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REYNOLDS' NEW MASTERPIECE

FROM EXPERIMENT IN SAVAGERY TO ICON OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

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ABSTRACT Joshua Reynolds' 1775 portrait of Mai [Omai], the first Pacific Islander to visit Britain, has attracted much public attention since 2001, when it sold for a near record-breaking £10.3 million. *Omai's* recent celebrity is based on the view that it is not only an 'icon' of British art but also of crucial significance as a reminder of an enlightened world we have lost. The critical heritage of Reynolds' *Omai*, however, indicates a rather more complex aesthetic and historical assessment. This article analyses the sources of the disjuncture between past judgements and today's soaring esteem. In doing so, it introduces for comparison another much-neglected Reynolds portrait of a New World traveller, entitled *Scyacust Ukah*.

Keywords: Joshua Reynolds, Mai [Omai], Ostenaco, savagery, portraiture

On 26 May 2005 a new exhibition on the work of Joshua Reynolds opened at Tate Britain around the theme of celebrity. Entitled 'Joshua Reynolds: The Creation of Celebrity', the exhibition was well received, various critics declaring the show 'hugely enjoyable', 'a personable delight', and 'a shrewdly good idea'. At the centre of the exhibition, both in terms of its publicity and its original theme, stood the eight-foot portrait of Mai, one of the most famous visitors to Britain in the eighteenth century (see Figure 1). The portrait, entitled *Omai*, has become something of a *cause célèbre* in its own right over the past few years, its acquisition for the four-month summer exhibition representing a significant coup for the Tate and – if the Tate be believed – for the entire British nation.¹

Mai was the first Pacific Islander to visit Britain, arriving with the return of James Cook's second voyage to the South Seas in 1774 and departing with his third and final expedition two years later. Joshua Reynolds – President of the Royal Academy and most popular portraitist of the day – painted Mai's image some time in 1775, evidently for his own purposes since no record of a commission exists and he never attempted to sell it. Reynolds exhibited the work in the Royal Academy's annual exhibition of 1776 and thereafter kept it in his studio as a show-piece. The painting was bought by a dealer in one of two estate sales held soon after Reynolds' death, who quickly sold it on to Reynolds' old friend Lord Carlisle of Castle Howard.² The Howards retained *Omai* for

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Figure 1 Joshua Reynolds, *Omai*, c.1775, oil on canvas, 236 x 145 cm. Sotheby's Picture Library, London.

over 200 years – until 2001, when the then owner was reputedly forced to put it on the market for financial reasons.

The controversy that unfolded made Reynolds' *Omai* into a masterpiece. In the tussle to keep the painting within British public space, a range of commentators – from curators and academics to philanthropists and politicians – claimed with ever-increasing fervour that *Omai* was not only a prize to the connoisseur but also to the historian; that it was, indeed, a brilliant symbol of a peculiarly British modernity. However, such a view has not been dominant in the critical heritage of the work, which follows a rather uneven and seldom triumphalist line. The present article takes its cue, if not its central question, from this recent, dramatic, redirection of opinion. Its

primary focus is on how the eighteenth-century circumstances surrounding the portrait have made such divergent responses possible. It is in the eighteenth-century aesthetic and cultural contexts of the painting, I argue, that an understanding of its inherent ambiguity can be found – if not an understanding of how one particular society might view it at any one particular time.

I MAKING A MASTERPIECE

The controversy surrounding Reynolds' *Omai* may be summarized as a drama in five parts. First, the work was sold in November 2001 for a staggering £10.3 million. At the time, this was the highest price ever paid for a Reynolds and the second highest price ever paid for a British work of art.³ The successful bidder remained anonymous; in 2001 the only official news was that the buyer was foreign and thus planned on taking *Omai* out of the country indefinitely. Second, a public campaign began in order to halt the painting's exportation. The Tate Gallery executive, together with various philanthropic organizations, lobbied the government to impose an export bar on *Omai*. After some months of negotiation, the Department of Culture duly issued a bar, which in normal circumstances lasts for about ninety days but in this case threatened from the outset to last an unprecedented nine months.⁴ Technically, the bar remains to this day, making *Omai* the longest detained work of art since such legislation existed. Third, in 2003, soon after the bar was ratified, another anonymous collector offered the Tate Gallery £12.5 million for the exclusive objective of re-purchasing *Omai*.⁵ The private owner, however, declined this sum, demonstrating a degree of annoyance at the proceedings by keeping his new acquisition out of public view while awaiting permission to take it home. Relations appeared to improve somewhat in 2005, when, as the fourth key development in this saga, the owner agreed to lend *Omai* to the Tate's Reynolds exhibition. The fifth and final act – thus far at least – involved the granting of a *temporary* export licence in early 2006 to the owner in order for the painting to be loaned to the National Gallery of Ireland. The work is currently on display in Dublin, where it is intended to hang until around 2011. The British government yet maintains that it will not be granting a *permanent* export licence for *Omai* in the foreseeable future.⁶

Amid the extremes of this affair, there has been noticeably little debate about why exactly this work warrants such passion and such expense. Most of the contending players seem simply to accept that *Omai* has premier artistic and historic merit. This is certainly what Sotheby's tried to suggest in its initial advertisement for the auction: *Omai* is 'one of the great icons of eighteenth-century art', the agent proclaimed, and, additionally, it is 'a symbol of an age which saw unprecedented advances'.⁷

Sotheby's is, of course, a commercial enterprise that must be expected to make such claims. What is significant is how curators, politicians, journalists and academics all largely followed suit – some even embellishing these views further. The then Tate Director General, Nicholas Serota, advised that *Omai* was 'one of [Reynolds'] most important and visually compelling works', while Tate Britain Director Stephen Deuchar declared it is 'probably Reynolds' masterpiece' and, indeed, 'an icon of the

eighteenth century' *in toto*.⁸ The Chair of the Art Fund Charity, which aided the Tate's early protest against *Omai*'s exportation, deemed the painting's historical significance was in being a 'vivid testament to the open-minded way in which people in Britain, during the age of enlightenment, accepted ... human being[s] from [other] worlds'; he added that, as such, it reminds us of how 'art can bridge cultural divides'.⁹

While keenly lobbied by Tate and the Art Fund, the government's Ministry for the Arts made its decision about *Omai*'s fate on advice from its own expert reviewing committee. This committee judged according to set criteria: a close connection to British history and life; outstanding aesthetic importance; and outstanding significance to the study of a branch of learning. A work has to satisfy only one point to warrant detention; in December 2002 the government's committee agreed that *Omai* satisfied all three requirements and was starred as a particularly crucial work. Moreover, the committee claimed that since Mai was 'one of the first black visitors to be welcomed as an equal in English society', his image today shows 'that Britain's historical response to other cultures and races could be positive'.¹⁰

