

A Russian in Malaya: Nikolai Miklouho-Maclay's Expedition to the Malay Peninsula and the Early Anthropology of Orang Asli¹

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Abstract:

This article presents a critical overview of the newly translated diary of Russian anthropologist Nikolai Miklouho-Maclay's expedition to the Malay Peninsula (November 1874 – October 1875) to study its indigenous peoples, today known as Orang Asli. At the forefront of modern anthropological practice, Maclay spent long periods of time in the field in order to study different peoples and cultures during the nineteenth century. His expeditions to New Guinea, Australia and Melanesia are well-known in the history of anthropology but his travels in the Malay Peninsula remain poorly understood and little studied. Govor and Manickam present an analysis of their new translation and annotation of the diary, highlighting its contribution to racial theories of the region and to understanding the dynamics of Malay statecraft and British colonialism on the peninsula. The diary is also one of the earliest studies of indigenous people of the Malay Peninsula, thus giving historians and anthropologists alike a glimpse into indigenous life in the late-nineteenth century. The article

¹ The final translation of Maclay's diaries while in the Malay Peninsula (November 1874 – October 1875) is the result of many academics' work. In no particular order, Govor and Manickam, Mimi and Charles Sentinella, Natalia Kuklina, Raphael Kabo and Chris Ballard were all involved at various stages of the project and supported the final compilation of the diary with annotations. We would also like to acknowledge the assistance from the University of Frankfurt Junior Professorship Appointment Fund for the translation of the diary. The final translation is based on the text in the Maclay's *Collected Works* published in the 1950s (Miklukho-Maklai 1950-1954 2: 116-201, 230-236), hereafter referred to as old *Collected Works* (OCW). This publication was heavily edited and had numerous textual differences in comparison with the original manuscript, which is now available in the new *Collected Works* (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 5-67, 81-91) hereafter referred to as NCW. A publication of the full journal entries and scholarly commentaries on its contents is planned for 2015.

will present excerpts from the diary that illustrate the main themes while framing the material within the history of anthropology of Orang Asli and of colonialism in the area.

Introduction

In the following pages I propose to give, as briefly as possible, an account of the Anthropological and Ethnographical results of my wanderings through the Malay Peninsula. At some future time I shall probably publish my Journal... ('Ethnological excursions in the Malay Peninsula – November 1874 to October 1875 (preliminary communication).') (1878b, 2: 205)

Nikolai Miklouho-Maclay (1846-1888) is not usually a name associated with the Malay Peninsula or with the Malay World. While he is a well-known figure in anthropological circles of Australia and the Pacific, his writings on the Malay Peninsula remain fragmented and little studied. His most well-known publications in English were the translations of article about indigenous peoples of the Malay Peninsula originally in German (1875b) where they appeared in the *Journal of Eastern Asia* (1875a) and two publications in the *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JSBRAS)* (1878a; 1878b), the latter of which the quote at the beginning of this section originates. These articles, however, were themselves based on two extensive fieldwork trips to the Malay Peninsula. In the first expedition, undertaken from mid-December 1874 to early February 1875, he explored the southern part of the peninsula in what is today the states of Johor, Negeri Sembilan and Pahang. In the second expedition (June – October 1875), he traversed the peninsula from the south to the north-east coast and then to the west coast. Contrary to the state of documentation on his Melanesian²

² Melanesia typically refers to the area from New Caledonia to the Admiralty Islands in the Pacific. See Map 1.

travels, which can only be reconstructed on the basis of fragmentary records, the original materials produced during his Malay Peninsula travels, especially the first one, are well-preserved (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 5-67). The foundational material for this paper is a newly annotated translation of his original Russian diaries of his first expedition to the Malay Peninsula, and the wealth of his published writings on his time in Malaya in Russian and German. Due to the fragmentary nature of information concerning the second expedition, we will concentrate on the journal and material related to his first expedition.³

The present article will give a critical introduction to the diary of Maclay's first expedition by situating it among his other scholarship on Malaya, and then by focussing on three aspects of his writing. Firstly, we will delve into the racial connections made by Maclay between his Malay Peninsula studies and his wider work on Papua, Australia and the Pacific. Maclay's study on racial affinities between what is today considered island Southeast Asia and Australia and the Pacific is part of the scholarly enterprise of nineteenth-century European scholars who saw wider affinities among peoples of this region known during his time as Oceania (See Crawford 1820; Logan 1847). A nineteenth-century term, which encompassed island Southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific, Oceania today is split into Southeast Asia on the one hand, and Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific on the other hand (see Map 1). As Bronwen Douglas and Chris Ballard have commented, the term originated among nineteenth-century French scholars and is at odds with today's regional definitions which tend to separate Oceania into two or more sections of the globe (2012: 247). Maclay's understanding of the Malay Peninsula, and the archipelago in general, was intricately linked to his familiarity first and foremost with its neighbours to the east, and what he saw to be similarities between racial types in Oceania.

³ A fragment of the route he took in his second expedition was reproduced in the *JSBRAS* by A.M. Skinner on "Geography of the Malay Peninsula" (1878: 60-62).

Secondly, we will analyse the connection between Maclay's anthropological studies and his reliance on colonial power structures, particularly as was evident in his diaries. While taking a broad understanding of the links between peoples of Oceania, his dealings with colonial officials, local royalty, and indigenous peoples of the Malay Peninsula was predicated on understanding the specific differences between how things were run in the Malay Peninsula and his previous experiences in other parts of Oceania. Maclay undertook his expedition starting in November 1874, the same year that the Pangkor Treaty was signed in the western Malay state of Perak which saw the beginning of formal agreements between the British and the Malay states (Harper, 1999: 18). The areas that he covered in his first expedition, namely the state of Johor and southern Pahang, were themselves not under British treaties as yet. However, relationships between Johor royalty such as Sultan Abu Bakar and British officials in Singapore had already been long established (Troicki, 1979: xviii). Indeed, Maclay's expedition was facilitated by his links to colonial British colonial officials and their relationship to Johor royalty. Maclay's diaries of his time in the Malay Peninsula thus illustrate a crucial period in the history of the Malay Peninsula where local sultanates were very powerful and wars between neighbouring states were the main obstacles to his research.

