years that it had been available for research.

In the late 1960s an Aboriginal law student, Harry Penrith, began a campaign to have Truganini's skeleton removed from what was now the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and be accorded appropriate funerary rites. Penrith wrote to the Trustees and the Director reasoning that the retention of her skeleton in their institution was not only against Truganini's wishes and the traditions and beliefs of Aborigines, but represented the continuing European oppression of Australia's indigenes. Although recognising the importance of scientific research, Penrith argued that the bones of "Queen Truganini" had been available for analysis for long enough and questioned whether "in the wildest flights of imagination" the bones of an English monarch would be allowed to "lie in a room of the British Museum marked 'for the genuinely scientifically curious only'" (Origin 1970, 2(7): 8). To reinforce his argument Penrith organised a demonstration

outside the Museum on 8 May 1970, the 94th anniversary of Truganini's death. Although these initial efforts were unsuccessful, the next four years witnessed increasing interest from the media and continuing pressure on the museum from Aboriginal groups such as the Aborigines Advancement League which requested that Truganini's wishes should be respected, and the Aboriginal Information Centre (an organisation later to be replaced by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC)) which demanded her remains "for her descendants" (Cove 1995: 150, and see Ryan 1974: 9-10; Cove 1995:146-149).

In September 1974, following a letter from the Director of the Tasmanian Museum to the Principal of the AIAS which proposed that Truganini's skeleton be housed in a "mausoleum" accessible to scientists, the issue of Truganini's remains was discussed at length by the Institute's Prehistory Advisory Committee. Totally opposed to the Museum Director's suggestion, the Committee agreed that the skeleton should be disposed of according to Truganini's wishes, if these could be ascertained. If her wishes were unknown, the Committee was unable to reach a clear consensus but expressed three points of view: that the skeleton should be reburied anyway; that more thought was necessary before a decision was taken; and that disposal of the remains should be determined "in consultation with contemporary Aboriginal groups claiming descent or affinity" (Minutes of the Prehistory Advisory Committee, AIAS 9.9.1974 HL A928/14.2). These views were communicated to the AIAS Council at a meeting in October 1974 which, after considerable discussion, instructed the Institute's Principal to inform the Director of the Tasmanian Museum that the AIAS believed Truganini's skeleton "should be disposed of immediately in accordance with her own wishes or those of her descendants" (Minutes of Council, AIAS 11.10.1974-12.10.1974, HL A928/14.2). Council further instructed the Principal "to forward a similar letter to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs asking him to write to the Prime Minister of Australia with a request that he convey the feelings of the Council to the Tasmanian Premier for immediate action" (Minutes of Council, AIAS 11.10.1974- 12.10.1974, HL A928/14.2)

Demonstrating a significant change in attitude towards Aboriginal skeletal remains, the Institute's historic decision was a reversal of its stance of only a few years previously, and in many cases it was the same scientists who had revised their opinions (Ellis 1981: 159; Hubert 1989: 150). Although the debate surrounding Truganini's remains had



prompted considerable, but inconclusive, discussion by the Institute's Prehistory Advisory Committee about the "digging of bones in general" (Minutes 9.9.1974, HL A928/14.1), the Principal made it clear that Truganini's skeleton was an exceptional case and that, by implication, the Institute was not committing itself to supporting the blanket return of all Aboriginal remains:

It was felt that the case of Truganini, a known historical person, is an exceptional one and that the moral issue involved overrides any other consideration (Ucko 1975: 7).

In accordance with the Institute's advice, and in response to continuing pressure from the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and, according to Cove (1995: 152-153), the Commonwealth Government, the Tasmanian Cabinet overruled the objections of the museum. Following an amendment to the Tasmanian Museum Act (1950), possession of Truganini's remains was transferred to the Crown in order that they should be "decently interred" (Tasmanian Museum Act 1974 5A(3)). In 1976 the Government arranged for Truganini's remains to be cremated and on 1 May the State Secretary of the Aboriginal Information Service, Roy Nichols, in the presence of the Acting Premier, Government officials and 21 representatives of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, scattered the ashes in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel. In a tribute to Truganini given at the cremation ceremony, Rosalind Langford, the former Secretary of the Aboriginal Information Service in Tasmania, addressed the participants reportedly noting, amongst other things, how "the degrading of [Truganini's] body has brought the Aboriginal race together for one cause - to have her rest in peace" (Aboriginal News 1976, 3(2):8).

4.2.a. The Crowther Collection.

The next major step in the development of the reburial issue within Australia was the campaign fought by Tasmanian Aborigines for the return of the Crowther Collection. In 1909, William Crowther (grandson of W. L. H. Crowther, who had removed the skull of William Lanne in 1869 (see Fforde 1991b)), accompanied by other medical students, had dug up a number of graves in the Christian cemetery at Oyster Cove, a settlement on the D'Entrecasteaux Channel which, from 1847 to 1868, had been the final home for many of the so-called 'last' Tasmanian Aborigines (Ryan 1981: 182-221). Crowther

bequeathed these remains to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery which, after housing them for some years, officially received them in 1963 (Clark 1983: 18).

TAC, an organisation which would also play a leading role in later national and international campaigns for the return of Tasmanian, and other, Aboriginal remains, became aware of the existence of the Crowther Collection in the early 1980s. Reportedly incensed that the museum had not previously informed Tasmanian people of these remains, especially considering the sentiments publicly expressed by Aborigines at the time of Truganini's cremation (Sunday Evening Mercury 29.5.1982; Langford 1983: 2-3), TAC demanded that the collection be returned to the community for cremation at Oyster Cove. As one of the campaigners, Michael Mansell, later explained to the Hobart Mercury (17.4.1984), only then would the spirits of the dead be finally put to rest and the responsibilities of their descendants fulfilled.

Initial attempts in 1982 by TAC to persuade the museum to return the Crowther Collection failed and approaches to the newly elected Liberal government in Tasmania were equally unsuccessful. In September 1982 TAC filed criminal and civil complaints against the museum, but these were later dismissed by a Hobart Court (see Clark 1983: 18). The museum continued to argue that the collection must be retained for scientific purposes, but indicated that although it was not willing to relinquish control over the remains, it was prepared to share responsibility for them with Aboriginal people. This offer was rejected with derision by Langford (Hobart Mercury 11.8.1982), who called on the Church and all Tasmanians to back TAC's requests. Significantly, TAC had the support of the Australian Archaeological Association (AAA) who, at its general meeting in Hobart in 1982, adopted the following motion:

The Australian Archaeological Association strongly urges the Tasmanian Government to hand over unconditionally to the Aboriginal people the collection of human remains known as the Crowther Collection, to be disposed of as they see fit. The Association is of the opinion that ethical considerations of the manner in which the collection was obtained far outweigh any potential scientific value (in Meehan 1984: 124-125).

Continued pressure by TAC allegedly elicited some kind of assurance from the Tasmanian Government in early 1983 that the Crowther Collection would be returned

(Hobart Mercury 6.12.1983; Tribune 14.12.1983). However, by December, Tasmania's Attorney General had reversed the Government's position and once again refused to return the remains from the museum, claiming that TAC would turn the event into a propaganda exercise (Hobart Mercury 6.12.1983, 8.12.1983). According to Cove (1995: 156) the Attorney General's stance was influenced by the "government recognition [that] an Aboriginal claim to those remains had broader implications for the state - of which ongoing land claims were the most visible", as it was during this period that TAC and the Tasmanian Government were engaged in discussions about the ownership of Oyster Cove. Angered by the Attorney General's response and denying his accusation of political opportunism, Tasmanian Aborigines demonstrated outside the Tasmanian parliament on 8 December. TAC allegedly interpreted the State Government's decision to be part of a long running campaign to deny the existence of Tasmanian Aboriginal people and to prevent any indigenous cultural revival in that State (Tribune 14.12.1983).

At the beginning of 1984, faced with continuing pressure from Tasmanian Aborigines, who by now had gained the support of the Church and many non-Aboriginal people (Errey to the Editor Canberra Times 1.2.1984; Launceston Examiner 18.10.1982), the State Government agreed to legislate for the return of the Crowther Collection. However, the Government was to be responsible for both the cremation (in a municipal crematorium) and the subsequent disposal of the ashes, as it had been for Truganini's remains. This course of action was also rejected by TAC who insisted that the bones must be accorded a traditional funerary ritual and cremated at Oyster Cove, arguing that if this did not occur the spirits of the dead would never rest in peace (Hobart Mercury 17.4.1984).

By March, TAC's attempts to gain control of the Crowther Collection were attracting national media coverage and were supported by Clyde Holding, the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, who pressed the Tasmanian Government to return the remains to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to do with as they saw fit (The Australian 2.3.1984, Hobart Mercury 6.4.1984). The problem of who would be responsible for the disposal of the remains escalated. The media reported that TAC was willing to go to any lengths to stop the Government's plans and that the Tasmanian Attorney General was prepared to

have the remains disposed of without any Aboriginal involvement or presence (e.g. The Australian 6.2.1984).

In an attempt to solve the issue, Holding convened a meeting with TAC and the Attorney General who, despite claiming that the Tasmanian Aboriginal community was not united in its opposition to the Government's plans and reiterating his accusation that TAC was merely involved in a propaganda exercise, agreed to refer the matter back to the State Cabinet. The State Cabinet decided to legislate for Government supervision of the disposal of the Crowther Collection, despite intense criticism by Tasmanian Aborigines and the media (e.g. Hobart Mercury 13.4.1984; Launceston Examiner 16.4.1984). In response, TAC began to lobby the State's Legislative Council to reject the Government's proposal. Shortly afterwards the Tasmanian Government backed down, appointing Roy Nichols, by now a delegate of the National Aboriginal Council, to survey Tasmanian Aboriginal opinion about the disposal of the Crowther Collection. Although TAC and other Aboriginal groups objected to Nichols' involvement (e.g. Hobart Mercury 16.5.1984, 21.5.1984), in July the Tasmanian Government heeded the survey's recommendations and agreed to hand over the remains to representatives of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community (Hobart Mercury 18.7.1984; Cove 1995: 156-159). By August 1984 it had also agreed to return remaining Tasmanian Aboriginal skeletal material in both the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery in Hobart and the Queen Victoria Museum in Launceston (Hobart Mercury 10.8.1984).

Although demands for the return of the Crowther Collection had found general support amongst the scientific community (with the exception of those working in the Tasmanian Museum, one of whom complained that the museum had "been abandoned by the mainland, and left to fight this battle on its own" (Clark 1983: 18)), the decision to return all Tasmanian Aboriginal remains in the collections of the Tasmanian Museum and the Queen Victoria Museum was heavily criticised. The Australian Archaeological Association expressed its concern to the Tasmanian Minister for Education and the Arts (Meehan to Beswick 13.8.1984 in Meehan 1984: 134). The Bulletin (4.9.1984), a magazine which would consistently oppose the reburial campaign throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, contended that "bone rights have apparently become a substitute for land rights" and quoted both Dr Alan Thorne and Professor John Mulvaney in

condemning the Tasmanian Government's decision. Arguing for the "tremendous international scientific significance" of human remains such as those discovered at Eagle Hawk Neck and Mount Cameron West, the Bulletin reported that scientists believed such ancient material had little connection to the modern indigenous population of Tasmania, which was "overwhelmingly of mixed race":

They do not understand how the government could entertain the possibility that remains not cremated thousands of years ago might suddenly be subject to a 'traditional cremation' when cremation was not traditionally universal.

The Crowther Collection was finally cremated at Oyster Cove in May 1985. Only Aboriginal people, or those with Aboriginal spouses, were allowed to attend the ceremony, which was later reported to have made the Oyster Cove site more sacred for Tasmanian Aborigines (Hobart Mercury 8.5.1985). The Chairperson of the Tasmanian Council of Aboriginal Organisations commented that, for the first time in years, the community had been able to put the spirits of their ancestors to rest (Hobart Mercury 8.5.1985). The rest of the Tasmanian human remains housed in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery were returned to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community in 1988 and have been cremated (Wishart 1990). The Queen Victoria Museum in Launceston returned its collection of Tasmanian Aboriginal skeletal material in 1985 and 1988 (Clark 1990).

Changes in museum policy and the success of the campaigns for the return of Truganini's remains and those in the Crowther Collection demonstrated that, by the early 1980s, the scientific community would no longer contest Aboriginal ownership of the remains of named individuals, individuals whose cultural or biological descendants could be traced, or those which had been obtained by what was now considered to be 'unethical' means. When Aboriginal bodies (two adults, a young child and a stillborn baby) preserved in fluid in a box at the South Australian Museum came to light in August 1983, there was little question that, after a Coroner's inquiry, they would be given to the appropriate Aboriginal community for disposition². However, in 1984 scientists in both Australia and overseas began publicly to oppose Aboriginal claims when it became clear that all

² In August 1985, after some difficulty in ascertaining the tribal affiliation of the bodies, the adults were eventually buried at Ooldea by the Kokotha people and the child and still-born baby interred at Raukkan (Point McLeay) by the Ngarrindjeri (AAP News Report 3.8.1985).

Aboriginal human remains, regardless of their scientific value, might be returned to their communities of origin. Thus, despite the return of a significant number of human remains to Aboriginal communities in the previous decade, it was not until the mid-1980s that the debate surrounding reburial and the scientific use of Aboriginal human remains escalated to become a major international issue.

4.2.b. Legislation in Victoria, the Murray Black Collection and the Kow Swamp fossils.

In 1984, Alan Thorne of the Australian National University was preparing to take fossil remains housed at the Museum of Victoria to the 'Ancestors' conference in New York (Melbourne Age 6.4.1984, 12.4.1984). Primarily to stop this from happening Jim Berg, then head of the Aboriginal Legal Service in Victoria and an Inspector under the Victorian Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act (1972), obtained a Supreme Court injunction against the museum which required that it take steps to recall all Aboriginal human remains currently on loan and to cease lending any relic without Ministerial approval (Melbourne Herald 17.4.1984). Thorne went to New York without the remains.

A month later, reportedly in response to its inability to prosecute the perpetrators of an auction of Aboriginal artefacts the year before (Melbourne Age 14.9.1984), the Victorian Government amended the 1972 Preservation Act, making it an offence to hold Aboriginal skeletal remains unless written consent had been obtained from the Secretary for Planning and Environment. Within two days of the amendment, Berg had approached the University of Melbourne about its holdings of Aboriginal skeletal material. The University's Department of Anatomy housed over 800 remains most of which had been collected from Aboriginal cemeteries along the river by George Murray Black between 1931 and 1951. For the first nine years, Murray Black had donated the remains to the Institute of Anatomy in Canberra, whose collections became the responsibility of the National Museum of Australia in 1982. After 1939, Murray Black began to send Aboriginal bones to the University of Melbourne instead, including the late Pleistocene remains of some 70 individuals discovered at Coobool Creek, widely considered to be "one of the most important collections of this type in the world" (P. Brown, University of

New England to B. Jones, Federal Minister for Science and Technology 29.6.1984 reproduced in Meehan 1984: 139).

After the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne had refused to discuss the University's holdings of Aboriginal remains, Berg obtained a Supreme Court injunction which impounded the collection. When the Vice-Chancellor, as now required by the new legislation, attempted to obtain the consent of the Secretary for Planning and Environment to house the remains, his request was refused. The Supreme Court then ordered the University to transfer its collection to the Museum of Victoria and Berg announced that he hoped that the entire collection, and other remains housed in the museum, would be returned to the appropriate Aboriginal communities for redistribution (Melbourne Age 19.6.1984). As Berg was later reported to have said:

the desecration of burial sites and the locking away in museums of our ancestral remains has shown a complete lack of respect for the Aboriginal community ... it causes us great anxiety and stress (in Lewin 1984: 393).

Although there was no reaction to Berg's announcement from the Victorian Government, it provoked condemnation from scientists in Australia and overseas who argued that many of the remains, in particular the fossils, were so unique and of such international scientific importance that they must be preserved for future generations of scholars, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal (e.g. Brown to Jones 29.6.1984 reproduced in Meehan 1984: 139). Bruce Chamberlain, the Victorian opposition spokesman for Planning and the Environment warned the government to be cautious, reportedly supplying his opposite number with correspondence from Australian and overseas scholars which stressed the scientific importance of the remains. Demonstrating a widely held incomprehension of Aboriginal concern for ancient remains and the inability of many who opposed repatriation to respect Aboriginal attitudes which differed from their own, Chamberlain stated that, "we are certainly aware of the significance Aboriginals attach to skeletal remains, particularly when they are of recent times. But there can be very little emotional attachment to remains which are up to 13,000 years old" (The Herald 23.7.1984). The AAA and the Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee both expressed deep concern that the Victorian collections might be lost to science (Meehan 1984; Canberra ANU Reporter 12.10.1984).

