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The cultural interface: An exploration of the
intersection of Western knowledge systems
and Torres Strait Islanders positions and
experiences

Thesis submitted by

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in December 1997

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies
James Cook University of North Queensland

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.....
(M. N. Nakata)

24 December 1997

A b s t r a c t

THE CULTURAL INTERFACE:
AN EXPLORATION OF THE
INTERSECTION OF
WESTERN KNOWLEDGE
SYSTEMS AND TORRES
STRAIT ISLANDER
POSITIONS AND
EXPERIENCES

by Martin N. Nakata

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This thesis is a study of the intersection of Western knowledge systems and Islander positions and experiences as they are inscribed in the literature on Torres Strait Islanders. By exploring and charting processes in the production of knowledges on Torres Strait Islanders over the last Century, this thesis has sought to understand what conditions the possibilities for Islanders in a Western order of things and to learn about whether historical relations between us, as formed discursively in the literature between Islanders and non-Islanders, constrain educational possibilities for Islanders.

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

.....

M. N. Nakata

24 December 1997

A c k n o w l e d g m e n t

I wish to acknowledge my family Vicky, Sana and Lucy for supporting me throughout my entire studies and for encouraging me to continue. I particularly wish to thank Vicky, Sana, and Lucy: first, for allowing me to pursue a project with no guarantee of success and second, for putting their lives 'on hold'. I wish to thank Professor Mary Kalantzis for allowing me the space to explore a topic on my terms but especially for providing me with the courage to explore the uncertainties. In the main, however, none of this would have been possible without the financial assistance of the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs and their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Study program (ABSTUDY).

Dedication

For

Anthony Philemon Nakata (An-ton)

who contracted Sub-acute Sclerosing Pan-Encephalitis (SSPE) at the age of sixteen, and fought on in a comatosed state for two years before dying on

Friday 20 June 1997.

“After a day at school, and in one of his quiet moments of frustration, **An-ton** threatened to go to university just to write a book on peer pressure”, his mother reflects, “because he felt people at school really didn’t understand who he was or what it was like growing up today”.

An-ton

(1979-1997)

P r e f a c e

Fortunate is the Country that has no history; and Mer, and the other islands of the Torres Strait, have very little. (Raven-Hart, 1949, p. 58)

When I commenced my degree in education, I was motivated, not by a desire to teach, but by a need to understand the knowledge that teachers possessed so that I could work more effectively in the position I held as an Education Officer on Thursday Island in the Torres Strait. In this role, I was required to interact with teachers and Principals and I felt my ignorance of educational matters in a very personal way, and in a way that diminished both me and my contribution as an Islander to the educational needs of Torres Strait students. It seemed to me at that time, that 'local' knowledge was insufficient for me to make a contribution. 'Local' knowledge about Islander students included their background and what I knew, through experience, of their difficulties in schooling and was considered important enough for me, an Islander, to gain the position in preference to a non-Islander with educational qualifications. Because my views were often patronised or discounted by those in the school system, I felt that my position was merely a token offering and I was determined to change that, by learning more about the knowledge systems from which teachers understood and viewed the difficulties that Islander students experienced. These things together, I thought, would enable me to make a more effective contribution to improving the schooling experiences of Torres Strait Islanders.

It did not take long for me to feel a sense of disquiet about the university. Initial success was subdued by the sense of alienation I felt, in particular, from much of the cross-cultural and indigenous components of my course. They, to me, seemed to be less about 'me', 'us', or 'our situation' and more about

what the 'experts' thought about these things. This was what I had felt in my position as an education officer in the Strait. I had also felt it on numerous occasions when interacting with non-Islander people who seemed to know much more about my history and my 'situation' than I did and who thought nothing of correcting my own understandings with their own explanations. If, in my cross-cultural interactions, I had always been reminded of my ignorance, why, when I was seeking to address that ignorance, did I feel such a sense of disquiet about the knowledge that I was provided to overcome that ignorance?

At this time, my mother, in course of conversation, related to me her understanding of her history, and in particular, in relation to her family's pursuit of education. My mother had not read any accounts of Torres Strait history. She did not know what had been written about it but she had lived it. This brief account showed her understanding about the place of education in her family's life. She did not offer an analysis of how or why this was constrained by the oppressive administrative apparatus of the time. She did not know all the details. However, despite this 'ignorance', in a personal sense she had absorbed the analysis of her father and grandfather which was expressed in the way that education continued to be valued in her own household.

At the time of my undergraduate studies, I had not read many accounts of Torres Strait history either. In retrospect, I am glad that I had not because I gained a perspective that helped me to uphold Islander responses to the interventions in our lives, responses that were easily submerged in other accounts. That is, when I, as a student, came to read the historical literature and the educational literature on the Torres Strait Islanders, I read them, not from a position of 'ignorance' or 'neutrality' or as an 'onlooker'. Rather I read them from a position of awareness that this literature was an attempt to represent my experience and my forbears' experience, as well as an attempt to present an analysis of my, or my fellow Islanders' 'situation'. This brought to

light a significant omission. The readings and analyses brought down through family and collective consciousness, from which my own position was derived, were invariably absent, or by-passed or, more often, re-explained in such a way as to negate the validity of Islanders' understanding.

When trying to redress these practices, I and other fellow Islanders are accused by implication of 'getting it wrong' because we do not fully understand all that has influenced the context that shaped our experiences. A further criticism that Islanders have to endure is the implication that in the passing down of our understandings of events via the oral tradition, 'popular memory' distorts, exaggerates, misunderstands, fabricates, or simply 'forgets' the actual 'facts' of what was experienced. This growing awareness of the uneasy relationship between my lived experience and that ascribed to me by the texts produced about Islanders led to the focus of my study. I wanted to investigate the way these two 'realities' have met historically at the interface of Islander experience and Western knowledge systems.

Chapter One

THE CULTURAL INTERFACE: A RECONSIDERATION OF THE ISLANDER SUBJECT, THE EDUCATIONAL LITERATURE, AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES.

Their condition might be called the tragedy of the inarticulate. They could not make the intruder understand the injustice which had been inflicted upon them. They were left confused and hopeless. (Bleakley, 1961, p. 140)

This Chapter is a consideration of the political positions and experiences of first, my family, second, my time at the university, and third, my community in the Torres Strait. These three aspects of positioning and experience will then be contrasted to the view of the Islander position as recounted in the educational literature. This is not solely to point out omissions but to explain the non-representation of the political aspects of Islander lifeworlds at the intersection of non-Islander and Islander trajectories. This, in turn, will help set in place an alternate platform for re-theorising Islander positions as they stand in relation to non-Islander practices. A reading of the texts that position Islanders is central to this task as it illuminates the conditions that limit what can or can not be included as 'mainstream' historical knowledge.

The Political Position and Experiences of My Family

My mother is a Torres Strait Islander who grew up on Naghir Island in the Central Torres Strait region. Her grandfather was a prosperous and enterprising Samoan who owned a successful pearling fleet. He was educated in boyhood by the London Missionary Society at Upolo, Samoa, was widely travelled as a ship's bosun, and had spent time in both England and South

Africa before coming to the Torres Strait. Because he had wider knowledge of the world, when he married into the local population, he secured a lease over the family's islands. At the time he may have thought that this secured and legitimated his position, certainly, it prevented these islands being gazetted by the Queensland government as Reserves in 1912. Recent investigations (Peterson, 1996) into the lease arrangements show that he was charged far in excess of what European entrepreneurs who held leases in other parts of the Strait were required to pay.

As an 'intruder' himself, non-Islander analysis would, perhaps quite fairly, posit my great-grandfather as exploitative of the local population. But he was a non-European, inserted into a racial hierarchy just above the local 'natives' and viewed by the family as a man who used this position to gain as much advantage as he could for the community. He was remembered as speaking good English and he valued education enough to employ teachers for his children. Who these were, and to what standard is not remembered in detail but a visitor who stayed with the family in 1946 on Naghir Island referred to the extensive English vocabulary of his son, my grandfather (Raven-Hart, 1949). He also noted a high standard of English in the younger generation on this island.

When my great-grandfather died, his assets (which, according to the family, included £10,000) were left to his family. It was never recovered. Investigations into 'the official records' by Peterson (1996) revealed that although he had made good money over his lifetime he did not in fact possess very much at the time of his death. The family, having an historical understanding that there were assets and a view that the government had never been completely trustworthy when dealing with Islander finances, fail to be convinced by this investigation. At the time, the family of course felt that they had been robbed, but were not quite sure how it was done.

For my mother's father, who became the next leader on Naghir Island, and who was my grandfather and an influence on me throughout my life, education, that is non-Islanders' education, knowledge, and language continued to be a matter of great importance. Education and English was needed not just for the development of our own community, it was also needed to understand and know the non-Islander people well so we could not be robbed again. We needed to understand how it was that they did things that seemed to advantage them but not us.

Because my grandfather was so keen for his children, including his daughters, to receive the best education that they could, my mother and her twin sister were sent away to board at the Convent School on Thursday Island in the 1930s, at the age of seven. My mother learned to read and write and do basic maths and received an education to Year four standard. This was in the mid-thirties, well before they were considered citizens, and the family funded their education. My mother also learnt to boil up the nun's habits and linen in the copper, to mend, starch, iron and scrub, to prepare food, to wait on priests at tables, to garden and milk goats, and so on. As a teenager she became, without any training, the teacher at the small school on Naghir Island and remained there until her marriage in the early fifties.

This school had been conceived, built, and paid for by her grandfather in 1904 (Lawrie, 1984). His only negotiation with the Queensland Government, who held the primary responsibility to provide schools, was for a fully qualified European teacher. One was appointed but she left the same year, enrolments having fallen to a level that did not officially warrant a government teacher. Unable to maintain enrolments by taking children from nearby islands, my great-grandfather confined himself to the education of his own community and employed his own teachers. Over the years, various teachers, mostly Islander teachers, were employed, including older family members such as my mother, or at other times the children were sent away to other schools. Thus this family (and the story is repeated with variations in

other parts of the Strait, e.g. Masig Island) was actively pursuing education for its children, and responding to changing circumstances, in an independent manner.

Continuing the pursuit for the children to have a 'better' education and better life-chances, my grandfather made a momentous decision to abandon his Island in 1964. Anyone who understands the attachment Islanders have for land, sea, and island way of life could perhaps understand the incredible pain and pressure my grandfather had to confront. But World War II and the decline in the pearling industry changed a lot for Torres Strait Islanders, and the economic and educational opportunities were much better on Thursday Island, the administrative centre for the Strait (Beckett, 1987; Prideaux, 1988; Ganter, 1994). It was the younger generation, that is my generation, with which he was concerned.

When I struggle with academic work, I often think of my grandfather. I think of his generous nature, his intelligence, his bitterness and suppressed anger and confusion over the intrusions of non-Islander control into his community. I think of his efforts to build on his own father's perceptions of the situation and the aspirations he held for his children and subsequent generations. And I think of the hopes he had for all his grandchildren that we could do 'better'. And his sadness towards the end of his life in 1988 when he realised that despite some successes, despite the fact that, yes, things had changed and that we were able to go away to schools on the Australian mainland, that we had 'more' education and some of us eventually made it to tertiary level, that relatively speaking, vis a vis non-Islander people, we were not really in a much better position than we had been all those years ago. His biggest sadness, though, was the self doubts he had about giving up his island and his community for this other life, and what for?

To this day, the island remains abandoned. To this day, there is no such community of people. As a community our legal status remains questionable

because of the lease arrangements, because of relocation - the very decisions made by us to improve our position. Today, in our separate isolations, such a community of people only remains in our thoughts and memories. But we still remain optimistic about a 'better' future. We took risks and lived with the positive and negative outcomes that accrued from those decisions.

My own education occurred mainly on Thursday Island, the administrative centre of the Torres Strait, first at the Convent that my mother had attended and then at the State primary and secondary schools. This period between the early sixties and the early seventies was a period of change for Islanders. The pearling industry declined and as a consequence the government allowed Islanders more freedom of movement to find work in other regions. Islanders were allowed to reside on Thursday Island. The right to vote was granted. Desegregation of schools occurred and requests for secondary education were finally answered with the extension of schooling to Year 10 on Thursday Island. With the election of the Whitlam government in 1972, access to southern schools for Year 11 and 12 would soon be provided. My education occurred across this changing context.

We were taught the Queensland curriculum, taught by non-Islander teachers who probably did not know we existed until they found out they had a transfer to the region. There was no recognition that English was a second or third language to us. In those days Torres Strait Creole, our local language, was not considered to be a language. It was just bad English, broken English (Shnukal, 1988). As well as my mother, my Japanese father was very keen for us to have the best education that was possible. To this end, he always spoke English to us as best he could and encouraged us at every moment to speak and read it, even buying us the Encyclopedia Britannica. All that I know of the Japanese language was learnt from other Japanese people, not from my father. Both my parents worked to provide their eight children with the material means to participate and do well.

We were continually exhorted by our parents to do 'better.' My memories of school were always of trying, trying, trying, of never getting it quite right, of never knowing what it was that I did not quite get right, of never being able to make myself understood, of always knowing that I was not understood in the ways that I meant. However, on Thursday Island I was able to do relatively well. It was not until I attended school on the Australian mainland that I had a credible measure of my real position. I understood nothing in the classroom. I understood nothing of what the teacher was teaching. I understood nothing of what we were required to read, nor why. I began to understand nothing of myself, and felt nothing but confusion. This was probably the time when I first took up drugs, and later turned to sports as a 'survival strategy', yet academically it made no difference. At the end of Year 11, I disappointed my parents and gave school away for good. I worked for fifteen years before entering university.

I think that my family's history and my own experiences provide a sharp edge to my perceptions of the outside world and our position in it and I think, as I look back on it, that this edge was part of the reason that drove me to see our position as political, when I approached academic work. This historical trajectory shows a community, since at least the 1880s, actively engaging with the changing world around them, intent on working in their own interests but nevertheless in relation to larger forces. Despite being unable to satisfactorily bring those forces to account, particularly in relation to financial and legal matters, my family did not remain blind or indifferent to their differential treatment but absorbed their perceptions into a view that oriented them to the future rather than the past. Whilst some may mourn the loss of 'pure' lineage and tradition from former times, perhaps my forbears considered autonomy and independence more preferable to patronisation and dependence; perhaps tradition was seen to be transportable and transplantable whilst yielding independence was an intolerable and humiliating burden. Perhaps independence was our tradition.

It can be seen that the Islander lifeworld was always positioned at the interface with non-Islander institutions, knowledges and economies. Our lives were always grounded in our relationship to their many influences. This is not to say that daily life was not grounded in other relationships as well. But it is to make the point that Islander orientation to the outside world and economy was a very real organising structure in our lives. The degree to which success in relation to these factors was valued was firstly grounded in material necessity. Like parents everywhere, mine worked to provide the means of a chance at a reasonable life. Education was seen to be necessary for economic security, the bottom having fallen out of the marine industry and there being fewer prospects for work. Secondly, success was a measure of stature and indicated an understanding of the knowledge of that world outside of the Strait - an understanding that would enable us to improve our position in relation to it, which in turn would reduce the constant struggle.

My experiences as an Islander and the analyses and understandings I derived from these, my family's, and the collective Torres Strait Islander experience have enabled me to hold one tenet central to my thesis. This is the idea that Islander experience and the analysis derived from that experience, however 'ignorant' of historical 'fact', or however 'ignorant' of an 'informed' understanding of the context of events, or however much it derived from just 'popular memory', is grounded in something that is significant to the ways that we have historically viewed our predicament and have enacted our lives. This continues to shape our ongoing responses to and uptake of changes brought on by non-Islander intervention. But as well, the 're-explaining' of the Islanders predicament and their needs by 'informed' or 'educated' or 'expert' people from non-Islander communities, often contains within it a sometimes unintended but oftentimes insidious negation of, or denial of, or refusal to accommodate, our experience and understanding of our own position as we confront alienating practices and knowledges.

It was from this lifeworld that I emerged to confront the knowledges inscribed in Western institutions. Having failed my last engagement at the secondary level, having engaged with a supposedly more sensitive and appropriate educational bureaucracy through my job, I arrived at the university, already with a political but largely unarticulated view of my situation.

My Political Position and Experiences at the University

I struggled in the university to articulate what I thought people did not understand about the position of Islanders in relation to educational processes and institutions, indeed, in our relation to the wider Australian community, its institutions and its knowledges and practices. Even with an Honours degree in Education, I felt completely alienated and isolated within the walls of an inclusive and enlightened Academy because I could not articulate my position in relation to these issues in a way that others could understand.

To find fault with the academy which was outwardly supportive, encouraging, and generally understanding was self-defeating when it was the very institution that I had to engage with successfully if I was going to contribute to improving the position of Torres Strait Islanders in education. My position in the university seemed to mirror the position of all Torres Strait Islanders as they too attempt to articulate themselves to the external forces which shape their lifeworlds, and in ways that will serve their interests better. Indeed, it was our relationship with the wider Australian community and its institutions that drove Islanders in the pursuit of improved educational outcomes (Torres Strait Islander Regional Education Committee, 1985; The Aboriginal Education Task Force, 1988; & Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1989).

Islanders have long understood their need to be educated in the ways of the non-Islander's world (Nakata, 1997a, & 1997b). Facility with the English language and understanding of non-Islander institutional knowledges and

practices, have been recognised as the path to effectively negotiating our position with non-Islanders about the terms and conditions of our participation in a changing order brought on by non-Islander intervention in our lifeworlds (Nakata, 1994, 1995a, & 1995b). But in engaging with the education process there has always been a view to defending our own position whilst incorporating and making effective use of the new (Nakata, Jensen, & Nakata, 1995). In operating in institutions from an already disadvantaged position then, educating ourselves runs the risk of blindly taking on knowledges and practices that have served to keep us in a disadvantaged position (Nakata, 1991). As well, educating ourselves via these institutions to overcome our disadvantaged position runs the risk of submerging or erasing those elements of our own lifeworlds which define us as a distinct group, the Torres Strait Islanders (Nakata, 1993).

Within the Academy, there is a lot of sympathy for people in our position. Much has been written across the disciplines about the dilemma of marginalised people who need to articulate difficulties experienced at the margins by deploying the knowledges of the centre (e.g., Trinh T. Minh-ha, 1989), and many attempts have been made by Aboriginal people at the margins (e.g., Bishop, 1996; Rigney, 1996) and by those at the centre to find ways around this perplexing problem (e.g., Weedon, 1988; Henriques, Holloway, Urwin, Venn & Walkerdine, 1984). The implicit assumption in the requirement for me, an indigenous student, to proceed in accordance with the conventions of the academy, however, is that mastery of that knowledge system will bring me the means to articulate what I think others do not understand about the Islanders' position at the interface. Unfortunately for my position within the academy, every criticism of the position of Islanders as inscribed within the Western order of things was countered by a further calling in to the academic position to understand even more of what I did not know. It was like saying to the inmate, trust the warder, he knows you best and he will serve your needs whilst you redeem yourself.

But this process gave me confirmation of what I already knew. I would never be able to argue my position cogently and coherently until I understood my position. I would not understand my position until I accepted (instead of always standing in opposition) that this position was only and always in relation to the order of things in Western knowledge systems. My task was not simply to know my position, but to know how I was positioned in and by those knowledges, that is, how those knowledges created a position for Islanders through which both Islanders and non-Islanders come to view Islanders and their 'problems'. Only then could I, a Torres Strait Islander, understand the initial and ongoing refusal of my position. Only then could I understand in the discourses of Western knowledge formations, the refusal of my history, the refusal of my spirit, the refusal of my mind, the refusal of my politics, the denial of freedom - the denial of my position as political.

It was in the corpus of knowledges that passes for my lifeworld, that I began to see the acceptance and supremacy of my constituted position: via another history forged by non-Islander interventions into my world; interventions that reconstituted my soul in relation to other religions; that reconstituted my mind and mentality as measured to the standards of others; the imprisonment of my body at a particular historical moment by non-Islanders to serve their economy; and the subsequent denial of my position as political. And in these interventions I began to see the logical and rational pattern of these reconstitutions of Islanders in theories and methodologies viz., in the sciences deployed by non-Islanders and the knowledges and practices they produced.

To accept my position as thus produced has brought a sense of relief. It eases the tension that exists between what I experienced as the lifeworld of Islanders and that world that has been reconstructed by non-Islanders in their own knowledge systems. It provides a point of rupture from which I can begin to develop an analysis to overlay and explain those ontologies found in mainstream historical records rather than be caught endlessly challenging their every 'truth'.

The Political Position and Experiences of My Community

Torres Strait Islanders constitute one group of Australia's indigenous minorities. All people of Torres Strait descent trace their origins back to the Islands of the Torres Strait. However, more Islanders now live on mainland Australia, than do in the Torres Strait. This shifting demographics is the result of migration by Islanders over the last thirty years to find better work and educational opportunities for themselves and their children.

The community of Islanders still in the Torres Strait is strong, proud, and diverse, united through a shared history. The history of religious and government administration of their lives has forged, from what was previously a collection of discrete but interconnected communities, a political unity that has pursued both participation in a new order and some independence from it. In pursuing this dual life within historically oppressive restraints and restrictions, Islanders have also developed a vibrant 'Island custom' (see Beckett, 1987) through an intelligent process of incorporating non-Islander practices into traditional meaning-making systems (see Sharp, 1993). Thus present day Islander cultures have been influenced by practices of non-Islanders who have brought new forms to the everyday life of Islanders, particularly since the increased intervention of non-Islanders after the commencement of commercial pearl-shelling in the 1860s (Bach, 1961; Beckett, 1977; Prideaux, 1988; Ganter, 1994). Distinctiveness as a group has been maintained, but the content of traditional custom has also changed as the forms and practices of intervention changed, currently seen in the embracing of Western technologies of communication, and popular culture.

The oppression of Islanders, from the 1860s, eventually forged their united political identity (as Torres Strait Islanders), but it was also from within this oppressive and restrictive administration that the institution of Islander politics was forged, in a form instituted by their administrators (Beckett, 1987). Although it has produced leadership within the Torres Strait community and a representation of our position as Islanders within the wider

Australian community, this was itself an imposed and compromising position for Islanders. It has been a political position of comparative weakness, where little more than formal and dignified posturing came to substitute for coherently articulating our position and negotiating our future. That Islander leaders have achieved so much for the Torres Strait community is an enormous credit to their perseverance and patience, their pride and dignity, their skills and intelligence, their faith and vision, and their deep love for their homeland and way of life. For they have done so without the benefit of a full and comparable education, and without the skills or knowledge of the outside world (Bleakley, 1961).

Islander leaders have always had to operate under the considerable constraints of their unequal position and thus have always in their basic list of demands prioritised the importance of education to the life-chances of Islanders and the improvement of the conditions of their lives (see Minutes of Councillors Conference at Masig on 19 August, 1944; Beckett, 1987). The restrictive controls on Islanders' participation in the new order severely limited their level and quality of education (Sharp, 1993). However, in rebelling against the oppression of this order, in 1936, Islanders immediately renewed with emphasis their quest for better education (see Minutes of Councillors Conference at Masig on 19 August, 1944; Sharp, 1980). It was not until the 1970s that major reforms began to be taken seriously with regard to education in the Torres Strait. These reforms have been welcomed, have been positive, and Islanders have had a measured input to the process. Twenty years further on, Islanders are still facing enormous difficulties in the education process. Some progress has of course been made, reflected in the number of tertiary graduates. But at every level of education - primary, secondary and tertiary - Islander students fail to make commensurate progress with other groups within the community (The Aboriginal Education Task Force, 1988; Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, 1997). Dropout rates continue to be higher than most and low literacy levels often limit upward mobility in the workplace (Nakata, Jensen, Nakata, 1995).

The current situation of Islanders is positive in that equality and access are recognised in national policy, and regional autonomy is politically accepted although not yet fully implemented by State and Federal Governments. However, these long awaited changes have occurred in times when the economic future of Islanders and their region is bleak. Unemployment, and the costs and effectiveness of basic services, are two of the biggest challenges currently facing the management of the region.

The current context in which Government intervention in the lives of Torres Strait Islanders occurs is the consultation and negotiation process. In this process Islanders often have their understandings and analyses 're-explained' in a way that suits the Government. Many Islanders struggle to maintain themselves in these encounters but, in the main, they absorb these explanations and at times come to recite them as their own. When this is not the case, and often when it is, Islanders continue to feel a sense of frustration and unease in their relation to non-Islander practices, knowledges, and their institutions. However, Islanders confused by these processes recognise the need to understand non-Islander knowledge systems as crucial to enhance their ability to negotiate and to bring forward Islander interests with more vigour (Lawrie, 1984; Sharp, 1993; Nakata, Jensen, Nakata, 1995).

The continuing difficulties that Islanders face in education thus have wide implications for our future. Islanders move closer to autonomy and self-government at a time when global technologies ensure that the effects of external factors will have more significance for us in the future than they ever have throughout the troubled history with the Queensland government. Islanders' knowledge and understanding of their position in relation to all of these external factors is now all the more crucial to the ways they will determine the possibilities for their future. It is via an extremely complex web of practices and knowledges that Islanders will have to negotiate their way in an information age that is rapidly transforming life around the globe. And yet, in the 1990s, Torres Strait Islanders are still struggling with basic English

literacies, as educators including Torres Strait Islander educators fail to come to grips with how to teach these literacies to Torres Strait Islanders (Nakata, Jensen, Nakata, 1995).

The Lifeworld at the Interface of Two Cultures

In the three examples provided above there are clearly two elements that can be brought to the fore. There is an Islander position and there is a non-Islander position. But as these examples also suggest there is another dimension to the Islander position that is not so clearly understood. This is the dimension where the trajectories of two different histories come together to produce conditions that circumscribe the ways Islanders make sense of and enact their lives. At every moment these historical trajectories cross paths they provide conditions to the ways Islanders go about their daily lives. The lifeworld of the Islander people is constituted by the historical moment where different paths cross. It is a temporal space where disparate historical pressures come together with experiences and emotions and together they set conditions for what is and how we enact our lives with others. It is a political space because each and every one of these discursive elements sets conditions and possibilities. It is a place, a position, where Islanders shape and reshape their lives. It is the lifeworld of the Islanders.

This lifeworld, which is the intersection of two trajectories, is inherently a position of complexity. My argument in this thesis is that the complexity of the position of Islanders at this cultural interface is not understood, rarely captured, and not articulated in any satisfactory way. Rather, Islander lifeworlds are more often re-presented as the opposing half of non-Islander worlds and in this process as part of a simplistic duality between two separate domains of 'them' and 'us', that is, representations of Islanders as victims of the "fatal impact" (Howe cited in Williamson, 1997, p. 409) of colonial intrusion. To accept such representations of the Islander lifeworld at this interface excludes altogether any recognition of histories indigenous to the people, as revisionist historians have argued (Reynolds, 1981). Yet many

forms of representation, historically (e.g., Haddon, 1935; Raven-Hart, 1949;) and currently (e.g. Cunningham, 1984; Kale, 1987, 1988) unquestioningly inscribe Islanders simplistically as Other in the Western order of things. Whilst this may accurately reflect the secondary status of Islanders in relation to others, it also perpetuates a simplistic and partial understanding of the Islanders' position and the representation of this position. Such representations do not capture the lifeworld and the complexities of the Islander's position at this cultural interface. I would argue that the confluence, itself, of two different historical trajectories adds another element to the relation between Islanders and non-Islanders and constitutes one of the more fundamental aspects of the lifeworlds of a people and their experiences.

The difficulty non-Islanders have had in understanding the complexity of the Islanders' position at the cultural interface has resulted in an inability of many of them to understand that Islanders have experienced and managed their lives from this position at the interface, ever since European contact. It is this position that has been submerged in the many attempts to explain and remedy Islander problems. It is this position, I would argue, that is not given adequate representation in academic analyses.

But, how can this be so? Is not this lifeworld at the very intersection that gives rise to all the difficulties that Islanders experience as they face the non-Islander worlds and its systems of thinking? Is it not this lifeworld, this position of Islanders that non-Islanders are attempting to explain, clarify, and improve when they explicate the problems and propose solutions to address their relative disadvantage and the difficulties that accrue from that? Yes, it is. But, the critical issue does not lie here. The critical issue is how this position is and has been given form and representation to the experiences in these Islander lifeworlds.

Re-viewing the Political Positions and Experiences in Approaches to Islander Lifeworlds

A general reading of the educational literature on matters confronting Torres Strait Islanders clearly shows that it seeks to address difficulties in schooling as the intersection of mono-cultural institutions and students of another cultural and linguistic tradition. The literature that is specific to the educational situation in the Torres Strait is, not surprisingly, small. It falls into three main areas: one, surveys and histories of education in the Torres Strait (Finch, 1975; Langbridge, 1977; Williamson, 1974, 1975, 1990; Orr and Williamson, 1973; Boxall and Duncan, 1979); two, the language situation of Islanders (Orr, 1977, 1979, 1982; Ober, 1980; Cunningham, 1984; Shnukal 1984a, 1984b; Gisu, 1986, 1987; Lominga, 1986, 1987; Kale, 1987, 1988; McDonald, 1988); and three, cultural positions on Islanders and the implication of those characteristics for curriculum and pedagogy (Osborne, 1979, 1982, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1989a 1989b, 1989c, 1989d, 1989e, 1989f, 1991, 1993; Castley, 1988,; Castley and Osborne, 1988; Kennedy and Kennedy, 1986; Lominga, 1987; Kale, 1988; Passi, 1986; Gisu, 1986; Lui, 1974; Topping, 1987; Osborne and Coombs, 1987, 1988; Osborne and Dawes, 1989; Osborne and Henderson, 1985, 1986; Henderson and Osborne, 1986, 1989; Osborne and Bamford, 1987; Osborne and Francis, 1987; Osborne and Sellars, 1987).

All of the literature to varying degrees deals with the historical neglect and shortfalls of educational provisions for Islanders. Representation of Islanders has been made primarily by dichotomising differences between Islanders and the non-Islander forms of formal education. The purpose has been to develop a clearer picture from which to find ways to achieve more equitable outcomes for Islander students. All without exception deal with the 'Islander predicament' in schooling as a position of dissonance between different cultures, between different language groups, between different worldviews, and between different value systems. Out of this arises the many analyses and position statements of the mismatch between the school and the community, between the learner and the curriculum, between unique learning-styles and

inappropriate pedagogy of the institution of instruction and so on and so forth. In some way or another they point to some incongruence in the schooling process.

Some (e.g., Osborne 1979, 1982, 1986, 1988, 1989c; Lominga, 1987) report on innovative practices in classrooms where aspects of the children's culture and language are built into the schooling process. Some (e.g., Boxall & Duncan, 1979; Kale, 1987) provide critical statements on how biased the school system was and propose that the inclusion of perspectives, cultures and languages indigenous to this country is the way to improving educational outcomes for Islanders and Aborigines. Others (e.g., Osborne & Dawes, 1989; Nakata, Jensen, Nakata, 1995) concentrated on gathering empirical data in classrooms. The research focus nevertheless attends in similar ways to the problem of transition between two separate domains. All start with an acceptance that schooling is mono-cultural and thus biased towards the dominant White groups. A major part of the research thus focuses on the learner and his/her characteristics and her/his interaction with the school and its characteristics. It is argued typically (e.g., Lui, 1974; Gisu, 1986, 1987; Topping, 1987; Osborne, 1989) that knowledge of the learner and her/his characteristics will enable the school, as an institution, to respond, adapt and develop more appropriate and effective curriculum and pedagogy to aid the transition between two entirely separate cultures.

In the review and policy area of the educational literature, there have been many attempts (e.g., see Minutes of Councillors Conference at Masig on 19 August, 1944; Boxall & Duncan, 1979) at instating policy positions on Islander education for several decades. By the 1980s, many reviews sponsored by the Federal Government followed and these include an extensive review by Watts (1982), Aboriginal Futures: A review of Research and Developments and Related Policies in the Education of Aborigines; the First Report of the Working Party on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Funding Priorities in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Education (Commonwealth Schools Commission & National Aboriginal Education Committee, 1984); An Evaluation of the Aboriginal Grants Scheme (Williams & Chambers, 1984); the Review of Delivery of Services for Aboriginal Students (Commonwealth Department of Education, 1985); the report of the Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs (1985); as well as the Report of the House of Representative Select Committee on Aboriginal and Islander education, Aboriginal Education (1985). By 1988 an Aboriginal Task Force completed its Report on the status of all indigenous peoples and pointed to situations that warranted intervention by the National Government (The Aboriginal Education Task Force, 1988). From this, the first joint National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy Statement published by the Department of Employment Education and Training (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1989) was produced. A formal agreement had been achieved with all States and Territories to join the Federal Government in a concerted effort to improve educational outcomes for indigenous peoples.

Over this same period, there were many initiatives made by the Islander people at the community level. In 1983 a group of Islanders met with Aboriginal groups in Goulburn NSW and began to direct funding priorities towards developing a position statement on educational priorities. By 1985, a manuscript outlining Islander priorities in education found its way to educational institutions and was to be a working guide for educational institutions who chose to adopt them (Torres Strait Islander Regional Education Committee, 1985). This was later presented with the educational priorities from Aboriginal communities throughout Northern Queensland and sent to the Queensland Government for consideration as a policy position (Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Committee, 1988).

All the aforementioned documents without exception proposed that the educational institutions had to respond in ways that incorporated forms of

schooling that were suited to indigenous people. This was the very same position that saw schooling issues in two separate domains: Western ideologies on the one hand and the indigenous peoples on the other. All, on this basis, proposed that making schools culturally appropriate to indigenous peoples was to be the key factor to improving educational outcomes.

As a subsequence, the current education agenda has been without question almost entirely focussed on the issue of 'culture' and the language and logic of this agenda is easily understood by Islanders. Islanders, according to this agenda, are to be viewed as culturally different, culturally distinct, and culturally unique. Islanders have welcomed this schema that frames how they and their predicaments in schools are to be viewed and articulated. It affirms their development as an independent and distinct group, it affirms their identity. It has brought reform. It appears as an 'Islander' discourse because cultural knowledge can be claimed as Islander knowledge. It is seen as an 'empowering discourse'. It helps to explain difficulties experienced at the interface of converging cultures. However, a national review of the joint policy statement has since found that the concerted approach to improving educational outcomes to be more culturally appropriate was not achieving what it set out to do (Reference Group Overseeing the National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, 1994). In particular, they pointed to confusion and uncertainty in implementing the cultural agenda as one of the key problems and subsequently proposed to bring about clearer guidelines to effect a more systematised approach to improving educational outcomes. The Torres Strait Islander Regional Education Committee also identified problems but they pointed instead to the bureaucratic arrangements of the Government Departments (Nakata, 1994c). A national forum held by a community organisation in Townsville for concerned Islanders living on the Australian mainland also identified problems but pointed more to the absence of any national initiative, program wise, to span the gulf between Policy and Practice (Nakata, 1997c).

The strategy to approach the situation of Islanders in schooling through the cultural schema has been productive in the sense that Islanders were able to see for the first time, and at the highest level, recognition of their unique position in this country. As stated earlier, this agenda has not been easy to implement. But, as the representation of Islanders' educational problems in the literature clearly shows, the Islander domain and the non-Islander domain are considered as entirely separate entities. That is, the only form that is provided any priority in all the above representations is one of difference: different culture, different traditions, different learning-styles, different language, different needs, and so forth. In other words, although the intersection at the interface is recognised as leading to complex problems for Islanders, the theorising of the relationship between the two has been quite simplistically put as 'different'; and this too has skewed the reform agenda. The two domains when seen as 'culturally' different require solutions that focus on transitional processes or ways to bridge two sets of understandings. Islanders, then, in accessing, for example, the non-Islander education system, need that system to recognise and understand and respond to their cultural situation. The school can only improve if it acquires enough knowledge about Islanders in order to understand the characteristics and the degree of difference, and respond to it effectively. In sum, improvements in educational outcomes rely heavily on a single form of a cultural 'subject' that has its history primarily situated in 'difference' – the whole approach is directed at the Islanders' constituted form, as 'different', and not on how Islanders experience schooling.

The current cultural agenda emerged from a broader social analysis of the position of Islanders as a minority and disadvantaged group. This broader social analysis emerged in the decades following the Second World War out of the discourse of Human Rights. The Human Rights platform was part of the agenda of the United Nations and a direct response to the program of annihilation of European Jews carried out by Nazi Germany. The discourse of Human Rights, developing as it did in the international arena, increased

international scrutiny of Australia's policies towards its indigenous population. As a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Australia had a responsibility to observe this declaration. Whilst most Australians already shared these rights it was obvious that there were serious infringements regarding Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Campbell, Cameron, Keats, Poulter & Poulter, 1958). Federal and State governments were slowly forced to review and reform their management of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs.

Governments, institutions and pressure groups were influenced, in their need to understand people indigenous to this land, to find new approaches to the problems of all Australians. The analysis of the 'interface' position of Islanders as a place of dissonance and difference at the intersection of the Islander and non-Islander histories, by non-Islanders who were sympathetic to the position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, owes much to cultural anthropology. Historically, cultural anthropology had produced theories to describe and explain cultural diversity. In the eighteenth century cultural difference theories centred on the idea of 'progress' where the growth of 'reason' had led humans from a 'state of nature' to 'enlightened civilisation'. Cultural differences were attributed to different degrees of moral and intellectual progress achieved by different groups. During the nineteenth century the concept of 'cultural evolution' dominated theories of cultural difference. This was the idea that cultures moved through different stages ending with the pinnacle of 'advanced' cultures, such as found in Europe. Some theorists worked from a platform of stages such as savagery, barbarism and civilisation. But almost all of the various theories postulated that the evolution of human biological types and races was linked with this evolution in cultures. Thus not only was the European at the pinnacle of cultural progress but the European male in particular. This idea preceded Darwin's 1859 publication, Origin of Species, but his theory of natural selection greatly increased the popularity of the notion that cultural evolution depended on biological evolution. It became a common part of nineteenth century belief

that “an unbridgeable biological gulf separated [the European] from the rest of humanity” (Haller cited in Harris, 1985, p. 516).

The twentieth century brought challenges to this evolutionary schema. The schema was challenged on the grounds of insufficient empirical evidence and the theory of historical particularism emerged which emphasised the uniqueness of each culture and the need to understand its history in order to explain a particular culture. Out of this theory was borne the concept of cultural relativism which countered earlier evolutionary views by holding that there are no higher or lower forms of culture. With the denouncement of evolutionary theories as ethnocentric, cultural relativists emphasised the need for extensive ethnographic fieldwork amongst non-European peoples. There were other approaches in cultural anthropology during this first half of the twentieth century. One school of thought explained cultural difference as the result of human groups to imitate and borrow from each other, rather than arrived at through independent inventiveness. Another group pursued explanations of the functions of cultural differences rather than the origins of difference. For some of these the function of maintaining the system of social organisation became an even narrower focus for study. These theorists argued that living in and being immersed in the language, thinking and organisation of another culture would provide valid ethnographic descriptions and explanations of that culture from within.

Following World War 2 the field of cultural anthropology continued to diverge. Some theorists went back to re-examine evolutionary models, others brought in other disciplines to their approaches. Psychology was used to explain cultural characteristics as derivative of personality within group members. Ecology was used to link natural conditions with cultural differences. Marxism was employed to argue that the history of cultures is influenced by internal contradictions of socio-cultural systems. It was also deployed to study how material constraints, as separate from mental or creative constraints, produced similarities or differences between groups.

Some approaches focused on explaining similarities not differences and many anthropologists rejected in total generalised causal viewpoints to explain cultural differences and argued that cultures should be studied merely to record their elements for their own sake.

The idea of racial determinants as an explanation of cultural difference lost credence in anthropology at the beginning of the twentieth century, as a result of the work of cultural relativists. Their studies uncovered the complexities of 'primitive' cultures and highlighted the gross under-estimations of the intelligence of non-European people. But the idea did not disappear, it swung off into other disciplines, like psychology and genetics. Largely disputed it nevertheless hung on in the form of biological (sometimes racial) explanations of behaviour, particularly in relation to intelligence and the ongoing hereditary-environment debates.

The concept of cultural difference, then, is not recent and has been conceptualised in different ways at different times. For Torres Strait Islanders the popular uptake of theories of cultural difference, by non-Islanders as a way to understand Islanders, has influenced the practices of non-Islander intervention into their lives, since contact. It would be simplistic to suggest that this is the only factor as many other interests also influenced the direction of intervention. But the theoretical principles that underpinned the way that Islanders were provided form as human subjects in the literature today owes much to the developing theories of cultural difference. Thus the current schema of cultural difference which is applied to educational reform in the Torres Strait is but a linear descendant of other theories of cultural difference which viewed Islanders as behind the European in a lower stage of cultural evolution.

Historically, then, educational policy and practice in the Torres Strait was rationalised through viewing the Islander in relation to Europeans as inferior both mentally and socially, and as a result politically unequal and in need of

only a limited education (Bleakley, 1961). Today policy and practice is rationalised through viewing the Islander as equal but different (e.g., National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy, 1989; Osborne, 1979, 1985, 1989). In both schemas the relation between the Islander and the non-Islander is dichotomised through the concept of difference which simplifies the relationship as 'us' and 'them'. Further to this, because non-Islanders give form to the knowledges that theorise and give substance to this relation, Islanders appear as the 'other' of the non-Islanders. Islanders are viewed, not as themselves, but in relation to what is known by non-Islanders, and for Islanders, historically, this meant they stood in a devalued relation to the non-Islander and were often misunderstood. So today a popular common belief is not that there is an 'unbridgeable, biological gulf' separating Islanders from non-Islanders but a 'cultural gulf' that produces so-called 'intractable problems'.

In this section, I have shown that non-Islanders, in their re-presentation of Islanders educational situation have recognised that Islanders operate at the intersection of two domains. I have also suggested that these representations have simplified the relationship between the domains as 'us' and 'them', and as 'different'. I had previously argued that as historical trajectories come face to face they provide conditions that enable us to go about enacting our lives and that such historical moments constitute what can be seen as Islander lifeworlds. And, it is this lifeworld that we need to represent. I contend that lifeworlds at the interface of multiple cultural and historical trajectories require more rigorous forms of representation that address the complexity that results. In particular, the ways in which material conditions evolve and determine social and political possibilities.

Reconsidering the Problem

If it is the complexity of the Islanders' position at the interface of two different historical trajectories that is difficult to capture, then in what ways can that complexity be uncovered and considered in the way that we

approach improving the representation of Islanders' position at the interface? In what follows, I discuss other dynamics not easily visible in 'us' and 'them' modes of representations. In brief these dynamics involve: (1) an interpretation of the interface as a site of historical and ongoing intervention by non-Islanders; (2) an interpretation of how the Islander is viewed as subject; (3) an interpretation of the effects of (1) and (2) on the Islanders' position i.e., how the position is experienced by Islanders and how the position of Islanders is understood and (4) what this position and understanding does to set the power relations between Islanders and non-Islanders.

Reconsidering the Interface as a Site of Intervention:

The 'interface' position of Islanders is produced by the acts of intervention by non-Islanders. It is these very acts of intervention that produce complexities that are difficult to capture and articulate in simplistic us/them analyses. At the simplest level, the intervention of non-Islanders can be recognised as arising from a singular mono-logic perspective and that when that intersects with the Islander lifeworld there are dynamics which arise out of the uptake of that worldview. Historically this process of intervention engendered a particular relationship between 'them and us' that worked against the interest of Islanders and in the interests of those who intervened. Thus Islanders' experience of the intervention in their lifeworlds is political and produced an ongoing struggle in their relations to those who intervened. So the interface is not merely a site where the Islander is 'culturally dissonant' with the outside world. The non-Islander has intervened and in doing so has subjected the Islander to enact a particular relationship. Both the content and form of such intervention has become part of Islander history. It is kneaded into their lifeworld and is part of many Islander experiences. Generations of Islanders have lived at the interface and their understandings are derived from their experience of this position. Nonetheless, and against the odds, they have brought to their position a continuity with their pre-contact past, and this has maintained customary ways, it has maintained distinctiveness. But this

distinctiveness is also, in part, an expression of the relationship engendered by the conditions imposed on Islanders by various historical acts of intervention - conditions that were imposed precisely because Islanders were different.

Non-Islander intervention and how it appeared historically, then, is tied up to the ways of thinking and the knowledges, institutions and practices of the Western order of things. The dilemma then is that the Islander domain as experienced historically by Islanders is difficult to re-present because the only means of doing so is via the accounts of Western knowledge systems. Non-Islanders have documented the history of this intervention from their understanding of it but Islanders have been unable to do so. Islanders have not had the skills to document their history and thus it appears as their history has always appeared - in memories and consciousness – as a history that lacks legitimacy for these very reasons and which now can only be validated by relating it to what non-Islanders understand of the history of this experience. Consequently the interface can only be conceptualised as a site of historical and ongoing intervention. It is the only means of giving it valid representation. Islander experience can no longer, I would argue, be legitimately separated from such intervention - the two are inextricably linked.

Reconsidering the Islander Subject

The complexity of the Islanders' position at the interface is produced as well by the way that Islanders' view themselves in relation to these non-Islander histories. This is a difficult notion to articulate precisely because little has been recorded of Islander history as experienced by Islanders. However, two non-Islander historians (Beckett 1987; Sharp, 1993) through their interviews with older Islanders, have provided glimpses into this history that gives substance to the idea that Islanders did hold and maintain a view of themselves that conditioned their responses to non-Islander forms of intervention in a particular way. At the time of European contact Islanders were on a particular historical trajectory. That is, their world had been proceeding along a path and that path took a turn at the point of contact.

Although the intervention that followed was constituted by the non-Islander view of Islanders as 'primitive' and 'native', and although Islander lives came to be regulated by non-Islanders this did not mean that Islanders altered their view of themselves to match that of non-Islanders. That is, Islanders could view themselves outside of the position that they found themselves in. Nor did the rupture to Islanders' historical trajectory by the intervention of non-Islanders necessarily mean that the uptake of Western knowledges and practices by Islanders would logically mean to them that they would lose control of their historical trajectory. Much of the cooperation and participation of Islanders in the new order rested on a notion that they were capable and equal. Much of their embracing of new ways was to equalise the relations between them and non-Islanders, not to erase their distinctiveness nor to discontinue their connections to their own historical path (Beckett, 1987; Sharp, 1993).

Thus Islanders' historical trajectory did not end, it continued. In the ways that Islanders dealt with intervention they developed their identity and sense of themselves into something new, something changing, but also something that was continuous with how they had always viewed themselves. They did not in their own eyes reconstitute their identity to conform to the position that non-Islander understandings produced for them. Even though Islanders did indeed lose control over their lives, and did reconstitute their identity, they maintained a view of themselves that was continuous with their own historical trajectory. And this enabled them to continue the quest to overcome these difficulties, to continue their struggle for independence and control over their affairs. They were aided in maintaining a continuous view of themselves, by their cohesiveness as a society, that is, they were not subject to the physical fragmentation of their society, or physical loss of their land by the intervention process as, for example, Aboriginal groups were. In today's context, this enables Islanders to deal with the contradictions between their acceptance of their constitution as 'culturally different' subjects by an intellectual schema and their own view of themselves as not limited to a

‘cultural’ essence. This enables Islanders to take up and continue to incorporate non-Islander forms such as ‘popular culture’ representations and other aspects of identity, drawn from non-Islander institutions and practices and still maintain their view of themselves as Torres Strait Islanders.

In short, two factors that produce additional aspects of the interface are, first, that the non-Islander domain is not separate from Islanders and their history but appears in their history and their lifeworld as an intervention. Second, Islanders’ ability not to limit their view of themselves to the position that has been constituted for them in the knowledges of non-Islanders has kept them on a path towards regaining their independence from the control of non-Islanders, even whilst cooperating with the forces of subjection. These two critical aspects of Islanders’ lifeworld at the interface are not well understood. Islanders have maintained some sense of being on their own trajectory, even whilst recognising that they are embedded in another. This is not merely cultural continuity forged in the face of emerging cultural discontinuities but as well involves a struggle to maintain a sense of continuity in the face of political negation by non-Islanders who managed Islanders’ affairs. An understanding of these two factors can lead to a re-theorisation of the interface position as not simply an intersection of two separate domains and a re-theorisation of Islanders not simply as ‘culturally different’ subjects.

Reconsidering Positioning

As stated earlier, the current cultural schematising of Islanders’ predicament appears as a welcome change because it is based on a premise of Islanders as equal but different, rather than the earlier premise that Islanders were inferior to Europeans. But this schematising is constrained by the same epistemological framework of earlier understandings of Islanders as subject. This current cultural schematising fails to capture the complexities of historical intervention and response to that intervention. The earlier brief consideration of how the current cultural schema emerged to frame the policy and practice of educational intervention in the 1990s provided an example to

illustrate how both the history of intervention and the conceptualisation of the Islander as subject conditions the possibilities at the current interface position. That is, the problem does not lie in humanity or the lack thereof, but in the system of knowledges that constrain and condition the possibilities at the interface.

Logically speaking when Islanders today adhere to a view of themselves as 'cultural' subjects, in essence they take up a position that has been produced for them in the knowledges of non-Islanders and inadvertently they reify the very relationship that rendered them inferior and which continues to categorise them as subjects of a different order. As discussed earlier, Islanders do not limit themselves to this constitution, but nevertheless the fact that this knowledge constructs such a position ensures that Islanders engage with this constituted subjectivity and are conditioned in the ways that they view, discuss and articulate their predicament and respond to reform. That is, in constructing positions for Islanders in relation to these non-Islander knowledges, such knowledges go on to position Islanders in particular ways as they respond to non-Islander institutional policy and practices that emerge from such knowledges.

Reconsidering Power relations

The way that historical relations of power between non-Islanders and Islanders are embedded in the knowledges of the non-Islander is also overlooked or oversimplified in many non-Islander analyses. Like Islanders' position at the interface, these relations are not entirely neglected but are understood as embedded in, for example, the history of colonial exploitation, or the dominance of the non-Islander culture and its institutions. These explanations (e.g., Boxall & Duncan) often overlook the complicity of Islanders who, in the intervention process, are positioned in a particular way by non-Islander knowledges, institutions and practices and who often uphold them when they embrace them because they are unclear about how these

knowledges work to produce a position for Islanders that reflects the historical relations of power (Williamson, 1990, 1997; Osborne, 1989c).

Historically Islanders were allowed a limited and highly regulated participation in the new order of things. This involved degrees of cooperation with authorities, degrees of surrender to the new order, and degrees of non-compliance and resistance. These acts varied from time to time, from community to community, from family to family, from individual to individual. Responses by Islanders to the new order were thus sometimes collective, sometimes disputed, occasionally united, sometimes entrenched, sometimes deceptive, sometimes momentary, and often shifting and contradictory. As alluded to above, Islanders went about this process in a positive, often pragmatic way in order to gain some measure of control over their position in this new order, although force of circumstances prevented them from achieving this. In their responses, however, Islanders often inadvertently assisted in their own oppression, even as they crafted a continuing positive identity for themselves and continued their struggle for control.

This aspect of the interface position, as experienced historically by Islanders as a site where both the positive and negative aspects of power emerged in ways that were both positive and negative for Islanders, helps reveal the complexities of this position as experienced by Islanders on a daily ongoing basis. As historically was the case, so in the current context, relations of power are weighted in favour of those in charge of knowledges, institutions and practice. These non-Islander knowledges, institutions and practices thus condition islanders' understanding of their position. The inscription of Islanders into non-Islander schemas according to non-Islander knowledges denotes, I would argue, a notion of power as knowledge inscribed – that is as expressed in power/knowledge relations by Foucault (1972/1980).

These additional complexities that are produced when Islanders immerse themselves, or find themselves immersed in and conditioned by non-Islander knowledges and practices are not easily apparent to Islanders or non-Islanders, though Islanders experience their material effects. However, understanding them, I would argue, is crucial for Islanders' understanding of their position. There is a positioning effect in the knowledges and practices of non-Islanders. Without an understanding of this, and without a way of working against this, Islanders will continue to risk complicity in their own disadvantage without understanding their own position in it. This is particularly important in the current context when Islanders are being given the opportunity to manage their own affairs but where the institutions, knowledges and practices they deploy continue to come from the non-Islanders.

Restating the Problem

I have argued that the re-presentation of the complexities of the Islanders' position at the interface has been difficult for non-Islanders to capture and for Islanders to articulate. In the educational literature, non-Islanders have theorised the Islander domain as separate from but intersecting with the non-Islander domain. They have theorised the Islander subject as culturally different. Where relations of power have been theorised, power has been viewed as either benign (by governments) or in a negative way as enacted by the dominant non-Islander institutions (by intellectuals). Non-Islanders have written the histories of Islanders oblivious to the history of their own intervention. The understanding of Islanders' position at the interface are thus limited and, in effect, constrains current possibilities for understanding Islander positions at the interface - for both non-Islanders and Islanders alike.

I have suggested an alternative theorisation of the interface position that argues that the interface is a site of historical and ongoing intervention into Islander lifeworlds. This intervention process has produced a historical position for Islanders at the intersection of two different historical

trajectories. I have also theorised that Islanders have viewed themselves in ways that go beyond their constitution by non-Islander schemas and that this has in part conditioned their responses to interventions in their lifeworlds. Further, Islanders have to rely on non-Islander knowledges to understand their position. This is because their own experiential analyses embedded in 'popular memory' and collective consciousness are easily invalidated – but mostly because they have not been written in any 'formal way' and thus cannot be sourced to any 'valid' references. The complexities that emerge from such a dilemma make it both difficult for Islanders to articulate their position at the interface as well as for non-Islanders to understand their predicament. These complexities revolve around the positioning effects of knowledges which often inscribe Islanders into non-Islander ways of understanding in a way that makes it difficult to see whether, in their uptake of these knowledges and practices, they uphold or submerge their own interests.

A Countervailing Hypothesis

An alternate view of the current educational literature is that unresolved problems experienced in the 1990s can not be a simple case of a lack of basic infrastructures to support policy positions. Nor can the problem be seen as a simple case of appropriating a 'different agenda' for people of another culture. In order to improve educational outcomes, Islander positions in schooling need to be considered as a dynamic lifeworld of a complex interplay between what is known as history by Islanders and what non-Islanders know as history. And we will not be able to fully realise what that lifeworld is about until we understand more about the epistemological constraints in historical practices that have served to constitute Islander positions in terms of 'them and us' relations. It is, I would argue, because non-Islanders have reified these positions between 'them and us' as if these are the ways things are and always have been. In their many documentations of Islanders in these ways, they have institutionalised a *modus operandi* which, in turn, has served not only to limit what can or can not be seen as positions and experiences in

schools but also how schooling situations for Islanders can be improved. A countervailing hypothesis then is that the 'them and us' schema in histories, and its reification across the many documentations of Islanders over the past Century has set the conditions as well as the limits that constrain how we are to intervene in Islander education. By investigating the documentation that gives witness to what non-Islanders have done when they have intervened in Islander lifeworlds, and by investigating the knowledges produced on Islanders by non-Islanders we will gain a much clearer understanding of the position of Islanders and the way non-Islander intervention has conditioned our lifeworld. From this position, a clearer understanding of the limits of current educational reform trends can be gained. And following on from this, it may then be possible to begin to construct an alternative foundation from which to view the educational issues which concern Islanders.

Sites for Study

The three main areas of interests for me in the corpus of writing on Islanders include early missionary activity, scientific studies, government administration, and the cultural agenda in the educational sphere. These sites have been chosen to explore what happens at the interface of Islander experiences and Western knowledge systems, and particular documents have been selected for the investigation.

Rev. S. McFarlane's (1888) Amongst the Cannibals is one of the earliest texts on the London Missionary Society's time in the Torres Strait. However, McFarlane's text was selected foremostly to investigate how Islanders are inscribed into a Western order of things and to illustrate particularly how the texts of Western knowledge systems are political.

The six volumes of materials on Islanders produced by academic researchers from Cambridge University in England after their expedition to the Torres Strait in 1898 were also selected. This team of researchers was skilled in a range of disciplines including linguistics, experimental psychology, zoology,

anthropology, archaeology, ethnology, and music. The team was led by A. C. Haddon a zoologist who, by the time of the expedition, had shifted his interest to ethnology. The texts produced by the Cambridge team serve as an important discursive site to explore and chart in more detail the range of subjectivities that is made possible by Western histories and sciences.

The story of early colonial administration in the Torres Strait, as recounted by several authors, was selected to show what is made possible by such knowledge systems that continue to produce texts and subjectivities using the Western order of things as the only standard. The interface of Islander experience and the Western order of things as they emerged in the form of government control over the years will help to demonstrate the material effects of Western knowledge systems in Islander communities. This will also help to reassert the position that all texts are political. And, whilst they have allowed particular benefits to non-Islanders they also constituted in Islander discourses a relationship with non-Islanders that has served to delimit, indeed prefigure, how Islanders can enact their presence in public lifeworlds.

The knowledge formations in our relationship with non-Islanders that have been developed to articulate what is possible between 'us' and 'them' will help to demonstrate my hypothesis that the tension this causes Islanders not only limits who we can be in Western societies but fails to appear in any theorisation of Islanders as subject.

The cultural themes as they are presented in educational spheres in the 1990s will serve as a final example of what happens at the interface of Islander experience and Western knowledge systems. By using the historical trajectory of Western texts and practices of subjectification enacted on Islanders over the past Century and the resultant submergence of constitutive forms that has delimited who and what Islanders can be in Western societies, and by exposing the failure to theorise Islander tensions and experiences with such

practices, I hope to demonstrate how this constrains educational practices in new times.

In this thesis, and from these texts, I will attempt to show how the tension of such constitutive forms in our relationship allowed many facets of Islander life to be documented in History without any of the Islanders' experience of being positioned as a secondary Other. And in doing so, I hope to show a part of Islander histories that we have hitherto failed to theorise as a crucial historical element in what makes an Islander in the current order of things.

These texts were also chosen to investigate forms of intervention across a broad range of disciplines and topics to show that no matter how diverse the different modes of representation, there is a particular consistency to the intervention process.

Methodology

The key areas that I want to chart in the documentation of Islanders by non-Islanders are:

1. Their consideration of the position of Islanders in the context of historical events;
2. Their view to the state of affairs of Islanders as they are re-positioned into the new order of things;
3. Their project of intervention on behalf of the Islanders;
4. What their intervention made possible; and,
5. What power/knowledge relations their projects constituted between Islanders and non-Islanders.

It is in these ways that I hope to provide a re-reading of how non-Islanders have intervened in the lives of Islanders for over a century.

Focus of Study

I have deliberately chosen not to approach the task by attempting to uncover and document Islanders' historical and ongoing experience at the interface. This is not because I do not think that attempts to retrieve this historical experience are necessary or worthwhile. To the contrary, they remain to be done. However, having argued the interface is a site of non-Islander intervention that has conditioned Islanders' historical experience, it is the forms of knowledges and their conditions that this has imposed on Islanders, that I wish to investigate. This stems from a desire to reach beyond simplistic black/white, us/them, you/me paradigms and to understand, perhaps more fully, historical processes in our current relations with non-Islanders. Further, I want to investigate how this holds implications for current understandings and for Islanders' ongoing responses. So the aim of this thesis is not to retrieve 'untold' histories of Islanders, to write in all the omissions, to counter biases, or make a counter claim to 'truths'. My argument here is that it is premature to reconstruct alternative knowledge of 'us', the Islanders, or an alternative history of our experience, before we understand the ways in which our experience has been circumscribed by non-Islanders, how 'they' have constituted 'us' in their knowledges, and how that emerges in practice. The task is to show how these things come to occur, how it is that they told Islanders' lives in the way that they did, and how that telling still constrains the options available to Islanders today. If we are to understand our position fully then having insight into the history of the relation between 'them' and 'us' and how that history is implicated in current interventions will assist us in understanding what yet needs to be done.

In this way I hope to avoid the trap of taking up a counter position that is, in effect, a(n) (op)position to the historical conditioning of the position of Islanders by non-Islanders, their knowledges, institutions and practices. I do not want to risk also reifying the historical relation between 'us' and 'them'. The task here is not to denounce non-Islanders for their acts of intervention. It is not to denounce their histories of Islanders as 'wrong'. It is not to

denounce their sciences that constructed knowledge on Islanders as 'wrong'. It is not to say that individuals involved in the process were 'good' or 'bad'. It is not to establish a position from which to reject or condemn the use of non-Islander knowledges. The task is to take a measure of these knowledges and their formation and what that means for Islanders.

This approach is recognition that Islanders will always stand in a particular, although changing relation, to non-Islander knowledges, institutions and their practices. The aim is to highlight how in non-Islander accounts, the failure to theorise the interface as more than an intersection of two discontinuous domains results in more than just absence, or omission of the Islander people and their experiences. By theorising Islanders as subjects according to particular non-Islander schemas, it results as well in a refusal of Islanders as political, independent subjects, a refusal of their view of their historical experience and it enabled historically the refusal of their humanity. My argument is that understanding these processes will enable Islanders to give better expression to the elements of their experience that non-Islanders cannot get to from their current methods of theorising our predicament at the interface. In turn, this will enable Islanders to position themselves more effectively and powerfully in relation to ongoing forms of intervention which are currently deployed via the uptake of non-Islander knowledges, institutions and their practices.

This approach is also recognition that as an Islander, I cannot fully understand my position in relation to the non-Islander knowledges I am required to employ unless I have an insight into the forms and processes of these knowledges as they have historically constructed and still construct the ways to understand Islanders. This is a search for knowledge about knowledges, that is, epistemological understanding. My argument here is that this kind of understanding of non-Islander knowledges needs to prefigure further research into Islanders' educational problems.

Limits to the Study

However, the task of examining the forms and processes of non-Islander knowledges as they were deployed in the acts of historical intervention into Islander lifeworlds is enormous. There were for example many interests that converged to influence the context and direction of intervention into the affairs of Islanders. These included the colonial expansion of European interests and all the subsections of that expansion such as economic interests, commercial and trade interests, the interests of competing European powers, systems of labour management, capital expansion, industrial manufacturing expansion etc. Then there were internal interests of Queensland and Australia such as capitalising on private commercial activity, regulating immigration, extending and controlling of territorial waters, financing of government activity etc. There were as well all the intellectual disciplines that provided the basis for European understanding of the world - their scientific knowledges, their knowledge of history, religious knowledges, social knowledges such as their understandings of notions of family and community, child-rearing, theories on the development of the races etc. It is beyond the scope of this thesis and this study to provide a comprehensive history of how these conditioned the acts of interventions into the lives of Islanders.

This study seeks only to understand the ways Islanders have been inscribed into histories in order to gain a better understanding of the epistemological relations between 'them and us' that, in effect, constrain the possibilities for intervening in Islander education today.

Chapter Two

MISSIONARY IN(TER)VENTION: FORMING THE MISSION, THE CANNIBAL, THE NOBLE SAVAGE, AND THE LOST SOUL

We can understand you captains, you come and trade with us, and then return to your own country to sell what you get: but who are these missionaries? Have they done something in their country, that they dare not return? (A Lifuan of the Loyalty Islands cited in McFarlane, 1888, p. 41)

After many thousands of years negotiating our ways in the islands of Torres Strait as well as with the people of mainland Australia and Papua New Guinea, it seemed necessary by 1871 that the souls of our people needed to be rescued by missionaries. In this Chapter, I will attempt to chart a particular missionary's rationalisation of his presence in the region and his founding principle in order to gain a broader understanding of the basic discursive relations that were established to justify intervening in other peoples' lives. However, this is neither to find out who was responsible for the missions in the 1870s nor to evaluate the impact the missionaries have had on Islander communities retrospectively. The aim here is to explore and chart, in particular, how the Islander was transformed into both subject and object of early religious discourse, and provided with a 'soul' that needed to be rescued.