Lastly, the authors hope that the greatest impact of the new translation and annotation of Maclay's diaries will be felt in the historical study of Malaysia's Orang Asli (a general term encompassing the indigenous peoples of Peninsular Malaysia) and the history of anthropological practices in Malaysia. Anthropologist of Malaysia's indigenous peoples, Lye Tuck-Po, has recently commented on the history of Orang Asli studies where nineteenth-century materials on peoples known today as Orang Asli are few and far between (2011: 24-25). James Richardson Logan and his articles on "aborigines" in the *Journal of the Indian Archipelago and East Asia* offer us some information on the nineteenth-century study of

indigenous peoples and some of the specifics of how he went about his studies (1847a; 1847b; 1847d). Yet, Maclay's diary is a rich source of information on the logistics of travelling to meet indigenous peoples, his unpolished impressions of the peoples and details about indigenous and Malay life in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The present study gives a critical introduction and contextualisation of the diary by detailing how it relates to wider debates and issues within anthropology but still centring on indigenous peoples in colonial Malaya.

Maclay's Malay Peninsula materials

The full corpus of Maclay's Malay peninsula studies and materials currently exists only in the Russian language published in the 1990s in his new *Collected Works* (NCW). While there have been a handful of key publications in English that deal more or less comprehensively with the explorer and his work, the focus of these publications is usually not on the Malay Peninsula and if so, they refer only to one version of the diaries, the OCW of 1950-1954 (See Webster, 1984, 395; Putilov, 1982, 239). Maclay's Malay Peninsula materials are in fact a collection of published and unpublished materials, including diaries, articles and drawings. Most of the unpublished manuscripts are kept in the Russian Geographical Society Archives in St Petersburg (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 450-452). As mentioned previously, the major record of his first expedition through the Malay Peninsula from the end of 1874 to early 1875 is his untitled journal containing handwritten text and drawings. The journal occupies the beginning of a notebook in a black bookbinder calico, with the years '1874-1875' imprinted in gold on the cover, currently in the archives of the Russian Geographical Society (6-1-47, ff. 1-61). This journal was published for the first time in Russian in 1939 (1939: 217-258) and later reproduced in Maclay's OCW in the 1950s (Miklukho-Maklai 1950-1954 2: 116-229). These initial publications, however, were heavily edited. Only recently, in the

publication of Maclay's NCW, was the original text of his journal published without amendments (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 5-67). This latter text has never been published in a language other than Russian. The Australian scholar Charles Sentinella, the first translator of Maclay's New Guinea journals into English (1975), translated some of Maclay's Malay Peninsula materials in the 1970s based on the extensively edited earlier Russian versions of them. Sentinella's typed translations are preserved in the Mitchell Library in Sydney. His translations were used as the basis of the current publication, although it was amended according to the original, archived version of the journal.

The notable articles relating to the Malay Peninsula are several publications in German which were translated into English. First published was Maclay's overview of the first expedition 'Ethnologische Excursion in Johore (15 December 1874 - 2 Februar 1875)' which almost simultaneously appeared in *Natuurkundig Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indië* (1875b: 250-258) and in English in *The Journal of Eastern Asia* (1875a: 94-100). This paper also appeared as an offprint with different pagination. In the second German paper, 'Ethnologische Excursionen in der Malayischen Halbinsel (Nov. 1874 - Oct. 1875) (Vorläufige Mittheilung) [Ethnological Excursions in Malay Peninsula (Nov. 1874 – Oct. 1875) (Preliminary communication)]', Maclay wrote an overview of both expeditions. It was published in *Natuurkundig Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indië* in 1876 (1876c: 1-26) and in an English translation in *JSBRAS* in 1878 (1878b: 205-221). Maclay also wrote a manuscript in German entitled 'From Ulu Pakhang to Ulu Kalantan (Brief itinerary compiled on the basis of journal I held during trip on the Malay Peninsula in 1875' about his second Malay expedition. This is located in the Russian Geographical Society archives and published in the NCW in Russian (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 88-91). The abridged and revised version of this text was published by A.M. Skinner, the Honorary secretary of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society as a section of his paper 'Geography of the Malay Peninsula' in 1878 (60-62).

Besides the foregoing scholarly output which focussed on ethnographic observations and physical anthropological details in writings and drawings, Maclay also wrote two linguistic papers concerning languages of the indigenous population of the Malay Peninsula written on the basis of his field records: ‘Sprachrudimente der Orang-Utan von Johor [Rudiments of the language of the Orang-Utan of Johor]’ and ‘Einiges über die Dialekte der melanesischen Völkerschaften in der Malayischen Halbinsel [Some words about the dialects of the Melanesian tribes in the Malay Peninsula]’. They were published in the *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* in 1876 (1876e, 1876a). In the same year, they were published as a booklet *Einiges über die Dialekte der melanesischen Völkerschaften in der Malayischen Halbinsel (Zwei Briefe an Otto Böhlingk in St. Petersburg)* [Some words about the dialects of Melanesian tribes in the Malay Peninsula (two letters to Otto Böhlingk in St Petersburg)] (1876b). A copy of this booklet is held in the Russian Geographical Society archives (6-1-99) and it contains valuable handwritten corrections and additions made by Maclay. This study was the basis of the English translation ‘Dialects of the Melanesian tribes in the Malay Peninsula’ which was published in *JSBRAS* (1878a).

Maclay’s writings and publications regarding the Malay Peninsula ceased after he moved to Australia in 1878 and concentrated on that continent in his scholarship. When he died in 1888 at the age of 41, a contemporary of his commented that, on Maclay’s deathbed, he grieved that after his death there would be no one who could complete the task of preparing his journals for publication since many entries are in foreign languages including Malay (Elpe 1898). Tragically, after his death, his grief-stricken Australian widow Margaret burnt a significant part of his archives, including, probably, some of his field journals from the second expedition to the Malay Peninsula (Putilov 1982: 203-204). Nevertheless, a significant amount of his materials has survived and was studied by Russian, and, to a smaller degree, by

Western scholars (for instance, R. Martin, 1903; Skeat and Blagden, 1906; Endicott, 1979). In Russia, the centre of these studies was the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (MAE) in Leningrad/St Petersburg. Since the 1980s, research was conducted by Russian scholars from the MAE, particularly by Elena Vladimirovna Revunenkovna, an anthropologist specialising in Malay and indigenous peoples of Malaysia. The results of their painstaking research are available as papers in Russian (1994; 2010: 391-416) and as rich comments accompanying Maclay's journals and accounts in his NCW which we also draw on for the present article. This introduction and the translation of the diary that will follow will hopefully contribute towards bringing Maclay's Malay Peninsula scholarship to light as a source of history and anthropology of the Malay Archipelago.