“Dismayed ... by the negative and socially divisive nature” (Meehan 1984: 124) of media reports, and seeking to address and defuse the situation, the AAA formed a small sub-committee (Dr Betty Meehan, Dr Alan Thorne, Professor Jack Golson and Dr Neville White) which hastily prepared a document outlining the scientific and heritage value of all collections of Aboriginal human remains, and those housed in Victoria in particular (Meehan 1984: 122). This document was sent to the Victorian Minister for Planning and Environment, with copies to the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and the Tasmanian Government, accompanied by a covering letter from Betty Meehan (reproduced in Meehan 1984: 127), then President of the AAA, which said:

1. The AAA congratulates the Victorian Government for the initiatives it has taken to accommodate Aboriginal requests to exercise significant control of Aboriginal skeletal material in the State of Victoria.
2. The AAA supports the disposal of Aboriginal skeletal remains of known individuals according to the wishes of the deceased, where known, and if not, by being transferred to the appropriate Aboriginal community to dispose of as they see fit.
3. The AAA believes that all other Aboriginal skeletal remains are of scientific importance and should not be destroyed by being reburied or cremated.
4. The AAA believes that the Aboriginal community and the archaeological profession share a common concern to protect and preserve prehistoric sites and material of significance.
5. The AAA believes that it is possible for Aborigines and archaeologists to reach a compromise about what should happen to Aboriginal skeletal remains. The employment and training of Aborigines as museum curators, the construction of Aboriginal Keeping Places and joint projects carried out by Aborigines and archaeologists are examples of such compromises.
6. The AAA urges the Victorian Government to instigate a programme enabling the construction of Aboriginal Keeping Places and the training of Aboriginal people in the skills necessary for employment in these Keeping Places as well as in the State's museums.

Although the AAA's approach to the Minister for Planning and the Environment questioned neither the validity of Aboriginal demands nor the Victorian Government's motive for agreeing to them, other archaeologists and physical anthropologists attacked

both. In particular, some argued that Aboriginal demands for the return of ancestral remains had no basis in 'traditional' beliefs, and that the destruction of the Victorian Collections was, for both the Aboriginal community and the State Government, motivated for political reasons only and stood condemned on this basis: "sacrifice of this material in the search for short term power or political expediency is criminal and should be considered an offence against all mankind" (Brown to Jones 29.6.1984 reproduced in Meehan 1984: 139; and see K. Kennedy, Cornell University, to the Editor, The Bulletin 9.10.1984). The Victorian Government was accused of using the collections to make token gestures of atonement for its past mistreatment of Aborigines (Lewin 1984), and merely providing them with a "sop" of power without addressing the real reasons for the "powerlessness and disadvantage of the majority of Aborigines" (I. Davidson, University of New England to B. Jones 20.7.1984 reproduced in Meehan 1984: 142). Some scientists branded the new legislation "racist" because, they argued, only Aboriginal people could now study certain aspects of Victorian prehistory (e.g. Brown to Jones 29.5.1984 reproduced in Meehan 1984: 139; Armidale Express 27.8.1984). Others considered that the legislation heralded the extinction of archaeology and physical anthropology in Australia (e.g. Lewin 1984) and likened reburial to book-burning (e.g. Kennedy to the Editor, The Bulletin 9.10.1984)

With some exceptions (e.g. National Times 20.9.1984) the press usually only represented the opinions of those scientists who opposed repatriation (e.g. The Australian 8.8.1984; Melbourne Herald 16.8.1984 and see The Melbourne Age 16.6.1989). The Victorian Minister for Planning and the Environment accused The Bulletin of publishing an article that would "only succeed in adding to the climate of fear being created in the community about anything to do with Aborigines and their rights" (Walker to the Editor, The Bulletin 11.9.1984). An editorial in the Armidale Express (2.7.1984), later criticised for its "social irresponsibility" (Creamer to the Editor, Armidale Express 10.8.1984), demonstrated how emotive this issue had become:

It seems ridiculous that this prehistory could be reburied under some archaic law that will prevent the world from gaining valuable information on the world and its peoples thousands of years ago. Any government, whether in Australia or in some suppressive dictatorship, has no right to stand in the way of the search for knowledge ... [the Minister for Science and Technology] must intervene in such a vital issue. No one, irrespective

of race, has the right to stand in the way of prehistory and archaeological research. It will be a criminal act against mankind to confiscate archaeological remains and rebury them. Such items should be preserved for all to see, particularly our future generations. It seems logical that political expediency is the basis of this treacherous legislation proposal. Everyone should be aware of the proposals and condemn the government on its ignorance towards mankind.

In May 1984 the Museum of Victoria placed a moratorium on any scientific research being carried out on its holdings of Aboriginal human remains; ten months later the National Museum of Australia followed suit (Webb 1987a:1). In May 1985 TAC successfully negotiated for the return of Tasmanian remains from the Museum of Victoria and collected them two years later (Hobart Mercury 24.5.1985; Melbourne Age 8.4.1987). In November 1985 the Museum of Victoria returned fragments and other pieces of unprovenanced Aboriginal bones to members of the Victorian Aboriginal community. Amidst considerable publicity (e.g. Melbourne Sunday News Pictorial 23.11.1985), hundreds of Aboriginal people watched whilst the remains, wrapped in bark, were reburied in a 'traditional' style in a Melbourne park. However, some members of the Victorian Aboriginal community reportedly criticised the event, being concerned about the location of the burial site, the extent of media interest and the likelihood that some, if not all, of the remains had been buried outside their tribal area and without appropriate ceremony (e.g. Melbourne Herald 22.11.1985).

Although there were exceptions, most notably the work of Colin Pardoe at AIATSIS who undertook research on Aboriginal skeletal material under conditions negotiated through consultation with local communities, by the end of 1985 the reburial issue had caused considerable antagonism between various Aboriginal groups and many archaeologists and physical anthropologists. In December, attempting at least to open an avenue of communication and discussion, the Skeletal Sub-Committee of the AAA instigated a liaison programme in which Steven Webb, a physical anthropologist, was appointed to consult with Aboriginal communities, particularly those with a direct interest in the Murray Black Collection. The consultancy focused on explaining to Aboriginal people at a community level the value of preserving their ancestors' remains, "scientific value had to be emphasised, together with the long term benefits to Aborigines of such study" (Webb 1987b: 293).

Webb's (1987a) consultancy report, affords a good indication of Aboriginal attitudes at the community level towards the reburial issue at this time. Webb found that because archaeologists had rarely, if ever, consulted with Aborigines about the removal or study of skeletal remains, communities were highly suspicious and held the general opinion that researchers "had little regard for Aborigines, either as the living descendants of the populations whose remains were studied or as people" (Webb 1987b:294). Some argued (in many ways correctly) that Webb was only talking to them now because scientists were faced with the imminent loss of their livelihood. Whilst congratulating Webb for "at least making an effort", one Aboriginal observer pointed out that his visits were 18 months overdue (Koorier 2 July 1986).

Aboriginal people, shocked at the quantity of remains in collections, the length of time they had been kept in a "seemingly secretive manner"(Webb 1987b: 294), and the way in which they had been collected, frequently pointed out the double-standards in operation, noting that such practices would not have been tolerated if Aborigines had dug up European cemeteries. Some people were disgusted that scientists should even wish to interfere with the dead, and little distinction was made between researchers who analysed remains today and those who studied and collected the bones in the past. Webb also discovered that some Aboriginal people were genuinely surprised that the majority of anthropologists would not support the campaign for reburial. Coupled with the recent use of the media by scientists and their canvassing of international scholars for support, Aboriginal people were angered at the unsympathetic attitude accorded to the very people whom, "archaeologists and anthropologists purported to understand and professed to help" (Webb 1987b: 294)

During the consultancy, Webb (1987b: 293) became increasingly sympathetic to the Aboriginal point of view:

After listening to why people did not want research to continue, I could find no scientific argument to balance or equate with their moral one. It is difficult to argue against the rights of any group of people to choose what should and should not happen to their skeletal remains.

He became convinced that although the reburial issue was sometimes used as a political platform, the argument that it was entirely politically inspired by individuals or organisations “opposed to ‘white’ science” (Webb 1987b: 295) was facile and simplistic. Webb recognised the deep moral and religious reservations that Aboriginal people held about disturbing the dead. However, despite the anger and concern which he encountered, Webb also realised that many Aboriginal people acknowledged the importance of archaeological research and were willing to discuss compromises regarding the future of skeletal collections. Primarily, Aboriginal people desired control over the remains, communication with the potential researchers and involvement in future projects (Webb 1987b: 295).

Webb concluded that the reburial issue could only be overcome with continued and considerable discussion between scientists and Aborigines. Archaeologists and anthropologists, already forced to “re-evaluate the ethics and philosophy of the study of recent skeletal populations” (Webb 1987b: 296), would have to understand (and presumably respect) differences in cultural attitudes towards research on human remains of all ages. By the time of Webb’s consultancy there were already signs that such changes were beginning to occur. Pardoe’s continuing work illustrated how research on Aboriginal remains could proceed with recognition of Aboriginal ownership and extensive community consultation (see Pardoe 1991: 16-17). Changes were occurring in the museum world also: in 1985 the Department of Anatomy at the University of Queensland agreed to return to the Kombumerri people both post- and pre-contact skeletal remains which had been excavated from the Aboriginal cemetery at Broadbeach in the 1960s. The Kombumerri people were successful in their claim because it demonstrated their descent from those who had been buried at Broadbeach from the eighth to the mid-nineteenth century (Hall 1986: 1-2). According to Kombumerri people involved in the reburial (Interview D 28.7.1995) the returned remains were placed in baskets and reinterred on land which the Kombumerri had obtained from the local City Council near the site of the 1960s excavation.

Following continued pressure from Aboriginal groups, in 1989 the Museum of Victoria began to hand over the Murray Black Collection to communities. By this time the National Museum of Australia, which had given its holdings of Tasmanian remains to

TAC in 1986 (Launceston Examiner 30.7.1986), had also started to give back its section of the Murray Black Collection (Wettenhall 1989: 18). The latter half of the 1980s also witnessed a number of returns from other Australian museums. For example, in 1989 the South Australian Museum gave its collection of Tasmanian remains to Tasmanian representatives (Adelaide Advertiser 10.5.1989) and in 1990 the Queensland Museum agreed to return remains collected in the St George area. According to one member of the St George Aboriginal community (Interview A 4.8.1995), local Aborigines have discussed how to rebury these remains since 1990. Drawing upon, amongst other things, the knowledge of elders and information in the ethnographic record, the community intends to conduct a ceremony which will contain 'traditional' funerary rites. The community has also deliberated on where to rebury the remains, but although a site has recently been acquired, there are now doubts about its suitability because its location has been so widely publicised (Interview A 4.8.1995, and see Chapter 5).

By the end of the 1980s, most Australian museums had adopted policies which responded positively to Aboriginal requests for the return of the remains of named or known individuals, those who had died post-contact, those whose line of descent to a modern community could be demonstrated or those which had been collected in 'unethical' circumstances (for a list of relevant museum policies see Australian Archaeology 1990 31: 52-66). However, with perhaps the exception of the Australian Museum in Sydney, holding institutions appeared rarely willing, or able, to commit the resources required to identify and return the 'eligible' parts of their collections. Furthermore, museums were still opposed to the unconditional return of fossil remains, the future of which continued to be a hotly contended issue. Thus, in 1990, when the Victorian Government announced that it would hand over the Kow Swamp fossils to the Aboriginal people of Echuca, prominent scientists, both in Australia and overseas, condemned this decision.

The Kow Swamp fossils comprised the remains of some 40 individuals dated to between 9,000 and 15,000 BP. Some of the fossils had been 'rediscovered' by Alan Thorne in store at the Museum of Victoria in 1967 and the rest were uncovered during his later excavations at Kow Swamp in northern Victoria between 1968 and 1972. The fossils represented the world's largest collection of late Pleistocene/early Holocene human

remains from a single site, and contributed unique information to the debate about human evolution in Australia (Thorne 1971; Thorne & Macumber 1972). Faced with the return of the Kow Swamp remains, scientists once more heralded their reburial as the 'death' of archaeology (e.g. Mulvaney 1991: 12), and compared it to book-burning (e.g. P. Pigott, former Chairman of the Federal Government Committee of Inquiry on Museums and National Collections in Australia, to the Editor, The Australian 9.8.1990). Many prominent archaeologists and anthropologists continued to argue that there was a clear difference between recent bones and fossils, and that the international significance of the latter should take precedence over any Aboriginal concerns over the proper treatment of what they claimed to be the remains of their ancestors. As Don Brothwell, then of the Institute of Archaeology in London, wrote to The Times (29.8.1990):

While we would all wish to honour the thoughts the Aborigines have for their ancestors, it is important to remember that ancient remains, from whatever world site, have international scientific importance and this should take precedent over local issues. Secondly, ancestor claims are more than likely to be based on ignorance of history or pre-history, a state of affairs which archaeological investigation attempts to rectify.

In accordance with Brothwell, most scientists still considered that it was impossible (e.g. Mulvaney 1991: 16) for modern Aboriginal communities to claim a direct ancestral connection with ancient human remains. As Les Hiatt, a past President of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies wrote to the Editor of The Australian (2.8.1990), he applauded the return of recent remains but human fossil material was "another matter entirely" and was:

surely the heritage of all humankind. It would be ludicrous to suggest that remains of *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* should be returned to the people of Dusseldorf for ritual burial or destruction. If such a proposal was made, we would quickly dismiss it as the product of misplaced sentimentalism, philistinism or political opportunism.

Exemplifying a standpoint that rejected the validity of modern Aboriginal beliefs and political demands, and upheld the primacy of scientific authority, Pigott wrote to The Times (18.8.1990):

when emotion mixed with political objectives takes over from common sense and reason, the results can be disastrous. If we are to ignore great

men of science such as Emeritus Professor John Mulvaney and Dr Alan Thorne, and act on the radical recommendations of those less knowledgeable, we throw archaeology to the winds in Australia.

With very few exceptions (e.g. Canberra Times 8.9.1990), the media once again supported the opinions of those who opposed reburial (e.g. The Times 6.8.1990; The Bulletin 7.8.1990). The Australian (29.7.1990), for example, informed the public that "Australia is poised to sanction the destruction of a priceless, irreplaceable piece of its national heritage, an enormous part of our human past". However, demonstrating that there had been some changes since 1984, some archaeologists and anthropologists were now sympathetic to Aboriginal opinion and highly critical of the views expressed by their colleagues (e.g. Bowdler to the Editor The Australian 3.8.1990; O'Brien and Tompkins to the Editor The Australian 5.8.1990; McBryde to the Editor, Melbourne Age 1.9.1990; and see Bowdler 1992). Indeed, even before the Kow Swamp issue had arisen, the Vermillion Accord passed by the World Archaeological Congress in 1989 (see above) recognised the legitimate concerns of indigenous groups towards the remains of *all* their ancestors - irrespective of age.

From July 1990 a few Australian scientists, in particular John Mulvaney and Alan Thorne, became involved in a "vain public and behind-the-scenes campaign to save the [Kow Swamp] collection" (Mulvaney 1991: 12 and see Mulvaney 1990), and attempted to approach unresponsive Ministers to explain the scientific viewpoint. However, there were no relevant discussions between scientists and the local community. Aware that it was unlikely that the remains would ever be retained in a museum environment, the scientists unsuccessfully sought the "prudent compromise" of a Keeping Place - "a ritual centre under absolute community custodianship" - which would have "kept future options open and did not place the burden of reaching a final solution upon a small community" (Mulvaney 1991: 19). Despite Mulvaney's efforts, in 1991 the Kow Swamp remains were returned to the Echuca Aboriginal community for reburial, demonstrating that the claim by scientists to even fossil remains was not perceived as tenable by those in Government.

The concept of Keeping Places for the storage of Aboriginal human remains had been debated since at least the mid-1970s (see Webb 1987a, Cove 1995: 155, P. Ucko pers.

comm.) and had been established for the storage of secret/sacred (and other) objects within various communities since at least the 1980s (see Atkinson 1985; Duroux 1985; Sampson 1988). Since developing its Draft Policy Statement on Aboriginal Human Remains (1988) AIATSIS has suggested Keeping Places (either at museums or at the original burial site) as a possible option (of many) which might be considered for the future management of Aboriginal human remains. Notwithstanding its recognition that "the potential significance of [human remains] to Aborigines has been neglected in the past ... [and] is of particular present relevance because of the historical and political situation of Aborigines", the Institute recommends that the ideal management strategy for such material is that which "pays due regard to the multi-faceted value of the material and attempts to provide for the proper acknowledgement of all these values, and provision for their conservation". Thus, the Institute considers that:

Acknowledgement of Aboriginal custodianship leads to the conclusion that the provision of Keeping Places is the most effective way of articulating this custodianship, while allowing for, and encouraging, appropriate research by Black and White scholars (Aboriginal Human Remains: Draft Policy Statement 1988).