The mainstream media quickly joined the cause of praising *Omai*. By 2003 *The Times* was pronouncing it Reynolds' definitive masterpiece, and by 2005 the *Daily Telegraph* was outbidding both Sotheby's and Deuchar by calling it an icon of all British art. A BBC television documentary on the work staked claims for its historic value, with host Alan Yentob telling us that it captured 'a unique moment in English history ... when the Empire stopped and paused for thought' about issues such as white racial superiority. In the same documentary, historian David Dabydeen even asserted that the work 'represents a great moment' because it helped to galvanize the abolition movement of the 1780s.¹¹

The puzzle about this recent commentary is how little it squares with past critique. The critical heritage of Reynolds' *Omai* is mixed at best and has rarely produced arguments for the work to be seen as an exemplary instance of British liberal enlightenment. For the bulk of its history, indeed, the painting has inspired only resounding silence. True, when it was first exhibited in 1776, the critic Horace Walpole declared the painting 'very good' and some fifty years later the itinerant German connoisseur G.F. Waagen pronounced it one of Reynolds' 'finest'.¹² But this hardly constitutes an overwhelming response considering the reams of praise that Reynolds enjoyed for at least the last twenty years of his life. When Reynolds' death in 1792 heralded a fresh stream of adulatory tributes in the form of obituaries and memoirs – many of which named their estimate of the artist's greatest or best works – the portrait of Mai was not once mentioned. And although Reynolds' executors secured a respectable 100 guineas for the work in the estate auction of 1796, this sum did not compare with the 150g., 200g. or 260g. prices that some of Reynolds' history paintings fetched in the same sale.¹³

Omai was not included in the first major Reynolds' retrospective held in 1813, nor indeed in any exhibition until 1954. Reynolds' keenest nineteenth-century disciples – among them William Wordsworth, William Hazlitt, John Constable and J.M.W. Turner – wrote substantial discussions about their favoured painter but none ever included reference to the portrait of Mai.¹⁴ Into the twentieth century, the work fared

only marginally better at the hands of art historians. Despite the government's claim that it is discussed in 'virtually every ... [history] of British art', *Omai* is rarely mentioned even in standard works on Reynolds' art.¹⁵ The 'doyen' of Reynolds studies, E.K. Waterhouse, failed to include it in his monograph *Sir Joshua Reynolds*; the editor of the scholarly volume that accompanied the last major Reynolds exhibition in 1986, Nicholas Penny, only glossed it in his introduction; while David Mannings gave it half a column in his recent monumental 1264-page Reynolds *catalogue raisonné*.¹⁶

The commentary that does exist on Mai's portrait – most of it by cultural historians of European voyages to the South Pacific – is remarkably discordant in its discussion of both style and success. On the matter of style, the majority of scholars frame their views with reference to a long-standing dichotomy between classicism and romanticism. Some emphasize the classical or neoclassical feel of the piece, noting the 'toga-like' quality of the subject's dress as well as the antique pose of Mai and his overall elegance.¹⁷ Others stress the work's adherence to 'the natural school' and point out for special remark its romantic exoticism, the sublimity of the landscape and the gesture to 'innate dignity'.¹⁸ Many commentators, of course, argue for a blend of both classicism and romanticism – among them the great scholar of the European vision of the South Pacific, Bernard Smith, who recognized 'affinities' to antiquity together with an 'idealised exoticism' in the portrait.¹⁹

Fewer scholars have ventured a direct opinion about *Omai's* success. Most admiring of the piece is probably Joseph Burke, who thought it the 'perfect reconciliation' of the 'classical and romantic tendencies of the eighteenth century' and indeed used it as the frontispiece to his *Oxford History of English Art, 1714–1800* (1976). In contrast, however, Harriet Guest worries over the portrait's 'strangeness', seeing it as 'oddly illegible' due to the 'incompatibility' of its classicism with what she calls its 'exoticism'.²⁰ Still fewer commentators have written explicitly on whether or not the portrait represents a progressive, tolerant enlightenment. Most tend to discuss the portrait of Mai at all because it relates to their interest in Britain's decidedly non-tolerant annexation of the South Pacific.

Before the twenty-first century, then, the portrait of Mai only haphazardly registered with critics as one of Reynolds' more important paintings, and when it did provoke interest, views on its impression and execution were widely disparate. This critical heritage over the longue durée stands in clear contrast to the current ecstatic celebration of Reynolds' *Omai*. What is the explanation? The remainder of this article focuses on the eighteenth-century history of *Omai* – its precedents and contexts – and suggests that such a history can reveal much about the roots of the work's later varied reception, and thus much about why it has generated so many different viewings over the years. It is a history that discovers that *Omai* was not Reynolds' first attempt at portraying a visitor from the New World to British shores. The artist had some thirteen years before painted a visitor from the American New World, in a picture Reynolds called *Scyacust Ukah* – today little known or debated by either popular or critical viewers. This work, however, Reynolds himself designated a failure. Instead of a glorious manifestation of progress, the later portrait of Mai, I argue, is better understood as a concerted experiment in overcoming the problems that had

previously led to failure. Its very experimentality, however, also laid the groundwork for later ambivalence.

II EARLIER NEW WORLD VISITORS

For the two years of his stay in Britain, Mai proved to be immensely popular – with the court, with the press and with the literati of the *bon ton*. He impressed the King, charmed provincial grandees, intrigued university dons, delighted Grub Street and, of course, inspired artists. Whether or not this popularity amounted to an example of egalitarian race relations remains in question, but it is little disputed that Mai was fascinating to multiple levels of the British populace. What is far less well understood is that this fascination followed at least a fifty-year history of precedence.

When Mai alighted at Portsmouth in 1774, he was seen less as the first visitor to Britain from the South Seas and more as the latest version of visitor from the New World. Native Americans had been travelling to Britain since the turn of the fifteenth century – and to notably popular effect since the turn of the seventeenth. Mai was linked to these previous delegations in at least three ways: by geography, by vocabulary and in terms of re-enactment. First, Mai's Pacific home region was viewed overwhelmingly at this time as an extension or repetition of the American New World. Following the European voyages of re-discovery to the Pacific from the 1760s, the South Sea Isles were called variously the 'terra incognita of America' or the 'Southern Part of the New World'. Antiquarian George Cooke in his *Universal Geography* hailed the Pacific voyagers of his time to have 'opened to us another *New World*', while John Pinkerton's *Modern Geography*, echoing earlier descriptions of America as the 'fourth and final part of the world', claimed the Pacific to be now rather 'the fifth and final part of the world'.²¹

Second, following this geographic connection, Mai was often referred to by the same epithets given to Native Americans – chiefly that of 'savage'. The newspapers of the day routinely referred to him as savage (though sometimes in irony); the popular broadsides *Omiáh's Farewell* and *Letter from Omai* were just two examples of street literature that named him savage; while literati such as Hester Thrale and David Garrick fantasized about 'Omiáh, the Savage' and 'my *Arlequin Sauvage*', respectively.²²

