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Unpacking the travel writers' baggage: imperial rhetoric in travel literature of Australia 1813-1914

Thesis submitted by
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in December 2006

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the School of Humanities
James Cook University



Wentworth Falls c.1830
Augustus Earle 1793-1838
Oil on canvas 71.0 x 83.2 cm Rex Nan Kivell Collection, National Library of Australia and National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Source: Elizabeth Johns, Andrew Sayers. Elizabeth Mankin Kornhauser with Amy Ellis, *New Worlds from Old: 19th Century Australian & American Landscapes*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 1998, p.98.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research and writing of this thesis has been a journey. As a traveller nervously anticipates a journey so I embarked upon this thesis with some reservations, not the least of which was the amount of work involved to complete it to a satisfactory level. As I approach the end of this journey, I would like to acknowledge the following for their assistance along the way. Firstly, Dr Russell McGregor provided guidance in research, constructive criticism on earlier drafts and inserted the commas where they were missing in the final draft. Similarly, Dr Rosemary Dunn and Dr Janice Wegner offered critical comment on earlier drafts of some chapters. I would also like to thank Ron Store and Susan Coker, Managers of Thuringowa Library Services for their patience and understanding in allowing me to take leave to finalise this thesis. I would also like to acknowledge Ron's assistance in editing some chapters. Last but not least I acknowledge my family and friends, in particular, Geoff, Anna, Peder, Chris, Sandra, Heather, Chantal, Bronwyn and Nancy for their moral support and encouragement through the difficult days.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines imperial rhetoric in published accounts of travel in Australia during the period 1813 to 1914. Imperial rhetoric was a subtle persuasive device that utilised metaphor as well as ideologies and issues to encourage readers towards a particular view of the relationship between Britain and Australia. Published accounts by explorers and travellers provided a medium for imperial rhetoric, one which emphasised Australia's inherent Britishness and manifest loyalty to Britain. It conveyed the image of Australia as an integral part of a cohesive and progressive British Empire. However the texts also revealed an evolving and separate cultural identity but one that was built upon British cultural and political traditions. Fundamental to these images of Australia was imperial rhetoric that initially placed the unknown landscape within an established framework of progress, science and aesthetics and later celebrated the survival of British cultural traditions while acknowledging deviations. Explorers' published accounts were a way of claiming the land for the empire. Their narratives were infused with the land's economic benefits and potential for settlement, which they promoted to their readership through their discourse. Later travellers underlined the idea that the British Empire was unified and that Australia was a loyal, successful and prosperous member of that Empire. In both forms of travel literature ideology and contemporary issues operated as the framework upon which the travel writers built their understanding of Australia which once presented in their published accounts suggested and encouraged a supportive response from their audience.

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Introduction

One of the central themes of travel literature of Australia in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the image of Australia as part of a cohesive and progressive British Empire. Explorers and travellers prudently composed their texts to pass on this vision to their readership. In this thesis I will explore the imperial rhetoric inherent in published accounts of travel written by explorers and travellers who came to Australia during the period 1813 to 1914. The accounts published during this period were selective and value-laden in approach as the cultural conditioning of the writer influenced what they presented. Furthermore, travel writers drew upon contemporary ideas to understand the people and environments they observed.[1] For example, explorers, perceiving and interpreting the environment they travelled through, consciously and subconsciously drew upon Enlightenment ideas of science, progress and aesthetics to describe what they saw. Their published accounts became a way of claiming and understanding the environment as part of the empire and marketing its potential to their readership. Even as more travellers journeyed to Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries their accounts continued to be influenced by their backgrounds and knowledge systems. They applied contemporary scientific opinions, imperialist principles and progressivist views to their interpretation of the Australian landscape and its people. In so doing they underlined the idea that the British Empire was unified and that Australia was a loyal, successful and prosperous member of that Empire. Ideology operated as the framework upon which explorers and travellers built their understanding of Australia which once presented in their published accounts instilled and encouraged a particular response from their audience.