From New Guinea to the Malay Peninsula

I believe it is important to see myself as many as possible varieties of Melanesian tribe. Several days, even several hours of personal observation of the natives at their birthplace and in their everyday surroundings have more importance than double reading of everything written about them. (Letter to Rudolf Virchow, Sydney, 12 March 1879, Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 233)

Maclay's interest in the races of Oceania led him first to New Guinea and later to the Malay Peninsula where he could personally observe the people. Before arriving in New Guinea at the age of 25, he studied natural sciences and medicine in Heidelberg, Leipzig, and Jena in Germany. It was during this time that he met Rudolf Virchow, the German biologist and patron of anthropology to whom the quote above is addressed. It was in Germany that Maclay added to his common Russian name Miklukha a second, enigmatic, part Maklai. In his passport, his name was recorded using the French convention as N. de Miklouho-Maclay and

in the German convention as N. von Miklucho-Maclay (Miklouho-Maclay N., de. Papers, Mitchell Library, A2989-1). As his first publications were in German-language journals, the second version of his name was initially more common. However, after he moved to Australia in 1878, he consistently used the French version of his name which became his major form of name outside Russia, often reducing it to just Maclay. The name was also corrupted in several other spellings. In this paper, we will use the second part of his name Maclay in reference to the explorer while keeping the original spelling of his names as stated in their respective publications.

It is difficult to place Maclay into one particular anthropological tradition. Maclay, as noted by celebrated historian of anthropology George W. Stocking, Jr., is often seen in an anthropological “dreamtime” where the lone and noble anthropologist conducted fieldwork among indigenous peoples whom he hoped to protect and uplift (Stocking, Jr., 1991: 25). This idealised image has been, for the most part, shattered with the awareness of the colonial alliances and the threat of force used by Maclay in order to conduct his fieldwork and to get the information that he desired. In this sense, Maclay is part of the larger tradition of anthropology and the growth of the profession, along with the awareness of its complicities and complications.

Maclay may be placed among a European, specifically German language, tradition of anthropology due to his being trained in universities in Germany and his continued close association to intellectuals there such as Virchow and later Karl Ernst von Baer whom he met in 1869. Baer was a Russian-German biologist and is considered today as the father of Russian anthropology and craniology. It was Baer’s armchair study ‘Ueber Papuas und Alfuren [Concerning Papuas and Alfuras]’ (1859) that attracted Maclay’s attention and interest in the study of races. Baer, discussing two racial types found in New Guinea,

supported the idea of a unity of different races of mankind and criticised Anglo-American polygenists.

The intellectual debt to Baer can be seen in Maclay's choice of New Guinea as a place to conduct research into the process by which racial groups took shape and differentiated in Oceania, and in his commitment to a monogenist outlook (Stocking, Jr., 1991: 17-8). As commented on by Philippa Levine, the issue of whether current humans were thought of as having one single origin (usually glossed as a monogenist view) or many (a polygenist view) was a long-standing controversy since the early days of anthropology (2010: 44). Yet, the simple division between monogenism and polygenism does not do justice to more complex positions with regards to human difference where scientists of the nineteenth century would hold to a unity of mankind while also embracing a Darwinian viewpoint (see Howes, 2012: 35). Maclay, for instance, believed that various races had differences in brain structure and vocal chords (Stocking, Jr., 1991: 18). Maclay's use of physical anthropological methods of collecting human remains and measuring bodily differences in individuals alive and dead was in keeping with German scholars such as anatomist Virchow (Penny, 2008: 85; Massin, 1996: 106).

Maclay first participated in scientific expeditions to the Canary Islands, North Africa and the Red Sea in 1866-67 and 1869 (Putilov, 1982: 10; Govor 1990 1:23-24). After meeting Baer in 1869, Maclay was further encouraged to follow up his idea of visiting New Guinea after meeting the famous naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace in London in 1870 (Wallace 1905:34-35) and after reading Wallace's newly published account *The Malay Archipelago* (1869) of his travels in the area from 1854 to 1862. In his unfinished paper "Why I chose New Guinea as the field for my studies" (1990-99 3:9), which he started writing aboard the ship that took him to New Guinea and continued when he settled there, Maclay commented about Wallace's

distinction between Malays and Papuans based on their appearance and their character. Wallace's writings became popular among German speakers in large part due to the translations of these works by a naturalist who was also in the region at the same time as Maclay, Adolf Bernhard Meyer (See Howes, 2012: 21-2). Wallace, in trying to prove that there was a clear line dividing the flora and fauna of the Malay Archipelago into two distinct types, had categorised Malays as Asian and Papuans as Polynesian. Maclay wanted to ascertain for himself which racial connections to endorse, and so his project entailed finding out the anthropological relationship between Papuans and other races, and to study in the field the boundaries of the Papuan 'race' beyond the territory of New Guinea Island. Later, he planned to expand his field studies "to study dark [i.e. dark skinned] inhabitants of Malay and Melanesian archipelagos" (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 3: 8-9).

