

## The Science, Ideologies and Practices of Extinction, Part I

### “The Capture of the Indigenous in the Social Sciences: Extinction and Evolution”:

- Theories of Evolution: “Inevitable Decline” in the “Science of Man”
- Ideologies of Extinctionism: “Providential Decline” & Pathetic Primitivism

### Extinctionism: An Overview of Theory and Ideology

Theory vs. Ideology

Extinction – evolution (*will* happen); Extinctionism (*ought* to happen)

### Theories of Evolution ↔ Extinction—Peoples Unfit for Survival, or, Destined to Modernize

	POLYGENESIS	MONOGENESIS
<b>Judgment:</b>	“Inferior”	“Backward”
<b>Future:</b>	Doomed to die out	Must Westernize to survive
<b>Concept:</b>	<i>Races</i>	<i>Cultures</i>

### *Polygenesis*

→ separate human races, Caucasians = the most evolved

Richard Lee, “The Extinction of Races,” *Journal of the Anthropological Society of London*, Vol. 2, 1864:

“It has been estimated that the Hawaiians have been reduced as much as eighty-five per cent during the last hundred years. The natives of Tasmania are almost, if not quite, extinct. The Maories are passing away at the rate of about twenty five per cent every fourteen years, and in Australia, as in America, whole tribes have disappeared before the advance of the white man.” xcv

“A similar process of extinction is even now taking place in New Zealand,” Lee insisted, “When missionaries first went out to New Zealand, the native population was variously estimated by them at from 100,000 to 140,000; but these estimates were necessarily made under considerable difficulties and probably never exceeded the truth. The first official census was not taken till 1858, and in that year the number was found to be hardly more than 56,000.” xcvi

“notwithstanding the thinness of the white population...so steadily is this going on, that before the end of another hundred years the aboriginal New Zealander will, in all probability, have become extinct.” Xcvi

→ 2001 Census, Statistics New Zealand: 14.7 percent of the population self-identified as Māori (526,300)

→ origins of polygenetic theory

→ taxonomy

→ Carl Linnaeus: Americanus, Europeus, Asiaticus and Afer (with an additional category for “wild men”)

→ 1840s and 1850s:

Josiah Nott

George Gliddon

Samuel G. Morton

= *American school of ethnology*

→ Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, 1851, *Personal Memoirs of a Residence of Thirty Years with the Indian Tribes* covering the period between 1812 and 1842:

“he is subject to be swayed by every breath of opinion, has little fixity of purpose, and, from a defect of business capacity, is often led to pursue just those means which are least calculated to advance his permanent interests, and his mind is driven to and fro like a feather in the winds”

→ incapable of evolving

# *Monogenesis*



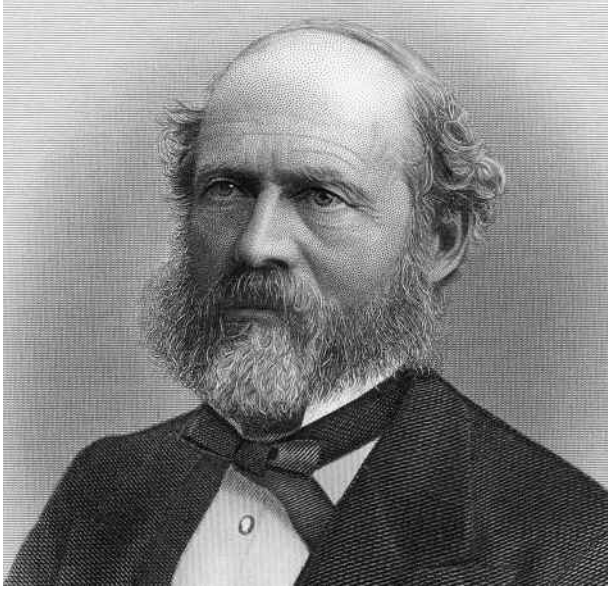
James Cowles Prichard

Thomas Hodgkin

Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton

- all humankind had a single origin
- *cultural evolutionist* theory
- “psychic unity of mankind”
- all societies evolved through the same stages
- native peoples equivalent of Europeans’ distant ancestors
  - what children are to adults
  - can mature faster through assimilation

→ In anthropology, cultural evolutionism:  
Lewis Henry Morgan and Edward Burnet Tylor



## Ideologies of Extinction:

### Doom, Inevitable & Providential



→ Canada, Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs (1913 to 1932)--For the introduction of Bill 14, March of 1920:

“I want to get rid of the Indian problem....Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department.”

→ “enfranchisement”

Professor Waitz, quoted in T. Bendyshe, “On the Extinction of Races,” *Journal of the Anthropological Society of London*, 1864:

“The higher races are destined to displace the lower....This extinction of the lower races is predestined by nature, and it would thus appear that we must not merely acknowledge the right of the white American to destroy the red man, but perhaps praise him that he has constituted himself the instrument of Providence in carrying out and promoting this law of destruction. The pious manslayer thus enjoys the consolation that he acts according to the laws of nature, which govern the rise and extinction of races”

### **Ideologies of Extinction: Pathetic Primitivism**

→ Richard Lee (also *Journal of the Anthropological Society of London*, 1864), Australian Aboriginals of the mid-1800s:

“Between the white and the coloured populations of which we speak there are not even degrees of civilisation. The man who now wanders free through the unknown wilds of Australia represents nothing. Not only has he not advanced in moral development since the first formation of his species, but he has actually retrograded. There are not even the traditions of past renown among his ancestors to arouse those inspiring emotions which should stimulate him to preserve the existence and identity of his race.” xcvi

→ Trinidad, 1800s:

(1) indolent torpor

(2) cultural loss

(3) infancy

(4) extinction via “mixture”

# Is Extinction Over Yet? From Salvage Ethnography to Post-Modernism



→ “Salvage ethnography”  
→ Franz Boas

→ de-indigenize the anthropological subject: “unbounded” and “deterritorialized” cultures

George Marcus:



“Distinguishing the elements of resistance and accommodation in the formation of collective and personal identities has become the almost sloganlike analytic formula for retaining a sense of the coherence and locality of place in ethnographic description while also

recognizing the penetrations of world systems and consumer economies. The resistance and accommodation formula might be understood, in a way, as the remaking of the salvage rationale that has served ethnography for so long”  
(Marcus 1994: 45)