Although a Keeping Place was not favoured by the Aboriginal community at Echuca, such an arrangement was established for the storage of 'Mungo Woman' - probably the most famous Late Pleistocene remains in Australia - when they were returned to the local community by Alan Thorne on 11 January 1992. The remains of Mungo Woman (or Mungo I), the oldest known cremation in the world, had been discovered in 1968 at Lake Mungo in the Willandra Lakes, New South Wales. Of exceptional scientific importance (see Bowler *et. al.* 1970; 1972), these remains are also of immense symbolic significance to the local and national Aboriginal community, having provided, according to Thorne *et. al.* (in Meehan 1984: 129), "a major psychological element in Aboriginal land and other claims in the 1970s". Along with the remains of nearly 150 other individuals excavated in the surrounding area, Mungo Woman had been initially kept in the Department of Anatomy at the University of Sydney and subsequently in the Department of Prehistory at the Australian National University in Canberra.

After the return of the Kow Swamp remains, Thorne had become aware of increasing pressure to address the issue of the future of the remains excavated at Lake Mungo

(Interview C 19.8.1995). Apparently it was at least partly because these remains had not been returned to Lake Mungo that for many years the local community had opposed further archaeological excavation in the area (Sydney Morning Herald 6.8.1991, Interview C 19.8.1995). Perhaps mindful not only of the great significance of Mungo Woman to Aboriginal people but also that the return of her remains might assist any future negotiations for the recommencing of archaeological research in the Willandra Lakes, Thorne offered to unconditionally return Mungo Woman (Interview C 19.8.1995). He did not, however, offer to return at that time the rest of the remains excavated at Lake Mungo, which might suggest that the return of Mungo Woman represented as much a strategic compromise than it did any overall change in Thorne's general attitude towards the repatriation of all Aboriginal human remains.

Acknowledging the scientific value of her remains, the local community decided that Mungo Woman should be kept in a Keeping Place (Sydney Morning Herald 6.8.1991). As hoped for by Thorne, and stated repeatedly by those who participated in the handover ceremony, the return of Mungo Woman and the community's historic decision to use a Keeping Place were believed to symbolise a new, co-operative relationship between Aboriginal people and the archaeological profession (Thorne to the Aboriginal Tribal People of Western New South Wales 11.11.1991; Melbourne Age 13.1.1992). The media coverage of the event reflected this new, positive, attitude:

it is precisely through the study of these ancient remains that we are able to know objectively what the Aboriginal people have always said - that they have been in this land for a very long time. The decision by archaeologists at the Australian National university to give Mungo Woman back is a sign that reconciliation, and negotiation, between Aboriginal beliefs and science may be possible (Melbourne Age 18.1.1992).

Since 1992 a number of other Aboriginal communities have obtained their ancestors' remains from museums in Australia. The Australian Museum in Sydney continues to be pro-active in its policy of returning provenanced remains to relevant communities. For example, in March 1992 the Australian Museum returned remains, thought to be those of a young girl, to the Gunganji people at Yarrabah in North Queensland. A Christian ceremony was followed by a 'traditional' ceremony and the skull was buried in a post-

contact, but now disused, cemetery that contained the remains of other Gunganji people (Cairns Post 9.3.1992). In 1991, the Australian Museum and the Queensland Museum returned the remains of eighteen individuals to the Darambul people near Rockhampton. With the help and financial assistance of the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage (QDEH) these were reburied in a national park within the Darambul tribal area in the hope that strict control over visitation to the site would reduce the possibility of future disturbance. In 1993, the Australian Museum and the Queensland Museum again collaborated and returned, with QDEH assistance, the remains of 22 individuals taken from the Keppel Island group to the Woppaburra people. These remains were reburied on Keppel Island in a private ceremony. In order to avoid future damage to the burial sites, the QDEH must be informed if any construction, or other destructive work is to be carried out in their vicinity. Also in 1992, the Queensland Museum, again with QDEH help and financial assistance, returned the remains of twelve individuals to the Aboriginal community in Springsure. These remains were reburied in their original location - now on freehold land - with the full support of the property owner (Godwin to Ormond-Parker 20.3.1995, FAIRA file).

Both FAIRA and the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC) are actively working to facilitate the repatriation of remains to Queensland and New South Wales communities respectively. In June 1996 the South Australian Museum gave the remains of over 100 individuals from New South Wales to the NSWALC who aim to return them to appropriate communities. FAIRA has recently been involved in the return of remains from the Queensland Museum. In August 1996, for example, two skulls previously housed in this museum were cremated by the Aboriginal people at Boulia and their ashes scattered in the Gregory River. Cremation was chosen because the community did not possess an appropriate burial site and to ensure that the remains would never again undergo scientific examination (L. Ormond-Parker pers. comm.). FAIRA continues to inform communities of the whereabouts of their ancestral remains (e.g. Land Rights Queensland 1995 6: 18), consults them in order to ascertain community wishes regarding the return of remains and is also undertaking research in Europe to locate Queensland remains in overseas museums (Briggs 1994; L. Ormond-Parker pers. comm.).

4.2.c. Recent developments in relevant legislation and policy.

In December 1990 discussions took place at the AAA annual conference in Townsville about the adoption of a Code of Ethics for Australian archaeologists involved in studying and managing Aboriginal heritage. Although based upon the Code of Ethics formulated by the World Archaeological Congress two months previously, the AAA Code -finally adopted in 1991 - contains slight alterations suggested by participants at the 1990 AAA conference. For example, while the original WAC Code states that "members shall not interfere with and/or remove human remains of indigenous peoples without the express consent of those concerned" (World Archaeological Bulletin 5: 22-23), that adopted by the AAA is more specific, requiring its members to obtain the "written consent of representatives authorised by the indigenous people whose cultural heritage is the object of investigation" (Davidson 1991: 64).

With the exception of the initial resistance of the Tasmanian Government to returning the Crowther Collection, Australian Governments have not opposed Aboriginal demands for the right to determine the future of Aboriginal human remains, and have frequently amended or developed legislation to force museums to accede to Aboriginal wishes. The Federal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act (1984), for example, enables the "satisfactory disposal of remains held contrary to expressed Aboriginal wishes" by empowering the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to order the delivery of Aboriginal human remains to himself or Aboriginal people "entitled to them, and willing to accept responsibility for them, in accordance with Aboriginal tradition" (A Guide to How the Act Works 1984: 13).

In more recent years there have been attempts by the Australian Government to develop a national policy on the return of cultural material from Australia and overseas. In October 1993 the Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council (AAAC), comprising the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and his State and Territory counterparts, adopted a set of National Principles which were a major development in the reburial campaign, most notably because they recognise indigenous rights of ownership over Aboriginal cultural property (including human remains) housed in museums and other holding institutions,

and assert the pre-eminent role of Aboriginal people in the recovery of Aboriginal cultural property. However, these Principles do not commit the Commonwealth, State or Territory Governments to allocating the required funding. In contrast, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission's (ATSIC) Policy on Protection and Return of Significant Cultural Property (1993), which it adopted less than a month after the National Principles had been approved by the AAAC, is more binding and commits ATSIC to not only providing financial resources for research to locate and provenance sensitive cultural material and to inform relevant communities accordingly, but to carry "primary financial responsibility for the identification, negotiation and return of significant cultural property held overseas". However, the policy reiterates ATSIC's stance held since at least 1990 (see Appendix 1), that State and Territory Governments "must accept primary financial responsibility" for the return of significant cultural material from within Australia to their respective areas.

Since the development of the National Principles there have been two major funded programmes to facilitate the return of human remains to local Aboriginal communities. ATSIC has provided financial assistance for this purpose to FAIRA and various State museums, while the Australian Cultural Development Office has funded the South Australian Museum to develop a scientific methodology for provenancing Aboriginal human remains of unknown origin (Pardoe 1995). In addition, small grants are now available from the Department of Communication and the Arts for communities to collect human remains from within Australia and to cover the cost of reburial ceremonies.

As shown above, since the early 1970s the reburial issue has forced Australian museums to develop individual policies towards their holdings of Aboriginal human remains. However, in December 1993, the Council of Australian Museum Associations (now Museums Australia) adopted principles and policies to direct the future management of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural material on a national scale. The policy states that a museum's role is custodial, and that decisions regarding the future of collections of human remains are the responsibility of the relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Museums Australia also recognises:

Museums recognise the potential value that human remains may have to the scientific advance of knowledge. Where it is considered that there are valid scientific interests in some remains, claims to that effect must be established to the satisfaction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Age by itself does not establish scientific importance. Before scientific research of any kind is carried out on human remains the relevant community, having been able to consider all appropriate information available to the museum, must give permission for that research. The results of any scientific research must be communicated effectively to that community (Previous Possessions, New Obligations 1993:12).

Giving priority to the wishes and concerns of Aboriginal people, Museums Australia's policy on scientific research demonstrates how far Australian museum attitudes towards Aboriginal human remains have changed since the early 1970s. Nonetheless, this policy has been criticised for its ambiguous approach to Aboriginal ownership and its failure to "seriously address issues of administration, funding and management of the repatriation of those items covered by the policy" (Ormond-Parker 1997: 10). As Ormond-Parker (1997: 10) has also noted, there are many Australian institutions that house Aboriginal human remains which are not members of Museums Australia and are therefore not bound by its new policy.

4.3. The reburial issue in the UK.

By the 1980s, demands for the return of Aboriginal human remains were beginning to be heard outside Australia. While museums in the UK had also been approached by Maori and Native Americans to discuss the future of human remains in their collections (Simpson 1994: 31), Aboriginal people appear to have achieved the greatest success in persuading museums to remove their ancestors' remains from public display or to return them to their homeland. One of the first campaigns to receive public attention occurred in the early 1980s when the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre asked the University of Edinburgh to return the skull which was believed to be that of William Lanne. This approach was unsuccessful, but received sympathetic coverage in the British press (see Appendix 1).

In 1985, TAC sent Michael Mansell, then a solicitor with the Aboriginal Legal Service, to Europe and the USA in order to gather information about collections of Tasmanian

Aboriginal remains, and to negotiate for their return (Mansell 1986: 2). Mansell's assignment (dubbed the 'Journey of Dignity' (Melbourne Age 5.10.1985)) was endorsed by the Tasmanian State Government (Hobart Mercury 5.10.1985) and arose out of discussions which followed the cremation of the Crowther Collection at Oyster Cove when the Tasmanian Aboriginal community had expressed its concern "that Aboriginal human remains were lying outside of their tribal boundaries in overseas institutions and that the spirits of those people [were] continuing to be disturbed" (Mansell 1986: 1; and see The Melbourne Age 5.10.1985; The Sunday Tasmanian 27.10.1985).

According to Mansell (1986: 3-4), his meetings with the Natural History Museum in London and the Royal Museum of Scotland were unproductive, both institutions being strongly opposed to repatriation. He records a slightly more favourable response from the University of Edinburgh (Mansell 1986: 4, 7 and see Appendix 1) and the Royal College of Surgeons in Dublin, the latter requiring written confirmation that any repatriated remains would be put in a Keeping Place. Mansell (1986: 4-5) notes that the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, USA indicated that it might consider returning its holdings of Tasmanian remains to a Keeping Place while the Etnografiska Museet in Stockholm undertook to attempt to locate Tasmanian remains which had been lost from its collection, and to "do their best" to have these remains returned. Mansell (1986: 6-7) also describes how the Director of the Natural History Museum in Vienna agreed to remove a Tasmanian Aboriginal skull from display (but not the skulls of other Australian Aborigines) but refused to consider its repatriation, while the Director of the Natural History Museum in Belgium at first denied that the museum housed Tasmanian remains and later, after admitting to their existence, also refused Mansell's request to return the bones to Tasmania.

Mansell returned to Australia aware that a considerable amount of further work would be required if human remains were to be returned even by those museums which appeared sympathetic to his requests (Mansell 1986: 8). The 'Journey of Dignity' highlighted Aboriginal concerns, attracting media attention within Tasmania and, to a lesser extent, throughout the rest of Australia (e.g. Hobart Mercury 9.7.1985, 10.7.1985, 6.8.1985, 23.8.1985; Launceston Examiner 31.7.1985; 6.9.1985; Melbourne Age 5.10.1985).

With a few exceptions (e.g. Colbung to Thatcher 1.8.1988), attempts to secure the return of remains from overseas museums ceased during the late 1980s, although it was actually during this time that the first repatriation of human remains from the UK took place. In 1989, without a direct Aboriginal request, but in response to Aboriginal concerns voiced in WAC fora, the President of WAC transferred to the Australian High Commission three Aboriginal skulls, one articulated post-cranial skeleton and a wooden club from St Thomas' Hospital. These remains were then repatriated to Australia and placed in the custody of the National Museum of Australia in Canberra, which, according to Section 21.1.c. of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984, is the only prescribed authority for the safekeeping of Aboriginal remains (see Appendix 1).

In 1990 Tasmanian Aborigines approached the Royal College of Surgeons, Dublin with a request to return the preserved head of Shiney, a Tasmanian man who had died in 1830 (e.g. Sydney Morning Herald 1.2.1990, 2.2.1990). Soon afterwards Mansell and Weatherall, then of FAIRA, were funded by the BBC to recommence the reburial campaign in the UK, which would then be the subject of a television documentary (Hobart Mercury 9.2.1990). While in the UK, Mansell, Weatherall and Rikki Shields, an Aboriginal man living in Britain with a special interest in the reburial issue (Benison 1991: 37), visited and demonstrated outside a number of institutions to request the return of Aboriginal remains from their collections. They also presented a petition to Mrs Thatcher "calling for the return of all Aboriginal remains held in British museums and scientific collections" (Sydney Morning Herald 14.2.1990).

Although Mansell and Weatherall returned to Australia empty handed, shortly afterwards the Royal College of Surgeons, Dublin transferred the head of Shiney to the Australian Embassy in Dublin, on the understanding that it would be sent to the National Museum of Australia (Melbourne Sunday Sun 25.2.1990, Sydney Morning Herald 26.2.1990). However, initial plans by ATSIC to freight the head to this museum, from where it would be returned to the appropriate community, brought heavy criticism from Aboriginal groups who demanded that it be collected by a Tasmanian Aborigine and brought directly back to Tasmania. A forceful campaign by TAC ensured that the head was collected by Mansell who brought it back to Tasmania in March 1990 (Launceston Sunday Examiner

25.2.1990, Launceston Examiner 27.2.1990; Sunday Tasmanian 11.3.1990, 25.3.1990).

Mansell explained that:

This man's spirit has been tormented for 150 years, and as I landed with him in my arms I had this terrific feeling: after 150 years he will be returned to his people and his country for ever. He will be buried in his tribal ground and his spirit will then be able to rest (Sunday Tasmanian 25.3.1990).

The repatriation of Shiney's head was followed in June 1990 by the repatriation of: an Aboriginal skull donated to the Peterborough City Museum by a Dr H. P. Elliott in 1913 and which, according to the Museum Services Curator for Peterborough City Council, had been taken from the Maranoa District, central Queensland; an Aboriginal skull from Bradford University which had reportedly been collected at the La Grange Mission near Broome, Western Australia (West Australian 25.6.1990); and five Aboriginal skulls (one unprovenanced and the remaining four from Melville Island, South Head, Queensland and north Western Australia) and one preserved penis (from the Nullagine district near the Oakover River in Western Australia) in the collections of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. Accompanied back to Australia by Michael Mansell, Lesley Fogarty of the Aboriginal Arts Unit and Karno Walker, an Aboriginal man from South Australia, all of these remains were transferred to various Aboriginal people in Sydney who undertook to deliver them to the relevant communities. David Mowaljarlai, for example, took charge of the remains from north Western Australia and the skull from Melville Island which he subsequently gave to the Tiwi Land Council in early 1991. However, the lack of exact provenance caused the Tiwi community "some distress" as, although the "Council wish[ed] to dispose of the skull in a dignified manner .. in [the] absence of any details of its origin [were] not prepared to inter [it] arbitrarily in one of the Tiwi estates" (N. Jones, Department of the Chief Minister, Northern Territory to R. Beadman, ATSIC 10.12.1991, FAIRA file).