Third, Mai was a successor to Native American envoys in the way that his visit to Britain re-enacted many of their itineraries – themselves forged by a succession of re-enactments – and alluded to many of the same literary and visual responses. Like nearly all earlier eighteenth-century Native American visitors, Mai was taken to see St James's Palace, Whitehall, the Exchange, Greenwich Observatory and the fashionable spas, with the deliberate intention of impressing a potential ally with Britain's organization, might and sophistication. Reports of Mai's reactions to these sites often plagiarized older reports of Native American responses. For example, when the *London Chronicle* gossiped about Mai taking an English lover, it was consciously reminding readers of the bestselling *Garland* of 1710 that told the same tale about an Iroquois visitor.²³

Most of all, Mai can be said to have followed in the footsteps of Native American visitors because his presence in Britain occasioned similar strands of polemic about the

state of British society. This was a polemic based on the contemporary assumption that New World peoples – American and Pacific alike – carried more than just the epithet of savagery but in fact represented its essence, and as such served as ideal vehicles for interrogating its supposed opposite in British civilization.²⁴

The modern history of the idea of savagery has generated a vast literature.²⁵ While most have agreed about the general function of savagery to ‘hold up a mirror’ to its presumed opposite, and also about its strong association – at least until the nineteenth century – with New World peoples, there has been less consensus about savagery’s definition over time. Some have argued that it was a ‘liminal category’, acting as a ‘bridge’ between notions of civilized man and notions of non-human animals; others have emphasized the way it was seen to represent humanity’s initial or ‘infant’ stage; many scholars simply project the late-modern definition of the term which is akin to mere ferocity or cruelty.²⁶

The etymology of savagery reveals that the word – derived from the Latin *silva* for forest – was not commonly used to describe man before the fifteenth century. In early modern usage, two properties were key. First, as in the case of the ‘*oddely* wild ... Ishmaell the Sauage’ in the fifteenth-century saga *Generydes*, savages were men fundamentally out of place; they were odd or different because they lived in spaces – like forests – that were not normally or familiarly occupied. Second, as with the initially ‘gabbling’ and godless Caliban of Shakespeare’s *Tempest*, the difference, or otherness, of savages was tied to simplicity or a lack of what we might today call social practices or ‘cultural facts’ – such as language and religion. Much more than physiognomy or personal attitude, it was the realm of the social in early modern times that indicated savagery.²⁷

From this barest of historical elaborations, it seems clear that savagery in the era under discussion cannot be reduced to an ‘in-between’ category or a stage or just a negative quality. Very rarely were savages before the nineteenth century thought to be outside the borders of ‘the human’ – not least because they were usually said to have society in some form. The notion of savagery as a stage in a teleological process was advanced only within the tradition of natural jurisprudence – and only then really after 1650. And finally it is not at all a given that a socially simple other is, or was seen to be, inherently cruel. Savagery in this period was both larger and more precise than often retailed.

Of course, other peoples from outside the New World were also sometimes called savage by early modern Europeans, but these were arguably all aligned in the first instance with another more powerful concept, and any attributions of savagery were rather synonyms for that prior alignment.²⁸ For example, most references to Asian savagery tended to be overwhelmed by, or were substantively, references to Asian barbarism – a state of simple social otherness occasioned by a decadent fall or wilful refusal to change, rather than an original condition.²⁹ Likewise, references to Celtic savagery were harnessed to a dominant notion of Celtic brutishness, just as references to African savagery were usually supplementary to African bondedness. In short, while others were sometimes called savage, it was the New World figure that became paradigmatic. To paraphrase an elder authority on the history of name-calling,

Winthrop Jordan, savagery 'never seemed to be *as* important a quality' in Asians, Celts or Africans as it was in the New World person.³⁰

From the start of receiving New World peoples to their shores, Britons emphasized both their radical difference and their simplicity of social practices. When three Beothuk from Newfoundland arrived with some Bristol-based fishermen in 1501, contemporary chronicler Richard Fabyan hailed their strangeness and was quick to point out their absence of cloth coverings, cooked diet and intelligible language.³¹ Over the next couple of centuries, such travellers arrived on British shores at periodic intervals of about a generation or so. Notably, however, it was only from the early 1700s that they started to generate deep and broad interest.³² The story behind this marked shift was less about a change in the definition of savagery than a change in its purchase within British culture. To a nation undergoing a momentous transition to a commercial society, reliant on continual expansion into overseas markets and necessitating the development of a sophisticated public sphere, savagery – especially in the immediate form of present individuals – began to seem particularly illuminating. Its contrastive capacity put issues into clear relief (or into sometimes strongly ironic comparison) and the social nature of its supposed radical simplicity made it pertinent to discussions about Britain's rapidly elaborating public. The most important feature was the way it could be used simultaneously by critics *and* defenders of this national transformation: both favourable and unfavourable readings of savagery surfaced in British responses to eighteenth-century New World visitors, and each in turn could yield critical or apologist views of the way that commercial Britain related to the notion of simple society. Savagery proved 'good to think', to borrow a well-known phrase from anthropology, for eighteenth-century Britons.

The first really popular visit by New World persons, the arrival in 1710 of four supposed 'Iroquois Kings', neatly exemplified the new utility of savagery. Joseph Addison published perhaps the best-known piece, in *The Spectator*, which narrated the imaginary discovery of mislaid papers by one of the Iroquois. The piece figured the visitors as genial simpletons who marvel at the complexity of British party politics and the elaborations of high-society dress codes. While gently satiric of British potential for excess, Addison ultimately approved the social effects of his country's emerging commercial state when he contrasted them with those assumed of Native American states. Addison's fellow journalist Richard Steele took a similar line on Britain's current transformation, but he employed the Iroquois differently in his literary interpretation to make the same point. To him, these visitors were simple only in their loving loyalty. What they lacked was greed, corruption and decadence – much *like*, Steele insisted, their British hosts, who were 'ready in their Service', caring and polite.³³ Visiting 'savages' thus appealed equally to both of these sympathetic observers of British society, but notably through wholly different readings of their value.

Similarly opposing evaluations of the Iroquois' savagery were also mobilized in critical views on Britain. A popular pamphlet entitled *The Four Kings of Canada* hailed the virtues of savagery's simplicity while disdaining the vices of a commercializing state: 'These princes do not know how to cocker and make much of themselves', the narrator noted, 'nor are they subject to those Indispositions our Luxury [now] brings upon us'.

Conversely, the satiric broadside *Royal Strangers Ramble* reviled savagery's nakedness and poverty, but made the same point as the *Four Kings* pamphleteer by comparing the Indians' lack with the new cultural emptiness of Britain: 'Since no one brought less ... Than those who from India are come ... no one before / Return'd from our Shore / With so little advantages Home'.³⁴

Into the 1700s, subsequent Native American envoys stirred a similar pattern of response.³⁵ Always, the concept of savagery remained the dominant frame by which popular culture received these arrivals. This was not only evident in the written responses but also in the many visual depictions of New World envoys. Visually, savagery was indicated by reference both to the 'sylvan' habitat of original association and to the simple customs assumed of savage life – skins, tattoos and feathers for dress, pre-modern tools for subsistence, and/or artless totems for spirituality or community. For example, John Verelst's portraits of the four Iroquois of 1710 are each set against a background of lush wilderness and present the delegates with feather dressings, tattoos, skin coverings, tomahawks, bows and arrows, and/or bestial totems.³⁶

Savagery was the concept that determined the increasing popularity of New World peoples in Britain and that which most bound the first Pacific Islander to visit Britain with previous Native American exemplars.