While at first reading exploration and travel literature is an expose of the explorers and travellers' journeys, it is the underlying political and moral subtext with its ideologies of empire that are of interest in this thesis. In this thesis I have used "imperial rhetoric" to denote the subtle imperialist influences that recur in travel literature. Imperialism is present in the way travel writers appropriated the land. In surveying and naming landforms, and in describing and naming flora and fauna, explorers used science and aesthetics to appropriate the environment for the Empire; in revealing the land's

[1] Throughout this thesis "travel writers" will denote both explorers and travellers. In a similar manner "travel literature" will refer to the body of work by both explorers and travellers.

potential to progress to a great civilisation, explorers and later travellers represented Australia as a land of opportunity for emigrants which would relieve the burden of poverty and unemployment from the British government. The appeals to patriotism in the consistent use of metaphors of home and family by travellers suggested the long and binding genetic ties between Australia and Britain and reinforced the protective connection of belonging to the imperial family. Furthermore late nineteenth and early twentieth century ideas about economic progress and society provided the background for travellers to describe Australians as egalitarian, successful and prosperous thus boosting the vision of the British Empire in the minds of the reading public at a time when the prestige of Empire and faith in progress was weakening.

An imperialist stance is evident in the often-superior approach travel writers took to their subject matter. Travel writers drew upon western ideologies and cultural traditions in developing their perceptions of Australia. In their texts they highlighted how Australia differed from the known British model. Their commentaries often constructed Australia as an inferior "other", which reinforced British superiority and Australia's paternalistic relationship with Britain. Even non-British travel writers maintained an authoritative tone in their texts by shaping Australia as the subordinate "other" of Britain. Knowingly or unwittingly explorers and travellers served the imperial cause through the imperial rhetoric contained in their published accounts and it is this that provides the unifying idea to the thesis.

In *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion,* John Mackenzie has used the propaganda evident in the theatre, organisations, imperial societies and juvenile literature to demonstrate how the various forms have promoted the cause of empire to a diverse audience. In that work he identified propaganda as

> the transmission of ideas and values from one person, or groups of persons, to another, with the specific intention of influencing the recipients' attitudes in such a way that the interests of its authors will be enhanced. Although it may be veiled, seeking to influence thoughts, beliefs and actions by suggestion, it must be conscious and deliberate.[2]

Mackenzie's work has provided a good basis for developing my thesis that travel literature by British explorers and travellers had an underlying and suggestive purpose

[2] John MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960*, Manchester, 1984, p.3.

to foster imperial prestige. He contends that these vehicles of propaganda provided a means to influence readers in the formation of their vision of Empire and to motivate them to patriotically follow the imperialist agenda. However rather than the specific objective of fostering imperial prestige that Mackenzie implies, my analysis of travel literature has discerned a spontaneous imperial response stimulated by contemporary ideology. To avoid the intent associated with MacKenzie's "propaganda", I have used "imperial rhetoric" in this thesis. The images and ideas of empire travel writers presented in their published accounts were both explicit and implicit. However travel writers were not necessarily deliberately advocating Empire but were simply drawing upon contemporary ideologies, which endorsed and supported Empire, in the process of describing Australia. The imperial rhetoric that resulted became a persuasive device that encouraged their readership towards a particular view of the relationship between Britain and Australia, a view which encouraged imperial loyalty. Imperial rhetoric was evident in the use of metaphor as well as in the use of ideology and contemporary issues. Travel writers made use of their existing knowledge systems and preconceived ideas to present a selective image of Australia as an important and progressive part of the British Empire. In the process of presenting their views, their ideas gained legitimacy and credibility and enticed and influenced their audience towards their point of view.[3] While it is not the concern of this thesis to measure the audience response to the writers' messages, the sheer numbers of travel texts published during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries indicate how popular these texts were with the public**.** The aim of this thesis is to explain and expound upon some of the ideologies and contemporary issues which travel writers drew upon and how these ideas were used to broadcast their imperial vision and to arouse loyalty to Empire.

Given the geographical extent and diverse environments of Australia, few explorers and travellers could hope to gain an understanding of Australia as a whole. Most of the explorers covered in this thesis set out with instructions from the imperial government relayed via the colonial administrators that set down specific exploration objectives. For example, Sir Thomas Mitchell was instructed to investigate the idea that a large navigable river existed in the interior that would allow easy communications between

[3] Oliver Thomson, *Mass Persuasion in History: An Historical Analysis of the Development of Propaganda Techniques*, Edinburgh, 1977, pp.3-39. Garth S Jowett & Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, third edition, Thousand Oaks, California, 1999, pp.1-11. J.A.C. Brown, *Techniques of Persuasion: From Propaganda to Brainwashing*, Harmondsworth, 1968, p. 9-13.

the southern colonies and northern Australia and Asia; Charles Sturt was directed to explore the course of the Macquarie River and confirm the nature of inland waters.[4] Their often-extended journeys were arduous and dangerous as they travelled into areas previously unknown to Europeans. Here the explorer, as leader and hero acted as the harbinger of civilisation; here he described the land in European terms and placed it within the imperial imagination. In contrast, late nineteenth and early twentieth century travellers confined their journeys to the urban centres and developed rural areas. Many travelled by railway and viewed the passing landscape from the comfort of their railway compartment. Some travelled between centres by steamship with only glimpses of the intervening coastline. Moreover their stays in various places were often brief and thus their impressions were generalised and relied upon the observations of other travellers, known facts and contemporary understanding about race, society and progress.