The Mission

McFarlane (1888), in his book *Among the Cannibals*, the first major publication of the London Missionary Society's activity in the Torres Strait, provided an interesting account of endeavours to evangelise New Guinea. At the time, the

islands of the Torres Strait had not been annexed by the Queensland Government and McFarlane considered them as being part of New Guinea. After receiving orders from the secretary of the London Missionary Society (hereafter LMS) in 1870, and after twelve years of evangelising the South Sea Islands, McFarlane was asked to relieve his position at Lifu in the Loyalty Islands and to establish what came to be known as the New Guinea Mission. At the time of these orders, not much was known about the region to which they were embarking and McFarlane sought “at once to collect information and mature plans.... *to spy out the land*” (pp. 12-13).

After recruiting a fellow missionary, Mr Murray, who was enroute from the mission in Samoa to the Loyalty Islands, four ‘native’ pastors and their wives, McFarlane departed Lifu in 1871 for the southern coast of Papua New Guinea.

It would be difficult to describe our feelings as we sailed towards that great land of cannibals, a land which, viewed from a scientific, political, commercial, or religious point of view, possesses an interest peculiarly its own. Whilst empires have risen, flourished, and decayed; whilst Christianity, science, and philosophy have been transforming nations, and travellers have been crossing polar seas and African deserts, and astonishing the world by their discoveries, New Guinea has remained the same... where the natives may be seen in the cocoanut [sic] groves mending their bows and poisoning their arrows, making their bamboo knives and spears, and revelling in war and cannibalism as they have been doing for ages” (McFarlane, 1888, pp. 14-5).

As they hastened towards the world of the ‘cannibals’, McFarlane presumed many things and, amongst them, the view that after many thousands of years, in this part of the world, people had ‘remained the same’. It will also be seen in the following Chapters, that one of the initial moves when intervening into other peoples lives was that the ‘unknown’ first needed to be posited in relation to what was ‘known’ of the outside world. For instance, it appeared to McFarlane in the aforementioned quote that, in light of the developments

in 'civilised' worlds, there had been no progress made towards 'civilisation' in this part of the world. Whilst this appeared as 'commonsense' because it provided a rationale for non-Islanders to conceptualise what was being described in another part of the world, what was not so evident was that such views of 'progress' also served as the rationale for ignoring what actually existed of indigenous histories.

On July 1st, 1871, McFarlane and his crew arrived at Darnley Island in the Torres Strait. Having sailed directly to Darnley Island from Lifu, McFarlane tells us why he chose this island in the Torres Strait:

A consideration of the known, as well as the unknown and probable difficulties, led me to select Darnley Island as the most safe, central, and in every way the most suitable place at which to commence our mission. For such a work as we were beginning, we required a central station, which we might make our sanatorium, city of refuge, and educational centre. As a Scotchman, I remembered Iona and its history in connection with the evangelization [sic] of Scotland, and hoped that Darnley would prove the Iona of New Guinea. (McFarlane, 1888, p. 28)

It may well be clear to McFarlane why he chose to land on Darnley Island. But what was not so clear was why and how McFarlane came to choose this island over the many islands that lay off the southern coastline of Papua New Guinea - islands that also can be considered central to the communities on the coastline. It is interesting to note here that Macgillivray who was appointed as the naturalist on the HMS Rattlesnake's expedition to survey the waters of the Torres Strait and who deliberated on the advantages of a settlement on Cape York 20 years earlier also favoured the settlements to the east on Darnley (Erub to the Islanders) and Murray Islands (Mer to the Islanders). These were some of Macgillivray's deliberations in 1852:

In a military point of view the importance of such a post [on Cape York] has been urged upon the ground, that in the event of war, a single enemy's ship stationed in the

neighbourhood, if previously unoccupied, could completely command the whole of our commerce passing through the Strait.

5th. From what more central point could operations be conducted with the view of extending our knowledge of the interior of New Guinea by ascending some of the large rivers of that country, disemboguing on the shores of the Great Bight?

6th and lastly. But on this point I would advance my opinion with much diffidence - I believe that were a settlement to be established at Cape York, missionary enterprize [sic], *judiciously conducted*, might find a useful field for its labours in Torres Strait, beginning with the Murray and Darnley Islanders, people of a much higher intellectual standard... and consequently more likely to appreciate any humanizing [sic] influence which might be exercised for their benefit. (Macgillivray, 1852, p. 320)

It would be helpful here to understand that the narrow waterway, Torres Strait, between Australian and Papua New Guinea is less than 200 kilometres wide and is a bottle neck between two great oceans: the Arafura Sea to the west and the Coral Sea to the east. It is considered a narrow bottleneck because of the many islands dotted throughout its waterway, the maze of coral reefs that span the length and breadth of the Strait, the shallow waters, and the dangerous tidal surges and currents that run between them. The scores of ships that lay wrecked on reefs in the Strait are testimony to the difficulties in manoeuvring through the narrow passages. Added to the danger, of course, are the many stories of sailors surviving shipwrecks only to be attacked and 'eaten by natives' in these waters. One in particular needs to be mentioned as it appears to have had the most currency in documentations made by travellers and voyagers in the 1800s.

Wemyss (1837), for example, in his narrative of the gruesome fate of the surviving members of the shipwreck *Charles Eaton* in the Torres Strait Islands provided a sickening story of intrepid sailors and travellers who were "massacred... by natives addicted to thieving" (p. 36) and "addicted to

cannibalism” (p. 24). In this recount, four responses to the massacre were contemplated and thereby another aspect of the missionary’s intervention was invented:

1. To send a suitable force from India and New South Wales to seize these islands, to exterminate their inhabitants, and to take possession of them in the British name, so as to form settlements or colonies, in which the shipwrecked mariner may in future find a secure refuge.
2. To invade the islands as before, and without exterminating, to expatriate the natives, by landing them on the coast of New Holland, leaving them to find their own way in that vast continent.
3. To subdue the islands, and to preserve the inhabitants, making them tributary, and using such efforts to civilise and improve them, as would render them less formidable to all who might visit them.
4. But, as all efforts to civilise, by merely introducing the arts of life, have proved either very tedious or absolutely ineffectual, there remains only another plan, and that is, to introduce the Gospel among them by means of missionaries, and by translating the Scriptures into their language. (Wemyss, 1837, p. 34)

The first two responses were repulsive and inhumane within the framework of Christian beliefs whilst the latter two pointed towards achievements of the London Missionary Society in reforming Polynesia. Wemyss (1837) proposed the notion that communities “destitute of the light of the Gospel” (p. 39) can be reformed but that such intervention was “the proper province of missionary exertion” (p. 39). Whatever motivated these early concerns with the souls of Islanders, it was essentially the need to find a safe passage through the Strait, from countries to the West to the eastern seaboard of Australia that brought them into contact. According to the missionaries however they had their own orders from the Secretary of the London Missionary Society in London to evangelise New Guinea and to claim it for Christ.

Although McFarlane (1888) acknowledged that ‘relatively little was known’ about the region and the people who lived there, he expressed great anticipation and excitement about establishing the mission. As he explained, “[i]t was this *terra incognita* that we were approaching, with its primeval forests and mineral wealth and savage inhabitants” (p. 15), and that

it comes with a sense of relief to visit a country really new, about which little is known, a country of *bonâ fide* cannibals and genuine savages, where the pioneer missionary and explorer truly carries his life in his hand. A land of promise, capable of sustaining millions of people, in which however the natives live on yams, bananas, and cocoa-nuts. A land of mighty cedars and giant trees, where notwithstanding the native huts are made of sticks, and roofed with palm leaves. A land consisting of millions of acres of glorious grass, capable of fattening multitudes of cattle, where however neither flocks nor herds are known. A land of splendid mountains, magnificent forests, and mighty rivers, but to us a land of heathen darkness, cruelty, cannibalism, and death. We were going to plant the gospel standard on this, the largest island in the world, and win it for Christ. (McFarlane, 1888, pp. 15-16)

So much was anticipated and yet so little was known, as they later found to the detriment of McFarlane’s colleagues. Illness and ailments claimed approximately half of their South Sea Islander recruits, especially in western areas of New Guinea where it was low and swampy - what McFarlane (1888) later described as the “sickly country” (p. 160). It took a while, but after some of their South Sea Islander recruits and missionaries suffered and died in the initial attempts to evangelise New Guinea, McFarlane eventually resolved to train Islanders in the Torres Strait as missionaries. These Islanders were thought to be more resistant to ailments in New Guinea and were also more akin to the people of its coastline communities than the Lifuan recruits from the Loyalty Islands. He thus moved to establish the Papuan Institute on Mer in 1880 as the central training ground and not Erub where he first landed nine years prior. As far as McFarlane was concerned, Mer was just that bit further off the main route yet still central to the New Guinea communities. Most

importantly to 'the mission', Torres Strait Islanders could be recruited from other islands and brought to Mer so that they were far enough away from both "their evil surroundings" (p. 81), and explorers, travellers, and traders. That way there was little chance to stall their efforts to 'win it for Christ'.

The Cannibal

What did the missionaries know of the people in the Torres Strait? Over the previous three centuries, prior to the arrival of the missionaries, there had been many recorded visits to the Torres Strait Islands by explorers from the West, for instance, Torres in 1606, Carstensz in 1623, Abel Tasman in 1644, Cook in 1770, Bligh in 1789, Edwards in 1791, Bampton and Alt in 1793, Flinders in 1802, King in 1819, Wilson in 1822, and there are many others (see Haddon, 1935, pp. 3-13). Moore (1978) claims that some of these journals recorded "a number of early reports of sightings of 'Indians' on the islands" (p. 1). Some of the later authors wrote of Islanders who armed themselves with bows and arrows as Indians and who were unlike the Aborigines on the Australian mainland who used spears and throwing sticks (see King, 1837, p. 801; Wemyss, 1837, footnotes on p. 45; Macgillivray, 1852b, p. 18; Ireland, 1854, Captain James Cook's Journal cited in Wharton, 1893, pp. 311-12; Captain Mathew Flinders' Journal cited in Haddon, 1935, p. 7; McInnes, 1983, p. 37). However, it was not until the 1870s when the missionaries arrived that the term 'cannibal' gained significance.

The great land of 'bona fide cannibals', as McFarlane (1888) chose to describe Islanders, marked a significant shift from other writings at the time on Torres Strait Islanders. On checking the aforementioned publications of voyages and expeditions to the Torres Strait and on Torres Strait Islanders even just a few decades prior to McFarlane's publication, one is hard pressed to find the word 'cannibal' used to describe Islanders. In several recounts of the ill-fated ship *Charles Eaton* and her crew by Lewis (1837), Brockett (1836), Wemyss (1837), McInnes (1983), and Ireland (1854), who was one of the two surviving members of the ill-fated ship, Islanders are referred to as Indians, savages, and

natives. As well, in the four large volumes of materials, containing narratives of two naturalists, J. Beete Jukes (1847a, 1847b) and John Macgillivray (1852a, 1852b) - whilst on major hydrographical surveys throughout the Torres Strait on the *HMS Fly* and the *HMS Rattlesnake* - no reference is made to Islanders as cannibals. In these accounts, Islanders are referred to as natives, people, person, men, husbands, fellows, women, wives, children, child, girls, boys, infants, inhabitants, blacks, Islanders, Torres Strait Islanders, old friends, and to a lesser extent than former writings, as savages. However, there are, in some of these earlier writings (see for example, Jukes, 1847a, p. 277 on Eastern Islanders; Macgillivray, 1852b, p. 5-7; 1852a, Chp. VIII, on Western Islanders), a few references to, and descriptions of, Islanders engaging in 'savage' warfare and gruesome behaviours like cutting off the heads of their enemies and using them as trophies or for spiritual purposes. References to Islanders as "addicted to cannibalism" (Wemyss, 1837, p. 24) are isolated but no Islanders are referred to directly as cannibals. And quite notably, there are even fewer accounts of Islanders consuming parts of the human body. In fact, citations relating to this practice come from a single source, namely from the recollection of one survivor from the shipwreck *Charles Eaton* in 1834 (see Ireland, 1854).

William E. Brockett (1836), who interviewed the survivor, John Ireland, on the 18th June 1836, at the time of his rescue at Mer, about his ordeal with the 'savages' on Boydan Island provided the earliest recount of the event. On reaching this Island with several other members of the *Charles Eaton* by two makeshift rafts,

[w]orn out with fatigue and want of sleep, and having nothing either to eat or drink.... the treacherous and brutal savages appeared to be disposed to act in a friendly manner, and accompanied them under the pretence of obtaining water and provisions for them. No sooner, however, had the shipwrecked wanderers fallen into a sound sleep, then the inexorable brutes fell upon their helpless victims, and massacred them with spears, knives,

and clubs; after which they cut off their heads, and danced and shouted over their bodies. (Brockett, 1836, p. 17)

Ireland himself is then stated to have said that,

the savages on Boydany [Boydan] Island eat the eyes and cheeks of the shipwrecked people belonging to the Charles Eaton. This they were induced to do from a peculiar notion which they entertain, that such conduct will increase their desire after the blood of white men. (Brockett, 1836, p. 21)

In a recent recount, McInnes (1983), who has a high reputation as a historian, especially in the North Australian Maritime field and who considered all relevant recordings of the event, continues to repeat this version of events thus demonstrating the endurance of the 1836 interpretation of this encounter:

[t]hey [the shipwrecked survivors] plodded around the island in search of food and water but were so exhausted by fatigue and hunger they could scarcely crawl and fell to the ground in despair. At this time the peaceful attitude of the natives changed alarmingly. The natives stood grinning and laughing in the most hideous manner and it soon became evident that they were exulting in anticipation of their murder. (McInnes, 1983, pp. 36-7)

To this, McInnes (1983) adds another of Ireland's statement,

[a]t a short distance off, making the most hideous yells, the other savages were dancing round a large fire before which were placed in a row the heads of their victims; whilst their decapitated bodies were washing in the surf on the beach, from which they soon disappeared. (McInnes, 1983, p. 37)

In 1852, Macgillivray, the naturalist on the *HMS Rattlesnake*, who wrote of an entirely different event, of warfare in the Western islands of the Torres Strait, also used a snippet from Ireland's experience on Boydan Island to characterise the behaviour of Islanders in a community over many many nautical miles to the West, as having the same demeanour:

The Kowraregas returned to their island [after a raiding party to another community] with much exultation, announcing their approach by great shouting and blowing conchs. The heads were placed on an oven and partially cooked, when the eyes were scooped out and eaten with portions of flesh cut from the cheek; † only those, however, who had been present at the murder were allowed to partake of this; the morsel was supposed to make them more brave. A dance was then commenced, during which the heads were kicked along the ground, and the savage excitement of the dancers almost amounted to frenzy. The skulls were ultimately hung up on two cross sticks near the camp, and allowed to remain there undisturbed. (Macgillivray, 1852, pp. 6-7)

The † symbol refers to a citation of King's (1837) account of the events of the shipwreck *Charles Eaton*, and as indicated in the above statement by Macgillivray, writers of the day saw some currency in describing the Kowraregas in similar ways. And, it is interesting to note in Macgillivray's (or King's) descriptions that changes have been made to heighten the survivor's earliest reference to the eyes and the cheeks being eaten. The event is subsequently described more graphically as the eyes of the survivors being "scooped out and eaten with portions of flesh cut from the cheeks" (Macgillivray, 1852, p, 6). If the earlier reference says anything at all about cannibalism, it would be that it was a very isolated practice, and not as prevalent as supposed by the missionaries.

Beyond their reference to 'savage' behaviours, and the single incident of eating human parts recollected by the survivor, Ireland, there is little documented on the people of the Torres Strait to validate calling Islanders 'cannibals'. What we have in the early missionary's account of the Islanders being 'bona fide cannibals' then comes out of McFarlane's (1888) references to: reports of cannibal practices in the "West India Islands" (p. 100); a story told by St. Jerome about the Scots eating human flesh and preferring "a ham of the herdsman or a piece of female breast" (p. 100); general observations of travellers to other parts of the globe, and from particular travellers who noted

Aborigines in New Zealand as “systematic feeders” (p. 101) of human flesh; from the story of “the Princess Lamballe in the French Revolution” (p. 101) who had her heart roasted in a restaurant and eaten, and from cannibal tales of the practice in Fiji, all supported by his “own experience of cannibal tribes” (p. 103).

Nowhere, however, in his publication does McFarlane cite one observation of eating human flesh witnessed by him in the islands. Indeed, as already mentioned, what people who spent some time in the region, portrayed in the early writings about Islanders, was quite different. For example, once known, according to Jukes (1847a, 1847b) and Macgillivray (1852a, 1852b), Islanders were found to be mostly hospitable and helpful to the early voyagers. They welcomed them. They willingly shared their water and food supplies. And they were found to be experienced traders by all who encountered them. All attributes which McFarlane was later to include as characteristics of the ‘noble savage’.

The Noble Savage

The view to the ‘noble savage’ was tied up with, and contingent on, what McFarlane (1888) considered and defined as the ideal “social state” (p. 129). Being a missionary, he contended that “[t]here must be some goal, [a view to] some state of perfection which we may never reach, but to which all true progress must bring us nearer” (pp. 129-30). He turned thus to the accepted position that,

it is a state of individual freedom and self-government, rendered possible by the equal development and just balance of the intellectual, moral, and physical parts of our nature - a state in which we shall each be so perfectly fitted for social existence by knowing what is right, and at the same time feeling an irresistible impulse to do what we know to be right, that all laws and all punishments shall be unnecessary. In such a state every man [sic] would have a sufficiently well-balanced intellectual organization [sic] to understand the moral law in all its details, and would

require no other motive but the free impulses of his own nature to obey that law. (McFarlane, 1888, p. 130)

Such a state of affairs closely resembled what was more commonly known as utopia – a state of perfection that is not of place but of imagination. McFarlane's view of Islanders as 'savages' is curiously related to the accepted standpoint of the ideal state of humanity. An interesting position is posed by McFarlane (1888) about the proximity of the savage to his notion of the ideal social state. In his view,

the 'noble savage'... in New Guinea [and the Torres Strait], where the natives are found in their primitive simplicity, the undisputed lords of the soil, displaying a proud independence, their lives void of care, and with little to excite either ambition or jealousy, as they see every one around them sharing the same lot, enduring the same hardships, feeding on the same food, and arrayed in the same rude garments. They have no laws or law courts (so far as we know), but the public opinion of the village freely expressed. Each man [sic] respects the rights of his fellows, and any infraction of those rights very rarely takes place. In these communities all are nearly equal. There are none of those wide distinctions of education and ignorance, wealth and poverty, master and servant, which are the product of our civilization [sic]. There is none of that widespread division of labour, which, while it increases wealth, produces also conflicting interests. There is not that severe competition and struggle for existence, or for wealth, which the dense population of civilized [sic] countries inevitably creates. All excitements to great crimes are thus wanting, and petty ones are suppressed, partly by the influence of public opinion, but chiefly by that natural sense of justice and of his [sic] neighbours' rights which seems to be in some degree inherent in every race of man [sic]. (McFarlane, 1888, pp. 131-2)

This was a very generous description afforded to Islanders and New Guineans. An almost utopian society uncontaminated by the evil of civilised worlds - a pristine wilderness - was seen by McFarlane (1888) to be free of want, enterprise, or care for possessing anything. Instead of competition and

division, he contended, there was sharing, equity, and a 'natural' sense of justice. There were no social foundations for any 'distinctions' to be made on the basis of wealth, status, education, or work. And this of course required no competing interests, no conflicts, indeed no 'excitement to great crimes'. The state of a utopian society thus needed no regulatory devices such as laws or law courts.

The world of civilised people by contrast was, according to McFarlane (1888), corrupt and, as we will see, corrupting. Civilisation, he argued, when seen in line with theories of evolution based on development, emerged out of "a state of primitive barbarism and savage existence" (p. 96). Christians in the civilised world then, according to McFarlane's view, emerged out of a corrupt and violent state whereas life in the 'noble savages' world emerged out of an ideal state that was essentially moral and egalitarian.

Take our country [England] for example. We are the richest nation in the world, and yet one twentieth of our population are parish paupers, and one thirtieth known criminals. Add to these the criminals who escape detention, and the poor who live mainly on private charity - which, according to Dr. Hawkesley, expends £7,000,000 sterling annually in London alone, - and we may be sure that more than one tenth of our population are actually paupers or criminals. Each criminals costs us annually in our prisons more than the wages of an honest agricultural labourer. We allow over 100,000 persons known to have no means of subsistence but crime to remain at large, and prey upon the community. Yet we like to boast of our rapid increase in wealth, of our enormous commerce and gigantic manufactures, of our mechanical skill and scientific knowledge, of our high civilization [sic] and Christianity, although perhaps it might be more justly termed a state of social barbarism. (McFarlane, 1888, p. 133).

Here begins a form of contrast emerging between people of the ideal state and the civilised worlds as well as a critique of the implicit social barbarism of progress. McFarlane (1888) posed here the view that people in civilised worlds seek only to produce and consume resources to create excess material

wealth. And in its continued development, in McFarlane's terms, civilisation was destined to be forever a state of conflict as well as destined to repeat its barbaric nature, poverty, and criminals that require costly regulatory devices. McFarlane was resolute in his stance on development and progress.

By contrast, he was clearly affected by a sense of Islander peoples as having emerged out of an 'ideal state':

In war they never stand up in orderly ranks and shoot at each other; according to their notions that would be the height of folly. Their favourite tactics are rather of the surprise and skirmishing order. I remember one of the chiefs questioning me about our mode of warfare, and his look of amazement when I described the rows of men placed opposite each other and firing at one another with guns. He eagerly inquired whether the men were within range, and when I replied in the affirmative he exclaimed: "then you are great fools. We thought you were wise men, but it seems you are fools." Then he asked where the chief stood. "Oh," I said, "he remains at home and sends his men to fight." At which there was a burst of laughter, the chief remarking proudly that New Guinea chiefs not only accompanied the fighting men, but kept in front. And it occurred to me that if we were to adopt a similar custom our wars would probably be less sanguinary" (McFarlane, 1888, p. 115).

There are tribal wars, as in civilized [sic] countries, although the natives do not yet understand the art of wholesale slaughter as we do, and moreover the man who makes the quarrel has to lead in the fight. Still they consider it perfectly right to plunder and kill the enemy. (p. 132)

The juxtaposition here of the different approaches to warfare entertained McFarlane somewhat. But his point was to highlight some of the hypocrisy associated with societies that emerged out of what he termed social barbarism.

However, in order for McFarlane to consider the Islander as a noble savage, he convinced himself that a state of utopia once existed in the Strait. The

balance that was achieved in such lifeworlds in the development of the 'intellectual, moral, and the physical parts of our nature' was seen by McFarlane to produce 'well-balanced' individuals who could self-regulate themselves according to moral laws. A society of people who have 'free impulses' to govern themselves achieved a lifestyle where there was individual freedom. And as far as McFarlane was concerned, the very essence, or the soul of the people in this part of the world, "in their low state of civilization" [sic] (p. 130), indicated that they were "approaching nearer that ideal social state" (p. 130). And, in this sense, it then appeared that ultimate care and protection was crucial to the survival of this state of being.

The Lost Soul

If the missionaries thought everything was so pristine in this secluded region of the world, and if the very souls of the people were in tune with the ideal state, why then were they there? The 'soul' is accepted by most as something special to a spiritual presence. However, it is also very much tied to the language that speaks of it. In order to bring out what is made of the soul, in the language that argues the soul is precious, under threat, and needs to be rescued, the first task then is to chart McFarlane's theoretical schema, in particular, his views on the state of things in the Islands and New Guinea, as he found it.

The founding elements in McFarlane's schema were, as we have just seen, (1) that the people of New Guinea and the Islands hailed from an ideal social state, and (2) that by contrast the civilised life of Christendom "begins in despotism" (p. 136) and hails "from a state of primitive barbarism and savage existence" (p. 96). To advance his perspective of the state of things in the savages' world, McFarlane had to provide a link between what was known at the time of 'development' in civilised worlds and what was relatively unknown in the Islands and New Guinea. McFarlane presented a very particular view of the way the region was affected by the West:

Now let us consider that the first empires which arose in the world were formed by descendants of Ham Nimrûd, the grandson of Ham, went into Assyria and founded Nineveh, and the city which he built and the empire he founded continued for ages to overshadow all western Asia. Mizraim, the son of Ham, founded the Egyptian monarchy and the Philistian commonwealth. Canaan, the fourth son of Ham, settled in Palestine, and his descendants founded first the Cannanitish kingdoms, then Tyre, and subsequently Carthage. These were for a very long time the leading nations of the world; they possessed its highest civilization [sic], and held all but a monopoly of its commerce. These young monarchies no doubt sent forth strong and vigorous colonies, which took possession of the Asiatic archipelago, Australia, New Guinea, and Western Polynesia. From the Asiatic archipelago they appear to have been driven out by a succeeding and superior race, who also in time being similarly treated by Malays, passed on to occupy the islands in Eastern Polynesia, fighting and mingling with the Papuans on their way; in some cases succeeding in driving them into the interior, and forming settlements on the coast, as on the southeast peninsula of New Guinea and some of the large islands in the South Sea. This pre-Malay or Polynesian race have left mementoes of their passage in the Polynesian names of various places, and in outlying remnants of their own race on scattered points of the Papuan archipelago. Perhaps the last and best confirmed attempt of these Polynesian names by which these islands and places in them are called even now by their Papuan inhabitants argues a permanence of residence that cannot be well disputed. The large infusion of Polynesian vocables in the Fijian language, and the mixture of the two races, especially in the south-eastern part of the group, indicate a protracted sojourn and an intercourse of peace as well as of war. I think the foregoing considerations plainly indicate the part of the world from which the people of New Guinea and Western Polynesia have migrated. (McFarlane, 1888, pp. 98-9)

McFarlane's historical account here began with his underlining of development in the civilised world. He put the view that the first empires of the world were set up by descendants of Ham Nimrûd in Syria, Egypt, and Palestine and it was they who extended their domain to the east and "took possession of the Asiatic archipelago, Australia, New Guinea, and Western

Polynesia" (p. 98). In the Asiatic archipelago, according to McFarlane, the colonists were challenged and driven out by another group of people. And, the people who succeeded the colonists from the Middle-East were later thrown out by the Malays and were said to have then travelled down the Asiatic countries, along the northern coastline of Papua New Guinea (known as Papua at the time), and settled in the eastern region of the Pacific we have come to know as Polynesia. McFarlane referred to them, in the preceding passage, as pre-Malays and subsequently as Polynesians. Whatever the 'truth' to this pattern of migration, the importance of this account was that it helped to establish the idea of the presence of corrupt influences (see McFarlane, 1888, pp. 130-1) from countries to the West. Indeed, this enabled McFarlane to explain that the civilising influence not only adversely affected the Melanesian people of Papua New Guinea along the way but drove them southwards into the interior, taking with them corrupt influences of Western civilisation all the way through to the coastline facing the Torres Strait. Likewise, this was how he explained why eastern areas of the Pacific (Polynesia) were more corrupt than the western areas (Melanesia).

I can testify to the possession of many noble qualities by the [Melanesian] cannibals. They are not deficient in courage, manliness, and even humanity, as some people foolishly declare them to be; and they are even distinguished for their hospitality. Indeed they are as a rule a good-tempered, liberal people - greatly superior in these qualities to their lighter coloured neighbours [pre-Malayans or Polynesians] who look down upon them.... The fact is, that the cannibal tribes make better houses, better canoes, better weapons, and better drums - and keep a better table, they would say - than their neighbours; indeed, they exhibit great skill and taste in carving; and any one who has visited both tribes will at once notice the good-natured hospitality of the cannibals, compared with the selfishness and greed of their neighbours, who are incorrigible beggars. (McFarlane, 1888, pp. 103-4)

The migratory element in McFarlane's account helped to appropriate not only a new history to the people in this part of the world, but also the different

degrees of civilising influences in this part of the world and more importantly for him, it helped to explain his idea of the “retrograding” (p. 96) of a group of people in New Guinea and the Torres Strait from the ideal state (see next quote). Indeed, Islanders and New Guineans were now to be seen and understood as declining from the ideal state. And to promote his idea of retrogression further, he considered the languages of the region and the daily habits of people influenced by the march of civilisation across the globe.

[t]he grammar is regular and uniform as if it had been formed by Lindley Murray, whilst the pronunciation is as exact as if it had been settled and phonographed by Walker, Webster, or Worcester; thus clearly pointing backward to a higher state of civilisation from which they are falling. How came these cannibals to have such a language, if they have not brought it down with them? If all our civilization [sic] is to be traced to a slow but gradual development from a state of primitive barbarism and savage existence, how are we to account for the state of the natives in New Guinea and the South Seas” (McFarlane, 1888, p. 96).

McFarlane argued that if the ‘development’ theory is accepted communities would be progressing and becoming more refined. But, he continued, these people currently live as heathens and violent cannibals in a state of anarchy. If there is a view to evolution as developing out of barbarism, “where is the evidence that they are advancing in civilization [sic], intelligence, morality, or happiness?” (McFarlane, 1888, p. 96). To the contrary, he argued, “there is abundant evidence that both races [in New Guinea and the South Seas] are retrograding, and none whatever that they are advancing, except from influences from without” (p. 96). Languages found in these very ‘primitive communities’ he contended are fully formed and pronounced. He went on. The grammatical structure of the language and poetry can be likened to Hebrew. The practice of cremation and circumcision practised in these parts compared with those of ancient Greece. The stitching used in fishing nets were the same used in England. The worshipping of stone gods and the use

of charms can be related to the Shiva cult in India. And, the singing was of the kind that “Laban wished to send away Jacob” (p. 98).

The most logical answer, to McFarlane, was that the people of this region who now live in despotic lifeworlds must have once emerged out of a ‘higher civilisation’ but were now in the process of retrogression, and were declining into a barbaric state because of the early influences from countries to the West. McFarlane’s (1888) view of the state of affairs as he found them then, led him to a fundamental part of his theoretical schema that, “these natives have fallen from a higher civilization [sic], [and] that their progress [was] downwards, and that they [were] merely the remnant of a worn-out race” (p. 98). Indeed, he now had ‘savages’ who were not so noble, who had lost their souls, and were in the process of losing the very essence of the ultimate state of peace and goodwill, and who now required missionary intervention.

Missionary Intervention: From Darkness to Light

Intervention in missionary terms thus relies on the theoretical schema outlined above. Intervening was not easy, argued McFarlane (1888), as these were no ordinary ‘savages’ in the Islands and New Guinea. On his arrival in the region, he found that the people had already been affected by civilising influences from the West. They were now living in primitive conditions, dirty huts, and filth. They were going about their daily habits mostly naked except for some body ornaments. Where McFarlane supposed there was once a natural sense of justice and respect for individual rights, there was now no order and everyone did as they pleased. Where there was once sharing, equity, and no competition for resources, there was now greed, unrest, and tension in the community, which inevitably led to daily conflict. Children were now being neglected and families were troubled. If he found this state of things on his arrival, one can only wonder where he witnessed the exemplar communities of a utopian society. But, he was adamant that people in this part of the world were not like what was known of ‘savages’ in European countries. He contended, “[m]any people form their opinion of

savagedom from the miserable hordes of natives that hang on the skirts of European settlements” (p. 130). As civilised communities formed and took over their lands, they turned natives in Europe into degraded beings. As McFarlane recalled, these degraded beings who live outside the walls of these European settlements have been exposed to,

a thousand superfluous wants, leading to selfishness, covetousness, and arousing the basest passions of the soul. They become drunken, indolent, feeble, thievish, and pusillanimous.... in the face of civilization [sic] they feel keenly their numerous wants and repine in hopeless poverty, which, like a canker of the mind, corrodes their spirits and blights the free and noble qualities of their nature. Like vagrants they loiter about the settlements, once their happy hunting grounds, now covered with spacious dwellings replete with elaborate comforts, which only render them sensible of the comparative wretchedness of their own condition. Luxury spreads its ample board before their eyes, but they are excluded from the banquet. Plenty revels over the fields, but they are starving in the midst of its abundance. The whole wilderness has blossomed into a garden, but they feel as reptiles that infest it. (1888, pp. 130-1).

Such is the wrath of a civilisation that begins in despotism. McFarlane (1888) reminded us that “it is not amongst this class that we must look for the ‘noble savage’” (p. 131). Neither, he says, can we find it in the class of savages who lived within the walls of newly formed civilised societies:

[T]hose of us who have been behind the scene in the South Sea Islands, New Guinea, and in some of the large cities in this country [England], know very well there are thousands of persons (and some of them well educated) who hate civilization [sic], with all its restraints, with a hatred which is incurable by any fear, or any reward, or any kind of inspection. They are not criminals, as a rule, any more than the wild tribes are; but they are savages, loving above all things to live lives untrammelled by the infinite series of minute restraints and obligations which go to make up civilization [sic]. (McFarlane, 1888, pp. 133-4)

Nor can the savages of the Islands and New Guinea be compared with a society of people that developed out of a barbaric state:

I believe that in every civilized [sic] community there is a considerable percentage of both men and women, to whom the first condition of external civilization [sic], the incessant taking of minute trouble, is utterly hateful, and who, if left to themselves, would not take it, but would prefer a condition of pure savagery. The rich, of course, seldom reveal this disposition, because others take the trouble for them; but unskilled labourers in this country, who earn possibly twelve shillings a week, who know nothing, and are pressed to throw off the burden of respectability, abandon furniture, give up the small decencies and formalities of life, and camp in a room on straw, as uncleanly and nearly as free as savages would be. They live from hand to mouth, shift from room to room, are beyond prosecution for money, drink if they have the cash, smoke somehow whether they have it or not, and are perfectly indifferent to the opinion of society - are, in fact, savages. (McFarlane, 1888, pp. 134-5)

McFarlane's (1888) point here was that a clear view was needed as to what kind of savage he was faced with in the Islands and New Guinea. They were unlike the savages 'back home'. Savages in the Strait have not been affected to the same degree as natives in Europe. Neither are they like the savages within civilised societies who have been confined within the walls of a new morality and regulated by strange laws. He is resolute in his stance on Islanders and New Guineans, and because of the relatively little civilising influence in these parts of the world, he has "no hesitation in pronouncing the savages of Christendom infinitely worse than those of heathendom, and infinitely more difficult to improve" (p. 134). Islanders, to McFarlane, were closer to the ideal state and residual elements of the ideal state could still be found in the community. He was as determined about his view of the honourable position the people held in the Islands as he was with his form of intervention. Consequently the following proposition was made to preserve lifeworlds of a people who were not so distant from the ideal state.

Now I can conceive but one remedy for this savagery wherever it exists, and that is religion - a pure simple, elevating religion, like that of Jesus Christ. You cannot elevate savage tribes in heathendom by giving them tomahawks and tobacco, beads and blankets; for they will soon sell these, and even their food, for brandy. Nor can you elevate the savages of Christendom by putting them in good houses and providing them with honest work, for very soon your model houses would be like styes [sic], and the honest work abandoned. My contention is however that, supposing both classes of savages to embrace the gospel, those of heathendom find themselves nearer the goal which civilization [sic] has been aiming at and striving for during many centuries. What we are pleased to term civilization [sic] generally begins in despotism, or, I might even say, in murder and plunder. A country is seized, the land appropriated, and the natives subdued, and placed under laws. Then, as education advances, and the subdued begin to feel their power, the struggle begins, and goes on for ages, between radicals and conservatives; the one trying to regain the rights and liberties of their fathers, and the other trying to retain what was gained by conquest. All I can say is, that I devoutly hope that New Guinea [and the islands] may be preserved from such civilising influences. (McFarlane, 1888, pp. 135-6)

The missionary intervention thus came to operate on two basic premises. The first was the need to inculcate Islanders into a moral world through what McFarlane termed 'a pure simple religion' and the second was the need to insulate them from any encroachment from the 'civilised' worlds. McFarlane (1888) was convinced that he was on a mission to rescue "the multitude of souls who have lost the image of God" (p. 24). Indeed, for these 'lost souls', he believed that the gospel was not "only the best civilizer [sic], the best reformer, and the best handmaid to science, but that it [was] the only way to eternal life" (p. 24). It was the only means of preventing the natives from being overcome by 'human progress and civilisation'.

The intervention that ensued was described by McFarlane (1888) to be particular to the communities in the region and appropriate to the Islander people and their languages. The missionaries established sixty mission

stations and six churches along six hundred miles of coastline communities. Training institutions for native evangelists were also established at Mer (Murray Island) and Port Moresby to assist in the mission to 'rescue the lost souls'. And, after a few short years of their occupation in these parts, the missionaries documented six languages or dialects (McFarlane was not able to distinguish in his text which was a language and which was a dialect) whereupon they moved to produce from them local readings of the New Testament, hymn books, catechism, and curriculum materials for teaching the natives. In triumphalist terms, McFarlane noted the following

In our mission work in New Guinea we have had to contend with difficulties quite peculiar to the place. We have had to sail in unknown and dangerous waters in order to reach the natives. We have had to contend with savages and cannibals, who regard strangers generally as enemies to be killed, cooked, and eaten. We have had to pass through sickly swamps and be exposed to deadly fevers in planting and superintending our mission stations. We have had to reduce the languages to writing, and translate portions of the Scriptures, school books, and hymn books into them. We have had to battle with the evil influences of abandoned sailors, although we have been helped rather than otherwise by many of the visitors and travellers who have come to New Guinea. We have had to guide the natives in making and administering laws, in developing the resources of their country, in building houses, making roads, and, in fact, in everything connected with their material as well as their spiritual progress. (McFarlane, 1888, pp. 184-5)

Because communities were seen to be easily corrupted by the civilising influences from countries to the West, McFarlane and others persisted in their mission despite suffering and hardship in one of the most isolated regions of the globe. Their goal was to bring the gospel to the people, rescue the lost souls, and put them back on the right path towards the ideal state. Given that McFarlane also held the view that the people had no worthwhile laws left, it seemed an obvious need to make new ones. The missionaries regarded this as a justifiable act because laws needed to be established to gain some order to

things so that communal life could be restored and religious teachings take place. However, despite McFarlane's professed reverence for the 'noble' savage's ideal state it was not that condition that informed the formation of laws. Instead the missionaries saw it fit to appropriate remedies and reforms that worked in civilised societies in Europe. Indeed, what they achieved through their intervention was strikingly similar to the reforms made to societies in Christendom that hailed from the aggressive state. Armed only with intervention strategies based in countries in the West, the reforms inevitably led the Islander society back down the path of the West's own despotic beginnings. But, as McFarlane indicates below, the reforms were done under the guidance of the gospel, as well as by the peoples' revelation of God. The missionaries intended the reforms to be well ordered and without the divisions witnessed in civilised communities in Europe. And they were proud of their achievements:

Let the present appearance and condition of some of the towns and villages where we have mission stations be compared with what they were fifteen years ago, and the difference is truly wonderful. Instead of the war song, the cannibal feast, and the night dance, churches and schools and family worship are established. Instead of the wild-looking appearance of the people, dressed in feathers and shells and paint, they are now respectably clothed, and ashamed of their former appearance and habits. Instead of dirt huts, lazy and cruel husbands, and neglected children, there are now well built houses, industrious and kind husbands, and bright and intelligent children. Instead of every man doing as he liked, which led to village quarrels, plunder, and war, there are now laws established, magistrates and policemen appointed, and law and order prevail.... Instead of heathenism and cannibalism, there is springing up a growing education and a thriving trade. Side by side with the preaching of the gospel goes the social improvement of the natives. (McFarlane, 1888, pp. 188-9)

In other terms, there was no longer a view of returning the people in these parts of the world to the 'ideal state' but a view to making them civil people and "furnish[ing] [them] with the useful appliances of civilized [sic] life

(McFarlane, 1888, p. 189). But, as the missionaries noted, it was done without corrupting them with the evil influences of civilised countries of the West. The mission's approach to the rescuing of lost souls, according to McFarlane, was the only thing that could help them out of their evil ways and insulate them from the evils of the West.

our primary project in going there was not that we might render it safe to land upon its shores.... it was not that we might render life and property secure whilst the miner digs for coal, iron, and gold, which are known to exist there.... although we are fully persuaded that the introduction of Christianity will do this more effectually than anything else: it was not the treasures of the country, but the inhabitants that we sought. (McFarlane, 1888, p. 24)

The missionaries cast the role of Christianity in a positive way. At the same time, however, the process of the exploitation of people and the appropriation of their natural resources was in full swing. What the missionaries proposed was that they provided a more effective transition for indigenous peoples in times of the development of civilisation. Indeed, there was a case that progress, influenced by the West was inevitable. It would appear obvious then that the shielding of Islanders from the ravages of a world developing out of a barbaric state was a noble act by the missionaries.

Summary

McFarlane's mission, undertaken under the auspices of the London Missionary Society, rested on a romantic view about the past 'ideal state' of the Islanders and a view that in the future they could be 'saved' from a further fall by Christian guidance. However, all McFarlane's points of reference for interpretation and action in relation to the mission's goal in the Torres Strait and New Guinea came quite clearly from the missionary's own worldview. They came from his own critique of civilisation, his own view of the savage, from his resolute belief in the transformative power of the gospel, and a belief that missionary intervention could stem the influence of creeping civilisation.

McFarlane's schema was not his alone and was not founded only in religious knowledge. It was also founded in understandings of cultural diversity that were current at that time. McFarlane's understanding was clearly derived from nineteenth century evolutionism which dominated theories of culture in that century. According to this schema, cultures were understood to 'progress' through stages of development - the pinnacle being European culture. Though different scholars theorised the stages in different ways, one of the most influential schemas was that of Lewis Henry Morgan who divided the evolution of culture into three stages of savagery, barbarism and civilisation. Although this was a cultural schema, most nineteenth century scholars (excluding Marx) adhered as well to a theory of biological evolutionism which postulated that cultures evolved in conjunction with the evolution of human biological types and races.

Adhering to this schema, McFarlane posited Islanders as people who had not progressed but who had 'remained the same', and further on, as people who had fallen from a higher state. This allowed him to instate his view that Islander people once came from noble backgrounds and were thus capable of having their souls restored. This schema also enabled him to locate Islanders at a particular stage in development. This provided him a particular view of Islanders' (then) current predicament in the face of encroachment, from not just 'civilisation' but in particular the more 'barbaric' elements of the civilised world. It was McFarlane's use of this schema, his descriptions of a perceived encounter between utopia and social barbarism that posited Islanders and New Guineans as heathens living in darkness, and living under the evils of idolatry. By inserting his view (also part of a wider historical schema) of the migration of races across to this part of the world, he ascribed to the Islanders a new history. This was a history that was relatively untouched by 'civilisation' yet corrupted from a previous 'higher' state by the contact with a migrating pre-Malay group of people.

What this achieved was a particular view to the predicament of the people. He had the necessary historical schema to name the problem and name the solution as he saw fit. Once incorporated into a world contaminated by aspects of civilisation from countries of the West, McFarlane enabled us to see people who were self-interested, dirty, indolent, cruel, and living in a state of anarchy. Once configured and inscribed in history as destitute, the missionaries then deemed it necessary to rescue the souls of the people from the labyrinth of a once noble society that was deemed to be in a state of retrogression. Comparisons were made to Christendom in Europe, in particular, that societies in heathendom were not like theirs 'back home', but that, having been influenced by aspects of civilisation, required the same intervention and remedies that worked so well in civilised societies. All rested on a single principle and that was that the people of Torres Strait hailed from an ideal state. But, where were the exemplar communities that could demonstrate that Islanders hailed from such backgrounds?

What the missionary view did not include was the lived reality of Islanders in all its complexity, its own history, and its own goals. The Islander that is represented in the missionary's text is not the Islander as he would have described himself and his world, other than the fleeting glimpses recorded in responses of Islanders as illustrated in the opening quote of this chapter. Instead, we have an Islander whose own understanding of history was not included and who was thus re-configured in relation to European religious and historical knowledge. We have the presentation of the Islanders' humanity characterised as the noble savage who lived in heathendom in relation to the European savage who lives in Christendom. That is, we have the Islander characterised in relation to European scientific knowledge. We have the Islander's then current position presented as the lost soul that needed to be rescued and an intervention followed that went on to re-order the Islander world in relation to the order in the 'civilised' or European world.

McFarlane's text provides an exemplar of the beginning of a systematic way of thinking about and for understanding the Islander – who the Islander is and what sort of intervention the Islander requires in the light of this. In this case, McFarlane's written account and the pursuit of his goals for the mission project drew from a particular and narrow positioning of Islanders as needing to be rescued and remade. In his descriptions of Islanders outlined above as cannibal, as noble savage, as lost soul, he builds a logical argument that missionary intervention was a good and worthy project.

My aim in this chapter was to show that the relationship between Islanders and Europeans that was established in this missionary intervention, was not merely a consequential or material outcome of missionaries' practical and actual re-organisation of Islander society. It was constituted in a schema which was itself embedded in the religious and scientific knowledges of the European world through which McFarlane articulated and rationalised his mission's goals and which thus pre-ordered Islander lives and their relationships with Europeans.

McFarlane's text represents less the position of Islanders and more the missionary's position derived from his own understandings of developmental theory through which he comes to an understanding of Islanders.

Chapter Three

SCIENTIFIC IN(TER)VENTION: FORMING THE SAVAGE

In Torres Strait we were continually meeting with instances which illustrated the powers of the natives in this respect. Nearly every detail of landscape and seascape had its special name and nearly every species which the zoologist or botanist would recognize [sic] as distinct was also differentiated by the native and had its distinctive name.... Minute distinctions of this sort are only possible if the attention is predominantly devoted to objects of sense, and I think there can be little doubt that such exclusive attention is a distinct hindrance to higher mental development.... it is natural that the intellectual superstructure should suffer. It seems possible also that the over-development of the sensory side of mental life may help to account for another characteristic of the savage mind. (Rivers, 1901, pp. 44-5)

The texts of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Strait represent a very different site of investigation from those of the missionaries. These are the texts of academic scholars. Their reports are based on scientific analysis of data collected from their observations, testing and interviews of the Torres Strait Islanders themselves. Because the collection and analysis of the data adhered to the underlying principles of scientific method, the Cambridge Reports carry the expectation that any bias or self-interest would be, at the very least, acknowledged and articulated and, at the most, eliminated as much as possible via the methods used in constructing tests, analysing data and drawing conclusions. The use of these techniques should lead to an expectation that the representations of Torres Strait Islanders in these reports are 'accurate' and 'objective' representations of who and what Islanders were at the time of the expedition.

A superficial reading of the texts may well confirm for the scientific and scholarly community the validity of much of the contents of these volumes. In such a reading, any inconsistencies perhaps would be understood in the historical context of the expedition. This was an expedition of ambitious proportion and logistics, an expedition at the cutting edge of new scientific disciplines and knowledges emerging at the turn of last century, namely the social sciences. It challenged the boundaries of what was already known and understood about 'primitive' people. It stands as one of the most comprehensive attempts to document the lives and characteristics of a society of people before the onslaught of colonial expansion changed them forever and before their previous skills and knowledge were lost to the world.

These texts represent a different site in another sense. Unlike the missionaries, the scientists did leave. They were present in the Torres Strait for only a few months. The six volumes of their reports took decades to publish - 1901, 1904, 1907, 1908, 1912, 1935. Until recent years, few Islanders would have been able to access them and whilst many authors on Torres Strait issues (e.g., Beckett, 1987; Singe, 1989; Sharp, 1993) make reference to their contents, there is no direct evidence of any material effect of this writing on the lives of Islanders. That is, unlike the interventions of missionaries and governments, the scientists of the Cambridge Expedition had no interest in changing the lives of Islanders. Although they claimed that their Reports may be of later use by others in managing the changes in the Torres Strait (Haddon, 1935), in the early historical documents relating to the management of Islanders (e.g., Bleakley, 1961) there is no evidence that any understanding of the Torres Strait Islanders was sourced to the Cambridge Reports.

If this is the case, why then present these texts as a valid site of invention and intervention - in(ter)vention. There are a number of reasons. Firstly, because now, more than ever, they are referred to by authors writing on the Torres Strait (Singe, 1989) as a source of history and as an authority on what

Islanders once were and the way they once lived. Secondly, because now, more than ever, these Reports are accessible to Islanders. For Islanders interested in their history they provide details now lost to many Islanders – from the genealogies which help Islanders trace their connections to each other and past generations, to the descriptions of past practice and customs that provide an understanding of tradition and heritage, and to the linguistic studies that provide insights into languages spoken a Century ago. Thirdly, in light of the above reasons, it is important for Islanders to have a measure of the significance of these Reports both to their own and to others' understanding of Islanders' past and present and how the position of Islanders has been given representation in academically authoritative texts. Fourthly, and most importantly for the purposes of furthering this thesis, the analysis of these texts holds particular significance for understanding the position of Islanders if it can be used to explicate how the forms and processes of the scientists' rationale and methods provided the conditions and the limits of how Islanders could be understood both historically and in the present.

This chapter, then, attempts to provide more than a superficial 'within discourse' analysis of the content, methods and conclusions of the Cambridge scientists. Its aim is to analyse these texts to provide a reading of how the position of Islanders has been framed, pre-conditioned and subsequently described, explained and understood by a scientific community of scholars. It aims to illustrate how these pre-conditions infiltrated and shaped the scientist's interpretation of data and how this circumscribed and limited the conclusions they were able to draw. It seeks to do this in order to pursue the following questions. How did these scholars view and give representation to the position of Islanders in the context of the historical events that surrounded the emergence of the new order? How reflective of the Western systems of knowledge were these observations, conclusions and representations and how did they represent Islander understandings of knowledge? As an exemplar of the application and production of scientific

knowledge and processes, are the scientific ways of observing, understanding, relating and categorising Islanders that are evident in these historical texts of the Cambridge reports, carried over into current methodologies for understanding, explaining and constructing knowledge on Islanders? What does an Islander need to understand about these texts and their methodologies in order to measure how such texts contribute to understandings about the current position of Islanders, particularly in relation to the ongoing intervention of Western systems of knowledges in their lifeworlds? Can these texts be sanctioned as 'authoritative' merely because they employed scientific methods assumed to be objective and free of the bias of the researchers? Should it be accepted that the diminution of the Torres Strait Islanders as expressed in these Volumes is an outcome of those particular historical times in which the scientists were embedded? Or should the sciences be scrutinised further for the epistemological constraints that precondition the interpretative frameworks through which they frame their knowledge production? What can Islanders learn from this exemplar of scientific practice and knowledge production about the positioning effects of current knowledge production on Islanders?

These questions are of the utmost importance to understanding both the historical and the current position of Islanders. As argued in Chapter One, Islanders own independent representations of their historical (and ongoing) experience are easily invalidated. Islanders' own historical understandings have been denied and refused and have been re-presented in the knowledges and understandings of non-Islanders. The position of Islanders cannot be fully articulated without reference to this body of knowledge as it appears in Islander lifeworlds in forms of intervention that have produced and still produce particular material effects and particular political positions for Islanders. Although the Cambridge Reports may have had limited material effects, they stand as an exemplar of knowledge production on Islanders. For this reason they present as an important site for study.

The most crucial goal of this study is to rediscover the ways in which non-Islanders have positioned Islanders in their texts. The attempts of the Cambridge scholars to chart the characteristics of the Islander were as noble in their intentions as were the missionaries. I have not set out to disprove their 'truths', nor to invalidate the contents, or construe the Reports as outdated or misguided. What I hope to show is the fragility of the grounds on which their 'truths' and statistics stand. In this way I wish to uncover the particular historical grounds and the particular epistemological position which constrain these Reports as the Cambridge team went about constructing a particular historical position for the Islanders they studied and from which they are still viewed.

The Cambridge Expedition

The Cambridge expedition was stimulated by earlier ethnographical data gathered by A. C. Haddon in 1888 on his first visit to the Torres Strait as a marine zoologist. The project for the following expedition was, according to Haddon, "to collect more data, with a view to making, with the aid of colleagues, as complete a study of the people as was practicable" (1901, preface). He argued that "no investigation of a people was complete that did not embrace a study of their psychology, and being aware of the paucity of our knowledge of the comparative physiology and psychology of primitive peoples" (preface) he determined that a team of psychologists be part of the expedition. Drs. W.H.R. Rivers, C.S. Myers, and W. McDougall, all trained in experimental psychology, were recruited to study the physiology and psychology of the Islanders. Sidney H. Ray was also recruited to document the two traditional languages of the Torres Strait. Mr. A. Wilkin who had some background in archaeology and anthropology was also recruited. Dr. C.S. Seligmann assisted with his special interests in exotic diseases and native medicinal practices. Haddon himself had not only a renewed interest in ethnology but had resigned his chair of zoology, and by the time of the expedition he was mostly preoccupied with anthropology.

On their arrival in the Torres Strait in 1898, the seven-member team found things had already changed for the Islanders. The people had been adversely affected by a burgeoning marine industry. The *Bêche-de-mer* (sea cucumber) and the Mother of Pearl shell had attracted a lot of people with financial interests who were single-minded about the exploitation of the marine resources as well as the exploitation of Islanders as cheap labour. In the Eastern region of the Torres Strait where the Islands were more isolated, missionaries from the London Missionary Society in England had control of the communities and had inculcated Islanders into a new moral order. The Queensland Government by this time had also stepped in to 'regulate' disorder in the commercial activity and to 'protect' the welfare of all Islanders in the Torres Strait including those under missionary control. The Islanders, then, found themselves invaded from many quarters and overwhelmed by the different regimes and new forms of regulation (the following Chapter will explore these regimes and their different modes of intervention in more depth).

The project for the expedition thus came to have a renewed purpose. The Cambridge research team was now "to recover the past life of the islanders [sic], not merely in order to give a picture of their former conditions of existence and their social and religious activities, but also to serve as a basis for an appreciation of the changes that have since taken place" (Haddon, 1935, p. xiv). The 'native languages', the 'primitive psychology', as well as the 'traditional culture' became obvious priorities for the team. The new sense of purpose required of them concentrated efforts to extricate and describe what constituted the Islander before the arrival of the marine industries, government agencies, and missionaries. The work was to be done with the view that what was documented was to be of later use by others in order that they gauge and manage the changes in the Torres Strait. The expedition thus gained its first political overtones albeit after the research team had arrived in the Torres Strait. But what was also clear was that the project was not about assessing the impact made by intruders from the West on Islanders. Nor was

it about documenting the damage done to whole communities by the West's incessant pursuit of material wealth.

Two points can be made about the terms of reference that the team established at the outset of the study. First, the Cambridge scientists embarked quite openly on a comparative study. In charting the characteristics of the 'savage mind', the team proposed to achieve this by directly comparing Islanders and Europeans on a broad range of tests. Sometimes they cross-referenced their data with knowledge gleaned from other studies of different groups before drawing their conclusions. By this process the scientists did much more than describe and report on the characteristics of Islanders and their society. They inscribed the Torres Strait Islander in a particular, and already prescribed relation with Europeans. It is this action and the subsequent relation that it engendered at the epistemological level that limits understandings about Islanders and the position that was constructed for them.

The second point concerns the way the Cambridge scientists viewed the historical position of the Islanders. They had difficulty viewing the Islanders as people embedded in their own historical context and trajectory. That is, the scientists submerged the dynamics of Islander society that resulted from their inter-island relationships and from their interactions with neighbours to the north and south, and their contacts with Western travellers that had been recorded at least since 1606. According to Stokes (1846), the earliest visit to the Islands was made by Luis Vaez de Torres in July 1606, at least 290 years before Haddon and his team arrived in the Torres Strait. According to Haddon's own review of the literature (1935) on early explorers there were many other visits by numerous seafaring explorers. Carstensz came in 1623, Abel Tasman in 1644, James Cook in 1770, William Bligh in 1789, E. Edwards in 1791, W. Bampton and M.B. Alt in 1793, Matthew Flinders returned for a second visit in 1802, P.P. King came in 1819, Young in 1822. Charles M. Lewis sailed into the Torres Strait in 1836 to search for survivors

of the ill-fated Charles Eaton. By the 1830s, the Torres Strait had become a major gateway to Eastern Australia for travellers and voyagers from Western countries. And because of this, major hydrographical surveys (Jukes, 1847a, 1847b; MacGillivray, 1852a, 1852b) were commissioned by colonial governments in Australia and abroad to chart safer passages through the Strait. The survey ships MHS *Fly* and the HMS *Rattlesnake* spent many months in the Strait and had become well known to most Islanders. Despite these visits and interactions, like the missionaries, the scientists saw Islanders as people who had “remained the same” (McFarlane, 1888, p. 14), whose historical path was only just beginning because of the infiltration of the current wave of European activity.

The Haddon accounts contain an example of how easily the Islander position can be refused and written out of history and it is presented here to illustrate the process and to clarify the significance of this practice for understanding the position of Islanders. When the sailors of the *Hormuzeer* and *Chesterfield* arrived in the Torres Strait in 1793, the Islanders of Erub (Darnley Island) welcomed them. The sailors were invited to help themselves to the island’s only source of water (as they reportedly did with all potential traders; see McFarlane, 1888). The sailors not only filled the ships’ many barrels but also indulged themselves by bathing in the water hole with soap, and then proceeded to wash the ships’ laundry as well. Water is extremely precious to Islanders in this region of the Torres Strait, and according to McFarlane (1888), Erub was often without rain for eight months of the year. The conflict that ensued as a consequence of their misunderstanding saw five sailors killed as well as an “unknown” (Haddon, 1935, p. 6) number of Islanders.

Haddon’s recount of this event understandably centred on the ferocity of the encounter between the Islanders and sailors. The actual number of sailors killed was recalled and the destruction of the material possession of the Islanders was listed: one hundred and thirty-five houses were destroyed,

sixteen canoes were burnt, and all the gardens were decimated. But, the number of young girls 'taken as prisoners' and the number of Islander deaths remain in his recount as, 'unknown'.

This recount appears as containing a simple omission of the Islanders position. The omission seems understandable because the incident was recounted from the visitors' point of view, how could they be sure of numbers. It appears easily remedied because although the numbers of Islanders killed and taken away can never be retrieved a more balanced account can still be rewritten to include the Islander position. But from the Islanders' position this is much more than omission. This represents the denial of their significance. The repetitive, almost endemic nature of such omissions is not so easily remedied by attempts to re-vision history to include Islander positions. The cumulative effect of re-writing history to include Islander positions does not add up to a more balanced historical account of the experiences of Islanders. If the historical experience of Islanders has been one of constant denial and refusal then it is this that must be written into Islander history. The effect of this historical experience on Islanders' current position needs to be more clearly understood and articulated within the historical context of non-Islander intervention. The remedies to this historical experience of refusal lie not so much in re-writing the past, although that has enormous therapeutic value. It lies as much in understanding the processes that give form to such refusals, that render them so logical, that render it natural to not even think of the Islanders' historical position, and that lead to obscuring Islander standpoints in history. It is from this standpoint that the analysis of these texts is informed. And it is from this standpoint that Haddon's view of Islanders as having only a recent past is untenable. It is from this standpoint also that in order to begin understanding Haddon's and his team's view of Islanders it has to be understood that from the outset Islanders could only constitute a secondary position in relation to those who studied them. And, as well, that Islander histories when they are

considered can emerge only in the secondary sense as an 'unknown' and untold appendage to the Western histories.

As we will see in the following sections, the standpoints and approaches used in the Cambridge project held that Islanders' lifeworlds were in a primitive state (i.e., with no political space of their own, going no place in particular, and thus with no history they could call 'their own'). Islanders featured as an unorganised lot with ad hoc lifestyles, living from day to day. And as we saw in the previous Chapter, according to non-Islanders like Rev. McFarlane (1888), the persistent standpoint was that the Islander up until the arrival of people from the West had quite simply 'remained the same'.

1. Modern Linguistics: Charting languages without their speakers or their history.

Sidney H. Ray's (1907) volume (III) on linguistics purports to describe in depth the formal aspects of the traditional languages as they were spoken in the Torres Strait in the late 1800s. It spans 528 pages, and considers the languages of the Eastern and Western Islanders, the languages of Cape York, and the southern languages of Papua New Guinea. In this section, I will chart Ray's overview of the literature in addition to his work on the traditional languages to provide readers, and particularly Islander readers, with a historical perspective on the extensive deliberations he had to make to put his case that Islander language formation was static. This method is chosen to show not only an historical moment that surrounds such efforts but to show that even after the most extensive reviews and considerations of the literature and the grammar of the languages, the Western theoretical principles regarding 'primitives' prevail. And once again we see that the political position of Islanders in the formation of their language does not figure in any significant way.

At first glance, the extensive descriptions of the grammar of the Islander languages are impressive but unremarkable. However, linguists do have a

location in History that helps set parameters to what they can do. Two important aspects of the historical moment need outlining. First, the period up until Ray's time was notable for major scientific explorations around the Globe. The trends to scientifically taxonomise all aspects of 'difference' had great intellectual currency, especially if such differences could be compared on an evolutionary scale. It is clear, for instance, that Sidney Ray's study (1898-1907) was mostly centred on capturing the formal elements of the grammar of the two traditional languages of the Strait. But, his standpoint in History is also clear when he begins to propose the notion that maturation stages in the grammar of a language can be used to compare it with another:

“[a]lthough a morphological likeness between the languages of Papuans or Andaman Islanders [the nearest black race west of New Guinea, as Ray referred to them] cannot at present be satisfactorily demonstrated, it seems to be at least possible that as the two races are in practically the same stage of culture, the psychology of their languages may be found on closer knowledge to have some common features” (p. 525).

However, it was after Ray's (1907) publication, and not until Ferdinand de Saussure's efforts between 1906 and 1911 that a scientific basis was fully established that could possibly locate psychology in linguistics. In other words, comparing the psychology of languages at the time of the expedition was only being speculated about.

Second, Ray (1907) undertook his study of the two traditional languages of the Torres Strait at a time when there were major theoretical shifts being made in the study of languages. Up until then there had been two clear positions on linguistics: Grammar and Philology. Grammar, at the initiation of the Greeks and later taken up by the French, was a preoccupation oriented to the formal elements of a language, and was heavily reliant on the logic of grammatical rules to elaborate about the use and misuse of a language. As such, it became a very prescriptive discipline. Philology, on the other hand,

was oriented to written texts and not the language used in daily discourses. The main preoccupation was largely with literary histories, and mostly on forms and styles of writers over different periods with criticism at the centre of its discipline. By the early 19th Century however, there had been a realisation in linguistic studies that languages could be compared. To Saussure (1972), “[w]hat was new was the elucidation of one language by reference to a related language, explaining the forms of one by appeal to forms of the other” (p. 2). Those who then proposed that a language could be compared with another looked towards the ‘living language’, and subsequently moved to develop standpoints that became known as comparative grammar and comparative philology.

Comparative philology continued its earlier stand on styles and the focus was clearly on the ideological creativity of language as used in speech acts. Language to these comparativists – theirs was a position borne out of preoccupations with Indo-European languages – was the creative work of individuals who sought to express themselves in stylistic ways. The history of its creation thus was seen as ideological – in the sense that language was seen as the manifestation of negotiated settlements between creative speakers – always in the making, and of changing forms. No primacy was given to languages as having a fixed normative system. Verbal expression – a creative speech act – is what manifests language. To the philologists, everything that was considered by linguists as grammar in a language was once an encounter of speakers stylistically expressing their tastes. As one Russian reader observed of extant trends, this approach was based on the notion that “[t]he reality of language is, in fact, its generation” (Volosinov, 1973, p. 56).