III REYNOLDS AND OSTENACO

The last significant envoy from the New World to arrive in Britain before Mai was a delegation of three Cherokee in 1762. This delegation, led by a minor Cherokee chief called Ostenaco, had been arranged by the colony of Virginia after extracting an agreement of peace from the Cherokee earlier that year. Ostenaco and his small entourage, although little discussed by British historians today, met with similar levels of fascination from Londoners that their predecessors had seen and that Mai would see.³⁷ They were frequently mobbed by crowds; they inspired innumerable forms and quantities of street literature; and they piqued the interest of many important cultural brokers – in this instance, men such as Edmund Burke and Oliver Goldsmith. Virtually unknown is that one of the distinguished men who sought to witness and capture this latest manifestation of visiting savagery was Joshua Reynolds.

Reynolds painted Ostenaco on 1 July 1762 (see Figure 2). The portrait, entitled *Scyacust Ukah*, is mainly ignored in the annals of Reynolds scholarship, although it is analysed briefly in the work of art historian Stephanie Pratt.³⁸ Like *Omai*, it was not commissioned, but, unlike *Omai*, neither it was exhibited in Reynolds' lifetime.³⁹

Compared to the enthusiasm shown for Reynolds' *Omai* today, the neglect of Reynolds' first representation of a New World visitor is surprising. One short answer may be that *Scyacust Ukah* fits awkwardly into the Reynolds canon. As well as being the most fashionable painter in Britain for the latter part of the eighteenth century, Reynolds was, as inaugural president of the Royal Academy, the most influential theorist on art in his day. His fifteen lectures to the Academy, delivered between 1769 and 1790 (though formulated from the late 1750s), focused primarily on explicating and advocating his vision of a 'grand style' for British art. This style sought to 'raise the thoughts, and extend



Figure 2 Joshua Reynolds, *Scyacust Ukah*, 1762, oil on canvas, 122 x 90 cm, from the collection of the Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

the views of the spectator [such that] its effects may extend themselves imperceptibly into publick benefits, and be among the means of bestowing on whole nations refinement of taste'. Such a refinement, Reynolds went on, if not directly purifying the manners of a people, would at least obviate their worst excesses and help disentangle the mind from appetite, 'till that contemplation of universal rectitude and harmony which began by Taste, may ... conclude in Virtue'. Elevation was achieved, Reynolds claimed, by questing always for the 'general and intellectual' over what he variously termed 'actual nature', 'common nature', or the 'vulgar and strict historical truth'.⁴⁰

In the case of portraiture – already a somewhat suspect genre for its attention to the 'particular' subject – the grand quest should be for 'the general air' of the sitter rather

than for exact likeness.⁴¹ On the tricky question of how to deal with particularity in portraits, Reynolds offered two slightly contradictory options. On the one hand, an artist could include certain 'single features' if they were minor or 'innocent' enough to provoke neither 'disquisition nor any endeavour to alter them'. Interestingly, Reynolds made this argument in the 1770s with reference to a Cherokee: whoever would make a fuss about, or wish to suppress, his 'yellow and red oker', Reynolds declared, is the barbarian. Such innocent 'fashions' in fact strengthen love of 'universal rectitude and harmony' because they promote a toleration of small differences. On the other hand (and here he gave no contemporary example), an artist should work to make particularity serve the creation of 'character'. Character itself is an ideal notion, of course, but at least as one of a 'certain number' it can provide some variety or texture to the otherwise rather monotonous universal human story. At all times, diversity was only to be admitted in so far as it nurtured the ideal of an ultimate human integrity, *not* for the sake of celebrating diversity itself.⁴²

According to this brief sketch of his theory, and according to the history of British responses to New World visitors thus far, a Reynolds portrait of a Cherokee might reasonably be expected to portray – amid some minor or innocent details of difference – a general idea about the character of savagery, designed to instruct a British audience on a universal theme. Considering Reynolds' patriot politics and aesthetic commitment to beauty, this general idea would probably be about a noble savage whose qualities compare favourably with those of Britons, and thus teach of the admirableness of virtue and the interconnectedness of humanity. Had Reynolds' politics and aesthetics been otherwise, perhaps this general idea would be about how noble savagery reprimanded British waywardness from virtue, or indeed about an ignoble savagery that either congratulated or castigated. Whichever the perspective, the subject would have been made into an allegory about savagery and contemporary British life – in much the same way, that is, that previous New World visitors had been represented for the past fifty years, and indeed how members of Reynolds' own circle of acquaintance represented Ostenaco and his entourage in the 1760s.⁴³

No such grand rendition of a general idea, however, is apparent in *Scyacust Ukah*. At the level of innocent single features, possibly only the shaved hairstyle qualifies: it resembles that depicted of other Cherokee in many images of the time. At the level of character, though, there are multiple features for consideration but tellingly each here suggests opacity over transparency. All the usual early modern signs to savagery are in this work muted and reduced. The smudged clouds in the background obscure any clear reference to savagery's primordial forest. There are no scarifications, no feathers, and no hide. Ostenaco's dress is certainly odd but not exactly indicative of a crude lifestyle: the mixture of wampum (worn incorrectly around the shoulders instead of as a belt) with silver gorget and European fabric and tailoring suggests rather a confused hybridity of characters. The implement Ostenaco holds remains unidentifiable – it could be a Native American calumet or tomahawk but, from the manner of carrying, it likewise suggests a European sceptre or baton.⁴⁴

Reynolds' ambition in securing Ostenaco for a sitting is difficult to ascertain. The artist's notebooks reveal a single line on the work: for 1 July 1762 Reynolds entered

simply 'The King of the Cherokee'. It is doubtful that Ostenaco's own lowly escort – the bumptious Virginian soldier Henry Timberlake – would have approached Reynolds to undertake the portrait. The artist more likely arranged an encounter himself, and presumably for the same reasons that had inspired his fellow countrymen to bear witness and, if possible, capture the spectacle of savagery all century.⁴⁵ If begun as a distillation of savagery, however, the portrait did not end that way. All the pointers to such an archetype, or character, fall well short of expectation. As Pratt remarks, 'there is ... an element of equivocation'. The main focus becomes a disturbingly complex – and for Pratt a strange and uncertain – sense of an individual gaze.⁴⁶ Dignified, weary, bemused and defiant, the sitter is surely his own person. We do not know if this was a fair likeness of Ostenaco, but we do know that this was precisely the kind of problem – that of producing a fair likeness, together with that of portraying individuals as their own persons – that Reynolds shunned. It is perhaps too much to suggest that *Scyacust Ukah* is an outright rejection of New World archotyping, but it is a testament to Reynolds' inability to epitomize an idea of savagery from this example. That Reynolds never let the painting see the light of day certainly underscores it as a failure of something.