My analysis has focused on, firstly, how explorers appropriated the land for the empire and secondly, how travellers confirmed Australia's place within the empire, its relationship with Britain and its societal and economic progress. Revealed in their narratives, was not only the view of the individual travel writer on various issues but also their own position in the world. Indeed their texts often suggest the authority and superiority secured by the position of imperial explorer and traveller. However those travellers from other parts of the British Empire, such as Canada, and those from independent democracies, such as the United States, conveyed a less superior tone. American travellers, in particular, maintained the authority of their country's success in the struggle for independence. While these accounts were published to meet a growing popular market in travel literature, they also served to influence their readers on the power and prestige of the Empire and Australia's contribution to the imperial position. Even when describing Australia's harsh environment, explorers and travellers still openly encouraged immigration to Australia, a journey they considered held the promise of personal advancement. Nevertheless some travellers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century also used their narratives to criticise British colonial policy.

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[4] J.L. Allen, "Lands of Myth", in D. Lowenthal & M Bowden (eds), *Geographies of the Mind: Essays in Historical Geosophy*, New York, 1976, pp.41-61. Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*: *An Exploration of Landscape and History*, New York, 1987, pp.56-57. Captain Charles Sturt, *Two Expeditions into the Interior of Southern Australia during the years 1828, 1829, 1830 and 1831*, Vol.1, London, 1833, p.185.

The historiographical and theoretical approach employed in this study will rely to some extent upon that used extensively by cultural historians and commentators of travel literature. This approach maintains texts should not be viewed in isolation, but placed within the intellectual and cultural context in which they were written. In addition literary theory has been used to analyse texts, particularly in an attempt to discern their "silences".

The publication in 1960 of Bernard Smith's book, *European Vision and the South Pacific* initiated a change in the interpretation of cultural history. The originality of his work lies in Smith's expansion of historical interpretation to acknowledge the interdependence of art, science and social science, providing a more complete view of evidence from the South Pacific. He demonstrated how the European interpretation of the landscape and people of the South Pacific was culture-bound and altered over time with contact and with changes in intellectual ideas. These changes can be distinguished in both the art and texts of the period. For example, Aborigines were often, but not solely, portrayed as noble savages in the early voyages of Cook but later as concepts of evolution and race developed they were described as ignoble savages considered weaker people and thereby dismissed or controlled. Smith states that "'Natural selection' …became an effective instrument for the maintenance of European power."[5] Further, Smith's presentation of the role of the Royal Society in promoting the empirical interpretation of the South Pacific and the Royal Academy in endorsing the representation of nature in her perfect form demonstrated how imperial societies furthered imperial rhetoric. These societies were influential in spreading the imperial agenda as they specified how material should be incorporated into the accepted aesthetic and scientific framework and then presented to their audiences. Smith highlights the way original sketches often differed from final published representations that indicated the selective process employed by the travel writer. Smith's work was particularly useful in contextualising art and science, particularly as it is presented in the accounts of exploration.

In *The Course of Empire,* Robert Dixon demonstrated how the Scottish Enlightenment, especially the theory of social and economic progress, led to the growth of colonial

[5] Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific 1768-1850: A Study in the History of Art and Ideas*, second edition, Sydney, 1984, p.ix.

nationalism in New South Wales from the period of first settlement to the mid-nineteenth century. Dixon emphasises progress as a central theme in literature and art during the early nineteenth century. This theme is marked in the accounts of explorers and travellers covered here and provided the basis for much imperial rhetoric. While the language of progress changed over the period of the thesis, from neoclassicism to romanticism to pragmatism, it remained crucial to "announce the imperial destiny of a young nation".[6]

Of particular relevance is Dixon's analysis of the exploration literature and art of the first half of the nineteenth century. His interpretation of exploration literature uses the image of the explorer journeying backward from civilisation to savagery in reversal of the usual order of progress. The explorer searches for a great inland river and fertile land; in the process he faces ordeals and overcomes barriers, in the pattern of the great epics. The explorer becomes the harbinger of civilisation to a land in a state of savagery but with the potential to progress to civil society as part of the empire. This pattern of societal development recurs in the published accounts of exploration covered by this thesis.