By contrast, those oriented to comparative grammar continued the earlier priority to phonetics, grammar, and lexical forms. These grammarians argued that verbal interaction, on the surface, may be seen as though they were in the process of language encounters of the aforementioned kind. But, underlying all forms of verbal expressions were elements that provided for

correspondence between speakers. How else would there be coherence between speakers, they asked? Coherence in communicative events, they contended, comes about because they are aligned by elements of phonetics (familiar sounds), grammar (recognised ways of making meaning), and lexical forms (a shared vocabulary). Language, seen in these ways, corresponded with a normative system borne out of communal usage – an agreed system of ways to structure and make common meanings. The living language to grammarians was seen to be embedded in “a stable, immutable system of normatively identical linguistic forms which the individual consciousness finds ready-made and which is incontestable for that consciousness” (Volosinov, 1973, p. 57). Not, they argued, in some contortion of some ideological creativity. In short, grammatical features of a confined linguistic system to them not only determined but also delimited forms of communication between speakers.

Comparative philology, according to the grammarians, failed to connect languages by their formal systems and linguistic components. They argued that styles and creativity in language may be useful to identify its forms but that there are no natural elements or artistic impulses beyond the formal rules of grammar. According to Volosinov (1973), this was a period that saw linguists arguing that “[t]he laws of language are the specifically linguistic laws of connection between linguistic signs within a given, closed linguistic system” (p. 57). Comparative grammar, according to philologists, developed modes of investigation that failed to connect languages by the history of their making. As the philologists pointed out, what is not often stated is that a fundamental purpose to the linguists’ work on grammar is to abstract it from its ideological beginnings so that languages can be ‘formalised’ for the specific purpose of teaching language as a ready-made product, and according to some fixed system. To the philologists, the grammarians’ central problem was their exclusive focus on the formal elements of a language, and in particular their failure to include the ideological histories that gave grammar its forms.

Ray (1907) was confronted with a theoretical standpoint based on a normative system of phonetic, grammatical, and lexical forms as the basis for describing languages on the one hand, and on the other he had the philologists pointing to instances and thus 'facts' in communicative events as theirs. Such positivism – the use of 'facts' as a basis for its standpoint - evident in the comparative work of philologists did not sit well with Ray (1907). Saussure's (1972) illustration of an early aspect of the positivism in the philologists' newfound schema is helpful here to bring forward Ray's attempt to distance himself from positivist traditions:

For example, suppose we take the paradigms of Latin *genus* and Greek *génos*:

genus, generis, genere, genera, generum, etc.
génos, géneos, génei, génea, généon, etc.

These series of forms tell us little, either on their own or when compared with one another. But they tell us a great deal as soon as we set beside them the corresponding Sanskrit forms:

ḡanas, ḡanasas, ḡanasi, ḡanassu, ḡanasām, etc.

At a glance we now see the relationship between the Greek and Latin paradigms. On the hypothesis... that Sanskrit *ḡanas* represents the primitive form, one concludes that *s* fell in the Greek forms *géne(s)os* etc. wherever it occurred between vowels. A further conclusion is that under the same conditions *s* became *r* in Latin. Moreover, as regards grammatical analysis, the Sanskrit paradigm makes it evident that the stem of these forms is the stable and clearly isolable element *ḡanas-*. Only early Latin and early Greek ever had the primitive system preserved in Sanskrit. So it emerges that the maintenance of Proto-Indo-European *s* in all cases is what makes Sanskrit illuminating in this instance. It is true that in other respects Sanskrit remains less faithful to the original prototype forms: it plays havoc with the original vowel system, for example. But in general the primitive elements which it maintains are vital for purposes of reconstruction. (Saussure, 1972, p. 2)

To the early philologists, the nature of the phonetic features of words and their changing forms were “diachronic facts” (Saussure, 1972, p. 91). The approach to establishing connections between languages thus was reliant on nothing more than the emergence of forms and styles of words: the *s* in the original word ‘fell’ in Greek because they emerged between vowels, and *s* turned to *r* in Latin for the same reason. This was very much a view to a history of languages where a central source was assumed, and where variations in the formation of similar words were seen to appear ‘over time’ as well as in ‘their transference’ to different geographical locations. So, the creative convergences of ‘primitive’ elements in a root word if not the geographical variation to the phonetics of a changing word were the ‘facts’ needed to establish connections.

However, the following synopsis of theoretical standpoints by Sidney H. Ray (1907) suggested that his approach to linguistic studies was not sympathetic to the early comparative work on like-words or their changing phonetic appearances. He argued that connecting languages by linking similar words or sounds of words was not only absurd but that the early comparativists assumed an equally ridiculous position that languages evolved across the globe genealogically from sources in countries to the West. He wrote, for example, of the same kind of practices in the Australian literature, “[t]here is a tacit supposition in all the foregoing theories that the Australians are immigrants from some unknown place into the lands which they now occupy” (1907, p. 516). He went on to show in the literature on Oceanic languages (Australia, Papua New Guinea, and the Pacific Islands) how inappropriate this practice had become:

In 1885 Tregear endeavoured to prove an Aryan origin for the Maori of New Zealand by a method, which by *reductio ad absurdum*, Atkinson [1886] showed would equally prove their kinship to the Semitic or any other group of languages. McDonald in several books [1894, 1889] has seriously tried to prove that the Melanesian languages are dialects of an ancient Semitic tongue. Hill-Tout [1898]

and Campbell [1899] have affirmed a connection between Oceanic and the American languages of British Columbia and Yucatan. F. W. Christian [1898; 1899] has compared Oceanic words with Aryan, Ural-Altaic and Eskimo, and with Japanese. Curr [1886] found that 'affinities in manners and customs demonstrate unmistakably that the Australian and the Negro are related, and also finds affinities in their languages. J. Matthew [1899], in discussing the origin of the Australians, finds traces in their languages of Dravidian, Melanesian (called by him Papuan), and Malay words. Dr. J. Fraser [1893; 1892] of Sydney has tried to prove that Aryan roots are found in Melanesian and Australian languages. As he also finds the same in Dravidian, and occasionally in Semitic, it naturally follows that according to his view, all these languages have a common origin. (Ray, 1907, pp. 504-505)

This led Ray to conclude that "[m]any who have discussed the subject, and some Australian writers in particular, appear to have followed each his own fancies as to origin and relationship, and, with no accurate method of comparison, obtained results which are at once confusing, contradictory, and in some cases absurd" (1907, p. 504). One of the primary faults Ray (1907) identified with past works on Oceanic languages, the same one raised by grammarians about positivist traditions, is that they:

...base their arguments upon supposed glossarial affinities. They believe that a likeness of words in sound and meaning is a proof that the languages in which the words occur are of common origin or genealogically related. Their method consists in taking some word or words in one group of languages, then to suppose some phonological changes which may or may not take place according to [?] rule in the languages discussed, next to find some words similar in sound and meaning to the altered words in the first group of languages, and then finally assert positively that the two sets of words are related. (Ray, 1907, p. 505)

In using this method, the aforementioned authors have come up with:

... three different propositions with regard to Australian languages. 1. They are related to the African (Curr). 2. They are related to the Polynesian, Melanesian, Dravidian, and Aryan (Fraser). 3. They are related to the Malay, with resemblances in Semitic (Mathew). Since, also, by the same methods, MacDonald affirms the Melanesian to be Semitic, and Hill-Tout relates some American languages to the Polynesian, and the Polynesian (represented by Maori) is Aryan according to Tregear, it necessarily follows that all these forms of speech are related to one another, and this process may be used to prove any given language to be connected with any other given language. (Ray, 1907, p. 506)

Ray (1907) queried why it was so important to prove that the first Australians were migrants. As he contended, “[t]here seems to be no more difficulty in assigning a distinctive character and local origin to the languages of the Australian aborigines [sic], than there is in assigning a special character to the fauna and flora of the land they dwell in” (p. 516). Why not consider at the outset that the people belong to this continent, Ray asked? Why not accept first, and before thinking about comparisons, that the languages of people in these parts of the world have their own beginnings?

By basing the early comparative work exclusively on sounds of words and ‘like’ words, Ray pointed out that their approach was not only too narrow but failed to see any of the developing elements of grammar in native languages. To establish connections, he contended, modern linguists needed a theoretically grounded approach to what makes languages peculiar to a community of speakers. Modern linguistics needed to adopt the standpoint that “[t]he process by which a thought is expressed in a language and the changes of form or position by which the words in a sentence are fitted to one another, are the only safe guides in establishing the connection of languages” (p. 507). The stage of development in the grammar of a language, for Ray, had to be identified and fully understood. Once a language was known in these ways he claimed, comparisons with another could then be

contemplated. He thus moved to provide the following examples to demonstrate the “true principles upon which linguistic comparisons can be made” (p. 507):

There can be no relationship in the speech of the Murray Islanders who says, *Nako ma-ra nei?* (What thee-of name), of the Banks Island Melanesian who says, *I-sei na-sasa-ma?* (Person-who the-name-thy), or the Hindu who says, *Ter ↔ ky ↔ n ↔ m hai?* (Yours what name is). But the language of the Micronesian who says, *Ia ito-m?* or *Ia ato-m?* (Who (is) name-thy) uses exactly the same formula of words as the Loyalty Islander who says, *I ↑ i ↑ -m?* and we may regard them as related to one another just as the Solomon Islander who asks, *A-bei na aha-mu?* is speaking a language akin to that of the Fijian who asks, *O d'ei na yad'a-mu?* (Person-who the name-thy), identical in construction with the expression of the Banks Islander just given. (Ray, 1907, p. 507).

Ray (1907) qualified this however by noting that “a similarity of structure is not evidence of linguistic connection unless there is also an identity of formative particles” (p. 507). He subsequently moved to provide the following example:

The Turkish words *el-in*, *el-e*, *el-den* are translated exactly by the Miriam [Mer Islander] *tag-ra*, *tag-en*, *tag-lam*, or the Mabuiag *geta-u*, *geta-ka*, *geta-ngu* (of hand, to hand, from hand), but there is no connection between the languages. But when, as in the words given above for ‘name-thy’, the Banks Islander says *sasa-ma*, the Micronesian *ito-m* or *ato-m*, the Loyalty Islander *i ↑ -m*, the Solomon Islander and Fijian *aha-mu* and *yad'a-mu*, and it can be shown by comparison with languages spoken between them that not only are *sasa*, *ito*, *ato*, *i ↑*, *aha*, *yad'a*, related words for ‘name’, but that the same suffix *-ma*, *-m*, *-mu* is used in these, and in the languages between, we may safely assume that we are dealing with related languages. (Ray, 1907, p. 507)

The principal features to making connections for Ray required the consideration of root words, the formative particles used with them, as well as the effects they had on meaning when words and particles were compounded (what he termed as 'word-building'). This approach, to Ray, required no less than a close examination of all the grammatical features that provided the basic structure to the traditional languages in the Torres Strait. He considered in his study, for example, the formation of demonstrative words and particles in the Islander languages, the place and form of adjectives, nouns, pronouns, the use and effects of verbs, adverbs, connectors, etc. as well as the forms and use of exclamations and numerals. As stated by him, documenting and assessing the stage of development of the grammar in a language was the only safe means to establishing whether there were connections with another.

As far as knowledge only of lexical forms goes, Ray (1907) had this to say:

The witness of vocabulary is entirely of a secondary character. The evidential value of words in a given language which are similar in form or meaning to those in another language, depends upon circumstances of the connection. If the languages in question are already proved akin by identity of grammatical construction and by identity of particles, then an agreement in words strengthens the argument for kinship. (Ray, 1907, p. 507)

He went on also to point out that the geographical and historical factors used by others in establishing language connections may not be as sound as they make it out to be:

There is a geographical factor in comparisons which depends on the contact, for trading purposes or by contiguity of settlement, between the speakers of the languages compared. This, though valuable as evidence of the amount and nature of the contact, is of no value for establishing theories of origin and descent. A historical factor depending upon the introduction of a new religion or higher stage of culture is equally useless. (Ray, 1907, p. 508)

Ray (1907) maintained that the process by which speech acts are formally structured and expressed in a language, and particularly their stage of development in grammatical terms, are the only primary organising principles by which language connections can legitimately be made. Isolated cases of a similar word or words appearing in different languages, as far as he was concerned, did not prove language connections. The priority evident here was for a more extensive consideration of grammatical features and syntactical rules. What was crucial to Ray's approach was the view that a language had to be treated, at the outset, as a static entity in a temporal space, contextualised only by its grammatical rules. In other words, connecting languages linguistically affords no view to ideological creativities and thus no view to a history of language. Just as Ray queried the early enterprise of basing connections exclusively on the style and sound of words, and particularly for not factoring in at least some position on the formal aspects of a language, so in turn one needs to question his own method of giving exclusive attention to the charting of developments in grammatical rules and structures without including the people in the making and remaking of their language.

Ray's (1907) review of extant practices in the literature, gives no priority to any ideological position in language formations. Grammar was at the centre of his consideration in the literature. Ray considered accounts from as early as Cook's voyage in the Endeavour in 1770 as well as Edwards' voyage in the Pandora in 1791. He found that the early authors neither "left accounts of the natives [n]or their languages" (p. 1). He noted that it was not until the arrival of Matthew Flinders in 1792 that focused descriptions were first made of the Islanders. Flinders, on a second visit to Mer in 1802, described an encounter with Islanders and referred to them as "... 'Indians'... holding up cocoanuts [sic] joints of bamboo filled with water, plantains, bows and arrows and vociferating *toore! toore!* [iron! iron!]" (Ray, 1907, p. 1). Around the same

time, Signor L. M. D'Albertis's (1880) documented a visit to the Torres Strait. His account "contain[ed], among others, a vocabulary of 38 words used in Yorke Island [Masig]" (Ray, 1907, p. 4). Ray also found an account by Stone (1880) of a visit to Papua New Guinea in 1876. Included in Stone's account is a discussion of a list of words from the language used at Masig. According to Ray, however, it did not appear that Stone actually travelled to the Strait. Likewise, in another publication, Herr Grube (1882) "made a re-arrangement of the Murray [Mer] and Darnley [Erub] Island vocabularies of Jukes and Stone, without adding to a knowledge of the structure of the languages" (p. 4). Typical of documentations in the early periods of visits to the Islands a few Islander words emerged here and there but they were mostly written up as words for artefacts of exotic worlds.

Ray went on to note that it was around 1822, on a visit to Mer, that a surgeon, T.B. Wilson, on the ship *Richmond*, compiled a vocabulary that was subsequently lost in a shipwreck in 1829 on another visit to the Torres Strait. By 1837, concentrated attempts were being made to identify the language. P. P. King (1837) had produced from Captain Lewis's journal of the rescue of Ireland a substantial list of words from Mer: "532 English words or phrases with native equivalents, 13 names of islands, 7 numerical terms, and 40 names of parts of the body" (Ray, 1907, p. 2). These words and phrases were documented by Captain Lewis from John Ireland (a survivor of the shipwreck 'Charles Eaton' who had been living on Mer for two years). In 1847, Jukes, a naturalist, published A Narrative of the Surveying Voyage of HMS 'Fly' (1847). In this publication, Ray noted that 800 words from Mer and Erub were included. A Mr Millery, the clerk of the ship 'Fly', had compiled them. Listed in the appendix to the Narrative of the voyage of HMS 'Rattlesnake' (1852) published by MacGillivray, also a naturalist, are two sets of vocabularies. The first was compiled from the language spoken by the Cape York people and the Muralag people and the second, to the language spoken in the "South Eastern New Guinea and the Louisades" (Ray, 1907, p. 3). But, as Ray pointed out, the former vocabulary:

... was almost entirely derived from the communications of Mrs Thompson (Gi'om), a white woman who had been held in captivity by the islanders [sic] for more than four years... but Mrs Thompson's want of education prevented her from giving Mr Macgillivray anything but a superficial idea of the structure of the language. (Ray, 1907, p. 3)

As far as Ray (1907) was concerned, the more significant publications came about in 1876 when missionaries began translating religious texts into the local languages. For Ray, the religious literature was significant because they contained lengthy representations of the traditional languages of the Torres Strait, and of a kind hitherto unseen in the literature. They offered a better sample of the grammar of the languages. In the Eastern region of the Strait, most of the literature published was concerned with "Scripture Translations, Lessons and Hymns" (p. 226). And, as far as Ray knows, the "first mission literature was a sheet of lessons first used at Darnley [Erub] on Sunday, August 24th, 1873" (p. 3). After five years on Mer, Rev. S. MacFarlane published in 1876, in Meriam, the first book, First Lesson Book from Darnley Island, Torres Strait (cited in Ray, 1907). Rev. A. E. Hunt later revised this in 1888. Another first was the translation of the Gospel of St Mark into Meriam, Evangelia Mareko Detali, published in 1879 in Sydney. To Ray, this single publication unfortunately set a mode for abbreviated grammatical forms clearly evident in translations that followed. As he said of one of the translations, "it is certain that the translation [of the Gospel of St Mark] did not fully represent the exuberant grammatical forms of the Eastern Language" (p. 226). Nevertheless, Rev. J. Tait Scott published 34 parables in 1883 at Montrose (cited by Ray, 1907). Another that followed the order of the aforementioned mode, Evangelia Mareko Detarer, was published in 1885 in Sydney. This publication included translations of the "Gospels of Mark and John, with the Catechism, Lord's prayer, Commandments, Marriage and Burial Services and 112 hymns" (Ray, 1907, p. 227). By 1898, when Ray visited the islands,

Finau... was translating the Gospels of Matthew and Mark into the Murray language [Meriam] whilst Iotama... was translating Luke and John. These have been since published by the British and Foreign Bible Society, under the care of Rev. Harry Scott. (Ray, 1907, p. 227)

Ray also found in Rev. Dr. R.H. Cordrington's, The Melanesian Languages, published in 1885, a short list of words from Dauan and Erub. Cordrington had deliberated on the linguistic features of a few nouns from Meriam. A list of Islander words are also included in Forty Years' Mission Work in Polynesia and New Guinea by Rev. A.W. Murray (1876) and Life in the Southern Isles by Rev W.W. Gill (1876). Ray (1907) resolved however that, in the main, and "[i]n spite... of the large numbers of vocabularies, the grammatical structure of the two languages of Torres Strait was very little known" (p. 4). As far as he was concerned, the "former grammars (based on translations of the Gospels) had left many expressions to be elucidated and explained" (p. 5).

In the Western Islands, Ray (1907) outlines similar-writing activities. However, unlike those produced in the Eastern Islands, the locals and South Sea Islander linguistic neophytes had produced all the literature. In 1884, a Lifuan translated the Gospel according to Mark in the Saibai dialect of the Western language. In 1900 a Samoan, with the aid of Ned (Waria), Tom (Noboa), Peter (Papi), drew up in the Mabuiag dialect the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. This too was published by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1900. Ray noted that there was also a "new version of the Catechism and Hymn Book.... Kulai Iapupoibi, Jesun Wakai Iudan A Ieovan Sabi. Naupuidaika.... [the] Hymnal portion has 82 pieces, some of which are prayers and exhortations rather than hymns" (p. 190). Ray resolved here, as he did with translation practices in the Eastern Islands, that the "language of the translation was in many respects much inferior to the language as ordinarily used by the older natives... the language had been for some years used and taught by white men... as my informant Pasi described the process, 'they cut it short'" (p. 5).

By contrast, two manuscripts produced by Eastern and Western Islanders, Pasi and Waria, impressed Ray. As he exclaimed of Pasi's manuscript, "this may be regarded as the first unassisted literary effort of a member of the Papuan race" (1907, p. 228). In the Eastern Islander language, Pasi wrote an impressive manuscript of 59 pages written on both sides and included folktales, names of islands, villages, reefs, animals, plants, as well as songs. Extracts from Pasi's manuscript are included with English translations in Ray's volume from page 229 to page 250. Ray described Pasi's writing of "somewhat crabbed style" (p. 228) and that it also resembled the missionary modes of 'cutting it short'. But, and more importantly to Ray, this is where Waria's manuscript was different. Ray considered Waria's manuscript to be more 'true to form'. In his words, it was "longer and more purely native" (p. 228). Waria's manuscript of 281 pages was produced after Ray's project in the Strait, and later sent to the Cambridge Expedition team in England. Parts of the manuscript are included in Ray's volume from page 191 to page 225 with English translations. The full manuscript,

consists of 281 pages, partly quarto, partly octavo, [and] written on one side. The first 175 pages, after a short account of Waria himself, are taken up by a genealogical description of the people of Mabuiag. Then follows a series of Folk-tales comprising those of KUIAM (i.e. Kwoiam), pp. 176-212; WAIAT, pp. 212-240; a short description of the funeral ceremonies, pp. 241, 242; TABEPA, pp. 243-257; AMIPURU, pp. 258-281. (Ray, 1907, p. 191)

Ray (1907) identified the form of writing chosen by Waria as the living language, or that used in day to day conversation. This was the aspect of the whole manuscript that interested him the most. To Ray, the style of writing was quite different from the translated literature produced by non-Islanders because it contained for him the more significant traces of a pre-given structure to the language and greatly assisted with his on-going study of the grammar of languages in Melanesia.

From his review of extant practices in the literature, however, Ray (1907) resolved that a more focused effort was needed in the gathering of data. What was needed was more evidence of the grammar of the traditional languages. Likewise, from his consideration of the theoretical trends, he resolved to centre his focus on analysing the Islander languages by their grammar. His approach to the study in the Islands was to collect as many language encounters from the Islanders as he could. It was through a very labour intensive process that Ray (1907) was able to put together with any certainty the grammar of the traditional languages as they were spoken in the Western Islands (see for example pp. 6-48) and the Eastern Islands (see pp. 49-87). He gathered statements used in day to day conversations and studied them individually for their grammar. From this, he was able to document a variety of ways of saying things. He checked and double-checked all of his data. He had his notes and descriptions checked not only by informants but also by the older members of the community. The assistance of the older members of the communities was particularly important to verify whether things said by informants were stated correctly. This also helped Ray to authenticate data gathered by him as 'traditional language'.

He contended with dialectical variations. He considered in depth the phonology of the words (sounds of vowels, consonants, syllables, etc.), word-formations (roots and particles of words), and classes of words (demonstrative words and particles, adjectives, nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, connective words, exclamations, and numerals). From his efforts he was able to conclude, for instance, that word formation in the Western Islander Language was "in the agglutinate stage, the significant roots and modifying particles being clearly distinguishable. The particles have no meaning when separated from the root word" (p. 9). And, by contrast, he was able to resolve that the Eastern Islander language was also "in the agglutinate stage, but the significant roots and modifying particles... [were] not so clearly distinguishable as in the language of the Western Islanders. The Particles have no meaning when separated from the root word" (p. 53). That

is, the grammar of the Western language was not as complex as the Eastern Islanders' language. For this reason, the Eastern Islander language was, he noted, "more difficult to analyse" (p. 49) than the Western Islander language and its "simple construction" (p. 7).

Ray (1907) also compiled a list of lexical forms from Mabuiag and Mer with corresponding meanings in English (see pp. 88-131). And he identified a list of alien words in use in the Islands. Some came from the Greek language. Some were from Hebrew and Latin. To Ray, they were obviously introduced through Scripture translations or by the Europeans who settled in the Strait. Words introduced by the Samoans and the Lifuans, as well as words of uncertain origin and adapted words were also appended. And thus from his consideration of all grammatical and lexical forms, he was able to conclude the following about the primary syntactical rules of the languages:

<u>Grammar of Western Language</u>	<u>Grammar of Eastern Language</u>
1. The Subject precedes the Verb.	1. The subject precedes the verb.
2. The Direct Object follows the Subject and precedes the Verb.	2. The object follows the subject and precedes the verb.
3. The Indirect Object usually precedes but sometimes follows the Verb.	3. Oblique cases of nouns usually precede but may follow the verb.
4. The case of a Noun depends on the meaning of the verb and its prefix, and so does not always correspond to the construction in English.	4. Adjectives or nouns used attributively, and possessives precede the word qualified.
5. Origin always requires the Ablative case in <i>-ngu</i> , destination or purpose the Dative in <i>-ka</i> .	5. Adjectives or other words used predicatively follow the subject.

6. Adjectives and Possessives used Attributively precede the Noun.

7. Adjectives used Predicatively follow their Noun with the noun endings – *nga* or *-mal* for things or places, *ig* or *igal* for persons.

8. The Adverb as a rule precedes the Verb.

9. When a Noun denoting a position or part is used with another Noun it is placed in the same case. (Ray, 1907, p. 48)

6. In a negative sentence the word *nole* immediately follows the subject and precedes the object.

7. Adverbs precede the verb and the object.

(Ray, 1907, p. 87)

Ray's work has provided useful information to people over the years, and particularly when they have wanted to counter claims from Westerners that Islander people did not have a systematic, grammatical language - they just 'jibber jabber' on first, like monkeys and later, like children. It is significant to Islanders of today for other reasons. For instance, there is now a record of the linguistic features of the languages spoken a century ago. However, what needs to be clearly noted about linguistic studies of this kind and the information produced by the linguists is that there was a lack of priority given to the position of speakers and therefore little understanding of the traditional languages beyond their grammatical order.

Throughout Ray's (1907) whole project, from his reviews to data gathering and analyses, there is little reference to Islanders as having an influence on the grammar of the language. Islander people only figure when identifiable elements of grammar require a owner. If the history of a language and its users/people are not factored into the primary standpoint then the knowledge about their language is diminished. However, this is not to invoke a concern about a shortfall in what linguists have done or currently do. It is to make the

point that the grammarians' angle on formal aspects of a language is fundamentally so that they may be taught later. Studies of this kind are content to describe and conclude with grammatical summations. Nevertheless the point remains that the grammarians' orientation to linguistic studies only sees language as 'ready-made' within a system of phonetic, grammatical, and lexical forms.

The early philologists were oriented diachronically to chart and document phonetic formation and changes in words, and to link "successive terms not perceived by the collective mind but substituted for each other in time without forming a system" (Saussure, 1959, p. 165). Such approaches as Saussure (1959, 1972) and Ray (1907) pointed out, were not very disciplined about what they did. Some, Ray argued, even adopted positions that, at times, were simply absurd. Saussure (1959), on the other hand, argued that the philologists, in giving primacy to the historical trajectory of words, had chosen quite wrongly to "ignore meaning and, by considering only the material envelope of a word, cut out phonic slices without asking whether they have a signification" (p. 141). Following the recognition of such shortfalls, Saussure and Ray opted to treat language synchronically. The only credible view to a historical locality worth considering, Saussure (1972) argued, was of some "indiosynchronic" (p. 90) position in the grammar of language users. They both contended that through communal usage, language groups have negotiated common ways of representing their views of the lifeworld and thus in any one moment of speaking about their experiences, grammatical patterns and deeper structures can be found that rightfully belong to a fixed meaning-making system. As far as they were concerned, this was a system that "register[ed] a state of affairs" (Saussure, 1972, p. 91).

However, following the experiences of Ray (1907) and others, Saussure (1959, 1972) found that little care had been taken to define what grammarians were studying. It became increasingly obvious that a theoretical standpoint was

needed to articulate a historical position to language that fundamentally links with speakers. If it ever was to be a science, as Saussure contemplated at the turn of the century, linguists needed to clearly define first what it was they were on about. Saussure (1959, 1972) subsequently proposed that what modern linguistics of the 20th Century needed to be about was the linguistic sign. If meaning is to be considered as a process by which thoughts are expressed then all there is to do is historicise the 'process' as a psychological entity. Saussure's preference for this position was articulated in a series of seminal works between 1906 and 1911 and was later published as *Cours de Linguistique generale* in 1916. If 'sign' can figure as this entity, as he contended, it would provide linguists a position to argue first, that 'the sign' is pivotal on speakers and a fixed meaning making system – the crucial link that is needed between people and language - and second, it would allow grammarians to maintain their allegiance to a primary fixed system albeit one now embedded in ontologies of psychological domains. For Saussure, what the grammarians needed was a clear focus to, and concern with, "the logical and psychological relations that bind together coexisting terms and form a system in the collective mind of speakers" (1959, p. 100).

Saussure's (1959, 1972) linguistic sign was not about the literal word formed by the letters 'm.a.n' but about the relational aspect of what and how the word meant. To Saussure, a word only provided a sign to a meaning that was always external to the word itself. But, as he added, meaning for each word, thus the sign, is achieved only in its relation to other signs. No word can stand on its own and have meaning only by reference to itself. For example, the argument being made by him was that the word formed by the letters 'm.a.n' on its own has no real significance unless the word 'man' has been assigned a meaning in its relation to what was known as the sign 'woman', and vice versa. Meanings for signs in these ways thus can only be relational. Words on their own have no meaning. But, the sign and what is signed - signal and signification - did, and thus required primary consideration by

linguists. And with this position came his first principle, “the linguistic sign is arbitrary” (Saussure, 1972, p. 67).

Saussure contended that to approach the sign in these ways also enabled linguists to witness ‘the fact’ that relations between man and woman could be inscribed differently by different language communities. And by relating in such ways, this would also help explain how they can be peculiar to a particular language community. Such relations and their patterns of coexistence with each other subsequently gave him reason to maintain that in every language community there would be a unique pre-given structure which groups of people have adopted to identify themselves and their lifeworlds. And, with this came his second principle. The linguistic sign, he argued “(a) occupies a certain temporal space, and (b) this space is measured in just one dimension: it is a line” (1972, pp. 69-70). Others, in Saussure’s eyes, neglected to consider these principal features of the linguistic sign and thus failed to see not only the pre-given structures but missed out on postulating a plausible measure for a psychological disposition of a language group. Structural linguistics in the modern era thus requires that more complex psychological structures by which daily communication operates are taken into account, and not only the history of the language.

That there was correspondence between variations within a language group was testimony to the ‘fact’ that pre-given structures existed. That there was no correspondence between two different language groups attests to ‘the fact’ that each language is unique to different groups of people. Language, according to Saussure, should then be treated as a fixed entity abiding by pre-given structures. In other words, its historical locale will be known as an already negotiated system of correspondences. And language owes its theoretical beginnings to ‘the fact’ that meaning can only be made from within a pre-given system. Saussure’s (1959, 1972) position on ‘signs’ became a means to establish the science that has come to be known as modern linguistics of the 20th Century. However, this new science takes up a positivist

position. In trying to bring some authority to linguistic practices, there is a slip into an academic positivism once criticised by Saussure himself as non-theoretical. The new science of linguistics assumes that the psychological disposition of a group of speakers is just there, in their heads. And that this is known by the way speakers agree to make meaning correspond to their surroundings. The meaning-making system now has a home in the speakers' head but speakers have no determining position. They are simply bound to a fixed process of expressing thoughts. Language, in this science, thus continued its distance from people and the socio-political world that it occurs in. The people's language and the history of its development is still secondary in linguistic studies, and is still as an ancillary consideration to the linguists' readings of how grammar determines meaning.

Summary

The inability of linguists to give primacy to people and to the history of a language is a fundamental aspect of a linguistic practice that has continued to this day. This shortcoming has come about in a mode for documenting languages because scholars have taken for granted an approach that single-mindedly leaves out people and their community. Such an approach affords little priority to language formation in its socio-historical context. And, in its most basic position, psychologistic positivism, in modern day linguistics assumes some "special kind of discontinuity between the history of language and the system of language (i.e., language in its ahistorical, synchronic dimension)" (Volosinov, 1973, p. 54). Indeed, Saussure is well known for his separation of *la langue* (language system) and *la parole* (speech act/utterance). It is well noted that Saussure elected to prioritise in his science principles based not on the ideological history of a language but on how words are strung together at any moment in time according to the peculiarities of language groups and their pre-given structures. As Matejka and Titunik indicated in their translation of Volosinov's Marxism and the Philosophy of Language (1973), there are serious implications in the way "synchrony is separated from diachrony in the investigation of verbal communication" (p.

2). Volosinov himself argued that the “dualistic discontinuity is absolutely insurmountable” (1973, p. 54). As far as he was concerned, language in its synchronic dimension could not be spoken of outside its historical position. And, language in its diachronic dimension can not be spoken of as outside of any communicative event. As he pointed out, “the linguistic forms that comprise the system of language are mutually indispensable and complementary to one” (1973, p. 54). The message to modern-day linguists who continue to engage in synchronic dimensions of living languages from social theorists who have a view to a philosophy of language is that,

... the actual reality of language-speech is not the abstract system of linguistic forms, not the isolated monologic utterance, and not the psychophysiological act of its implementation, but the social event of verbal interaction implemented in an utterance on utterances. (Matejka, 1973, p. 164)

However, it is hard to discount completely what linguists have achieved over the past century. By approaching languages solely in their synchronic dimension, modern linguists were able to document the grammatical structures and syntactical rules of many native languages across the globe. These outcomes have been very useful in the teaching of languages in formal settings. It even enabled people like Ray to make very astute claims in his work on traditional languages: “[t]he grammars now given, based upon oral communications and phrases taken down from native dictation, must therefore be regarded as superseding all that was formerly written on the structure of the languages. The vocabularies have also been corrected and extended” (1907, p. 5). There is little damage done even when grammatical structures are compared and resolved in the following manner:

1. The Western language of Torres Strait is Australian.
2. The Eastern language of the Torres Strait is morphologically [similar grammatical forms] related to the Papuan of New Guinea.

3. There is no genealogical [community of origin] connection between the two languages of the Strait.
4. There is no evidence of an African, Andaman, Papuan, or Malay connection with the Australian languages. There are reasons for regarding the Australian as in a similar morphological stage to the Dravidian, but there is no genealogical relationship proved. (Ray, 1907, p. 529)

However, it is problematic, when statements are made by modern linguists that claim that,

[a]lthough a morphological likeness between the languages of Papuans or Andaman Islanders cannot at present be satisfactorily demonstrated, it seems to be at least possible that as the two races are in practically the same stage of culture, the psychology of their languages may be found on closer knowledge to have some common features. (Ray, 1907, p. 525)

In this statement it was speculated that through an understanding of the grammatical structures of languages in different parts of the globe a pre-given set of features of a native language group could be used to identify where people are located in the evolutionary process. However, it was not until the later work of Saussure on the linguistic sign that a methodological position was developed to link the living language to the psychology of its speakers. Nevertheless, the point here is that grammarians like Ray and Saussure continued to discount people, histories, and particularly the socio-historical positions of languages. Linguists who take up such a standpoint then simply do not have the means, other than speculation, by which they can connect people or their culture in a developing social world.

Irrespective of the factors that motivated linguists like Ray or Saussure in their standpoints, social theorists like Volosinov maintained that their form of the discipline still needed to be substantiated by a science that encompassed an interactive and dynamic social historical trajectory. In other words, they

needed to incorporate a political path to the speech event being described, and a presence that situates it fundamentally in an economy of negotiating social futures. To achieve this requires no less than a full consideration of the people, their histories, and their political position.

2. Physiology and Psychology: Charting the savage mind

Another crucial part of the Cambridge project was aimed specifically at the study of the mental characteristics of Islanders from two of the many inhabited islands in the Torres Strait, Mer and Mabuiag. This work was to provide a scientific basis to “the comparative physiology and psychology of primitive peoples” (Haddon, 1901, preface). As far as the multi-disciplinary team of researchers was concerned, “no investigation was complete that did not embrace a study of their psychology” (preface). This task was left to the trained psychologists Drs W.H.R. Rivers, C. S. Myers and W. McDougall with the assistance of Dr. C. S. Seligmann. Rivers (1901) however held the primary role.

The Cambridge project regarded its work as standing apart from previous experimental psychological studies. Previous studies, the Cambridge scholars contended, were done with a series of tests administered within an hour whereas the tests on Islanders they were to carry out were to be over several months, thus minimising fatigue factors that could limit responses. The Cambridge Project would also focus in more depth and experiment with “a certain number of individuals... many times and in different subjects of investigation on different days” (Rivers, 1901, p. 5). The compilation of data in Volume II is from the report on the physiology and psychology of Islanders and is presented in two parts. Part 1 reports on the study of ‘Vision’ namely, physical characteristics and disease of the eyes, visual acuity, colour vision (colour nomenclature, derivation of colour names, colours of rainbow, colour vision of the peripheral retina, colour contrast, after-images, preference for colour), and ‘visual spatial perception’ (binocular vision, bisection of lines, dissect lines into three or more equal parts, estimation of vertical and

horizontal lines, the Muller-Lyer and other illusion tests). Part 2 reports on 'hearing abilities' (pathological condition of the ears, auditory acuity, upper limit of hearing and smallest perceptible tone-difference), smell (olfactory acuity and discrimination of odour-strengths, memory and discrimination of odours), taste, cutaneous sensations (delicacy of tactile discrimination, localisation of point of skin touched, temperature spots, and sensibility to pain), muscular sense (discrimination of small differences of weight, and degree of the size-weight illusion), variations of blood pressure, and reaction times.

This particular volume is considered as representing an attempt to counter claims that native people were closer to animals. Their speculation was that, if extreme acuteness in the senses was observed in native people, on a scientific basis to be similar to those from 'civilised' places then it followed that the views held about native peoples as closely related to animals were wrong. Such acts of intervention on behalf of Islanders have continued for a long time free from sanction or scrutiny. It seems to have been the case that if the intent was a noble one, the practice was beyond question. Yet there is no clearer example of the refusal of Islander people's intellectual capacities, and historical position than in Rivers' (1901) Report. What the scientists did, especially in the ways they intervened and compared Islanders with Britons and others from non-Islander worlds, requires detailed scrutiny.

A. Vision

Physical characteristics and Disease of the eyes

Rivers (1901) initial goal in Volume II was to outline the physiological characteristics of the eyes. To do this he first had to locate a standard by which comparatives could later be drawn. If the physiological condition of the eyes showed no debilitating factor it could be assumed that the starting points for Islanders would be the same for those in the West. However, he forewarned,

[o]n examining the eyes... I found a difficulty in getting an extensive view of the cornea and conjunctiva... it seemed to me that this was due to a greater narrowness of the palpebral fissure, but I have no direct measurements to show whether this was the case. (Rivers, 1901, p. 8)

Rivers' work contains numerous apologies like this for such limitations. However, this did not prevent him from making generalisations about Islanders. It is stated in Rivers' (1901) report of the physical characteristics and diseases of the eyes that he considered the state of the cornea and conjunctiva, and found "in nearly all cases[,] the conjunctiva was pigmented" (p. 8). That is, the types of pigmentation that modify the epidermis of the eye, a protective layer or membrane covering the eyes including the cornea and the inner side of the eyelid, were seen to range from irregular patches to an even distribution over the eye giving the eye a "yellowish appearance" (p. 8). Other variations included patches that "existed together with the diffuse pigmentation; in other cases, especially in younger men and children, the rest of the conjunctiva was white and clear" (p. 8).

Rivers (1901) found also that "the cornea was immediately surrounded by a definite ring of pigment" (p. 8). He recalled this as something noted in Pergens (1898) descriptions of the Congolese, and Kotelmann's (1879) notes of "a Negro". He also noted that "a similar ring may be seen in many animals" (p. 8). In addition to this observation, Rivers witnessed cases of "a definite arcus senilis" (p. 8) - this is a greyish fatty deposit in the cornea found in older people. This made the cornea appear hazy and gave the "outer edge of the iris a bluish appearance" (p. 9). Opacities of the cornea too were observed by Rivers and were thought to be a factor that restricted visual acuity, especially in cases where the middle of the cornea was affected. Rivers noted that people who lived on the south-eastern side of Mer where it was very windy and dusty, and who appeared "less healthy in other ways" (p. 9) had "the most marked corneal changes" (p. 9).

Rivers (1901) found no cases of strabismus (viz., squinting) although conjunctivitis and cataracts were evident in the Islands. He also witnessed that pterygium and pinguicula were common. The latter two described the thickening of conjunctiva that spreads over part of the cornea that can, at times, grow across the eyes: "pinguicula forms one stage or part of one stage in the development of pterygium" (p. 9). He suspected that dust and smoke from within shelters, huts and houses were the primary irritants that brought about pinguicula and its subsequent development into a pterygium. The youngest case observed by him was of a boy aged 11 whilst the more marked cases were with men about 40 years of age. And, by contrast, the condition in older men was less marked. This led him to surmise that pterygium occurs in the early years. Insufficient observations of the condition in women inhibited any statement to be made on whether the condition could be differentiated by gender. Nevertheless, as the results of visual acuity tests showed (see p. 39) the presence of a pterygium did not appear to affect the Islanders' sight.

Rivers (1901) observed that the Islanders' pupil size was generally smaller although, as he regretted he, "did not make any measurements of the size of the pupils" (p. 11). Eccentricity of the pupils, on the other hand, was found to be hardly different to its presence with Europeans. But, Rivers thought it necessary to mention that the few observed were on the nasal side. And, that they conferred with Kotelmann's findings of three Patagonians in Berlin: "it is perhaps noteworthy in this connection that in such eccentricity as existed in Torres Strait, the displacement was also nasal" (Rivers, 1901, p. 11).

Visual Acuity Tests

Rivers started his work with the understanding that it was the common view amongst travellers of the day of "uncivilised parts of the world" (Rivers, 1901, p. 12), that "savages can see objects and hear sounds which escape the most acute European" (p. 12). Rivers pointed to much debate about this in the intellectual arena (see *Nature*, 1885, vol. XXXI, pp. 340, 359, 386, 407, 433, 457, 503, 552). Lord Rayleigh, in his debate with those who were "ascribing

to savage and semi-civilised races a higher degree of acuteness of sense than is found in Europeans" (Rivers, 1901, p. 12), argued that "on theoretical grounds there were necessary limits to the resolving power of the eye, and believed that the highly developed visual powers of the savage depended on his [sic] attention and practice in the interpretation of minute indications" (p. 13). It was Rivers' view that his tests on Islanders would enable him to contribute to the debate as well as to speak with more authority on whether there existed such acuteness of the senses in the 'savage'. He thus sought to test the visual capabilities of Islanders using the E method, Snellen's letter test types (to be used presumably with children who knew the English alphabet), No. LIV (tests using numbers), and Guillery's test-types (tests using black dots on white backgrounds).

The results from the E method suggested, of the 170 people tested from Mer, Mabuiag and Kiwai, 8.8% of them were below "what is often supposed to be the normal European standard" (Rivers, 1901, p. 25). This meant that 91.2% achieved higher results (see table I, p. 25). Islanders outscored the supposed norm for Europeans by a huge margin. In order to get some handle on this large discrepancy, Rivers moved to problematise the 'supposed European standard'. If we were to compare the results of tests administered on army personnel by Seitz and Seggel (1883) in Germany, Rivers contemplated, we would see "no marked difference between the visual acuity of the average European and the Torres Strait Islander" (cited in Rivers, 1901, p. 27). Moreover, he suggested, if we were to use statistics and in particular average mean deviations, we will see similar advantages of Europeans over Islanders. For example, he continued, we may see from the average acuity rates from Cohn's (1896) tests on the European population in Heligoland (see Table I, p. 25) that "Heligolandians are distinctly inferior" (p. 28). But, he contended, if we were to consider the distribution below and above the average vision $V=1$, the "difference... is not [so] great and seems to show that European islanders [sic] living an outdoor, seafaring life do not differ very greatly in visual acuity from Papuan islanders [sic] whose life is also largely spent upon the sea" (p.

28). Rivers was able to show that if one chose a comparative wisely (e.g., German army personnel or average mean deviations of Heligolanders), the Islanders' high visual acuity could be assigned a lower status. But, he was then left with the problem of deciding what was to be the standard.

Results from Snellen's letter test-types, however, proved to be not so dependable because of the Islander children's uneasiness with the English alphabet. Rivers (1901) found that even with allowances for mistakes it was hard to gain results that were satisfactory. Moreover, he found that variations with the different letter shapes and sizes made it hard for him to gain any consistency and thus severed any chance of a definitive statement. What little was achieved, when compared with the results of the E tests, the children rated considerable lower. This confirmed for Rivers that the Snellen's letter-type method was totally inadequate for measuring acuteness of vision, and he later moved to declare that "the method... [was] scientifically defective as a method of testing visual acuity" (p. 31).

Snellen's Table LIV method likewise was first thought to be "the most Satisfactory of the methods which depend on counting" (Rivers, 1901, p. 33). He soon found that Islanders on Mer had a "very poorly developed" (p. 33) counting method and a limited vocabulary. These Islanders, he explained, had "words only for 1 (netat) and 2 (neis)" (p. 33). Numbers from 3 to 6 were described by compounding the words netat and neis whilst numbers beyond this were described using the joints of the fingers. Although they tried to use English numerals, and even with modifications to limit the use of numbers in Islander responses, Rivers found the results to be so inconsistent and unreliable that he declared Snellen's method in these situations as "entirely worthless" (p. 33).

Similarly, the Guillery's method was first considered: "the most satisfactory method of testing visual acuity" (p. 34). This method involved using a black dot on a white background and gauging the distance "at which a black dot of

a certain size situated in a square space is no longer distinguished from the ground" (Rivers, 1901, p. 34). As this test required the use of language, Rivers thought that he could get around this by giving Islanders "an empty square in which he [sic] had to mark the position of the dot in the same situation as occupied by that in the square to which... [Rivers] was pointing" (p. 34). However, no data is provided to demonstrate what levels of visual acuity were achieved by this method. Again Rivers makes an apologetic note, "[t]his method was necessarily laborious and I only made sufficient observations to satisfy myself that the method would be satisfactory if modified for ethnological purposes" (p. 34).

Rivers (1901) noted that he did make an attempt to look at Islanders who had an "abnormal refraction of the eye" (p. 35). Those "who were found to have low visual acuity were tested for errors of refraction" (p. 35). Presumably he meant the 8.8% who achieved low acuity levels from the E tests. However, with no ophthalmoscope or retinoscopy on his person, Rivers had to concede that "it was not possible to determine the refraction" (p. 35). He added that the task was very laborious: "[t]he natives did not like being tested. They were always interested in anything in which they excelled, but disliked having their inferiority in any respect shown, and consequently I had more difficulty with this than with any other of my observations" (p. 35).

Having failed to implement reliable visual acuity tests to corroborate his position on 'the standard' or his results from the E tests, Rivers (1901) resorted to the literature on hypermetropia and myopia for an explanation. Hypermetropia, or long distance vision, Rivers noted, "have been described as the normal condition of the child and of the savage" (p. 35). He supported this statement by citing results from other studies on children from the village of Schreiberhau as well as Negro children of Africa, and from studies of the "Lapps, Patagonians, Numbians and Kalmuks.... Sinhalese and Hindus.... Chippeway Indians.... Congolese" (pp. 35-6). Rivers was left then to make some general observations from his experience in the islands, "[u]nfortunately

I had not with me a convex glass of less than one diopter, [but] ...the fact that the vision of some was certainly not diminished, renders it probable that slight degrees of hypermetropia existed in Murray Island”.

Nevertheless, as Rivers (1901) continued, myopia, or shortsightedness, was considered to be “very rare among savage people” (p. 36). To support this view, he again cited from studies of indigenous peoples in the literature: of the 17 Nubians tested, only one was found to be myopic; of the Kalmuks, Sinhalese, Hindus, Lapps and Congolese no case of myopia was found; of the Negro children 2.6% were myopic; of the American Indian children 2.4% were myopic; of the 6163 children studied in Buenos Aires 4.2 were myopic. On the other hand, Rivers pointed out, myopia is considered to be a common feature in Japan, Armenia, as well as places like Georgia. This also was found to be the case with studies of children in Mexico who were “attending superior schools [and] who were of European parentage” (p. 36), 19% of them were myopic. Although Rivers considered the results from Mer to be unsatisfactory and insufficient to provide him with a “percentage of myopia in Murray Island” (p. 37), he was however able to note from his observations that “the condition certainly existed, but only in slight degrees and in a few individuals” (p. 37). From these comparisons hypermetropia is reported as a characteristic of people in ‘uncivilised parts of the world’ and myopia, by contrast, a characteristic of ‘more civilised’ people. Rivers was thus left to concede that although myopia ‘certainly existed’ the visual capacities of Islanders were hypermetropic like natives in other parts of the globe.

In order to interpret a set of findings that were pointing to Islanders having acute visual senses, Rivers (1901) problematised other stereotypes. He considered cases of astigmatism on Mer namely, poor focus or poor vision in one eye. Studies cited by him supported the view that “[v]ery few cases” (p. 38) of astigmatism existed in native peoples. But, as Rivers noted, several cases were found on Mer when Islanders were able to read the E in the vertical position, either the right way or backward, but not in the horizontal

position, either up or down, when viewed from the same distance. He subsequently noted that astigmatism occurred in Islanders who had longsighted visions as well as those who had shortsighted visions.

Rivers (1901) then went on to investigate the view that the “natives” (p. 39) were able to adapt their vision much faster in the dark than “Europeans” (p. 39). He started out with challenges that such a view of “visual acuity in feeble illumination....may be misleading” (p. 39) because adaptations to poorly lit areas are subject, for example, to familiarity with contents in the Islander house and thus may “suggest a greater power of vision than actually possessed” (p. 39). He set out to test this. However, he reported that due to the “unsuitability of improvised apparatus” no “definitive results” could be claimed. He set out, that is, to measure the time it took, after one had stuck one’s head in a dark chamber, to recognise a letter in the enclosed area. He selected three Islander boys and compared the results achieved by himself and Dr. Haddon. The men took 13 and 15 minutes to guess the correct letter but were not really sure whether they were correct. Two of the boys took 2.30 minutes and 6.40 minutes. Results from the third child were not mentioned. As Rivers learned from this test, “the method was not good enough to allow any definite conclusions to be drawn...[but they do] support... [the held view] that the eye of the Melanesian adjusts itself to the dark more quickly than that of the European” (p. 40).

In order to support his conclusion, Rivers (1901) referred to an emerging viewpoint that “increased sensitiveness of the dark-adapted eye depends on accumulation of visual purple in the rods of the retina. We know also that the formation of visual purple is closely connected with the pigment epithelium” (p. 40). This information led him to conclude:

In dark races there is reason to believe that the eye shares in the greater abundance of pigment, and it is quite possible that in deeply pigmented races visual purple may be formed more readily and more rapidly than in white races, and it is therefore quite conceivable that dark-

adaptation should take place more readily. (Rivers, 1901, p. 40)

The qualifications used here: 'quite possible' or 'quite conceivable', undermine the possibility of a scientific conclusion. Rivers apologised and indeed "regret[ted] very much that... [he was not able to] contribute more positively to the problem" (p. 40).

River's attempt to intervene positively on the Islanders' behalf clearly was not convincing. The conclusions he draws from these early studies of the characteristics of the eye and acuteness of vision was highly speculative. Data compiled on the comparative table (see Fig. I, p. 25) - especially in the final column where it records "percentages of those whose vision excelled what is often supposed to be the normal European standard" (p. 25) - suggests that 88% of people from Mer and 94.4% from Mabuiag scored better than the European standard. Rivers confronted these figures by saying that "the visual acuity of savage and half-civilised people, though superior to that of the normal European, is not so in any marked degree" (p. 42) when compared with the visual acuity of German soldiers. However, when Heligolanders were compared to Islanders they were found to be "distinctly inferior" (p. 28). He explained this as follows. When one considers that "errors of refraction producing defect in vision, and especially myopia, are much more common among civilised people" (p. 42), and if these cases were omitted from the count, the figures "do not exhibit that degree of superiority over the European in visual acuity proper" (p. 42). This result came from a rearrangement of the numbers. Rivers recognised that the European norm was indeed the fundamental problem for him. That is, he provided measurements from Germany that say the norm is underrated, and data from Heligoland that say the norm may well be correct if the numbers are rearranged. So, it follows then that if there is nothing that can be relied upon as a standard then what can be stated about the Islander is also without basis.

Rivers had to deploy another test to make the data fit better with the preconceptions of the time.

An additional test using the Masson's Disc to measure "sensibility to differences of brightness" was tried (Rivers, 1901, p. 45). The results showed that some of the Islanders "had a much higher degree of sensibility than had been previously recorded for European vision" (p. 46). So high in fact that Rivers was moved to declare that the "degree of sensibility seemed to be so greatly in excess of what has been recorded among Europeans that I was inclined to be incredulous" (p. 46). However, on his return to England he tested 23 subjects and was able to achieve results similar to Islander people. His findings, albeit contrary to ones previously conducted on Europeans, as he claimed, was possibly because of his modification and application of the Masson's Disc. Or, as he also thought to mention, it was possible that "previous observations have been made on laboratory workers whose visual powers are below average, or at any rate below that of many individuals" (p. 47). Whatever the case, as far as he was concerned, it was "sufficient that the... [Islanders] tested have not shown any superiority over Europeans [when] tested by exactly the same method" (p. 47).

What gave Rivers some confidence here was that when the results of the visual acuity tests using the E method were compared with the Masson Disc test there appeared to be corresponding trends for sensibilities to brightness as there was with visual acuity. The Islanders tested on both methods showed the same distribution patterns on each of the score charts. This was very important to Rivers because it confirmed his findings. The efficacy of these tests was important for another reason. The Masson's Disc test verified for him that, when carried out with English people, it proved some fallibility to what was often "supposed to be the normal European standard" (p. 25). In other words, if the Islanders' achievements on the E test showed a corresponding pattern with the Islanders' achievements on Masson's Disc, and if the English people when tested with the Masson's Disc indicated that

they can score just as well as the Islander then it was conceivable that the often supposed European norm based on the E test was questionable. If the supposed norm was problematic, then the visual acuity scores of the Islanders could show no superiority over the Britons. Rivers made one last attempt to find a credible explanation for his standpoint.

Visual Powers

Rivers (1901) put together a case to draw a distinction between visual acuity and visual powers. He suggested that what he had done in his study was visual acuity proper wherein the "Torres Strait Islander was not found to be in any way extraordinary" (Rivers, 1901, p. 42). By contrast, he contended, what has won the admiration of travellers of "uncivilised parts of the world" (p. 12) was visual powers. The special abilities of the 'natives' to see things that are barely visible to Europeans like, spotting birds high in the tree tops, or pointing out boats over great distances, even "describe its rig and in some cases knew what boat it was.... were obviously of a kind in which special knowledge would be of enormous importance" (p. 42). He found himself at odds to explain how whilst on a boat trip between islands, Islanders on board were able to make out a steamer in a harbour with only a little of its mast showing. When they pointed it out to him he was not able to locate the mast. This was indeed the "miraculous" (p. 43) visual powers observed by fellow travellers to other parts of the globe. However, he pointed to a case in South America where Ranke (1897) having learnt and practised looking for objects over great distances, was able to increase his visual powers to be as good as the Indians even though he was myopic. Once taught to identify the gait of a male deer for instance, he was able to identify the sex of a deer at distances equivalent to the Indians. Visual powers, once understood as informed by localised knowledges, were no longer a special characteristic attributable only to the native. In other words, it was now recognisable as site-specific and thus able to be attributed to people of all societies. Indeed, as Rivers explained, "it is doubtful whether his [sic] visual powers excel those of the European.... There is little doubt that the most acute sighted savage

transferred to a Scotch moor would, in the unfamiliar surroundings, be a very poor match for the gille" (p. 44).

Rivers (1901), provided a scientific explanation for his generalisation. He suggested that "correlation[s] between acuteness of vision and the development of accommodation" (p. 44) should be considered. He maintained that there was a limiting aspect to vision. For instance when one focused selectively on an individual object, only things surrounding the immediate area can be seen. The held view in scientific communities was that "the amount of accommodation which takes place for distances greater than 6 metres [from the object being viewed] is negligible" (p. 44). For instance, if one looks across a room through the window and focuses on one end of the house next door, they see that part of the house but not the other end. To see the other end, one has to move their eyes to that side of the house to see it. Only by moving focus between the two ends can anyone arrive at some conclusive statement about whether there is a person on the full-length verandah. Rivers accepted that it was "possible that delicate gradations of accommodation may take place which adjust the eye to much greater distances" (p. 44) but, as he qualified, there was not much evidence of this. More importantly for Rivers this explanation enabled him to maintain that there was "correlations between acuteness of vision and the development of accommodation" (p. 44). For instance,

The frequency of hypermetropia in savage races may also have some importance in this connection. It is one of the consequences of hypermetropia that accommodation becomes necessary even for the most distant vision. In the hypermetrope the mechanism of accommodation is always more or less in action, and it seems quite possible that with the more extensive use of accommodation, there may be associated a higher degree of delicacy of adjustment than exists in the emmetropic eye, and that by practice this may become in the case of the savage one of the causes of his superiority over the European. (Rivers, 1901, p. 44)

That is, the more focused one's vision is to the object being viewed the less it is that surrounding items can be accommodated. As Rivers (1901) explained, "[t]here is no doubt that the savage is an extremely close observer of nature" (p. 44), so close in fact that "[n]early every detail of landscape and seascape had its special name and nearly every species which the zoologist or botanist would recognize [sic] as distinct was also differentiated. In the case of familiar plants, such as the yam or banana, there were many named varieties" (p. 44). Focusing in depth on individual objects like this to Rivers was not a good thing because, and to step in line with Lord Rayleigh's position,

Minute distinctions of this sort are only possible if the attention is predominantly devoted to object of sense, and I think there can be little doubt that such exclusive attention is a distinct hindrance to higher mental development. We know that the growth of intellect depends on material which is furnished by the senses, and it therefore at first sight may appear strange that elaboration of the sensory side of mental life should be a hindrance to intellectual development. But on further consideration I think there is nothing unnatural in such a fact. If too much energy is expended on the sensory foundations, it is natural that the intellectual superstructure should suffer. It seems possible also that the over-development of the sensory side of mental life may help to account for another characteristic of the savage mind. (Rivers, 1901, pp. 44-5)

A huge theoretical distance was being assumed here between visual powers and mental development. Rivers (1901) was making an enormous leap without scientifically substantiating a position on either of these elements. The Islanders' visual capacities may be defended as not being animal-like but it is clear from the above that Islanders' were still 'savages' when considered in relation to those in the West. This is where the inevitable slip happens with regard to the noble intent. Rivers' history takes him to the more familiar territory of his own privileged position in 'civilised cultures'. Rivers' finding

makes evident a particular standpoint that differentiates Rivers from his intellectually constrained subjects.

Proclaiming Islanders to be in a lower position did not deter Rivers from his highly motivated goals (1901). He subsequently attempted an explanation for the discrepancies. He again retreated into the Western literature to cite Ranke's experience as a European living with Indians in South America. After living with the Indians for a while, Rivers pointed out, Ranke discovered that "he had lost his capacity for the aesthetic enjoyment of scenery, he found that individual objects forced themselves upon his attention and prevented his enjoyment of the scenery as a whole.... he also found that, owing to the fact that he was continually attending to details... he was unable to devote attention to the more serious problems of life" (p. 45). The experience of a learned colleague, in other words, is brought forward to add to "the view that the predominant attention of the savage to concrete things around him may act as an obstacle to higher mental development" (p. 45). This is an attempt by Rivers to moderate the negative aspects of his findings. The superficiality of his method, however, is glaring and illustrates well the kind of interactions and inventions made on behalf of Islanders.

Rivers went to great lengths to 'write-off' the achievements of Islanders on the visual acuity tests, supposedly to distance native people from animals. His efforts in this regard were affected by his own lack of preparation and by his own scientific shortfalls. In his attempt to regain some intellectual ground he postulated that although the yellow-eyed native of uncivilised parts of the world - like the Islander - may score higher on visual acuity tests and may be perceived to have outstanding visual powers, they are not 'animal-like'. But, by the same position, he reaffirms that Islanders are in no way as intellectually advanced as the more cultured people of the West are. Islanders, to Rivers, simply did not have the visual traditions needed to develop an appreciation for the aesthetic aspects of life. To be a culturally intelligent people, he contended, there must be an appreciation of the aesthetics. And, as he

explained, “[t]here is, I think, little doubt that the uncivilized [sic] man does not take the same aesthetic interest in nature which is found among civilized [sic] peoples (Rivers, 1901, p. 45). Indeed, it is in fact what they do to gain the notable visual powers that interferes with their mental progress and hinders their development into ‘civilised’ dimensions.

Rivers, attempts thus to inform the debates in the annals of Nature not through the visual acuity tests in the Islands as he proposed to do but through his own speculations on visual powers. He makes an attempt to defend Islanders as a human race through statements unfounded by science. And at the same time, his initial noble intention degenerates into a reaffirmation of the superiority of the more cultured people of the West. Islander people are thus used to circulate particular academic debate. The documentation of the attributes of people in the Torres Strait Islands was not noble in its findings or effects. They were positioned into a new order of things that countered, in return for their participation, any positive validation of their attributes. By refusing primacy to Islander people’s own historical trajectories, and by comparing them solely to what was most familiar to those in the West, the Cambridge project gave legitimacy to the ways non-Islander experts continue to demean Islander people as uncultured beings whose attributes debilitate their intellectual growth.

Colour Vision

Another characteristic of ‘the savage mind’ that Rivers (1901) sought to investigate was the development of colour sense. A popular notion of the day was that the colour sense of people developed over time and that stages could be identified in their naming system as markers of progress towards a civilised state. High culture or civilisation, at the time, was equated to many achievements made by those in the West including the appreciation of colours and abstract names for colours ($C=1$). The uncivilised ‘savage’, by contrast, was deemed to be someone who did not have an appreciation of such aesthetic forms ($S < C=1$).

The notion of colour nomenclature as a marker of cultural evolution first gained significance from an early examination by Gladstone of “the epithets for colour used by Homer” (Rivers, 1901, p. 48). Gladstone’s study (cited by Rivers) of names used by Homer led him to conclude that in Homer’s period little was known about the names of colours. What was found to exist mostly in early written records were notions of brightness and of darkness. Following this, Geiger (cited by Rivers) sought and found from much broader studies of the literature, an evolutionary pattern to the emergence of colours. From studies of the aforementioned kind, Rivers (1901) learned that red was the first to be named and “that the other colours had developed in the same order as that of the arrangement of the colours in the spectrum, the power of seeing blue and violet having been the latest to develop” (p. 48).

However, as Rivers (1901) acknowledged, attributing such developments in colour names as indicators of a primitive mind was not accepted by all learned colleagues. This was so because the early theorisation of colour nomenclature was based on philological grounds and not on any physiological evidence. The debate, according to Rivers, had one group of learned people arguing that the naming of colour was related to developments in colour sense and another refuting the idea that there was such a connection between colour nomenclature and colour sense. Virchow (cited by Rivers), for instance, argued that Geiger’s proposition was problematic as it assumed that deficiencies in colour nomenclature implied deficiencies in colour sense. Rivers, by contrast, felt well supported by the more popular position, as well as by studies like that done by Magnus (cited by Rivers) who argued that developments in colour nomenclature could indeed be related to physiological developments. However, Rivers was not able to find anything definitive in his study that could provide a conclusive statement about this. The best that could be said from his study was that “it show[ed] that defect in nomenclature for a colour may [my emphasis] be associated with defective sensibility for that colour and so far lends support to the views of Gladstone and Geiger” (p. 49).