While in England, Mansell had also contacted the Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum to ascertain whether it held any Aboriginal human remains and, if so, whether it would be willing to repatriate them. The museum responded that it had located four Queensland remains - three skull fragments from a cave near Mount Morgan and one skull from near Bowen. After a meeting with Mansell, the Curator of Anthropology discussed the request with her museum colleagues who agreed that the "views of contemporary descendants

concerning the display and disposal of the remains should be respected” (Lovelace 1994: 30). At the Curator’s request, the Glasgow City Council agreed to deaccession these remains and in September 1990, a delegation consisting of Weatherall, Monty Pryor, Catholic Deacon and Birri Gubba elder and William Toby, a Chaplain and Gangulu elder, travelled to the UK to collect them. At the official handover, attended by the Australian Consul in Edinburgh and officials of the museum and City Council, Toby conducted a short ceremony for the Mount Morgan remains and presented the museum with a decorated scroll signed by members of the Gangulu community which identified Toby as their representative. This scroll has now been accessioned into the museum’s collection, “as a material momento and affirmation of the repatriation” (Lovelace 1994: 30).

On return to Australia, Toby reburied the skull fragments on Mount Morgan in a ceremony that combined Christian and ‘traditional’ elements. More than 60 people attended, Toby commenting that:

The feelings that have been generated by this historical burial will not be known for some years ... The things that have been told to people here today, and the things that they have seen, they will never forget ... In 20 or 30 years time the younger people who were here will be able to look back at the traditional side of the burial - it would have been a learning experience for them (Rockhampton Morning Bulletin 12.11.1990).

The skull from Bowen was taken to Townsville by Monty Pryor who subsequently placed it in the Material Culture Unit at James Cook University for safekeeping, where it remains until an appropriate reburial place is secured. Pryor would prefer to inter it within Birri Gubba land but to do so must wait for a successful land claim. If this does not eventuate, the skull may be buried near old Birri Gubba burial site or in a modern cemetery near other Birri Gubba people. According to Pryor (Interview E 20.7.1995), the funerary rites will probably include a smoking ceremony and an oration in Birri Gubba language as well as Christian ceremony.

The only other UK institution to return its holdings of Aboriginal remains to Australia is the University of Edinburgh (see Appendix 1). Indeed few of the museums or institutions which contain large numbers of Aboriginal remains have entered into relevant

discussions with Aboriginal people. For example, the Natural History Museum argues that it is bound to retain its collections under the British Museum Act (1963) and considers that the present and potential future scientific value of its collections outweighs the concerns of Aboriginal people. According to the office of the British Minister for the Arts, the position of the Natural History Museum is supported by a number of eminent Australian scientists who have requested that the museum retain its collection "because they believe much of this important anthropological material has already been lost to the scientific community" (Tatham to Mansell and Weatherall 28.3.1990, FAIRA file). Far from prompting a change in attitude towards repatriation within the 'scientific community', the return of Australian collections of Aboriginal remains has therefore been used as an additional reason why overseas museums should not repatriate their holdings.

Most holding institutions in the UK are reluctant to divulge details about their collections and have generally been unresponsive to Aboriginal requests to obtain such information. Moreover, some academics - those who perhaps do not work in the field of physical anthropology, or are known to support the reburial campaign - have been denied full access to museum records (P. Turnbull pers. comm). The Natural History Museum, for example, has never provided detailed information of its holdings of Aboriginal human remains to Aboriginal groups and in 1991 denied a researcher for the World Archaeological Congress (WAC) direct access to its records. As the former Secretary of WAC informed its members in an editorial to the World Archaeological Bulletin 6 (1992):

Those responsible for collections of human remains in England vary greatly in their response to the suggestion that the details of their holdings should be made public. Most exhibit extreme defensiveness in discussing their holdings; almost all admit that their collections are badly catalogued and that they are not able to say definitively whether or not their catalogues match their holdings (Ucko 1992: 1-2).

Restrictions on access to museum documentation are not always condoned by others in the museum community (e.g. Jones 1994: 29) and, as Simpson (1994: 29) has noted, are "surely contrary to the Museum's Association's code of ethics - and the spirit of knowledge and education on which museums are founded".

Like, for example, the Natural History Museum, few UK museums have a written and public policy regarding their holdings of human remains. However, unofficial policies are said to exist - there is, for example, some indication that one was developed in 1993 by the Conference of Directors of National Museums and Galleries, but researchers have been denied access to this document (Simpson 1994: 29). One exception has been the University of Cambridge which by 1990 had decided to return remains "to close kin, where it is possible to identify any material by name, or through information on when and where it was collected" (ATSIC file 92/3.3).

UK museums may, if they wish, follow the guidelines recently approved by the Museum Ethnographers Group (MEG) "for the storage, display, interpretation and return of human remains in ethnographical collections in UK museums" (Museums Journal July 1994: 25). While these stress that respect and sensitivity must be accorded to requests for the return of human remains and that all curators should make themselves aware of the relevant issues, MEG does not take up any position as to whether remains should or should not be placed on display, let alone returned to relevant communities. Instead, the guidelines state that "the rules and governance of the museum or institution will dictate the parameters for any action", and that requests should be resolved on a case by case basis, with consideration of:

ownership, cultural significance, the scientific, educational and historical importance of the material, the cultural and religious values of the interested individuals or groups, and the strength of their relationship to the remains in question.

The Department of National Heritage considers that repatriation is a matter for each individual museum, an opinion shared by the Museum and Galleries Commission (Simpson 1994: 31). The Museum's Association has recently stated that it "intends to issue some guidance on the subject" (Ethical Guidelines, Advice from the Museums Association Ethics Committee June 1996), and meanwhile refers its members to the guidelines of MEG.

4.4. Conclusion.

In Australia the reburial issue has been punctuated by a number of political campaigns which have progressively established the rights of Aboriginal people to all their ancestral remains held in Australian collections, regardless of age and/or scientific value. Since the successful campaign for Truganini's skeleton and the remains contained in the Crowther Collection, scientists have largely supported Aboriginal control over the remains of named individuals, known individuals, those which were collected in 'unethical' circumstances, and those which have demonstrable cultural or biological descendants. However, with the exception of the return of Mungo Woman, it has invariably taken Government authority to enforce the return of those remains considered to be of most scientific importance. In this way, Government has played a crucial role in the return of Aboriginal remains from Australian museums. Notwithstanding this contribution, Aboriginal groups have been highly critical of both the current legislation which covers treatment of Aboriginal human remains and the authority assumed by the Australian Government in the repatriation of remains from overseas museums (see Appendix 1). Such criticism is based on the fundamental Aboriginal demand for *control* over their ancestors' remains (and see Pardoe 1991: 18).

The reburial issue has been a very public affair. As perhaps was to be expected, the media have usually concentrated on, and thus exacerbated, the potential divisions between Aboriginal people and scientists. While such media coverage reflects the emotive nature of the reburial issue it also detracts from the advances which have been made to forge a working relationship between Aboriginal people and archaeologists (e.g. Sim & Thorne 1990). Pardoe (1991: 22) has argued that the media presentation "of an oppositional stance, archaeologist wrangling with Aborigine over ownership and control of skeletons and artefacts from the past, is simply untrue" and that, "debate which is predicated on conflict is driving skeletal biologists out of Australia; students are put off from these studies; and it reinforces the view that Aborigines are unreasonable" (Pardoe 1991: 22). Unlike many of his colleagues Pardoe has consistently taken a positive attitude towards the future of physical anthropology in Australia:

By entertaining the notions of ownership, wider community responsibilities, interplay between academia and society, in short by engaging a set of global ethics applicable to any peoples, we can advance science (Pardoe 1992: 140-141).

Proving his point, consultation with communities with the recognition that Aboriginal people own the bones of their ancestors enabled Pardoe to continue his research, to the extent that in 1991 he was "stretched beyond [his] limits responding to Aboriginal requests and interest" (Pardoe 1991: 22).

Opposition to scientific use of the dead is by no means an exclusively indigenous concern, either today or in the past (see Bahn 1984; Hubert 1989: 132-137). Recently in Israel, for example, Orthodox Jews have been campaigning for the reburial of skeletons currently housed in museum collections, and the cessation of excavation of all burials in Israel, regardless of their religious affiliation. Reminiscent of the arguments presented by Aboriginal people for the repatriation of their ancestors' remains, the Director of the Society for the Protection of the Sanctity of the Dead, an Israeli organisation which aims to prevent scientists from studying human remains, explains that in Jewish belief the body and soul are not separated at death and "the claim of scientific research is insufficient legal justification for the traumatic violation incurred by investigative treatment" (in Morrell 1995: 1424). Such demands prompted a re-interpretation of Israel's 1978 Antiquities law, which had previously allowed archaeologists to study bones as long as they were subsequently reinterred. Since 1995, newly excavated human remains must be handed immediately to religious officials and all bones excavated since 1978 are to be reburied. The majority of the collection at the Antiquities Authority, which held the remains of ancient populations excavated in many areas of Israel, has been moved to the Religious Affairs Ministry and is currently being reburied in mass graves. The Authority has retained all remains which are older than 5,000 years, as it is at about this date that Orthodox Jews believe humankind was created. Israel's physical anthropologists therefore consider that the country's Neanderthal and other human fossils are exempt from current interpretation of the 1978 law (Morrell 1995: 1424).

Richardson (1988) has documented the popular revulsion in seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth century Britain to the practice of dissection and grave-robbing. It appears

that, while scientists were usually unwilling to allow their own bodies to be anatomised (Richardson 1988: 185-186), they rarely respected the popular beliefs of their own culture towards the dead, let alone the culture of others. This situation appears to be changing. As Hubert (1989: 132-134, and see Bahn 1984: 132-133) has demonstrated, growing concern in twentieth century Britain about the excavation of skeletons has in some cases prompted reburial ceremonies. For example, the remains of a sailor from the Mary Rose were buried in Portsmouth Cathedral in 1984 partly in order to pacify those who believed the wreck to be a 'war grave' which should have been left undisturbed (Hubert 1989: 133; Southworth 1994: 23). However, although scientists in the UK have had to accommodate the wishes of the British population about British human remains (and see Rahtz 1985) their new respect for the dead does not appear to extend to those of other cultures. Although the reburial issue has been ongoing for almost thirty years, Aboriginal rights to Aboriginal human remains are rarely recognised outside Australia, enforcing the conclusion that it is indigenous action, supported by Government, which effects changes in scientific practice and *not* debate within the academy. Indeed, because some Australian physical anthropologists have written to support the retention of collections in Britain, it is clear that while in Australia scientists are now forced to adopt the codes of practice prescribed by legislation and museum policy, their fundamental attitude towards Aboriginal human remains, and the wishes of Aboriginal people, is unchanged.

Chapter 5. From Object to Person: repatriation, the politics of meaning and the construction of Aboriginality.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the appropriation of the 'meaning' of Aboriginal human remains by comparative anatomists and, later, physical anthropologists, affected the constitution and articulation of power relations between the West and Australia's indigenes. Like their initial collection, the *return* of Aboriginal human remains to their cultural and/or biological descendants also involves recontextualisation and an accompanying 'refiguration' of their social meaning. It is the contest for control over this 'meaning', as much as for the actual remains themselves, that can be seen to lie at the core of the reburial issue. Once again, the movement of human remains from one social context to another has implications for relations of power and knowledge which are in themselves associated with the construction of Aboriginal identity(ies).

Integral to Appadurai's contention that material things are social actors is the notion that objects have regulated "paths", or careers, which are defined by their social meaning (Appadurai 1986: 16-29). Through the action of individuals, or strategies of a more institutionalised form, objects may be "diverted" to new paths which are, in their turn, regulated by the different social meanings which they hold in each new social context. Using various ethnographic examples, especially that provided by kula exchange in the Western Pacific, Appadurai (1986: 17) has demonstrated that "the flow of commodities in any given situation is a shifting compromise between socially regulated paths and competitively inspired diversions". Reflecting the complexity of categorising objects and their social histories, Appadurai (1986: 13-16) suggests various different sets of distinctions between commodities. Of particular significance to the present analysis is his discussion relating to the degree to which objects are linked with one particular social group. He makes a distinction between "mobile" commodities, or those which are to be found in general circulation, and "enclaved commodities" or those which are monopolised by one section of society (Appadurai 1986: 16).

Collections of human remains may be seen to represent such an 'enclave'. In a collection, the career of human remains is controlled by one group (scientists) which monopolises

their meaning and value. Just as collecting in the past redirected human remains from their regulated paths within indigenous societies as 'the dead', so repatriation campaigns can be viewed as strategies to divert remains from their ideal careers in the 'scientific enclave' back onto an historical trajectory controlled by their cultural and/or biological descendants.

Appadurai (1986: 26-27) has drawn attention to the relations of power that surround the diversion of objects from their customary paths, arguing that such action always carries a "risky and ambiguous aura". He includes the collecting of museum objects in this bracket, noting that controversies surrounding the ownership of such things raise:

all the moral and political delicacies that come into play when things get diverted, several times over, from their minimal, conventional paths, and are transferred by a variety of modes that make their history of claims and counter claims extremely difficult to adjudicate (Appadurai 1986: 27).

For Appadurai (1986: 26), diversion is "always a sign of creativity or crisis", and he presents warfare, and the plunder which traditionally follows, as a prime example. In such cases it is the taking of things emblematic of the enemy ("special arms, insignia, or body parts" (Appadurai 1986: 26)) which makes diversion, and its ramifications, so intense. The 'crisis' inherent in the diversion of things integral to the identity of the dispossessed is *crucial* to an understanding of why the reburial issue is so politically charged.

5.1. Inalienable possessions.

In her analysis of the repatriation of the Kow Swamp remains, Lahn (1996) employs the concept of the 'inalienable possession' as originally formulated by Weiner (1992). Inalienable possessions are "imbued with the intrinsic and ineffable identities of their owners" (Weiner 1992: 6) and are extremely difficult to relinquish as their loss "diminishes the self and by extension, the group to which the person belongs". For Weiner, inalienable possessions do not have to be objects, but can also be oral history, songs, dances and other things which have no material form, as long as they symbolise and authenticate the social identity of the group which possesses them. She argues that

the power and authority of inalienable possessions is directly rooted in the source of their authenticity being perceived as “outside the present”, be this their connection to such diverse things as, “ancestors, gods, sacred sites, the legitimising force of divine rulers, or ideologies such as the reciprocal freedom of the marketplace”.

As argued by Lahn (1996: 25-26), Aboriginal human remains are inalienable for both Aboriginal groups and the scientists who curate and study them, but the source of their authentication for each group is very different. For the scientists, it lies in the meaning of bones as important specimens, the collecting and study of which affirms and authenticates their own group identity as the authority which produces knowledge about the past. For Aborigines, on the other hand, the source of authentication lies in the perception of the bones as, broadly speaking, ancestors, whose presence and proper disposal are often viewed as essential components of Aboriginal self-identity. As Michael Mansell has asked, “if we can’t control and protect our own dead, then what is there to being Aboriginal?” (*Melbourne Age* 5.10.1985). However, because some scientists have viewed repatriation as a symbol of the extinction of physical anthropology as a discipline (e.g. Lewin 1984: 393), it may have been as valid for them to have questioned, ‘if we can’t control and study human remains, then what is there to being a physical anthropologist?’.

Inalienable possessions circulate in what Weiner (1992) terms the paradox of ‘keeping-while-giving’, or the situation in which things may be transferred between individuals, but are retained within the closed context of one social group. This concept is similar to that of the enclave as proposed by Appadurai, and is evident in the history of the curation and study of human remains. For while human remains have often been moved from one institution to another, they have only rarely been transferred out of the academy. Even when such a transfer has occurred, scientists have often tried to retain some control over the relinquished items. Indeed, as Lahn (1996: 38) has noted, the compromise sought by some archaeologists to have human remains returned to Keeping Places exemplifies the notion of ‘keeping-while-giving’, for under such arrangements the candidacy of remains as scientific objects is not entirely negated, nor is their removal from the scientific enclave absolute.