Dixon's examination of colonial topographical painting in *The Course of Empire* is particularly relevant to the illustrations in the published accounts of exploration. He emphasises how these illustrations fit the theme of social and economic progress. The illustrations in the explorers' accounts similarly reveal the theme of progress in their composition and adherence to contemporary artistic conventions. Dixon contextualises his interpretation of colonial culture as a product of Enlightenment thought and imperial effort.

Christopher Mulvey has employed the contextualisation of texts in his study of Anglo-American travel literature, entitled *Anglo-American Landscapes*.[7] Mulvey examined the cultural relationship between Britain and America by comparing and contrasting the approaches of British travel writers in America with American travel writers in England. He suggests that travellers were influenced by their existing opinions when

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[6] Robert Dixon, *The Course of Empire: Neoclassical Culture in New South Wales 1788-1860*, Melbourne, 1986, p.3.
[7] Christopher Mulvey, *Anglo-American Landscapes: A Study of Nineteenth Century Anglo-American Travel Literature*, Cambridge, 1983.

they travelled. British writers were looking for the familiar in America while American travellers were seeking their past. Mulvey mainly uses the work of sentimental writers in his analysis and focuses on their reactions to the landscape rather than on social commentary. He notes that their responses were informed and constructed by their existing knowledge systems, particularly those pertaining to romanticism and the picturesque.

Not confining their study to responses to landscape, R.G. Moyles and Doug Owram have analysed British impressions of Canada in their work, *Imperial Dreams and Colonial Realities: British Views of Canada, 1880-1914*, by placing them within an intellectual and cultural context that not only defines British impressions of the Canadian landscape but also Canada's society, its relationship with Britain, views about the Indigenous people and Canada's economic potential.[8] They contrast the "imperial dreams" of writers with the "colonial realities" using popularist literature that propagandises empire, such as juvenile literature, magazines and novels as their foundation. Mulvey, and Moyles and Owram's approach in contextualising travel literature is pertinent to this thesis. Analysis of the literature in its historical and social context has an underlying significance in the study of Australia's past as it illuminates Australia's relationship with Britain and place within the Empire.

Other theoretical approaches have been utilised to some extent. Some come from literary theory while others combine theory with a historicized methodology. In *Orientalism*, Edward Said discusses how Europeans have utilised the discourse of oriental studies to serve the cause of imperialism and thus dominate the East.[9] He asserts that from the end of the eighteenth century Europeans had developed distinct ideas about themselves and about non-Europeans. Western cultural traditions and perceptions highlighted difference and contrast, which created cultural hegemony that authorised western superiority and ideas of Eastern inferiority and stagnation. Said's main concern is with European perceptions of the East, but he contends that similar models have been constructed to analyse other peoples. However the interactions are much more complex than Said's "black and white" interpretation suggests. Writers are

[8] R.G. Moyles and Doug Owram, *Imperial Dreams and Colonial Realities: British Views of Canada, 1880-1914*, Toronto, 1988.
[9] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York,1979.

also influenced by the historical context in which they are writing, that is, the economic, political and social situations that affect their observances. Perhaps the major criticism of Said's work is that he oversimplifies the interaction between West and East, failing to contextualise the material he presents in a place-by-place, traveller-by-traveller examination.[10] Nonetheless, his methodological devices of "strategic location" and "strategic formation" that he uses for studying authority are useful for this thesis. "Strategic location" relates to the author's position in the text, the kind of voice used and the images and themes used with regard to the subject matter. "Strategic formation" is the way texts and textual genres acquire referential power among themselves and thereafter in culture at large.[11] Used in conjunction with analysis of the historical context of the published accounts they provide useful analytical tools.

Mary Louise Pratt takes Said's work further by combining a historicized approach with literary theory and imperialist ideology in travel and exploration literature. In her work *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation,* she discusses transculturation; not only how imperialists' endeavours presented in travel writing engaged readers at home in their enterprise but how this writing impacted upon the object of the imperial gaze. She writes:

> While the imperial metropolis tends to understand itself as determining the periphery … it habitually blinds itself to the ways in which the periphery determines the metropolis – beginning, perhaps, with the latter's obsessive need to present and re-present its peripheries and its others continually to itself. Travel writing, among other institutions, is heavily organized in the service of that imperative.[12]

Of particular use for this thesis is her discussion of how the Linnean system of classification provided a passive but powerful means of possessing and commanding the world. This authority over the landscape had later implications in the industrial revolution. Pratt introduces the terms "contact zone", "anti-conquest" and "transculturation" which have some relevance to my analysis of travel literature. The "contact zone" was the place where Europeans engaged with non-Europeans.[13] "Anti-

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[10] Billie Melman, "The Middle East/Arabia: 'the cradle of Islam'" in Peter Hulme & Tim Youngs (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, Cambridge, 2002, p.107. David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire*, Oxford, 2001, pp.xix, 4-5. John M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, theory and the arts*, Manchester, 1995.