His trip of exploration to New Guinea was approved and funding partially given by the Imperial Russian Geographical Society. The Russian corvette, *Vityaz*, sent to join the Russian Pacific Squadron, crossed the Atlantic and then the Pacific before it reached Easter Island in June 1871 and Astrolabe Bay in September 1871 (see Map 3). In 1871-1872, Maclay stayed for 15 months on the north-east coast of New Guinea; this area soon became known in Russia as Maclay Coast. On December 19, 1872, the Russian clipper *Izumrud*, sent by the Russian Government to find him, reached New Guinea. Maclay was persuaded to leave with them to Batavia. He had his first comparative study of peoples of the Malay Archipelago during this voyage where he briefly undertook an excursion to the mountain areas of Luzon Island to visit the Aeta people. In December 1873, while recuperating in Bogor (known during Maclay's time as Buitenzorg) and preparing his first New Guinea accounts for publication, he embarked on a second trip to New Guinea, this time to the Kowiai coast on the north-west of the island with the aim of further comparative racial studies of different groups of Papuans (Miklucho-Maklai 1876d: 150). On route, he visited Sulawesi Island, Banda Island, Ambon on Seram

Island, and Geser and Kilwaru east of Seram, and studied individuals with whom he noted Papuan and Malay mixture, paying close attention to their physical characteristics (Miklukho-Maklai 1876d: 174-176; Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 1: 267-337) (Map 3) The following year, Maclay undertook an expedition across the Malay Peninsula to study its indigenous population and to compare it with New Guinean Papuans. He arrived in Singapore from Batavia on 22 November, 1874 and set off to Johor from there.

Maclay in the Malay Peninsula

The first entry of the journal of the expedition is on 22 November, 1874 in Batavia when Maclay was leaving for Singapore. The last entry is on 31 January, 1875 in Kota Tinggi, Johor, where he visited an ancient tomb site. All in all, the diary covers 71 days of travel during which he went from Batavia to Singapore, then the residence of the Maharaja of Johor in Johor, throughout Johor and southern Pahang on ship, boat and foot (see Map 4). The Malay Peninsula at this point was not commonly known by the term “Malaya” which only came into fashion at the turn of the twentieth century with more and more British treaties with sultanates on the Peninsula. Maclay’s diaries of the first expedition has no title and no reference to the entire peninsula, an ambiguity that later editors sought to clarify by inserting the phrase Malay or Malacca peninsula into the title. Rather, specific places on the peninsula were mentioned such as Singapore and Johor. After only five days in Singapore, Maclay went to Johor where he wanted to work in a quieter environment and start his research. He stayed with Maharaja Abu Bakar (1833-1895) who frequently hosted Europeans:

29 November. Johor.⁴ After a journey of an hour and a half, including transport on a small steamer I arrived in Johor [from Singapore], the residence of the Maharajah

⁴ The excerpts are taken from longer diary entries written by Maclay. Where a place is mentioned in the entry, this is inserted at the beginning of the excerpt for clarity. The places are marked on the accompanying Map 4 in cases

(Emperor), where I was received very graciously. I was not mistaken; the house or palace of the Maharajah has a good view and I settled in very comfortably. (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 7)

The Maharaja facilitated Maclay's research by introducing him to other Europeans also staying there, by allowing him to go on boat expeditions with the Maharaja's men and by giving Maclay an official letter with the royal seal so that he may show it to whomever he met along the way and ask (or in most cases, demand) assistance.

The rivers were the arteries of Johor and Maclay found that travelling by boat was the most convenient and quick way of traversing the country. He initially left the Maharaja's residence with one or two *perahus* [small boats], two servants (a young man from Papua called Achmat and a Javanese cook) and a crew of twenty men (Greenop, 1944: 132).

22 December 1874. Lenga. Travelling by boat gives one the comfort and convenience of enjoying the beauty of the scenery, whereas in travelling on foot one has to pay the most attention to what is at one's feet, the stumps, vines, stones etc. which to my annoyance I have had to experience many times. You think that on foot you will be able to see the country better, but no you see less (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 12).

By meeting with local headmen or leaders, Maclay could locate settlements of indigenous peoples and obtain information about them.

where the authors were able to locate them. The spelling of certain place names and words in Malay have been changed to reflect the modern spelling.

29 December 1874. Upstream Rompin River, towards Pahang. About three o'clock, we approached a small settlement of the Orang Utan [Jungle People, often used as a synonym for indigenous or tribal peoples] . I got out of the pirogue and went up to a hut in which a man was working who had a very Malay physiognomy, although he was an Orang Utan. I went on then to another hut which consisted of only three walls. Here a whole family were housed... I was told that at the present time, apart from these Orang Utan there was no one else. I decided to go on, and so we came to this place where the *penghulus* [headman or leader of the village] rather than nephew lives. He knows all the locations around very well and so I decided to wait for him. (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 22)

The people he met were called various names. Orang Utan and Orang Rakyat were the two most frequent names Maclay used to refer to indigenous people. Following naming conventions at the time, most likely taken from Malay speakers who would refer to inland peoples, the generic Malay term for person or people, *orang*, would be supplemented by an adjective such as *utan/hutan*, meaning forest or jungle, or *rakyat*, meaning followers or subjects (for more examples of names, see Skeat and Blagden, 1906, 20). Maclay would set up camp when he found an interesting settlement, or ordered that accommodation be set up for him in the settlements themselves. He would then gather people for observation, questioning and drawing.

30-31 December 1874. Up the Jekatih River, tributary of the Kraton River. Abdul Rahman [the *penghulu*'s nephew] went ahead so that the people [Orang Utans], scared by my sudden appearance, did not run away. Near two huts, I saw several unprepossessing almost completely naked people. One, dressed Malay fashion was presented to me as the *batin* [leader of the indigenous group]. In a large hut which

belonged to him, they fenced off a considerable area making quite comfortable quarters for me and soon brought my things there. I at once ordered that tomorrow as many as possible of the Orang Utan be gathered here. (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 23)

While travelling, Maclay used field notebooks where he throughout the day to record data, note observations, and make sketches. Later, he transferred some of these materials into the main body of his diary. Most of the diary entries are made in ink although some are written in pencil. Drawings were sometimes incorporated into the text, or text around the drawings. The journal was not intended by Maclay for publication in its present form. This was his personal diary where anthropological observations intermingled with his records about the ordeals of the expedition and his personal, often intimate, feelings and reflections. In many cases, the original field notebooks have additional information in comparison with the diary and were used for the comments in the publication of the journal in the NCW. This type of textual and visual account is a unique phenomena among the early explorers of the Malay Peninsula and allows us to see not only the process of research and exploration but rather of the encounter and Maclay's involvement with the objects of his study in their "messy actualities" (Thomas 2003: xxxiii).