As it happens, Reynolds was not alone in experiencing this latest envoy from the New World as a challenge to conventional practice. Although almost always still referred to as 'savages', the Cherokee of 1762 in many ways oversaw the beginning of the end of the Native American as most obvious representative of visiting savagery. For in nearly every instance of fascination for them, there were also new fracture-lines. Even though the Cherokee pulled larger crowds than any previous delegation – somewhere around 10,000 by one count in Vauxhall Gardens – they also for the first time stirred worries over their potential exploitation.⁴⁷ When rumours spread that their colonial escort was charging a fee to view them, there was an extraordinary backlash: Timberlake said he feared for his life from the morally outraged, and no less a figure than the Secretary of State felt compelled to issue a decree against any future interference.⁴⁸ Similarly, when a publican wrote in to *Lloyd's Evening Post* in July 1762 to protest against the alleged 'shewing' of the Cherokee for profit in rival taverns, he declared himself 'shocked' at the 'inhumane ... project', believing rather that 'no man has a right to make a property of ... fellow creatures'.⁴⁹

Worries over exploitation joined worries over the clarity of cross-cultural translation. Edmund Burke, for one, observed that the British intent to show off the 'power and grandeur of the nation' to the Cherokee was fraught from the start because neither culture fully understood the other's language, or – it followed – their social priorities.⁵⁰ Likewise, a newspaper reporter noted that a military parade in St James's Park backfired when the Cherokee reacted with 'agitation' and 'suspicion' to the grenadiers' imposing uniforms and bayonets, instead of with awe and humility, as expected.⁵¹

No previous delegation had evoked such explicit concerns about the imposition of archotyping onto New World peoples. This is not to say that the Cherokee of 1762 were the first Native American visitors to break fully from the bonds of allegorization, or idealization, but it is the case that enough ambivalence about their subject status filtered through on this occasion to make the whole episode uncomfortable. While it

is beyond the remit of this article to speculate about the causes for this change, it is of course no coincidence that Ostenaco arrived near the end of the Seven Years War – an imperial conflict that Troy Bickham has argued not only made the continent of America seem more ‘real’ and critical to Britain’s commercial interests but also made ordinary Britons for the first time see the native inhabitants of America as ‘real people’. With the stakes of the war ever soaring for its European players, and with increasing evidence of Native American influence in determining the outcome of that war, both ‘America’ and its native peoples lost some of their allegorical status as they became more and more subject to an urgent and pragmatic scrutiny.⁵²

In a sense, then, the envoy of 1762 ended up failing in social and cultural terms in the same way that Reynolds’ *Scyacust Ukah* appeared to fail in critical terms. Both the event and the work defied certain expectations. Indeed, it could be said that *Scyacust Ukah*, in its final if hesitant maintenance of the particular over the ideal, stands as a single painterly articulation of the discomfort that the envoy caused as a whole. This, then, is the longer answer to the question of *Scyacust Ukah*’s neglect: the portrait reflected too acutely the awkward fit of Ostenaco’s entire visit within the whole eighteenth-century tradition of receiving New World peoples. Just as the work jarred against the artist’s own inclination for idealization in the service of higher instruction, it also showed how the subject himself jarred against the prevailing wider inclination for savage exemplars to enable discussion on what it now meant to be British.

IV REYNOLDS AND MAI

When Mai arrived in Britain some twelve years after Ostenaco, he was seen by many to rehabilitate the savage type: he came from a still relatively unknown New World – one free from the unsettling realities of colonial war, native uprisings and potential massive loss. Reynolds’ portrait of this exemplar turned out very differently from his previous portrayal of a New World visitor, but not, as we shall see, in simply obverse ways.

Mai’s journey to Britain in 1774 was not the first major relocation of the young Polynesian’s life. Mai had been born in Raiatea, a tiny island near Tahiti, in around 1753. In the 1760s Raiatea had been invaded by neighbouring Boraborans. Mai’s father had been killed during the invasion, although the rest of his family – who were probably from the second order of Raiatean society, and thus landowning if not of the chiefly class – managed to escape to Tahiti. All his subsequent life, Mai dreamed of avenging his father’s death and the loss of his ancestral land. He made it plain to numerous later British commentators that his main objective in travelling to ‘Bretanee’ was to obtain ‘men & guns ... to drive the Bola Bola Usurpers from his property’.⁵³

In 1773, when Captain James Cook called at Tahiti during his second Pacific expedition, Britain was already known to Society Islanders as a nation of extraordinary firepower. When Cook disembarked at Huahine Island, Mai was ready to grab his opportunity, climbing onboard and immediately volunteering his maritime services. Cook himself was ambivalent about Mai’s inclusion on board his escort vessel, the *Adventure*: ‘dark, ugly and a downright blackguard’ is how he initially described him.⁵⁴

But the Captain was under pressure to return a living example of Tahitian humanity to his one-time fellow voyager, and now influential patron of British exploration, Joseph Banks. He also knew that the Admiralty followed a long tradition among British explorers of seeking 'native informants' whenever they ventured into new worlds, for immediate navigational purposes as well as for potential later negotiations over territory and trade.

Thus Mai remained on ship and survived the long voyage across oceans, disembarking with the *Adventure's* captain, Tobias Furneaux, at Portsmouth on 14 July 1774. Frustratingly, Reynolds' notebooks for the period 1775–6 are missing, so we do not know exactly how, or how often, Mai came to sit for him. The artist probably had an easier time gaining access to him than to Ostenaco, though, since he was by then a close friend of Joseph Banks. What is left to us are two preliminary sketches of Mai that Reynolds made before embarking on the full-scale canvas. This in itself is extraordinary, for Reynolds rarely made sketches of any kind, let alone both a pencil and an oil as he did for *Omai*.⁵⁵ The pencil sketch, made by the draughtsman in Reynolds, is probably a realistic image (see Figure 3). It compares well with sketches made by Cook's professional draughtsman, William Hodges, who first encountered Mai in Polynesia.⁵⁶ It shows a man with a full face, broad nose, round eyes and flowing hair. The later oil sketch has the face slightly slimmer, the nose slightly narrower, the eyes slightly more almond-shaped and the hair, though still unadorned, now perceptibly more arranged (see Figure 4). The final version takes each of these modifications one step further, adding high cheekbones and removing all the hair.