Another feature of the scientific enclave is the conditions which have often been placed on gaining access to collections of Aboriginal human remains. Access to most UK collections, such as that in the Natural History Museum, London (letter from the Director of the Natural History Museum, London to the Editor, The Bulletin 14.2.1992) is restricted to *bona fide* researchers (although see the Museum Ethnographers Group guidelines in The Museums Journal July 1994: 25), a restriction that emphasises the perception that only a scientific meaning for, and interest in, human remains is genuine and valid. *Bona fide* researchers come from within the group (scientists) that enclaves human remains, share the same perception of their meaning and value and, by their research, help to legitimate scientific interest in such material. On the other hand, Aboriginal representatives, who have often been denied access to Aboriginal human remains housed by institutions which refuse to repatriate such items, are not members of the scientific community and contest not only ownership of remains but also their scientific meaning. In doing so, Aboriginal representatives threaten the source of authentication for those who curate and study human remains and thus endanger the foundations of this group's identity. As noted in Chapter 4, such gate-keeping also extends to control of information *about* collections.

However, it is also the case that science threatens the source of authentication of human remains for Aboriginal people. The opinion of some archaeologists (see Chapter 4) that fossils, such as those discovered at Kow Swamp, belong to all humanity and can not legitimately be claimed by Aborigines today clearly challenges the identification of such remains as exclusively Aboriginal ancestors. Moreover, as Weatherall (1989) has commented, scientific interpretation of human remains can negate the authenticity of Aboriginal concepts of the past (see Chapter 4). The reburial issue has therefore arisen not only because human remains are inalienable for both social groups which contest their ownership but because the often incompatible meanings which each group ascribes to such items can fundamentally threaten the identity of the other.

Viewing collected human remains as central to the identity of those who maintain and constitute the scientific enclave helps to explain why requests to relinquish them to Aboriginal groups are so often refused. This approach also clarifies the policies of those

museums and archaeological organisations which agree to the repatriation of some remains but oppose the repatriation of others (see Chapter 4).

5.2. Repatriation and the social meaning of human remains.

5.2.a. Repatriation from outside the scientific enclave.

It is clear from the history of repatriation in Britain (see Chapter 4 and Appendix 1) that the few institutions in the UK which have decided to return all the Aboriginal human remains in their collections were *not* controlled by members of the social group which today constitute the scientific enclave. The identity of these institutions was not integral to the curation or analysis of the Aboriginal remains in their possession and, consequently, the loss of such material to Aboriginal groups did not constitute a threat. As Simpson (1994: 28) has noted, “most of the repatriation cases [in the UK] pertain to individual items or small groups of items that served no significant purpose in the museum collections in question”. For example, one of the reasons why the Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum decided to return its small collection of human remains to Aboriginal representatives in 1990 was because it “never had the scientific expertise to do any scientific analysis of the remains” (Lovelace 1994: 30).

The Pitt Rivers Museum’s decision to repatriate only one type of Aboriginal human remain in its collection exemplifies the way in which a museum’s identity determines what items it can justifiably de-accession. Being an ethnographic and archaeological museum, which had “no display or research use for ordinary skeletal material, whatever its origin” (Jones 1994: 29) in 1990 the Pitt Rivers decided to return all the Aboriginal remains which had not been altered *post-mortem*. However, the museum *did* retain those Aboriginal crania which had been made into water vessels because, according to its Director, Schuyler Jones, (1994: 29) “we feel that it is one thing to return specimens of skeletal material that should not have been in the museum in the first place, and quite another to return cultural artefacts - the subject matter of our collections”. Although wishing to be “sensitive to the attitudes, beliefs and practices of other cultures” (Jones 1994: 29), this museum therefore only relinquished control over those items which were no longer associated with its institutional identity and which it now considered to be

irrelevant to its research agenda, despite such items having been accepted as 'subject matter' by the museum in the past. The apparent repositioning of the Pitt Rivers Museum outside the institutional and social structures which enclave other UK collections of Aboriginal human remains is perhaps underscored by the reaction of one curator who contacted the Pitt Rivers with the accusation, "you are giving *our* research material away" (Jones 1994: 29, my emphasis).

While the distinction made by the Pitt Rivers between 'bones-as-artefacts' and 'bones-as-human-remains' appears to have had strategic value for this museum in its decisions about how to respond to Aboriginal requests for the repatriation of their ancestors, it may be tested in the future. Recently (17.7.1997), the relevant Aboriginal organisation has been informed that the Pitt Rivers holds crania water vessels taken from its area. It now remains to be seen whether or not this organisation will request the repatriation of these items and, if so, whether or not such a request will challenge the Pitt Rivers' distinction by claiming these 'artefacts' on the grounds that, irrespective of any *post mortem* modification, they are nonetheless ancestors. This case provides an example of how diverse can be the meanings attributed to human remains, how this meaning is integral to decisions about whether or not to repatriate such items and how varied can be the factors used to determine the boundary between skeletal material as 'objects' and skeletal material as 'people'.

Although Matthew Kaufman, Professor of Anatomy at the University of Edinburgh, was supported by some physical anthropologists in the UK and abroad in his efforts to retain the Aboriginal remains housed in its Department of Anatomy (see Appendix 1) in 1990 he did not have the authority to keep these items from being repatriated to Australia. Although since the early 1980s the Department of Anatomy's refusal to return human remains to Aboriginal groups had gone unchallenged by University authorities, by 1990 there appears to have been sufficient pressure placed upon this institution - by Aboriginal people, staff and students of the University and other British academics - for the University Court to assume effective control of the collection. And in deciding whether to accede to Aboriginal demands, the Court sought advice from the Senatus Academicus. Thus, by 1990, ultimate control over the collection did not lie solely with the Department of Anatomy but in a much wider based academic group - few of whom had direct

professional interest in the collection. The decision to repatriate Edinburgh University's collection of Aboriginal remains was *not*, therefore, taken by individuals who constituted the scientific enclave or for whom such items were inalienable possessions.

After agreeing to repatriate the remains, the University of Edinburgh refused to deal with individuals or Aboriginal organisations and preferred instead to negotiate with ATSIC and/or the Australian High Commission, and to return its collection to the National Museum of Australia in Canberra rather than to release remains directly into the control of Aboriginal individuals. According to the University, this procedure was preferred in order to acquit its perceived responsibility to ensure that the remains would be returned to nobody except the rightful custodians. By recognising only the Australian Government's authority to act in regard to these remains, in particular to decide who were the 'rightful custodians', the University disempowered local communities, who challenged and criticised the Australian Government's involvement at almost every stage of the repatriation process. In particular, in both the initial repatriation of the Tasmanian crania, and the later return of the rest of the collection, criticism was levelled at ATSIC for deciding to send the remains to the National Museum of Canberra instead of directly, and with appropriate escort, to the relevant Aboriginal communities. After a lengthy campaign TAC did manage to halt the transfer of Tasmanian crania from the High Commission in London to the National Museum and sent their representatives (partly funded by ATSIC) to London to collect the remains and accompany them directly back to Tasmania. However, during the later organisation of the repatriation of the rest of the collection the wishes of the Victorian Aboriginal community, which had raised its own funds for two of its representatives to collect the Victorian remains from Edinburgh, were rejected by ATSIC and the Victorians had to wait to collect their ancestors' remains from Canberra.

While established procedure and the wishes of the University of Edinburgh may have contributed to ATSIC's initial decision to take charge of the Tasmanian crania (despite the criticism levelled at their previous attempts to control the repatriation of the head of Shiney from the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland (see Chapter 4)), ATSIC decided to take more than only financial responsibility for the repatriation of the main collection on the grounds that it was unprovenanced and the necessity (imposed by the University

of Edinburgh) of removing the remains from the Department of Anatomy before the end of the summer vacation. Although ATSIC had requested provenancing information from the University of Edinburgh on several occasions, by the time the collection was due to be repatriated no comprehensive documentation had been received - only a list of how many remains could be provenanced to each State or Territory - the University stating that most of the relevant records had been lost or destroyed many years before. In such circumstances, ATSIC considered it impossible to undertake prior consultation with relevant communities, and, due to the paucity of provenance information, the remains were to be transferred to the National Museum of Australia as it was the only prescribed authority for their safekeeping (see Appendix 1).

Despite many assurances from the University that it was not withholding information that would help to establish more details about the provenance of Aboriginal remains in its collection, this institution, whether consciously or not, did fail to return the bulk of the relevant documentation in its possession. Subsequently, after many months of requests to the Department of Anatomy in connection with the present research, sufficient documentation was located in this Department which provenanced over 80% of the remains that were returned to Australia with which it was possible to identify the remains of a further eight named individuals (see Appendix 1). Thus, while the Department of Anatomy did not hold sufficient authority to retain the Edinburgh Collection, its failure (whether intentional or not) to return the relevant documentation made it almost inevitable that these remains would stay within the scientific enclave. The collection's unprovenanced status resulted not only in its transfer to another museum, but was the major factor which denied community control over both its repatriation and its current management. Perhaps most significantly however, the collection's lack of provenance is the primary reason why it has been examined by physical anthropologists at least twice since its repatriation. Thus, because of the initial absence of associated documentation, the repatriation of the Edinburgh Collection did not divert the majority of these remains from their historical trajectories as scientific objects. The Department of Anatomy has therefore demonstrated Weiner's concept of 'keeping-while-giving' in practice. Unsurprisingly, some Aboriginal people were extremely angry and disappointed when the collection was returned with insufficient documentation. As one Aboriginal man explained, his own anger and those of other Aboriginal people derived from the fact that:

once they [the Edinburgh Collection] came back to Australia they became the property of the Museum and their legislation and the day to day care of the remains were going to be controlled by non-Aboriginal people. Plus ... people were concerned that scientific experiments, more torment, would continue; we thought that the torment had ended. You know, it was about 109 years ... in Edinburgh [where] they'd been probed ... and people felt that whole torment had stopped and that [we] had fulfilled some kind of customary obligation to their ancestors ... We told [the ancestors] ... that they were on their way back home ... [and] we feel very concerned about it, that we haven't fulfilled a contract that we gave to those people. You know, we said we'd 'get you back home' and they're not there and we feel responsible that that's not happened and we can't move the Government, we can't move anything. But there's an enormous amount of problems with [the collection] - a lot of [the remains] were unidentified, people don't have the resources, they don't have land for them to go back to. It was just the way it was done ... it wasn't an example to be followed again, ever. (Interview A 4.8.1995).

The failure of the Department of Anatomy to return all the information about the Aboriginal remains it had received may have repercussions for the University of Edinburgh six years after the collection was returned. For the information consciously or unconsciously retained in the Department revealed that many more remains, in particular post-cranial bones, had been received than were returned in 1991. As well as providing an example of how disorganised today's collections of indigenous human remains can be, the apparent rediscovery in June 1997 of some, but not all, of the 'missing' bones of Tommy Walker in a drawer in the Department of Anatomy (see Appendix 1.3) not only suggests that the Department did not carry out sufficient steps to ensure that all the Aboriginal remains in its custody were repatriated in 1991 but also shows that the lack of information about the collection available to Australian authorities at that time has not only kept many of the *returned* remains within the scientific enclave but has delayed the repatriation of others.

The index card catalogue which accompanied the repatriated Edinburgh Collection *does* provide provenance information for about a third of the collection. Even so, since 1991, little over 10% of the remains have been collected by the appropriate communities or Aboriginal organisations. The rest of the collection is still in the National Museum, early attempts by some groups to retrieve their ancestors' remains having failed because neither the Federal nor the State or Territory Governments will take responsibility for

funding the return of such items to locations within Australia. Although since 1993 a Federal body (the Department of Communication and the Arts) has made available small grants for communities to repatriate remains from Australian museums, it seems that ongoing political arguments between the Commonwealth and the States and Territory may have been one factor in ensuring that the majority of even the provenanced remains in the Edinburgh Collection have not been returned to their community of origin (see Appendix 1).

As in many previous cases, such as the return of Shiney's head to Tasmania and the return of the Crowther Collection to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community (see Chapter 4), the criticisms levelled at ATSIC for its handling of the return of the Edinburgh Collection demonstrate the critical importance placed by Aboriginal groups on controlling the repatriation process and, due to the widely held belief that the ancestors should be accompanied back to Australia by a representative of their cultural and/or biological descendants, specifically the repatriation of remains provenanced to a group's own particular region. Given that the funds for repatriating human remains from overseas are usually provided by the Federal Government and allocated by a nationally elected Aboriginal body (the ATSIC commissioners), there are therefore grounds for extreme tension between pan-Aboriginal concerns to ensure, and facilitate in a cost-effective manner, the return of entire collections and the spiritual and political requirements of local communities to accord their particular ancestors appropriate treatment. This tension is exacerbated, as in the case of the repatriation of the Edinburgh Collection, by the tendency of those who hold the power to repatriate human remains only to negotiate with the Australian Government. As a frequent locus of political struggle between a pan-Aboriginal government body and local Aboriginal groups and individuals, human remains have once again been entangled with relations of power.

5.2.b. From object to person: refiguration of meaning within the scientific enclave.

Within the scientific enclave, Aboriginal human remains have been predominantly perceived as specimens - as passive objects. Their status as scientific data is what invests them with value, makes them inalienable possessions for those who curate and study them, and is integral to what keeps many collected human remains from being returned to

those indigenous groups which contest their meaning and ownership. On the other hand, as we have already seen, many Aborigines consider that the bones of their ancestors *are* their ancestors. Those scientists who agree to the return of the remains of named or historically known individuals (see Chapter 4) appear to recognise that for such items the indigenous perception of their meaning and value demands respect. In doing so, it can be argued, these scientists are also conceding that known individuals can be justifiably perceived as ‘the dead’, whose repatriation and reburial is an appropriate and valid course of action - overruling any loss of scientific information that may result. However, the refusal by some of the same scientists to agree to the return of ‘anonymous’ bones implies that the remains of unknown individuals do *not* fulfil the necessary criteria to be perceived and claimed as ‘persons’ (despite contrary beliefs held by Aborigines) and, consequently, can not be justifiably repatriated. The attitudes of such scientists thus appear to be determined more by European notions of ‘the dead’ than by the needs of science.

The circumstances of the burial of Yagan’s head in a British cemetery in the 1960s (see Appendix 2) demonstrates that it is not only indigenous demands for repatriation which can prompt a shift in the meaning of human remains from ‘object’ to ‘person’. After Yagan was shot and killed in 1833, his preserved head was objectified through various processes: its initial commoditisation; its use as a scientific specimen; its display to the public and its inclusion within museum collections. In 1964, when Yagan’s head was stored at the Liverpool City Museum, the then Keeper of Ethnology requested that it, the head of an unknown Aborigine and the desiccated body of a Peruvian should be destroyed (see Appendix 2). The Keeper argued that the decomposition of these remains was “making the specimens disagreeable room mates” and the necessary treatment, “difficult, costly and without guarantee of success”, would only be justified if “the specimens were of exceptional importance” and he found “nothing in the records to indicate that this [was] the case” (memorandum 12.3.1964 LM). However, although this memorandum indicates that the Keeper’s main reason for wishing to destroy Yagan’s head was its advanced state of decomposition, other staff at the Liverpool Museum (not named to preserve anonymity) have recalled that it, and the other remains referred to, were well preserved for their age and in comparable condition to other similar items in the museum’s collection. Whatever the Keeper’s actual reason for disposing of the

remains, it was decided to bury them in the local cemetery rather than simply storing them elsewhere, destroying them by another method or - as in normal museum practice - offering them to another museum, indicating that by this time the remains were no longer regarded as objects but as the dead who required a fitting method of disposition.

After its burial in Everton cemetery, the 'meaning' of Yagan's head was dominated entirely by its significance as 'person'. Once interred it was no longer an object that was allowed to be freely moved, examined or destroyed - as it would have been if it had still been part of a museum collection - but was instead subject to all the restrictions accorded by the British legal system to the treatment of dead bodies. In 1995, having followed procedure developed to implement the Burial Act of 1857, the Home Office refused to issue Ken Colbung with a licence to exhume Yagan's head on the stated grounds that parents of some of the stillborn babies and neonates buried above Yagan objected to the minimal and temporary disturbance to these remains that an exhumation would probably incur (see Appendix 2). Therefore, in this exceptional case, it was the European perception of human remains as 'people' that prevented the return of an Aboriginal remain to Australia. For if Yagan's head had stayed in the collections of the Liverpool Museum it is highly likely that this institution, because the head was that of a known and named individual, would have agreed to its repatriation. This example highlights how very different, and sometimes quite contradictory, can be European attitudes towards human remains which are buried in cemeteries and those that are found on museum shelves, demonstrating once more how varied are the factors which determine whether human remains are perceived as 'objects' or 'people'.

In its initial refusal to issue an exhumation licence, the Home Office decided to respect the wishes of parents of stillborn babies buried above Yagan's head as opposed to those of Yagan's descendants. In doing so, the Home Office also appeared to be respecting the right of the stillborns to 'rest in peace' over that of Yagan who was believed, at least by Ken Colbung, to be in as much spiritual torment buried in Everton cemetery as he was when housed in the Liverpool Museum (K. Colbung pers. comm.). The history of attempts to secure a licence to exhume Yagan's head therefore also demonstrates that differential rights can be accorded to the dead and also to their living relatives. It is questionable whether an exhumation licence would have been denied for so long if

Yagan was as central to British identity, culture and heritage as he is to the Aboriginal people of south-west Australia.