What Rivers gained from his review of the ongoing debate was a notion of developments in colour nomenclature that emerged over time and in a similar order to the layers of colours as they appear in a rainbow. What was also gained was a stimulus to inquire into the Islanders' colour vision in physiological ways, and to perhaps inform the debate on relating colour names and colour senses. What he faced was an unresolved position between a philological concept – names – and a physiological concept – sense. Rivers' study of colour vision in the Torres Strait provides yet another example of the appropriation of Western schemas into the Islands, the conscription of Islanders into a new order of things, and the refusal of histories and experiences that informed the Islander positions.

Colour Blindness

Rivers' (1901) first tested for colour blindness to establish a baseline for comparing Islanders with others. He set out and examined 152 individuals from both the eastern and western islands of the Torres Strait, and Kiwai Island to the north. Participants were asked to match the seven test-wools with similar colours beginning with red then green, pink, Holmgren's green, yellow, blue and lastly violet. Each attempt and all combinations using these coloured test-wools were noted. The Islanders matched the colours satisfactorily and Rivers could find no case of red-green blindness. This was deduced from observing that no Islander "matched, or even transiently compared Holmgren's pink wool with blue or violet, the most frequent confusions which occur in red-green blindness" (p. 51).

Rivers felt supported by his findings as they concurred with studies of colour blindness across the Globe – studies of Melanesians in the Loyalty Islands and German New Guinea (e.g., Schellong cited by Rivers), with studies in Africa (e.g., Pergens cited by Rivers), with Zulus in Berlin (e.g., Konig cited by Rivers), with African-Americans (e.g., Gould cited by Rivers), with Polynesians in Hawaii (e.g., Brighams cited by Rivers), with the Chinese and Japanese (e.g., Fielde, Stephenson, MacGowan, cited by Rivers), with Koreans

(e.g., Stephenson cited by Rivers), with Malayans (Stephenson cited by Rivers) with Amerinds of North America (Fox cited by Rivers) with Tamils and Sihalese (e.g., Kotelmann cited by Rivers), with Eskimos (e.g., Almquist cited by Rivers), with Aleuts (e.g., Stephenson cited by Rivers), with Lapps (e.g., Seggel cited by Rivers), with Samoyeds (e.g., Kirchoff cited by Rivers), with Chukchis (Almquist cited by Rivers), with people of central Asia (e.g., Kotelmann cited by Rivers) with Ossets of the Causcasus (e.g., Giltschekno cited by Rivers). With this kind of support, Rivers (1901) argued that, "It certainly seems... as if colour-blindness must be distinctly rarer in many races than it is among Caucasian and Semitic peoples" (p. 93).

Rivers (1901) also noted another potential characteristic of native peoples. He suspected cases of yellow-blue blindness when some of the participants compared yellow and blue wools, and blues with browns. But, as he explained, the persistence of these matches was not evident in other combinations. Perhaps the dullness of the yellow wools he suggested may explain the tendency for participants to associate blues with dull colours. It was possible that some of the Islanders were comparing dull colours. But, as he explained, those who made these mistakes were the same ones who did not fully understand what was expected of them in the experiment. Such aspects of the wrong combinations however were of particular interest to Rivers because they concurred with another study. Scholer (cited by Rivers) reported a case of a Nubian in Berlin who, as Rivers deduced, was "probably yellow-blue blind" (Rivers, 1901, p. 51). The Nubian compared red and orange with purple; blue with yellow and grey; and, yellow with blue and grey. Although the confusion was more marked in the Nubian, it was reason enough for Rivers to remain alert to any markers that could distinguish between Islanders and people of the West: "The subject is one of great importance, for it would be very remarkable if yellow-blue blindness, so rare among Europeans, should be present in other races" (p. 51).

Rivers (1901) claimed that “the number examined... [was] sufficiently large to justify one in saying that colour-blindness... [was] either absent in this race, or much rarer than among European populations” (pp. 52-3). He concluded that people of these parts of the world could see all the colours. What was of more interest to Rivers was if the Islanders could name all the colours.

Colour Nomenclature

Confident that the Islanders were not colour-blind, Rivers (1901) began to test and document the Islanders’ system of naming colours by prompting them with coloured papers and coloured objects. The coloured papers purchased from Rothe of Leipzig were considered at the time to be the standard used by experts who tested colour vision. Using the paper and object combination also enabled Rivers to check for variations between the naming of a colour and the naming of a coloured object.

From his preliminary work on Mer, Rivers (1901) observed a gradient from children who hardly knew the names of the colours to the older folk who knew them all. Women, it was noted by him, did not know as much as the men. Moreover, in a later observation of colour recognition, Rivers (1901) noted that the older generation of Islanders could recall and reproduce the colours of the rainbow using the coloured test-wools but the younger men were not as good. To Rivers, this particular test, was useful in throwing some light on the Islanders’ memory retention: “[t]he observations are interesting in one way as showing the degree of accuracy with which the natives can give a description from memory of a natural phenomenon” (p. 70). Just as this could have informed him that the older men were able to abstract a natural phenomenon and reproduce it from memory, it could have perhaps also said that the younger men on Mer were not really interested in reproducing rainbows. Instead, this suggested to him that “the failure of the young men is only one among many instances of the loss of the powers of observation of nature which has accompanied contact with civilisation” (p. 70).

The more revealing issue for Rivers was the definiteness of a name for red in the Islands and the uncertainty about a name for blue. According to the philological evidence in the Western literature, the name for red was the first to emerge and the first to become a universal term, and subsequent names for colours developed in order of the colour spectrum with blues last. Rivers speculated that the definiteness of red in Islander schemas and the uncertainty about a name for blue could signal a prolonged primitive status. And, if we considered that the colour nomenclature of people from the West as fully formed, or $C=1$, then anything short of this, or $S < C=1$, we could assume that we are dealing with an earlier stage in the development of things. Rivers was convinced that any shortfall in the colour nomenclature would confirm for him that he was dealing with a characteristic of the savage mind.

In deploying his $S < C=1$ schema, Rivers exemplifies another instance that refuses Islanders' histories and experiences. The two crucial elements that gained special interests and which informed Rivers' formulations were the derivatives of colour names and the definiteness or indefiniteness of colour names. Rivers (1901) documented the names of colours used in the Torres Strait, identified their derivatives, as well as noted qualifying terms used to describe shades of primary colours (colour shades were mostly reported as big, small, good, similar to, bad, dirty, etc. see pp. 56, 60, & 61). From his consideration of the colour nomenclature system, he observed that the names of colours "nearly all come into the lives of the people in some practical way, either as food, medicine, or as objects used in sorcery" (p. 63). Although there were representations made by him to indicate that blues and greens were derived from names used for the sea as well as leaves, the blood and bile names in red and green, as he himself pointed out, featured in more definite ways. For instance, he recalled from the literature on Melanesia that the use of the word blood in red is very common. He recalled from the literature on Asiatic peoples they, like the Islanders, have similar correspondences between the name for green and the name for bile and the gall bladder. He did accept however that the English name for gall and yellow "are [also] closely

connected" (p. 63). But, to Rivers, it was more of a systemic issue in native communities that "[o]bjects which might have attracted attention on account of their beauty seldom seem to form the basis of colour names" (p. 63). Apart from one case in Mer where a flower was the basis for a name for yellow, Rivers found that the names of flowers generally did not feature in the Islanders' colour vocabulary. This was, as he stated, very much unlike the British and their "use of violet, pink, mauve, heliotrope, rose, etc., all derived from the names of flowers" (p. 64).

The association of the word for red with the name used for blood, according to Rivers as well as the Western literature on native peoples, was a telling indicator of their savage status. There are however two things that need to be considered here. First, no comparative comment is offered on the origins of the English word red. For example, red: Islander name for blood; green: Islander name for bile and gall-bladder; yellow: English word closely connected to gall; Islanders hardly use names of flowers for colours: those in the West use a lot of flower names for colours. The lack of a comparative comment for the English word, red, cast the Islander usage in an extreme and negative way. Also, there is no mention of findings by his colleagues, Haddon and Ray, who drew especial notice to the fact that the Islander word *kulka* is used for red as well as blood, "[b]ut *kulka*, as Mr Ray was definitely informed, is used also for the dawn, as e.g. *ar kulka*, the dawn reddens: hence Kulkalaig means Eastern people" (Haddon, 1904, p. 2). My family and the community I belong to are the Kulkalaig people being referred to here. People on a nearby island to us (my relatives) are known as Kulkalgal. We are literally the people to the East of Muralag, Badu and Mabuiag islands - the place where the sun rises. However, I grew up with and learned only to accept such a reading of our place in the Islands as bloodthirsty people.

To Rivers, it was "noteworthy that the sea, rather than the sky, should have been the source of the word blue" (p. 62). The variations in the colour of the sea range from aqua to black in the Islands, and they change from week to

week depending on the time of the year, the phase of the moon, the velocity of the wind, the strength of tidal surges, or the depth of the water. In these parts of the world, just south of the equator, there is no winter. The sky is always blue even behind the clouds and, of course, black once the sun has gone. Because Islanders depend on the sea for staple foods, there is much attention paid to the changing conditions of the sea, more so than the almost unchanging blue of the sky and the black of night. Names for colour derived from the sea seemed not to have developed for the British. Rivers regarded the primary words for colours that come from the sky as indicators of a higher position than those words for colour that we determined from the sea. This allowed him again to position Islanders as inferior.

The next most important elements that informed Rivers' (1901) position on the Islanders' primitive status was the certainty and uncertainty about the names for colours. This was the other crucial aspect of Rivers' argument that enabled him to claim that the colour nomenclature was not as fully developed for Islanders as it was in the West.

Table 1: Frequency of terms used for Colour.

<u>Colour</u>	<u>Eastern Islanders</u>	<u>Western Islanders</u>
Red	"In Murray Island [Mer] red was called <i>mamanamam</i> by all" (Rivers, 1901, p. 53)	"Red was called <i>kuladgamubiga</i> by nearly all" (Rivers, 1901, p. 57)
Purple and Pink	The same Islander name, <i>kebe mamanamam</i> was used "... by many" (p. 54), three other names were in use.	The same Islander name <i>kuladgamubiga</i> was used "... by most" (p. 57), several used three other names.
Orange	"Orange was called <i>bambam</i> by nearly all" (p. 54), three other names were used.	"Orange was called <i>mudagamubiga</i> ... by the majority" (p. 57), four others

		were used.
Yellow	"Yellow was called <i>bambam</i> by most; <i>suisu</i> by a good number, more rarely <i>giazgiaz</i> or <i>zomkolberkolber</i> and <i>samsuam</i> by one" (p. 54).	Yellow was called <i>murdegamulnga</i> by nearly all" (p. 57), three others were in use.
Green	"Green was called <i>soskepusoskep</i> by most" (p. 54), five others were in use.	"Green, <i>maludgamulnga</i> or <i>ildegamulnga</i> " (p. 57).
Blue	Blues were called by no less than eight different names	"Blue was called <i>maludgamulnga</i> most frequently" (p. 57), six others were offered.
Violet	Violet was called by nine different names.	"Violet was called <i>maludgamulnga</i> by several... it was often called" (p. 57) by six other names.

It was the frequency of the terms used by Islanders that enabled Rivers to arrive at a position on the state of the colour nomenclature in the Islands. There was certainty about red, less so for purple, orange, yellow and green, and even less so for blue and violet. Rivers did not quantify this data in comparative tables as he did with the visual acuity tests. Nevertheless, we can gather from the above list how he arrived at the view that,

...there was great definiteness and unanimity in the nomenclature for red, rather less so for orange and yellow, less so for green, and very great indefiniteness for blue and violet. (Rivers, 1901, pp. 54-5)

The great definiteness about red has been resolved by its consistent reference to blood. By contrast, the great indefiniteness for blue in the Islands depicted for Rivers (1901) an unresolved situation: some used terms from the sea; some used the same term used for green; and some used the term used for black. That there was no unanimity for a word for blue suggested to Rivers that people in these parts of the world had not yet resolved amongst themselves a common term for blue. And, because Red has already been negotiated to one common term, it all confirmed for him that he was indeed dealing with a group of primitive people who were in the early stages of their cultural development - a people with little appreciation of aesthetics.

If Islanders offered more names for blue than they did for red, as they did in documentations by Rivers, could we suppose that, and to the contrary, it was because blue was far more advanced than red? In the Islands there are very important reasons to have multiple names for blue. If we consider that Rivers noted words and variations of words for blue were more reliant on the sea than the sky for practical reasons then it is conceivable that close attention had to be paid by Islanders to the different shades and hues of the colour blue? This is particularly so, if the success of diving, fishing, hunting, and trapping of marine animals and mammals is contingent on particular tides, currents, and changing seasons. There would need to be concentrated attempts to make distinctions between the changing blue of the water: spring tides (green-white), blues of neap tides (blue), the blues of deep water (blue-black), the blues of shallow water on grass (green-aqua-clear-yellow), the blues of shallow water on sand (turquoise), or the blues of tides on reefs (clear-brown). And, of course, we need to consider that these colours are most evident when the sun is directly overhead. Even today, if an Islander is asked, the Islander will offer a different name depending on the elements. It will depend mostly on where the Islander is positioned physically in relation to an area of water being referred to, on the presumption of a possible activity that could be conducted in that region, as well as on the intended time for a visit. Say, for example, if an Islander is asked whether diving for crayfish

would be appropriate on a spring tide, they will tell you 'no, dirty water' viz., poor visibility when diving. In other words, pointing to the water as an object and asking the Islander "what colour is that?" there is every possibility that an answer will be "dirty water". This nomenclature does not signify that the water is the colour of dirt. It signifies an element of cloudiness that reduces visibility when diving. The actual colour is irrelevant in this designation.

The other prominent names used for colours by Islanders that intrigued Rivers was the corruption of the English word blue, as *bulu-bulu*. But, if we consider that apart from the sky, the sea, and some birds and fish, there was no other blue item in the natural environment, and if we consider that all other blue items used as objects (e.g., coloured patches and glasses, personal adornment, or clothing) in Rivers' study had to be referring to items introduced by those from the West then it would follow that Islanders were mostly obliged to provide the English term used with the introduced items. That is, *bulu-bulu* is not necessarily a replacement term due to an absence of an Islander name and thus a revealing factor to be considered as a corruption of an English word but, and more appropriately, the use of a term that rightfully belongs to the introduced items.

Just as an argument can be made about the unanimity or certainty about the word for red as an indicator of development, a counter argument can be made in favour of the extensive vocabulary of the word for blue, its prominence in Islander communities, and the use of very refined terms to argue that it was the more established code in the naming system. Whichever 'truth' one accepts the central tenets suggested are: the philological argument that red was the first developed colour name in the early Western literature and 'blues' last. In the islands of the Torres Strait there may well be another historical trajectory that could help provide alternate explanations to the Islanders' colour nomenclature. Whilst such a definitive statement about an alternate position is difficult to make, by posing its possible inclusion into the equation, even raising its very possibility, makes it quite evident that by

refusing such an option, the Islanders could only have been measured against the achievements of those in the West. This exemplifies again how non-Islanders refuse to include any of the Islanders' standpoints.

Rivers (1901) determined the colour nomenclature, especially at Mabuiag Island, as the most extensive system he has seen in the academic literature, and even more extensive than the colour vocabulary of Mer Island. Islanders in the western parts of the Strait, according to him, had "some natural object in mind to compare with every shade of colour shown to them" (p. 64). As far as Rivers was concerned, "the colour vocabulary illustrate[d] very well the extensive knowledge which the savage possesse[d] of the concrete things around him and the powers of observation which are associated with this knowledge" (p. 64). For him, the intricate system of naming colours, and every shade of colour with concrete objects, helped to explain why when attention was devoted primarily to minute distinctions cultural development was impaired. It helped to explain the Islanders' lack of interests in aesthetics. He thus went on to proclaim that the stage of development in the Islands was "but one indication of a characteristic feature of the savage mind i.e. a complete lack of any aesthetic interest in nature" (p. 64), and that "[t]his lack of aesthetic interest may be directly due to over-development of the sensory aspect of mental life" (p. 64).

The Comparative Picture of Colour Nomenclature in the Region

The position of the Islander in relation to the West was thus revealed by the studies of the Cambridge project. But the question remained. Where were they situated along the evolutionary continuum? One of the ways to answer this was by comparing the Islanders with other native peoples of the region. Rivers (1901) and his colleagues put together data from the Fly River district to the north on the Papua New Guinean coastline, and built a continuum of practice between the three sites to suggest that stages of primitiveness could be identified in the different codes for naming colours. His entire argument was based around his data on names for the colour blue: "As regards blue,

the three languages may be taken as representative of three stages in the evolution of a nomenclature for this colour" (p. 66).

Data from the Fly River district, for instance, Rivers reported, showed no word for blue. This is a place at the mouth of one of the biggest river systems in a country, with rainfalls measurable in metres, that start at mountains higher than anything in Australia and have a short 100 kilometres or so to travel to the coastline. The water is mostly filled with silt and debris. It is also the meeting place of fresh and salt water. For many months of the year, layers of fresh water sit on the surface of the waterways and look mostly brown. Kiwai Island when compared with the islands in the Torres Strait is the more isolated. Contact with non-Islanders and their material objects thus were very limited. These conditions go some way to explain why Rivers could find "no word for blue" (p. 66). Most used the same term for green, "black, dull or dirty" (p. 66) whilst *bulu-bulu* did not feature at all in their language.

Data, on the other hand, from Mer indicated "no proper name for blue" (p. 66). Most, he noted, used a modified version of the English word, *bulu-bulu*, and in its absence they use *suserisuseri* (blue and green) and occasionally *golegole* (black). And contrasting with Kiwai and Mer, data from Mabuiag, Rivers (1901) "present[ed] a more developed stage in the existence of a word, *maludgaruulnga*, which is used definitely for blue, but is also used for green" (p. 67). The Mabuiag people, he noted, also had "the tendency to confuse blue and black" (p. 67). He was surprised that Islanders would compare the colour blue with the dark of the night. He was even more perplexed when "these natives would compare a brilliant and saturated blue to the colour of dirty water" (p. 94).

The immediate task for Rivers was to locate people of this region according to developments in their colour nomenclature. Data from Kiwai suggested that they were in a much earlier stage of development in their colour nomenclature than Islanders. Data from Mer on the other hand suggested

that it was not as developed as Mabuiag. He also learned from his colleague (Ray, see p. 87) that the colour nomenclature used by Aboriginal people on the Australian mainland was even “less developed than that of the Kiwai [people of the Fly River District] (p. 67). So the intellectual continuum over a 700 square kilometre region was determined mostly according to the different configurations of blue. This enabled a view of an evolutionary path that began with Aborigines in the south, travelled north past Mer to the Kiwai people in the most north eastern corner of the Torres Strait, then south to Mer almost a third the way back to the Aborigines, and then to the far west of the Torres Strait to Mabuiag. This data may have told Rivers that Islanders were not like Aborigines in Australia, not like Kiwai people in the north, and definitely not like those in the West.

Colour Sense

The indefiniteness of names for blue was seen to be a common trait amongst native peoples even though every shade of blue could be distinguished from each other. However, there was no definitive position on why there was uncertainty about the term for blue in the nomenclature. Rivers thus sought to make quantitative observations to measure any “degree of insensitiveness to this colour, which makes a given blue a darker and a duller colour than it is to European vision, and may help to account for the confusion of the colour with black” (p. 70).

Rivers (1901) had with him a Lovibond’s Tintometer borrowed from Lovibond - a tube-like instrument one looks through to see three different coloured glasses passing over two square holes that allowed the light in and enabled the experts “to determine the threshold for each of the three colours” (p. 71) red, yellow and blue. Each of the three glasses was separate in colour, and had the entire area covered with gradual stages of colour from clear to highly saturated. Rivers rotated a coloured wheel from its faintest point to the highest saturation point and then back down again. The Islander was to peer into the tube and identify colour, or lack of colour, at the earliest possible

moment as the glass passed over the square holes. The results of Rivers' experiments was able to "show that the Murray Island natives distinguish red when very faint much more readily than blue, while, by the same method, to European vision there is little difference" (p. 95).

However, from later work on colour vision of the peripheral retina (pp. 75-80), Rivers was left in "no doubt that the colour blue was recognized [sic] readily, even more readily than other colours" (p. 79). That is, Rivers got the Islanders to stare directly at him whilst he introduced colour patches gradually from either side to distinguish at what point, and at what angle, Islanders could determine colours. The early detection of blue patches before any other was significant and was a contrary finding. Rivers' explanation was thus: "the most ready way of reconciling the two observations is to suppose that the defective sensibility to blue is due chiefly, or altogether, to the influence of the macula lutea" (p. 79). His hypothesis was physiological and he referred to the literature to help his case: "[i]t is well known that owing to yellow-red pigmentation of the region of direct vision, blue and green rays are absorbed more strongly than in the extra-macular regions of the retina" (p. 79). 'It', however, is not sourced to anything and remains anonymous in this formulation. He went on,

There is, so far as I know, no actual evidence that the yellow pigmentation of the macula is greater in black-skinned people than in the Caucasian races, but there is little doubt that this must be the case. If so, the absorption of green and blue rays would be greater than in the European eye and may account for the relative insensitiveness to blue. (Rivers, 1901, pp. 79-80)

The unconvincing nature of this proposition did not prevent Rivers from reaching his conclusions. For Rivers, the colour patches fell entirely in the macular region with the tintometer tests whilst tests of the peripheral vision were distinguished in the extra-macular regions of the retina. It was then conceivable that "the defective sensitivities for blue is to be regarded as a

function of the pigmentation rather than of the primitiveness of the...visual organ (p. 80). It was a credible position only of logic, and not one established by physiological science.

Rivers (1901), having no further scientific apparatus on hand, sought to gain some idea of the colour sense among Islanders by asking them to pick from coloured papers what they liked most. Some were asked to pick the three best colours whilst others were asked to arrange all colours in order of preference. One person arranged the colours in the exact same order as that when Rivers was charting colour nomenclature. Not satisfied with the efficacy of this experiment, Rivers then asked Islanders to discuss their preferences and found "in these cases that they never finished by agreeing with one another, but each gave his [sic] independent opinion" (p. 83). He found this to be the case also with married couples and their deliberations on colour preferences. The colours most popular with Islanders, he reported, were red, purple, indigo, black, yellow and, of course, blue, green and violet were the least favoured – just as they are depicted in the Western order of things. There was another notable element:

I was inclined to regard the frequency of black among the papers chosen by the men as a very doubtful feature, and as indicating that they did not understand properly what was wanted, but when I found that black was so predominant in their personal adornment, it became no longer unsatisfactory, and may be taken as an indication of a real liking for this colour (or absence of colour).
(Rivers, 1901, p. 83)

He then made concerted efforts to observe what people wore to church on Sundays. From these observations he noted that black was most popular with the men, then red, green, and of course blue was the least present. Women, by contrast, wore red mostly, with pink coming in second, then blue, and then yellow. There was, Rivers (1901) noted, a notable absence of green colours amongst the women. The combination of colours worn by the Islanders

suggested to him that there was a preference for yellow to be worn with blues, and reds with greens. By contrast, Rivers described the red and yellow combinations worn by the Kiwai people as “hideous” (p. 84). And when a father preferred yellow to be combined with blue and his daughter chose instead to combine yellow and scarlet, Rivers made comment that, “the man certainly seemed to have the better taste” (p. 84).

With no further supporting evidence to inform the debate between colour sense and colour names, Rivers (1901) deployed his authority on the matter,

The bearing of this on the controversy mentioned at the beginning of this paper is obvious. In ancient literature, as among modern barbarous and savage races, it is the colour blue for which nomenclature is especially defective, and in Torres Strait this characteristic defect of nomenclature has been found to be associated with an appreciable degree of insensitiveness to this colour. The colour vision of the Torres Strait islander [sic] gives some support to the views of Gladstone, Geiger and Magnus that the defective colour language of ancient literature may have been associated with a defective colour sense... . There can be very little doubt, however, that any physiological insensitiveness which may exist, can only be one of the factors determining the characteristic features of primitive colour nomenclature. (Rivers, 1901, p. 95)

There may be any number of explanations for this. There is however little to go on from Rivers’ data that could be correlated between colour nomenclature and colour sense. The evidence showed in one experiment that there may be physiological insensitiveness for the colour blue but another of his test showed evidence to the contrary. Such opposing findings provide support for the more popular position forwarded by Gladstone and others. What one needs to be careful about first is accepting that there was a defect in colour sense.

As for the 'characteristic defect' of nomenclature, I tried to show here that what constitutes the basis to such a claim was none other than the canonical views of those from the West. In other words, it was foremost about the order of developments in the old literature, the order of the colour spectrum, the order of colours as they lay in a rainbow, the order of things as they stand already achieved in countries of the West. It was an appropriation of a Western schema of colour vision deployed to undermine those in the Islands. Out of such an approach to the study of colour vision in the Islands, Rivers was able to conclude that the Islander nomenclature was not fully formed. In these ways and only these ways, does the absence of pretty flower names and the persistent use of blood names for red, characterise for Rivers the savage mind. Likewise, the apparent absence of any appreciation for aesthetics in the naming system condemned the Islanders to a primitive status. But in relation to developments in colour nomenclature of other people in the region, Islanders were conscribed at least as a little more advanced along the evolutionary scale. That is, the means by which Rivers was able to invent a model for charting colour nomenclature was also the means by which he could intervene and judge the Islanders in relation to their neighbours in the north as well as to the south. Such a process for understanding the colour nomenclature in the Islands was both the means by which the experts could name characteristics of the savage mind and to condemn Islanders and their neighbours to a lower position.

Visual Spatial Perception

Some of the basic aspects Rivers (1901) sought to document when testing spatial perceptions were the accuracy of the contributions, the constancy of each attempt, and its comparative value when compared with the overall results of the same group. Although all measurements were numerical, the use of illusions as the stimulus for the tests provided Rivers a measure of the participants' psychology. An important aspect that Rivers was interested in was the degree to which individuals were affected and how each person's scores corresponded to the rest of the group. Measurable degrees of variation

of individual scores were chartered and then compared with the overall degree of variation amongst all participants so that the results could figure as normative findings for the group as a whole. The elements of these tests thus became the means to identify the 'essential' characteristics of particular groups of people. And it was entirely on this basis that Rivers was able to draw comparisons between entirely different groups of people, e.g. "by the smallness of the mean variations and by the general consistency of the results" (p. 127). Islander attributes are afforded some reality of their own but once again it was their comparative value to those in the West that was most significant.

Rivers' (1901) initial goal was to consider the physiology of the Islander eye to see if there was anything that could affect the degree of illusion at different distances. He used Hering's fall experiment to test whether Islanders had binocular vision. This required the Islanders to look through a cylindrical tube at a bead that was held up by very fine wire at a distance of two feet, and gauge whether objects dropped into view were "nearer or farther from himself than the fixation point" (p. 97). Rivers explained, "[t]hose with binocular vision are able, when using both eyes, to estimate the relative distances of such object even when quite close to the fixation point, while individuals without binocular vision are in the same position as normal individuals when only using one eye, and are unable to judge the relative distances of the falling objects even when much nearer or farther from the fixation point" (p. 97). He found, from seventeen Islanders tested, that when both eyes were in use nearly all were correct while, the results from the use of one eye were correct only half the time. He then compared his results to other tests on double images to point out that Islanders shared attributes with Europeans. But, as he pointed out, "[p]erhaps the main interest of these observations is to show that the Torres Strait people were certainly quite as good observers as the average European" (p. 99). This was to demonstrate that a common starting point to his tests could be assumed.

Rivers (1901) also made some preliminary test to assess the Islander's ability to estimate distances - "Estimation of length by the eye" (p. 100). Two standard lengths were given, 80mm and 160mm, and four Islanders (aged between 40 and 60) were to move a cursor along a ruler to what they estimated as the length of each standard. Rivers began by placing the cursor at the lower end of the ruler before asking Islanders to estimate the distances. Later it was placed at the top end. In all, there were ten attempts at each of the standards, five from the former position and five from the latter. The averages of all ten attempts, for the 80mm standard, indicated the Islanders were not far off the norm. The first Islander estimated, on average, 74.6, the second 79.75, the third 76.8, and the fourth 80.4. The corresponding results of the 160mm standard were 152.7, 149.4, 160.1, and 153.45. Rivers observed from these results, "a distinct tendency to make the variable length shorter than the standard" (p. 101). There was also a notable difference about the starting point of the cursor: "the variable was made larger when a long distance had to be shortened than when a short distance had to be lengthened" (p. 101). This is, as he explained, something that was also done by Europeans, and "the same peculiarity [that] is also very marked in the observations on the Muller-Lyer illusion" (p. 101) experiments.

Bisection of Lines

Rivers (1901) proceeded then to observe how Islanders divided 100mm lines into two or more equal parts. He experimented first with 20 Islander men and 12 boys from Mer. These participants were asked first to bisect the 100mm standard into two equal parts. The men measured, on average, the left half 51.4 and the right half 48.6 - to Rivers, the tendency of all attempts was to make the left half longer than the right half. However, only the results of nine are provided in Table VI (p. 102). They nevertheless show similar tendencies to make the left longer than the right and that after three or more attempts similar averages of 51.5 and 48.5 were obtained. The boys on the other hand had an average of 50.1 on the left and 49.9 on the right - the tendency to the left was not as constant as for the men (see Table VII, p.

103). That is, to Rivers, there were as many children who had tendencies to the left as there was for those who went right. However, to Rivers, individual measurements showed the children to have a greater degree of difference, which indicates that no greater value could be placed on the children's ability to estimate than the men's ability.

When compared with the achievements of 15 English psychology students and 12 village children (who were on average older than the Mer children) from Girton, near Cambridge, there was an opposite tendency to measure the right half bigger (see Table VIII on p. 104). Rivers (1901) pointed out that not much can be made from this except that "nearly all the Murray Island men had a constant error in one direction, while the English individuals had an error in the opposite direction" (p. 104). However, the average mean variation, says Rivers, is worth noting (see Table VIII, p. 104). Whilst the psychology students scored better with an average mean variation of .56, the Mer men and boys with averages of 1.31 and 1.77 could only be compared with the English children's at 1.27. In Rivers' terms, "[t]he results given here show that the Murray Island man and boy are able to perform the simple operation of dividing a line into two equal halves with nearly as much accuracy and constancy as the English village child" (p. 104). However, it was the constancy factor in achieving those results that separated them from the psychology students. By comparing the average mean variation of all attempts, the data was able to be interpreted in ways that could show the Islander men to be more erratic with their estimates than the psychology students, indeed to have a consistency level of a village child in Girton, Cambridge. Only the overall results of psychology students and the Girton children were provided in the comparative Table VIII which, in effect, preclude us from any further scrutiny of the data from England.

In the following tests on dividing a 100mm line into three or more parts, Rivers considered a measure of accuracy. The average estimates of 8 Islander men and 6 boys from Mer were compared with 12 Girton children. Again

only the overall scores of the Girton village children are provided (see Table X, p. 107). The cohort of psychology students was not compared in these tests. Rivers reported that the accuracy of the Islander men, to divide the 100mm standard into three equal parts, varied by 2.99. To divide the standard into four equal parts the variation was 2.36. And, to divide into five equal parts the variation was 3.09. The Islander boys achieved on average a degree of accuracy that varied at 2.41, 2.58, and 2.4 over the same tests. The Girton village children results were 2.09, 2.08, and 2.3. Rivers noted from these figures that, comparatively speaking, the accuracy of the Mer children in bisecting lines into three or more parts was "consistently smaller than for the adults, i.e, the accuracy of division was greater in the children" (p. 107). And, when compared to the collective figures from Girton, Rivers showed the results from the village children in the U.K. to be "slightly smaller than those of Murray children" (p. 107) but as he says, not necessarily "inferior to the English child" (p. 107).

However, a cursory check of the extremes (see Table IX p. 106 and Table XI, p. 107) of each Islander average estimates would confirm - if we were to apply the previous priority to consistency or constancy factors - that the individual scores of the children were notably erratic when compared with those of the men. That is, the extreme variation in the Islander children's estimate was 7.07:0.4. This far exceeded the men's at 5.07:1.53. If the main goal was about the psychological aspects of seeing, that is, the way illusions are formed by particular groups of people, this should have been noted. But this was not to be the case. Rivers went on instead to make other observations from the data.

Except for one of the children tested, Rivers found that the Islanders mostly did not divide a line into four parts by bisecting the line into two equal parts first. He noted, as well, that the English village children divided lines from left to right as did the Islander children "and there can be little doubt that this was due to the influence of their school education" (p. 108). By contrast,

Rivers found that, of the eight men tested on Mer four started bisecting from the left, three started from the right, and one began from both ends. Rivers (1901) concluded that when taken "into account the number of trials necessary before the lines could be divided successfully and the degree of accuracy as compared with the Girton children the Torres Strait natives were distinctly deficient in this operation" (p. 108). But, as Rivers explains, albeit condescendingly, when one considers the language difficulties in undertaking such an experiment as well as "their deficiencies in numeration, the results were surprisingly good" (p. 108).

However, this finding has been a very selective conclusion of the Islander attempts to divide a line into three or more equal parts. The Islander men's rate of constancy or consistency in these tests was not fully realised for a number of reasons. First, Rivers chose to highlight and compare the degree of accuracy of the participants. Second, a measure of the extreme estimates were not considered by Rivers in order to compare Islander men and Islander children. Third, no comparative measure can be made of these methodologies because details of the English participants and their extreme estimates were not provided. Fourth, neither the accuracy nor the constancy factors could be valued against those of the psychology students. Instead, Rivers chose to highlight tendencies and patterns of the physical ways participants carried out their measurements. These are of course important elements to note. But, to understand the psychological disposition of a group of people, aspects of visual spatial perceptions must also be considered. Naming deficiencies in how participants carry out their tasks is simply not enough.

Estimation of Vertical lines

Rivers (1901) went on to test whether Islanders could draw a vertical line the same length as that given by a horizontal standard. 20 men and 12 children from Mer were involved. There were three tasks set for the Islander. The first required the Islander to draw a vertical line starting at the centre of a

horizontal standard of 100mm. The second task required him to start at the end of the standard. And the third required him to draw a line that passed through the centre of the standard with equal distances on either side – as in a cross. Data from these tests were then compared with those of 15 psychology students and 12 Girton village children.

Rivers found that both the Islander men and boys achieved an overall accuracy rate that improved over the tests. For instance, “the average length of the vertical line in No. 1 was distinctly smaller than in No. 2, and in No. 2 than in No. 3” (p. 112). The men achieved on average, 65.7mm in the first, 77.0mm in the next, and 90.1mm in the last. The boys achieved averages of 79.5mm, 84.3mm, and 99.4mm. Comparatively, the boys were more accurate in their estimates of the standard. The boy’s estimates, across all three tasks, also show them to make the vertical longer than the men. Moreover, as Rivers noted, there was a notable constancy factor. For instance, in No. 1, four men out of twenty estimated beyond 75mm whereas nine of the twelve boys estimated beyond 75mm. In other words, there was a consistency amongst the boys to estimate above 75mm whereas the consistency factor for the men was to estimate below 75mm. This told Rivers that “the illusion was apparently less marked” (p. 112) for the boys.

Data from 15 psychology students and the 12 Girton village children (see Table XIII, p. 113) also showed that all improved the accuracy of their estimates as they progressed through the tests. The Girton village children averaged 78.2 in the first, 88.7 in the second and 90.7 in the third. The psychology students averaged 89.0, 92.5, and 94.5. This, Rivers (1901) noted, was an interesting characteristic for all four groups. All “agree in making the vertical line shorter when drawn from the middle of the horizontal line than when drawn at one end, and shorter in the latter for of the tests than when it is drawn so as to form a cross” (p. 114). Notably, for Rivers, the psychology students were more accurate in the average scores than the Girton village children and the Islander children, and even more so than the Islander men.

However, the constancy factors were also important. As Rivers noted, when the mean deviation from the average is considered, it can be clearly seen that “the illusion was most marked in the case of the Murray Island men”... [and by contrast], [t]he illusion was least pronounced in the case of the psychology students” (p. 113). That is, when each Islander man’s attempt is considered against the average of the whole group of Islanders - M.V. – the figures come up as 10.13 in the first, 7.85 in the second and 9.75 in the third. The psychology students’ figures were 5.73, 4.37, and 3.43. Rivers offered a few explanations for this. One he noted was that some participants in England who had done the first test used a mode that divided the standard into two halves wherein they gained some correspondence for their vertical estimates, “[t]his observation illustrates very well one cause of difference between the results of the savage and the cultured measurements, for one may feel fairly confident that such an artificial method was not employed by the Murray Islander” (p. 114). This helps to explain perhaps the means by which the English participants come by their accurate measurements but it says little about the constancy factors.

However, the consistency with which the Islander men provided their estimates in each was considered. And from this, Rivers discovered that seventeen of the twenty men displayed the characteristic increases in their measures over the three tasks whereas only eight of the fifteen students did. His explanation was thus: “I am inclined to ascribe this result to the influence of a factor, viz. Knowledge of the nature of the illusion, which is not present in the savage” (p. 115). That is, with both conclusions Rivers presents the cultural attributes of the English participants as on a higher plane whilst describing the Islanders achievements as savage-like. The categories of ‘civilised’ and ‘savage’ thus prefigure the test and all the findings are aligned to this polarity. This is the case even where the data does not support such a distinct difference in performance.

The generalisation drawn from Rivers' methodology and orientation to the data is that there were more differences in achieving the averages by Islanders than there were by the psychology students. There was more consistency amongst the Islanders in achieving their characteristic trends across the three tasks than the psychology students. But more important is the changing normative factors in each of these comparisons. The 100mm might have been the standard used for the tests but the interpretations made are based on various normative positions depending on what the data was compared with. And, as is evident from the process outlined above, no matter what comparisons were made the findings were interpreted by recourse to a 'them' and 'us' schema.

Rivers (1901) went on to consider the views of others and their explanations as to "the cause of the erroneous estimation of vertical as compared with horizontal distances" (p. 116). Some, he noted, accepted the view that this was because of "the curvature of the retina... [particularly when] the retina is more concave in one meridian than in the other" (p. 116). Others accepted the more popular view "which refers the illusion to the influence of eye movements" (p. 116). This view was based on the idea that the muscles that control the vertical eye movements are greater than the ones that control the horizontal movements. Another view considered the oval shape of the field of vision one gets from monocular vision and binocular vision. This view suggested that it is "possible that a vertical distance may be overestimated as compared with an equal horizontal distance because it forms a larger proportion of the field of vision" (p. 116). To others, erratic estimations of vertical lines from a horizontal standard are caused by psychological tendencies because it is supposed by people like Lipps (1891), "that we ascribe certain mechanical activities to geometrical figures and... that we ascribe activity more readily to vertical than to horizontal lines (Lipps cited in Rivers, 1901, p. 116). Rivers, however, remains unconvinced, and is moved to suggest that,

[t]he pronounced character of the illusion in children and in people in the stage of mental culture of the Murray Islanders shows that the illusion is primitive and deeply seated, and that its source is to be sought in some physiological condition, or if it is at present necessary to be content with a psychological explanation, this must be of a simple and primitive character. (Rivers, 1901, pp. 116-7)

Nowhere in Rivers' research is there evidence that suggests that the stage of mental culture for Islanders is primitive. Explanations that link the data to notions of 'simplicity' and 'primitiveness' go beyond what the findings can deliver even within their own scientific terms. What it does suggest, however, is that the distinction made between 'civilised' and 'savage' has an inscrutable impact on both methodology and the outcomes.

Estimation of Horizontal Lines

The Muller-Lyer Illusion test was another used by Rivers (see Fig. 2, 1901, p. 117) to gauge visual spatial perceptions. The apparatus used in this test was a sliding rule. A standard length, 75mm, was positioned on the sliding scale and the participant was then required to slide the scale the same length as the standard 75mm by estimating how far to slide the measure. Participants were required to estimate the standard in two different ways by sliding the scale in to shorten the measure and by sliding it out to lengthen the measure. The first results of 19 Mer men tested are provided in Table XIV (p. 119). They indicate that on average across all ten attempts the Islanders scored 60.29mm. Five of their attempts made, when the slide rule had to be shortened, were on average 62.45mm in length, and showed an average mean variation of 3.057. When the rule was lengthened the estimates were significantly different. Of the second five attempts, the 19 men estimated the length, on average, to be 58.13mm with an average mean variation of 2.305. Rivers observed that the Islander men were definitely influenced by the direction the slide rule had to be moved to, but he suggested they were "influenced to a considerable extent by the position of the slide at the beginning" (p. 120). In addition, Rivers

pointed out that the estimates were consistently longer when the rule was shortened (62.45mm) and not as long (58.13mm) when it was lengthened. He retried this test in reverse order to test whether any change in order affected the trend. This was not found to be so and thus affirmed an Islander characteristic for Rivers.

The 10 Mer boys (10-13yrs), by contrast, achieved an overall average score of 61.16mm (75mm standard) after ten attempts - slightly longer than the 19 men's average of 60.29. Their first five attempts moving the slide one way showed an average score of 62.06mm (men's 62.45) with an average variation between estimates to be 2.296, whilst the second five attempts showed an average of 60.26mm (men's 58.13) and a variation of 1.856 when required to move the slide in the opposite direction. Two other boys were tested in reverse order to test the characteristic trend. Again, it reaffirmed a tendency to make the estimate longer when the rule was shortened and not as long when lengthened. But, it was significant that results from five of the twelve boys did not correspond to the characteristic trend.

The data from tests on 9 Islander girls aged between 10 and 14 were, by contrast, corresponded with each other uniformly and were characteristic of the overall trends. Moreover, they appeared to have outscored the men as well as the boys. The average score for their ten attempts was 62.55mm (boy's 61.16; men's 60.29). The average of the first five tests when moving the slide rule one way was 64.47mm (boy's 62.06; men's 62.45). The second five attempts that the slide rule was to be moved in the opposite direction showed an average score of 60.64 (boy's 60.26; men's 58.13). The girls from Mer showed overall that they were more accurate with their estimates. The constancy factor was also superior. Attempts by the girls varied from their group's average by 2.68 and 1.62 over both tests, whereas the boys varied by 2.296 and 1.856 and the men varied by 3.057 and 2.305. In regards to a measure of visual spatial perception, smaller variations equate to more constancy. The girls were, in this sense, the most accurate.

When the results were compared with those in the West, the Islanders were found to be more accurate with their estimates than their English counterparts. Rivers (1901) acknowledged that, at first glance, "[t]he illusion appears to be distinctly less marked to Murray Islanders than to the Europeans. This is shown not only by the average but by the maximum and minimum observations, and also by the median observations, which differ but slightly from the averages" (p. 125). However, to Rivers, the constancy factors needed to be considered in more detail. Whilst advantages can be seen in that the Islanders scored with a greater accuracy than the English, the English showed greater consistency in achieving their average scores. For example, as can be seen on Table XVIII (p. 124), variations in the Islanders' estimate of their first five attempts, when moving the slide one way, show an average estimate of 62.8mm with an average mean variation of 2.77. And, when the slide was moved in the opposite direction in their second five attempts, the average estimate was 59.3mm with an average mean variation of 2.03. By contrast, the English achievements were 2.09 and 1.58. These figures were distinctly smaller than the Islanders were. This, in effect, meant that the English were more consistent with achieving their averages for the first five attempts as they did in their second five attempts. There was more of a disparity to see, Rivers noted, between the Islander men and a group of English students who were most familiar with the exercise. The Islander men had a mean variation of 3.06 and 2.3 in achieving their average score whereas the English students achieved 1.79 and 1.42 in theirs. However, when all of the Islanders were compared with the English, "Islanders show[ed] that they performed the operations involved in the test with a degree of constancy and accuracy, slightly inferior to an equal number of English people" (p. 125).

However, Rivers is left with a particular problem. Whilst the English had the advantage when mean variations are considered against the average estimates achieved in each of the two tests, a different picture emerges when individual estimates are considered against the combined averages of the two tests. The variation amongst the Islander estimates, for instance, when correlated with

the collective average of both tests 61.1mm showed a constancy factor, or a (M.V.), of 3.89. According to Rivers, the "M.V. is an index of the variability of the individuals within each group" (p. 127). The degree of variance amongst the English individuals then in achieving the overall average of 55.6mm was greater. They scored a M.V. figure of 5.02. There was more constancy amongst the Islander people in achieving the overall average than the English and, in effect, meant that Islanders were more accurate and less prone to seeing an illusion.

In light of this Rivers (1901) acknowledged that Islanders "gave results which were more consistent with one another than those of an almost equal number of English people, and the group of Murray Island men varied from one another very much less than the group of practised English observers" (p. 127). This was difficult for him to explain. But, as he suggested, perhaps

[t]his is another example of the fact that in some respects the unpractised and wholly ignorant inhabitants of Murray Island give more consistent results than Europeans practised in psychological observation. In the introduction I [Rivers] suggested that the greater consistence [sic] of the Murray Islanders may have been due to their total ignorance and to the fact that they gave their whole minds to the special attention they had to perform, and were not influenced by speculations founded on knowledge, in this case on knowledge of the illusion. (Rivers, 1901, p. 127)

These Islanders again are explained away by reference to those 'practised in psychological observation'. In Table XVII, Rivers separated off "students and others well acquainted with the illusion" (1901, p. 124) so that he could indeed make such comparisons between them and Islanders. And from this, he found that it was "the difference between the Murray Island men and the English group A (all practised observers) which make the average mean variation of the English observers superior to that of the [Islanders]" (p. 125). What Rivers is struggling to explain is the extent to which Islanders were

more consistent with each other in their estimates than all of the English in achieving the combined average of both tests. That is, the English were not only affected by illusion more, they were more erratic with their tasks. Rivers speculated “it is possible that in the simpler mental features they [Islanders] may present more uniformity than is found among the members of a highly civilised community” (p. 127). However, what is even more telling is his resolve in this concluding statement:

The very slight inferiority to the English observers in accuracy as shown by a comparison of the average mean variations (m.v.) and the remarkable correspondence of the three Murray Island groups with one another would have been impossible if the Murray Islanders had not applied their full attention to their tasks or if they had failed to understand what they were told to do. (pp. 127-8)

There is nothing in this explanation that implicates the psychological aspects of different groups of people. By quantifying the estimates offered by Islanders, Rivers had hoped to gain some measure of the psychological disposition of Islanders comparing them with the normative positions of those in the West. Rivers should have been able to interpret and compare the score of the Islanders and the English “both by the smallness of the mean variations and by the general consistency of the results” (p. 127). He seemed unable to do this in a neutral way or in a way that prioritised any Islander attributes. Instead all findings were reinterpreted in order to make consistent the inferior position of the ‘savage’ Islander.

There is little substantive data in Rivers’ study that proves superiority or inferiority. However, there are persistent references to Islanders as ‘lower race’ people and the superiority of the Europeans. Even when Rivers reveals his uncertainties in relation to other studies in the literature, he struggles to provide something of substance about the psychology of the Islander. In fact, the data presented by Rivers that may be regarded as reliable as a

comparative - in the sense that both the Islander and the English people were subjected to the same tests - shows that Islanders were affected by the modified Masson's Disc as much as the English people were affected. It also shows from the one case found on Mer, that the frequency of colour-blindness is not a common feature of the Islanders. That the colour nomenclature for blue is not fully developed (although this is open to challenge). That the "Islander is relatively more sensitive to red than the Englishman, and distinctly less sensitive to blue" (p. 73). That Islanders were able to see contrasting colours "less readily than the average European" (p. 81). None of these conclusions tells us anything about the psychological capabilities of the Islander people let alone is sufficient to compare Islanders to the psyche of Europeans.

However marked the especial interests of the experts, it is the epistemological schema of these Reports that explains the orientation of their generalisations. These scholars, and their Reports belonged to an era of exploration of exotic worlds that although supportive, judged the 'unknown' in the world according to the order of things in their own so-called 'civilised' world. It is under these conditions that science operates to form the constitutional characteristics of primitive minds and cultures.

To cover all the aspects of the senses the expedition team moved to experiment with and document the Islander hearing, smell, taste, touch, muscular sense, blood pressure, and reaction-times. Once again, as many aspects of the senses as possible were tested in order to gain an idea of how the Islander psyche functioned. The experiments involved the introduction of measures from the West, and an assessment of the degree to which Islanders had been influenced by the West. Myers and McDougall's, Report on the Hearing, Smell and Touch senses of Islanders, however, sits in stark contrast to Rivers' findings that condemned Islanders as 'Savages' with primitive minds.

B. Hearing

Like Rivers, Myers (1903) moved first to identify pathological conditions of the ears of Islanders on Mer that could affect the Islanders' hearing capacity. The Islanders were found to be in good health and only one case of discharge from the ear, or otorrhoea, was identified. An outbreak of measles some years prior was suspected by Myers to be partially responsible for some deafness in the community. However, as far as the adult members in the Islands were concerned, a more likely reason was the extent of the diving required by the commercial marine industries.

Until the recent legislation enacted by the Queensland Government, natives were induced to dive, without dress or helmet, into such deep water that deaths were of frequent occurrence. At the time of our visit, the hospital at Thursday Island contained several cases of paralysis, which had arisen from diving in excessively deep water. (Myers, 1903, p. 142)

Myers was in no doubt about the extent of deafness from this kind of diving. He tested 18 divers and found that almost half had defective hearing in one ear and a couple who had the same problem with both ears. Indeed, from all his tests on hearing, including those on children, he was "forced to conclude that the general auditory acuity of islanders [sic] in the Torres Strait is inferior to that of the Europeans" (p. 148).

Auditory Acuity

Common amongst travellers of the world then was a view of "the remarkable capacity possessed by primitive people for distinguishing faint sound amid familiar surroundings" (Myers, 1903, p. 143). Myers pointed to two cases in particular. Laszlo Magyar who had visited the Kimbunda people in South Africa spoke of this remarkable capacity, "they are able to distinguish very accurately sounds which are heard from a great distance, and at once recognize [sic] their nature and direction" (cited by Myers, 1903, p. 143). P. Paulitschke visited Somalia and "found the Somali hunters to have a very

delicate sense of hearing, the slightest noise awakening their attention, its direction being recognized [sic] with certainty" (1903, p. 143). But, there is as much from other travellers who contradict this view by arguing that all people hear and become accustomed to sounds, just as well, in their own environments. Generally, however, "[w]e need but imagine such an individual transported to the streets of a busy city, to obtain a complete reversal of the phenomena, the primitive man heedlessly passing various noises which could be full of significance to his more civilized [sic] companion" (p. 143). Myers (1903) believed that the common opinions of fellow travellers had little scientific basis. He could find only two experimental studies of indigenous peoples around the globe by Giltchenko and Hyades. The first heralded extraordinary capabilities, and the second maintained ordinary capacities. For these reasons, Myers pursued tests to provide a measure of the auditory acuity, the upper limit of hearing and the smallest perceptible difference of two different tone by "subjecting the ear to a definite test" (p. 143).

Myers (1903) had three available methods of testing auditory acuity. The first was to use a telescope where, with the lens removed and placed in the vertical position, a small pith-ball can be dropped through the small opening onto a piece of felt fixed at the other end. As he says, "[t]he velocity of the fall of the ball, and hence the intensity of the sound produced by its impact against the felt-disc, could be varied at will by altering the height of the telescopic tube" (p. 144). He also had available Politzer's, Hormesser. This is an apparatus made up of a hollow steel cylinder and a hammer that falls from a fixed height. But, because of the noise of the surrounding environment, Myers chose not to use this instrument on Mer: "Here the constant rustle of the palm-leaves and the beating of the surf on the sea-shore compelled me to lay aside my telescopic apparatus and Politzer's Hormesser in favour of a stop-watch" (p. 145). He thus settled on Runne's clock. This is a particular kind of stop-watch "which could be made to tick five times in a second, and could be easily stopped or set going at will" (p. 145).

To moderate external noise factors, Myers tested his colleagues alongside the Islanders on Mer. It is not clear if he tested them at the same time as Islanders were being tested. No allowance is made for any different level of external noise between the two groups thus affecting the reliability of this control group. Rivers (cited in Myers, 1903), however, did find some exceptionally quiet times at Mabuiag Island where there was “almost complete silence” (p. 147). At Mabuiag he was able to test 8 out of 13 Islanders under these conditions with both Runne’s clock and Politzer’s Hornmesser (for results see following reproduction of Table XX. p. 147).

Both Myers and Rivers compared Islanders as a group with members of the Cambridge team who became the defacto ‘English’ or ‘civilised’ group. What was investigated was thresholds or limits of hearing. The chosen apparatus was first placed in the participant’s range of hearing and moved away at metre and half-metre intervals until it could not be heard. The apparatus was then placed outside the range of the participants hearing and introduced by the same method until it was heard. Five subsequent trials were made between the two points to determine a threshold. These were then listed as average scores and compared with each other. A point where Islander participants could/could not hear a Western apparatus was the basis on which comparative measures were made. The normative basis by which the Islanders’ auditory acuity was measured was the familiarity of members of the Cambridge team’s with their own instruments. Data from both Rivers’ and Myers’ experiments were compared in the following tables 1 and 2:

Table 2: Results of tests run by Runne's clock.

TABLE XIX.						
Murray Island Boys, tested by Runne's Clock.						
Date	Name	Age	R. Z.	L. Z.	Standard observer	Remarks
Aug. 2	Jimmy Daur...	10	3:00	4:00	worse than C. S. M.	
Aug. 3	Dela.....	10	2:50	2:75	same as C. S. M.	
July 19	Aki.....	10½	2:75	2:75	{C. S. M. L. Z. = 5:00 m. W. H. R. R. L. Z. = 1:75 m.	
Aug. 3	"	"	0:50	1:50	much worse than C. S. M.	
July 19	Tom (Malsouli)	11	2:75	3:00	{C. S. M. L. Z. = 5:00 m. W. H. R. R. L. Z. = 1:75 m.	
Aug. 3	"	"	3:00	2:50	{L. Z. slightly worse than } C. S. M. {L. Z. same as }	
Aug. 1	Marau.....	11	3:50	4:50	same as C. S. M.	
July 17	William (Tat)...	11½	0:75	0:75	C. S. M. L. Z. = 5:00 m.	
"	Sailor.....	11½	4:00	4:00	worse than C. S. M.	
Aug. 3	Tom (Tanu)...	11½	2:75	3:00	not quite equal to C. S. M.	
"	Sagigi.....	11½	1:50	1:25	{L. Z. slightly worse than } C. S. M. {L. Z. same as }	
July 17	Poi (Pasi).....	13	4:50	3:00		
"	James.....	13	2:00	2:00	C. S. M. L. Z. = 5:00 m.	
"	Apori.....	14	3:00	3:00		
Murray Island Girls, tested by Runne's Clock.						
July 15	Maima.....	11	2:00	2:25		
"	Gigai.....	11½	1:75	2:00	{W. H. R. R. L. Z. = 3:25 m.	
"	Seba.....	12	2:00	3:00		
Aug. 3	Nei.....	13	3:00	?	{W. H. R. R. L. Z. = 1:00 m.	
"	Maletta.....	13½	1:00	3:00		nothing abnormal noticed otoscopically.
"	Sider.....	14	1:50	1:50	W. H. R. R. L. Z. = 0:75 m.	otorrhoea formerly.
"	Mary.....	14	2:75	?	not quite equal to C. S. M.	
Murray Island Men, tested by Runne's Clock.						
Aug. 2	Charlie (Pasi)...	16	1:50	1:50		has never dived.
"	Berò.....	17	5:00	2:00		
July 20	Topom.....	18	4:25	4:25	{C. S. M. L. Z. = 5:00 m.	
"	Joiah.....	18	0:05	2:75	{W. H. R. R. L. Z. = 0:50 m.	
Aug. 1	Zarub.....	20	—	—		dived at 14. White discharge followed.
May 27	Gaud.....	20	—	—		has dived L. Z. opaque tympanic membrane. Hornessner 1 m.
July 15	Jimmy Rica	30-35	6:50	3:30	{W. H. R. R. L. Z. = 2:25 m.	
July 20	Babelu.....	30-35	2:25	2:75	{C. S. M. L. Z. = 5:00 m.	
"	Boa.....	35-40	0:75	0:50	{W. H. R. R. L. Z. = 0:50 m.	has dived: no discharge.
July 19	Charlie Berò	35	1:00	1:00	{C. S. M. L. Z. = 5:00 m.	
"	Komaberi.....	50	1:75	2:00	{W. H. R. R. L. Z. = 1:75 m.	
Aug. 2	Tibi.....	45-50	0:55	2:20		has dived 6-10 fathoms: blood from nose and mouth.
Aug. 1	Alo.....	50	—	—		has dived 1-2 fathoms: no discharge.
Aug. 2	Krila.....	50	4:00	—		has dived 7-8 fathoms: no discharge.
Aug. 1	Canoe.....	50	2:00	2:00		Watch, R. Z. 18 in., L. Z. 9 inches.
July 20	Enoka.....	55-60	1:00	1:00	{C. S. M. L. Z. = 5:00 m. {W. H. R. R. L. Z. = 0:50 m.	has dived. Opaque tympanic membrane. has dived: blood from nose and ears.

Table 3: Results of test by Hormesser on Mabuiag men.

TABLE XX.
Mabuiag Men tested by Hörmesser (by W. H. R. Rivers).

Date	Name	Age	R. E.	L. E.	Standard-observer	Remarks
Sept. 23	Urma	30-35	1.50	7.00	C. G. S. R. E. = 9 m.	weather rather windy.
"	Josiah	17	8.00	8.00	C. G. S. R. E. = 10 m.	
"	Min	20	2.50	1.50	much worse than C. G. S. .	
"	Gigib	20-25	4.00	3.50	
Sept. 28	Tom	30-35	5.00+	4.00+	C. G. S. {R. E. = 8 m. L. E. = 9 m. }	more windy and variable: hence probably the difference in the two ears.
Sept. 30	Waria	35	7.00+	13.00+	C. G. S. R. E. = 16+ m.	no wind: almost complete silence.
"	Baira	30-35	6.00	3.00+	much worse than C. G. S.	
"	Waiat	20	2.00	6.00		
"	Peter	35	8.00	5.00		
"	Wame	35	0.75	2.00	W. H. R. R. R. E. = 2½ m.	
"	Monday	20	1.50	0.50	C. G. S. R. E. = 18+ m. ...	no wind.
Oct. 2	Alis	20	6.00+	5.00+		
"	William (of Murray I.)	20-25	0.75	0.75		

From Tables XIX, Myers reported that 7 of the 12 boys on Mer could not hear as far as he could, and 4 of the 5 Adults could not hear as well as he did. By comparison, all of the girls on Mer could hear as far as or better than Rivers. But, as Myers pointed out, "Dr Rivers... was certainly suffering from partial deafness when these estimations were made" (p. 148). On Table XX, Rivers compared the results of Mabuiag adults with Mr Seligmann and himself. As Myers noted, "[n]ot one of the ten young Mabuiag adults [aged 17-35] with whom Mr Seligmann later compared himself, could hear as far as he could. Two others could not hear as far as Dr Rivers, whose auditory acuity even by this time had not much improved" (p. 148). Myers thus concluded: "[t]he remarkably low acuity of the general adult hearing must hence be attributed to pathological conditions. Yet as the children show a similar, although less marked, deficiency, one is forced to conclude that the general auditory acuity of the islanders [sic] in the Torres Strait is inferior to that of Europeans" (Myers, 1903, p. 148).

The rigour of these tests, the reliability of the comparisons and the validity of the test instruments are all clearly questionable. Moreover, an examination of the 'Standard-observer' column of the findings provides some idea of the

normative basis upon which the aforementioned findings were made. In the first comparison of Myers, the 12 boys are compared with: one "not quite equal to CSM"; two "same as CSM"; one "worse than CSM"; one "much worse than CSM"; one "L.E. [left ear] of CSM"; two "L.E. (left ears of both) CSM and WHRR"; and so forth. Comparisons made of the data in these ways, with no corresponding values, are shaky and depend too much on the members of the Cambridge expedition. Except for one item on Table XX - CGS R.E.=8m and L.E.=9m - it can be presumed that the auditory acuity of each of the team members was the same in both ears. The rate of exact scores for both ears - B.E. - amongst the research team was recorded no less than 13 times. In contrast to this, 5 of the 12 boys on Mer did. 1 of the 7 girls on Mer did. 4 of the 16 men on Mer did. And, on Mabuiag, of the 13 participants, 2 did. Clearly Myers and Rivers were basing their findings on fragile grounds. Moreover, this process illustrates again the degree to which Islanders' capabilities were diminished by reference to Western norms. Thus, Islanders, it was found, did not have animal-like qualities as supposed by fellow travellers (i.e. higher-order hearing skills) but were found to have a level of acuity well below what constituted the norm for civilised peoples.

The Upper Limit of Hearing

Myers (1903) went on to test the Islanders' upper limit of hearing. For this test, he used a Galton whistle. This is a tube-like instrument, with a one-millimetre bore, and "[I]ts length can be varied by sliding in or out the solid rod which closely fitted the tube of the whistle" (p. 149). Attached to this rod was a device that provided a measure, in millimetres, any position the rod is placed along the whistle. The researcher began first by blowing the whistle with the rod fully extended and slowly slid it into the whistle until no audible whistle-note could be heard. He then blew again but this time he slid the rod out of the whistle until the first audible note could be heard. After five attempts like this an average was taken and this became a measure of the upper limit of hearing for that day. (Myers tested the same person on another day and found different averages). It thus enabled the upper limit of hearing

to be measured in millimetres. The results, when compared with similar tests done on the people of Aberdeenshire, Scotland, indicated small differences between the two groups, “this small difference is in favour of the latter” (p. 152). Myers also observed a distinct pattern in the data that suggested to him that “children of both communities hear a higher tone than the adults, the upperlimit of hearing becoming gradually lower with increase of years” (p. 154). This can be seen in the following reproduction of Table XXII.

TABLE XXII.

Age	Murray Island			Aberdeen-shire	Age	Murray Island			Aberdeen-shire
	Name	Class	Whistle-length			Name	Class	Whistle-length	
18-19	Zarau	G	2-25	—	30-39	Billy Kuria ...	A	2-84	—
	Charlie (Pasi) ..	F	2-05	—		Groggy	B	6-23, 5-40	—
	Berd	E	3-22, 2-75	—	40-49	Gi	E	4-44, 5-50	2-62
	Madaa	C	2-75	—		Pasi	G	2-73	7-00, 3-25
20-29	Zarob	B	3-50, 1	2-27		Wasalgi	A	3-31	2-38
	Tapau	G	2-00	2-27		Snooke	B	1	3-28
	Dubwai	C	2-86	2-11		Jimmy Dei ...	B	4-80, 3-52	4-22, 5-27
	Poi	A	4-00, 3-08	—		Tibi	A	3-62, 2-98	—
	Komaberi, jun.	G	2-80	—		Azd	A	4-25	—
	Jimmy Weilu.	G	2-87	—	50-59	Kriba	C	7-12, 1	3-44
	Loko	B	3-80, 3-18	—		Cance	C	5-25	4-06
						Alo	A	3-94, 5-75	4-12, 5-27
30-39	Dick Tui	E	4-09, 3-52	2-80		Komaberi	D	3-12	—
	Gaul	B	3-35, 3-07	2-86		Wanu	C	4-39	—
	Babelu	D	3-25, 2-94	2-80, 3-00		Wali	E	4-00, 6-00	—
	Mabo	F	3-10	2-35		Lui	G	5-87	—
	Orote	D	3-51	2-42					
	Jimmy Rice	G	2-80	—	over 60	Mamus	G	6-16	4-00, 3-47

Table 4: Comparative data on Islanders and people from Aberdeenshire.