Nothing shows more powerfully or succinctly how determined Reynolds was this time to idealize his subject. The problem here, as the disparate nature of *Omai's* critical heritage makes plain, is in the clarity of his idealization. In one sense, it is evident that the painting is intended to represent the character of savagery: the wild landscape, the primitive dress of the figure and the tattoos on the subject's hands all recall standard flags to the idea as it had built up over the early modern era. But in another sense there is also evidence of an unusual mixture of approaches to that character. The overtly classical attributes of the painting – the *adlocutio* pose that was commonly used at the time to suggest the admirable qualities of an ancient magistrate and the heavy folds of the costume that *also* suggest the toga of a civic official – sit alongside a swarthy, turbaned exoticism with which they were rarely associated.⁵⁷

In the most interesting piece written on the portrait, Harriet Guest has argued definitively for the confusion, rather than conciliation, that this mixture creates. She does so by paying special attention to the tattoos: Guest is the only *Omai* commentator to have registered Reynolds' peculiar opinion about tattooing, which consequently makes this feature more germane than it might be otherwise. In his seventh discourse, Reynolds gives tattooing, together with corseting, as two examples of fashions that should *not* be considered innocent. Because they cut into the surface of the body, Guest explains, they indicated human difference too indelibly and thereby compromised the philosophy of human integrity. Many contemporaries testified to the fact that Mai did indeed have tattooed hands. That Reynolds decided to include these 'single features' and simultaneous 'inscriptions of exoticism', as Guest names them, rather than



Figure 3 Joshua Reynolds, pencil sketch of Mai, c.1775, 27 x 20 cm. nla.pic-an5600097. National Library of Australia.

suppress them in the interests of the grand style, reveals a disapproval that is hard to square with the ‘authority’ of the ‘classical stance’ and, as such, confuses any final allegory.⁵⁸

In agreeing broadly with Guest’s conclusion, I would add, or underscore, three points. First, tattoos were also, of course, well-known indicators of the idea of savagery in the period, so Reynolds’ inclusion of them signals at once a disapproval of Mai’s Polynesian customs and a disapproval of the character Mai was said to embody. This double negativity only furthers the resultant ambiguity. Second, following the identification of tattoos with savagery, Guest’s claim that they simply indicate ‘exoticism’ may be refined: more specifically, they indicate a strand of exoticism. This



Figure 4 Joshua Reynolds, sketch of Mai, c.1775, oil on canvas, 60 x 53 cm. Yale University Art Gallery. Gift of the Associates in Fine Arts.

means that the other strands of exoticism additionally suggested in the painting – that of the African Other by way of physiognomy and the Oriental Other by way of the turban – also further confusion. Third, while Guest relies on reading Reynolds' written theory to make her argument about *Omai's* execution, I suggest that an analysis of Reynolds' past practice – namely in the portrait of *Scyacust Ukah* – helps to explain the motivation behind *Omai's* execution: Reynolds was so careful in 1776 to avoid the bleed into the particular that occurred in 1762 that he over-compensated, as it were, with idealization.

We may conjecture that Reynolds would not have shared Guest's thesis since, unlike in the case of *Scyacust Ukah*, he exhibited *Omai* and kept it always on display in his studio. He must have found a way of resolving the multiplicity in the portrait, or at least preferred in art to wrestle with a problem that fell within the bounds of idealization than with one that threatened idealization altogether. This is of course how many later critics have seen *Omai* – as a 'perfect reconciliation' of divergent idealist tendencies.

As with *Ostenaco*, Mai's reception in the wider British culture of his time was in many ways encapsulated in the Reynolds portrait. Unlike *Ostenaco's* visit, though, where the key difficulty was the host's struggle to resolve idealizing impulses with

particularizing ones, the central problem with Mai was the tussle over differing idealizations. This was of course a version of the same tussle that British commentators had faced with most Native American envoys before 1762 – whether to view them as noble or ignoble savages – which thus situates Mai more comfortably than Ostenaco within the eighteenth-century tradition of receiving New World peoples.

Mai's immense popularity ensured a plethora of publications, from within weeks of his arrival to many years after his departure. The bestselling squib, *An Historic Epistle from Omiah* (1775), pursued the especially popular noble-savage critical line. It ventriloquized a virtuous Mai horrified by the greedy and violent mores of the contemporary Old World. Mai asks, 'Can Europe boast, with all her pilfer'd wealth, / A larger share of happiness, or health?'⁵⁹ Another critical response, written a few years later, was contained in the scurrilous satire *Transmigration* (1778). This publication, however, figured Mai as an ignoble savage. It criticized British attempts to mask explorations into the New World as a high-minded pursuit of learning. Exploration was rather 'simple FORNICATION', which thus put Britons on the same plane as Polynesians, who 'frisk in OBEREA'S COURT'.⁶⁰

Apologist reactions also abounded, and these could also use either favourable or unfavourable evaluations of Mai's reputed savagery. When the Revd J.E. Gambier met Mai in 1774, he hailed the 'strict & rational temperance of this *Savage*', and compared his 'unaffected Smile', 'intrepidity', abstemiousness, and deep sensibility with the best of newly enlightened Britons.⁶¹ The poet William Cowper, conversely, in his long work *The Task* of 1785 held a less sympathetic opinion of Mai, though equally positive sentiments about Britain. *The Task* depicted Mai as a pitiful and senseless savage: 'rude', 'ignorant' and 'inert' who must 'regret / Sweets tasted here'.⁶²

In uncanny resemblance, then, the portrait of Mai reflected the event of Mai just as the portrait of Ostenaco matched the Cherokee's reception. *Scyacust Ukah*, however, encapsulated contemporary doubts about the truly exemplary status of Ostenaco, while *Omai* encapsulated contemporary confusion about what kind of example Mai embodied. Where Ostenaco's subjectivity was precisely at issue, Mai's was only debated within an unchallenged acceptance of its ideal parameters.

Scyacust Ukah, like the delegate it sought to represent, turned out to be a failure in standards: the painting defied Reynoldsian standards as well as the usual standards of New World visitor representation, while its subject defied prevailing conventions for the understanding of people of his kind. The portrait of Mai, on the other hand, was caught between failure and success. It balanced a consistency with the typical view of New World visiting savagery against an inconsistency over which ideal view predominated. Such ambiguity worked to Mai's advantage during his visit: it created further fuel for the type of instructive speculation that his kind were expected to provide in eighteenth-century Britain. Contained all in one portrait, however, ambiguity opened the way to wildly opposite interpretations, as the portrait's mixed history of reception has shown. Some have always appreciated Reynolds' *Omai*, but some have been troubled by its internal incompatibilities. Today, evidently, most viewers understand the portrait only in the affirmative.

V FROM EXPERIMENT TO ICON

That the current British art scene and public have decided to see the portrait of Mai as a brilliant symbol of modernity is at the very least an historical irony. Today's audience want to view *Omai* as a portrait that is fundamentally about human differences – about 'other worlds'; about 'black' people; about race – and presumably about our need to 'accept' differences, 'building bridges' to them rather than swallowing all whole within universality. But the identification of difference, or particularity, in the definite and indelible sense evoked here was always Reynolds' most difficult problem; it was what he saw creep into his portrait of Ostenaco, what caused him to disregard this work in the end, and what inspired his over-compensatory idealization in the portrait of Mai. The historical irony is deepened by the fact that *Scyacust Ukah*, Reynolds' earlier work that seems to cater so much more fittingly to modern sensibilities, is now little seen or discussed.