The distinction often made by scientists today between 'recent' and 'old' Aboriginal bones can also be attributed to Western perceptions of the dead. For example, John Mulvaney has publicly opposed the reburial of fossil remains but supports the return of known individuals and those who died post-contact. Perhaps predictably, therefore, he refers to fossil remains as 'material' or 'evidence', but refers to the remains of more recent individuals as 'people' who 'should be treated with respect' (Interview F 21.11.1995). Mulvaney's beliefs (and see Mulvaney 1991: 16-17), reflected in the opinions of some Australian physical anthropologists (Interview C 19.8.1995; Interview G 14.9.1995) and mirrored in museum policies, only serve to underscore the contention that within today's scientific community certain remains are frequently perceived very differently to others. The remains of named, recent and historically known individuals can be recognised as the dead, for whom reburial is a valid option, whilst those of anonymous, pre-contact individuals and fossils are regarded as objects, whose return to Aboriginal communities for re-disposition is inconsistent with their current social meaning and cannot, therefore, be justified. Once again, therefore, it seems that European attitudes towards the dead have strongly influenced the repatriation issue: it was those categories of remains which would have been accorded respect within Western culture (recent, named and known individuals) that were returned to Aboriginal communities first.

Depending upon their social contexts, human remains have been perceived as 'objects' or 'persons', meanings which in times of crisis may become mutually exclusive. However, at other times, these meanings can and do coexist, informing the seemingly paradoxical attitude of those scientists who wish to retain the anonymous dead for scientific analysis while supporting the return of known remains, although both 'categories' are of equal scientific importance. Indeed, given the importance of knowing the origin and sex of human remains to current osteological research, it is highly likely that bones with provenance and identity are actually of *greater* scientific value than many of the unprovenanced and unidentified remains which institutions may be left housing in the

future. As Pardoe (1991: 20-21) has commented, “there is no scientific validity to these sorts of compromises”.

An ability to perceive human remains as both ‘object’ and ‘person’ also clarifies the differential treatment which has sometimes been accorded by scientists to their own dead and to those which they study. For example, in 1931 the aged Professor Archibald Watson who had, during his career, collected many Aboriginal body parts from the dissecting room at the University of Adelaide (see Chapters 1 and 2), was particularly anxious to ensure that his parent’s burial place (in which he also wished to be interred) was not disturbed by the construction of a road. His complaints were not appreciated by the relevant authority, who was annoyed at Watson’s “desire to have [his] parents resting place made sacred” (NL 1682/38/2454).

5.3. The return of ancestors.

When returned to their community of origin, human remains leave the scientific enclave and enter a new social context in which they are refigured as ‘people’ (see Chapter 4). No longer scientific objects, bones are now ‘the dead’ who must be accorded appropriate treatment. However, deciding which procedures are ‘appropriate’ confronts communities with a number of difficult issues, not least the question of where and how to grant them funerary rites; particularly because whether provenanced or unprovenanced, identified or unknown, returned remains are widely regarded as those of *traditional* people and an exclusively ‘modern’, European influenced funeral is therefore rarely considered suitable.

Many factors can influence the eventual choice of reburial site. As noted in Chapter 4, there is a wide and strongly held belief that the dead must be interred in the dead individual’s place of origin. For example, as one community custodian for returned ancestral remains explained, “he can’t be buried in anybody else’s ground, that would be hard, would be really hard because he’d always be classed as an outsider” (Interview B 26.9.1995) and as a Wamba Wamba elder was reported to have commented when organising the redistribution of remains uncovered during construction at Swan Hill, if his “ancestors’ bones were not reburied in their appropriate burial sites, the land would be cursed forever” (The Melbourne Age 23.2.1989). Where possible, remains are therefore

usually reburied at or near where they were originally interred. An additional factor favouring reposition near the original funerary site is the belief held by some Aboriginal people that the ancestors can only enter the spirit realm if their remains are buried all in one place. For example, Colbung (1996: 1, 6, and see Appendix 2) considers it important that Yagan's head should be united with the rest of his body, the burial place of which is known to some members of the Noongah community. Other Aboriginal people have no such concerns, some considering that the reburial of just one bone may allow the ancestor to return to his/her traditional country and attain spiritual peace (Interview B 26.9.1995), while still others are undecided (Interview A 4.8.1995).

If, as in most cases, remains had been collected from funerary areas there is usually insufficient documentation to relocate the original burial site. Even when this is possible communities are frequently unable to reuse such areas for funerary purposes, usually because sites have been built upon and/or destroyed. In such an event, preferred alternatives include old Aboriginal burial grounds or areas associated with the tribe of the dead person. Some communities are opposed to burying remains in modern 'white' cemeteries (Interview B 26.9.1995; Muswellbrook Chronicle 20.12.1991) but in other cases such areas are used although usually only if they contain the remains of the returned ancestor's (or ancestors') kin. For example, some communities living away from their traditional lands have reburied returned remains in the local modern cemetery, placing a higher priority on keeping their ancestors near the present community than returning them to their traditional country (Briggs 1994: 50-51). One factor influencing such a decision is the wish to ensure that returned remains will not be disturbed in the future. For this reason at least one Queensland community still occupying its traditional country decided to reinter remains in the local modern cemetery instead of at their original burial site nearby (L. Ormond-Parker pers. comm.).

Affording protection to reburial sites is also a fundamental reason why communities frequently seek to acquire land for funerary purposes, few already having title to such areas. A consultation programme carried out by FAIRA within Queensland concluded that although obtaining land for reburial was considered a high priority, 95% of the communities consulted did not have title to suitable areas (Briggs 1994: 61). Another

option which has been chosen is to rebury remains in national parks as such areas can provide some protection to burial sites (see Chapter 4).

The wish to ensure that returned remains will never again be the object of scientific enquiry has not only prompted Aboriginal people to bury them in areas which might not be considered 'traditionally' suitable but radically to change the form of disposition which was accorded to these remains in the past. Thus, for example, Tasmanian Aborigines have chosen to cremate, and not rebury, repatriated crania and other skeletal material. The modern use of a form of funerary disposition that *was* practised in pre-contact Tasmania (see Meehan 1971) but was clearly *not* accorded to these particular remains in the past, is one example of how today's communities develop funerary practices for 'traditional' ancestors which are considered culturally appropriate and yet suitable in the contemporary context.

Like choosing a suitable reburial place, determining an appropriate funerary ceremony often necessitates lengthy debate and organisation. In their deliberations communities have used, amongst other sources, knowledge of past burial practices held by elders and/or information supplied by ethnographic literature (Interview A 4.8.1995; Creamer 1988: 57). Again, because returned remains are frequently considered to be those of 'traditional' people most communities, regardless of the prevailing religious belief, choose to rebury in a 'traditional' manner or with ceremony that combines both Christian and 'traditional' elements (see Briggs 1994: 21-57). Typically, the traditional component may include a smoking ceremony and a speech in an appropriate Aboriginal language. The amalgamation of Christianity and 'tradition' that reburial ceremonies can exhibit is exemplified by Walter Palm Island's oration of the Lord's Prayer at Tambo's funeral in the now unspoken Manbarra language. On one level, by according Tambo a 'traditional' and Christian ceremony the funeral articulated respect for both Tambo's belief system and that of the Island's predominantly Christian community today. On another level, however, it perhaps demonstrated the continuing relevance of the traditional past on Palm Island today.

The many different ways in which communities have dealt with returned remains demonstrates that although reburial ceremonies may not be identical to funerary rites

accorded to the dead pre-contact, knowledge of past burial practices has been used in the context of the present to develop ceremonies which are considered culturally appropriate today. The modern development of such funerary rites demonstrates both the vitality of modern Aboriginal 'tradition' and how 'tradition' can and has changed since (and because of) colonisation. The sense that reburial provides an opportunity to develop 'traditional' ceremonies that are authentic yet different from those practised pre-contact is apparent in a description by an Aboriginal campaigner for the repatriation of ancestral remains of discussions undertaken within his own community to prepare for the return of ancestral remains from the Queensland Museum:

[The community] say, well what [did the burial ceremony] used to be? And we say, well the question is: what it used to be and what it is today, isn't it the same thing? Doesn't it mean the same thing? ... So that's a further dilemma, do you go back and do it the proper way or do you create something now that's still appropriate? Because not all [the traditional knowledge] is there - some of it's lost, and [the community] recognises that now. Some are Christians and that's another problem. Others want to say prayers and things like that and people say 'no it was Christians who [collected the remains in the first place]' - or supposedly Christians anyway.... So that was a couple of proposals - they want to wrap them up with bark in Kangaroo sinue [sic]... and put down the grave goods with them for the journey ... That's all right with the men but the women are saying 'what do we do?'... No,[it's] not traditional, but it will become their tradition and that's what I've been trying to say to them; and they're saying too: it will become traditional in that sense (Interview A 4.8.1995).

Such a view is not, however, universally shared. While recognising that modern reburial ceremonies have frequently had beneficial effects on communities - as well as being politically successful - other Aboriginal people believe that they may sometimes be spiritually extremely dangerous (Interview H 3.8.1995). The unique problems (and opportunities) presented by reburial demonstrate the complexities which surround the question of what is considered 'appropriate' funerary treatment.

The development of reburial ceremonies provides an example of the way in which archaeology and physical anthropology can effect change in modern societies. Today there are indications that some Aboriginal people no longer want to be buried in a 'white' cemetery with a 'white' funeral, but wish to be interred in the same place and/or in the

same manner as returned ancestral remains (Interview A 4.8.1995; Interview B 26.9.1995; Launceston Examiner 4.8.1992; Hobart Mercury 4.8.1992). The return of collected human remains may not only have caused communities to develop *reburial* ceremonies, but may therefore have prompted changes in modern burial practice as well.

5.3.a. Repatriation and the construction of Aboriginal identity.

Although many Aborigines perceive all human remains as ‘people’, regardless of whether the bones are provenanced and/or identified, the level of information associated with returned remains can influence not only what a community decides to do with them but also the different ways in which repatriation affects relations of power and the self-definition of Aboriginal identity(ies).

Tambo was a known individual with documented kinship to current members of the Palm Island family. As a historical figure, Tambo’s return was integral to the manner in which events prompted a resurgence of traditional authority on the Island, particularly as invested in Tambo’s great grand-nephew, Walter Palm Island (see Appendix 3). The significance of Tambo’s known identity is perhaps demonstrated by the arguments proposed by those who stood to be *disempowered* by the return of his body, who questioned Tambo’s identity as Manbarra and thus his genealogical link to Walter Palm Island.

The return of his ancestor had a profound impact on Walter Palm Island, reaffirming his identity as Manbarra and re-vitalising his interest in ‘traditional’ matters. Moreover, the belief held by many Manbarra and Bwgaman that Tambo was, and remains, an ancestor to *all* Palm Islanders has established the Bwgaman as people who belong to, and are *of*, Palm Island (see Appendix 3). As Walter Palm Island (1996) recently explained:

They [the Bwgaman youths] felt Tambo ancestor for them too. They felt Aboriginal identity strong in themselves. It gave them a sense of belonging - they weren’t left out. They had that sense of belonging because they were Bwgaman. Even though they were historical people, they were still Palm Islanders. They were proud of that. It was honour and respect that they showed, and also a duty of being part of the Bwgaman

tribe. They felt proud to be involved, they wanted [the] responsibility to be involved.

Tambo's return has thus provided an additional facet to Bwgaman identity, a people commonly defined by their status as 'historical people' - those born on Palm Island since 1920 but whose immediate biological ancestors came from elsewhere.

Yagan is also perceived as a common ancestor - in his case by the Noongah people of south Western Australia. This perception strengthens Noongah identity by reinforcing the group definition as one of shared descent. For example, the 1993 Kyana Corroboree in Perth, a major Noongah event, was dedicated to "the warrior spirits" of "our ancestral elders", Yagan and his father Midgegooroo (Neuenfeldt 1995: 28, and see Appendix 2). Yagan, as a common ancestor and famous elder, renowned for his role in the early resistance to colonial settlement, thus embodied and symbolised the theme of the 1993 Kyana Corroboree - 'in unity and strength' - and reflected the aims of the Kyana initiative itself, to unite Noongah through "the rejuvenation of Cultural and Spiritual value systems of our people" (Neuenfeldt 1995: 28). Colbung (1996: 8) has asserted that Yagan is an "ancestor to all the South-West Aboriginal people" and that "in Yagan all Noongah people have a common bond". By invoking Yagan as a common ancestor, Colbung (1996: 8) has called upon "all Aboriginals of the South-West to re-evaluate and re-instate the traditional values and philosophies espoused by Yagan".

While at least partly responsible for insuring that the repatriation of the Edinburgh Collection was placed outside community control, the lack of accompanying information to provenance these remains has also prompted, and may continue to necessitate, a refiguring of Aboriginal self-identity(ies). When the Edinburgh Collection was returned, ATSIC was faced with primary responsibility for the bones of over 230 individuals whose remains were either totally unprovenanced, or only provenanced to a State or Territory level. To try and resolve this situation, ATSIC requested assistance from State and Territory representatives on the National Task Force to consult with Aboriginal communities about future plans for the remains. Possibly reflecting the extreme difficulties presented by deciding the appropriate treatment for unprovenanced bones, ATSIC has so far received very few suggestions. One possible solution was proposed by

David Mowaljarlai who suggested that, following extensive consultation with Aboriginal people throughout Australia and subject to the permission of the traditional owners, the unprovenanced remains should be buried at Uluru (Appendix 1). In effect, this would establish a new pan-Aboriginal ritual for disposal of the dead, a development which would almost certainly necessitate a re-negotiation not only of Aboriginal beliefs but also self-definitions of identity. The difficulty that such changes would involve is perhaps apparent in the un-enthusiastic reaction to Mowaljarlai's idea voiced by the Central Land Council and the Northern Territory Representative on the Task Force (see Appendix 1).

Problems that are associated with ancestral remains provenanced only to a general locality can be overcome. In one ATSIC region of New South Wales, the return of the Edinburgh Collection has already prompted the development of a new (but yet unused) burial practice for repatriated remains. Elders from the area currently encompassed by the ATSIC Regional Land Council boundary of the Far North Coast decided that remains provenanced only to within this area should be interred in a central burial ground not affiliated to any particular community. The return of the Edinburgh Collection may thus strengthen the common identity of at least one group of Aboriginal people; it may be significant that in this particular case the current political boundary roughly coincides with a former tribal grouping.

5.3.b. 'Tradition'

Notions of what constitutes 'tradition', as well as the frequent distinction made between 'authentic' 'traditional' and less 'real' 'urban' Aborigines forms a significant sub-text in the repatriation issue. As noted in Chapter 3, the wider (but not exclusively non-Aboriginal) Australian public perceives Aboriginal 'tradition' as comprising the lifestyle and ceremonies of an Aboriginal culture largely unchanged since contact. Associated with this attitude is the implicit correlation of 'traditional' culture with an Aboriginal 'race' and the consequent frequent denial of an Aboriginal identity to those people who have Aboriginal and European ancestry, live in the more urban areas of Australia and do not follow what is considered to be an authentic 'traditional' lifestyle.

The majority of Aboriginal communities to have requested and/or received ancestral remains from institutions in the past decade have been those perceived as 'non-traditional' or 'urban' people. This is, of course, not to say that such people do not identify as Aborigines (or Kooris, Murris, Noongah etc.), but only that they do not conform to outside perceptions of the culturally pristine Australian indigene. While there are many reasons why the return of ancestral remains is of great significance to Aboriginal people, those involved in the reburial campaign have usually cited spiritual concerns as the main grounds for requesting the repatriation of their ancestors. Perhaps unsurprisingly, arguments employed to oppose these requests have frequently denied the authenticity of such beliefs (see Chapter 4). Thus, some archaeologists have claimed that in 'real tribal areas', Aborigines do not care about human bones once they have passed through ceremony (e.g. Interview F 21.11.1995) and that demands can therefore be dismissed because they are made by 'urban' Aborigines ('political radicals') who have, by intimation, 'lost' their culture, have no 'traditional' foundation on which to make such requests and are using the reburial issue for purely political ends (see Chapter 4).