The table here shows a comparison between Islanders and people from Aberdeenshire, Scotland. The first point that needs to be made relates to the seven different groups of Islanders. Myers (1903) formed these groups according to their relative experiences with diving:

Class A comprises men who had not noticed any ill effects in the ear from diving. Those in whom diving had caused haemorrhagic or purulent discharge from one ear are grouped in Class B, a discharge from both ears in Class C, haemorrhage from the mouth and nose only in Class D. ... in Class E those whose hearing in one of both ears was defective from some other cause. The men who had never dived are in Class F. Those about whom I have no information are in Class G. (Myers, 1903, p. 152).

Of note here is the different categories used. They are determined by what Islanders could or could not recall from their diving experience and not, as Myers noted, by any physiological examination. The other significant feature to note is the comparative measures derived from Aberdeenshire, Scotland. One would expect that the two groups had similar diving experiences. That

is, for example, in Class B the comparative measure was of two different groups of people who had haemorrhages or purulent discharges caused by diving in deep water. And the next notable item is about the relative number of Islanders compared with the Scots. In Class A, 4 Islanders are compared with no Scots. Class B, 7 Islanders compared with 3 Scots. Class C, 6:5. Class D, 2:0. Class E, 6:5. Class G, 7:3. Class F, 1:1. Overall, 33 Islanders are compared with 17 Scots.

Having tabulated these results, Myers then reconfigures them. He provides a comparative table of the overall results in a new table (Table XXIII, p. 154) designated only by the different age levels to show what would be achieved if references to “any aural lesion or disease produced by diving or other causes” were omitted (p. 153). He subsequently provided another set of results (Table XXIV, p. 154) from Table XXII above to show average rates of the highest tone achieved by the different age groups. And from these, Myers concluded that “the Murray Islanders [of Mer] are very identical with those given by the people of Aberdeenshire” (1903, p. 154).

However, despite this conclusion, from the outset there existed no valid position by which the Scots could be compared with the Islanders. His consideration of some of the variables that debilitated the hearing capacity of the participants in his study was meaningful. Less meaningful was the suggestion that the study could be based on what Islanders told him about their hearing experiences, and not on any physical examination by him. Furthermore, comparative figures based on twice as many Islanders than Scots weakened his results. The ignoring of these weaknesses to his study in favour of overall results does not present a solid basis for Myers’ findings. In this study, as in other ones done by the Cambridge group, there is evidence of a tension which undermines the research as a whole. On the one hand, there is an earnest desire to situate the Islanders in their own environment yet on the other hand, all measures used to understand Islanders favour instruments, methods and norms imported from the West.

The Smallest Perceptible Tone-Difference.

Myers (1903) went on to determine the smallest perceptible tone-difference that could be identified by the Islander: “[f]or it be supposed that smaller intervals are employed by primitive than by civilized [sic] communities... we should expect them to show evidence of extremely high sensibility to minute differences of pitch” (p. 168).

Two tuning forks were used in this experiment to ascertain the Islanders ability to detect the smallest perceptible tone-difference between them. The first was of a fixed kind at 256 vibrations per second. The second was also of the same pitch but one where a sliding metal bar was attached to one of its forks to vary the interval times. The Islanders, upon hearing the sounds of two selected forks, were to respond thus: “first one high, or second one high, or both all same” (p. 158). In all, 12 children and 21 adults were tested on Mer and in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. As regards some of the adult Islanders, Myers was left in “no doubt that in these experiments their judgment [sic] of pitch differences was being exercised for the first time” (p. 159). The folk of Aberdeenshire, however, “belonged to a highly educated class. Six of them played a musical instrument, and of these three had had the valuable previous experience of tuning the violin, and one of the violoncello... But I [Myers] ought to add that at most only one or two could be termed highly musical” (p. 156).

Myers (1903) tested the participants over a six week period and “[e]ach sitting lasted from twenty to thirty minutes” (p. 159). Each sitting involved many encounters with the tuning forks. The following table shows this.

Table 5: Average Number of Measurements taken in each sitting.

	Sitting 1	Sitting 2	Sitting 3

	Total no. of tests	No. of people	Group average	Total no. of tests	No. of people	Group average	Total no. of tests	No. of people	Group average
Children of Mer	424	12	35.3	433	10	43.3	356	6	59.3
Men of Mer	857	20	42.85	434	9	48.2	202	3	67.3
Scottish Children	616	12	51.3	344	8	43	133	4	33
Scottish Men	929	21	44.2	195	5	39	148	3	49.3

As we can see from this compilation of his work, Myers recorded, on average, in the first sitting 35.3 responses from 12 Islander children, 43.3 responses in the second from 10 children and, 59.3 in the third from 6 children. He recorded averages of 51.3 from 12 Scottish children in the first test, 43 from 8 in the second and, 33.25 from 4 in the third. Averages of 42.85 were obtained from 20 Islander adults on Mer in the first, 48.2 from 9 in the second and, 67.3 from 3 in the third. Averages of 44.2 encounters were recorded from 21 Scottish adults in the first, 39 from 5 in the second and, 49.3 from 3 in the third. The number of participants most certainly depleted as the tests progressed over the six-week period. But, and perhaps more notably, those Islander children and men who chose to continue with the tests endured an increasing number of tests of their ability to gauge perceptible tone-differences between two tuning forks.

Myers (1903) recorded as many as 5000 attempts to determine the least perceptible difference of pitch amongst Islanders and the Scots. The group averages in the next Table show the combined average of each of the four groups. The standard fork was set at 256 vibrations per second.

Table 6: Group averages in each sitting.

	Sitting 1			Sitting 2			Sitting 3		
	Total of indiv Results	No. of people	Group average	Total of indiv Results	No. of people	Group average	Total of indiv Results	No. of people	Group average
Children of Mer	2925	12	243.75	2438	10	243.8	1481	6	246.83
Men of Mer	4808	20	240.4	2193	9	243.66	750.75	3	250.25
Scottish Chn	2944	12	245.33	1989.6	8	248.7	991	4	244.75
Scottish Men	5209	21	248	1244.6	5	248.9	752.21	3	250.7

From this compilation of figures from his study, it can be seen that the Islander children's group average in the first sitting was 243.75 which sets it 12.25 away from the standard fork set at 256 vibration per second. They managed 243.8 and 12.2 in the second, and 246.83 and 9.17 in the third. The Islander men managed 240.4:15.6; 243.66:12.34; and, 250.25:5.75. The Scottish children managed 245.33:10.67; 248.70:7.3; and, 244.75:11.25. The Scottish men managed 248:8; 248.9:7.1; and, 250.7:5.3. The following comparative table shows the group's average measure of least perceptible tone-difference from the standard of 256 vibrations per second.

Table 7: Group averages on least perceptible tone-difference.

	Sitting 1	Sitting 2	Sitting 3
Children of Mer	12.25	12.2	9.17
Men of Mer	15.6	12.34	5.75

Scottish Children	10.67	7.3	11.25
Scottish Men	8	7.1	5.3

The smaller numbers indicated that the Scots scored closer to the standard than did the Islanders. That is, as Myers concluded, the people of “Aberdeenshire surpass the people of Murray [Mer] Island in their power of distinguishing two tones of nearly identical pitch” (p. 167). However, he did make some clarifications. The first alluded to the familiarity of the Scottish adults with their musical instruments and the Islanders first encounter with a tuning fork. This, in a sense, meant that perhaps the children could only be compared. However, the second clarification he made pointed to the large discrepancy in the above Table on the number of tests taken by the Islander children and the Scottish children – 424:616. Myers (1903) thus conceded that it would be difficult “to deduce a numerical measure of relative pitch-discriminability in the primitive and civilized [sic] races” (pp. 167-8).

However, Myers did not comment on the 5000 measurements he made. Myers thought that perhaps a view to “existing difference may be gained, if we dismiss from consideration (i) the results given by those subjects, on whom the number of observations made at their first sitting did not exceed thirty, and (ii) the improved results, gained by telling the subject if his judgments [sic] were right or wrong” (p. 168). Thus huge differences could be deduced between the Islanders and the Scots. The comparative data, when re-configured, show the Mer people in the first sitting had an average score of 15.4 and the Scots had a much better average of 7.6. In the second sitting, the new figures show them to be 12.5 as opposed to 4.7.

A stark difference between the Scots and the Islanders from Mer was then made. The question that needs to be asked here is why the participants who contributed below thirty measurements had to be omitted from the overall

analysis? The reason is not immediately clear but the effect is striking. The adjustment doesn't resolve the methodological problems of this research. Moreover by making this adjustment to an already flawed comparative score, Islander participation was depleted further against an already over represented Scottish contingent. As can be seen from the Table 1 above 12 children from Mer, in the first sitting, made 424 measurements whilst their 12 counterparts had made 616. The 21 adults from Mer made 857 whilst the 21 Scots made 929. By adjusting the figures as Myers did, the Islander overall numbers had to be reduced by a further 10 participants whilst the Scots had to reduce theirs by 3. This imbalance, though small, had dramatic effect in the results. The flawed comparative tables and the weaknesses in the methodology does not prevent Myers from making conclusions that advantage the 'civilised' people from the West and continue to disadvantage the 'savage' Islanders. Indeed, where necessary, adjustments were made to data to affirm differences between the two groups.

C. Smell

Myers (1903) also tested the Islanders' sense of smell and compared them with the Scots. There was a view amongst those who travelled the world that the sense of smell amongst native populations was so acute that they exceeded anything known to the Western world. There was, for instance, the view from Ribot that "in the human species savage races have a characteristic fineness of smell in which they approach the animal world" (cited by Myers, 1903, p. 169). Paulitschke held a similar view. He noted that the olfactory acuity of the Somalis "equal[ed] that of the best sporting dogs. With dilated nostrils they scent[ed] the game" (cited in Myers, 1903, p. 169). Myers then pointed to those who attributed this high sense of acuity to "the wideness and flatness of the nostrils in the lower races" (p. 169). Althaus afforded a more scientific explanation for this. He perceived that "the olfactory nerve is as highly useful to man in his natural condition as to beasts, and the peculiar pigment, which surrounds the endings of this nerve and appears to assist in an easier resorption of odorous substances, is even now better developed in

the coloured races than in the Caucasian, among whom the nerve itself appears attenuated” (cited in Myers, 1903, p. 169).

What little research there was at the time showed evidence to the contrary. Myers cited the work of Hyades amongst the Feugians in 1891 and Lombroso and Carrara’s work on the Sudanese Dinkas in 1897. These studies were the first attempts at measuring levels of olfactory acuity in indigenous peoples. According to Myers, they found no instance of animal-like instincts. But, they did flag many variables in their study that inhibited any conclusive statements to be made of the acuity levels. In particular, they noted “imperfections” (p. 169) of the language of indigenous peoples as a central issue. Myers thus resolved that his study would be “directed rather to the discovery of suitable methods for future experiments than towards an estimation of the acuity of their smell-power” (p. 170). This indeed was so and all concluding statements he made were qualified by various imperfections in the tests. But he nevertheless invented tests to estimate the levels of acuity amongst Islanders, made some measurements, and reported his findings. And, this act of intervention is what is of interest to my study – to seek out how and where the Islander was positioned in his deliberations.

There were two measurements made by Myers. The first experimented with ways to estimate levels of acuity amongst Islanders. The second experimented with different scents from “Messrs Piesse and Lubin of New Bond Street, London” (p. 182) to test the Islanders memory and discrimination of odours. Both these experiments were to show that there were multiple variables at play that could complicate the identification of the sense of smell of Islanders as a racial characteristic.

Myers found from the first experiments that the Islanders’ olfactory acuity was slightly higher in the Islands than in Aberdeenshire. Myers (1903) arrived at this conclusion through a round of tests. His first series of test was “to determine the approximate threshold at which the dilute acid could be

detected from water" (p. 177). This involved a solution of 5 minims of valerianic acids diluted in 15 ounces of water. This solution was then added to glass tubes in varying amounts. The first tube contained a half a dram of the diluted solution; the next would contain one dram; the next two drams, and so forth. Four tubes containing the various measures were accompanied with tubes with corresponding measures of water from the local well. The tubes were arranged in the following order starting with the smaller measures: water (w4), diluted valerianic acid (dva4), w3, dva3, dva2, w2, dva1, and w1. Fourteen boys from Mer were asked whether "they smelled water or something else in each tubes" (p. 173). They were then marked either as right or wrong and their results were recorded on Table XXIX (see Myers, 1904, p. 173). From this, he found that half the boys failed to detect "the weakest solution, a much smaller proportion with the next stronger solution, while all succeeded with the two strongest solutions" (p. 177).

The second series of test were done in the reverse order to the first "with a view to determining the differences brought about, when decreasing instead of increasing the strengths of the valerianic solutions" (p. 177). With no indication of the number of participants, Myers explained that the "resulting judgments [sic]... were not sufficiently numerous to indicate more than an approximate equality in the results given by the island [sic] adults and children" (p. 174). No data were recorded and no comparative Table constructed. He added that it was "impossible" (p. 177) to replicate the experiments in the West because there would be no comparable water sample to the ones used in the islands. To him, "[i]n Murray Island [Mer] everything had a smell" (p. 177). He thus passed on to the next series of tests without gathering any data because, as he remarked, he was encouraged by "the evident superiority of camphor solutions" (p. 177).

The third series of tests involved 9 men and 8 children from Mer, and four glass tubes: two filled with 4 drams of water, and the other two contained 15 and 30 minims of "filtered saturated aqueous solutions of camphor" (p. 174).

They were first given a separate solution of camphor of unknown quantity to smell and then "told that of the four tubes one or perhaps more than one tube had a camphor-like odour and that the others contained merely water" (p. 174). The Islanders had to pick out which ones contained the foreign odours. This and the following tests provided Myers some confidence and provided "greater promise of definite results than the preceding" (p. 174). From this series of tests he discovered that "[o]f nine islanders [sic] two had distinctly subnormal acuity, four were worse than, three were equal to two members of the expedition (W.H.R.R. and A.C.H.), whose acuity was investigated at the same time. Of eight island [sic] children, one had distinctly subnormal acuity, five were worse than, two were better than, the same two Europeans" (p. 177). No data from the tests were provided. The standard achieved by his colleagues was also unstated. And, as he stated, no similar experiment was repeated in Scotland.

The fourth series of tests involved 16 men from Mer and 16 men from Aberdeenshire, and four glass tubes. Two contained 4 drams of rainwater and two had 7.5 minims and 3.75 minims of the camphor solution. The numbers of right answers were then listed and compared (see Table XXXI, p. 175). The results from the Table show the two groups to be almost the same. But, as Myers pointed out, the water in the islands had a smell and had to be considered as a major variable in the comparison. Myers, for instance, found that in Mer Dr. Rivers obtained 4.5 right answers for the stronger solution and 3.5 right answers for the weaker solution, in Scotland he provided "all ten answers invariably correct on three different occasions" (p. 178). However, there was a positive aspect to the difference in levels achieved by Rivers. If Rivers experienced both samples in the tests, his results may be used as the constant in making comparisons between the Islanders and the Scots. He resolved thus of 16 Islanders that "the olfactory acuity of three is decidedly defective, of seven is slightly worse than, and of six is better than his. Comparing the 16 Aberdeenshire adults... with the same standard observer, we find that the olfactory acuity of four is decidedly defective, of seven is

slightly worse than, and of five equal to or better than his" (p. 178). The Islanders' level of acuity were measured then against a standard of 4.5 and 3.5 achieved by Rivers in the islands whilst their Scottish counterparts were compared presumably with a standard achieved by this same man in Aberdeenshire that was said to be 'invariably correct' at all times.

In the final series of tests, Myers (1903) involved 6 men and 12 children from Mer, and 6 men and women and 12 children from Aberdeenshire, and six glass tubes. Each tube contained graduated amounts of camphor solutions: 7.5 minims, 15 minims, 30 minims, 1 dram, 2 drams, and 4 drams. These were to test the participant's judgements on relative strengths of camphor solutions. Or as Myers described it, "to test the discrimination of odour-strengths" (p. 178). He listed all the right and wrong answers from these tests in Table XXXII (p. 176). However, in his summaries he elected only to display the frequency of wrong answers, which he then compared. He observed from these results then that the Islander children "made fewer erroneous judgments [sic] than the Aberdeenshire children.... The Aberdeenshire adults were more successful than the Murray Island[er] adults" (p. 178). But, as he hastened to add, "the results show[ed] no remarkable differences in the behaviour of the two communities to the same experiment" (p. 178).

In his conclusion to the overall study Myers noted that insufficient number of participants limited what could be said about the data. There were two other qualifying factors. Firstly, of the 60 sets of observations made over the series of 5 tests, "no two of which are the experimental conditions the same. Secondly, in spite of these frequent modifications of experiment, I reached the close of my stay in Murray Island [Mer], as it will be seen, without having made use of a wholly satisfactory method" (p. 177). But as he pointed out, "[t]here are, however, few experiments of which it can be said that they teach nothing" (p. 177), and thus moved to present a "few general conclusions, which can be legitimately drawn concerning the comparative acuity of smell

among Murray Islanders and among Europeans" (p. 177). Myers reported thus, "[w]e may on the whole conclude, I think, that the average olfactory acuity is slightly higher in Murray Island... than in Aberdeenshire, a smaller proportion of the islanders [sic] having obtuse and a greater number having hyperacute smell-power. The average acuity of the children of both communities seems slightly higher than that of the adults" (p. 179).

However, there are two other points that need to be made about why not much can be made of the data. First, in all the above tests only the numbers of wrong or right answers were recorded - yes they can smell it, or no they can't. Second, the grounds upon which any comparative statement can be made between the two different groups of people comes primarily from the latter three tests. In the first of the three, the constant used in the comparison was Myer's two colleagues, Rivers and Haddon. However, no data on any participant in this test or his colleagues was provided and thus can not be relied on. In the next, data was provided on the levels achieved by the Islanders as well as by the Scots. Rivers was also tested when the Islanders were tested and was also tested when the Scots were tested making him a possible constant in both of the tests. His achievements were then used as the standard measure at each of the different sites. However, whilst Rivers' standard of 4.5 and 3.5 correct answers was used to gain a measure of the Islanders' achievements, no similar standard was offered in their counterparts' measurements. The standard in the latter case was, "invariably correct on three different occasions" (p. 178), and obviously deemed as sufficient information to provide a measure for the Scots. And in the final test, there was no attempt at providing a constant so there were no standards used to compare the two different groups.

Overall, then, there was no credible position by which Myers could draw any comparisons between the two groups. As for the concluding remark that "a greater number of Islanders had hyperacute smell-power" (p. 179), there was nothing conclusive in the data provided by Myers that shows this 'greater

number'. And more crucially, there was nothing that a measure of 'hyperacute' could have been based on as it refers to a measure over and above a standard level of acuity – something that was not resolved properly and cannot be resolved simply by the number of correct or incorrect answers.

The second part to the identification of Islanders' sense of smell as a racial characteristic was for Myers to test the Islanders' memory and discrimination of odours. Father Guis' wrote of his experience in Papua New Guinea and inferred that Islanders too had a delicate sense of smell that enabled them "to track a man down, some object belonging to him, preferably his garment, is procured if possible. They smell at it and then start off in pursuit of the individual, whom they will readily recognize [sic] among several others because of his odour" (cited by Myers, 1903, p. 180). Myers himself observed his "Malay boy" (p. 181) who sorted out the washing of the expedition team by smelling them. He however noted that Le Cat's experience with the South American Indians was that, yes they did have a fine sense of smell but was convinced that "Europeans would soon acquire this power of discrimination if they lived long among savage people, and that there is nothing strange in the matter at all" (cited by Myers, 1903, p. 180). Moreover, Francis Galton taught himself "to associate two whiffs of peppermint with one whiff of camphor, three of peppermint with one of carbolic acid, and so on" (cited by Myers, 1903, p. 181). In these ways and more Galton was able to develop a sense of smell comparable with those known of indigenous populations around the globe. Myers himself then resolved that maybe "the mode of life led by primitive people and their general mental status combine to make them more aware of an attentive to the majority of external stimuli than we ourselves are" (p. 181).

Myers experiment then was to put before thirteen Islanders over a five-week period a range of scents and other substances brought in from London. They were camphor, valerianic acid, Thyme, Sandal, Benzaldehyde, Jasmine, Violet, Verbena, Heliotrope, Vanilla, Musk, Asafoetida, Caproic acid, Civet, Ocimum

sanctum, Linimentum terebinthae acetium, Phenol, Ammonia. The Islanders were then asked to identify what the various scents and substances smelt like, and to record whether they liked it or not. He found the Islanders to be independent in their judgements and not influenced at all by any suggestions. He also found that they gave responses with “surprising readiness and assurance” (p. 184) and evoked associations with the various scents and odours with such a remarkable pace that exceeded any such experiences with testing Europeans. This he thought to mention fell in line with Rivers’ findings and thus the Islanders’ enthusiasm was reduced to “yet another expression of the high degree to which the sensory side of mental life is elaborated among primitive peoples” (p. 185). Overall, however, “[s]o far... as these experiments go, they show that the people of the Torres Strait [sic] have much the same liking and disliking for various odours as obtains among ourselves” (p. 185).

In short, we can see here that this was an attempt by Myers to characterise Islanders with a measure of their ability to remember and discriminate between odours so that he could provide some explanation to the held view that they had a delicate sense of smell. What we ended up with in his Report was a simple categorisation of the items liked or not liked by Islanders, as well as some passing comment about their elaborated sensory capabilities of which nothing could be derived from the test he conducted.

The point to be made for this study is that we have here one of the more positive contributions in the Haddon Reports to put Islanders in a better light than being animal-like. But the emphasis is on innovations in scientific experiments maintained throughout his tests and thus the little regard to the credibility of their findings.

D. Taste

Myers tested seven adults on Mer with solutions of sugar, salt, acetic acid, and quinine. Seligmann carried out the same test on Mabuiag Island. The

solution was wiped onto the individual's tongue and he (they were all male) had to report on what was "the nature of the taste" (1903, p. 186). The following Table provides data gathered by Myers and Seligmann as they grouped them with the exception of the word for bitter.

Table 8: English translations from Myers as well as Ray's dictionaries of the languages.

<u>Sample</u>	<u>Mer</u>	<u>Mabuiag</u>
Sugar	Good taste, and fully ripe	Good taste, good water, good tasty water, something with a really nice taste, honey comb, the juice of a coconut
Salt	A variety of coconut with a bitter husk; bitter, acid; like sea water; and unripe fruit.	Salt water; good thing.
Acetic acid	Like unripe fruit; juicy or juice of sour fruit; unripe fruit; hot fire; biting like when eating chilli; and bitter.	To pinch (presumably this was meant to bite); bad black bee; strong taste; bad to go down (throat).
Quinine	Like milk from a broken stem of a plant; like seawater; bitter; and biting.	Bile-like; salt water; thing with strong taste; and bitter.

Myers noted of both studies that "[s]weetness has the best defined taste word, saltiness comes next. Acidity appears to have even a less definite name in

Mabuiag than in Murray Island [Mer]" (p. 187). But what attracted Myers attention was the "absence of a distinctive word for bitter [to describe the taste of quinine]... Several Aberdeenshire adults whom I tested had precisely the same difficulty as the Murray [Mer] Islanders in giving a name to the taste of the bitter solution" (p. 188). He went on to point out its scientific significance: "It is... remarkable that there should often be no distinctive word for bitterness, the sensation of which is now regarded with such unanimity by physiologists as *sui generis*, differing from other taste-sensations as widely as the sensation of blue differs from that of red. A similar state of things has been already met with in the colour-vocabularies of primitive folk" (p. 188). This indeed may be quite a revealing issue for Myers. However, on checking his team member's (Sidney Ray) dictionary on the Islander languages, I was able to include translations for Islander words in their data as meaning bitter - words Myers and Seligmann chose not to offer any explanation for in their Report. All of the data on taste as Myers and Seligmann grouped them are now shown in the above Table. And as can be seen from this Table, the inclusion of a term for bitter now means there can be no such case to make about primitive folk.

E. Cutaneous Sensations

Four individual studies were done by McDougall to obtain a measure of cutaneous sensations. The first was on tactile discrimination. The second attempted to document whether Islanders could identify an area of skin touched by him. The third was to map temperature spots in the skin, and the fourth was to gauge the Islanders' sensibility to pain. As McDougall (1903) reminded us, "it was a principal object of our work to discover, if possible, racial characteristics" (p. 189) of the Islanders.

The Delicacy of Tactile Discrimination

To test the delicacy of tactile discrimination, McDougall (1903) used a small pair of carpenter's dividers. This particular divider had its points rounded and the distance between them measurable in millimetres. He began first by

prodding the Islanders on the “forearm... the nape of the neck... the palmar surface of the terminal phalanx of the thumb... and... the inner surface of the pulp of the second toe” (p. 191). But later, he resolved that prodding the skin of the forearm and the nape of the neck with the carpenter’s dividers was sufficient for his study. The dual point of the divider and its adjustable features enabled McDougall to find a threshold “at which they yield a sensation perceptibly different from that yielded by a single point” (p. 190). The distance between the points of the divider was reduced successively by 20-30 percent to the previous setting. In pragmatic terms, the threshold was determined thus: “If in the series of ten double touches only one wrong answer was given I went on to the next step and usually found then a large proportion of wrong answers. The mean between the distances of the last two steps was then accepted as representing the threshold” (p. 190).

McDougall (1903) found from his study that the Islanders’ threshold for identifying two points when the divider was at its closest was half that of the working class English person - that is, the Islanders’ “power of discrimination is about double that of the Englishman” (p. 192).

Table 9: Comparing the average threshold for participants.

	Men				Boys			
	Forearm		Nape of Neck		Forearm		Nape of Neck	
	Nos.	Av.	Nos.	Av.	Nos.	Av.	Nos.	Av.
Mer	50	19.8	21	11.6	25	14	18	9.8
English	23	44.6	19	20.8				

Weber's Europeans		40.6		54.1				
Landois' Europeans		45.1		54.1		33.8		36.1
Sarawak	10	35						

In other words, from the above Table we can see that data from the 50 Islander men indicated that they could identify the two points of the divider when they were only 19.8mm apart on the forearm and 11.6mm apart when used on the nape of the neck. By the same method, McDougall was able to identify from 23 English men that they could identify the two points when used on the forearm at 44.6mm apart. Data from the application to the nape of the neck suggest that 19 English men could identify two points when the distance between them was 20.8mm.

However, there was some uncertainty to interpretations made from an unequal number of participants: Data from 50 Islander men cannot be compared with data from 23 English men in one test and 19 in the other. McDougall thus attempted to provide data from other studies to provide some reassurance that the averages of those in the West were reached through his study. He cited from Weber's study of an unknown number of Europeans that their average on the forearm was 40.6mm. And he cited Landois' study also of an unknown number of Europeans that their average was 45.1mm. But as data from both these studies also showed, the average of 54.1mm achieved from tests done by Weber and Landois on the neck is way over that (20.8mm) found by McDougall in his study of the English. And, it thus raises some concern about whether he had reached an average for the English. In any regard, the huge margin between those in the West and Islanders does not change his view on the general trends. Indeed, he went on

to remark that it was “noteworthy that, while among 23 Englishmen only three gave thresholds for the skin of the forearm of less than 10mm... among 50 Murray [Mer] men 7 gave thresholds of less than 10mm. This may have been a revealing issue for McDougall but the actual percentage of men who achieved this were relatively the same: 3 of 23 English equates to 13.04% of them achieving less than 10mm; 7 of 50 Islanders equates to 14% who achieved less than 10mm.

The final twist comes when McDougall suggested that the Islanders be compared further with 10 Sea-Dayaks or Ibans of Sarawak” (p. 193). The people of Sarawak achieved an average of 35mm when the divider was applied to the forearm. But, as McDougall remarked, the more telling story lay within the top ten thresholds of both groups. If the highest thresholds were considered from the top ten people from Mer and compared with the top ten of Sarawak, it would be seen that the Islanders still maintain a lower average. And it is this final element that McDougall concluded “that this delicacy of tactile discrimination constitutes a racial characteristics” (p. 193). In other words, it was not that Islanders were able to distinguish two points of a divider when they were prodded on the forearm and the nape of their neck that counted but how these sensibilities weighed up with the experiences of others. And it was through the latter means that McDougall turned Islander achievements in the tests into a racial characteristic.

Localisation of Point of Skin Touched

McDougall (1903) went on to test the Islanders’ “power of localization [sic] of a point on the skin” (p. 193) after it had been touched. In this experiment 20 Islanders held a pointing in the right hand rod and had to have their eyes closed whereupon McDougall with a similar rod would touch a point along the left forearm when at rest with the palm side up. The Islanders would then open their eyes and using the rod in his/her right hand to identify the point of skin touched by McDougall. Each Islander endured no less than thirty tests. The results of his experiment, says McDougall, served no “especial interest

and do not lend themselves to tabular statements" (p. 193). Although no data was provided, he did make some observations of the tendencies of errors that "were preponderantly in the direction of the long axis of the arm, either upward or downward, and in most the accuracy was greatest in the region just above the wrist" (p. 193). The Islander participation again is noted but their achievements are not recorded because as he conceded "[t]here was no certainly reconizable [sic] correlation between the accuracy of tactile localization [sic] and the delicacy of tactile discrimination" (p. 193). At least then we are not left in any doubt about whose interests these tests were conducted for.

Temperature Spots

McDougall (1903) also sought to identify temperature spots in the Islander's skin but he was unable to make a full assessment of these. Four individuals who were tested to his satisfaction for cold spots showed that the distribution "over an area of four square centimetres.... presented no peculiar features and the spots seemed entirely similar in every way to those of English subjects" (p. 194).

Sensibility to Pain

In his fourth and final experiment to chart cutaneous sensations, McDougall (1903) attempted to measure the Islander's sensibility to pain. The perception amongst the more-civilised worlds was that "savages in general are less susceptible to pain than white men" (p. 194). To obtain a measure of the Islanders' sensibility to pain, McDougall used an algometer "devised by Prof. Cattell" (p. 194). This involved pushing an ebonite rod, with a flattened point 9mm in diameter, through the middle of the instrument which is pressured by springs so when downward pressure is made onto the skin surface one can obtain readings in kilograms.

His initial attempts involved "a single application to the nail of either thumb, of either forefinger, and of either great toe, and to the skin of the small

hollow just above the patella of either knees... and two applications to the forehead on adjoining spots in the middle line just above the glabella [the area between the eyebrows] and two to the sternum [breastbone] in the middle line" (p. 194). He found that thresholds were much the same from the different areas and subsequently moved to concentrate his examinations "to the nails of the thumbs and forefingers and to the forehead" (p. 194).

McDougall's (1903) results showed that 47 men from Mer yelled out stop after an average of 6.7kgs was applied to the thumb nails; 5.5kgs to the forefinger nail; and 6.2kgs to the forehead. Similarly, 18 boys (10-14yrs) of Mer yelled stop after an average of 3.8kgs was applied to the thumb nails, and 3.3kgs to the forefinger nails. No reading was provided for the tests on the boy's forehead. By contrast, the 23 Englishman yelled stop earlier after an average of 3.8kgs was applied to the thumb nails, 3.6kgs to the forefinger nails, and 3.8kgs to the forehead. The English boys (13-14yrs) similarly were less inclined to the pressures and succumbed after an average of 2.9kgs was applied to the thumb nails and 2.4kgs to the forefinger nails. No results are given on tests to the forehead. When McDougall compared the men from England and the Torres Strait he concluded that,

while their average threshold of tactile discrimination is only about half as high, their average threshold for skin pain... is nearly double that of the Englishmen; or expressing the difference in other words and more loosely, we may say of these Murray men that their sense of touch is twice as delicate as that of the Englishmen, while their susceptibility to pain is hardly half as great" (p. 195).

In short, McDougall found from this series of tests support for the held view that the Islanders' sensibility to pain was not as susceptible as they were to those in the West. He found too that their delicacy with tactile discrimination was double that of the Englishmen. No further support could be found from his two other tests on temperature spots and localisation of point of skin

touched. Nevertheless, the Islanders certainly had the better scores in the comparison, and by scoring so differently from those from the West, they certainly fitted the view of Savages so held by the more civilised ones – difference thus equated to all things not civilised.

F. Muscular Sense

McDougall (1903) set about a study of muscular sense to determine thresholds for the discrimination of small weight differences. This involved Islanders estimating the weight in tin cans of the same size. There were 11 tin cans in all and each had their weight graduated by 10 grams. The Islander was given first the heaviest and lightest can and then asked to say which was the heavier. In each of the subsequent steps, the weight differences of each can were reduced until the least perceptible difference in weight could be determined. As the participant neared his/her limit, McDougall determined that the proportion of right and wrong answers would become his gauge for measuring the participant's ability to discriminate between small differences in weight. He admitted that this was an arbitrary device but argued that it could be relied on because of the latter part of his proposed measure.

A difference evoking five right and one wrong answer was held to be a difference above the threshold, *i.e.* greater than the least perceptible difference.... Five right and two wrong answers were held to indicate the threshold, and if the proportion of wrong answers was larger than this, this difference was held to be below the threshold, and the mean of this difference and that of the preceding step was chosen to represent the value of the threshold.

The Islanders' ability to tell differences of weight in the cans were thus to be measured by a measure of right and wrong answers as determined by McDougall. It too was the device that enabled him to compare Islanders with the English. With no data provided by him from the actual tests, McDougall announced the following:

Of 19 boys and 45 men the average least perceptible difference was almost exactly the same in the two groups. I therefore put them together and give the average least perceptible difference of 64 Murray [Mer] Islanders, namely 27.2 grms. (median 25 grms., extremes 10 and 55 grms.). If then we take 850 grms. as the mean value of the weights compared, the average least perceptible difference equals 3.2% of the total weight.

For comparison with this result I give the corresponding average least perceptible difference of 30 Englishmen, namely 33.3 grms. (median 35 grms., extremes 10 and 50 grms.) which is 3.9% of the total weight. (McDougall, 1903, p. 198)

In the above comparison we first have to accept what McDougall 'gives' as the sum total of the two groups. We also then have to accept that the results of 64 Islanders are comparable to 30 Englishmen. Indeed, before both these considerations, we have to accept his device for locating the thresholds. And if we do, we will then most certainly agree with him that the English did better than the Islanders.

The Degree of the Size-Weight Illusion.

In another experiment, McDougall (1903) tested 21 men, 21 boys and 13 women and girls in the islands on the effects of size-weight illusion. Two series of tests were made.

In the first, there was a large tin 10cm in diameter and 16cm in height and a set of smaller tins, which measured 7cms in diameter and 11cms in height. The large tin was used as the constant and weighed 32 ounces. The smaller ones had their weight varied. One was set at 32 ounces and the others were reduced in steps of 2 ounces. The test began with the large tin being presented with the smaller one of the same weight. The Islanders were then asked to hold each can in turn in the palm of his/her hand and to say which was heavier. McDougall found that the Islanders considered the smaller one to be heavier at all times. The variable cans were then reduced in steps of 2

ounces until the Islanders could say that the smaller one was heavier than the large tin. This experiment was to give McDougall some measure of the visual as well as the kinaesthetic influence on their judgements.

The second test involved the same cans and the same procedures. However, the difference was that the Islanders had to lift the can by a piece of string. To McDougall this allowed him to gain some measure of the effects of the illusion through sight alone.

McDougall then had to devise a normative position by which he could gain a measure of the judgements.

When the subject pronounced the smaller tin to be equal to the larger or was undecided, the difference of weight between the large tin and that smaller one was taken as measure of the extent of the illusion produced in him. When the subject pronounced one small tin to be heavier than the large tin and the small tin next in descending order to be lighter, the mean of the weights of these two small tins was subtracted from that of the large tin and the difference was taken as the measure of the extent of the illusion.

McDougall (1903) found from these two tests that although the results corresponded in much the same way the illusion was "greater by both sight and by grasp than when by sight alone" (p. 199). It is interesting to note here the limited data provided by McDougall, and particularly the little provided on the English.

Table 10: Compilation of data provided by McDougall for both tests.

	36 Men of Mer	21 Boys of Mer	13 Women of Mer	20 Englishmen
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	Visual only	Visual and Touch	Visual only	Visual and Touch	Visual only	Visual and Touch	Visual only	Visual and Touch
The average weight equated to the large tin of 32 ounces	24.4	23.5						
The difference being his measure of the illusion	7.6	8.5						
The median and extremes of judgments	M7 E15/1	M8 E15/1						
As a percentage of the large tin of 32 ounces	23.7%	26%	23.1%	27%	28%	32.2%		15%

The higher percentage here, according to McDougall's measure, denotes those who were affected most by the so-called illusion. He thus went on to draw comparisons on the above data, "[t]he illusion affected the judgment [sic] of weight of the Murray men almost twice the amount that it affected that of the English men, and the Murray women shewed [sic] themselves still more markedly subject to it" (p. 199).

However, there is an interesting twist to these results although the Englishmen still come out tops. McDougall had to confront a theory held by

Muller-Shumann that there was a normal response for the body to adjust itself physiologically when encountering the sight and feel of objects. What was under consideration here was a theoretical position that suggested that the human body had reflexes that went beyond any conscious deliberations. That is, there was a certain degree to which muscles of the body were responding to impulses automatically. However, to what degree this was to occur, was unstated. But, as McDougall maintained, we cannot altogether omit the influence of suggestion. And even if there were some degree of physiological impulse involved, the smaller scores in the above Table would still maintain its advantage over those who scored higher. As far as he was concerned then, it still followed that the Islander men, "although they exhibit a greater nicety in the discrimination of small differences of weight, are yet subject to the size-weight illusion to a very much greater degree than the English men" (p. 200).

G. Variations of Blood Pressure

McDougall (1903) was also drawn to test the Islanders' blood pressure. A prominent viewpoint held by people in the West, "asserted that the inferiority of the black races is due to the cessation of the growth of the brain at an earlier age than in the white races, and it may be that this is in part, or wholly, due to a less active response of the blood pressure to mental activity" (p. 201). His final contribution to the documentation of racial characteristics thus as a member of the scientific team was premised on the following idea:

... since the effective working of the brain is so intimately dependent on a rapid circulation of the blood through it, and since that circulation is so largely determined by the state of the arterial pressure throughout the body, the power of mental activity to raise the general blood-pressure must be of great importance in promoting the vigour and effectiveness of mental processes. And it may be that this power is an element of fundamental importance in determining the superiority of the higher races" (p. 201).

But, McDougall prioritised for himself a simpler study “to discover, if possible, some correlation between the activity of mental processes and the response of the blood pressure” (p. 201). He used a Hill-Barnard sphygmometer to measure the Islanders’ blood pressure when at rest, during muscular work, and in the course of mental work. This was all done in one sitting. To gain a measure of the Islander when at rest, McDougall “engaged the subject in conversation for some minutes in order to allow any exciting effect of the application of the band to his arm to subside” (p. 201) before taking five to ten readings. The same Islander was then required to squeeze a dynamometer at 50% of his maximum capacity and a reading taken 15-20 seconds after he began squeezing. Five to ten readings were taken in these ways. In the next, the Islander was given a maze drawn on a card and was required to trace his/her path to the centre. A series of readings were taken during and after this activity. In a few cases, readings were made when an algometer was applied to “the hypothenar eminence [?]" (p. 202) with such force so as to cause slight pain in the Islander. However, Table XXXIII on page 203 and 204 recorded the details of readings taken only at rest and during muscular and mental work. Quite notably, we have the details of every measure taken of the Islanders whilst no such effort was made to provide the English data. We are just told what their overall averages were. Furthermore, no heed is paid to the disparity in the number of participants in each test. The following Tabular statement of the details provided thus shows the comparisons McDougall had to consider. I have included the average mercury levels when at rest – something McDougall chose not to sum up or refer to - and the single representation he gave of the levels when under pain.

Table 11: Average blood pressure results.

	At Rest	Muscular Work	Mental Work	Under Pain

Men of Mer	28 men - 96.1mm	26 men - 16.5mm	24 men - 6.6mm	14 men - 11mm
Boys of Mer	11 boys - 132mm	11 boys - 23mm	11 boys - 11mm	
Englishmen		16 men - 25mm	16men - 13mm	

This has been a consistent feature in McDougall's documentations of not providing the equivalent statistical data afforded to Islanders. Nevertheless, in these ways, he could concede that differences between the men of the Islands and England cannot be contemplated due to "the numbers of individuals too few and the difficulty of the observations too great" (p. 202). Table XXXIII provides all his data on "touch and weight discrimination, sensitivity to pain, size-weight illusion and blood pressure" (p. 202) of Islander participants, and notably with no corresponding information on the English, as an offer to others for their own deliberation. No such consideration was made by himself and the Table thus closes the Chapter on the Touch senses of Islanders.

Reaction-Times

Myers (1903) also tested reaction times of 53 Islanders and compared them with 26 Englishmen and 26 people of Sarawak as well as "five members of the expedition and of two Englishmen in Sarawak" (p. 205). There were three tests in all. The first tested the reaction times of Islander's response to an auditory stimulus, the second to a visual stimulus and the third to a choice-visual stimulus (this was one that required the Islander to respond to a visual stimulus but had to register his response by pressing morse keys and raising his hand to designate one colour being seen and the other hand for another colour).

Myers found that the older men of Mer was notably slower in their reaction times than the boys and is mostly indicated in the results of the auditory stimulus. These results too show that the boys scored just as well as the younger adults in the auditory tests. However, when the young adults of Mer are compared with adults of the same age group (16-35yrs) from Sarawak and England (the English contingent were university students as well as graduates, and laboratory assistants) new things can be observed. First, the Sarawak people outscored the others in both the auditory and the visual tests. Second, the English people did just as well as the Mer people in the auditory tests but were notably faster in the visual tests. The most outstanding feature was the difference between the Sarawak people and the others viz., their reaction times were half of the other groups in both tests.

Moreover, as Myers (1903) found, what can be interpreted from the figures "is dependent on an arbitrary selection of one of many possible ways of arriving at the mean reaction times" (p. 215). Indeed he argued that, if the average of the median was changed to "either the median of the median columns... or the median of the 'average of ten' columns" (p. 215) or, if we were "to consider separately the individuals whose series contained no a- or b-reactions so that those who gave irregular reaction -times should no longer weigh upon the general mean" (p. 215), one could effectively form alternative figures, and thus new correspondences between them (see Table XXXVIII). In these ways, similar results can be achieved as before but with one notable exception, "[t]he visual reaction-time of the Sarawak natives... is almost identical with that of the English" (p. 216). In these ways as well, the results of the choice-visual tests can be further manipulated. For example, the results of the English people in this new formulation can now show that they were much faster than the Islanders were in their reaction times.

Quite appropriately Myers (1903) reminds us that these tests only teaches us "that in a given time one people has adapted itself more readily than another so as to perform a prescribed reaction more rapidly" (p. 221). And, that

“[t]he proportion of slow or irregular... [participants] (most of whom will react satisfactorily after adequate practice) must vary from community to community... [and] in this sense, reaction-times may be said to vary inter-racially” (p. 221). In his final summation, he suggests that,

[s]uch racial differences in reaction-times, if actually established by further research, may turn out to be merely the expression of racial differences in temperament. For it is easily conceivable that a highly strung, nervous people cannot develop the disposition, or assume the attitude, that is favourable to the most rapid and regular reactions with such readiness as can a relatively unemotional people. (Myers, 1903, p. 223)

The crucial word in this summation is the word ‘if’. ‘If’ further evidence can be established then it may be able to suggest what he proposes. But, there is no evidence in his study that can remotely support his kind of suggestion. What exists is data that suggests that the English participants did not do well as expected. And what followed was a means to manipulating the figures to show how the English scores can actually be raised to the level of the Sarawak contingent and, in turn, to show that they were better than the Islanders were.

Summary

It is imperative that we first come to terms with the standpoint that what was stated about Islander faculties in the above tests was neither an aberration of science nor the evil thoughts of self-interested researchers. It does not matter necessarily that Islanders were circumscribed as a secondary other to standards familiar to those in the West. And it does not matter necessarily either that at times ‘truths’ were stretched beyond the data gathered by the researchers. But, that it matters more:

- that Islanders understand how the ‘truths’ have been founded on very fragile grounds;
- that such ‘truths’ were achieved only on a basis that disconnected Islander historical trajectories from such documentations; and,

- that the same 'truths' were achieved by disengaging any view to the political irruption in the lives of Islanders as having anything to do with the impact of those from the West.

The elected standpoint here is that science, and indeed the whole project, emerged at a particular moment in history that not only defined its parameters but also confined its usefulness to certain priorities and not others. At the onset of my investigation, the charting of scientific tests at the turn of the Century was about showing historical moments that enabled things to be said and indeed what enabled things to remain unsaid.

I wanted to show in this Chapter a history of the highly confined position taken to the interpretation of data and in so doing, show positions in history that are always present, readily assumed, and rarely considered as constricting what can be said. And perhaps less directly, I had hoped this would bring to light the epistemological schema we have become so loyal to, and thus the very selective path of our preoccupations and deployment of extant positions that have served to uphold the vantage point of those in the West.

Perhaps, then, Islanders can better appreciate what constrains what can be conceived about the intersections of Islander positions and experiences and Western knowledge systems, begin our departures from the constraints of 'them and us' paradigms, and plan a more aggressive path to learning about what conditions all of our possibilities.

3. Anthropology: Charting how the mind of a savage projects a community.

The cultural anthropology of the Islanders as documented by Haddon and his colleagues is presented as the final example of the ways scholars from Cambridge went about intervening in Islander communities and characterising Islanders into a Western order of things. The Cambridge Expedition was to provide a comprehensive picture of the people of the Torres Strait. Thus they documented such things as the Islanders' birth, childhood practices, puberty rites, toilet habits, their spiritual beliefs, social

organisational schemas, and burial rituals. The data contained in the Cambridge team's Reports (1904, 1908, & 1912) is extensive and very detailed. It was brought together in a final Report as a general ethnography of Torres Strait by Haddon and published in 1935.

These Reports continue to be regarded as valuable sources of data on Islander traditions and thus Islanders. Haddon was formerly a Zoologist. According to Arturo Alvarez Roldan (1993) - in a paper delivered in Portugal at the European Association of Social Anthropologists Conference in 1990 - the transition by Haddon from "zoology to ethnology was nothing but the transference of a great part of the techniques, instruments, theories, models and point of view of biology to the study of anthropology" (p. 23). According to Roldan's viewpoint, of concern is the transference of zoological models into anthropology. In particular the three criteria used to identify animals and divide them into zoological regions. They are: (1) what is found; (2) what is rarely found; and (3) what is absent. The framework thus begs another reading of the documentation purporting to be the folklore society in the Islands.

A. A Society with no written historical knowledge is a society based on myths, folk-tales, totems, and kinship systems

There was relatively little written about the people of the Torres Strait Islands in 1898 when the Cambridge team visited. The common view of the people at that time was that the Islanders were without a literate tradition. There was a view of Islanders of the Torres Strait as having no written records, no supreme God, no Government and thus no historical knowledge, no religion, and no formal organisation. As far as the team was concerned though, there had to be a core or something that people adhered to guide their communal lifestyles comparable with historical knowledges in societies in the West. Although many aspects to this core were considered by the team, particular efforts were made by Haddon to document the "folk-tales" (e.g. 1904, pp. 9-120; 1908, p. 1-63; & 1935, pp. 101-6, 292-3) of the Torres Strait communities

as well as the kinship (e.g., 1904, pp. 121-152 & 1908, pp. 64-101) and totemic systems (e.g., 1904, pp. 153-193) to provide some basis for understanding the regulatory life of the communities observed during their visit in 1898. By considering how these aspects of life related discursively to the lived experiences of members of the community, they were hoping to determine a cultural context for their communal life.

Folk-Tales

It was the Cambridge team's view as well as that of others like Landtman (cited by Haddon, 1935, p. 101) that with,

... ordinary care [folk] tales may be accepted as trustworthy ethnographical documents so far as objects, certain customs, and beliefs are concerned" (p. 101). The miraculous elements may be discounted, nor can tales be regarded as historical evidence. Events and technical innovations are associated with one or more culture heroes and it is convenient to retain these ascriptions, not that they may be accepted as literally true, but because they clearly indicate that there is a traditional belief in the spread of cultures from one area to another. (Haddon, 1935, p. 101)

The project for the team members thus was to consider the folk-tales of the people in the Strait not as true historical evidence but to seek in them indicators of cultural shifts and spread throughout the Torres Strait region. Constructing a cultural matrix was thus central for locating the people in a historical context. It was crucial that the folk-tales were documented carefully. But the meanings that might be derived from the tales, the team recognised had to be treated with even more care.

In collecting these folk-tales I could not take down the actual native words, having limited time and insufficient knowledge of the language, but I have given a faithful rendering of the tales as told to me in broken English [sic]. I have nowhere embellished the accounts, and I have given most of the conversations and remarks of

people in the very words my informants used; thus preserving, as far as possible, the freshness and quaintness of the original narrative. I believe that in many cases the native idiom was bodily translated into the 'Pigeon English'. (1904, p. 9)

Haddon (1908) documented sixty-nine folk tales. Furthermore, through the engagement of middle-aged men as his informants, as well as requiring them to recollect stories as they were told by the "old men" (1904, p. 9), allowed him to "confidently claim that this collection of tales really represents the traditional folk-lore of the last generation and the stories therefore may be of any age previous to the influence of Europeans and South Sea men." (p. 9). He then collated these folk tales into categories of nature myths, culture myths, totem myths, religious myths, tales about Dogais (devil spirits), tales about people, and comic tales. He provided a synopsis of their plots and their anthropological relevance in a subsequent section – and in English. He hoped that his interpretation and compilation of folk-tales was "sufficiently representative of native thought and expression" (p. 1). This was important because they constituted the basis upon which he rested his case of a 'folklore society' in the Islands.

According to tradition there have been numerous cultural movements to Torres Strait [sic] from Daudai [the great mainland to the north - PNG] and between the islands. Very few influences have come from the Cape York Peninsula and these for the most part are reflex movements, as originally the cultures came to Australia from Papua through the Strait. I have reiterated on p. 101 my acceptance of the evidence of folk-tales as worthy of consideration, though every statement cannot be accepted as literally true. The marvellous is always apt to intrude, but this and deliberate exaggeration can usually be detected. In all mythologies cultural improvements and cultural spreads are usually associated with named persons. It is immaterial whether they ever existed as such, but it is convenient to employ these names as a concise method of recording the tradition. Therefore I have not hesitated to make use of the tales as indications

in a general way of what has probably happened.
(Haddon, 1935, p. 412)

Several observations about his method can be made. First, his 'according to tradition', seems to allude to something intrinsic to Islanders but is in fact linked solely to his documentation of myths and folk-tales. That is, the first point that needs highlighting is his acceptance of the tales – as translated by him – as 'the tradition' of Islanders. The next point is about an assumption that the tales come out of a pristine state unblemished by any external influences (e.g., the answer to the zoological question of what belongs to or is found in this region). Before making the comments in the above quote, Haddon cleared the way by claiming that prior to the intervention of missionaries, pearlers, and the Australian Government, the Islander cultures were "unaffected" (p. 411) by the early voyagers from Spain, Indonesia, or any other place. A further point, that needs to be highlighted is his acceptance that the tales to which he referred to were to be considered unequivocally as belonging to this region. Haddon was quite confident about this: "[i]t is safe to assert that thirty-five years ago there was no intelligent intercourse with white men; this period may practically be reduced to twenty-five years, and in some islands to even less" (1904, p. 9). The final point to highlight is his entertainment of the notion that beyond the marvellous and the exaggerated, one is able to detect in these tales traditional aspects that will tell of the cultural evolution of the people. He was able to make such an assessment of the cultural spread in the region, even though a relative chronology of the evolution of culture in the region was not possible. The following are some examples of how Haddon believed folk tales informed the cultural spread: (note that all persons referred to in the following are fictitious characters from tales gathered by Haddon).

Reference is given on p. 374 to various culture heroes: Yarwar, the great gardener of Badu, and Gelam came from the Western Islands and increased the vegetable food from Mer. Sida or Soida (pp. 374-380), who came

from New Guinea, was the bestower of many good things. He instructed people in language, stocked reef with the valuable cone shell and with other shells; he was the first to bring coconuts and bananas and other plants useful to man [sic], but the greater fertility of the Eastern islands as compared with the Western is attributed to the treatments accorded to him in the different islands.

Sesere of Badu was the pioneer of harpooning dugong and Bia of Badu taught people how to catch turtle by means of the sucker-fish; he was known as Barat when he came to Mer. All the culture movements were from west to east except in the case of Abob and Kos of Mer, who built the first stone fish-traps which they introduced into the other Eastern islands and into some Central islands; on their way westwards they either taught a new language or suggested a different way of speaking the old one; finally they are said to have settled in Kiwai (vi, pp. 26-8).

The journey of Auken and Terer from Mer to Boigu in the west is only an apparent exception, as this was merely the route taken by the spirits of the dead (vi, pp. 128, 131-3). Although they are said locally to be of Miriam origin (vi, pp. 31-3), they certainly were Western personages who were introduced by Walet into Mer with other funerary ceremonies. In the Western version of the myth (v, pp. 56-62) they are aukum and Tiai who lived at Boigu in Moa, but finally they went to the island of Boigu.

The folk-tales state that the original inhabitants of Daudai were in an extremely low state of culture from which they were raised by cultural influences coming from the north.

The earliest Western islanders [sic] were doubtless in a state of culture similar to that of the aborigines of Daudai, but the same cultural influences from the north spread into the islands – when or what length of time this took we have no means of knowing.

The migration to the Eastern islands may have been about the same period.

The earliest people were simple hunters and collectors, but the introduced art of the cultivation of the soil improved their mode of life. The natives of Muralug and the neighbouring islands never really attained this second stage, and even in Mer three folk-tales (vi, pp. 6, 9, 11)

refer to the cooking of aroids for food, which now are eaten only in times of scarcity; this may be a remembrance of a time anterior to the cultivation of yams. The story of Yarwar shows that some of the inhabitants of Badu were then extremely incompetent gardeners.

The introduction of new kinds of cultivated plants or better varieties of yams and the like is accredited in the Eastern islands, or at all events in Mer, to named persons who came either from the Western islands or from New Guinea.

We may guess, but we do not know, what other elements of culture were used or practised at this period.

(Haddon, 1935, pp. 412-413)

Although nothing in the above comments was intended to be a comprehensive picture there is, however, a lot that can be said about the cultivation of 'truths' from folk-tales. But the more important thing to analyse is Haddon's effort to compensate for the absence of the historical literature akin to that, which underpins societies in the West. That is, he collected many folk-tales from the people in the Torres Strait in order to establish some idea of their cultural make-up. Islanders were required thus to recall tales in ways their ancestors told them in the traditional language, and convey them in a 'pigeon language' so that Haddon could understand them. Haddon then went on to document the tales in English, as he understood them. This became a primary source for him to draw upon for what he considered as "anthropological incidents" (1904, p. 10). As can be seen in the above quotes from the texts, Haddon sought from various tales and myths, that which could be considered "as evidence for the occurrence of certain customs and beliefs" (1904, p. 10). By substituting folk-tales for a historical context for people in the Torres Strait, Haddon effectively invented a way to view Islanders as a people whose thoughts and expression were enmeshed in a cultural tradition constituted by myths and tales.

Kinship System

The genealogies of the people of the Torres Strait were also of great interest to Rivers (see 1904, pp. 121-128; 1908, pp. 64-92). He described the work done on family trees as his "attempt to collect the pedigree of a people of low culture" (p. 64) in order to "furnish a large part of the material which has been used in working out the account of the social organisation" (p. 122) in the islands.

Data from the Western Islands will serve here as an example of the Cambridge team's efforts to link kinship systems to social organisation in the islands. The Islanders' kinship network was identified in both the western regions as "a definite example of what is known as the 'classificatory' system" (1904, p. 139) says Rivers. He noted at least eighteen names used for different members in the family and that some of the terms used were of two forms. One was used for speaking directly to a person – the 'vocative form' – and the other when speaking about a person what he termed as the 'ordinary form'. To Rivers, the Islander's system of referring to kin differed from the American and Asian systems in two distinct ways. In the Western Islands, for example, Rivers explained, a distinction was made in the names used to identify children of brothers and sisters. In today's terms, these children would be referred to as first cousins. But in the old days, according to Rivers, Islanders made distinctions between first cousins to identify the relationship between their parents. For instance, if the parents were brothers, the children – irrespective of their gender – were to relate as *Tukoiah*, and if the parents were sisters the children would also relate as *Tukoiah* – "a reciprocal term used by men to one another or by women to one another" (p. 131). However, if the parents were in a brother-sister relationship the children – again irrespective of their gender – would relate to each other as *Babat* – "a reciprocal term used between men and women" (p. 131). In short, *Tukoiah* was used between children of brothers as well as between children of sisters whereas *Babat* was used between children whose parents were in a brother-sister relationship. This system as noted by Rivers differed in two

characteristic ways from the so-called American and Asian forms. There were distinctions made between relatives to identify the relationship of parents; and there was a reciprocal character in the terms used by them.

Rivers then went on to outline, albeit hypothetically, the complexity of such a kinship system in the western islands and what a child needed to know to operate in such a system. He began by explaining that the child “learns to give to each individual person his special term of kinship just as he learns to give a special name to other objects around him. There seemed to be little doubt [to Rivers] that the child used terms of kinship as commonly as, or more commonly than personal names” (p. 140). A son, for example, learned from this mode of operating that,

everyone whom his father called *tukoiab* is his *tati*; that everyone whom his mother calls *tukoiab* is his *apu*; that everyone whom his father calls *babat* is his *ngaihat* and that he may also call them *kutapu*; that everyone whom his mother call *babat* is his *wachum*” (p. 141). He will further find out that everyone whom his father calls *tukoiab* will be called by his mother *ngaihat*, and that everyone whom his mother calls *babat* will be his mother’s *imi*. Further, he will find that everyone whom his mother calls *tukoiab* will be called by his father *ngaihat*, and that everyone whom his mother calls *babat* will be his father’s *imi*. (Rivers, 1904, p. 141)

The complexity, Rivers explained, was compounded when the child heard others being related to. For instance, Rivers pointed out, those older folk who the “father or mother call *tati* or *wachum* will be his *atei* or *babat*, and that all whom they call *apu* or *ngaihat* will be his *kaiad* or *aka*” (p. 141). And, Rivers continued, it was even more confusing when

A boy will find that all whom his father or mother call *kazi* are his *tukoiab* or *babat*, according as they are male or female, while a girl finds that her parent’s *kazi* are her *tukoiab* or *babat*, according as they are female or male. They will also find that they give the same name to those

whom their *wachum* calls *kazi*, and their father calls *wachum*, and to those whom their *ngaihat* calls *kazi* and their father calls *wachum*" (p. 141).

As the child grows up and marries s/he learns new terms for wife, husband, in-laws, children, and so on and so forth, and adds to the dimension of a very complex system underpinning the social organisation of a people.

But before going on to examine how Haddon arrived at his conclusions, a few words on the above sketch of the kin network needs to be made. The use of traditional names as described above heighten the complexities amongst the kinship system identified by Rivers. There was nothing really complicated about this. Today, for instance, there are sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, aunts, uncles, grandfathers, grandmothers, great-uncles, great-aunts, first cousins, second cousins, third cousins, wives, husbands, in-laws, nephews, nieces, grandson, grand-daughters, and so on. As a child grows in today's environment s/he hears and learns very quickly who is who by centring her/himself and adopting terms that refer to her/him. They also hear people referring to others differently to what s/he is used to but this is not confusing because what matters is that s/he uses the terms that relates to her or him. For example, a child who heard his or her mother referring to dad and mum will learn that they are to be known as grandmother and grandfather. S/he also learns that who the father call mum and dad are also grandmother and grandfather. And when the grandparents refer to child's parents as son and daughter the child learns that they are his mum and dad. And so on and so forth with aunts, uncles, nieces, great aunts and uncles etc. There are also vocative and ordinary forms used today: e.g. 'Here is my grandmother'; and, 'Hello granny'; 'That person is my mother'; and, 'Meet my mum'. This is not to dispute anything in what Rivers has noted but to lessen the complexities brought to our notice. And by doing this, to focus on the only two significant differences between the old and the new system. The first was about the distinctions made between children of brothers, children

of sisters, and children of brothers and sisters as mentioned above, and the second, was to do with the marked reciprocal character of the terms used between them.

However, the point to the kinship system lay beyond the naming of kin and more towards its connection to the social spheres. The first point that Rivers identified was the role that such naming systems played in marriages. As he stated, "in the case of any disputed point, such as that of two people who wish to marry... it may be his knowledge of the exact relation in which they stand to one another, and probably of the precedents for and against such a marriage, which decides the point" (p. 142). Rivers also identified "kinship taboos" (pp. 142-144) that regulated how married people were to refer each other. For instance, he found that once married people had to refrain from using the personal names of his/her in-laws. They had to be called by their kin names: as brother of, sister of wife of, husband of, etc. whichever was convenient to use in any communicative event. This "disability" (p. 143) as Rivers chose to call it, had relevance to customs documented in other parts of the world where people corresponded with their in-laws via a third person. Rivers contended that under these arrangements social intercourse between people and their in-laws, although not regulated by any strict rule, was mutually avoided.

To Rivers, the kinship system thus "was a means of regulating social etiquette, but [as he contended] it was much more than this" (p. 144). He identified within this system "very definite duties and privileges attached to certain bonds of kinship" (p. 144). When someone died, for instance, there were particular members in the kin system who would be distant enough from the deceased, but related through marriage, who were to carry out the burial rites. In another, when there was conflict between married partners there were others, according to their level in the kinship system, who had a legitimate role of stepping in as moderators. Another practice documented by Rivers showed that a person who stood in a particular relationship with others could

take anything belonging to them. For instance, Rivers observed that a "nephew, even if quite a small boy, could take, lose, spoil or destroy anything belonging to his uncle and the uncle would utter no word of reproach or anger" (p. 146). In one interview, Rivers was told of a case where a nephew actually took a canoe belonging to his father and gave it to his uncle, and the father said nothing. Rivers noted however that this may be the process by which the uncle can be compensated for things taken by the nephew in other ways through his standing with the parents. Rivers provided many other descriptions of the boy's relationship with his maternal uncle and learned that "the special guardianship of a man at the most important period of his life was entrusted, not to his father but to the brother of his mother.... [and] this bond between nephew and uncle becomes especially close after initiation" (p. 147). In all instances, this was to do with the uncle overseeing his responsibilities to his sister.

According to Rivers (1904), there were clear duties and privileges for the male members in the Islander community in other ways: "[t]he essential feature of the various customs connected with the relationship of brother-in-law... is that an individual could demand certain services of anyone who stood to him in this relation" (p. 149). He would, as Rivers was told, organise and take charge of a hunt, procure what he needed for the hunt including other people's boats, take charge of the sharing of the catch, and throughout maintain a subdued but senior role in providing and keeping calm in the family. Whilst the owner had the charge of the steering the boat, as Rivers pointed out, his brother-in-law had a place in the front of the canoe designated especially for him and would take charge of the activities on fishing trips. Although he did all the labouring tasks during the trip, he also took charge of the hunt directing the owner on how to prepare for the hunt, which tides or areas to work, when to go, when to anchor, and so on (Rivers, 1904). His view to all this was that it was a deeply seated practice: "[t]he whole group of customs is strongly suggestive of a survival of a condition of

society in which a man was closely associated with and had to render service to the family of his wife" (p. 149).