Whatever else the portrait of Mai was, it was not a refutation of Reynolds' guiding adherence to the 'grand style'. The fact that best underscores this claim is the existence of Reynolds' earlier attempt to paint a previous New World visitor. *Scyacust Ukah* is illuminating here for the judgement of failure that its creator accorded it. Reynolds thought that the work failed because it revealed too acutely all the protestations against New World idealization that *Omai* is now celebrated for depicting. Its failure suggests that Reynolds' second effort to represent a New World visitor, some thirteen years later, was driven by a desire to rectify this defect. In this way, *Omai* was far more an experiment in restoring the utility of the concept of savagery than an effort to dismantle it in the name of open-minded genius. As an idealist portrayal of savagery (however jumbled), *Omai* fits squarely within the dominant eighteenth-century mode of understanding New World visitors, which received such people as exemplary notions come to illuminate the vices and virtues of commercial modernization. If a great portrait of 'pause' (*pace* Alan Yentob) about the reductionism involved in this process was really wanted today, the British public might do better to turn instead to the neglected 1762 portrait of a Cherokee called Ostenaco.

NOTES

1. *Daily Telegraph*, 25 May 2005; *Daily Telegraph*, 21 May 2005; *New Statesman*, 23 May 2005. Our closest estimate to the visitor's real name today is Mai, though he was commonly called Omai by eighteenth-century Britons (who included the Tahitian 'O', meaning 'it is', in their appellation). In this article I use Mai to refer to the man and *Omai* to refer to Reynolds' painting.
2. See Martin Postle, *Sir Joshua Reynolds: The Subject Pictures* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 277, and Sotheby's sold lot archive at <http://www.sothebys.com>.
3. See the *Guardian*, 1 October 2001; 30 November 2001; 18 December 2002; and Sotheby's sold lot archive at <http://www.sothebys.com>. The world sale record for a Reynolds in 2000 was £1.65 million: see <http://www.christies.com>. The highest price for any British work of art at that time was £10.7 million: see the *Guardian*, 30 November 2001.
4. Department of Culture, Media and Sport (henceforth DCMS) press release, 'Temporary Export Bar for "Outstanding" Reynolds' Portrait of Omai', 17 December 2002. Also see

- DCMS, *The 49th Report of the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art* (2003), p. 53; *Guardian*, 18 December 2002; 24 December 2002.
5. 'Anonymous Donor Steps in to Help Acquire Omai', Tate News, 26 March 2003 (online).
 6. See Martin Bailey, 'Owner of Reynolds' Portrait ...', *Art Newspaper*, 171 (2006), and *Guardian*, 5 February 2005.
 7. Sotheby's sold lot archive at <http://www.sothebys.com>.
 8. Serota quoted in DCMS, *The 49th Report*, p. 50; Deuchar cited in the *Guardian*, 24 December 2002.
 9. Art Fund Charity, 'Noble Savage', at www.artfund.org. See also 'Anonymous Donor Steps in', Tate News.
 10. See DCMS, *The 49th Report*, pp. 50–3. See also the *Guardian*, 8 February 2003, and DCMS, *The 48th Report of the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art* (2002), p. 57.
 11. *The Times*, 29 January 2003; *Daily Telegraph*, 25 May 2005; BBC1 documentary *Imagine ... Portrait of Omai*, prod. Robin Dashwood (2003). See also Stella Tillyard, 'Paths of Glory: Fame and the Public in Eighteenth-Century London', in M. Postle (ed.), *Joshua Reynolds: The Creation of Celebrity* (London, 2005), p. 69.
 12. Walpole cited in David Mannings, *Sir Joshua Reynolds: Complete Catalogue of His Paintings* (New Haven, CT, 2000), vol. 1, p. 357; G.F. Waagen, *Works of Art and Artists in England*, trans. H.E. Lloyd (London, 1838), vol. 3, p. 205.
 13. See Richard Wendorf, *Sir Joshua Reynolds: The Painter in Society* (Cambridge, MA, 1997), ch. 1, and Postle, *Sir Joshua Reynolds*, ch. 7. An example of an initial posthumous memoir is Samuel Felton, *Testimonies to the Genius and Memory of Sir J. Reynolds* (London, 1792), which lists Reynolds' 'principal' 60 works but does not feature *Omai* (see pp. 20–31).
 14. See Postle, *Sir Joshua Reynolds*, ch. 7.
 15. DCMS, *The 49th Report*, p. 52.
 16. E.K. Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain 1530–1790* (London, 1953), p. 160; Nicholas Penny (ed.), *Reynolds* (London, 1986), p. 27; Mannings, *Complete Catalogue*, vol. 1, p. 357.
 17. G. Williams in his and P.J. Marshall's *The Great Map of Mankind* (London, 1982), p. 283; Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT, 1998), p. 154.
 18. Michael Alexander, *Omai: Noble Savage* (London, 1977), p. 103; Eric McCormick, *Omai: Pacific Envoy* (Auckland, 1977), p. 174.
 19. Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific* (Oxford, 1960), pp. 80–1.
 20. Joseph Burke, *English Art, 1714–1800* (Oxford, 1976), p. 205; Harriet Guest, 'Curiously Marked: Tattooing, Masculinity, and Nationality in 18th-Century British Perceptions of the South Pacific', in John Barrell (ed.), *Painting and the Politics of Culture* (Oxford, 1992), p. 106. 'Oddly illegible' is Barrell's phrase in his Introduction to this chapter, p. 10.
 21. See William Guthrie, *A New Geographical, Historical, and Commercial Grammar* (London, 1770); *St James's Chronicle*, 16–18 January 1787; George Cooke, *A Modern and Authentic System of Universal Geography* (London, 1800); John Pinkerton, *Modern Geography* (London, 1802). The earlier work that Pinkerton references is Peter Heylyn's *Cosmographie*, 2nd edn (London, 1656–7).
 22. See *London Chronicle*, 28 July 1774; *St James's Chronicle*, 4–6 August 1774; *General Evening Post*, 6–9 August 1774; *Omah's Farewell* (London, 1776); *Letter from Omai* (London, c.1780); Thrale and Garrick cited in McCormick, *Omai*, pp. 333, 156.
 23. *London Chronicle*, 20–22 April 1775.
 24. For the diplomatic history of such visitors, see Alden T. Vaughan, *Transatlantic Encounters: American Indians in Britain, 1500–1776* (Cambridge, 2006) and Kate Fullagar, *The Savage*