Although the reburial campaign is clearly saturated with political issues and is in itself a modern development, there has been opposition by Aboriginal people to the collecting of their ancestors' remains since the early nineteenth century (see Chapter 2). More importantly however, accusations of inauthenticity from some members of the scientific community invalidate the development and mutability of 'tradition' and its use within the contemporary context, despite the very role of science in prompting such changes. Moreover, by judging beliefs to be inauthentic and dismissing political demands as invalid, scientists not only deny the very real spiritual concerns of many Aboriginal people today but disempower those who may not follow what is considered a 'traditional' lifestyle. Such attitudes are a manifestation of the ossification of 'true' Aboriginal culture in a static and timeless past and is a perpetuation of the denial of a 'real' Aboriginal identity to those categorised as 'urban' or 'non-traditional'. As such, they are examples of the way in which science continues both to presume an exclusive and authoritative knowledge about Aboriginal culture - past and present - and to impose identities upon Aboriginal people (see Chapter 3).

The resistance by scientists to demands which they construe as politically motivated may be one factor which has prompted Aboriginal groups consistently to emphasise

‘traditional’ arguments in reburial campaigns. Thus, as described by Jacobs (1988) in her analysis of the construction of Aboriginal identity in the Land Rights process, by focusing attention on ‘traditional’ concerns for the appropriate treatment of the dead, groups may be expressing their Aboriginality in ways acceptable to those controlling access to human remains as a strategy to effect a successful campaign outcome. Both Land Rights and the reburial campaign demand control over aspects of Aboriginal culture deemed central to Aboriginal identity. Indeed the dead, the living and the land are often described as components of one another: As Weatherall explained on 31.9.1991 at the ceremony to handover the Edinburgh Collection to Aboriginal representatives at Heathrow airport:

One of the major things with Aboriginal people [is that] they always believe that we go back to the earth - become one with the land our mother. That land is very sacred to us ... our ancestors’ blood runs in that country ... their heart is there, every bit of their body is there. [The same blood] that runs in that country is in [my] veins ... and in [those of other Aboriginal people]. It’s the same thing. That’s not just a piece of land, its sacred. Sacred land - that’s our father, our great grandfather.

While both campaigns have been concerned with, amongst other things, ‘traditional’ beliefs and have been advanced by ‘traditional’ people, they have been made into national and international issues by so-called ‘urban’ Aborigines, those who have been most dispossessed of land and their ancestors’ remains. By bringing what has been termed ‘bone rights’ by a critical media (e.g. *Bulletin* 4.9.1984) into the political arena and the public eye through, for example, the lobbying of Government, the signing of petitions and the staging of demonstrations, ‘urban’ Aborigines have, as Beckett (1988: 208) has observed in reference to the Land Rights campaign, “been able in some degree to shift the emphasis away from ungeneralised particularities of tribe, country and kinship”. Such a shift provides one means of breaking the catch 22 situation in which such groups have found themselves - that while (and because) they are the most dispossessed they are the least able to claim the return of their heritage on ‘traditional’ grounds as is required by the wider Australian community. Aboriginal human remains have thus become not only a “spiritual resource”, but, “the means by which the Aboriginal past is substantialised in the Australian present, and the locus in which Aboriginality can be realised through self-determination” (Beckett 1988: 208).

The reburial of remains by Aboriginal people on their traditional lands can also become a very powerful public statement about Aboriginal rights to that area as, for example, in the ‘traditional’ burial of Tambo by the traditional owners of Palm Island in the presence of dignitaries such as the American Ambassador and the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (see Appendix 3). Certainly, there have been fears voiced by many local white communities that the reburial of remains on non-Aboriginal land might lead to a land claim in the future (Sydney Morning Herald 29.1.1987, 30.1.1987; Cooma-Monaro Express 27.2.1992). Although no such cases have, as yet, eventuated, the possibility that they might occur is one reason why private land owners have sometimes been wary of agreeing to reburial on their properties (L. Ormond-Parker pers. comm.). Certainly, reburial has often invested places with new spiritual meaning, whether or not such areas were previously regarded as in any way sacred. Tambo’s burial, for example, has made Palm Island Side an area of special significance for many in the Palm Island community (Interview W. Palm Island 19.7.1995) and, according to Creamer (1988: 57) the reburial that occurred in 1978 at a pre-contact Aboriginal cemetery at Wallaga Lake in New South Wales served to ‘re-activate’ this place as a sacred site. That more than a symbolic relationship can exist between the sacredness of reburial sites and Aboriginal rights of ownership to such places is evidenced in Tasmania where in 1984 a claim was made by TAC for the site of the nineteenth century Aboriginal settlement at Oyster Cove. According to Cove (1995: 123-124) the claim was not made on the basis that Oyster Cove had any particular ‘traditional’ meaning but because this area’s great historical significance was “equivalent to that of a sacred site”. Because the later cremation of the Crowther Collection at Oyster Cove reportedly made the site *more* sacred for Tasmanian Aborigines (e.g. Hobart Mercury 17.4.1984), this event clearly strengthened the basis of TAC’s land claim, regardless of other spiritual reasons for using this area for funerary purposes. Perhaps this at least partly explains why the Tasmanian Government fought so hard, but ultimately unsuccessfully, to have the remains cremated by Government officials in a municipal cemetery away from Oyster Cove (see Chapter 4). As Turnbull (1993: 15) has commented, the reburial of ancestral remains can thus be seen as “both an affirmation of Aboriginal identity and integral to an ongoing struggle for the recognition of sovereignty to the lands Europeans took and named Australia”.

5.3.c. Aboriginality.

As noted in Chapter 4 and detailed in Appendices 1 and 3, the return of ancestral remains has frequently brought pride and unity to Aboriginal communities. On one level this outcome stems from the sense of achievement associated with fulfilling responsibilities towards the ancestors and the (at least temporary) cohesion brought about by the involvement of community members in sometimes protracted campaigns for the return of remains, discussions surrounding how and where to rebury, and a reburial ceremony itself. On Palm Island the pride engendered by Tambo's return was accentuated by the unprecedented involvement together of both young and old people and the high profile and public nature of the repatriation. As detailed in Appendix 3, the unity which Tambo's return brought to the Palm Island community is still a recurrent theme in the conversations of those who recall the event.

At another level, repatriation and reburial are loci for processes which both construct and reaffirm Aboriginality, empowering its participants by enabling them to assert, define (and thus take control over) their own identity - often in a very public manner. As one of the organisers of Tambo's funeral observed, for Palm Island's young people, the return of Tambo's body had:

made them feel real important, it really showed their true identity. That's what it really was on that day - [it] made them feel really proud, of not only who they were but what they are. And what it means to be Bwgaman to us; true identity as an Aboriginal person and a Palm Islander (PI.v).

Reburial is one facet of what has been termed Aboriginal 'cultural revival' (e.g. Creamer 1988), an upsurge of interest in the 'traditional' past that has occurred throughout Australia since the 1970s, but particularly within communities living in more settled areas. As Creamer (1988: 57) has observed, 'cultural revival' frequently employs knowledge about the 'traditional' past in conjunction with 'traditional' material items and the use of sites of 'traditional' significance to make a "powerfully symbolic statement about the distinctiveness of modern Aboriginal identity". Reburial, sometimes comprising any or all of 'traditional' ceremony, the bones of the ancestors and the reuse

of Aboriginal burial grounds, can therefore be viewed as a fusion of many of the factors which contribute to 'cultural revival' and which not only articulate, strengthen and construct local Aboriginal identity but Aboriginality as a pan-Australian commonality. For while using elements from the past specific and significant to one local group, reburial also clearly differentiates between those who are Aboriginal and those who are not. Indeed it might be questioned whether there is any other process that could affirm the Aboriginality of 'urban' people more effectively than the reburial of 'traditional' ancestors with 'traditional' ceremony on 'traditional' lands.

However while not to deny the occurrence of the phenomenon it describes nor the vital importance of 'tradition' in the construction of modern Aboriginal identity, 'cultural revival', at least in the case of reburial, may be a misleading term. First, because it implies a prior loss of 'culture' and identity and is thus complicit with perceptions of Aboriginality which revolve around the degree to which a community enacts what is outwardly considered a 'traditional' lifestyle. Second, because it might imply a return to a pristine traditional past and thus again denies the mutability of 'tradition' and its role in the contemporary world. Third, and perhaps most significantly, the term 'revival' ignores the frequent conjunction of modern and 'traditional' concerns that occurs in reburial ceremonies as well as the fact that reburial has perhaps more to do with the shared history of Aboriginal and European society than it does with pre-contact Australia. The contribution that repatriation and reburial makes towards modern Aboriginal identity (locally and/or nationally defined) does not, therefore, derive only from the revitalisation of pre-contact 'tradition', but rather from the way in which various elements from both the pre- and post-contact past *and* the present are conjoined in the active development of contemporary Aboriginal customs and beliefs.

Amongst others (e.g. Cowlishaw 1993, Lattas 1993, Tyler 1993), Keeffe (1988) and Hollinsworth (1992) have provided a view of Aboriginality in which the traditional past, the colonial experience and the current relationship between white and black Australia all play significant roles. Keeffe and Hollinsworth contend that the many facets of modern Aboriginality can be divided into two major themes, both of which have developed (and are constantly developing) in response to the relationship between Aboriginal people and the dominant society. The first theme, 'Aboriginality-as-persistence' is characterised by

an emphasis on a cultural continuity with pre-contact Aboriginal society, the endurance of a distinct, essential and inherently Aboriginal identity, and the belief that these elements are found, in one form or another, throughout Aboriginal Australia. As Keffe (1988: 68) notes, Aboriginality-as-persistence is “founded on a particular notion of culture as a fixed body of knowledge and concepts that are described as being genetically transmitted and reproduced”. In such analysis Aboriginal descent, to whatever degree, is clearly a crucial component of modern Aboriginality (Hollinsworth 1992: 141; and see Lattas 1993).

The second theme, ‘Aboriginality-as-resistance’, emphasises “resistance to white authority, political struggle and collective solidarity” (Keffe 1988: 68), and is commonly expressed using familiar symbols of power employed by the dominant society - for example, the Aboriginal flag, passport and the tent embassy (Keffe 1988: 68, 71). Significantly, the assumption and assertion of a pan-Aboriginality which underlies both themes is in direct contrast to the frequent denial of Aboriginality to ‘urban’ Aborigines and, as Keffe suggests (1988: 71), was almost certainly developed by those disempowered by this definition as a strategy to combat such pejorative categorisation. The themes of persistence and resistance are intricately interlinked and can exist in both easy unison and in extreme tension with one another. As Keffe (1988: 72) notes, they “can be seen as parts of a sometimes contradictory unity, with the significance of persistence or resistance being stressed depending on context and social purpose”. These themes are not, therefore, mutually exclusive but are instead frequently mutually reliant: “the persistence of Aboriginal people is partially due to successful and ongoing resistance, and contemporary political actions makes use of both notions” (Keffe 1988: 68).

Repatriation and reburial are suffused with elements of both Aboriginality-as-persistence and Aboriginality-as-resistance. Requests for the return of remains articulate and assert cultural continuity through their focus on persisting pan-Aboriginal ‘traditional’ concerns to accord the dead appropriate treatment (see Chapter 4). The use of ‘traditional’ elements in most reburial ceremonies also articulates this form of Aboriginality. Moreover, the identification of collected remains as ancestors confirms the descent of modern ‘urban’ communities from individuals in the ‘traditional’ past, thus confirming

the Aboriginal identity of such groups by virtue of their genetic inheritance. Nowhere has the 'descent' factor perhaps been more apparent and more significant than in Tasmania, a State with a history of denying Aboriginal status to its indigenous population, usually on the promulgated fiction that Truganini had indeed been the 'last Tasmanian' (Cove 1995: 86, 102-139). As Cove (1995: 150, and see Chapter 4) observes, by demanding the return of Truganini's remains in 1970 "for her descendants", the Aboriginal Information Centre effectively challenged the State Government's grounds for denying Tasmanian Aboriginality at a time when establishing an outwardly 'acceptable' basis for such an identity was crucial for the advance of Aboriginal rights in Tasmania:

Truganini provided a basis for self-identification as stipulated in the Commonwealth's definition of Aboriginality. Individuals of Aboriginal descent had probably experienced discrimination which could be readily linked to the dehumanised treatment of Truganini's remains and continued denial of her deathbed request for dignity. Not only was the Tasmanian Aboriginal rights movement based on individual self-identification, there was a need for concrete issues around which mobilisation could occur and acquire external validity. The issue of Truganini's remains spoke to all these dimensions (Cove 1995: 150).

The skeletal remains of other nineteenth century Tasmanian Aborigines have had a similar significance for some of today's Tasmanians. As Phylis Pitchford, a member of the Flinders Island community, reportedly commented about the importance of the discovery of the exact location of Tasmanian Aboriginal graves in the cemetery at Wyballena, "its also about our identity - that we are here, that we exist" (Hobart Mercury 29.11.1990).

The history of the collecting of Aboriginal human remains is in part a history of indigenous resistance (see Chapter 2), the remains of certain individuals being particularly significant. The preserved head of Yagan and the skull of Carnambeigle, for example, symbolise active Aboriginal opposition to European settlement, as do the as yet unlocated remains of Jandamarra and Pemulwye. On Palm Island, Tambo's story is frequently equated with survival and resistance and indeed encapsulates the themes of removal, endurance and return that can be associated with the history of this community. As one (Bwgaman) Palm Islander observed:

Its good for us ... [it] brings up morale to know that he went over there ... he done it, one of our people went across to [America] living their lifestyle, stood up to the weather conditions and [if he can do that] then so can we, he's like a hero (PI viib).

While obviously a modern political struggle, the reburial campaign is one facet of a continuing Aboriginal resistance to white authority which can be traced back to the contact period. In the reburial campaign, resistance is targeted upon science, an institution which, since colonisation, has been integral to the construction and maintenance of European hegemony (Turnbull 1993: 14 and see Chapter 3). The reburial campaign seeks not only to regain culturally significant items which have been appropriated in the past but in doing so to challenge and oppose the identities which continue to be imposed upon Aboriginal people. Also typical of Aboriginality-as-resistance, requests for the repatriation of remains, and indeed the significance of local reburial events, are frequently couched as pan-Aboriginal concerns, enforcing the notion of shared cultural practices, a collective solidarity and a common identity for Australia's indigenes. Thus in her speech at Truganini's cremation ceremony in May 1976, Rosalind Langford reportedly noted how "the degrading of [Truganini's] body has brought the Aboriginal race together for one cause - to have her rest in peace" (Aboriginal News 1976, 3(2): 8). It is even possible that the reburial issue may be symbolically extending the concept of pan-Aboriginality into the past, given the frequent draping of the Aboriginal flag over boxes containing returned remains and David Mowaljarlai's suggestion that unprovenanced ancestral remains should be buried at Uluru, a site which not only has significance for the local Aboriginal community and Aboriginal people in general, but is associated with Aboriginal culture by non-Aborigines both within and outside Australia.

5.4. Conclusions.

By detailed examination of the collecting and repatriation of Aboriginal human remains, this thesis has documented a 'social history' of such items. This 'social history' has revealed that as remains have moved through different social contexts in space and time they have been invested with power, a power which ultimately derives from the

association of human remains with the identity(ies) of Aboriginal people and those who study the remains themselves. This power has not only had a significant impact on Aboriginal identity(ies) but has produced perhaps the most contentious issue ever to be faced by the archaeological discipline and one which has caused, at least in Australia, a re-negotiation of the relationship between archaeologists and Aboriginal people. That such power has been invested in human remains and is not inherent, 'produced' by their unique status as both material things and the physical remains of Aboriginal ancestors, is shown by the dispute which developed in 1995 between the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council (TALC) and La Trobe University in Melbourne about artefacts excavated from Tasmanian sites between 1987 and 1991. With both TALC and La Trobe voicing arguments that echoed previous debates about the repatriation of Aboriginal human remains (see Murray & Allen 1995), it is clear that the issues of power, knowledge, identity and control which surrounded the reburial issue are likely to remain important with reference to other items regarded both as archaeological data and as Aboriginal heritage.

From the way that physical anthropologists once 'constructed' the Aboriginal body as inferior to that of the European, to the dismissal by some scientists that modern political demands for the repatriation of remains made by 'non-traditional' Aborigines, this thesis has shown that Aboriginal bones have been situated within a discourse made hegemonic in part by its imposition of identities upon Aboriginal people. In repatriation campaigns and reburial events, Aboriginal human remains have continued to be a locus for processes that have constructed and articulated Aboriginal identity (whether locally or nationally defined), but the defining has been under Aboriginal control and has been instrumental in the empowerment of many Aboriginal people. Thus while, as Lattas (1993) has argued, the importance of the living Aboriginal body to modern Aboriginal self-identity has been largely ignored, this thesis has demonstrated that the importance of the role of the dead Aboriginal body in the past and present construction of Aboriginal identity(ies) should not be underestimated.