Another feature of the kinship system noted by Rivers was its influence on how people should address each other. For instance, Rivers noted, there are kin relationship that orient how people can be approached, how they should be addressed, and who can not be approached directly; and indeed if the social etiquette was violated they would shame themselves. One example provided to Rivers indicated that a person may not use the personal names of his in-laws, and may only communicate to his or her in-laws indirectly through their partner. If direct contact was necessary between the father-in-law and the son-in-law, for example, the son-in-law would be "very subdued and that he would suffer more or less from shame" (p. 143). Rivers hastened to add that these were not "strict regulations against every kind of intercourse between a man and the relatives of his wife, but there seemed to be a certain amount of mutual avoidance of each other" (p. 143). He recalled an incident during an interview when this social etiquette was not being adhered to and explained that the erosion of such traditions were the result of the presence of foreigners in the region. In short, what he was trying to say was that there once used to be order and better organisation of the community through kinship systems in ways that did regulate all social interactions but that in changing times they have become less effective as social determinants.

Rivers (1904) further explained that times had changed from earlier periods in other ways as well. The maternal uncle had right of way in Mabuiag in the old days but at the time of his visit, "there seemed to be little doubt that the duties of *imi* were reciprocal and that a man could demand service of his sister's husband, while the latter could in return demand service of the former" (p. 150). He reiterated that at one time there was clear right of way given to the maternal uncle but "by a process of generalisation, these duties have now come to be regarded as pertaining to the relationship of *imi* in general" (p. 150). This, he claimed, has caused confusion in the expectant

roles of the male members of the community, and particularly about who was supposed to do what. Combined with his hypothetical sketch of the 'confused child', his explanation is that this was because there was "a tendency to confuse together things possessing the same name" (p. 150). Moreover, this was a tendency he likened with the confusion of colour names in the islands: "I think there can be little doubt that the influence of nomenclature in the case of kinship has been a cause which has led to the confusion of duties originally distinct" (p. 150). But as pointed out above, there is little that can be regarded as complex or confusing about the nomenclature of kin especially when seen in Western terms. Nevertheless, Rivers, ever the cognitive psychologist, went on to claim that "the close relations between a man and his mother's brother which exist in Mabuiag may similarly be regarded as a survival of a state of society which has now disappeared" (p. 150). And this subsequently enabled him to go on to confirm that, in the old days, the kinship system was most important because they determined the social relations between Islanders.

Totems

Both Haddon and Rivers (1904) saw the use of totems in the Islands also as having some influence on the social organisation of the people. They adopted the popular notion used in relation to indigenous peoples in other parts of the world, that a totem was "a class of objects that is revered by a body of men and women who acknowledge a definite relationship to that class of objects" (p. 153). They went on then to state their case that a group of people who have their lives bound by a class of objects is what is known as a 'clan group' or a 'kinship group' and usually there were social obligations that bound them together. And in such groupings, they both saw two important social aspects in their relationship with the totems viz., the social, and the religious or spiritual.

But first, what Haddon and Rivers understood to constitute a totem needs to be explained (1904). They claimed that a totem was spoken of in the Islands

as *augud*. *Auguds* were represented “usually [by] a single species, of animals” (p. 153) but that on Saibai Island they observed representations of “the *Daibau*, a tuber like a sweet potato, the *Kokuan* or hibiscus, and *Gabu*, a stone that was used for making stone-headed clubs” (p. 152). Others were in the form of “legendary heroes” (p. 154). On another island, some were shaped in the form of a star - *Titui*. They observed others used to represent the first and last quarter moon phases - *kutibu* and *giribu*. The latter two apparently represented a group of clans that was treated with utmost respect by the Islanders on Mabuiag Island.

Clan groups, Haddon and Rivers (1904) noted, frequently adorned themselves and their possessions with representations of their *augud*. They noted a few cases where totems of “the *Dangal*, *Kodal*, and *Tabu augud* were cut on the loins of four women” (p. 158) but hastened to add that, as far as they knew, this was not practised widely in the islands. Robert Bruce (cited by Haddon & Rivers, 1904, p. 158) did add to this view though showing cases observed on Boigu Island where the body was marked in one way or another to indicate their totems. However, Haddon and Rivers conceded that after concentrated efforts to locate more extensive evidence of such body markings none could be located other than the four women previously noted. They also claimed that people of primitive cultures liked to carve their totems on their material possessions. And though they appear variously on the many artefacts taken from the Torres Strait it was hard to make a case in favour of this due mainly to “the lack of authentic specimens” (p. 159).

The social aspects of the totemic system derived from the study are interesting. Haddon and Rivers (1904) observed a number of clans and totems on each island they visited, and noted that although a clan group may have more than one totem to signify their heritage lines, there was usually a chief totem that combined them as one. They also noted totemic lines from their genealogical records to show that the sons always maintained the totem of the fathers. And in these ways, they were able to state that “decent in the

clan has been reckoned in the male line" (p. 160). To be more specific, each partner in marriage, as can be gathered from the genealogical records, kept their original totems but the children of these marriages were always accorded their father's totem. The genealogies listed in Volume V (1904) and VI (1908) attest to this. And as far as they knew, "[a] man was not able to change his totem" (p. 160) and severe reprimands were served if totem lines were violated or clan boundaries were overstepped or threatened in any way. Where, at times, they did vary from this custom they were mostly put down as an exceptional case or to confusion. In short, to them, this was a system from the old days that not only was organised but also highly regulated.

To Haddon and Rivers, the most important aspect to the totemic system was its management of marriages, although they accept that at the time of their visit marriages were organised along kinship lines. As they recalled, marriages regulated by the totemic system were not allowed between clan members. Sexual intercourse, they added, was likewise prohibited. In the few cases evident in the genealogical records where this had broken down, they were found to be the same clan groups but from different islands. In other cases they were found to be traditionally of the same totem but belonged to different clans – and, presumably, of a different generation. In one case, where a man married his sister, the man was simply listed as unbalanced.

According to Haddon and Rivers (1904), the membership of a clan "was a marked feature in the social life of the people and it took precedence of all other considerations" (p. 161). If members of the same clan name, for instance, would visit another island they would be treated well and regarded as their own. They cited other incidents to indicate that even in warfare harming another clan member would be sacrilege. And when seen together with the regulatory nature of totems in marriages, Haddon and Rivers were left in no doubt that in the old days the aforementioned "aspects of totemism prove that it was a distinct ameliorating influence in social intercourse and tended to minimise intertribal antagonism" (p. 162).

It is interesting to note just what constituted for Haddon and Rivers the magical and religious aspects in totemism. They stated at the outset of their study that this was not an explication of those religious aspects known to those in the West. Instead, Islanders “regard[ed] as religious those totemic regulations and practices that have reference more directly to the non-practical side of human life” (p. 182). The magical aspect in contrast to this was regarded as, “a pantomimic or symbolic action on the part of the human members of a clan which is designed to have a direct effect upon the non-human members of the clan” (p. 182). In short, and contrary to what was known as religion in the West, Haddon and Rivers restricted themselves to describing Islanders engaged in aspects of symbolic rituals and pantomimes that used animals, or parts of animals to invoke, for instance, good or bad seasons. What follows from this is an exposé of the magical ceremonies used by Islanders that were connected with dugongs and turtles to display rituals and, more importantly, events that noted further regulatory elements in the social world of the Islanders.

It was observed that when a man from the *dangal* (dugong) clan caught the first dugong of the season a ceremony was performed to celebrate its catch and to notify the arrival of the season. The people who officiated in this ceremony adorned themselves with various items, and painted their bodies to simulate aspects of the animal. The dugong was then placed on special plants (*pui*), and the performers went about their ceremony. The dugong was then given up to the *sortal* (turtle) clan to distribute amongst the community. Haddon and Rivers (1904) observed that if a member of the *dangal* clan was not happy with his share he would perform magical rites to give bad luck to the selfish one. “He would take the penis of the dugong, through which he would pass an arrow and pushing it up and down would say the following *mwun* [spiritual power]: I make dugong penis copulate do not again come hither do not near” (p. 183).

It was observed that similar practices were carried out when the first turtle of the season was caught. Feathers and headdresses were worn and the Islanders danced around the turtle whirling bull-roarers and shaking their *kulaps* (dance rattle). They performed rituals to bring on a good season for turtles. The turtle was then given up to the *dangal* clan to consume. Again, Haddon and Rivers (1904) resorted to an account by their colleague about the regulatory control of the totemic system - placing jinxes on people - to explain their observations.

An ill-conditioned fellow might make the surlal season a very bad one by taking the heart of any turtle, wrapping it up in the bark of the *Ti* tree and, after placing it in a segment of bamboo with more bark, burying the whole secretly in hard ground. To annul the effects of this charm, the heart was dug up and boiled for some time in sea-water along with the plants.... The boiling was done in a canoe, which was then launched and manned by a crew of Surlal men. The boiling decoction was slowly poured into the sea while what remained of the heart was hoisted on the mast of the canoe, some words were chanted and the canoe returned to the shore. The surlal men might not go turtle-fishing until a turtle had been caught by members of some other clan. (Haddon & Rivers, 1904, p. 184)

From these documentations and others, Haddon and Rivers (1904) considered that the mystic affinity between clans and totems was "deeply ingrained and... [was] evidently of fundamental importance" (p. 184). Moreover, they went on to add, there was an expectation of clan members to adopt the characters of their totems. For instance, the cassowary, explained Haddon and Rivers, was a violent creature "of very uncertain temper and can kick with extreme violence" (p. 184). The cassowary clan, and similarly with the crocodile clan, the shark clan, and the hammer-head shark clan, was thus described by Haddon and Rivers as fighting clans. By contrast, they documented clans with totems representing the skate, the ray, and the sucker-fish as being peaceable clans. Such alliances with their totems, they

contended, provided a ready-disposition, if not the means, for members to measure their characters.

As far as the Cambridge team was concerned, in former periods before the arrival of foreigners in the Strait, this was a society of people with a cultural history secluded from others and who, according to their folk tales, emerged primarily in the Strait. Such a unique development of a culture of a people was, as they learned from the genealogical records, organised socially along kinship and totemic lines. By identifying levels to the different generation of people, Haddon and Rivers both found a ready organisational structure which they were able to use to characterise 'community' in the Strait. According to this model then, in former periods the social organisation of the community of people in the Strait, was to a large extent dependent on a kinship and totemic system that not only bound people together as a social unit but also provided regulatory aspects to their behaviour, how they should relate to one another, as well as who they could marry. In the absence of deep historical knowledge of the people of the Strait a number of loose social elements have been brought together to constitute the social and cultural paradigms of the Islanders. Haddon and Rivers' documentation of the lives of Islanders, however, cannot be read simply as an attempt to identify the traditional culture of a people. Theirs was a project to identify the essential characteristics that constituted a people in their primitiveness.

B. A Society without a Supreme God is a Society without a Religion.

A substantial part of the Cambridge Expedition goal was to also document the spiritual constitution of the people in the Torres Strait. Haddon, Seligmann, Wilkin and Myers all spent large amounts of time documenting "some of the religious conceptions and rules of conduct and avoidance" (p. 241). In their view, however, there was nothing that they could discover that corresponded with "anything like an All-father or Supreme Being" (p. 316).

The first thing they did was to define their topic of study. They began by citing the conventional wisdom on differences between magic and religion: "Magic, or sorcery, is the constraint of nature by man [sic] through the action of the spoken or written word, or through some deed in connection with an object, or by a pantomimic ceremony, or in some analogous manner" (p. 320). Religion, on the other hand, was "a belief in the existence of a personal or impersonal being or beings with powers transcending those of mere mortals and to the actions that result from such a belief" (p. 320). Magic and religion in these ways emerged as separate categories so that clear distinctions could be seen between the world of the 'savage' and the world of the enlightened 'civic man'. In their words, "if a man, who requires something specific, recites a formula or performs a mimetic action, he is doing a magical act, but if he requests some power to assist him to obtain that of which he has need, he is performing a religious action" (p. 320). The language used here is interesting: magic as opposed to religion; requires instead of requests; recites a formula or performs a mimic rather than requests some power to assist; on the former it is a constraint of nature whereas on the latter it is a belief. Hence, the emergence of clear divisions between 'them' and 'us' with religion upholding a position for those in the more 'civil' worlds and magic upholding positions of their more primitive counterparts. Moreover, it was also clear that the language used for the former was also to be less demanding than the language afforded to the latter.

However, as Haddon (1904) pointed out, it was not easy to separate what was religious and what was magical, as there were many places where they overlapped. He thus made mention that in what he did he had "not attempted to make a definite classification of the observances dealt with in this section" (p. 320) and instead "thought it desirable to bring together all I could find on the subject of magic" (p. 320). Indeed, this was so. The titles used for his observations include: "The Training of a Magician" (p. 321), "Magical Practices Against People" (p. 324), "Sympathetic Magic Connected with Human Beings" (p. 327), "Love Charms" (p. 327), "Magical Appliances"

(p. 328), "Magical Formulae" (p. 329), "Magic Connected With Fishing" (p. 330), "Agricultural Magic" (p. 345), "Rain- and Wind-making" (p. 350), "Supernatural Beings" (p. 353), "Transformation" (p. 354), "Spirits and the Future State" (p. 355), "The Boy Who Was Spirited Away" (p. 358), "Muri" (p. 359), "Omens" (p. 361), "Dreams" (p. 361), "Divination" (p. 361), "Austerities and Purification" (p. 362), "Sacred Stone and Carved Images" (p. 363), "Totemism" (p. 363), "Ancestor Worship" (p. 364), "The Kwod in Religion" (p. 365), and "Hero Cults" (p. 367). This list of magical practices was clearly not made with a view to locate aspects of religion. Nevertheless, a few of these foci can serve as exemplars of the kinds of things the Cambridge team looked for as the spiritual basis of a people as well as the kind of deliberations they made on people in the Western Islands.

Haddon and Seligmann (1904), for instance, documented the training of a magician. They said they were told that any 'man' could become magicians but few chose because of its unpleasant initiation process. Magicians in the Islands, in their view, were sorcerers or *maidelaig* in the local language who as they reported "understood all kinds of magical and medical lore... [and who] could cause disease and death and could cure illness. He could lure dugong, turtle and fish by charms or he could strike and kill animals with unerring aim, and he knew furthermore the virtues of animal and vegetable products" (p. 321). The high position of magicians was well noted and the things that they could do were considered well beyond any mortal being. On the basis of this understanding, Haddon and Seligmann launched into a ghoulish tale of how one became a *maidelaig*.

He was taken into the bush by the instructor and the first operation consisted in the old man defecating into an alup shell filled with water; when the mixture was well stirred the novice had to drink it all up, and in order that he might have the benefit of it, he was enjoined to keep his eyes open whilst drinking.... if the eyes watered during the process of training the novice would not make a good *maidelaig*. (Haddon & Seligmann, 1904, p. 321)

The reporting of black magic or cult practices of the magicians were marked by the most vivid descriptions and sat in stark contrast to the language used elsewhere in the Reports. Here is another example, “he had to eat the decomposing flesh of a dead man which was full of maggots, the effect of this revolting diet was to make the throat bad” (p. 321). It was not enough to report that the novice magician had to eat a decomposing body but it seems that Haddon and Seligmann were compelled to use a style of language for describing cult phenomena that left no doubt that one who ate decomposing human bodies also ate it when it was full of maggots. Another indicator of the presence of a fetish for this sort of graphic reporting was the following apology for not having found ‘voodoo dolls’, “[w]e have no information whether the *maidelaig* operated through objects belonging to the victim or intimately associated with him such as hair, nails or the like” (1904, p. 324).

Haddon & Seligmann (1904) reported that after three years of training the graduate would be deemed a magician. In order to kill, to place a curse, to injure, to lure, or to cure, set rituals and performances as well as incantations had to be followed closely. To carry out these rituals and performances they were aided with many items: “[a]mong the implements of sorcery were stone-headed clubs and spears” (p. 324), human effigies (see p. 324), a vine called kuman (see p. 325), and a crocodile’s tooth (see p. 326).

Haddon and Seligmann (1904) went on to show that the magician’s world also carried over into the general population. In this way, they attempted to superimpose a belief in magic as another means by which Islander people enacted their presence in primitive communities. Islanders used magical practices, they (1904) reported, for “a sympathetic relation between human beings and between people and animals” (p. 327). They cited, for example, that “at parturition a woman would get a good-looking man to come and sit behind her so that the child might take after him” (p. 327). As an example of magic between people and animals, they cited mothers who adorned themselves in fish bones to ensure their children become beautiful. As an

example of magic between people and plants, they cited the case of a particular tree at Mabuiag Island that was so significant to the men that if the leaves were burnt it would mean some of them would die in their next encounter with enemies. Like the magicians' discourse, various implements were used in carrying out such practices. Haddon and Seligmann cited cases on the Islands, where bull-roarers, throwing sticks, bark of a particular tree, and boar's tusks were used to increase prospects on animal hunts, to bring on stronger winds, or to assist Islanders in warfare encounters (see Haddon & Seligmann, 1904, pp. 328-9). Haddon and Seligmann claimed that, like the specialist practices of the *maidelaig*, in the old days the magical acts involved "an expressed wish or command, or the utterance of a formula of some kind or another" (p. 329).

Love charms, or as Haddon and Seligmann (1904) chose to put it, "sweetheart medicine" were also reported on (p. 327). Magic, they claimed, could be deployed both to lure women as well as "drive away a girl's affection" (p. 327). They recalled several tales from Islanders to illustrate the type of logic behind these magical practices:

... just as a snake that is in one tree, can by swallowing its spittle make a bird that is in another tree come to it, so if a man chews certain medicine and a girl sees him swallowing the infusion in his saliva she understands what the man means and is constrained to go to him. (Haddon & Seligmann, 1904, p. 328)

However, Haddon was keen to distance himself from the following recount.

The following information was obtained by Mr Seligmann in Mabuiag: "The end of the os [sic] penis of a dog was bent or broken so that it became hook-shaped, the bone was then plastered with a chewed mixture of the following plants.... It was worn at the back of the neck during a dance by the man who wished to secure the affections of a particular girl. When the girl smelt the charm she would probably succumb.... All the while he is dancing the man

must repeat to himself or think hard of the name of the girl in question. (Haddon & Seligmann, 1904, p. 328)

Haddon's definition of magical practices involves pantomimic acts meant to acquire something directly through chanting or reciting a formula. The so-called 'magical act', defined at the beginning of this section by Haddon as, 'the constraint of nature by man', is paralleled with the 'rain dance' to bring rain, or with some other pantomimic act to appease spirits to ward off bad luck, and so forth. There were many other acts like this included in the Cambridge Reports.

Haddon and Seligmann (1904) also described magic used in the horticultural and agricultural activities. They reported that a human effigy, *madub*, was used in the garden to protect the crop and to increase the yield. The *madub* and bull-roarers were placed in shrines whereupon nightfall the *madub* "became animated, and went round the garden swinging the bull-roarers to make the plants in the garden grow and they danced and repeatedly sang" (p. 246). The authors reported great celebrations took place to give thanks at harvest times.

Another example of magic Haddon and Seligmann (1904) cited was about people deemed to have special talents. The specialist position of rain-making or wind-making, according to their source "was hereditary in certain families and the same man performed both functions" (p. 350). These tasks varied from one island to another but essentially they involved the painting of the body, the application of some local 'medicine' (potion), and lots of chanting. Such practises they reported could bring on rain and wind as well as put a halt to them.

Haddon and Seligmann (1904) went on from here to also show that Islanders had a belief in supernatural beings. They reported that Islanders claimed to see giants and tailed-men and had "a belief in a class of powerful beings, or bogeys, termed *dogai*, who generally were on the look out to do mischief, but

who were easily outwitted and often killed; some however were good” (p. 353). A Dogai, they were told, was female and characteristically had large ears, and on one telling she had long white hair. They can lure, kill, and eat a person. They can transform themselves into most things, animals, trees, rocks, a star, and even a constellation. The authors cite from folk tales many instances of the transformation of people into animals, all of which have no other basis than in the lore of the people.

An account by Macgillivray (1852) cited by the authors, show Islanders who believed in “transmigration of souls” (p. 354). This account by Macgillivray conveyed the notion that Islanders believed that “immediately after death they... [would be] changed into white people or Europeans” (p. 354). However, there was another reading of this. Roth pointed out “that instead of a return of the deceased native’s actual body after death in the form of a European, the meaning intended to be conveyed was that the vital principle (spirit, etc.) is re-incarnated in the white man” (cited by Haddon & Seligmann in, 1904, p. 355). The influence of those from countries in the West is obvious: in both cases the ‘savage’ dies and is resurrected in the ‘civilised man’.

On the issue of spirits and the state after death, Haddon and Seligmann (1904) noted that it, “was extremely difficult, indeed practically impossible, to get any very definite information respecting the belief of the people as regards spirits generally” (p. 355). Yet there were clear signs of its presence. According to their linguist colleague, there was a distinction made between a ghost (*markai*) and a spirit (*mari*) - *markai* was the ghost of a dead person and *mari* was a “disembodied spirit” (p. 356). Haddon and Seligmann maintained that Islanders held a belief that “the soul, or ghost, *mari*, of a person... left the body at death” (p. 355) in that it was, in one telling, in the corpse, and in another, it was wandering nearby. Others, they claimed, told them of spirits who may leave the island to go to an unknown place in the West but could also come back. That is, at the time of death the “*mari*... is a very intangible

sort of thing" (p. 356) and is said to travel West, always to the West, whereupon arrival at "spirit-land" (p. 356) he or she is met and taught how to be a '*markai*'. To verify this belief Haddon and Seligmann cited a case where an Islander pointed out that: "[w]hen the friends at home see a water-spout they weep and say, '[t]hey are now teaching him, he is now a proper *markai* and will forget us all'. They also cry at a new moon as the *mai* is then killed and converted into a true *markai*" (p. 356).

On the issue of ancestor worship, Haddon & Seligmann (1904) contended that "[t]he ghosts of the dead were neither regarded as demons nor divinities, nor do I think it can be said that they were actually worshipped" (p. 364). However, skulls of revered individuals and family members were kept in houses and, at times, carried as charms on various voyages. Haddon and Seligmann reiterated that "the preservation of skulls of relatives in the houses was due to the sentiment of affection and to keep the dead in remembrance" (p. 364). They found no evidence to support any view to ancestor worship in any of their ceremonies. That was an inevitable conclusion given that their stated position was that such practices had more to do with those practising religion not magic.

But they did admit to Islanders practising hero worship. Haddon contended however that "[t]he invocation of dead heroes... is part of the hero cult; they were prayed to solely as heroes and I did not find any indication that they had any existing human kin other than the totemic kinship. We cannot then regard the hero-cult as an ancestor-worship in the strict sense of the term" (p. 365). Macgillivray's account amongst those from missionaries also supported this view, "[n]either at Cape York, nor in any of the islands of Torres Strait... do the Aborigines appear to have formed an idea of the existence of a Supreme Being" cited by Haddon & Wilkin, 1904, p. 378). The point they made here was that hero worshipping in the Islands can not be regarded in the same league as worshipping a Supreme God: "I think it can be definitely

stated that the Western Islanders had no deities and certainly they had no conception of a Supreme God” (Haddon & Wilkin, 1904, p. 378).

In summary, the small section on religion in the Eastern Islands in Volume VI (Haddon, 1908, pp. 241-280) encapsulates the Cambridge team’s standpoint on religion in the Torres Strait. There Haddon pointed out: “[n]othing is more difficult than an attempt to discover and interpret the religious ideas of an undeveloped people, and I cannot profess to have succeeded in my efforts in this direction among the Miriam” (p. 240). The basis on which Haddon considered and defined what he meant by ‘religious’ is as follows:

The term ‘religious’ is applied in this memoir to those actions which depend for their efficacy upon appeal to, or reliance upon, something which is extrinsic to the performers or to the objects employed.... This non-human influence is usually of a more or less personal nature, and is approached by means of words or ceremonies, and operates through a ceremony or object, or directly on the petitioner of those in whom he is interested, or it accomplishes those aims which he desires. The extrinsic influence can also act of its own initiative. Usually an emotional relation is established with this extrinsic influence or power. (Haddon, 1908, p. 241)

The things that were to count as religious for Haddon were elements associated with a model of the Supreme God. For the Islanders, this did not amount to much if they worshipped odd things. Haddon considered four main icons worshipped by the Islanders: *Lu babat*, *Ad*, *Zogo*, and *Agud*. *Lu babat* was listed by him as the worship of items belonging to some ancestor. *Ad* was said to be “something old and traditional with the idea of a sanctity that is associated with ancient wont, thus certain folk-tales are *ad*” (p. 242). So too were tales of legendary characters or items of a sacred nature like “magical stones” (p. 242). *Zogo* on the other hand was considered to be an array of objects like rain, effigies, shrine, birds, plants, totems, etc. Haddon

claimed it was even more distant from religion because it could also be the term for the whole rite associated with some form of worship. *Agud*, or *augud* as known in the western regions, was according to Haddon, a name used for the *zogo* that superseded all *zogos* and all totems. Nowhere in Haddon's account is there any notion entertained that one of these icons has any relationship with that of a human being with spiritual powers like Jesus Christ. What is represented are those things worshipped in the Islands like stones, plants, animals, legendary heroes, etc.

However, as Haddon allowed, the ways people engaged with their icons were "distinctly religious" (p. 245). Such practices, and in particular those to do with "Bomai-Malu *zogo*[,] were collectively a socialising religious factor in the life of the people" (pp. 242-3). However, not much more was presented that could be considered akin to the formal religious institutions in the West. Instead, we see a representation of the people's spiritual and moral conscious as embodied in rules of avoidance and rules of conduct – taboos. What followed then were descriptions of taboos associated with places, gardens and produce, names, and food as a demonstration of how such things impact as rules of avoidance. Anything of 'religious' value in the Strait was thus circumscribed as simple forms of taboos. And in closing the Chapter on mythical beings Haddon (1908) wrote,

I am inclined to believe that neither among the Western nor the Eastern Islanders has the idea of a definite god been evolved. They have, I admit, come very close to the conception, but do not appear to have taken the final step, and I am tempted to connect this omission with the absence of a definite and powerful chieftainship... hence there was no autocratic social type upon which the incipient demigods could be modelled and thereby be transformed into actual deities. (Haddon, 1908, p. 316)

That is, according to the model of Supreme Gods in countries in the West no equivalent religious order was found to be in existence in the Islands. Instead,

Haddon identified and substituted for religious experience a context of mythical experiences on behalf of the Islanders. Islanders were people, Haddon claimed, who had their spiritual being embedded in an array of supernatural phenomena that included giants, omens, dreams, divination, austerities and purification. They were people who worshipped various objects including legendary heroes, effigies, plants, animals, and totems. They were people who relied on magical and cult-like practices to help their garden to grow, to help them obtain girlfriends, or to hunt fish and wild animals. They were people who may seem to have some religious practices but these cannot be considered as the same as religion in countries in the West. The Cambridge scholars thus proclaimed: "We did not discover in Torres Strait anything like an All-Father or Supreme Being" (p. 316).

C. A Society with no government is a society with no formal institutions

The Cambridge team also found no formal system of government in the Islands comparable to what they knew about systems employed in countries in the West. They concluded from their short time in the Torres Strait that in the Eastern Islands, (prior to the missionaries and the Australian government's presence in the region), "the method of governments... was probably by the elders, who followed traditional custom in coming to their decisions" (1908, p. 178). The Cambridge team contended also that thirty-five years prior to their own arrival there existed in the Western Islands "a simple form of government, which may be described as a limited democracy, or an oligarchy of elders" (1904, p. 264). What was believed to be in place in the Strait all those years before their arrival was a system of hereditary chieftainship. In this final section another attempt to model the old lifeworlds in the Islands according to organisational structures more familiar to societies in the West will be illustrated. In the Cambridge team's treatment of the topic "Law and Government" (1908, p. 178) elements in the Islanders' lifeworlds were again substituted. Furthermore, it will be shown that the Cambridge team's deliberations on how the public and private were regulated

helped to reify the unequal relationship between 'them' and 'us', as well as constitute other aspects of the social world to characterise Islanders as having savage minds.

Need for an Authority of Some Sorts

Haddon (1904) struggled with putting together a picture of past regulation of public life. What was uppermost in his deliberations was a desire to discern those attributes of a communal life that could be represented as organisational structure, common rules, and some central authority that held it all together. This approach corresponded to the ways communal living was viewed in countries in the West. His first task was to identify the different forms of authority that existed in the Islands.

His brief sketch of periods prior to his arrival in the Islands began with an appeal to the genealogical records of Western Islander families: "the social duties of life were relegated by custom to definite members of the community as will be seen on a perusal of our accounts of Kinship.... Little appears to have been left to chance or to private initiative or enterprise" (Haddon 1904, p. 263). Having established a view about some basic structures in the community he then moved to incorporate a notion of hierarchy, division, and thus conflict as a basis for political interaction in Islander lifeworlds. He did this in order to establish a mechanism that could illuminate some form of authority. To make his case, Haddon (1904) outlined the organisational needs of traditional ceremonies:

The time for the performance of certain ceremonies was fixed by the appearance of particular stars, but these ceremonies had to be prepared for and various details had to be arranged, and this necessitated an executive of some sort that would command respect and obedience.... Disputes of various kinds must always have arisen in each community and some form of arbitration was necessary. (Haddon, 1904, p. 263)

Haddon chose to focus on a study of ceremonies in order to find an event that required some supervisory person. The ceremonies and feasts reported on involved whole communities and oftentimes several communities. Such events often required the involvement of many people to catch and kill numbers of animals and fish, to crop gardens, to get ready the earth ovens, to prepare large amounts of food for enormous feasts, catering for hundreds of people at a time. These kinds of events required special people to carry out the formal aspects to the ceremonies. Special dances and performances were also part of the whole spectacle. And, it also required an army of people to clean up after the event. To Haddon who was unfamiliar with these spectacles, it seemed obvious that in the past “[t]here must have been many occasions for argument and misunderstanding in the inter-relations of a community however minutely its affairs may have been ordered by custom. To meet all these exigencies some form of government [must have been] necessary” (p. 263).

Rivers (1908) likewise reported that in the Eastern Islands it was “very difficult to understand... the social organisation of the Miriam people.... the most definite feature... is the existence of a system of exogamy in which the village is the social unit, but there also exist other groupings of the people which are of social significance” (p. 169). That is, where Haddon appealed to some mechanism within the ceremonial activities to demonstrate structure and control by some higher authority, Rivers based his conclusions about the authority on the order of things in the community to show that there were some elements that were at the basis of the social organisation of the community.

Rivers identified four possible ways of grouping social units on Mer, “firstly, a grouping in villages, of especial importance in connection with marriage; secondly, a grouping in districts; thirdly a dual division into two groups, called the *Beizam Le* and the *Zagareb Le* ; and lastly, a grouping of people who are named after certain animals” (p. 169). Such groupings, he learned, had some

political influence in the order of things that determined even the day to day things. For example, in the first, in these social encounters people identified themselves foremostly as belonging “to a certain village which is the village of his [or her] father” (p. 169) regardless of their own birthplace or his/her relationship with the father. Such an influence, Rivers claimed, can also be seen in the arrangement of marriages: “the marriage of a man is definitely regulated by means of the village to which he belongs and by those of his mother and his father’s mother” (p. 169); people who were contemplating marriage would say, “I may not marry this or that village” (Islander cited by Rivers, 1908, p. 169). Such groupings by district Rivers claimed have a way of influencing how people identified themselves as well as who they can or can not marry.

The second grouping of social units considered by Rivers was the geographical feature of the villages as laid out in districts. By showing social groups by districts, Rivers was able to provide a basis of the hierarchical elements of a community. One district, for instance, he claimed, was named after their habit of eating raw fish “and it would seem improbable that it denotes a district of any social importance” (p. 174). Another, was to be “regarded as foreigners and have no place in the more important institutions of the island” (p. 172). In short, the point was that there were identifiable social groupings on Mer that could be equivalent, albeit in primitive ways, to what was known about segmented societies in the West e.g. distinctions of class, status, background, etc.

The third and fourth groupings of social units appeared to Rivers as “especially connected with the Bomai-Malu cult, and it is doubtful what is their special significance, or indeed whether they have any social significance at all apart from the Malu ceremonies” (p. 172). Most, it was claimed, were affiliated with the cult and they fell into two classes: the *Beizam boai* and the *Zagareb*. The *Beizam Le*, had the shark as their symbol and were the head people of what Rivers termed, the fraternity. They were considered to be

more important than the *Zagareb Le*. By contrast, those in the class of the *Zagareb Le* were assigned a less responsible role in the fraternity. They beat the drums and sang. In a nutshell, the third form of grouping identified by Rivers was based on affiliations with a cult, and the fourth form identified the members within the cult who were named after animals. However, as stated above, there was uncertainty about whether groupings based on animals “were ever connected with the social organisation, though [as Rivers pointed out] the fact that all their neighbours of this people [in the western regions] have a totemic organisation can leave little doubt that their society was also at one time organised on this basis” (p. 174). That is, Rivers could find very little trace of a totemic system but because it existed in the Western Islands, and because they are all Islanders, he was “almost certain [that] it must have once existed.

In the basis of such deliberations and others seeking out past leaders and hierarchical forms of authority from the genealogies and totemic systems, Haddon and Rivers resolved that there must have been a simple democracy under the rule of elders. But, as they also noted, it was “difficult to say exactly what constituted a claim to the distinction of being an elder.... We have met old men who had little influence, and we know of middle-aged or even comparatively young men who have a decided weight among their fellows” (p. 263). Nevertheless, they were convinced that there was clearly the outmost respect for decisions made by the older folks. They then made some general remarks about what happened in the Islands thirty-five years prior to their arrival. They concluded that akin to practices in other lands Islanders had a simple form of government with a familiar “deference for the authority of age” (p. 264).

Regulation of the Public

Haddon considered the use of taboos in the Islander communities further to learn more about what constituted forms there were that provided the communal lifestyle with some cohesion. He learned that “there was merely

the customary usage or the orally transmitted law. There was no legal machinery by means of which these could be [sic] enforced, but it is probable these regulations were well kept on the whole as they had behind them the weight of public opinion" (p. 269). Here we will see the attempt by him and Seligmann to inscribe items such as taboos in some primitive correspondence with constitutions of Law and Order as they existed in the West.

Their deliberations moved in direction of taboos in general and sexual taboos in particular. A taboo, explained Haddon, generally operated tacitly throughout the community and was understood by all its members. There were taboos that could be placed on items that prohibited anyone else from owning them. He described how property, crops and other possessions were marked to taboo people from infringing on designated areas, houses, and trees. Other aspects of the taboo involved injunctions placed on the consumption of certain foods. Taboos, if broken, could bring severe reprimand by the person who was offended, by the magic man, by elders, by the community and in many forms. Taboos have the effect too, as Haddon described, that knowledge of a violation would bring about, for instance, elephantiasis. The fear of some physical deformity was enough to ward off the most determined person.

Sexual taboos, in particular, were singled out by Seligmann (1904) for scrutiny. He reported on various prohibitions and injunctions that constrained the Islanders. If sexual intercourse was indulged in before fishing and hunting trips, he reported that Islanders believed their chances of success would be spoiled. In the case of warfare it meant that bad luck would accompany them. Seligmann maintained that this bad luck took the form of risking an acquired infection which would attract the missiles of the opponents rather than weakening the warriors ability to attack. This he noted could be likened to menstrual taboos as practised in other countries. In another, Seligmann pointed to cases where men or women performed sex before sacred rituals. This, he said, would mean to the Islander that a male would spoil the food.

And in the case of the same act by a female, it was said that she would be shamed. Chastity, then, reported Seligmann, was to be “recommended... [and] it was generally found expedient to abstain” (p. 271). His references to the restriction of fornication and adultery bring an end to his list of things that taboos regulated.

What both Haddon and Seligmann attempted here was a description of some characteristics that might constitute a formal legal system comparable to written ones he was familiar with. In the Islanders’ case, however, they were unwritten, constitutions. In this section on the regulation of public life, we can see from the above descriptions that Islanders were being constructed as communities ruled by taboos, or a primitive set of prohibitions and injunctions. Although Haddon and Seligmann were unable to discern any supporting institution to enforce these, they claimed taboos were regulated either by the self or by public opinion. Their analysis points to the conclusion that thirty-five years prior to the arrival of the Cambridge team, the people in the Torres Strait Islands were regulated by superstitious beliefs in a primitive constitution of taboos.

Regulation of the Private

In the ‘old days’, and according to Haddon (1904), a “definite system of morals was inculcated to the lads during the period of initiation... and that it was an excellent code” (p. 273). At these initiations, the younger generations were to have learned that,

The injunctions were: remembrance of admonitions, reticence, thoughtfulness, respectful behaviour, prompt obedience, generosity, diligence, kindness to parents and other relatives in deed and word, truthfulness, manliness, direction in dealings with women, quiet temper. The prohibitions were against: theft, borrowing without leave, shirking duty, talkativeness, swearing, talking scandal, marriage or connection with certain individuals. (Haddon, 1904, p. 273)

To Haddon (1904) it was “fairly evident that the obligations of the social life were at the basis of the morality of the Torres Strait islanders [sic], indeed it would be scarcely incorrect to speak of it as social morality. On the other hand individual morality had scarcely emerged” (p. 272). The attempt here to provide a moral fibre to these people in the old days was honourable but the injunctions and prohibitions listed above is very suggestive of the Christian doctrines so valued by those in the West. However, as Haddon pointed out, there was “no reason to suspect any trace of missionary influence” (p. 273). In the old days then, and according to Haddon, there were identifiable forms of social morality that provided the basis to the ways Islanders carried out their private lives.

But, as he pointed out, clear distinctions needed to be made between social morality and individual morality, that is, distinctions between “them” and “us”. The first, social morality, was characterised by Haddon as those forms of morality that were codified in terms of an understanding of what is acceptable behaviour in a community and was regulated and enforced by members. The second, individual morality, to Haddon, were those forms enshrined in important articles like for instance the Ten Commandments wherein they laid down moral codes for things sacred like the preservation of the Christian Soul. The latter forms differed because they abide by some external authority like God. And as far as Haddon knew it, Islanders had no Supreme God. The division thus between “them” and “us” also could be seen in terms of different moral codes.

Haddon (1904) turned then to provide an example of this as well as to indicate a shift towards Christian values in later periods. At the time of their visit, he said, things had changed somewhat because of the influence of missionaries, “together with the contact with other white and coloured men, [this influence] has undoubtedly brought about altered moral conceptions. The clearest example of this is to be found in their attitude towards the wearing of clothes and the idea of modesty” (p. 272). “Thirty years ago”

Haddon exclaimed, these people were “absolutely naked and unashamed” (p. 272). He went to cite an incident where his team members found it difficult to get an Islander to strip off his clothes and to pose in the fashion of a dying legendary hero so that the Cambridge team could photograph him. Something they described as evidence of “prudish” (p. 272) behaviour. Haddon’s intention here was to illustrate the emergence of a consciousness of the self as laid down by moral codes set down by some “external authority outside of the community” (p. 272). Consequently, it could be claimed that in the ‘old days’, the Islanders had no individual morality or, no external referent that could moralise the naked body in such ways. Thus leading to the view that Islanders had a system based on social morality as determined by the community alone.

In a further attempt to provide some basis to the Islanders’ moral constitution, Haddon (1904) provided some data on “domestic morality” (p. 274). However, as he conceded, they did not learn much about ‘the position of women’ in the early periods but as he did “believe that on the whole the wives had not much to complain about” (p. 274). He was aware of documentations by people like Macgillivray (cited by Haddon) that depicted Islander men as ‘wife-bashers’ but contended that they were “defective” (p. 274). If it was so, Haddon said, it may be because the group cited were “less advanced than the other islanders [sic]” (p. 274). Or, that it may have been because of “the lack of gardens and the hunting and collecting nomad habits of the men [which, Haddon contemplated] would tend to make them less considerate to their wives” (p. 274). Here then we have two codes of behaviour towards women. One for those Islanders who till the soil and who are caring towards women, and another for those who roam the region and who were not caring towards women.

On sexual morality, Haddon (1904) reported that incest was considered by the Islanders to be the most reprehensible act. Sexual morality, he explained, was also a very good determinant in who could marry who. But importantly,

he said, this was “an example of a social convention which was probably of fundamental biological importance to the community” (p. 274). His other “impression is that chastity before marriage was formerly practically unknown” (p. 275) and yet he added, “there was no term for fornication or adultery” (p. 274). He says, however, there was a word for theft, *pumu*. And in these ways, Haddon effectively enabled adulterous acts by Islanders to be termed as “stealing” (p. 275). And subsequent also to this, it also enabled him to express ideas of wives and women in general as “property” (p. 275). If caught ‘stealing’, he went on to say, there was an expectance that they should marry “to make them honest folks” (p. 275). If they were not shamed into getting married, physical markings were made on their bodies as posters for public humiliation. But what is suspect about the analysis here is that in trying to set up sexual morality as a social convention in the Islands in the old days he contradicts his colleague Sidney H. Ray (1907), the linguist who on the trip, listed on page 170 of Volume III of the Cambridge Reports in his English to Islander languages dictionary the following terms for adultery: kupa-kuasar, kuasar-kupa (in the language of the Western Islanders); Kogem, Kosekerlam (in the language of the Eastern Islanders).

Haddon also wrote on “commercial morality” (p. 276). He was of the understanding that in commercial transactions, particularly in cases where canoes were purchased on the basis of an “instalment system” (p. 276), there would have been some “utilitarian foundation” (p. 276) by which credit was established between two people. He contended that there was not only such a system in place but that there was an accompanying moral code by which Islanders were bound. To this he added, it would have been senseless to violate any agreement when one’s livelihood was swinging in the balance, as one Islander told him, if we do not observe such conventions “how we get fish, or turtle, or dugong” (p. 276). It was rarely the case that anyone would have been dishonest, he remarked.

Haddon and his team went on to consider the regulation of the private spheres, in the days before any encroachment from the West, most extensively. They documented women's puberty customs, birth and childhood practices, the formalities of the initiation processes, rituals in courtship and marriage, how marriages were regulated, as well as the practices associated with funeral ceremonies. These Reports came to be regarded as the most extensive anthropological description of the culture of people in periods before the onslaught from the West. The topics pursued and described by the men from Cambridge were done with a view to charting the constitutive characteristics of the savage mind. What we see, however, is the way their observations on what constituted the savage mind were influenced by implicit aspects of their own history. Where others in the past have read these documents as depictions of the culture of a people, I have tried to follow literally the way non-Islanders attempted to understand the constitution of primitive minds. Nowhere is the process of constructing the savage mind more explicit than in the final two examples.

D. A society of people with no historical knowledge, no supreme God, no government is a society of savages

Haddon (1904) observed from his notes and folk tales that extensive trading, by exchanging goods, occurred between Western Islanders in their region, with mainlanders from Papua New Guinea and Australia, as well as with "white men" (p. 293). The exchanges were mostly described in the sense of bartering goods like crafts, dance masks and drums, foods, plants, sea shells, turtle shells, tools, bows and arrows, iron (from shipwrecks), canoes, feathers and plumes of birds, tobacco pipes, and so on. He mentioned also an extensive network for the purchase of a canoe, that spanned the breadth of the Torres Strait region and involved many middle men and their contacts, and protocols in negotiating a canoe, as well as the art of testing the soundness of the material and craftsmanship, and buying on credit. By contrast, in the Eastern Islands there were perceived to be two trade routes to Papua New Guinea and none to the Australian mainland: "the Miriam were

practically debarred from intercourse with Australia" (Haddon, 1908, p. 185). The people of Mer also exported crafted shell ornaments and imported ornaments crafted from cassowary feathers, bird-of-paradise feathers, dogs' teeth, boars' tusks, leaves of sago palms, pandanus leaves, and items such as canoes, drums, mats, stone-clubs, etc. And there was trade as well with foreign sailing vessels according to Haddon. Local produces, craft work, ornaments etc. in the latter case were bartered for iron, knives, axes, etc. Wilkin (1908), on the other hand, described a very complicated inheritance pattern of land ownership in the region that seemed to him to favour men. He remarked that in these parts of the world, "[t]he sense of property is very well developed" (p. 168). In all, these could have amounted to very progressive societies in the Islands engrossed in maintaining and negotiating lifeworlds with self-interested views. But, as with all enterprising ideas, according to a Western standpoint, there must have been "quarrels and warfare" (see Haddon, 1908, pp. 189-191).

The following deliberations by Haddon and Wilkin serve to remind us that no matter how enterprising the Islanders were they were still Savages. What is presented as data however is basically an account of very like-events. These two men gathered data from many sources to demonstrate the savage disposition of the people in these parts of the world.

In the Eastern Islands Haddon (1908) said, "[t]here is no doubt that their vain-glorious excitable temperament led to frequent squabbles, but they expended most of their energy in words" (p. 190). He provided one account of a quarrel amongst Islanders on Mer and one against the South-Sea men living at Dauar. From the latter account, Haddon pointed out that, "although they were great braggarts, the natives were unskilled in fighting, probably owing to lack of practice on account of their isolation" (p. 191). In the Western Islands, however, Haddon (1904) identified three distinguishable kinds of fighting. They were "blood feuds" (p. 298), "head-hunting" (p. 298), and "ceremonial fights" (pp. 298-9). It was the condition of Islander people

in the old days, according to Haddon, that “[a] life for a life was the recognised doctrine” (p. 298) and blood feuds thus were enacted as “reprisals for injuries” (p. 298). In contrast to this, head-hunting was “to gain glory and the approbation of their women” (p. 298), and ceremonial fights were for “settling quarrel when there were more than two people concerned, and assumed quite the character of a duel upon a large scale” (p. 299).

What followed was an even more marked shift in the emotive language used elsewhere in the six volumes of materials on Islanders. In short, it exemplifies the Western pre-occupation with describing blood and gore in ‘savage’ peoples. All supporting evidence of barbaric acts were drawn from the story of the two survivors of a shipwreck, ‘Charles Eaton’, on an Eastern Island reef.

Haddon began by citing from the account of the shipwreck ‘Charles Eaton’:

...the savages on Boydany [sic] Island ate the eyes and cheeks of the shipwrecked people. This they were induced to do from a peculiar notion which they entertain, that such conduct will increase their desire after the blood of white men. (Wemyss cited in Haddon, 1904, p. 302)

He went on to add that the surviving members were ‘brained’ by the Islanders. Most of the other descriptions in this section seem to arise out of this one. Indeed, it appears to be the familiar Western genre for describing ‘savages’ involved: first describing nasty things savages do to one another, and then providing an explanation on the primitive psyche of the savage. Thus reifying debauchery, treachery, and ghoulish behaviours. Macgillivray (cited by Haddon) provided the best example of this:

The Kauralaig returned to their island with much exultation, announcing their approach by great shouting and blowing on conchs. The head were placed on an oven and partially cooked, when the eyes were scooped

out and eaten with portions of flesh cut from the cheek; only those, however, who had been present at the murder were allowed to partake of this; the morsel was supposed to make them more brave. A dance was then commenced, during which the heads were kicked along the ground, and the savage excitement of the dancers almost amounted to frenzy. The skulls were ultimately hung up on two cross sticks near the camp, and allowed to remain there undisturbed (Macgillivray, as paraphrased by Haddon, p. 300).

Another, by Wilkin, as paraphrased by Haddon, claimed that

After an enemy had been hit on the head with a stone club, a cut was made all round the neck with a bamboo knife, the head was then taken with both hands... and twisted one way with a long-drawn 'Ah!'; then it was twisted the other way round with a short 'Isul' After this the head would come off with 'kluk', at which the warrior would say, 'Ah---, kawai, kawai, Ah---, kawai, kawai,' and he would repeat these words all the time he was threading the head on the singi or ratan head carrier.... The men returned to Pulu and made an earth oven in which the heads were partially cooked and the lads who had been at this their first fight when an enemy had been killed were given the cheeks and eyes to eat 'to learn him' and to make him brave and fearless" (p. 301).

Either the cheeks and eyes were the most prized by the Islanders, or we have here again a possible predisposition for the language used in the same account of the shipwreck 'Charles Eaton'. The account subsequently got more graphic.

Sometimes when a Mabuiag man killed another in a fight and had cut off his head he would hold up the head and let the dripping blood fall into his mouth and would also give some to the young man who accompanied him but who had not yet killed his man, saying, 'you do not know how to fight. You drink it and it will give you strong heart. (Haddon, 1904, p. 301)

He then adds another from the Central Islands:

Tutu men also drank the sweat of renowned warriors, and ate the scrapings from their finger-nails which had become saturated with human blood; this was mixed with their food in order 'to make strong and like stone; no afraid'.... A Tutu warrior would tear out the tongue of a man he had just killed and eat it on the spot. The penis was usually also cut off by Tutu men; before a fight they would blow through the dried penis in the direction towards which they were going. (Haddon, 1904, p. 301)

The next description provided by Haddon is from Naghir Island (my family's island), where he claimed to have been told that,

... in order to infuse courage into boys, a warrior took the eye and tongue of a man he had killed and after mincing them and mixing them with his urine, administered the compound in the following manner. He told the boy to shut his eyes and not look, adding, 'I give you proper kaikai'. The warrior then stood up behind the sitting youth, and putting the head of the latter between his (the man's) legs, would feed him. After this dose, 'heart belong boy no fright'. (Haddon, 1904, pp. 301-2)

From the most north-eastern end of the Torres Strait, Haddon reported an account by Chalmers (cited by Haddon) that "the muscle behind the ear is given in sago to lads in Kiwai Island to eat that they may be strong" (p. 302).

The final example comes by way of Wilkin's descriptions in a section titled the "Preparation of Heads for Augudalkula" (p. 305).

On the conclusion of the festivities which followed a victory (or massacre) the heads of the slain were taken by their owners to Pulu to be cleaned. A great earth-oven was dug and, after the scalps had been cut from ear to ear and from back to front, the heads were subjected to a short period of cooking which rendered them easy to skin and at the same time, so far as they were eaten, more palatable - for the boys were compelled to partake of the

cheeks, eyebrows and eyeballs on pain of castigation. The object of this mild form of cannibalism was to develop those manly qualities whose crowning glory was the acquisition by the young warrior of a head of his own taking. (Wilkin, 1904, p. 305)

All the above extracts appear to cover every corner of the Torres Strait, and give the impression that such practices were rife throughout the Torres Strait in the earlier periods. It needs to be noted here that these events described were not founded on a single observation made by the Cambridge group. It is also interesting to note that Haddon elsewhere noted that anthropophagi, or cannibalism, was not a practice found in the Islands.

Nevertheless, Wilkin (1904) went on to provide a narrative of feud and native warfare amongst Islanders and again featured treacherous cannibals and their ghoulis behaviours.

At Pulu they cut the heads from ear to ear across the scalp and slit them from back to front even to the end of the nose and down to the teeth.... The small boys they constrained to eat the cheeks and eyebrows and the balls of the eyes, and those that were unwilling they beat, for unless a man do this in his youth he will remain a woman or a child all his life long. Moreover when he has taken such a head for himself in battle he is to be accounted fit for marriage. (Wilkin, 1904, pp. 313-4)

The repetition of tales told to them by Islanders of feuds, warfare, head-hunting, and massacre seems to stretch out across the Strait. But, as Haddon tried to clarify in the footnotes to the aforementioned quote, there is a need to remain sceptical about it all: "[t]he narrative give a vivid picture of native warfare, and we may regard them as being as accurate as most historical records which are narrated by the conquering side. These are accounts of historical events, but it is not difficult to imagine how these could easily be transformed into hero-tales and so become folk tales" (p. 308). To re-emphasise the point here, Haddon stressed that accounts provided to people

such as Wilkin need to be viewed with caution, as they may have been exaggerated forms told by Islanders championing their stature as proud warriors. This seems to imply that by contrast he and his fellow travellers' recounts were not in any way exaggerated or far-fetched. The following examples of their reporting, however, beg the question.

Infanticide

Contrary to the 'savage' entity, there were many instances that indicated that there was a sense of kin relations amongst Islanders. For instance, Seligmann indicated that at the time of their visit there were close bonds between parents and their children. He cited two stories to indicate a close relationship with each other in older periods. "The story of Siwi shows spoilt children were not unknown, and Amipuru tried to catch a pelican in order to give it to his child" (1904, p. 199). He later commented that the older kinfolk not only provided care but also organised celebrations for girls during puberty customs and for boys during their initiation which recognises a time and role of younger generations to create new generations (see 1904, pp. 201-221). Haddon too made comment that indicate such a bond between parent and child: "[w]hen the wife is pregnant a *waiwi* is paid, presents are given when the child is born, when he is named, a small present is given when he first stands up, again when he begins to talk and also when he kills his first bird or catches his first fish" (1904, p. 232). Rivers too passed comment on this: "Divorce appears to have been rare" (1904, p. 246); but for one main reason divorce could be achieved if the couple were childless. Haddon, emphasised that he had no reason to believe that "devoted fathers" (1904, p. 229) were not there in the past: "I have never heard of a parent ill-treating a child" (p. 274). He later cited from old folk tales to support his position on this.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned, Seligmann's (1904) citation of "infanticide" (p. 198) referred to earlier claims made by Haddon (1890) and Macgillivray (1852) and in doing so incorrectly provided a view of Islanders as killers of their infants, in particular, female infants. Haddon said, "infanticide

was undoubtedly a common practice” (cited by Seligmann, 1904, p. 198) in the islands. Macgillivray on the other hand said that he learned that there was only “the occasional practice of infanticide” (cited by Seligmann, 1904, p. 198). What he learned from these two separate accounts were strikingly similar. He learned from Haddon that:

At birth a father would decide whether a child was to be permitted to live; if he decreed its death it was simply buried in the sand. As a rule female babies were less likely to be permitted to live than boys. (cited by Seligmann, 1904, p. 198)

What he learned from Macgillivray was very similar:

Few women rear more than three children, and besides, most of those born before marriage are doomed to be killed immediately after birth, unless the father - which is seldom the case - is desirous of saving the child; if not, he gives the order *marana teio* (throw it into the hole), and it is buried alive accordingly. (p. 198)

Seligmann subsequently had to acknowledge these accounts in order to write something into the section on the treatment of children:

Although foeticide and infanticide were formerly practised the desire for children is now manifest by the frequency of adoption and by the readiness with which the charge of orphan children is assumed by their relatives.... At the present time parents treat their children with kindness and indeed they may be regarded as indulgent towards them” (Seligmann, 1904, p. 199).

This was an attempt to characterise Islanders in former periods as ‘savage’ baby killers. Not one of the scholars involved in writing these accounts claimed to witness any such event. Nor did they explain how many infant deaths it took to claim that it was ‘a practice’ in the Islands. Furthermore,

their superficial understanding of Islander ways might have led them to make a gross error here. The Islanders had (and to a certain extent still continue to have) a belief that when someone dies it is because another has had a hand in the death - that is, they have a ready disposition to view deaths as the result of the wrath of a devious other. For instance, in describing funeral ceremonies, Haddon noted that on announcement of the dead, "the brother of the dead man 'got wild' and took his bow and arrow and wished to kill the maidelaig (sorcerer) who had caused the death" (p. 248). His footnote on this stated, "[a]ccording to native belief all sickness and death were due to sorcery" (p. 248). The point to be made here is that if an Islander was asked how a baby died there was already a disposition to blame and name someone. In other words, when one asked about the death of a child an Islander was likely to attribute it to foul play by someone, regardless if babies died from particular illnesses like small pox.

Many stories by fellow Westerners are cited in these Reports to support their position on the murder of children.

Reverend A.E. Hunt - on foeticide:

Abortion was very common, for various reasons: sometimes (as in the case of a single girl) from shame, sometimes to save the mother the trouble of child rearing. (cited by Rivers, 1908, p. 107)

Reverend A.E. Hunt - on infanticide:

After a certain number had been born, all succeeding children were destroyed, lest the food supply should become insufficient. If the children were all of one sex some were destroyed from shame, it being held proper to have an equal number of boys and girls. (cited by Rivers, 1908, p. 107)

Dr W. Wyatt Gill - on infanticide:

The custom here [Erub] and at Murray Island (and we believe throughout the Strait) had hitherto been to rear only two children in each family. The rest are strangled or buried alive by the cruel father as soon as born. Illegitimate children were invariably murdered by the mother, to avoid the toil of having to provide food for them. (cited by Rivers, 1908, p. 108)

d'Albertis – on infanticide:

it is the custom to kill the female children at birth in Erub.
(cited by Rivers, 1908, p. 108)

Rev. A.W. Murray - on infanticide:

the rule at Darnley Island was not to rear more than three children. (cited by Rivers, 1908, p. 108)

Mr Bruce – on infanticide:

Infanticide is not now practised, although it was formerly.... Female children were more frequently killed than males.... Male children would also be destroyed if the parents had what they considered a large enough family.... The parents considered that the male child assisted to perpetuate the name and family, but that the female did not do so.... girls required too much looking after when grown up, through young men coming to see them when they were working in the gardens, so that they were a hindrance rather than a help in the garden. Also at night the parents could not get their proper rest, through having to be continually on the alert, lest their daughter should be stolen by the young man.... if the husband or wife had a quarrel with someone, they might be taunted with having a large family, and be told that all the people were talking about them... and they would then be greatly ashamed, and decide that the next child born should die.... If the parents of the child were an old couple, they feared the ridicule and gossip... and the child was invariably killed.... The father was generally consulted if he wanted the child to live, but not necessarily so if the

woman herself desired the death of the child. Sometimes the husband ordered it to be destroyed and might perhaps do it himself; or the parents might arrange beforehand that the infant should be destroyed at birth.... When the child was to be destroyed the father killed it by pressing the head with his hands over the brain... or strangling it with a cord.... They buried the body at night near the house, or took it out to the edge of the reef and sank it in the deep water with stones, as an unweighted body has sometimes turned up again on the beach. (cited by Rivers, 1908, p. 108)

The same Mr Bruce - on how things have changed since missionary intervention and the realisation of commercial industries in the Strait:

Parents now find it profitable to have large families, for the sons can find plenty of employment in the pearl-shelling fleet... it means many luxuries to the parents, in the way of calicoes, coats, and trousers, camphorwood boxes, tobacco, and so forth.... Daughters are also found now to be very valuable property, for they are always in great demand in marriage, by their own countrymen, and also by South-Sea, Malay, and Manila man... the highest bidder, the man who can give the most, is the husband the parents choose for their daughter. (cited by Rivers, 1908, pp. 109-110)

However, it is worth mentioning that Rivers (1908) also noted that “[a]lthough foeticide and infanticide were commonly practised, the desire for children is manifested in the frequency of adoption and the readiness with which the charge of orphan children is assumed by their relatives” (p. 110). Again on the following page, he pointed out that the “fondness of the parents for their children, own and adopted, was very obvious, and one frequently sees a father nursing young children. It is evident from the fearlessness of the children of all ages and the way in which they mix with their elders that they are uniformly well treated” (p. 111). But the point of such accounts were not intended to counter perceived practices of infanticide but to note that such

practices amongst primitive folks, had through contact with the West, changed in favour of Christian values.

It is easy to understand from Rivers' compilation of other people's writings that because of a limited food supply in the Islands, there was a 'custom' to control population numbers so 'to avoid the toil of having to provide food for them'. This explanation provides the basis of understanding why families were restricted to two children according to Gill, or three if we take Murray's position. Once the reason and the need for infanticide is articulated in this way it follows that the practice was an unwritten 'rule' of a people that is to not rear more than three children, to kill illegitimate children, to kill female babies at birth if there were too many children. Again, not one of Rivers sources claim to have witnessed these practices. It is hard to make any counter claims against so many citations of the occurrence of such practices.

However, there was some statistical data on Islander families that was put together from the genealogies that were documented on Mer in an attempt to support their claims that blur the soundness of their conclusions. A Miss Hingston put together some data that showed the average number of children in families. She, for instance, found that "2.6 is the average number excluding marriages in which there are no children, and 3.6 excluding also those in which there is only one child" (cited by Rivers, 1908, p. 108). Her data showed that in the present generation (at the turn of the Century) 138 families had 264 children. She recorded an average of 1.84 children per family. The raw figures were as follows:

- 1 family had 10 children
- 5 families had 6 children
- 11 families had 5 children
- 6 families had 4 children
- 23 families had had 3 children
- 19 families had 2 children
- 38 families had 1 child
- 35 families had none

In the second generation, the data showed 160 families of 409 children, with an average of. 2.55 children per family. The raw figures were:

- 1 family had 12 children (11boys and 1 girl)
- 5 families had 7 children
- 3 families had 6 children
- 16 families had 5 children
- 19 families had 4 children
- 27 families had 3 children
- 37 families had 2 children
- 33 families had 1 child
- 19 families had none

In the third generation, the data showed 56 families of 209 children with an average of 3.73 children per family. The raw figures were:

- 2 families had 7 children
- 7 families had 6 children
- 10 families had 5 children
- 9 families had 4 children
- 9 families had 3 children
- 11 families had 2 children
- 8 families had 1 child

In the fourth generation, the data showed 9 families of 27 children with an average of 3 children per family. The raw figures were:

- 2 families had 5 children
- 1 family had 4 children
- 3 families had 3 children
- 1 family had 2 children
- 2 families had 1 child
- 19 families had none

In the fifth generation, the data showed 2 families. There were 5 children in one and 1 in the other.

Rivers (1908) then suggested that if we take “the second and third generations only, so as to eliminate missionary influence, we find that the average numbers in the families of above three children were respectively 4.8 and 5.7. Ignoring families of 0 [children] or 1 [child], there is an average of 3.41 in the second generation and 4.18 in the third” (p. 108). These are respectful figures for a growing population. In real terms, and by their own accounts, there was no statistical evidence to support any claim that could amount to a practice of foeticide or infanticide in the islands. Furthermore, no evidence could be found for the claim that female babies were killed in preference for males: “[o]ut of a total of 915 children, 489 or 53.4% are boys, and 426 or 46.5% are girls, thus female infanticide does not appear to have produced a very marked effect upon the relative proportion of the sexes” (p. 108). Added to this is the fact that given that there were no sightings by anyone of any such incident and given there was no statistical evidence to support such ‘practices’ as claimed by all of the above their conclusions about the practice of infanticide were suspect and in need of revision. Rivers, however, maintained that despite these analytical shortcomings “these figures tend to show that while foeticide and infanticide doubtless were prevalent, their practice did not seriously tend to affect the actual population of the island of Mer, though they prevented over-population” (p. 108). Even when their own data told them otherwise, there was still an imperative to maintain the distinctions between ‘them’ and ‘us’ - distinctions that made the Islander both inferior and unequal in moral values and social behaviour.

Summary

One of the principal aims of this exploration of the anthropological texts and the charting of Western knowledge systems as they interface with Islander positions and experiences was to illustrate that in all the well-meaning interventions by non-Islanders there are indeed consistent processes to be seen as well as ongoing refusals of Islander positions. However slight, or trivial, or insignificant, these refusals may seem, the cumulative effect has been the denial of the independent intelligence and an ongoing patronisation

of the intelligence of these people as something secondary to what Western societies are more used to.