30-31 December. Up the Jekatih River. I drew two Orang Utan who were somewhat different from the others. Ashar was very embarrassed to show me her breasts, whereas the majority of the other females, it is true they were married, went about all day with their breasts dangling. She was not bad looking although somewhat heavily built and not more than 1.41 metres tall. (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 25)

Frequently, as illustrated by the entry above, the messy actualities involved sexual attraction between Maclay and the indigenous women. Besides mostly noting details of indigenous people and life, he also took note of Malay houses.

5 Januaray 1875. From Ponton to Tenang. For the first time since Lenga I met a quite well built Malay house. There was no penghulu about so I sent three men to look and call out for him, as I wanted to leave early tomorrow. His wife, a pretty young woman, granted me the cleanest part of the house, a kind of gallery with a small window the frame of which was beautifully carved like in Arabian houses. The house was built of various materials. The roof of *atap* [thatch] and from the *gomutu* [a type of palm], the walls partly of split and plaited bamboo and partly of bark, only the piles, posts and crossbeams were of wood. The floor as usual was of split bamboo. The saddle-shaped curved roof and the narrow windows ornamented with decorations are characteristic. (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 30)

Maclay often found himself as a messenger for various parties, first safe-guarding letters from the Maharaja to his men in other parts of Johor, and later being asked to relay the events and conditions back to the Maharaja. There was conflict between Johor and Pahang and Maclay had to make sure that he did not give the impression of aligning himself too closely to either one side. His research activities were met with suspicion and he posed himself as a disinterested European.

15 January 1875. Endau River. He [a Pahang chief] questioned me with curiosity: where had I come from? Where was I going and why? I deliberately took on a very serious and showed him my instruments (compass, aneroid, thermometer) and notebook and told him that I was travelling to see people, animals, plants, to see

mountains, how high they were, and rivers, where and how they flow. (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 46)

Nonetheless, during his travels he found himself in contested areas, with empty settlements from people being killed or fleeing the war. The war over territory also entailed a war over names, with different groups calling major waterways dissimilar names:

13-14 January: Kuala Endau...the people of Pahang say that they will not renounce their claim to the *rumah pasung* [jail, police station or barracks], for the right bank of the Endau River belongs to the Maharajah of Johor and the *rumah pasung* stands on the left bank which belongs to Pahang. In fact they insist on calling the Endau the River Kahan (or Sombron as they call it here) which the Johor people dispute. I know only that when I was travelling along the Kahan River I never once heard the Orang Utan say it was the Endau. (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 45)

Towards the end of Maclay's journey, he made his way south of Johor where his last diary entry was made on 31 January 1874 in Kota Tinggi. There were more and more clearings in the forest and evidence of gambir plantations and tin mines. He visited several *keramat* [sacred] sites around Kota Tinggi, old tombs of Sultans of Johor. Maclay's last entry was thoughtful about the future of Johor.

31 January 1875. Kota Tinggi. It is highly likely that in a decade, Johor will be very changed, if the current maharaja remains living; if not, then everything might yet vanish. In any case the movement of the Chinese is important. The population of Johor is very timid, but the river communications are very useful and easy to set up: it is

likely that the mineral wealth of the area can greatly transform the country.

(Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 65)

Already on 2 February 1875, a note by Maclay about his travels in Johor appeared in the *Singapore Daily Times* which he cut out and glued into his notebook (NB no. 1, f. 56-56 verso). In the report, Maclay wrote about visiting places where no European had set foot before him, and where Malays rarely went. He also mentioned that the expedition took 50 days, on boats and by foot, and his plans of a second expedition across the Malay Peninsula (A. A. Anfertyev in Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 460).

Maclay and Racial Classifications

Maclay's first encounters with indigenous people were already in Johor Baru. At the Maharaja's residence, he met a Mr. Hole who knew the area and suggested that they visit a group of *Orang Utan* who were employed in felling timber nearby.

1 December 1874. Johor Baru. In about an hour and a half's rowing on the river called Sungai Melayu we met the first pirogue of the Orang Laut Seletar. Seletar is a locality on Singapore Island where, according to oral tradition, these people formerly lived, which has now been turned into a police post. These Orang Utan or, as they are also called here Jakun Laut, have no permanent dwelling place. They live in their pirogues roaming along the rivers and seashore. They feed on anything they can find, they even eat their dogs. (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 7)

Orang Laut Seletar (Sea People of Seletar) was a community written about approximately thirty years earlier in 1847 by Logan (1847b). Jakun Laut was another name that married a

common term for indigenous people, *jakun*, with a place adjective, *laut* meaning sea. The state of racial theorising in the context of 1870s Malay peninsula had already expanded to include indigenous people who were neither negrito nor Malay (Manickam, forthcoming 2014). However, Maclay continued to see Papuan or Melanesian infusion in Malaya's indigenous people. During an initial meeting with indigenous people in Johor, Maclay was already struck by what he saw to be similarities between them and the people he met in New Guinea.

1 December 1874. Johor Baru. ...of the three or four women and several children I saw, the hair seemed half-Papuan type, just like the Papuan mixed breeds who I frequently met around Seram. Many of them had thick lips. I came to the conclusion that there existed here *a definite infusion of Papuan blood*, in spite of the fact that the heads proved to be brachycephalic and [the colour of the skin] no darker than other Malays. (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 8. Italics in original)

The comparison with what Maclay saw as a Papuan type continued throughout his expedition. That Papuans were foremost in Maclay's mind was in keeping with his interest in determining the extent of a Papuan-like race outside of New Guinea. Unlike many explorers from Europe, Maclay went 'the other way around', via the Atlantic Ocean, and sailing by Brazil, the areas called Polynesia and Melanesia before arriving at New Guinea. The directionality of his travels is an important point to note. Many other travellers went to Oceania, crossing the Middle east, via India and coming through the Straits of Melaka to areas further east. In many of these writings, the mode of comparison when it came to the "races" that were encountered was usually from the point of view of the 'normative' "Malay race" which was supposed to be ubiquitous in the Malay Archipelago (a false conflation of language and "race"), and the subsequent assumptions of degeneration as travellers moved eastward into the area of "black

“races” (See, for example, Crawfurd, 1820). Breaking the mould of these savants, Maclay went the other way, and came across the Polynesian and Melanesian “races” before the “Malay” and the inland peoples of the Malay Peninsula. Hence his comparing the indigenous peoples of Malaya to the groups he met in New Guinea, and naming them the “Melanesian tribes” (1878a: 42, 43). This “cardinality of comparison”, a phrase coined by Chris Ballard, sets the framework for subsequent theorising of the differences and gradations in races in the Oceanic area (2008: 160).