It has been shown that throughout the history of the collecting and repatriation of Aboriginal human remains these items have accumulated multiple layers of meaning: human remains as ancestors, specimens, commodities, objects, artefacts, metonyms,

symbols etc. However, even though each group and/or individual with interests in human remains has attributed a different significance to them, a fundamental distinction has emerged between those who view such items as predominantly 'objects' and those who view them as predominantly 'people'. While sometimes polarised, these different perceptions of human remains have been shown to be not necessarily mutually exclusive. Indeed this thesis has demonstrated that if there are boundaries between the different meanings attributed to human remains then they are not rigidly fixed and are frequently crossed.

The flexibility of 'meaning' which has been demonstrated in relation to human remains has wide implications for archaeology and anthropology, for these are disciplines which seek to understand past and present societies through the interpretation of 'things' - whether these be, for example, material culture, skeletal material or contemporary social practices. However, as has been seen, it appears that scientists have frequently found it difficult to conceptualise that the term 'data' is simply one more definition; that objects of scientific analysis can hold as many different meanings in the contemporary context as they did in the past. The frequent refusal by scientists to accept the validity of other 'meanings' that are attributed to Aboriginal human remains today has been shown to derive from their status as inalienable possessions. Scientists should, therefore, not view their own interest in such items as purely objective academic enquiry but must recognise that for them also, like for Aboriginal people, human remains have a social meaning. When scientists recognise that their knowledge of human remains is also situational, they may be more able to accept the validity of other, seemingly opposing and threatening, perspectives.

By assuming that the meaning of 'things' is unitary and static, archaeologists and anthropologists have constrained their own ability to understand and perceive not only the role of objects in society but how societies and social practices can, and do, change. By discarding the need for 'things' to fit within circumscribed definitions, the dynamism of past and present human societies becomes apparent. Only then will the archaeological and anthropological disciplines be able wholly to free themselves from discourse that imposes restrictive identities on the 'Other'. Far from being the 'death' of archaeology

and physical anthropology, repatriation may be the process which enables these disciplines to escape from prohibitive paradigms.

Science restricts itself and imposes identities on others in part by the terminology it employs. In this thesis the word 'tradition' has been highlighted as particularly unsatisfactory, ambiguous and prohibitive. If Aboriginal society today (whether nationally or locally defined) is to be recognised as vital and dynamic, and thus be allowed to escape from the 'pages of history books' and take its place in the contemporary world it must be accepted as valid that people use whatever they consider appropriate in the self-determination of their own identity(ies). Reburial is a dramatic example of how the past and the present are used for this purpose. 'Tradition' has been shown *not* to be only customs and practices located in the past, but a vital and constantly developing theme within modern Aboriginality.

Reconciliation through repatriation occurs not only because appropriated items are returned but because this process accords recognition and respect to the legitimacy of modern Aboriginal society. If repatriation is to continue to play an active role in the reconciliation process, it is therefore crucial that all requests for control over ancestral remains are accorded equal respect, regardless of whether or not the remains in question are perceived by Europeans as 'the dead', and thus justifiably returnable. Since the late 1960s Aboriginal people have been successful in lobbying Australian State and Federal Government to force Australian museums to relinquish control over the human remains in their possession. Being neither British citizens nor a client group of British museums, it is doubtful whether Aborigines will ever be able to bring about a similar situation in the UK - or indeed in any other country other than Australia. It is therefore up to individuals in control of Aboriginal human remains outside Australia to reassess their responsibilities in regard to these collections. For while it may be easy for modern curators to excuse the actions of their predecessors as those of a less enlightened age, this thesis has shown that the contemporary significance of the historical context of collections of Aboriginal human remains, for the future of science, Aboriginal people, and the relationship between the two, is too great simply to be ignored.

This thesis has shown that the reburial issue continues to raise issues concerning the “connections between archaeological theory, research methods and politics” (Layton 1989: 1). In particular, the reburial issue - and the past analysis of collected human remains - highlights the question of objectivity in scientific research (Layton 1989, Zimmerman 1989c). While the subjectivity of nineteenth and early twentieth century analyses and interpretation of human remains is accepted, and its practice and results dismissed as invalid on this basis, current and future research is assumed to be objective. Indeed, it is often the claimed objectivity of science that constitutes a major component of the arguments used by those who are opposed to reburial. However, is it possible that the analyses of today will, in their turn, be dismissed as subjective by scientists in the future? Can, or should, it be assumed that subjectivity in the analysis of human remains stopped with the UNESCO declaration on race? Are scientists being objective in their claims to objectivity? Should a claim to objectivity legitimate denial of indigenous demands?

Two examples serve to question whether or not current osteological analyses are really as objective as generally assumed. The ability of standard scientific methods to accurately determine the age at death of individuals was placed in considerable doubt by research undertaken as part of the Spitalfields project in London (see Molleson et al 1993). Between 1984 and 1986, the remains of nearly 1000 individuals of known age at death were removed by archaeologists from the crypt of Christ Church, Spitalfields. Subsequent archival research enabled additional information about their life histories to be obtained for over a third of the individuals collected. The Spitalfields project thus provided the possibility of studying a group of remains about which considerable information already existed, and thereby an unparalleled opportunity to test the accuracy of standard scientific techniques. A great disparity emerged between information about age at death provided by the historical sources and by scientific analysis of the skeletal material itself. While it may be suggested that such disparity simply demonstrated the ‘inaccuracy’ of standard scientific techniques, it raises the possibility of subjectivity in the discipline. The widely held assumption that such a basic characteristic as age at death could be accurately and easily obtained from skeletal remains has perhaps led researchers to fail both in recognising the variability in their data and, more importantly,

to test their results by empirical observation, as 'good' scientific method demands. As researchers on the project concluded,

The lesson from Christ Church must surely be that it is extremely dangerous to make *assumptions* about populations from skeletal samples about whom nothing is known except that they represent all that remains of dead human beings (Molleson et al 1993: 213 my emphasis).

Although the Spitalfields project tested standard scientific techniques, it does not appear to have compared the results of the same analysis undertaken by different researchers - a comparison which might have demonstrated whether or not individual subjectivity influenced the analysis. However, it may be possible to make such a comparison from results of separate analyses undertaken by Steven Webb and Denise Donlon on the Edinburgh Collection after its repatriation to Australia in 1991. As noted in Appendix 1, there were large discrepancies between Donlon's and Webb's results, particularly in their assessment of which remains were post-colonial and which remains were either of non-Aboriginal origin or of both Aboriginal and European descent.

Subjectivity in current and future analyses may become apparent if standard techniques continue to be applied despite evidence provided by the Spitalfields project that they are highly inaccurate. Certainly, the results of Webb's and Donlon's research on the Edinburgh Collection appear to demonstrate at least a continuing assumption that the 'race' of individuals can be accurately and objectively determined through examination of their cranial structure, despite evidence to the contrary provided by nineteenth and early twentieth century physical anthropology. The discrepancies in their results only serve to underscore how subjective such analysis may be. Furthermore, their analyses have considerable implications for managing the repatriation of remains to communities, demonstrating, once again, that it is critical for remains to be returned with as much accompanying documentation as possible.

The history of nineteenth and early twentieth century physical anthropology, the evidence provided by the Spitalfields project and the recent analyses carried out on the Edinburgh Collection all raise the question of whether *any* way of measuring skeletal remains and explaining the results can be objective. While I do not contend that observation without

theory is possible, the analysis of human remains underscores the critical need for theories to be open to empirical test if their results are to be informatively assessed and their claims to objectivity upheld. The future results of the Provenancing Project undertaken by Colin Pardoe may assist our understanding of the role of subjectivity and objectivity when measurement of physical morphology is used to determine cultural origin.

However, is it really valid or informative to attempt to compare the 'accuracy' of past and current scientific practices, to judge whether one is more 'correct' or 'objective' than the other? If, as Foucault contends, every discipline has its discourse then the practice and results of a discipline must be examined within its own historical context, recognising a society's specific "regime of truth" (Foucault 1972-77: 131) which guides, determines and sanctions what it believes to be 'true' or 'false' (and see Kuhn 1962). Nonetheless, while it may be easy to recognise the integrity of the discourse of nineteenth and early twentieth century physical anthropology, it may only be issues such as the reburial debate which enable us to identify and accept that the current discipline also operates within its own discursive practices.

As illustrated in the recent discussion between Hassan (1997) and Hodder (1997), the degree of objectivity and subjectivity in archaeological research is still a matter of great, and heated, debate. It would appear that central to this debate is the ongoing issue of whether there is any "'real' past somewhere 'out there' which can be 'discovered' and 'objectively' analysed, if only we can 'get at it'" (Ucko 1989: xiii). This issue, and its implications, are apparent in arguments for the retention of human remains that are predicated on the belief that skeletal remains have an enduring scientific significance, containing the 'answer' to certain questions if only the 'correct' techniques can be applied. According to this type of understanding, regardless of scientific practices having been previously developed and discarded as 'incorrect', the bones themselves will *always* hold the solution to the critical questions of human origins and diversity. This perception of science is particularly useful in strategies for retaining remains, as it does not require any objective proof of the scientific importance of such material or the relevance of such research for indigenous people - as many groups have requested. The importance and primacy accorded by scientists to the *permanent* scientific relevance that

they claim for human remains is highlighted by anti-reburialist arguments which place this factor, and scientific objectivity, in opposition to what scientists pronounce are the transient and emotive, and thus subjective, reasons put forward by indigenous groups for their return (see Appendix 1). While once again open to the criticism that such views continue to uphold the status of science as the only authoritative source of knowledge about the past, they also demonstrate how difficult it has been for scientists to deal with the strength of genuine feeling that the reburial issue has engendered amongst (but not solely within) the indigenous community. Because 'emotion' is seen to have no place within academic debate, scientists have disregarded indigenous arguments voiced with emotional intensity. Over and above the evidence presented in this thesis that scientists may not be as detached and objective about the reburial debate as they claim, is it valid or even instructive to dismiss the emotional aspects of this issue? As some authors (e.g. Zimmerman 1989c, Swidler et al 1997) have noted, it may instead be crucial that emotion is *not* kept out of the reburial debate, demonstrating as it does how important is the social meaning of human remains, how deep is the indigenous concern about this issue and how significant for individual people are the implications of conducting scientific research.

This perception of science as "the one enterprise that draws constantly nearer to some goal set by nature in advance" (Kuhn 1962: 171) perhaps makes not only 'objective' analysis of current scientific method more difficult, but finds no place for contemporary indigenous meanings that contradict those offered by science. Alternative meanings are considered obstructive - at worst resulting in the 'death' of the discipline. However, as various authors are beginning to show (see, for example, Layton 1989, Swidler et al 1997), it is possible, and perhaps more instructive about concepts of the past and the meaning of objects, for scientists to accept that different meanings can and do co-exist. As Kuhn (1962: 171) has asked:

need there be any such goal [of 'truth', set by nature in advance]? Can we not account for both science's existence and its success in terms of evolution from the community's state of knowledge at any given time? Does it really help to imagine that there is some one full, objective, true account of nature and that the proper measure of scientific achievement is the extent to which it brings us closer to that ultimate goal?

However, whether or not past, current or future research can be called objective, is perhaps less informative about the role or *nature* of objectivity in scientific research - and its perceived value - than its use as a reason why remains should be retained. For the claim that objectivity legitimates possession of human remains is not, in itself, an objective statement. Such a claim can not be empirically tested and clearly has subjective intentions (to retain remains within the scientific enclave). As Layton (1989: 13-14) has noted, simply because human remains are considered to be of value to science, does not mean that science consequently has property rights over them. What such a contention does underscore, however, is not only how prevalent is the assumption that objectivity in science is self-evident but, and clearly these two are connected, how crucially important 'objective-ness' is perceived to be for the self-legitimation of science and the belief in scientific authority.

As 'objectivity' is used in arguments to oppose reburial, so it continues to be used to disregard and dismiss the political and ethical implications of ongoing research and the curation of remains against the wishes of indigenous people. Although scientists have dismissed the demands of indigenous groups as political, they have been less ready to accept that their own actions may also be political in nature. By, for example, denying the validity of modern indigenous demands and assuming a position of authority about the indigenous past, scientists are sustaining hegemonic relations of power that were maintained by the collecting and interpretation of human remains in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The political implications of skeletal remains research can not simply be dismissed as irrelevant or somehow separate from the science itself. As Zimmerman (1989c: 66) commented in reference to the reburial debate in the USA, archaeologists can no longer "protect themselves with the mystical, but flimsy, cloaks of 'science' and 'objectivity' as they circle the wagons around the ivory tower".

Many European museums refuse to return any remains on the basis of their enduring scientific significance and, in doing so, appear to consider that scientific interest in human remains precludes any ethical considerations. This stance is not universal. The history of the development of the reburial debate demonstrates that many scientists have considered there to be instances when ethical considerations might validly restrict scientific research. Initially, such instances were restricted to those where remains were

of named individuals but gradually other ‘types’ of remains began to be included, such those of known individuals, those of post-colonial individuals, those of individuals with known descendants, those of individuals disinterred in ‘unethical’ circumstances. In what can be viewed as a highly subjective determination, the degree of information about the identity of remains and their method of disinternment became the principle criteria in resolving whether research was considered ‘ethical’ or not. As noted in Chapter 5, decisions about which remains were to be returned were more to do with European attitudes towards the dead than any clear scientific parameters. The wishes of indigenous groups were *not* the principle concern, as many demands for remains made no distinction between named or unknown individuals, post-colonial remains or fossils.

As McGuire (1989) has noted in reference to the reburial debate in the United States, one reason why there has been a distinctly different attitude held by the white population towards disturbing white burials and those of indigenes was that only the former were perceived to be part of a living culture. Strategies for denying indigenous claims for the return of remains are often based on this premise (see Chapters 4 and 5) and contend that indigenous people have no right to remains unless they can prove a direct genealogical link to them. It is surely highly euro-centric both to accept only biological descent as a valid ‘connection’ to remains, and to expect indigenous groups to produce written genealogies, given the history of colonial invasion and the lack of historical records pre-contact. Such requirements, along with the contention by scientists that modern groups can have no biological or cultural connection with ancient remains, are not only another example of both the continuing assumption that archaeologists have the sole authority to speak about the past and the ongoing imposition of identity upon contemporary peoples (see Chapter 5), but appear to at best ignore certain realities. Although by making these requirements scientists have introduced biological descent as a criteria for determining property rights over remains, they nonetheless ignore the fact that pre-colonial remains are genetically more similar to modern indigenous groups than they will ever be to European populations (and see Layton 1989: 14). Some anti-reburialists do seem to recognise that this is the case but, paradoxically, use it in support of the retention of remains. Thus, while contending that modern Aboriginal groups could have no possible biological or cultural link to ancient remains, one eminent Australian archaeologist argued that it was in the best interest of Aboriginal groups not to rebury such material

because of the possibility that they could be used in the future as proof of indigenous occupation and thus as evidence in support of land claims cases (Interview F 21.11.1995). Such a view demonstrates how flexible science can be when used to retain remains within the scientific enclave.

There appear, therefore, to be considerable problems in using ethical considerations as principle criteria for determining research guidelines and developing means of resolving the reburial debate. Such considerations have been both too exclusive to, and variable within, the scientific community to provide a firm basis for policy formulation. Moreover, as this thesis has shown, the reburial debate is less to do with whether or not it is ethical to collect or conduct scientific research on the human remains of other cultures than it is about *control* over such material. The key to resolving the reburial debate may therefore lie in recognising indigenous *ownership* of human remains, as part of the recognition of their rights to control their own cultural heritage. In the United States, NAGPRA has legislated that Native American human remains, funerary objects and objects of cultural patrimony are the property of indigenous groups. In Australia, while some archaeologists have acknowledged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ownership of human remains (see Chapter 4) the Museums Australia policy continues to be criticised for its ambiguous approach to this issue. Indigenous ownership of human remains is not officially recognised by any of the institutions which continue to curate collections of human remains in the UK. As current scientific study of indigenous human remains in the USA and Australia has shown, recognition of indigenous ownership of such material does *not* mean the permanent termination of archaeological research. To the contrary, as demonstrated in Swidler et al (1997) recognition of indigenous ownership is likely to provide the only meaningful basis upon which a new and mutually beneficial relationship can be forged between the academy and the living populations whose past is the subject of scientific enquiry.