The Cambridge Expedition, as can now be seen, was an early attempt by people from outside the Torres Strait to chart the savage mind and how the savage mind projects a community, not some apolitical approach to documenting a culture of a people. This perspective on their writings is yet to be considered. But it is not to suggest something sinister or underhanded. It was something that was quite clearly stated by the academic scholars. McDougall, for instance, in his study of Cutaneous Sensations noted that “it was a principal object of our work to discover, if possible, racial characteristics” (McDougall, 1903, p. 189). It is more to note that these Reports are yet to be considered as a discursive site that brought to bear on Islanders an epistemological schema that made credible a particular way of positioning the Islanders into the various institutions and histories of the West. It is more to note that basic questions still need to be asked about the epistemological schema that deploys a science that arrives at statements about the intellectual capacity of Islanders qualified by:

I think... There can be little doubt that... It is natural that... It seems possible that... [and with all things considered, conclude that they], may help to account for another characteristic of the savage mind. (Rivers, 1901, p. 45)

It is more to note that when the numbers do stack up in favour of the Islanders the Western knowledge systems is able to appropriate a higher position for non-Islanders and a lower one for Islanders as savages who kill their infants. It is, to say the least, to make the point that questions still need to be raised about forms of analyses that continue to inscribe Islander positions into an order of things according to those in the West.

Perhaps it could be argued that this tendency was in part an expected outcome of the research process. That is, in the process of research the

Islanders were transformed into subjects of study and this action in itself resulted in a temporary 'suspension' in time and an intellectual dislocation of Islanders from their own historical trajectory. This means Islanders are represented not only through comparisons and 'dissimilarities' with non-Islanders, but also as 'discontinuous' with both the Western history and their own Islander historical trajectory. It is as if they were just there, enclosed in the Strait, marooned on islands, waiting to be named, related, and categorised by the more enlightened people of the West. This may seem an obscure point but I would argue that this is a crucial point to help understand how Islanders have historically been positioned and how their position is understood currently.

What this 'suspension' and 'dislocation' of Islanders from their own historical context achieves for the academic scholars is the transformation of people into objects to study. It is the intellectual construction of a 'neutral' position from which to view and understand Islanders. By not considering Islanders' historical trajectory, that is, what has come before, what is occurring in the now, and what the implications are for their future, the Cambridge scholars were able to divorce themselves from the politics of the Islanders' predicament, the politics of colonial activity, etc. They are left to 'impartially' describe the Islanders, their languages, psychology, and customs.

By 'dislocating' Islanders from Islanders' own historical context as they went about constructing ways for understanding Islanders, Western scholars achieved much more than a 'temporary' dislocation of Islanders from their historical context. They suspended their own connections to the political nature of colonial activity. They stood themselves outside of the activities of Western colonial expansion as if their intellectual discipline had no connection to this when in fact the expansion of Western knowledges, especially anthropological knowledge, was tied inextricably to Western colonial activity. They sutured over and rendered invisible, through this process, the politics of their practice, the political effects on Islanders of their

practice, the political nature of their texts, as if the whole context of their activity was devoid of any politics, and as if the position of Islanders in this process was devoid of politics.

It is in this way that the activities of scientific knowledge construction, as exemplified in these texts, appear to us to be logical, objective and benign in terms of their effects on Islanders. But the scientists' activities were far from benign, far from being merely descriptions of the 'state' of Islanders at the time. They were part of a much wider web of activities that, through denying Islanders their own historical context and the political nature of their position could then easily view and re-represent their position in apolitical ways in relation to a different order of things. In that this became the only way for non-Islanders to understand Islanders it was political intervention in the extreme.

In this process the Islanders' own worldview 'disappears' and is rendered invisible and unintelligible. The position of Islanders can then be rewritten into another set of relations, namely in relation to Europeans and their worldviews. Thus the Islander position is intellectualised as 'Other' in its attachment to the Western historical trajectory. In this practice there occurs a denial of and a refusal or inability to engage with the Islanders' own analyses and understanding of their position, to view and acknowledge them as politically independent people on their own historical trajectory. They are in effect 'depoliticised' and accepted as Other and secondary to all Western positions.

The legacy of this remains to this day. We tend to view the intellectual practices of these scientists as belonging to a long-gone historical context rather than see them as belonging to the intellectual and scientific context in which current practice is still embedded. We tend to think that the practices of these scientists went home with them when they left the Strait. But these practices are still with us and in this sense, like the missionaries, the scientists

have never left. Islanders, too, have never been 'returned' to their own socio-political historical context and understood from that position. They have been left in limbo – suspended in a discursive space waiting to be appropriated once more. And as we will see in the next Chapter, Islanders emerged in government welfare regimes as 'dependents' and perhaps more notably, as in a parent/child relationship.

Such practices of the Western knowledge systems, as demonstrated here with the Cambridge Reports, have sanctioned a particular discursive relation between non-Islanders as explorers and founders of 'truths', and Islanders as a 'subject' to report on as well as an 'object' to later profess about. Because of the failure to consider these two crucial aspects of the text produced by the Cambridge scholars as well as the readiness to accept the primacy of Westerner schemas without question, relations between Islanders and non-Islanders continue to be institutionalised in ways that are now taken for granted.

Chapter Four

GOVERNMENT IN(TER)VENTION: FORMING A PARENT/CHILD RELATIONSHIP WITH ISLANDERS AS DEPENDENTS OF A WELFARE SYSTEM

"... For many years officials and others interested in the welfare of the islanders [sic] have endeavoured to persuade all able-bodied men to engage in congenial employment, or work their own boats in a systematic manner... As we are endeavouring to gradually raise a strong healthy race to a higher plane, it is the duty of these people to take the utmost advantage of the facilities provided for them... In some quarters this procedure would be termed 'slavery', but any person who possesses an intimate knowledge of the people and the subject will think otherwise. The islanders [sic] have not yet reached the state when they are competent to think and provide for themselves; they are really overgrown children, and can best be managed, for their own welfare, as a prudent parent would discipline his family." (Protectors Report 1915, cited in Ganter p. 83)

The words, contained in the Protectors' Report of 1915, encapsulated the thinking that underlay the Queensland government approach to the administration of Islanders. This was an approach that constructed for Islanders, the system that still, despite considerable changes, constrains and condemns them today – a system of welfare that confined them to a position of dependency on government intervention. It was borne out of the best of humane intentions, and considered to be in the best interests of Islanders. At the same time it was borne out of a way of thinking, that was unable to see Islanders in any other way than through its own logic and rationality, its own knowledge and understanding of the world. What was known and understood, by the administration, about Islanders and about what was in Islanders' best interests, emerged in a prefigured way, out of the broader

European worldview of civilised/uncivilised; native/European; and the hierarchy of the social development of races. This way of knowing and viewing 'natives' prefigured and pre-ordered any knowledge of Islanders gained in the field and in closer personal interactions with them. In this way of 'knowing' Islanders, the means of administering and disciplining Islanders to conform to the demands of another system of regulation was always able to be justified, no matter what number of internal contradictions appeared over time in enforcing this system. This was, in another sense, the birth of a welfare system that Islanders were inscribed into as 'dependent child' in paternal relationship with Western governments.

In administering Islanders according to their own systems of knowledge and logic, governments accorded with external interests and not Islander interests. For example, the government that intervened to firstly regulate the worst excesses of intruding fishermen, who exploited and abused Islanders, achieved this by 'protecting' the Islanders via an enmeshing web of legislation. This legislation diminished Islanders' independence and control over their lives but fully aided the capacity of pearling companies to reap enormous profits. The interests of pearlers and fishermen were upheld until those resources lost their profitability. In this way, throughout the administration of Islanders, we see Islanders' interests considered secondary to the interests of intruders. Yet the rhetoric of the government has always been that their presence was to serve the best interests of Islanders and to the eyes of most non-Islanders perhaps this was seen to be the case. The presence of fishermen, missionaries and governments was an accepted given and Islander interests were managed within that accepted order. This allowed the genesis of the parent-child relationship that formed the basis of their welfare system, the effects of which are still evident in the present.

The theme of this chapter, then, is the same as has emerged in the previous chapters. The interests of Islanders can only be understood as secondary to non-Islander interests. Because this uneven relationship was pre-figured, the

government had no difficulty at all in justifying their policies as being in the best interests of Islanders. Their logic and rationale was self-fulfilling, for if the 'parent' holds the key to the door, then the 'child' cannot get out and move into the 'unprotected' adult world to develop the necessary skills for competence in that world.

The theme of this chapter may be the same as previous chapters but it is in the content of this chapter that we see the real manifestation and expression of the power/knowledge relations that emerged in the writing of the missionaries and the scientists. We see in the activities of government (and to a lesser extent religious) administration the emergence of the material relations between Islanders and non-Islanders. These relations are evident in the bodily regulation of Islanders in terms of their labour and movement and in the regulation of their finances and spending and all the restrictions and deprivations that these entailed. They are also evident in the more fundamental fact of loss of sovereign title to their Islands that occurred without their knowledge. These relations are also evident in the future that was envisioned by the administration for this society of people. This vision of the future of Islanders was that they should continue to live under paternal care but in a self-dependent community that was separate from other Australians. Bleakley, the Chief Protector, eloquently expressed this sentiment as late as 1961 when he said about the Islanders: "(t)hey are shrewd enough to know they would have nothing to gain by trying to take the tiller of their own canoe" (1961, p. 299).

However, this chapter is not just an account of the construction of the 'dependent' Islander, or of the secondary, or disadvantaged Islander, and the reality of what that meant for Islander people. It is an analysis of how the underlying epistemological framework, that is, the logic and knowledge that is employed to construct the ways of knowing Islanders, shapes what is possible and locks this in as common-sense and logical. It is also to expose that what is common-sense and possible for Islanders is shaped by many other factors

beyond the knowledge and world of the Islanders, for example, by commerce and government. Ways of considering these issues fall within the same epistemological schema. These inform the interpretative framework by which all things are viewed by the government and which legitimates all their policy and practice. The possibilities that are excluded in this process appear illogical and impossible for consideration. The outcomes of applying pre-ordered knowledge have material and psychological implications for people and their lives.

This chapter also furthers the argument, already begun in earlier chapters, that Western administrators refused Islanders a position from which Islanders could uphold their own interests, and from which they could articulate their view of their position. They refused this to Islanders through the practice of viewing, of legislating, and of treating Islanders as secondary to themselves and their interests. In the process, Islanders were refused a position from which they could negotiate the changes occurring all around them in a way that did not deny them primacy in the region. They were refused a position from which they could negotiate their participation in the changing circumstances on equal terms that acknowledged their own extensive knowledge of their history, their environment, their beliefs, skills, intelligence and ability to adapt. Consequently Islanders were denied an independent identity, in the political sense.

The agency that Islanders did have with regard to their lives came to serve the interests of the administration first, as they were co-opted into the new order. This co-option was achieved by allowing Islanders limited and highly regulated participation in the new order, including a form of 'self-rule' which allowed individual Islanders and Councils of Islanders to assume the roles of government agents. Islander interests as viewed by Islanders were not completely silenced but were consistently able to be overwritten and re-organised to fit within the new interpretative framework of the Western system of administration. Instances of rebelliousness, of non-co-operation,

and of resentment and discontent are evident in accounts of this period, but none of these strategies would change the position of Islanders in relation to those who administered their lives. Islanders' capacity to fully understand what actions and standpoints on their part would or would not uphold Islanders' long-term interests was severely limited by their lack of access to education and the world of knowledge that informed the government position.

In many accounts (Bleakley, 1961; McFarlane, 1888; White, 1917; Barrett, 1946; Mollison, 1949; Raven-Hart, 1949), this period is viewed through a lens that tends to soften and blur. Such accounts posit events and actions firmly within by-gone ideologies, elevating the good intentions of administrations and downplaying, even ignoring, the harsh realities of the position of Islanders. In more recent accounts (Beckett, 1987; Ganter, 1994; Sharp, 1993), the position of Islanders has begun to be politicised. This has allowed for the emergence of analyses that focus on the array of external forces and factors that led governments to impose extreme measures of control over the entire population of Torres Strait Islanders. This control was enforced by administrators using the guise of protection, without being held accountable to the norms and values that governed their own lives, and those of other White Australians.

Islanders experienced this period of administration as a collective group. Regulation of 'natives' was uniform across all Islands and after 1934 extended to include the descendants of hitherto exempted South Sea Islanders. However, prior to external administration, Islanders were discrete groups, inter-related through trade and family connections, but independently organised along local family lines. In the face of externally imposed regulation a new and political group identity was forged by Islanders, that of the collective - Torres Strait Islanders. A clever administration took advantage of the diversity within this collective, promoting inter-island rivalry

when it suited their cause. But in times of crisis, the unity of Islanders in the face of control could not be ignored so easily.

Sixty years after the commencement of protectionist policy, these once independent Islanders had few illusions about their position. They were the loyal and Christian subjects of His Majesty the King of England, though still unaware that they had lost the sovereign title to their own land to this King and his Crown. They worked for their living but didn't see their money and could not spend it as they wished. They had paid for their boats but were not free to use them as they pleased, nor did they have freedom of movement between their islands or beyond them. They had schools but were not able to proceed past a set year 4 level. They lived a close and strong community life on their islands with virtually no crime against persons or property but their movement in these communities was prohibited after 9.00 p.m. The officials who accused them of crime or misdemeanour also conducted their trials. They had no right to legal counsel, no right to appeal, and the onus of proof was on the accused. They paid income tax but could not vote. They could not marry outside their race without the permission of the Protector. Their mail was censored (Campbell et al., 1958). The department which administered them was a sub-section of the department which administered, as well, prisons, benevolent asylums, chronic diseases, inebriate institutions and the institution for the blind (see Sharp, 1993, p. 129). Their official status was that of 'inmates'. In reality, they were prisoners.

This state of affairs did not occur overnight. It began with the intent to gain government jurisdiction over the activities of the marine industry in the region in the 1860s. Over time, by restricting Islanders rather than fishermen, legislation would have enormous impact on Islander freedom. Eventually, the administration of Islanders would be little more than the management of their labour in the pearl shell industry, in order to generate the money for their governmental upkeep (Ganter, 1994). Not until the decline of the industry in the 1950s would the government begin to relax its control but the

paternal relationship between Islanders and the administration would endure for many decades beyond that (Beckett, 1987). The ongoing implications of this relationship, particularly in terms of dependency of Islanders on governments for assistance and advice are considerable. These implications are not clearly recognised by governments and not clearly understood by Islanders who still struggle to articulate their own independent position as they continue the long process of negotiating their relationship with non-Islanders.

The Beginnings: 1860s-1904

As inhabitants of a seaway, Islanders in the Torres Strait were long used to welcoming or defending themselves against visitors and were themselves travellers of considerable distances, both north to Papua New Guinea and south to Cape York Peninsula (Haddon, 1935; MacGillivray, 1852; Jukes, 1847). As early as 1792, Bligh and his men record the Islander's desire to trade for iron (Sharp, 1993). In the 1800s the frequency of interactions between Islanders and non-Islanders appears to have increased sharply. This had much to do with increased traffic to the colonies of Australia and colonial activity in the South Pacific. But three events were to signal the casting of a net of external control over the daily lives of unsuspecting Islanders.

The first was the commencement of activity by the pearl-shell fishery in the Torres Strait in 1868 (Ganter, 1994). Not far behind were the missionaries of the London Missionary Society who landed on Darnley Island in the Torres Strait in 1871 (McFarlane, 1888). Following this activity the Queensland government moved its Resident Police Magistrate from the Cape York settlement of Somerset (established 1863) to Thursday Island in the Torres Strait in 1877.

When trepangers or béche-de-mer fishermen moved into the Torres Strait it was to raid the resources of the seabed. There was no interest in dispossessing the natives of their land, though there were reports of shellers

raiding gardens, water sources, removing women and even murdering (Beckett, 1987; Murray, 1876; McFarlane, 1888; Beckett, 1987; Ganter, 1994). The industry based its practice on South Pacific models of trepanging operations (Ganter, 1994). This model entailed establishing shore stations using imported labour. Being familiar with the South Pacific, these European traders often brought their own experienced indentured South Sea labourers with them. Always considered a potential labour resource, Islanders were relegated to the marginal position of being largely a supplementary force, cheap and available when circumstances required them.

Six years after Charles Edwards established the first recorded trepang station in 1862, the first pearl-shelling began by Captain Banner from his *bêche-de-mer* station on Warrior Island (Ganter, 1994). The impact of contact was enormous. With seventy non-Islander employees, the local population was soon infiltrated and transformed both through depletion as a result of disease and through intermarriage. The patch of pearl shell at Warrior Island was depleted within a year of commencement of activity (Ganter, 1994). By 1870 five boats were pearl shelling. By 1875 the practices were the same but there were seventeen luggers on six island stations (Ganter, 1994). The more stations were set up the more South Sea island crews were imported to work them (Ganter, 1994).

Into this situation came the London Missionary Society in 1871. This enterprise, too, relied on imported South Sea Islanders to achieve its mission (McFarlane, 1888). The missionary McFarlane recognised the effectiveness of native agency in converting their 'own kind'. His experience in the South Pacific had taught him "that our native teachers can get *at* the heathen of their class, and influence them in favour of Christianity, quicker than European missionaries" (1888, p. 138). In this way, the European missionaries became the managers of the whole project with South Sea Pastors carrying out the day to day ministrations to a growing flock.

Beckett (1987) reminds us that Islanders were not completely averse to the intrusions of missionaries. They had long traded with other peoples and incorporated non-Islander ideas and material practice into their lives. Sharp (1993) through long conversations with Islanders gives weight to the theory that Islanders were pre-disposed to take up the Christian message and therefore accept the presence of foreign missionaries as the bearers of these messages. This pre-disposition arose not just from their position as traders and seafarers, but also from their own religion and, in particular, at this point of contact, the religion of the Islanders of Mer. Islander priests retrospectively, at least, see the coming of the Gospel as the completion of their own traditional religious law - the law of Malo. This eastern island traditional law is likened to the Old Testament and was seen to operate like the Ten Commandments as a code of behaviour expressed in a list of thou shalt and shalt not's. The teachings of Jesus were seen to be an acceptable extension of what had come before.

This is not the only theory to explain what appeared to be the rapid conversion of the population. Beckett (1987) suggests that having learnt that it was wisest not to attempt violence against Europeans, and that the missionaries were prepared to defend them against abusive intruders, Islanders were inclined to be amenable to their demands. He also suggests that the mission appeared to Islanders in the form of a cult which offered unprecedented wealth and prosperity, that is, that adherence to the demands of the missionaries would bring to the Islanders the same material benefits that the Europeans seemed to possess. And not least is that with a shared custom of reciprocity in social exchanges, Islanders were particularly amenable to interactions with South Sea missionaries. But it seems a difficult task to retrospectively analyse with any degree of certainty all the reasons that Islanders took to the missionary message in the way that they did. Or indeed if they all embraced it unreservedly or were caught up in forces that overtook them, that is, the overwhelming web of rapidly changing circumstance and intrusion. It is not the task of this account to deliberate on these reasons.

The salient fact is that this intervention changed forever the historical trajectory that Islanders had hitherto been on, and there would be no going back.

The success of the mission achieved more than religious conversion. It achieved the complete reorganisation of Islanders daily lives. Churches were built close to the beaches and good anchorages and villages established around the Churches. This enabled a close surveillance of Islanders daily, religious and moral lives. The punishments for transgressing moral and religious codes could be quite severe. Floggings, head shaving, and the stocks were known to have been imposed in the South Pacific (Beckett, 1987). In the absence of secular supervision in the Torres Strait, and in the absence of European missionaries at all villages, there were reports of overzealous South Sea Pastors administering floggings (Beckett, 1987). Islanders were forced to give up traditional practice that was deemed to be 'disgusting and revolting' but were able to retain some of the more 'inoffensive' practices, as well as incorporate a considerable amount of South Sea custom. They were inculcated with the concept of 'shame' through the requirement to clothe their bodies. The mission quickly inserted itself into and took advantage of the 'gift economy', the social practice of Islanders which wove reciprocity and exchange into the ordering of social and kin and trading relationships. Indeed, they soon became the main beneficiaries, with Islanders contributing to the expenses of the mission, the building of churches, villages, and schools (Beckett, 1987).

Because of the effectiveness of using South Sea natives to evangelise the Islanders, integral to the LMS project was the training of Islanders to help take the Mission to the Papua New Guinea mainland. To this end McFarlane established the Papuan Institute on Murray Island in 1879 (Langbridge, 1977). Here he assembled

promising young men and boys from different parts of
the mission, speaking different languages, and at a central

station; and there, removed from their evil surrounding and family influences, teach them, making the *English language* and an *industrial school* prominent features in the course of their instruction. (McFarlane, 1888, p. 81)

As well, alongside the Churches schools were built.

In connection with these churches [Murray, Mabuiag, and Saibai] we have good schools, attended by nearly all the young people of the place, and a good many of the old ones too, all being anxious to learn to read. In this district they are now paying for their books, and making a handsome annual contribution to the parent society... (McFarlane, 1888, p. 184)

The requirement of cash for these purposes led the mission to support, with reservations, the entry of Islanders into the cash economy of the marine industry. This fitted well with the mission's inculcation of the Protestant work ethic. In this way it tacitly rationalised the imposition of the colonial order to its congregation (Sharp, 1993; Beckett, 1987; Ganter, 1994). The participation of Islanders in the marine industry did not, however, fit with the mission's project of moral regeneration and protection of the Islanders.

Here then, in this early history, emerges a theme that appears again in the history of government administration. Their mission was to rescue heathen and savage souls, but the re-organisation of Islanders' daily lives required money for clothing, for buildings, for the utensils of civilisation, to build schools and so forth. To earn this money Islanders were forced into the company of Europeans of 'questionable character', and thus brought nearer to the most debasing and degrading influences of Western civilisation. The mission sought to resolve the paradox of uplifting these savages in the moral sense by thrusting them into contact with the very immoral practices from which they wanted to protect them, by inculcating and policing a code for living that was far stricter than that imposed on any European. When the

Anglican Bishop White travelled around the Islands in 1914, prior to taking them over from the London Missionary Society he remarked on the severity of sentences of ex-communication for what he considered minor offences: the quarrelling between husband and wife, and drunkenness amongst others (White, 1917). Thus souls were to be uplifted by adherence to a puritanically strict moral code that could be enforced by the close surveillance of the Islanders' daily activities. This was afforded to the missionaries and Pastors by the isolation of the Islander communities from European communities and in the beginning from the arms of secular administration. It was also assisted by a policy of maintaining as much segregation of Islanders from non-Islanders as was possible. And in the process, this project was aided by the Mission's tacit support of a colonial order that relegated these souls to a lower position within this order than Europeans (degraded souls that many of those Europeans were by their standards).

Thus on two new fronts (labour and moral) Islanders became positioned along a continuum, scientifically constructed as developmental from savagery to civilisation (e.g. McFarlane, 1888; Haddon, 1935), but to all practical intent and purposes, a racial one. Europeans, originators of the construct, assumed their position at the top, South Sea Islanders with their longer relationship with and experience of European habits, language, morality and work ethics were regarded superior to the Islanders of the Torres Strait in ability and skill and thus assumed a position above them. Imported indentured Japanese labour would rise to take their place just below Europeans and in fact would require legislation to prevent the Japanese from challenging Europeans as the leaders of the pearling industry (Ganter, 1994). In time, the skills of Islanders, their conversion to Christianity, their inter-marriage with South Sea Islanders and their integration of some South Sea custom, would in turn differentiate them significantly from both neighbouring Melanesians and the mainland Aborigines. This would assure them of a higher position than both Aborigines and Papuans in this externally imposed hierarchy (Ganter, 1994). For the Islanders of Torres Strait, in both arenas, the activities and the

customs of the Europeans were greatly mediated by South Sea Islanders and their customs.

With the arrival of the third wave of intervention, the Queensland Government, and the expansion of both marine and missionary activity, this emerging hierarchy would be formalised in the legislation affecting 'natives'. Legislation was initially directed at the marine industry. Although annexation of the islands within sixty miles of the mainland occurred in 1872 for primarily strategic reasons, the 1879 annexation of the rest of the Strait seems to have been largely a response to the activities of the marine industry. Much of this activity was being conducted outside territorial waters in order to escape government jurisdiction. The 1872 Pacific Islanders Protection Act was enacted by British parliament out of concern over the abuses of the labour trade. Popularly known as the Kidnapping Act, it required vessels to hold special licences in an attempt to prevent the acquisition of Pacific Islanders as labour without their 'consent'. According to Ganter (1994) the legislation was vague and largely ineffectual but it did legitimate the presence of the Government. Its reference was to the employment of Islanders as crew and so it made no provision for employment in other capacities, effectively barring the use of South Sea Islanders and Torres Strait Islanders. An 1875 amendment to the Act overcame this problem and the 1879 Annexation extension enabled the government to travel around inspecting and regulating the activity of European fishermen.

The early interdependence of pearl-shell operators and government agents is evident in the Queensland Government enacted Pacific Islanders Protection Act 1880. Pearl-shell operators were aided by government officials who themselves held fishery interests. They argued that Polynesians were higher on the 'civilised' scale as demonstrated by their experience and their ability to organise their own forms of bargaining power in the forms of labour strikes and refusals to work. In this way they were able to keep the experienced South Sea Islanders (Polynesians) out of the terms of the Act, and were not

required to train the Torres Strait Islanders in the skilled aspects of diving. This enabled the upward mobility of Polynesians as the differentiated Torres Strait Islanders (and Aborigines) became increasingly subject to restrictions. This Act was more specific in the terms of its protection detailing the provision of medical attention, living space and provisions (Ganter, 1994). It was quickly followed by the Pearl-Shell and Béche-de-mer Fisheries Act 1881 which enabled the government to obtain revenue through its licensing operations by requiring labour to be signed on through written contracts and signed off again in Queensland. Previously much labour had been signed on in Sydney or other places.

The double-edge of the sword of protection becomes more clearly evident in the Native Labourers' Protection Act 1884. By requiring Queensland 'indigents', that is Aborigines, Torres Strait Islanders and Papuans, to be signed on and off and paid before a shipping master, and that they be returned home after twelve months, the government both extended better protection but restricted their employment (Ganter, 1994). This legislation emerged specifically in the context of the marine industry and the success of that industry in persuading the government to continue to exclude Polynesians from its terms illustrates its influence.

The next legislation concerning Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders was the Aborigines Protection and Prevention of the Sale of Opium Act 1897. This legislation was comprehensive in its terms and was to all intents and purposes about managing the 'problem' of a dying race. Its points of reference emerged out of concern for the plight of Aborigines on the mainland but it was also initially intended to further restrict the employment of indigents in the fishing industry.

However, the expansion of government activity in the Torres Strait, in the 1880s and 1890s, in response to marine and missionary activity, coupled with the direct influence of the pearl-shelliers was to be significant for the position

of Torres Strait Islanders in relation to this legislation, at least initially. In a significant victory for the pearl-shelliers, the final draft of the Act did not make any reference to the employment of indigenous labour in the marine industries. However continued concern about abuses in the industry led to the 1901 Amendment that did make specific reference to the employment of Aborigines. By stipulating the terms and conditions, including wages, of indigenous employment the government effectively prevented aborigines from negotiating their own terms of employment leading to considerable restriction on their participation in the industry.

However, the abuses of the industry cannot be ignored or understated. Both Ganter (1994) and Bleakley (1961) document some of the worst abuses. These included kidnapping, the putting to work of women and children, sometimes as young as six years, the sexual exploitation of women, abandoning them on Islands reefs or sandbars, defrauding them of the money wages due to them. But of most concern appears to be the exposure of Aborigines to addictive substances by paying them with such. Sugar, tea, and tobacco were supplied as the basic necessities of existence but it was alcohol and the dregs of opium addicts pipes that Chinese used as payment for services that caused the most concern to authorities.

Torres Strait Islanders were exempted from this Act. This was due largely to the influence of John Douglas, the Government Resident at Thursday Island. His argument echoed the arguments of pearl-shelliers and was supported by the Chief Protector. It was the same argument that the industry had used twenty years previously to exclude South Sea Islanders from the restrictions of government legislation. This argument, now afforded to the Torres Strait Islanders, was that Torres Strait Islanders were a superior race to the Aborigines and were better able to look after themselves (Douglas, 1899-1900; Bleakley, 1961; Ganter, 1994; Beckett, 1987). In this way labour was further stratified along racial lines and governed by different sets of regulations. The differentiation between the two groups, Aborigines and

Torres Strait Islanders, was reflected in wage differentials from the time the Department began regulating the wages of Torres Strait Islanders. It was continued through different styles of management for the two groups, and culminated in the separation of the legislation with the 1939 Torres Strait Islanders Act. An official acknowledgment of what they were doing is evident in a statement of the Minister of Health and Home Affairs when he introduced the two separate bills of legislation in 1939.

We propose to deal with the Torres Strait islanders [sic] under an entirely different Act because they have proved that they are capable of doing a great deal for themselves and do not need the strict control that is exercised over the mainland aboriginals....The question whether our mainland aboriginal would not have done as well as the islander [sic] if he had been given the same opportunity is a matter of opinion, but the islander [sic] has had greater advantages than the mainland aboriginal, inasmuch as his territory has been preserved for him. (Hanlon cited in Ganter, 1994, p. 42)

In this stratified order another theme weaves itself through this administrative practice - the intelligence, interchangeably described as ability, or mentality or as the psychology of the 'native' or Islander. The position of Islanders depended throughout this period on European perceptions of their intelligence in relation to others. This influenced and rationalised administrative decisions about the degree to which they were to be allowed to participate in the new order and live independently and free. But another paradox emerged and one that was increasingly to frustrate the Islanders. To participate in the new order fully required both access to new knowledges and skilling in new practices. By restricting their labour, by controlling their finances and movement, and by limiting their education, the government effectively ensured their continued administration of Islander affairs, for without full access to the new knowledges and practices, Islanders would always be confined to a lower and more dependent position. Islanders then

had to prove their ability before they could be trusted with more control of their own affairs.

But it was not just through the formal legislation that the Government began to extend its control. It was as much in the understandings and the styles of individual Government Residents and local Protectors in the Torres Strait and their interactions at the local and personal level with both the LMS and the pearling industry that we see significant changes in the interventions in Islanders daily lives. The activities of the LMS did not pass unnoticed by the Queensland Government or entirely with their approval any more than the activities of the unscrupulous pearlers had. There was more than passing concern expressed about the harshness of the regime (Bleakley, 1961). However, it was not until the Annexation of 1879 that the Government Resident gained jurisdiction over all the LMS missions. As well, early Government Residents were not well resourced and to a considerable extent relied on and benefited from the early groundwork of the LMS. Soon after Annexation, the Police Magistrate, HM Chester, appointed 'headmen' to be his representatives on the islands, in the absence of sufficient government resources to position European government agents on the Islands.

In 1885 John Douglas, a former Premier of Queensland, was appointed Government Resident on Thursday Island. He remained until his death in 1904 and his actions and style of administration were to have significant historical effects in the Torres Strait. He regarded the Islanders as

capable of exercising all the rights of British citizens, and [that] they ought to be regarded as such. They are a growing and intelligent people, and they want to be educated. They want to be educated even more than our people. They show an inclination for education that often exceeds that of our own white population. This is not an extreme statement. It is a true statement, which I can prove by facts, and I am quite sure that anyone who saw these people would be quite convinced that what I have said is true. (Douglas, 1899-1900, p. 35)

In 1892 he appointed the first of the teacher-supervisors to Murray Island and others followed this appointment in succeeding years to six islands. Although part of their brief was to instruct the children in the basics of English literacy and numeracy, these teachers were also the administrative arms of the Government and were selected less for academic qualification and more for administrative ability and common-sense (Bleakley, 1961). In 1899 he instituted a simple system of local island administration by elected councils of headmen with magisterial powers and village constables, thus introducing Islanders to the European idea of democratic procedure. This system was retained throughout the entire period of administration and provided the basis for the present system of self-management. It was hardly a form of self-rule as so often cited, the teacher-supervisor officially holding effective day to day control between the years 1911-1936 and the Protector holding the power of veto.

Douglas was instrumental in keeping Islanders out of the terms of the 1897-1901 Aboriginal Protection Act by arguing that they were quite capable of running their own affairs and of exercising their rights. However, after his death in 1904, Islanders were quickly brought under the Act, and deemed 'aboriginals' as far as the law and Government was concerned. No official explanation was given, though Bleakley (1961) writes that although some Islanders were managing their affairs well, many were not able to take care of themselves. South Sea Islanders remained exempt.

The marine industry, the Church and then the Government from Douglas' time allowed for local participation in the new order, though on terms that proceeded according to their own logic, that were already delineated by their own interests and sometimes subject to conflicts and struggle between those interests. In the marine industry Islanders were limited in the type of work that they could perform by the hierarchization of labour. In the Church, locals were allowed to participate in order to assist in the evangelisation of Papua New Guinea and later were allowed to proceed to the Deaconate to

administer to their own people mainly due to a shortage of Europeans. Through its system of elected Councils the Government allowed locals to participate in the running of their own affairs. The interactions between these three areas would both work in concert to tighten the control over Islanders and against each other to provide small spaces for Islanders to reassert themselves in the face of this control. In both Church and Government, Islanders contributed financially from the beginning and would be self-supporting except in time of famine, until the pearling industry collapsed in the 1960s. Their participation in the marine industry would earn them this money and their refusal to participate in it would, many years later, wield them considerable leverage in their demands for the removal of tight controls over their daily lives.

The Tightening of Protection: 1904-1936

In this period, the government 'protection' of Islanders which had begun in the 1870s as supervision of fishermen and their activities and then developed into a restricting web of legislation for Islanders, peaked in intensity and oppression as almost total deprivation of liberty by the 1930s. In the government's thinking this was able to be justified by the future vision held for Islanders. Even in the 1960s, Bleakley, the former Chief Protector, thought that the paternal relationship between government and Islanders could last until the turn of the century. Thus Islanders need only contribute to their upkeep and need only be educated to fit the needs of village life. Unskilled work with low wages that were well managed on their behalf was deemed adequate for the government's goal. To give Islanders more would give them ideas above their station (Bleakley, 1961). Continuing segregation from Whites accorded with the terms of the White Australia Policy and disallowed Islanders' movement to the mainland and knowledge of the conditions of workers elsewhere.

How was this achieved? How were controls for 'protection' progressively tightened until Islanders were virtual prisoners in their own islands? How was

the policy of segregation and secondary status continually rationalised, upheld, even applauded, when it relied on keeping Islanders in a position of dependency by denying them access to education, knowledge, skills and material resources of the European world without which they would never be able to take care of themselves?

The three major forces of industry, Church and Government continued to give shape to the daily lives of Islanders during this period. But Government influence was to be in ascendancy and Church influence was to be increasingly frustrated by a government administration which was increasingly concerned about controlling the finances of Islanders by controlling their labour and their participation in the pearling industry as well as their articulation to traditional subsistence activities. In this quest they came into conflict and competition with both Church and the marine industry and generated considerable resentment amongst Islanders. And again we are reminded in the historical documentation of these times that Islanders were not necessarily averse to all the changes occurring (Beckett, 1987). They showed a willingness to participate and co-operate in all three areas but their struggle was to be that of how to have their interests recognised in the terms and conditions of their participation. It was to be a losing struggle for Islanders as non-Islanders continued to proceed according to their own logic and interests. But where there was loss for Islanders, there was also the emergence of a new position for them, one of renewed strength that derived from the collective formation of formerly discrete, separate and oftentimes competitive communities into one that became united in its grievances against an increasingly harsh regime.

Administrative practice in this period centred on the control and regulation of Islander labour in the marine industry. Whilst the LMS continued to administer the religious and moral aspects of life they had a continued interest in Islanders working for cash and an interest in mediating that interaction. The Government had an interest in developing self-supporting communities

so they also had an interest in controlling the labour of Islanders and an interest in mediating the influence of the Church which drained Islanders of much of their cash. Islanders showed a spirit of independence with regard to their participation in the pearling industry and the disposal of the cash that it earned them. The government developed a corresponding response of increased control over that independence, through the control of their finances and their personal freedom of movement and communications. Thus regulation that was initially rationalised on the grounds that Islanders couldn't take care of themselves extended itself to eventually ensure that Islanders would always be dependent on governments and would never take care of themselves.

Although government legislation bounded the actions of the marine industry and the extent to which the LMS and its successor the Anglican Church could interfere in the secular lives of Islanders, the legislation was itself open to the various interpretations of individual protectors and their Islander representatives, the teacher-superintendents. These interpretations were themselves often in response to fluctuating marine markets and the activities of missionaries and the Church, and even on occasion to the demands of the Islanders themselves. Adding further to the complexities are the differences in the particular circumstances of the communities. In neither their response to the demands of the marine industry and the administration nor in their degree of participation and co-operation, could Islander communities be considered a homogenous group. Added to this is the position of the descendants of South Sea Islanders who until 1934 were exempt from the terms and conditions of the Act excluding those who chose to reside habitually with Islanders on the reserve communities.

From its commencement, Islanders had always participated in the marine industry both as wage labour on Master Pearling fleets and on their own accounts to bring in the cash needed for the material necessities that the civilised and Christian life required - Bibles, school requisites, clothing

utensils, buildings etc. (Sharp, 1993). Community life could spare young men to work on the master boats for the long seasons. But the smaller boats that worked close to communities found it difficult to maintain any profitability, particularly in view of the 'slop-chest' debits that accrued during the season. These debits were not clearly understood by Islanders and were subject to much suspicion with many Islanders believing that unscrupulous merchants were ripping them off when they bought their provisions and traded their shell. Understandably it made them reluctant to work the boats except at times of high prices.

In response to Islanders' concerns, and his own concern over 'idleness' of the 'natives', the missionary Walker established Papuan Industries Limited in 1904. He had to resign from the LMS to do so, the LMS expressing concern that this level of commercial activity was a conflict of interest with the missions' aims. The LMS in refusing to antagonise the powerful trading companies, in particular Burns Philip who held the trading monopoly in the Western Papua district, argued against Walkers vision of a lugger scheme which would promote independent native enterprise. "If indigenes (sic) were started 'on the road to money making, they would be led to greed and avarice'" (Ganter, 1994, pp. 69-70). This is the continuing paradox of the missionary project. The pursuit of civilisation required the pursuit of material commodities but such a pursuit could also lead to the path of moral destruction. Their response to this dilemma was once again to mediate the Islanders' access to the means of material progress lest it should interfere with their spiritual progress. A scheme which had them working for themselves, separated from the influence of White workers, seemed to Walker a preferable alternative to full-scale entry into the cash economy, or to the idleness that limited participation in the cash economy would bring. Despite objections his lugger scheme went ahead and the government set up a similar scheme for Islanders who were too removed from Walker's Papuan Industries Limited (hereafter PIL) on Badu Island (Beckett, 1987). Thus with government and private backing Islanders were afforded a space in the

industry in which they could work for themselves and their communities. They purchased their boats with loans, and paid them off with interest out of the earnings from their catches. They worked very hard to clear themselves of debt and the scheme was initially looked upon as achieving its aims. The PIL and the government both sold the Islanders' produce and supplied provisions to Islanders to eliminate the risk of them being defrauded in both transactions by unscrupulous merchants, a practice that was difficult to monitor in a free market. These boats, worked co-operatively by island communities, were known as 'company boats'. As well, PIL and Government encouraged the planting of coconuts for copra, a commercially viable crop at the time (Bleakley, 1961).

However, the scheme was not considered a success for long. Once the Islanders paid off their boats they ceased to work them as hard. In effect, now as owners, they preferred to use their boats as they wished, for travel and communication, for fishing and community life and, when they needed cash, for commercial purposes. They were inclined to work if prices and conditions were good but were not inclined to work them according to the economic model of maximum efficiency. This use of the boats was considered by the government to reflect the native psychology - they were indolent, lazy and unreliable (Ganter, 1994; Bleakley, 1961). It was not seen as an intelligent response to incorporate aspects of the new economy to fit with both the demands of their new 'civilised' life and the continuing traditional demands of subsistence activity.

By encouraging Islanders to work their own boats the government achieved another goal that was greatly supported by the LMS. This was the maintenance of separation of the Islanders from the White population. For most Islanders the only Whites they would come into contact with were those that had authority over them. But the insertion of Islanders into the cash economy in order to support their separate communities was not a simple matter for the government or the Islanders. The traditional subsistence

economy required considerable time and effort on the part of communities and it was prone to seasonal failures. If gardens failed because of neglect through commercial activity, then government would be forced to provide relief. The task of maintaining a balance between the two economies came to be directed through government regulation rather than by leaving Islanders to determine the extent of their participation in the commercial sector (Beckett, 1987).

However, as noted above, Islanders did attempt to regulate this themselves and this is evident in the differences between various Islander communities in the degree to which they participated in the cash economy. In the eastern islands, fertile soils resulted in extensive traditional gardening as a major part of subsistence along with fishing. However the more arid western and central islands relied more on wild crops when they were available and to a larger extent produce from the sea. They were also more prone to famine and seasonal 'hungry times'. To these western and central communities the cash from commercial activity to purchase store bought provisions such as flour was more attractive than to the Eastern Islanders. Thus on Badu, for example, where the PIL store was close at hand, and agriculture was a less dependable activity and famine more common, Islanders were drawn further into the cash economy. By remaining less dependant on cash for their subsistence, and by virtue of their isolation and the fertility of their island, Murray Islanders developed an historical attitude of independence and distance from the government. This was in stark contrast to the other extreme, Badu Island, whose success in the marine industry was a reflection of its co-operation and close ties with the government.

Government regulation of this imbalance was often of a persuasive nature but at times there was definite coercion. When government became frustrated with the Islanders' lack of co-operation the response was regulation. Legislation, and the interpretation of it, was to a large degree dependent on individual Protectors and their personal styles. Up until 1906, the Chief

Protector was not insistent on indigenous participation in shelling and had opposed a government proposal to take responsibility for recruiting for the pearl-shell industry. But a change in protectors saw a change in support for the idea. Local protectors held seemingly as much influence as the Chief Protector. Bennett and O'Brien, the first two protectors who oversaw the lugger scheme remained quite enthusiastic about it despite its shortcomings and also regulated the activities of Japanese captains and recruiting practices. Costin who followed in 1907, was not only less enthusiastic about the degree of participation in the lugger schemes but, as well, relaxed the rules of recruitment for Islanders on master boats knowing that this led to more exploitation and ultimately desertions.

It was also Costin who brought the Islanders completely under the Act by denying them cash to spend as they wished. Ostensibly to prevent them from buying alcohol on Thursday Island, he issued a bank account for all men signed on wages boats. These accounts could only be drawn upon at island stores as credit. For small cash withdrawals they had to gain the permission of the Protector. In this way Islanders were effectively barred from spending on Thursday Island, and their spending limited to the bare necessities of life as dictated to them by those officials who supplied the goods for their stores. This policy, endorsed by the Chief protector, didn't go unchallenged in all government quarters. The Government Resident, Milman, who replaced Douglas, thought it unnecessarily harsh to enforce such a policy. The Chief Protector, in seeking to allay Milman's concerns, stated that deductions varied from 'boy' to 'boy' according to intelligence (Ganter, 1994). However, even at this early stage public criticism and opposition was discouraged lest it lead Islanders to think there was any cause for resentment. Milman was effectively silenced (Ganter, 1994).

Costin also resisted any moves to further expand the lugger scheme. Even though they were useful in tiding over 'hungry times' they were not considered profitable. Thus began a widening of the division between the

PIL and the government schemes both in terms of their vision for Islanders and in terms of their co-operation with each other. Ganter reports that the PIL regarded Islanders as “fully autonomous entrepreneurs with property rights over their luggers” (1994, p. 76). The Protector on the other hand considered them to be:

wards of the state, not the fully responsible legal entities of a business relationship. In the eyes of the Queensland government, they had no land rights, no rights to their labour, and no rights of property. (Ganter, 1994, p. 77)

This meant that luggers, although bought and paid for by Islanders, remained essentially in trust for the natives. The government could assert, when questioned, that Islanders owned their luggers but by preventing them from disposing of their produce in a free market, or of being entitled to the proceeds, the Protector achieved effective control over them. Islanders, however, continued to view the luggers, once fully paid for, as their own property.

Thus just with the change of a Protector considerable restrictions were effected. According to Ganter,

[t]he government teacher at Mabuiag testified that indigenous people had become more restricted in their spending since Costin’s arrival: ‘when Mr O’Brien was here he paid half the money to them and they spent it themselves; but since Mr Costin came here he has altered that, and he had the handling of the whole money - he pays them what sum he thinks proper’. (Ganter, 1994, p. 77)

As well, Costin tightened control over the Islanders who operated through the PIL thus making PIL operations difficult. He demanded to see PIL accounts to ensure fair operations and concluded that the natives were getting the better of the PIL. He tried to further erode them by persuading Islanders

that they could earn more working on wages boats. This was the difference in vision. Where the PIL sought to increase the Islanders separateness, independence and participation by learning to labour for themselves, the government sought to develop an efficient and competitive workforce that would keep the communities self-sufficient via contribution to the government that administered them. His actions occurred with the approval of a Chief Protector who was also keen to see the communities self-sufficient.

Although pronounced a failure by Costin, Islanders considered the scheme a success, despite variations in the degree to which they entered into the scheme. Islander communities also varied in their use of the money but on the whole used it to improve their material standard of living. On Saibai the proceeds went to house construction for all married couples; the Mabuiag community displayed their wealth by building a Church. This was the independence that Costin wanted to bring under government control.

Despite criticisms the scheme continued although the rules changed. The lugger scheme expanded in 1907 because of plummeting world prices that resulted in 200 Islanders being laid off work on the master boats. In 1911 the Protector formally substituted the power of the Mamus and Council to the government teacher. In this way the teacher, rather than the Council, could decide who and when should work the boats. Thus in 1912, the Protector could report that nearly all boats were in credit, adding

[t]his satisfactory position was not easily attained, as most of the natives do not worry about being in debt, and resented our efforts to place them on a sound footing. In course of time they realised we had no intention of being turned from the object in view, and resigned themselves to the inevitable. (Ganter, 1994, p. 82)

In 1912 the Island Fund was established. This involved the deduction of earnings to provide a fund that government could access in times of famine, that would contribute to the services on the Islands and that would look after the aged, the sick and those unable to work. In 1913 the Islander response to

such constant interference, led by the Murray Islanders, was a 'disinclination to work' on boats. Government interference and a lack of funds also contributed to the withdrawal of the LMS from the communities whose Churches were taken over by the Anglican Church in 1914. The Church lent support to Islanders by protesting at the rate of the deduction, 20 per cent, which was imposed even though workers were paying income tax to the Australian federal government.

The initial 'supervision', by the government, of the intrusive and often exploitative activities of pearl-shellers and missionaries had given way to 'protection' through regulation. That it was now being tightened by further legislation and practices designed to 'discipline' the 'native', is evident in the following abstract from the Protector's 1915 report. It also indicates that Islanders were responding and struggling to maintain some degree of control over their lives.

The past year was marked by a strong feeling of unrest among the people, which manifested itself in refusals to work when good employment was offering, and, in a few places, by open disregard of departmental authority...They have a very good idea of the limits of our authority, and, while willing to obey all directions that can be supported by the Acts and Regulations, strenuously oppose attempts to improve their condition which are not within the four corners of legislation relating to aboriginals... For many years officials and others interested in the welfare of the islanders [sic] have endeavoured to persuade all able-bodied men to engage in congenial employment, or work their own boats in a systematic manner. In a few instance these efforts have been successful, but, unfortunately, in most places results are not encouraging, particularly so in the eastern group...As we are endeavouring to gradually raise a strong healthy race to a higher plane, it is the duty of these people to take the utmost advantage of the facilities provided for them...In some quarters this procedure would be termed 'slavery', but any person who possesses an intimate knowledge of the people and the subject will think otherwise. The islanders [sic] have not yet reached the state when they are competent to think and provide for themselves; they are really overgrown

children, and can best be managed, for their own welfare, as a prudent parent would discipline his family. (Ganter, 1994, p. 83)

But the value of community owned luggers was evident in times of plummeting pearl-shell prices such as occurred with the outbreak of World War 1. Islanders were able to bring in small amounts of cash by fishing for béche-de-mer and as well used the boats to ensure their food supply. In 1915 they entered the trochus shell market and were able to work effectively, trochus being much easier to collect than pearl-shell.

However, resentment of the administration continued to build. With lower prices and more expensive maintenance, neglected boats, or insufficient returns by Islanders, were dealt with punitively by confiscating and reallocating boats to more profitable communities. In 1919 Protector Foxton reported Islander discontent over administrative control of their earnings:

When it is pointed out that the compulsory banking deduction averaged, say 50 per cent at the most of the total wages earned, and of that deduction nearly 60 per cent was returned to the owner in clothes and other benefits, it will be seen that the hardship alleged is somewhat overstated. (Bleakley cited in Ganter, 1994, p. 85)

Discontent continued and in 1921 the Murray Islanders went on strike.

In 1922, the next Protector, O'Leary, effected the final stage of metamorphosis of the lugger scheme from that of a co-operatively owned scheme to increase Islanders' independence to a fully viable and competitive commercial enterprise, controlled and managed by the government. To achieve this, his role became that of a merchant as his administrative decisions reflected market considerations (Ganter, 1994). Most communities appear to have responded to this, good prices raised wages to the level of master boats,

and company boats increasingly operated further from home. Only Murray Island appears to have been reluctant to engage any further with the industry on the terms set by the government.

In 1922 Walker from the PIL retired and the goals of the PIL and the government once again became more closely aligned. Tensions between them eased and facilities were shared. In 1927 the PIL began training boat-building apprentices at a newly acquired boat slip on Thursday Island undercutting the competitive Japanese who held the monopoly. When markets fell in 1930, the PIL were unable to continue operations and their Torres Strait operations were bought out by the Queensland Government, using 8,000 pounds of Islander savings (Campbell et al.). The Protector became the Manager of this amalgamated Aboriginal Industries Board. Thus the 'protection' of Islanders was officially and without much pretence the regulation of their labour, control of their wages and their spending, as well as the control of their movements, to ensure the supply of labour stayed within the region.

Perhaps most Islander communities would have been prepared to accept the control of labour in return for this increased participation in the pearling industry had it coincided with increased participation in other areas of life. Success brought a certain amount of satisfaction as good prices were reflected in an increased prosperity to many communities. This prosperity was enabled by an Administration that began to see the sense in extending the availability of material goods to Islanders as this in turn provided a motivation to work (Beckett, 1987). Thus the formerly tight restriction on consumer goods became more relaxed, though the Protector still decided how much and which individuals were to receive what he deemed appropriate. Diving for pearl-shell became a way of life and part of a reconstituted identity. It was the only means of earning wages apart from very limited openings in the administration as store managers, teachers and health workers. Islander men thus had little alternative but to co-operate with the government over the

issue of labour. But the tightening of government control seeped through all levels of Islander life and was not just confined to labour. Where increased prosperity through their own labour might have opened up possibilities to become skilled in other areas such as the management of their money or improving educational levels so that Islanders could be eventually trained to look after their own affairs, the reverse occurred. The government instead tightened the regulations that governed daily lives ensuring their continued control. In restricting Islanders control over their earnings the government generated a festering discontent. But in restricting control over their persons, the government caused more than discontent - they caused untold pain and a deep-seated anger, and fertilised the seeds of revolt.

In 1921, the government relocated the Hammond Island tribe to remove them from the close and tempting proximity to alcohol on Thursday Island. Although the Islanders expressed a preference to move to Prince of Wales Island, the government chose Moa Island because it already had a school. They were moved under an armed police escort. Sharp cites an Islander who remembers:

...I saw my uncle that brave, just go and push all those white police who come out with revolvers...I was frightened they might shoot my uncle. So the police said, 'You jump in the dinghy you cheeky boy' and put a revolver to my chest and pushed me into the dinghy. The mothers and sisters all cry and go and take all their things and Badu and Moa people made grass houses at Poid, Moa. It was oh, big cry that night. (1993, pp. 139-140)

But along with the pain of such events there was the added burden of humiliation. Islanders increasingly needed permission for everything. For day to day matters they had to deal with the teacher/superintendents and these varied in their personal approaches as much as the Protectors. What could be endured if the Protector or teacher/superintendent was fair-minded and honourable in his personal dealing with Islanders could not be accepted if

they were not. In the early 1930's, despite the hard work and increased earnings of Islanders in the pearling industry, the controls kept tightening. The callousness of the more restrictive laws and the incumbent Protectors' disregard for the humanity and intelligence of Islanders inherent in his personal attitudes to them was to invoke the most serious crisis that the government had ever faced since they intruded into the lives of Islanders. Not only was travel between Islands restricted, it was necessary to have a permit. Without a permit, individuals could expect to be and in many cases were caught by the police, stood before the courts, and fined. Talking to or consorting with members of the opposite sex was prohibited. One Islander recalled,

Before the War when our people fall in love, younger people fall in love and police find them - if they meet together, kiss or walk about together - they must come to stand before the court. The law punished them by making their hair cut in two parts, shaved on one side. I was a boy then. I worked beside it. In the time of McLean. (Sharp, 1993, p. 143)

This same Islander was imprisoned for three months and given hard labour at the age of fourteen for walking back to the village in the company of a White girl whilst running a message.

It was, in fact, in most cases, Island courts and Islander policemen that exercised the letter of the law. How was it, in the face of such widespread community resentment, that Islanders were able to participate in the regulation of each other, to participate in their own humiliation? The Islanders' predicament was a difficult one. The Council System was their only legitimate means for participation in any local administrative affairs. This mechanism was available to them only because it depended on the close personal supervision by the teacher/superintendents and the Protector. This was a structural expression of the accepted paternal relationship between Islanders and the Queensland government, a relationship defined on a racial

basis. It is the relationship we saw emerge in the writing of McFarlane and Haddon. It is a relationship carefully crafted and maintained as unequal.

In that such a relationship was established and rationalised on a premise of European superiority, it required continual moderation in practice to maintain the inequality between the two groups, for the relationship was unable to be considered, by the government, in any other terms. Thus we see at a time when Islanders were developing their skills in line with the new order, and increasing their earning capacity which could provide the means of material independence, that is the means to take care of themselves, the government moderated the other factors in the equation. Whilst earning capacity went up, other capacities were held constant or reduced lest the altered balance destabilise the status quo. Thus Islanders educational opportunities were not extended. They were to be denied the experience of handling their own finances, lest some be lost or squandered along the way, or worse that they might show themselves capable of looking after their needs. Their freedom of movement was reduced to make surveillance and control easier. Their interactions with non-Islanders were likewise monitored to keep them from gaining knowledge of the outside world, so that the inequities in the relationship could not be questioned. This was all measured to be in the 'best interest' of the Islanders.

Despite these restrictions Islanders were able to take their measure of the government. They were well versed in a creed that preached all men were equal before God. They developed on the one hand, a view of their situation as unjust. On the other hand, they had for fifty years lived a community life according to the moral code of the missionaries that demanded adherence to a work ethic, and to a closely regulated and disciplined daily life. This discipline, although purported to be discipline of the 'self', was effected by external regulation both by the public process of 'shaming', that is by the mockery of the transgressor by others, and the enforcement of regulations as expressed in 'Island Law' which were the by-laws of Island Councils.

References to these laws often cite their basis as customary law that existed and had been passed down from pre-contact time (Bleakley, 1961; Beckett, 1987). Some may well have been influenced by custom, such as resolution of land disputes, but much of this law appears to be rooted in the code imposed by the early LMS missionaries (Beckett, 1987). Some of the laws varied from island to island, but although decided by the Island Councils they were subject to veto by the Protector. Islander magistrates and policemen were able to enforce these laws but in more serious cases the Protector judged cases. In some instances, the Protector intervened to protect Islanders from the overzealousness of some of the Islander magistrates. Some of these laws, in the interests of supervision and discipline sanctioned gross invasions of privacy. For example, in the interests of health and hygiene all children were taken for a supervised swim each morning. As part of this morning discipline, Islander policemen also inspected each household to ensure breakfast was being cooked. Islander women complained to Bishop White that they objected to these officials lifting the lids of pots to inspect what was being cooked (White, 1917). Where moral regulation, enshrined in a regulated code that was part of civil law, was an accepted practice, the boundary between public and private seemed not to exist. That such laws would have probably been deemed unconstitutional under Australian law did not prevent the Queensland government and its agents from taking full advantage of the restrictions that these laws placed on personal liberties. Nor did it prevent particular agents, for example the Badu Island school teacher, Mrs Zahl, from tightening the laws and enforcing them harshly.

There is no detailed comparative investigation of the differences between Islander communities, beyond Beckett's analysis of Badu, Saibai and Murray Island in the 1960s, but the extreme harshness of the Badu regime may not have existed elsewhere. On Badu, in the 1930s, the dovetailing of the agendas of Islander Council and government teacher occurred with the emergence of a strong, dominating and competitive personality in the form of the Island's Chairman. Other islands may have, by virtue of the personalities of both

Chairman and teacher, been far more relaxed about how law was interpreted and enforced. Whilst the Council at Badu became entrenched and dynastic and oppressive, other Island Councils exercised their democratic will by changing the composition of Councils through their vote, whenever dissatisfied. But in time dissatisfaction with the government that controlled the Councils and the Act that gave them the scope to enforce this, became the target of dissatisfaction amongst Islanders. Thus whilst there was much internal politics this did not completely submerge the bigger analysis that Islander troubles were the result of government policy. And it was this analysis that was to unite Islanders in 1935-36.

Election of the Councils was hardly democratic, voting procedure varied. In some places boxes labelled with the candidates name were placed in the hall. Voters dropped a shell in the box carrying the name of their preferred candidate. This was done under the watchful eye of an Islander policeman whose presence was justified to ensure nobody came through twice. In other places voters drew a chalk mark on a board in the column under the name of their preferred candidate, once again scrutinised by an Islander policemen (Raven-Hart, 1946). Effectively, there was no secret ballot and the room for standover tactics or subtle coercion on the part of candidates was not closed off. This mockery of democratic procedure was paralleled by the veto on all decisions of the island Council by the local Protector and by the enormous influence of the teacher-supervisors. Thus island councils could raise, discuss, and reach decisions that were never responded to by an amendment to law. Island Councils thus operated as a rubber stamping system for the government. In some places they worked co-operatively and were rewarded with benefits and privileges not given to other communities. In other places relative isolation enabled them to quietly ignore directives. In other places there was no escape from co-operation but the price was increasing resentment and frustration.

But the most insidious practice of the government was, ironically, their benevolence. The governments' relationship with Islanders differed from the one it had with Aborigines. Missionaries had already effected the reorganisation of community life. Islanders' land was not threatened by the advance of pastoralists and the means of subsistence survival was still available. Once the activities of pearl-shellers was effectively regulated the governments interest lay in containing the Islanders in the Torres Strait, and taking advantage of a marine economy to develop a separate, self-sufficient society of Islanders. A society perhaps with a degree of self rule but with no aspiration to be part of the wider Australian community (Bleakley, 1961). This was reflective of a White Australia policy and the notion of European racial superiority. The administration was secure in the knowledge that Islanders would remain where they were, contributing to their upkeep in an order that had been rationalised to Islanders since the time of the first missionaries. They afforded to Islanders a degree of benevolence that was generally not afforded to Aborigines on the mainland.

This benevolence expressed itself in the formalities and procedures of the effectively powerless island Councils and their interactions with the teachers and the Protectors. It was aided by the small population and the Protectors' ability to know Islanders personally, to greet them personally, and to take care of their individual problems as if it were personal favour. It was refined to the extent that Islanders learnt that their relationship with teachers and Protectors influenced their access to government benefits and privileges. These might include access to free passage, to inside information and knowledge about White affairs, the degree of respect bestowed upon them and their families by Whites, their access to their savings, etc. It introduced friendship and intimacy into the relationship, and widened the avenues of regulation through friendly persuasion rather than force. It allowed the Protector to be seen as separate from his governments policies. It co-opted Islander participation in their own imprisonment (Sharp, 1993).

But where a dependence on the intimate relationship existed to ensure co-operation, so did the reduction of benevolence reduce the level of co-operation. Despite ongoing and building frustration and resentment Islanders united only after the appointment of an unsympathetic Protector. This was a Protector who did not treat Islanders as if they were intelligent, who did not accord respect. McLean was prone to throwing Islanders out of his office when they raised grievances. He tightened all the regulations and he used force. In 1934, the descendants of South Sea Islanders, who had since the beginning of legislation been exempted from the Act were now brought under it and subject to the same restrictions. This caused outrage and anger in this community and Islanders gained renewed support from South Sea Islanders. Between 1933-5 the Anglican Bishop also became publicly critical of the government administration and in his 1935 address to the Synod encouraged the idea of transferring Islander affairs to the Commonwealth government. Thursday Island shopkeepers (with a prudent eye on the Islander patronage long denied them) added to the rising moral support for Islanders grievances (Sharp, 1993). But although Islander discontent was rising to a crescendo in the communities, the government remained unaware of the severity of the situation. It was not until the post-strike investigation that the actions of McLean would come to official light. Although he would be dismissed to placate Islanders and redress the situation, the damage would not be able to be undone. Islander analysis of the situation would continue to see the abolition of the Act as the only eventual solution to their ongoing discontent (Sharp, 1993, Beckett, 1987.)

In January 1936, the Islanders retaliated in response to this extreme control. They withdrew their labour from all government boats all over the Strait. It took the government completely by surprise. It was a major tactical feat, given the distances and the lack of modern communication technology of the time. It was a defining moment in the history of the Torres Strait people. It defined them as a collective - Torres Strait Islanders. It gave them national press that solicited support for them from White unions and White liberals.

It lasted for four months and one island refused the negotiated compromise that was eventually worked out. The Murray Islanders never went back to the government boats. Many years later, in the 1980s, they would continue this tradition and refuse the Deed of Grants in Trust Legislation drawn up by the Queensland government, as a step towards self-management. They would then turn their efforts toward contesting the legal concept of Terra nullus that had rendered their Islands property of the Crown. Their eventual triumph would be the legal and enacted recognition, in 1993, of title to their own Islands and the acceptance that Native Title may still exist in other parts of Australia.

The strike was eventually resolved through the efforts of O'Leary a former Protector. He investigated grievances and persuaded the government to allow some concessions to Islanders. McLean's assertion that the trouble was mainly caused by non-Islanders, including shopkeepers on Thursday Island and the Church, was to be dismissed as the primary cause as O'Leary's investigation uncovered the depth of resentment of Islanders. That it was so difficult to persuade Islanders to return to their boats, even with better wages and conditions, led O'Leary to understand that they were demanding something much more fundamental - the removal of the restrictions of the Act (Beckett, 1987).

O'Leary's style was the masterly refinement of patronisation that Sharp (1993) has captured in her detailed account of the strike.

He treated them 'as individuals of ordinary intelligence', capable of engaging in 'candid discussion' (Report 11 May 1936, p. 11)...Nevertheless 'appreciating their intelligences' did not preclude inducement and manipulation into accepting their lot as non-citizens in a continuing paternalist relationship: '...it should be the policy by sympathetic treatment of the aboriginals to induce them to recognise the benefit which they can obtain from the measures designed from their protection and assistance'. (Report 28, cited in Sharp, 1993, pp. 203-4)

O'Leary set up mechanisms that allowed the administration to achieve by indirect means, that is, by persuasion and co-operation, what the teacher/superintendents had become used to achieving through coercion and penalty. The iron fist of administration had been forced to don a new pair of soft gloves.

