

The Human Experience



The
Grandeur
of
Life

Voyages of discovery regularly encountered native peoples, and visual records were often made and reproduced in the voyage narratives. Such images often tell us more about the artists than the subjects. The drawing of the Tasmanians (*below right*), made on the Baudin voyage of 1801-04, is fairly neutral. But we have three contemporary sketches of the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego that vary greatly in the degree of humanity that is granted to the Fuegians. Captain Cook, encountering Tierra del Fuego in 1769, subscribed to the idea of the “noble savage,” and his image reflects that (*bottom*). Philip Parker King visited in the late 1820s, and his natives are far less noble, but still friendly (*below left*). Robert Fitzroy, the commander of Darwin’s *Beagle*, believed that the Fuegians were savages and could only be saved by English intervention, and the sketch by his artist presents a much darker vision of humans in a state of nature (*right*).

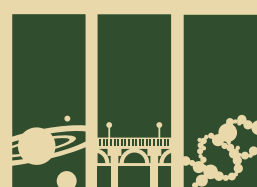


Top: Native Fuegians, drawn by Conrad Martens, from Robert Fitzroy, Narrative of the surveying voyages of His Majesty's ships Adventure and Beagle, 1839

Above Right: Natives of Van Diemen's Land [Tasmania], drawn by Charles Lesueur, from François Péron, Voyage de découvertes aux terres Australes, 1807-16.

Center Left: Native Fuegians, drawn by Phillip Parker King, from Robert Fitzroy, Narrative of the surveying voyages of His Majesty's ships Adventure and Beagle, 1839.

Left: Native hut at Tierra del Fuego, engraved by Giovanni Cipriani, from John Hawkesworth, An account of the voyages... [of Capt. Cook], 1773.



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