Often, however, Maclay had difficulties telling apart indigenous people with Papuan admixture from Malays. As a mode of comparison, he had with him his porters who sometimes consisted of both Malays and Orang Utan (indigenous people). Here, he put forth his theory of mixture between original Malay and Papuan/Melanesian races to account for similarities between Malays and those he called Orang Utan, Orang Rakyat or Orang Jakun.

24 December 1874. From here (Nanka) I went to the southwest to the settlement (temporary) of the Orang Badun or Badon, which I reached in an hour and a half ... Badon, a settlement of the Orang Rakyat, has seven huts scattered over a quite considerable area,... Many of their physiognomies could not be sufficiently distinguished from those of the Palong Malays who had accompanied me, so that I could [not] discriminate with confidence between them. But there were, however, elements of some as if alien admixture. This similarity to the Malays can be explained by crossbreeding over a long period of time. But it seems to me quite definitely that it is not the Orang Jakun who are similar to the Malays, but the Malays having Orang Jakun mothers have acquired here some features of the latter, which make both sides somewhat similar. (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 14, 15, 18-19)

This research was undertaken at a time in racial science where differences between bodies were used as a basis for arguing that there were different species of people, some of whom had more “apelike” characteristics such as argued by supporters of Darwin within Germany such as leading evolutionist Ernst Haeckel (Marks, 2010: 222) though Maclay himself did not endorse such theories in his writings. Unlike some researchers of his day, Maclay was avowedly monogenist and argued for the similarities between Papuans and Europeans in the quality of their hair and skin (Miklucho-Maclay 1873). His interest in Papuans extended to the search for other Papuan-like people in the Malay Archipelago. Despite his steadfast belief in similar human origins, he nonetheless sought to distinguish people based on different bodily features such as face shape. When such uniform differences were absent, other elements tipped off Maclay to their indigeneity such as their clothing:

30-31 December 1874. Up the Jekatih River. The general facial type of these people is not different from the Malay. If I did not know about the people called Orang Utan, I would have thought that I was among a different population. Thick lips, a broad nose, frequently frizzy hair and generally speaking coarse features and particularly the absence of clothes distinguish the Orang Utan from the Malay, but I have not met one among them with a specific type of face. (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 25)

Towards the end of his journey, Maclay became convinced of a Papuan admixture into the indigenous populations of Malaya, similar to his observations while in Kilwaru (Miklucho-Maklai 1876d: 174-176). With this theoretical device, he explained the similarity of hair types between indigenous people of Malaya and of New Guinea.

6-7 January 1875. Beko River. A not inconsiderable number of the people had curly hair which made me think of a Papuan mixture. The hair of an old woman reminded

me particularly of the hair of women I saw at Kilwaru [see Map 3]... I am beginning to be convinced of the necessity of admitting the *admixture* of Papuan blood, an idea which I formally regarded very critically. (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 32. Italics in original)

Comparing the people whom he said had such admixture with Achmat, who Maclay described as his servant from New Guinea, vindicated Maclay's theory.

21 January 1875. Made. I was observing my companions the Orang Utan today, comparing them with Achmat, for me there is no doubt about the admixture of Papuan blood. These faces with protruding lips and the flat broad nose were very similar to Achmat, particularly the profile, even the colour of the skin was identical. (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 55)

The conception that there were mixtures of races relies upon the assumption that there was an original base of racial groups, Papuan on the one hand, and Malay on the other, from which these mixtures came. Maclay's conception of racial affiliations in the Malay Archipelago, as essentially being varieties of original brown and black races, has a long history. British scholars such as John Crawfurd and George Windsor Earl had expressed such ideas (Ballard, 2008: 160) with the black races, understood as a homogenous Oceanic race and synonymous with Papua/Papuans, forming the very bottom of the racial hierarchy in Virchow's scholarship (Howes, 2012: 36). That Maclay would see Papuan or Melanesian "admixture" in the Malay Archipelago from Kilwaru in the east to the Malay Peninsula in the west, is thus not unusual given his direction of travel and his primary interest in Papuans. But unlike the earlier writers, of whom Maclay mistakenly or purposefully wrote that they did not actually meet any Papuan or Negrito individuals, Maclay's contact with indigenous people who could be classified as

Melanesian was far greater than any earlier European scholar (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 432; Greenop, 1944: 122).

As the choice of the Malay Peninsula for Maclay's research show, the peninsula, with "Malays" and "inland tribes" found on its narrow stretch of land, played a not unimportant role in the European theorising on the distribution of "races" of humankind, the development of human society, and possibility entertained by European scientists for intermediate forms of life between apes and humans. The case study of the peoples found on the Malay Peninsula was part of a global conversation on racial knowledge in the 19th and 20th centuries which brought European scientists to colonised parts of the world where they created knowledge about races and, conversely, the peoples studied also influenced the resulting "science" (Manickam, 2012). Many of the notable precursors of fields of study came through the Malay Peninsula such as Wallace who was in Singapore, and later anthropologists still came through the Malay Peninsula such as W.W. Skeat in his investigations into the number of "wild tribes" of Malaya (Lye 2011: 25). This research on Maclay serves then as part of a long line of histories of science and knowledge that was developed in or around the Malay Peninsula, and whose knowledge was borne out of interactions with people, ideas and events in the region at the same time.

Maclay and colonial power structures

In general, Maclay had three types of exploratory encounters. The first type was where he lived in one place near his source community and gradually learned the language to explore various aspects of its life (for instance, during his stay on the Maclay Coast in New Guinea). The second type of encounter was voyages aboard vessels where he had to comply with the agenda of the vessel and could undertake short shore visits, mostly without go-betweens, with

limited list of subjects to explore. This was most typical of his voyages in Micronesia, Melanesia and along the south coast of New Guinea. Lastly, there were overland expeditions which involved local guides and carriers, of which his Malay Peninsula expedition was one.