Concessions granted to Islanders came to be known as 'New Law'. The more controversial matters which concerned Islanders were conciliated during the resolution of the strike and were circulated amongst Islanders prior to a 1937 Councillors' Conference which was left to resolve some of the more straightforward matters. Many powers of the teachers were passed over to the island Councils and this reorganisation resulted in repeal of the more oppressive regulations and relaxed restrictions on personal liberties. It also gave Islanders more control of the recruitment for boats, closer involvement in the sale of shell and the distribution of earnings. These laws were enshrined in the Torres Strait Islanders Act of 1939, an Act which officially differentiated them from Aborigines. Resolutions were also put forward by Islanders that could not be acted upon by Islanders but which were matters to be considered by the Minister. These mechanisms, then, were to afford Islanders a renewed degree of independence in local government matters and an avenue for consultation with the Minister. The process was a two-way street as closer relations between island Council chairmen and the authorities meant that they relied on those in government for advice and knowledge of official matters. As well, final authority rested on the local Protector, and island Councils had to earn his trust by complying with policy and governing responsibly to his satisfaction.

In accepting the 'New Law' Islanders had conceded that there would be no end to the 'Act'. But the nature of some of their resolutions must have indicated to the government that Islanders had set themselves upon a course that would continue to pursue better conditions, more independence and the eventual repeal of the Act. Sharp (1993) points out that resolutions indicated

an ongoing determined pursuit of both equality and independence. These included the call for maternity allowances as were available to other Australians and that Islanders be trained to be 'pump divers' on par with the more skilled, more productive and better paid Japanese; a skill from which they had previously been excluded. They also included requests for secondary schooling, improved health facilities and even further control over island affairs.

But the root of the problem was never conceded - that of the control of the personal finances of Islanders. The governments' economic agenda remained intact. The paternal relationship endured the process of reform. The reform was limited to 'in house' reorganisation, the house itself remained as solid and as encompassing as ever. The interpretative framework through which the government viewed the Islanders' position had been challenged but the status quo remained unchanged. When Islanders realised that they would continue to be governed under the Act, one was heard to say: "We are in a closed box and wait for the lid to be taken off" (Islander to the Deputy Chief Protector in 1936; cited in Sharp, 1993, p. 181).

Temporarily pacified by the concessions, the Islanders may not have been content for long but a bigger event was to intervene and once again redirect their focus. This was the outbreak of the Pacific theatre of the Second World War. It was to have ramifications that the Queensland government could not control.

The War and beyond: The disruption of Queensland Government control

The war was to have ramifications for Islanders that even the government could not have foreseen. The war would not just bring massive disruption and re-organisation of life within the Strait due to military threats. It would also herald a changing world order. This order would see the post-war emergence of the United Nations as an advocate for human rights around the globe which would slowly force Australian governments to reassess the way

they treated Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders. The post-war era would also see the decline of the colonial empires of European nations as the colonised pursued independence from their colonisers. The military experience for Islander men would bring renewed hope and confidence for them in the form of new skills and knowledge from the outside. But once again this hope would be frustrated by the slow pace of post-war reform.

The war brought about the evacuation of everyone in the Strait except the Islanders as the Japanese moved down through South East Asia and across the Pacific and threatened Australia by their invasion of Papua New Guinea. Islanders, as indigenous people, could not be conscripted, not being citizens. After some confusion as to what the role of Islanders was to be Islanders through a process of eliciting volunteers were brought together and trained by White officers on Thursday Island (Hall, 1997). Working alongside the White garrison, the hitherto isolated world of the Islands was opened up for the Islander soldiers. They gained the respect of their White officers for their discipline, their considerable skills and capacity for hard work, and their extensive local knowledge of sea, reefs, weather and seasons. They were not treated equally, either in terms of their pay, or in terms of the punishment metered out for breaches of discipline. Nevertheless, they formed friendships with White soldiers who were for the first time officially of equal rank, and gained much knowledge of the outside world (Hall, 1997). These men were generally older men, as younger men were sent to the centres of action. Sharp (1993) reports that, as unionists themselves, a number of them were supportive of Islander wishes to be free of the Queensland Department of Native Affairs (or DNA) and of their desire for equal pay. Islander soldiers went on strike for equal pay and conditions, and in 1944 their pay was raised to 2/3 of that of White soldiers. Whilst they might have to this point thought of themselves as slowly advancing under the policies of the Queensland government in a material sense at least, they discovered just how disadvantaged they were in relation to the rest of Australia. And astutely, some of their grievances over army pay and conditions were directed not at

the army but at the Queensland Department of Native Affairs who continued to control their money, although it was army pay and not in anyway derived from the marine economy. Their long held frustrations, resentments and grievances were affirmed by their White friends as a window on the wider world was held open.

The War introduced the Commonwealth government (the army) to Islanders as a higher authority than the Queensland government. It brought with it the public discourse of freedom, the principle that all soldiers were fighting for. In giving service and loyalty to King and country, the Islanders assumed they were fighting for their entitlement to be free, that is, that the idea of a 'free' world also included them. They returned to their home islands after the war with a renewed hope of 'freedom', now expressed in terms of 'citizen rights' (Sharp, 1993; Beckett, 1987). This renewal was strongly derived from a new view of themselves which emerged out of the development of new skills and knowledge, as well as an acknowledged respect and camaraderie and relationship with their fellow White soldiers. It gave them renewed confidence to pursue their freedom from the conditions of the Act.

However, after the war they went straight back to life under the Act, as the colonial order of the Queensland Department of Native Affairs reasserted its authority. But in their ongoing quest for freedom Islanders would eventually be aided by a changing world order and the emergence of the United Nations and its accompanying discourse of human rights. At the national level these discourses were expressed through post-war organisations. such as the Federal Council of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advancement, the Australian Communist Party, and the Australian Legion of Ex-servicemen and Women. At the international level such discourses brought increasing scrutiny of Australia's treatment of its indigenous people generally, eventually resulting in the direct involvement of the Commonwealth government in the indigenous affairs of the States.

Their quest for freedom would also be aided by the decline of the pearling industry. The regulation of Torres Strait Islanders had been closely tied to the regulation of their labour and marine resources. The demise of the industry, then, and the lack of alternate sources of revenue and labour would remove from the government their main justification for such comprehensive control over the personal affairs of Islanders. And with the increasing supplementation of dwindling wages by the extending of the arms of the welfare state, through federally funded and implemented schemes, the role and relative authority of the Queensland government would be further eroded though never withdrawn.

The Queensland government continued to administer Islander people and yielded no ground in the managing of their money. The marine economy, buoyed by an initial, though temporary, post-war prosperity, which, coupled with war time savings, provided for the rebuilding of neglected communities and fleets and allowed for increased personal spending. This activity initially delayed any overt expressions of discontent but with the decline of the pearling industry in the 1950s due to the advent of plastics, the administration came to recognise the inevitability of change. Whilst unemployment rose in the Torres Strait, the sugar industry and then the railways in Queensland were in great need of labour. The government responded to requests from eastern Islanders who were not involved with company boats to emigrate to the mainland. Here on the mainland Islanders were left to negotiate their labour in a free market and control their own earnings. Unless they got into trouble, they were no longer controlled by the government. Although confined to low wages by their lack of skills, they were generally paid the same as whites in these positions and could earn much more than they could in the Strait. Their children also had access to secondary schooling for the first time. The 'experiment' was successful with Islanders quickly gaining a reputation as 'good tropical workers' and sought after as such (Beckett, 1987).

Initially, the government with the co-operation of the island chairmen strictly controlled this migration. As the island population continued to grow and the marine industries continued to decline the government increasingly left the granting of permission to leave to the discretion of individual island Councils. Thus where men could be spared they were allowed to leave but on Badu, for example, where boats were still operating profitably and required crews, permission was rarely granted and those that chose to defy this were often exiled and denied permission to return. Thus although there was no exemption clause in the Torres Strait Islander Act, Islanders were increasingly free to leave the islands as their labour was no longer needed there, and as the means to support themselves was diminished.

For those remaining on the Islands the administration of their lives continued in the same manner. The 'protector' was now the 'manager' but he was still known personally and knew personally most Islander families. Though changes came to pass, such as voting rights in 1961 and 1965, and an increasing flow of information from the South, there was never again mass public dissent as had been expressed in the strikes of 1936 and during the war. But the disgruntlement of Islanders continued to be expressed amongst themselves as they struggled to develop a coherent voice with which to articulate their resentment at the slow pace with which social and political reforms continued to occur (Sharp, 1993).

As well, the paradoxes of earlier times continued, especially in the continuing paternalist relationship of the government with Islanders. Where Islander representation of issues relied on the ability of Councillors, the Councillors shared the bind of all Islanders, that of lack of education. But for the Councillors and indirectly thus, for all Islanders it became a double bind. Without the level of education or the English language with which to assess their situation in relation to the rest of Australia, the Councillors remained dependent to a large degree on the Minister and his agents, for their understanding of their situation and of the possibilities that were open to the

government. Thus those island Chairmen who were happiest with their lot were also those least likely to upset the government and more likely to persuade their communities that their faith should be with the government. They were also those that had the most to lose. Those with less reason for allegiance had virtually no alternative avenue through which to gain ground, except for the superficial flirting with non-Islander groups. Thus those communities, dissatisfied with their Chairmen could change the incumbent but without the unanimous support of other communities little pressure could be exerted. The one exception to this was the leverage Islanders were able to gain by playing off the federal and state governments against each other, such as occurred during the border issue in the 1970s. But this was over an issue that threatened to divide Torres Strait Islanders and leave them straddling the border of two different nations. In this case there was once again a clear position of unity (Beckett, 1987).

A clear discernible cleavage emerged in local politics along conservative/radical lines. Conservatives argued for caution, patience, co-operation and faith in the government; radicals continued to demand the end of the Act, further local control and in many cases self-government (Beckett, 1987).

This paradox was nowhere more evident than in the question of citizenship for Islanders in the 1950s and 60s. Despite the Islanders ongoing quest for freedom, their renewed call for citizen rights after the war was not encouraged by the government, despite support for it from other quarters. With citizenship, argued the government, came responsibility, and the government questioned whether Islanders were ready for the responsibility when their level of education was so low. Cautious Islanders deferred to this argument, many of them sensitive to their lack of education that had been one of their ongoing grievances with the government. However not all Islanders were satisfied with this rationalisation, as expressed in the following sentiment:

They say we can't get freedom till we better educated. But that same talk since before the war. When my father was councillor they ask more education. How long we been ask that thing and never got it yet? Torres Strait people never will get education while they under the Act. While we under the Act we'll always be down. (Beckett, 1987, p. 105)

Islander analysis continued to see the Act as the ongoing cause of their troubles but as regulation of personal liberties gradually relaxed, and conservative Councils seemed reconciled to the established order, other forces began to work (Beckett, 1987). In 1973 the newly formed Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs opened an office on Thursday Island and thus began a formal relationship with island Councils along the well oiled tracks put in place by the State government. As well, Islanders gained official representation in Canberra through the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee. With their monopoly on control now officially broken, the State nevertheless continued their administration. It was not until the 1980s that the issue of land control would be resolved in the form of the Deed of Grants in Trust legislation as a concession to self-management. Even then it would be a marked compromise on the part of Islanders and Murray Islanders would reject it altogether. Islanders would proceed down the path of autonomy and self-management, already delimited by the federal and state governments. And the structural mechanisms for achieving this would remain much the same as they had always been, via the long instituted local council system. The government would have power of veto over decisions and many Islanders would continue to feel frustrated by the rate of progress of reform.

Summary

The administration of Islanders, discussed in this Chapter, illustrates the material effects of the enactment of a particular relationship between Islanders and non-Islanders. The purpose of this Chapter has been to highlight the position of Islanders in this historical context. It has been an

attempt to show how the content of regulation of Islanders' lives was constituted in their pre-figured relationship to non-Islanders. It has not been to dwell on the harshness of the regime or the events that describe it.

Rather, it has been to demonstrate that the possibilities for Islanders, who and what they could be, were constrained by the relationship that gave form and content to the external regulation of their lives by non-Islanders. Further, that Islanders' regulation of themselves as they responded to this regime was both pre-conditioned by this relationship and by their own continuity with a different historical context. In this sense, the absence of the view of Islanders, as being in part, formed and remade by their responses to this intervention, in the theorising and understanding of who and what they are today, is a major and crucial omission. That is, the understanding of Islanders' historical experience of this administrative regime does not belong only in the context of those times or in History. It informs and pre-conditions how Islanders' understand and respond to current forms of intervention and it informs who and what they are today. The consideration of the Islander as subject in current forms of intervention cannot be adequately represented if it fails to include this element of historical experience in its representation of who and what Islanders are.

Chapter Five

EDUCATIONAL IN(TER)VENTION: FORMING NON-ISLANDER AGENDAS IN NEW TIMES

*Tenebris Ad Lucem - From Darkness to Light (The motto of Thursday
Island State High School until 1985).*

The Islander that was constructed and given representation in the historical texts was an invention constitutive of a pre-figured relationship to Western knowledge systems. Islanders emerged over the past Century only in relation to what non-Islander authors knew and understood of their own world. In not being able to understand the Islander in any other way, the full and politically active Islander who makes and remakes himself in relation to his own world and its order is lost, absent, if not submerged.

However, the various textual invention in itself changes little for Islanders. The Islanders are not transformed in text to be that constituted secondary Islander. The Islanders continue on their own historical path, making and remaking themselves in response to all circumstances. In that the daily circumstances of Islanders begin to involve the interventions of others it is then that the constitutive effects of the textual construction begin to emerge.

The invention of a particular relationship between Islanders and non-Islanders both rationalised and enabled the intervention of non-Islanders in the lives of Islanders in the ways that this historically occurred. As seen in previous Chapters, the missionaries could not have had grounds for re-organising the lives of Islanders in the way that they did, without first understanding Islanders in the way that they did. In their intervention, the

missionaries first constituted and then enacted a power/knowledge relationship based on our perceived state of development in comparison to non-Islanders. This enabled Islanders to be accepted and understood in a Christian/heathen relationship as 'noble savages' whose souls needed to be rescued from the depth of darkness and bought to the 'light'.

Likewise, the academic scholars constituted and enacted a power/knowledge relationship based on a comparison between civilised/uncivilised that enabled Islanders to be seen as legitimate objects of study and subjects of scientific disciplines. This enabled the Islanders to be understood by others as characterised by a 'savage mind' that explained the limited development of their primitive communities and way of life.

The administrative regimes constituted and enacted a power/knowledge relationship between 'them' and 'us' as one between parent and child. This enabled not just protection from abuse but the continuing denial of 'adult' rights in the form of personal and political freedom. The material effects of such subjection ensured the continuing dependency on the 'welfare' of governments even when political status was finally granted.

The historical and ongoing effects of constituting the Islander, as 'Other', in a 'them and us' relation is well understood in terms of Islander disadvantage in relation to other Australians. For twenty-five years government policy has attempted to redress the past practices of administrations that have been the source of material disadvantage.

But there have been other effects of this constitution that, I have argued, are not so well understood. This is an understanding that, in daily life, Islanders respond to the positioning effects of the knowledges and discourses that surround them and that inform and regulate their lives. Our historical experience is not just the linear unfolding of events that have given shape to the direction of our lives and cannot be given full representation as such. It is tied inextricably to our responses to the intervention in our lives that occurred

in these events. Given that this intervention has positioned us as something other than what we were, our responses have been invariably about defending our own view of ourselves and working to uphold ourselves in the face of often demeaning practices. This history has helped to make Islanders what we are today.

The history of our responses to the interventions in our lives is the history of Islander struggle. This history has not been lost. It is embedded in the consciousness and memory of Islanders. It is also evident in the historical records (e.g., Bleakley, 1961) and this history of Islander struggle has been recounted and given voice in more recent analyses of Islander history (e.g., Beckett, 1987; Sharp, 1993; Osborne, E., 1997).

However, the ways that the tensions between the representation of our experience and how we experience the ongoing effects of Western systems of knowledge and thought has not been clearly documented in terms of how we continue to respond to the discourses that surround and inform our daily lives. That is, it is one thing to document the historical struggle of Islanders as they responded to the interventions in their lives and to understand that struggle in hindsight from the standpoint of the Islanders. But it is another thing to understand how Islanders are positioned in the here and now, and how our responses to the discourses that inform our daily lives constrain or enable us as we seek to deal with the ongoing tensions that arise from our relationship to non-Islander standpoints.

It is easy to assume that because the relationship between Islanders and non-Islanders is currently understood as being premised on the notion of equality that the differentials of the relationship involve no ascription of value to one position over the other. The differential is presented as merely a 'description', in this case of 'cultural difference'. It is a 'fact' of the relationship. How can it be indicative of a particular power/knowledge relationship when both Islanders and non-Islanders agree to the terms of the relationship and when

the relationship does depict the 'reality' of the relationship? Islanders and non-Islanders have different languages, histories, cultural understandings, traditions and ways of viewing the world.

To understand how much more than mere 'description' the current understanding of the relationship between Islanders and non-Islanders as 'culturally different' is, it is helpful to understand the history of the current educational reform that is informed by this understanding of Islanders.

The Historical Context of Current Educational Reform

In the 1970s education in the Torres Strait finally became a focus for reform. This reform emerged from a context of general political change that had been slowly creeping forward since the end of the Second World War. This change brought some political reform in the 1960s, accelerating in the 1970s into a process that has brought Islanders in the 1990s closer to their goal of regional autonomy for the Torres Strait.

Briefly, this changed path for Islanders commenced in the late 1940s when the Queensland government allowed for the first time, restricted migration to the mainland. In 1962, Islanders were allowed to vote in Federal elections and, in 1964, in State elections. In 1967, a national referendum gave the Commonwealth the power to enact special laws in reference to the affairs of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. However, it was not until the election of the Whitlam Labour Government in 1972, when this government assumed moral responsibility for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and began to assert its primacy in the role, that significant changes and reform began to occur (Attwood, Marcus, Edwards, & Schilling, 1997). Perhaps the most overriding change in this period was the creation of the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs which embarked on an energetic program of expenditure that led to policies and programs in areas of concern, such as law, health, housing, employment and economic development, and education.

These changes in the 1970s followed distinctive but overlapping eras in the policies that drove the management of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Initially there was in Queensland, a period of extermination between 1840 and 1897. This was not a legally sanctioned policy but little attempt was made to exact penalties against those guilty of killing Aborigines or Islanders. In 1897, under the *Aborigines Protection and Prevention of the Sale of Opium Act 1897-1901*, the policy came to be one of segregation and exclusion and it lasted until 1965. During this period of segregation, there had always existed a practice of 'merging' Aboriginal people of mixed Aboriginal and European descent into the European community, generally to relieve the State of their upkeep and to provide cheap labour. However in 1939, when two separate Acts were legislated for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, the principle of assimilation began to be ushered in, though it was not officially announced until 1956 and not legislated as policy until 1965 in the *Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Act 1965* (NISATSICFF Report). This principle did not apply to Islanders at all until the late 1940s, and then continued to be subject to considerable restriction until 1965. The principle of assimilation co-existed with the policy of exclusion, accommodating the desire of the government on the one hand to remove the aboriginal 'problem' from visibility and on the other to avoid the expense of maintaining those Aborigines who were capable of working and living in White society.

This period reflected the popular 'common-sense' thinking about 'natives' at the time. Segregation satisfied both those humanitarians who wanted Aborigines and Islanders 'protected' from the degradation of living on the fringe of White society and those who simply wanted them removed from visibility. Assimilation rested on the idea that 'inferior' cultural and tribal ways needed to be eliminated and Aborigines' identity assimilated into the framework of the majority, that is European society, if Aborigines were to make progress. In Queensland, this policy was not based on the interest, 'progress' or 'welfare' of Aborigines as often claimed. Its basis was largely economic. Aborigines on settlements cost the taxpayer money, so

assimilation into White society was an answer (Kidd, 1997). For Aborigines it was enacted more by design and less by provision, being implemented largely by forcing people off the reserves and removing children from their parents, an arbitrary practice.

Although officially the policy of assimilation held sway in Queensland from 1965 on and prior to that in practice, intellectuals and concerned citizens had already moved on long before this. Out of an understanding of cultural relativism as a way of viewing cultural difference came the idea of integration, a policy already attempted in India by Nehru in the 1950s. Integration aimed to join or integrate different communities without completely submerging their identities. This principle recognised that there was much in Aboriginal and Islander culture, society, language and art, that was valuable, even superior to modern civilisation, that should not be destroyed. Advocates of this approach in Queensland, also argued that Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders could “advance to full civilisation” (Campbell et al, 1958, p. 51) whilst retaining aspects of their own cultures.

The goal of integration which was being advocated and circulated, in the 1950s even before its predecessor the goal of assimilation was officially enacted in Queensland government policy, is an example of the overlaying of different intellectual schemas in relation to thinking about both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their problems. It also illustrates the deployment of them in contested ways in different sites, and the blurring of them that occurred at the nexus of policy and practice. It is also illustrative of the languishing of governments to do anything beyond ‘managing’ Islanders.

So, despite the official policy of assimilation, the burgeoning of research into Torres Strait education in the 1970s and increasingly in the 1980s would largely reflect the principles of integration, and reject those of assimilation and would exert its influence in the practice of schooling institutions. The official policy of assimilation in Queensland would be ongoing despite the integration

model, despite the emergence of multiculturalism as a model for the wider integration of immigrant cultures into Australian society in the 1980s, and despite the increased influence of the Commonwealth government into policy and practice with regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues.

The initiatives, then, of Whitlam's federal government in the 1970s were the implementation of Labor Party policy and were a significant departure from the policy of previous federal Coalition governments, including post-referendum governments, as well as from the policies of State governments. Such policy itself had emerged from concerns about the status and conditions of Aborigines in Australia articulated by such groups as the Federal Council of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advancement (FCCATSI). (Torres Strait Islanders were included in this category but were much less visible in the Australian community, and were more an addend to the category of Aborigines and an afterthought in policy). This concern was driven from a general recognition of past injustice and the appalling conditions that many Aborigines endured and was to a large degree framed by two sets of intellectual understandings. One was a recognition that the 'native' population was 'human' and thus entitled to all the rights that that entailed. The second was that although the 'native' was no longer viewed, as 'beneath' the European, he was nevertheless 'different'. The first understanding was enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of which Australia was a signatory and was required to uphold, the second was derived from the concept of cultural relativism, which belonged to the discipline of anthropology. These understandings propelled change away from assimilation and along a path toward integration and then to self-determination, as the push for recognition of land rights developed momentum throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

The Commonwealth government prioritised education as a means to improving the conditions and future of both Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Whilst the Queensland government continued to run the schools

in the Torres Strait, Commonwealth funds opened up new possibilities for Torres Strait Islanders. In brief, it provided previously denied education beyond Year 10, by enabling Islander students to travel to the mainland to receive their final years of education, at Commonwealth expense, until comparable schooling levels were provided in the Torres Strait. This option remains available for all Islander students who live on Islands that offer no secondary schooling. Special provisions, funding, and programs for Islanders to attend tertiary institutions were also initiated by the Commonwealth. Tied capital grants to the State government led to the upgrading of primary and secondary schools in the Torres Strait. It was not until 1985 that the Queensland Education Department took over all the Outer Island schools that had previously been run by the Department of Aboriginal and Islander Advancement (and its predecessors like the DNA).

The reform program did not remain restricted to capital projects and wider access to schooling for Torres Strait Islanders. It also generated interest in the difficulties that students encountered in the schooling process itself. The enormous discrepancies in the achievement rates and educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students compared to other groups of the Australian population was a matter of both concern and interest for Aborigines and Islanders themselves, and for governments, educators and academics.

Reviewing the Current Educational Research

The influence of the changing ways of viewing the position of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in relation to the rest of Australians' discussed briefly above, is evident not just in the changing priorities for funding and infrastructure in Islander education. It is also evident in the research on Torres Strait Islander education. The schema of cultural relativism, which emerged into principles of integration and then self-determination, is the fundamental basis of much of the educational research.

Educational research in Torres Strait education was largely a reaction to the view that schooling, as experienced by Islanders prior to commencement of reform, was recognised as a 'colonial' or 'Western' institution that was mono-cultural, assimilatory and incongruent to Islander culture, ways of knowing, and values. Curriculum, likewise mono-cultural, was in general seen as often irrelevant and as inhibiting the capacity to augment conceptual development of Islander children. Pedagogical practices were recognised as culturally inappropriate and incongruent with Islander learning styles and cultural ways. The use of English as the language of instruction was also viewed as assimilatory and was both incognisant of the linguistic background of Islander children and of the role that language played in the cognitive and intellectual development of children.

This research on Torres Strait education over the last twenty-five years constitutes a small corpus. It emerged across the context of change discussed above and out of an historical background of neglect, exclusion and segregation, discussed in the previous chapter. It falls into three main categories: history, language and culture.

These categories quite obviously, reflect the ways that Islanders' educational problems have been schematised. Firstly, recognition that there has historically been non-Islander forms of education in Islander lifeworlds and that considerable neglect and shortfalls occurred in early forms of education. This aspect of the research literature provides a background context that situates the current low levels of educational outcomes as historically based, to some extent, and some explanations of that. Secondly, the recognition that the non-Islander education process is embedded in a different culture, uses different knowledges, different ways of thinking, expresses and upholds different values and that because this is dissonant with Torres Strait ways of knowing, values and culture, many problems are experienced by students in schools. Thirdly, the recognition that central to the Islanders difficulties in achieving equal educational outcomes is the language situation of Islander

students and the implications of that for teaching policy, programs and practice in the form of appropriate language curricula and pedagogy.

In all three categories, researchers have attempted to give representation to the Islanders' experiences with non-Islanders forms of education. The influence of cultural relativism as a way of conceptualising cultural difference and viewing the educational predicament of Islanders, and the principles of integration that flow from that, are evident in these types of representations. Representation has been given primarily by dichotomising the differences between Islanders and non-Islander forms of formal education for the purpose of developing a clearer picture from which to find ways to achieve more equitable outcomes for Islander students in relation to the non-Islander system of education.

It must be argued that all this research has been valuable, legitimate, and has added to understanding of the Islander position in relation to mainstream educational processes. The intention of any critique is not to diminish the work or the content of research. In their description and analyses, researchers have added much to the understanding of those involved in the delivery of improved education processes. In all that they do these researchers attempt to understand the complexities of the Islanders' position at the interface. The intention is to point to how the underlying relation engendered in the interpretive framework through which Islander educational problems are viewed, both carry over historical practices from earlier contexts, and continue to limit the ways we view the Islanders' educational position. It is also to show how in failing to theorise the Islander's historical position at the interface, as an element in the way they deal with tensions in the current lifeworld, a valuable part of the educational puzzle is missed.

In the accounts of earlier educational history (Finch, 1975; Langbridge, 1977), representations of Islanders' experience appears via the description of non-Islander practices, that is, the forms of education that missionaries and

government instituted and the effects of these on the educational outcomes of Islanders. Thus education is historicised in terms of its impact on Islanders and related through the actions of missionaries and governments who intervened.

A later history (Williamson, 1990), addressed the issue of representing Islanders in history from the perspective of non-Islanders. Williamson grappled with the very issue of contention in this thesis, that is, how to represent the complexity, the dynamics at the interface that shaped Islander historical experience. He tried to go beyond the revisionist approach of historians of Aboriginal history (e.g Reynolds, Loos) which he argued still interpreted material from the Aboriginal side by the same criteria used to interpret that from the outside. He thus wrote a history of the schooling of Torres Strait Islanders that attempted to capture the dynamic interrelationships of factors that shaped both schooling practices and their outcomes. In this he recognised and charted the complexities of negotiations between the 'coloniser and the colonised' and in the process ascribed agency to the Islanders, rather than positing them as passive recipients of an imposed system. For example, Williamson was able to show that whilst Islanders called for 'proper' education, that this pursuit had minimal impact on outcomes. But on the other hand, whilst these expectations were unmet (Williamson, 1987a, 1987b, 1990), schooling as an agent of enculturation of Islanders into the colonial order was likewise not altogether effective. This type of analysis represents a shift in the documenting of histories of Islanders. It recognises that Islanders were actors in their own lives and that their actions and responses helped shape the outcomes of colonial interventions into their lifeworlds. It was also a shift that recognised that Islanders have a history beyond the accounts of colonial events.

Williamson's interpretative framework rested on assessing data by using internal referents rather than external referents as other histories had. In this way he claimed, theory emerged from the data - grounded theory - rather than

pre-conditioned. His primary referents were not predetermined, and the analyses emerged from the data and was “adjusted to the judgement and creativity of the researcher” (1997, p. 412) However, Williamson, like others before him, continues to give primacy to the State in his analysis, and fails to give primacy to Islander contributions (Nakata, 1997). The State is almost excused, given the constraints of distance, and policy and education elsewhere at the time, which it operated under; and Islanders are people who had “misplaced hopes”.

Williamson’s analysis illustrates both a departure from earlier attempts at documenting the history of education in the Torres Strait and a continuity with the epistemological constraints under which these histories are produced. There is a continued absence of the Islanders’ political position, of a view of Islanders as politically interested and motivated in their negotiations. Williamson is right that it does need to be written that Islanders and non-Islanders are part of the process of schooling. But the actors involved must be considered as having a historical position, a political disposition that provides the foundations to what they say (in the data collection process), an epistemological locatedness that conditions what is possible by them. If not, the data is easily construed and recounts end up being read as an apology for the State and Islander responses read as being ‘misplaced’ and as part of the problem.

In this way, Williamson’s history, although an attempt to do otherwise, continues to fail to adequately represent the experiences of Islanders in education because it fails to theorise the interface between Islanders and non-Islanders in a way that can account for the historical trajectory of Islanders. That is, a trajectory that was continuous with a view of themselves as political subjects trying to equalise their political position in relation to non-Islanders. This is not to denounce or singularly criticise Williamson’s account, which is a shift forward from others. It is merely an example which demonstrates again

the constraints under which researchers operate and which go on to condition how both non-Islanders and Islanders read history.

Another example of the way these constraints work can be found in the surveys by Orr and Williamson (1973) and Boxall and Duncan (1979) of Islander educational experience. Both briefs required an investigation into existing conditions and organisation of the schooling sectors in the Torres Strait and recommendations for reforms to produce more equitable outcomes for Islanders. The dichotomy between Islanders and non-Islander forms of education appeared in these surveys via the sites of investigation chosen by the researchers. These included the learner and the curriculum, the different language situations, secondary schooling as a way into the wider world, teachers, programs, existing conditions and administration. These surveys recommended proposals for action as did Finch's (1977) historical account.

Orr and Williamson (1973) captured the harsh reality of educating Torres Strait Islander children in State schools wherein an almost unmodified Queensland curriculum was being delivered to children in a language that was not their own. In addition, it was delivered by either white teachers who had little understanding of Islander norms, values or language or by Islanders teachers with inadequate levels of English and teacher education. In a position paper, Williamson (1974) outlined the 'incongruence' for the Islander child as a learner in a school system based on 'white middle-class Australia' and its values. He argued that policy and reform makers needed to pursue 'different' educational goals, and that the difficulties experienced by the Islander children in current schooling situations would not be overcome unless there was "intensive research into the distinctive learning needs and motivations of these children" (1974, p. 60). Boxall and Duncan's (1979) survey was more extensive but included similar recommendations. These included a case for further research into bilingual education, Islander learning styles, and the developmental patterns of Islander children that would enable the authorities to develop programs that would reflect both the children's

local experience whilst at the same time opening up the world beyond the Islands. They also encouraged more community involvement and direction in programs to encourage cultural identity. Both these surveys indicated the need for upgrading of the training of Islander teachers.

These researchers, in establishing a position on the historical educational position of Islanders, drew on wider intellectual schemas for understanding Islander-Australian relations, and contextualised the educational process within that understanding, recognising the assimilatory nature of extant education processes and the implications of that for successful outcomes. They then recontextualised education in line with more recent schemas for understanding of Islander-Australian relations, that recognised Islanders as equal but different and the implications of this for schooling. These understandings then provided new parameters for viewing and discussing the Torres Strait educational context. These parameters reflected the principle of integration that allowed for the encouragement and maintenance of the Islanders' cultural heritage, whilst still working toward improved outcomes in the formal schooling system.

These parameters are also evident in the research on Torres Strait Islander education of the late 1970s and the 1980s (e.g., Osborne, 1979, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1989c; Osborne & Bamford, 1987; Osborne & Coombs, 1987, 1988; Osborne & Dawes, 1989; Osborne & Francis, 1987; Osborne & Henderson, 1985, 1986; Osborne & Sellars, 1987). This research centred around the cultural mismatch between Islander learners and schooling practice and on the language situation of Islanders. It also attended to the education of teachers for the Torres Strait.

The schematising of 'difference' via cultural relativism is most evident, obviously, in the research that deals with the cultural mismatch between Islander culture and the non-Islander culture as expressed in the schooling process. Barry Osborne, the major contributor to this category, operated

from a theoretical position that rejected assimilation and integration policies as 'absorptionist' (Osborne, 1979) because he considered them as confining schooling practices within the dominant ideals and values which were ultimately very constraining for Islanders. His research reframed the interface position as a site of cross-cultural relations and opened up a field of productive research that investigated the cross-cultural dynamics of the interface as it was manifested in educational practice.

This line of research focused on ways to disentangle the Islander from the effects of earlier missionary and colonial educational projects that had neglected the cultural and linguistic diversity of Islander learners. Rather than attempt to equalise Islanders' relation with other Australians by imposing 'sameness' via the assimilation process, they offer and embrace 'difference'. Primacy in research then has to be given to the mismatch between universal representations of schooling and universal representations of the Islander who is different (e.g., Osborne & Coombs, 1982a, 1982b). These understandings of difference were derived from other disciplines, for example, anthropology (e.g., Osborne, 1986) and psychology (e.g., Osborne, 1982) and other domains, for example North American Indian (e.g., Osborne, 1989c; Osborne 1991). These understandings provide comparisons of cross-cultural experience and/or the findings of research which inform to some extent the representation of Islanders as they come to be the object of more recent research in education.

Osborne's body of research flowed from his earlier experiences as a teacher in the Torres Strait and his Master's thesis (1979), which was an argument for new strategies to prepare teachers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. His position was aligned with emerging multicultural models, and proposed that teachers be sensitised and informed by the knowledge of differences in Islander and Aboriginal cultures and languages. If they were also prepared with the right strategies, attitudes, high expectations and warmth, success would be achieved in both the affective and academic domains. He described

both socio-cultural and cognitive characteristics to heighten the awareness of the dilemma of Islanders participating in the State's educational institutions.

Osborne and his colleagues did extensive research throughout the 1980s. His body of research reflects a development of both his theoretical and methodological positions and also reflects his involvement, as an educator, in the preparation of both non-Islander and Islander teachers for the Torres Strait region.

For example, following his thesis, Osborne's early research (Osborne, 1982; Osborne & Coombs, 1982b) attempted to find out more about Islander children's cultural characteristics. This early work was in the cognitive field and sought to determine if Islander students were field-dependent or independent and to use these findings to outline a variety of appropriate teaching strategies. By 1986, Osborne was shifting away from the cognitive/psychological domain into the ethnographic mode and this crossover is seen in his work on Torres Strait Islander styles of communication and learning. The section on learning styles is presented under some familiar psychological headings: "sense modalities, conceptual tempo, responsive mode, lifestyles in relation to learning, psychological differentiations"(1986, p. 7). The communication section in contrast is presented under general headings to depict styles and forms of verbal and non-verbal interactions between student and teacher and between student and student: "oracy versus literacy, mocking and teasing, oral responses to questions, things white teachers do which annoy Islander students, keeping appointments and punctuality" (1986, p. 6).

By 1988, Osborne had begun to explore what teachers do in cross-cultural classrooms as a way to understand the dynamics of cross-cultural encounters in classrooms. This research (Osborne and Coombs, 1987; Osborne, 1988; Osborne, 1989a; Osborne and Dawes, 1989) signalled a shift in his focus from in-student' explanations to 'in-setting' explanations of cross-cultural

dynamics. In moving to ethnographic methods he argued that they had a lot more to offer because they invoked important considerations of the social dynamics of 'what is happening' in classrooms.

This work also contributed to research into pre-service and in-service of teachers for the Torres Strait. His aim was to collect data to build a model to assist non-Islander teachers in cross-cultural situations (Osborne, 1989a). This followed a long list of papers that focussed on teacher preparation (Osborne, 1979; Osborne and Henderson, 1985, 1986; Henderson and Osborne, 1987, 1989; Osborne and Bamford, 1987; Osborne and Francis, 1987; Osborne and Sellars, 1987; Osborne, 1989b & 1989c). These papers also reflect his shift in theory and method over the period. In the 1985, 1986, and 1987 papers there was an emphasis on observing, documenting, and analysing real mismatches between Islander student-teacher and non-Islander teachers in classroom where practicums were undertaken. The perceptions of both teachers and Islander students were collected in order to improve cross-cultural understanding and communication in this particular situation.

This research extended to consider the difficulties experienced in mainland classrooms by Islander teachers who were viewed as highly successful teachers in their Torres Strait classrooms. Investigations (Osborne & Sellars, 1987; Osborne & Bamford, 1987; Osborne & Francis, 1987) were undertaken to identify potential mismatches between Islander teaching styles and teaching styles in non-Islanders settings. The purpose was to provide valuable information for pre-service and in-service education for both non-Islander teachers in the Torres Strait, where much could be learnt from the strategies of Islander teachers to relate local culture to the curriculum. Conversely its aim was to assist Islander teachers on practice in mainland schools to understand other teaching styles. And, as well to inform non-Islander teacher educators of elements in their training that were contradictory to the teaching styles that Islanders were used to.

Osborne (1989a, 1989b, 1989c) then moved to more sophisticated explanations of cross-cultural teaching encounters. In particular he sought to establish a theoretical position for a culturally responsive pedagogy (1989a), and took on the issue of power/differentials with outsider/insider relationships (1989b), and argued that the basis for such a position should arise out of an understanding of “fused bicultural people” (1989c, p. 16). In the first of these papers he drew comparisons between Islander and Zuni classroom studies and argued that although all ethnographies were context specific, commonalties could be drawn to ascertain whether they could provide guidance for policy-makers and practitioners interested in developing culturally responsive pedagogy. In the second paper he argued that socio-political considerations emerging from status-relationships between cultures “should be built into cultural-difference explanations of school failure and [be built into arguments for] achieving increased cultural responsiveness” (1989b, pp. 212-13). In the last of this series, Osborne (1989c) describes other complexities of classroom teaching in cross-cultural environments.

The argument here is that culturally responsive teaching practices are not simply borne out of an understanding of ethnic differences but out of an understanding of people who operate across different cultures. He contends that a culturally congruent strategy of teaching on its own engages in “ethnic modes” that do not recognise the world that bicultural people live in. In contrast to this, he introduces his notion of a “fused bicultural” position to bring into light, the interactive nature of bicultural people negotiating lifestyles at a point of difference between ethnic and Western ones. (In this he is attempting to articulate the very element of experience identified in this thesis as being crucial to understanding the complexity of the Islanders’ position at the interface).

From this Osborne argues for “culturally congruent teaching” (p. 17) strategies that lead to reinforcing fused bicultural people, and then proceeds to clarify what is needed by way of good teachers. He does this by

problematising issues that relate to simplistic notions of ethnicity - for instance, “native” background or being “black”. That is, in choosing teachers who would be best at the task of cross-cultural teaching situations, it is quite possible to argue that an “Anglo” who has been in the community for a while and can speak the language of the community may have advantages over an ethnic member of the community who lives in the “big city”. Osborne’s position here is not simply critique - his is one based on imperatives. When scholastic performances are still - low preferences must go to those most effective as teachers and educators regardless of their ethnicity.

Although Osborne has been the major contributor, there has been other research that generally supports his approach. Some work (Castley, 1988; Castley and Osborne, 1988) has focussed on community involvement and understanding community expectations as a way to reduce the gap between the school and the community. Some (Lomonga, 1987; Kale, 1988; Lui, Clark & Watkins, 1988) has emphasised the importance of providing positive learning environments that are sensitive to the children’s cultural background.

A paper by a High School Principal (Topping, 1987) confronted the various positions on culturally different students, the priorities for traditional knowledges to be included in the curriculum, and the importance of English. He was critical of the simplistic understanding of Islanders’ position between two cultures as either in the traditional camp or the assimilated one. He argued that there is room for schools to synthesise values and knowledges from both cultures that will maximise choices for Islanders and enable Islanders to define their own identity. Whilst this is clearly the integration model, there is no clear model suggested for reforming the curricula to achieve such a position. The school is left to support the status quo: include cultural knowledge in the form of culture and language studies, and improve the teaching of English through the importation of Western models such as ESL and English Language Across the Curriculum.

Contributions by Islanders are interesting. Two of these (Gisu, 1985; Passi, 1986) make cases for the preservation of traditional knowledges and a role for them in the schooling process. By contrast an earlier interview, (Lui, 1974) argued that culture should only be used in schools as a way of involving parents and that the main purpose of formal schooling was to gain the English language and communication skills. These are two alternative positions held by Islanders in the ongoing debate amongst Islanders themselves about how to organise the schooling system to best respond to Islander needs. It is interesting to consider the effects of the increasing circulation of the cultural discourse on education, in the positions in these papers, but it is also speculative.

This type of research illustrates that Islanders' problems are viewed as the result of cultural mismatch and dissonance, and as a result of the imposition of the Western mono-cultural, monolingual system of education. A summary of Osborne's contribution to the field illustrates a number of significant points. Most interesting is the development of his theoretical and methodological position. Theoretically he grappled with conceptualising the interface as the site of intersection of two different domains, the Islander domain and the non-Islander domain. All his work sought to uncover the dynamics of cross-cultural relations in this intersection. Not until his 1989 papers does his theorising move closer to reflect more adequately the complexities of the interface. However, he fails to resolve the dichotomy of Islander/non-Islander relations even as his notion of "fused bi-culturality" attempts to conceptualise the interface, not as a site of a simple intersection of Islander and non-Islander, but as a more complex site that is conditioned by intervention from the outside.

Osborne also made a methodological shift in that he moved from 'in-student' explanations of cultural difference using a psychological model, to 'in-setting' explanations that relied on ethnography. All his work shows his struggle to provide fuller understandings of the dynamics that interfered in the education

process. Characteristic of his work was the purpose of providing a basis for practical reform in the education of Torres Strait Islanders and with providing practical strategies for teachers. His most notable contribution, apart from improving pre-service and in-service of teachers, was his influence in developing a language with which to discuss many of the issues in Torres Strait education. Much of the language in Osborne's work is the language in circulation in educational circles in the Torres Strait. This includes terms such as 'cultural sensitivity', 'culturally sensitive pedagogy', 'culturally relevant curriculum', 'culturally appropriate strategies' 'warm demanders' and 'learning styles'.

The schematising of 'difference' via cultural relativism and the principles of integration is also evident in the language research. This research emphasises the need to value and understand the linguistic diversity of Islander students. The dominant position (Orr, 1977, 1979, 1982; Cunningham, 1984; Kale 1987) argues that differences between the language of children entering school and the language of instruction account for some of the learning difficulties of Islander students. Whilst initially arguing against the exclusive use of English as the medium of instruction (Orr, 1977), Orr (1979) went on to theorise the dichotomy between Islanders and non-Islanders via the cultural-pluralism model and argued that this model was more appropriate because it prioritised the use of local languages as the medium of instruction and thus maintains ethnic identity. However, he further argued that because local languages do not provide access to the Western economy and its technologies a bilingual model was needed to allow for maintenance of identity and access to the Western economy. He proposed a program that began with literacy in the vernacular (either a traditional or a Creole language), followed by oracy and then literacy in English.

Others (Shnukal, 1984a, 1984b; Lominga, 1987; McDonald, 1988) recognise that Islander learners operate between different linguistic domains in cognitive and pedagogical terms and that the current programs in schools

failed to reflect this reality. They emphasised that language problems of Islander children were not due to cognitive or language deficiency but rather were a 'transference phenomena" (Shnukal, 1984b, p. 18) – a linguistic phenomena that occurs when second language learners correspond between language one and language two. The importance of valuing linguistic competencies of Islander students was highlighted. This research led to more acceptance of the validity of a role for Torres Strait Creole in the education process.

Three Islanders have contributed to discussions on the language situation of Islanders. Ober (1980) considered that linguists had become preoccupied with basic description and recording of languages and argued the need for 'maintenance' bilingual programs that included study in the vernacular in schools and for Islanders to play a crucial role in the process of delivery of such programs.

Gisu (1987) accepted arguments for the child's first language to be used as the language of instruction in schools but raised concerns about which language to use. This question reflected the diversity of languages in the Torres Strait and was taken up by Nakata (1991b). Given that there were two traditional languages in use across the Strait and the Torres Strait Creole language, which one should be taken as the first language in any bilingual program?

This language research is notable for having failed to bring any resolution to the language dilemma that Islanders face in schooling. Despite strong advocacy by researchers for bilingual programs it is a proposition yet to be considered seriously by the Education Department. English remains the official language of instruction. The influence of this research as 'expert' knowledge, coupled with Islanders strong desire to maintain their own distinctive languages, has presented a model to Islanders that promises the delivery of English literacy whilst maintaining Islander languages. As well, it

presents a model that will help overcome the learning difficulties of students who must access knowledge in their second language.

Across the research, in all three categories, there is an engagement with a succession of opposing positions between school and community, curriculum and learner, teacher and student, the language of the student and the language of the institution, traditional knowledge and Western knowledge etc. Researchers have attempted to find ways to resolve the oppositions inherent in the Islander/non-Islander dichotomy. They have largely and consistently followed an integration model for viewing the improvement of Islander/non-Islander relations. In the education setting this involves ways of providing education in non-Islander knowledges whilst at the same time upholding and valuing Islander knowledges, values and languages. The research has focussed on overcoming the mismatch in these elements by developing culturally sensitive teaching strategies, by including, as much as possible, local knowledge to make learning more relevant to the Islander context and by advocating bilingual programs of language teaching.

This academic research has not dictated education policy. But it conditions Islander educational practice in a number of ways. Firstly, by emphasising the importance of particular issues in the pre-service and in-service of teachers, it infiltrates the practice of teachers as they seek to find ways to produce successful outcomes for Islander students. Secondly, it provides a knowledge base for departmental officers and thus influences their ways of understanding problems of Islander students. Thirdly, often in its process, it engages and consults with Islanders and in this way it provides for Islanders both the structure and the language for Islanders to understand their difficulties and participate in discussions and negotiations to resolve them. Thus it produces a community of speakers who circulate the language and transform the discourse of research into one of common and popular understanding. This operates between Islander parents, Islander teachers, Islander leaders, non-Islander teachers, curriculum writers, policy makers, and

academics across a number of disciplines - history, linguistics, anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, and education. The effect of this circulation has been a consolidation rather than an expansion, of the parameters available for discussion of the difficulties of Islanders as they experience non-Islander forms of education.

Thus the cultural paradigm which has emerged out of a changing historical and political context for understanding Islander/Australian relations has also become the primary means for viewing the schooling difficulties of Islanders. Researchers have developed the way that Islanders' difficulties with curriculum, pedagogy, language, and teacher preparation issues are viewed, and have largely constructed the language for talking about the issues. These positions are echoed and incorporated by Islanders in local education policy (Torres Strait Islander Regional Education Committee, 1985), and in the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy Statement (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1989). The Queensland Department of Education, in its undertaking to adopt and support local policy, officially recognises the cultural difference of Islanders and the implications of this in delivering education to Torres Strait Islanders. Thus, despite resource constraints which limits commitment to rigorous programs of reform, the Department acknowledges and where possible works to incorporate understandings of the cultural difference of Islanders.

However, it is not simply the production of research based on this cultural agenda that continues to limit the ways that education difficulties can be discussed. To argue that alone would deny the changes and improvements that have so far occurred as result of the efforts of researchers and would overly implicate the effects of research. It is, however, the foundational principle on which the cultural paradigm rests that continues to limit the possibilities for understanding ways to improve education for Islanders. It is the simplistic division that situates 'us' in relation to 'them'. That is, the cultural paradigm is but another way to articulate the same division that

constituted our position at the interface historically and is now expressed through our cultural difference. It is in the bind that is the power in knowledge, that serves to reify old relations and that conditions future possibilities. This research and its effects is but an exemplar of how underlying epistemological schemas are taken up, given form, condition the possibilities, and produce effects in Islander lifeworlds.

Some Concluding Points about Educational Futures

It can be argued that in the main this research is struggling to articulate the difficulties, the complexities, the dynamics that Islanders' experience at the intersection of two incongruent domains. In this, researchers accurately describe many valid elements of Islander educational experience. There is no argument here.

The argument does not even entirely lie with the interpretive framework that gives form to the relationship between Islanders and non-Islanders. This is the schema of cultural difference. Cultural difference is a valid and accurate way of giving representation to this aspect of this relationship. The argument is that in the process of deploying this representational schema something else that is crucial to understanding the Islander position is submerged.

In trying to understand the complexities of the Islander position by deploying a simplified framework through which to view these complexities, Islanders are once again disconnected from their own experiential history. As well, researchers suspend their own connections to the very analyses that describe their own historical relationships with Islanders. The whole context in which Islander education is discussed is depoliticised, it is devoid of the politics of the players –Islanders, researchers and knowledge. The political position of Islanders in relation to practice is attached to the historical context and left behind. The current political position of Islanders engendered in this power/knowledge relationship is displaced to a different context - perhaps hung on those who hold different ideological standpoints, perhaps attributed

to the formal political process itself, perhaps only an outcome of continuing material disadvantage - but never acknowledged in the politics of Islander representation.

However, the power/knowledge relationships engendered historically between Islanders and non-Islanders continues to emerge from this schema through its positioning effects on Islanders. There are real effects which become evident in the way that educational issues are discussed and debated in the Torres Strait context. The oversimplification of the Islanders educational position emerges in the oppositions expressed in such relational terms as Islander/Mainstream; Traditional/Western; etc. This polarises debate within the educational and Torres Strait communities reifying the extreme positions as irreconcilable tensions rather than developing and extending knowledge and understanding in order to deal with the tensions. This is not an intention of the framing of the public discourse but it is the effect.

For example, proposals for bilingual models of language development are put forward as an argument to maintain Islander languages and overcome problems of transition between the first language and the language of instruction. These proposals were founded on the rejection of monolingual and monocultural approaches as being assimilatory in intent and causing learning problems in effect. This proposal for bilingualism is meaningful to Islanders because they are united in their desire to maintain their languages and they have long called for improved education in English. On the other hand, the many Islanders who continue to call for improved English literacy (to learn how the bastards continue to rob them) (Nakata, 1994) have difficulty discussing the issue outside of the bilingual model. The call for an examination of the methods of teaching English literacy skills is continually called back to its referent model namely, bilingualism. Those who do not adhere to the parameters for discussing language issues by seeking to explore other possibilities run the risk of being accused of not upholding Islander

traditions. In this way the issues of the roles of traditional language and English language in the education of Islanders are polarised in terms of two opposing principles – assimilation on the one hand, and cultural maintenance on the other. This is an effect of the first principles of a research paradigm based on cultural difference.

In the absence of any implementation of bilingual models in schools, but in the presence of new models for understanding the language difficulties of Islanders in schools, English only instruction proceeds unreformed. The new schema emerges in schools, on the one hand, in the form of separate, ad hoc, poorly planned and developed traditional language programs. On the other hand, English instruction pedagogy accommodates the need for improved English literacy skills for Islanders by the incorporation of non-Islander models developed for other contexts, such as English as Second Language programs and English Language Across the Curriculum strategies. In this way, the whole language dilemma is by-passed. There is no systematic plan to maintain Islander languages; there is no specific plan to deal with the problems of moving between languages, which Islanders do on a daily basis. There is no real reform in methods of teaching English literacy that is grounded in the language context of Islanders.

Two important issues are sidelined via the polarisation of discussions of the language issue. The complexity of the language situation of Islanders is still not confronted in any rigorous way in terms of devising a practical plan for language teaching. This is simply that there are four main languages in use in the Torres Strait and their dialects. These comprise the two traditional languages, Torres Strait Creole and English. This makes it difficult to implement a uniform bilingual model across the Strait and a practical nightmare to accommodate the four languages (three of which are oral languages) in school programs. Secondly, Islanders continue to strongly emphasise that low levels of English literacy maintain their historical disadvantage by limiting upward mobility in the education process and the

workplace (Nakata, Jensen, Nakata, 1994). The result is the continuation of management and supervision by non-Islanders and a continued reliance on the advice and understandings of non-Islanders. In not confronting this reality in Islander lifeworlds, the urgency for improved methods for teaching English literacies and knowledges has languished. One effect of the failure to confront these realities is the continued failure to achieve equal educational outcomes with other Australians and the inequities that that perpetuates.

But an equally damaging effect is the way in which the cultural paradigm works in silencing Islander viewpoints of their experience and viewing their problems via non-Islander understandings. Islanders themselves get caught up in the popular simplistic oppositions of assimilation/monolingual versus self-preservation/bilingual. Continued calls to prioritise the teaching of English literacies in schools is drowned in anxiety about losing language and identity and the teaching of local languages and the acceptance of Creole in schools leads to demands for more focus on English. The two positions operate as if they are mutually exclusive and other ways of approaching the problem are left unexplored except in the individual classrooms of teachers who constantly seek ways of overcoming the learning difficulties of their students which emerge from the language situation in the Torres Strait. And, as well, except in the continued practice of Islanders to respond to the ongoing positioning effects of these ways of knowing Islanders.

In these ways, current educational research on Islanders not directly but by default, has reified the simplistic oppositions of 'them' and 'us' in common-sense understandings of Islander problems. In this it conditions and limits the possibilities for other understandings and positions Islanders in its discourse in a limiting way. It exemplifies a mode of intervening that appropriates the Islander people into an ontological world that only exists in relation to non-Islanders – the history of the Islander people as constituted in the Western order of things is indeed one that is inherently different from non-Islanders and literally different to Islanders.

In the current process of understanding Islander situations in schooling, the Islander as subject is only theorised in a pre-figured way - as culturally different. The history of the formation of the Islander subject in Western knowledges and understanding, which provided the basis of their 'management' and much of their experience, fails to appear in the theorising of the Islander in schooling. It is as if Islander historical experience has only incurred cultural loss. What of political loss? What is the subjection of a whole society of people if it is not the loss of political autonomy? Are our experiences to be trivialised by being further denied, further refused.

What is submerged, and from the Islander point of view denied, is the ongoing presence of Islanders as participants in their own history. Islanders responded to intervention in what is now a long practiced process of dealing with the tensions inherent in their position at the intersections of different domains. They made and remade themselves in this position, they deployed certain strategies to uphold their own interests, to continually affirm their presence, to provide continuity with their own historical past. They transformed their customs, many have transplanted their customs. Despite all the loss, they remain the cultural entity expressed in the current schema of cultural difference.

But understandings of the Islander subject are severely limited by this schema. For Islanders are also other things. They are Australian. They live under and are regulated by Australian law. They deal with all the problems of modern life. They seek employment, they struggle to pay mortgages, they worry about health, they provide for their children. They enjoy recreation, they belong to clubs, they raise money, and they care for the aged. In all of these daily activities they contend with the tensions that form between their own historical experience and the discourses of Western domains that have historically positioned them as secondary.

In this process, their experience is one of always reading the world that reads them as Other. It is a position derived from the continual defence of what one is, against what one gauges one to be by the treatment of others and in the discourses of others. It is the uptake of a position in response to being positioned by others. It cannot be represented in any simplified form. Our responses have been both enabling and constraining. They have involved varying responses to varying circumstances. Effects have sometimes been negative and sometimes positive. There is no prescription for response.

But if we could theorise this historical experience into a representation of us as active and political, through our ongoing tension with the Western knowledges and discourses that position us in daily life, we may shift our perspective to gain an alternative view of the Islander student as learner. This is a shift that necessitates recognition of the Islander student as belonging to a lifeworld that has emerged from and been constituted by the inscription of Islanders into a particular historical relation with non-Islanders.

This 're-invention' of the Islander student opens up new possibilities for intervention in the educational process. We are able to theorise a student who requires a particular sort of education in order to understand the world in which he/she lives. Not only is there a shift in the broad philosophy of that education but as well there is a shift in the outcomes of that education. From this we have an intervention process that forms around the needs of its client, out of the historical and educational context, in the same way as it always has, but for different ends. The end is not to construct a curriculum to balance the tensions inherent in the cultural interface. Rather the curriculum and pedagogy builds around the necessity to recognise the relationship between its client the Islander student and the Western forms of knowledge production as a way of understanding their world and dealing with the tensions of the interface. Instead of upholding a schema which works to hold Islanders to a secondary construction of 'Other', there emerge possibilities for Islanders to respond to the interventions in their lives in ways that will

validate their historical quest both for continuity with their past and for control of their futures without the unresolved tensions of the current debate.

Through such understandings, intervention can be seen for what it is - well-intentioned, often positive, conducive to change. But an understanding of the power/knowledge effects which constrain Islander responses and work to maintain the particular relationship engendered, if understood, allows for better understandings of Islander positions. This should provide the conditions for broader, less restrictive discussions of the relevant issues and ultimately less refusal of Islanders.

Islanders will always be in a particular relationship with non-Islanders. Like people everywhere, they will not always be in control of what frames the way their position is understood. But with an understanding of how they are positioned in this process, they can then position themselves more effectively, and build their own discourses to articulate their standpoint and thus condition the possibilities for their future in a way that is clearly understood by others.

*The Personal in the Politics of Representing
Islanders*

In the Preface to this thesis, I referred to my growing awareness of the uneasy relationship between my lived experience and that ascribed to me by the texts produced about Islanders, that had emerged during my work experience and in my undergraduate studies.

In this thesis I have investigated this relationship. For me, this has been much more than an intellectual exercise. It has been a personal journey that has brought me to a place where I not only have a better understanding of my position and the position of Islanders, but a position where I feel much more secure about myself, in the personal sense.

It may be arrogant to say that I believe that few non-indigenous Australians understand the degree to which the current generations of indigenous Australians feel the burden and pain of the past. But I do not think it arrogant to say that I believe few understand the depth of psychological torment and fragility that many individual indigenous Australians live with on a daily basis.

I cannot overemphasise the relief I have experienced at the personal level through the understanding I have gained at the intellectual level about the historical and ongoing tensions that Islanders have been dealing with in their daily lives since Contact. In this sense the path to understanding has been a journey of the mind, both intellectually and psychologically. The history of indigenous/white relations in this country is not just one of material effects. It screws people's minds. It screwed mine. It engendered tensions that at times were so contradictory they were just too hard to resolve and almost impossible to bear.

The understanding I have gained through this study of how the historical Islander/non-Islander relationship has been engendered and brought to bear

on the understanding of and management of Islander lives and carried through to the current theorisation of our problems, has released me personally from a life of endless confusion and frustration in two major ways.

It has provided me with enough historical and epistemological knowledge to understand fully that my forbears and I were not responsible for our predicament. I am not too proud to say that somewhere deep inside the psyche has been a persistent dark thought that whispers that something of what we were must have warranted this historical treatment. Despite, the fact, that like most Islanders, I have never rationally believed this and was raised to both defend and project my presence, our historical subjection must have internalised itself in some deep recess of my mind.

From the reading of the historical records from our standpoint, Torres Strait Islanders emerge in my view as an amazing group of people – intelligent, knowledgeable, and gracious and consistent under intolerable pressure, deserving of the respect they have always sought. More than anything, we have responded in ways that have enabled us to remain our own people.

This study has also provided me with enough understanding of the forms and processes of intervention to understand that these interventions cannot be construed as the deeds of ‘evil’ white men. To understand this in the historical context helps me to channel my anger in more constructive ways. There is no sense in focussing anger at individuals, past or present, whose actions are generally well-intentioned, however much it feels justified. It makes no sense to cleave the white world up into those that are good and those that are bad. It makes more sense to understand the constraints under which current discourses on Islanders operate, discourses that we also contribute to, participate in and circulate, and to respond to and ask questions of these. In that way, processes for understanding different positions are brought to the fore. By the same token this means that the forms and processes of historical intervention are not exonerated by tying them to their

historical context and viewing them as belonging to the past. Their forms are clearly implicated in current contexts and thus remain to be acknowledged and dealt with.

As an outcome of this study, I am able to see more clearly how we are all caught up and in constant tension. The task is not to pursue some ideal equilibrium but to articulate what informs the tensions. In this way, I have been able to separate the personal from the political for long enough to rise above personal anger and deal with issues more intellectually. This is a significant personal breakthrough because like so many indigenous people I experience the personal as political and the political as personal. Thus in all my personal interactions, for example, the loss of an argument has often meant either the loss of self, or the loss of a relationship. Either way it has been destructive.

But I have not been able to get to this position personally without having understood just how I have been positioned historically and how I am still positioned on a daily basis by others and the discourses they form around me, particularly in terms of how they argue against my position or defend their own.

It is a relief to be able to say: "I know who the missionaries were, why they came, and why they did not go home." The tensions I have experienced between the religious message and the actions of missionaries and current Church hierarchy is understood, able to be articulated and explains a lot to me personally about my own responses. I have a position on them, and I understand better my position in relation to them. I can articulate my feelings, I can feel less troubled about my relationship with God.

It is a relief to be able to read the Haddon collection without the unease that I previously had. I wanted to have the historical knowledge but I didn't want to read about myself as a 'savage', it seemed such a betrayal of my ancestors. It helps to know that these scientists struggled to find ways to conclude we

were at a lower stage of mental and social development when some of their data even indicated the reverse. But it is not the glimpses of instances of superiority that boost my sense of self. It's that I can read and understand what they were doing and how they arrived at their conclusions. It is to know that they had limits to their understanding just as I have.

Likewise an understanding of how our 'Protection' was grounded in the construction and enactment of a parent/child relationships explains much to me about our current difficulties in making the transition to self-management. It also explains why my family's decisions and struggle were not enough to overcome the constraints of their regulation. It confirms that my grandfather's response was intelligent, independent and an expression of the way he confronted the tensions of his relationship to the regulatory and economic order. It does not mean that he betrayed his traditions and his heritage which has sometimes been implied to me by people who have wanted to suggest that I'm not really an Islander because of my family history.

In all this understanding of what others did to Islanders historically, I have a better understanding of who and what I am today.

I know I am a good Islander parent even when I don't teach my own children to dance and sing because I know that the guilt I have been made to feel about not teaching my children to behave as 'cultural' Islanders is a product of others' representations about what Islanders are and should be.

I know that the way that I have personally dealt with the Islander/non-Islander tensions in my children's lives has resulted in their success at school, even though I have been seen to neglect their cultural education. I know that by succeeding in the State finals of the National History Challenge by researching the topic "Torres Strait Islanders at War" my 14-year-old daughter has just as significantly given valid expression to her heritage as she would through any cultural activity.

I know that my children's insertion into the Islander/non-Islander relationship and the tensions therein has exposed them to different tensions from the ones I have experienced, just as mine have been different from those that my grandfather had to contend with. Like my grandfather I know that there are risks to be taken, and positive and negative effects in all my decisions.

But I know that I would rather deal with the negative effects of my own considered responses to the tensions and the complexities inherent in my children's position than allow them to blindly subscribe to an identity that is itself the positive effect of a negative and secondary construction of them in History as Other.

I feel an enormous weight lifted from me by understanding all this. I feel that I understand enough of my history to understand myself and move on. I feel that my task as an Islander parent is to ensure my children develop the skills necessary to live independently and in control of their own trajectory, mindful of the position of others. This makes me an Islander, this hold me to a tradition. This is my heritage.

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