- Visit: Native Americans and Native Oceanians in Britain, 1710–1795* (forthcoming).
25. For a slice from the last four decades only, see: Margaret T. Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia, PA, 1964); Ronald Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge, 1976); Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse* (Baltimore, MD, 1978); Robert J. Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian* (New York, 1978); Anthony Padgen, *The Fall of Natural Man* (Cambridge, 1982); Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia, PA, 2000); Kay Anderson, *Race and the Crisis of Humanism* (Abingdon, 2007).
 26. Hodgen, *Early Anthropology*, ch. 10; Meek, *Social Science*; Anderson, *Race and the Crisis of Humanism*, ch. 2.
 27. On etymology, see *OED*, 3rd edn; Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1975), p. 74; and Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race*, p. 67. *Generydes, c.1450*, ed. W.A. Wright, Early English Text Society No. 55 (London, 1873), ll. 1344–5. For Shakespeare's Caliban in *The Tempest*, see Act 1, Sc. 2. 'Cultural facts' is Hodgen's term, *Early Anthropology*, p. 23. For a fuller discussion of all these claims, see Fullagar, *The Savage Visit*.
 28. For some scholars who concur that New World peoples were paradigmatic savages, see Ter Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage* (Berkeley, CA, 2001), p. xiii; Nicholas Hudson, 'From "Nation" to "Race": The Origin of Racial Classification in Eighteenth-Century Thought', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 29 (1996), p. 249; Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race*, p. 67; Anderson, *Race and the Crisis of Humanism*, p. 50.
 29. See Marshall and Williams, *The Great Map*, pp. 7–8, 17–18.
 30. See N. Canny, 'England's New World and the Old', in N. Canny (ed.), *Oxford History of the British Empire* (Oxford, 1998), vol. 1, p. 164, and, generally, Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 324–9. Also see David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (Cambridge, 2000) and Winthrop Jordan, *White over Black* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1968), p. 27.
 31. See David Quinn (ed.), *New American World: A Documentary History of North America to 1612* (London, 1979), vol. 1, p. 103.
 32. On New World peoples in early modern Britain, see C.C. Feest (ed.), *Indians and Europe* (Aachen, 1987) and the more recent account by Vaughan, *Transatlantic Encounters*. The subdued attitude of Britons to New World visitors before 1700 was in keeping with their attitude to the New World generally. See John Elliott, *The Old World and the New 1492–1650* (Cambridge, 1972).
 33. The 1710 episode is well documented in R.P. Bond, *Queen Anne's American Kings* (Oxford, 1952) and E. Hinderaker, 'The "Four Indian Kings" and the Imaginative Construction of the First British Empire', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 53 (1996), pp. 487–526. Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, 50 (27 April 1711), ed. D.F. Bond (Oxford, 1965), vol. 1, pp. 211–15; Richard Steele, *The Tatler*, 171 (13 May 1711), ed. D.F. Bond (Oxford, 1989), p. 440.
 34. Anon., *The Four Kings of Canada* (London, 1710), p. 7; anon., *The Royal Strangers Ramble* (London, 1710).
 35. These include especially the Cherokee envoy of 1730 and the Creek envoy of 1734. See for a full treatment Fullagar, *The Savage Visit*, ch. 3–4.
 36. To view these images, see Bond, *Queen Anne's American Kings*. To view earlier images, see Hugh Honour, *The European Vision of America* (Cleveland, OH, 1975).
 37. One recent article has concentrated on this event: John Oliphant, 'The Cherokee Embassy to London, 1762', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 27 (1999), pp. 1–26. See

- also Fullagar, *The Savage Visit*, ch. 4.
38. Stephanie Pratt, 'Reynolds' "King of the Cherokees" and Other Mistaken Identities in the Portraiture of Native American Delegations, 1710–1776', *Oxford Art Journal*, 21 (1998), pp. 145–7, and now also her *American Indians in British Art, 1700–1840* (Norman, OK, 2005), pp. 57–8. David Mannings discusses the work in a paragraph in his *Complete Catalogue*, vol. 1, p. 408.
 39. See Mannings, *Complete Catalogue*, vol. 1, p. 408. *Scyacust Ukah* did feature in the 2005 Reynolds exhibition at the Tate, but to little comment.
 40. Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*, ed. R.R. Wark (New Haven, CT, 1997), pp. 171, 235, 59. See also John Barrell, *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt* (New Haven, CT, 1986), ch. 1.
 41. Reynolds, *Discourses*, pp. 70, 59, and see p. 200. See also E.A. Bohls, 'Disinterestedness and Denial of the Particular', in P. Mattick (ed.), *Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics and the Reconstruction of Art* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 16–51, and Richard Wendorf, *The Elements of Life: Biography and Portrait Painting in Stuart and Georgian England* (Oxford, 1990), p. 229.
 42. See Reynolds, *Discourses*, pp. 39–54, 200, 137, and Barrell, *Political Theory*, pp. 99–112.
 43. Most notable among them was Oliver Goldsmith, who queued for some three hours to meet the Cherokee. See John Forster, *The Life and Times of Oliver Goldsmith* (London, 1871), vol. 1, pp. 288–9.
 44. Pratt hazards that it is a 'pipe-tomahawk' as made in Europe (!) at the time or a 'baton': 'Reynolds' "King of the Cherokees"', pp. 145–6.
 45. Mannings, *Complete Catalogue*, vol. 1, p. 3.
 46. Pratt, 'Reynolds' "King of the Cherokees"', pp. 146–7.
 47. See *St James's Chronicle*, 19 June 1762; 31 July 1762; *London Evening Post*, 19 June 1762; *London Chronicle*, 27 July 1762; and Henry Timberlake, *The Memoirs of Lieut. Henry Timberlake* (London, 1765), p. 114.
 48. Timberlake, *Memoirs*, pp. 119–21. See decree of the Secretary of State in *Public Advertiser*, 6 August 1762.
 49. 'Old Honesty', *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 28 July 1762.
 50. See Burke's *Annual Register* for 1762, p. 93.
 51. See *Public Register*, 20 July 1762.
 52. Troy Bickham, *Savages within the Empire: Representations of American Indians in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 3–7. Also see Pratt, *American Indians in British Art*, p. 68.
 53. For Mai's early life, see McCormick, *Omai*. Also see Sarah S. Banks, Memorandums, August–November 1774, in the Papers of Sir Joseph Banks, National Library of Australia (NLA) MS9, and James Cook, *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery*, ed. J.C. Beaglehole (Cambridge, 1955–67), vol. 3, pp. 233–5. For usage of 'Bretanee' in Tahitian, see Greg Dening, 'O Mai! This is Mai: A Masque of a Sort', in M. Etherington (ed.), *Cook and Omai: The Cult of the South Seas* (Canberra, 2001), p. 55.
 54. Cook, *Journals*, vol. 2, p. 222.
 55. See Caroline Turner, 'Images of Mai', in Etherington (ed.), *Cook and Omai*, p. 24, and Edward Edwards, *Anecdotes of Painters* (London, 1808), p. 208. Mannings revises this view slightly: *Complete Catalogue*, vol. 1, pp. 10–14, 24 n. 58.
 56. On Hodges, see McCormick, *Omai*, pp. 52–3.
 57. On the *adlocutio* pose and toga dress in the period's art, see David Solkin, 'Great Pictures or Great Men? Reynolds, Male Portraiture, and the Power of Art', *Oxford Art Journal*, 9 (1986), pp. 42–9.

58. Guest, 'Curiously Marked', pp. 102, 105–10. And see Reynolds, *Discourses*, p. 137.
59. Anon., *Historic Epistle from Omiah to the Queen of Otaheite* (London, 1775).
60. *Transmigration* (London, 1778), transcribed in Smith, *European Vision*, p. 47.
61. Notebook of Revd J.E. Gambier, 11 August 1774, cited in McCormick, *Omai*, pp. 102–3.
62. William Cowper, *The Poetical Works of William Cowper* (Edinburgh, 1863), p. 48.