While the first type of exploration did not involve much expenses, the second and third involved significant expenses. Maclay's expeditions from the very start had very little financial support from the Russian academic institutions. In a few cases he was supported by collection of money by his friends and Russian public at large; in several cases he borrowed money from bankers and his debt increased to quite substantial amount until it was finally covered by the Russian Emperor not long before Maclay's death (Putilov 1982: 46-47, 99-101; Tumarkin 2011: 453-454). That is why using support and patronage of the local officials and dignitaries, who wanted to help him 'for the sake of science' was the matter of survival for Maclay. In the case of his Malay expeditions the fact that he easily 'penetrated' into the Malay power structures is noteworthy. When he was in Singapore, he visited the Governor, Sir Andrew Clarke, and his wife at their house. Thereafter, the Maharaja of Johor hosted Maclay at his house, and even allowed Maclay to follow official expeditions.

14 December 1874. Johor Baru. A few months ago several inhabitants of Singapore (Orang Bugis) were killed in Johol [in the vicinity of Melaka]; they were traders and the murderers were men of Pahang and Johol. Since the people killed were people of some substance and as the Maharajah had not apprehended the guilty ones (he had promised the Governor [Sir Andrew Clarke] he would get them) he was equipping a third expedition. As this expedition was traversing a considerable part of Johor I have thought about going with it. (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 11)

The Maharajah facilitated Maclay's transportation by giving written orders that the people of Johor should assist Maclay. Maclay seemed to prefer utilising Malay power structures rather than European colonial power, perhaps because the former was more powerful at this time or his animosity towards the colonising power (see Howes 2013, 281). In a 1882 Russian Geographical Society lecture, Maclay said that "I purposely took no letter and recommendation from the Governor of Singapore, fearing to be taken for an English agent and meeting difficulties from the Malays who, in general, do not like the English." (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 435) His tactics served him well, as the Maharajah's letter was more than enough to require obedience from the locals.

16 December 1874. Lenga. We were met by the master, Inchi Anda (Inchi is a title) who led us on to a verandah of a still higher hut where we all sat around a circular. After reading the letter from the Maharajah, Inchi Anda informed me that he had to do anything that I would require of him. (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 11)

A motley crew of people were instructed to help Maclay, ranging from his two servants, Sainan from Sunda and Achmat from New Guinea, to penghulu's who were ordered to help him, Malay villagers and indigenous Orang Utan. The threat of force was often used as an incentive to help Maclay.

3-4 January 1875. Up the Segamat River. I told Abdul Rahman to read out the letter from the Maharajah [of Johor, Sultan Abu Bakar]. The letter was read. "You have heard: if, within an hour, there are not enough men to carry my things to Tenan I shall be very angry and when I tell the Maharaja he will be very angry. Now get to it and call the men." (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 29)

The number of people and parties that had to assist Maclay in Malaya belies the impression that his will got him where he wanted to be. There had to be various arrangements made for him, by very powerful people, who themselves put weaker members of their community at his disposal, and he used them to his benefit, all in the name of selfless collecting of knowledge. This is not the same situation that he was in years before when he first arrived in Astrolabe Bay. By the time he was in Malaya, he had already made a name for himself, and had colonial machinery on both sides of the Straits of Melaka to help him.

Maclay was not above using his position as “the white man” in situations that would benefit him. He already realised his privileged position as protector of his men in the warring state between Johor and Pahang.

16 January. Pelandok, village of Panglima Kecil. By a curious concatenation of circumstances both men who have accompanied me yesterday and today are men who would not dare to appear here without risking their lives unless they were with me or at least accompanying a white tuan. Yesterday it was a deserter who formerly lived in Pahang but now serves the Maharajah. Today it is a Johor man who they already wanted to kill once but he managed to escape. Here, they have more than once and quite recently too, felt the power of the white man and they fear it. (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 48)

At the end of his trip, when he was approaching more developed portions of Johor that had many Chinese labourers working in the area, he found himself no longer commanding the same fear and respect as he did when he was inland. His anger at a Chinese man who worked ceaselessly and did not respond to his calls shows how used he had become to his position of power:

29 January. Along Johor River. Their [The Chinese] relationship to white men is quite different to that of the Malays, and not entirely without its reasons, although their attitude... today annoyed me very much. Today, in order to find my way I and my companions stopped near a Chinese who was sawing boards ten paces away. We were separated by a strip of open forest. I called to him to ask the way, he continued to saw paying no attention. I asked him once more and got no answer. This angered me and raising my gun I said that I intended to shoot him if he did not come at once, which finally had the required effect, and I did not need to go to extremes. (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 62-63)

This incident and Maclay's paternalism towards indigenous and Malay subjects was characterised by Stocking Jr. as Maclay's "darker Kurtzian impulse to power" (61, 25) referring to Joseph Conrad's protagonist in the novel, *Heart of Darkness* (1899). Stocking's description captures the many facets, his empathy for indigenous life as well as his impetuosity at not being heed, of Maclay's engagement with people in the Malay peninsula.

Indigenous Lives

The diary, as well as the whole corpus of Maclay's Malay materials, is a clear manifestation of his positivist approach to the exploration of the indigenous societies. He meticulously recorded every detail he witnessed and distinguished it from information he received from informants. He was reticent to draw global, theoretical conclusions that were not directly supported by his personal observations in the field, leading perhaps to a reluctance to publish his materials in his lifetime. But the preciseness of his recorded observations gives his

journals and papers make them valuable testaments to indigenous life in the Malay Peninsula in the 1870s.

Historians of Orang Asli are faced with difficult challenges in writing about their subject.

Sources on people who came to be called Orang Asli in the present came from anthropologists, linguists and other scholars who were connected to British incursions into the affairs of states on the peninsula, and later, to the colonial government in Malaya. The study of Orang Asli had been facilitated by the opening up of Malaya economically and the involvement of the British politically in the Straits Settlements, as seen from works such as Singapore-based British scholar and publisher J.R. Logan in the 1840s and 1850s, who wrote about the involvement of various indigenous peoples in the economy of Johor and Singapore (Logan, 1847a, b, c, d). Other studies, such as by Rev. Favre in Melaka, were connected to the presence of the British in the surroundings of Melaka (Favre, 1848). The difficulty in writing about Orang Asli during this period is that very few observers wrote about inland peoples, and the people that did came from a very particular social segment: that of British or Europeans connected to colonial structures.

Maclay's studies of Malaya's indigenous people was similarly facilitated by his colonial connections as discussed in an earlier section. At the same time, he saw himself as outside of that structure, and sought to differentiate himself from the British by not wanting to provide them with information on the regions in which he travelled. By virtue of relying on Malay power structures, he traversed a great deal of territory and saw much more of Johor and the involvement of various parties, including indigenous peoples, in the politics of the region than previous authors.

It was unique that Maclay lived with many of the indigenous communities he met. For instance, in one of the first communities he met upon leaving the Maharaja's residence, he details the type of structures in which they lived.

24 December 1874. Southwest Nanka, at a settlement of Orang Rakyat. All the huts, if you could call such structures huts, consisted of a floor of rough crooked branches and a roof, walls there were none. Some were large, but they were almost all of the same pattern. As an example of this primitive architecture I sketched one of the huts.

This accommodation was sufficient for a husband, wife and two children. The children surprised me, they swarmed up the ladders, ran about the floors full of holes scrambled about to the very edge but did not fall. The children and the dogs for a long time could not get accustomed to me. The children from a distance looked me over, screwed up their faces and began to cry. The dogs only had to sniff the air round the hut where I happened to be would raise their heads and run away growling. The majority of the dogs were ginger, of a small size, with pricked ears and a bushy tail, they are similar to those of New Guinea (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 14-16, 18).

Details concerning the children and animals in the camp, and their reactions to him, add more depth to the diary and illustrate the curious circumstances of this cross-cultural encounter. Despite many of the communities he met being afraid of him, Maclay persisted in being in their midst.

Force was still used in order to obtain the necessary man-power needed to facilitate his expedition. Since the indigenous porters were able to carry more than Maclay or the Malay porters, he was insistent that they join the expedition.

1-2 January 1875. Kuala Myntai, Dukun. When I and my men were already in the pirogues, we found out that the Orang Utan who were to carry the goods and cut the

track, being afraid of the work, had run off. I had to send the baten and the penghulu after them. In order to compel the Orang Utan to return they even had to threaten that I would be so angry that I would kill them. Six men came back. The baten a young, small Jakun with a pleasant face, went ahead, hacking a track through here and there and building primitive bridges across the numerous streams (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 26).

Some of the more interesting aspects of indigenous people's lives are perhaps matters quite ordinary such as the burial of an indigenous person, the non-indigenous people who lived with them, and the particular dangers that they faced.

10-11 January 1875. Endau area. I then went to the grave of a recently deceased Orang Utan. The tomb consisted of an oblong shaped four cornered pyramid made out of loam with a frame of smooth poles. At the top lay two sticks of sugarcane. At the head and the foot two carded stakes had been driven in - the *nisan* [headstone] which indicate the sex of the buried person. For the grave of a woman two stakes of another kind of wood are driven in. Beside the tomb a basket is hung and vessels for water and a holder for a dammar gum torch. At the head and foot two sticks were planted which had already sprouted shoots. The dead person is buried wrapped in *kain* [cloth]. (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2: 40).

19 January 1875. Made river. I found three huts, quite well constructed and having asked for the *denan* (the new chief) I directed him that he should as soon as possible make available a *yalo* [canoe or boat] and five or six people for the continuation of the journey. A Chinese lives in this village who had married a Orang Utan woman. ..The wife of the Chinese was white and quite pretty (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2:52).

19-20 January 1875. Made. Since there wasn't much water in the river the yalo had to be pushed along with poles which two Orang Utan did with great skill, and in doing so they not only had to keep their balance but also they had to frequently cut down the overhanging branches and the trailing vines of the Calamus [a type of rattan palm]. The denan Nianta was particularly notable for his agility. On his chest, back and face were the scars from a tiger's claws with which he had had encounters three times. The last time the tiger attacked him in the morning a few paces from his hut. He was going for wood accompanied by his little daughter, when the tiger jumped on him and gave him many wounds although not deep ones. Nianta killed him with a parang, but the wounds caused him to keep to his bed for a long time. A tiger had eaten a fellow-tribesman of Nianta. I bought from him the skull, which had been buried not far from his hut and which Dyubusu will forward to me (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2:54).

From Maclay's diary, the reader gets images of dynamic indigenous lives, ones that are connected to the neighbouring peoples and politics, and ones that are changing.

22 January 1875. Made. On account of the rain I could not set off until eight o'clock, so I occupied myself with questioning the Orang Utan and this is what I learned. The local Orang Utan, being in close association with the Malays, have lost many of their old customs, they do not use the sumpitan and have completely forgotten their old language. They build huts and live almost quite the same as the Malays, some of them have even accepted Islam. The Malay, even Chinese, frequently marry the Orang Utan girls. As a result of the war with Pahang many Orang Utan have moved away to various other places. Soon probably this tribe here will partly merge with the Malays and to some extent disappear (Miklukho-Maklai 1990-1999 2:56).

This last anecdote describes a process in which indigenous peoples changed their lifeways and became Malay, a process which Maclay described as extinction, and which later scholars such as Skeat would also dub as extinction. However, this peculiar understanding of extinction, rather than merely describing the loss of indigenous life, was underpinned with European scholars' assumptions about ideal indigenes and their slow contamination and usurping by Malays. Indigenous groups supposedly untouched by Malay culture were often considered "wild", while those familiar with Malay culture, or on their way to adopting Malay culture, were called "tame". The taming of indigenous people and predictions about their extinction continued from the early twentieth century to the eve of the Japanese occupation of Malaya in the 1930s despite the continued presence of indigenous people in the census (Manickam forthcoming 2013).

Conclusion

The interpretation of Maclay's diaries, and the process of understanding its relationship to ideas about indigenous peoples then and now, is an ongoing endeavour. Further research will aim to link Maclay's diaries to the anthropology of Orang Asli today and to the current linguistic studies of Orang Asli, as well as to provide the complete diaries for scholars to utilise. This article has attempted to present the writing of a very unique Russian in the Malay Peninsula in all its richness and complexity and to pave the way for additional research into the history of racial science, anthropology and indigenous people in the Malay World.

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