[11] Said, *Orientalism*, p.20.

[12] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation,* London, 1992, p.6

[13] *Ibid*., p.7.

conquest" refers to the sympathetic representation of Indigenous people in travel literature by explorers and travellers whose arduous journey induced a form of language that conveyed a passive and innocent position, but was still informed by the imperial imperative of control and dispossession.[14] These concepts have been particularly useful in the discussion of exploration literature and European views of Aborigines.

As a counter-argument to the emphasis on the racial 'other' of *Orientalism*, David Cannadine in *Ornamentalism* contends that the duplication of British social hierarchies and displays of the pomp and circumstance of imperial administration served to reinforce ties to Britain and establish a unified empire. He points to a different way of viewing the empire by downplaying the role of race and colour in perceptions of empire and emphasising instead class and status. For example, he notes that Indigenous people were placed within the British social hierarchy and could be regarded with dignity and respect despite their colour and race. This was particularly the case in the colonies such as India where the British administration relied heavily upon local rulers. Cannadine contends that a homogenised empire was presented to the domestic market by overcoming the diversity found in their territories abroad with the cultivation of British traditions and social structure. He describes the empire as a

> royal empire, presided over and unified by a sovereign of global amplitude and semi-divine fullness, and suffused with the symbols and signifiers of kingship, which reinforced, legitimated, unified and completed the empire as a realm bound together by order, hierarchy, tradition and subordination.[15]

The flaws in his work rest on his assumption of the diminishing place of race in the British administration of its colonies and an over-emphasis on social status. To produce a completely inclusive work Cannadine should have focused not only on the ruling classes in both Britain and its territories, but also tested his thesis further to encompass the middle and lower classes. His argument is not entirely convincing given the extent and diverse societies that made up the British Empire at its height although it has been useful in formulating my thesis, particularly the role of British cultural traditions in fostering the Empire.

Paul Carter's poststructuralist work *The Road to Botany Bay* has had some bearing on my thesis. In particular his textual analysis of the published accounts and journals of

[14] *Ibid.*
[15] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, p.102.

explorers provided some insightful analysis that could be illuminated further through contextualisation. However Carter's concept of spatial history, which he develops in opposition to what he calls the imperial history of historians such as Manning Clark and Russel Ward, is difficult to grasp due to his elaborate style. He considers his spatial history, that is the individual's experience of travelling through the landscape, to be divorced from temporal considerations. Naming is an indication of spatial history as it indicated the individual's engagement with space. Carter's concept of spatial history is flawed as the process of travelling is a temporal experience as well as a spatial one and space and time cannot be considered in isolation. Carter's work seems more a work of literary criticism than history as in his deconstruction of texts he devalues the external factors that were influential in the explorer's journey such as government orders and scientific objectives.

In *The Cartographic Eye: How Explorers Saw Australia*, Simon Ryan follows Smith and others in stating that the explorers' perceptions were governed by European knowledge systems. He analyses exploration literature within a Foucaldian framework that allows him to develop a thesis that considers the explorer as motivated by a desire to control and appropriate the land. For example in his discussion of nineteenth century aesthetics, he asserts that:

> These [aesthetic] conventions are not to be understood as harmless strategies for familiarising the unfamiliar, or – worse – as natural responses. Rather, the picturesque and panoramic deconstruct the journals' claims to the authority of originality and immediacy, for no longer is the vision fresh and unaffected, but it is culturally mediated. Moreover, they are techniques which reveal the nexus between power and surveillance within the journal and, once the existence of this nexus is realised, it is possible to see that 'innocent' aesthetic responses are actually expressions of imperial greed.[16]

Ryan reduces the appreciation of landscape to mere avarice and a capricious desire for imperial power. It is suggested that while these accounts do contain the rhetoric of empire, explorers are not as consciously complicit in fostering empire as Ryan claims. Most explorers were men of taste who used aesthetic theories as the framework upon which to describe the land. In this process they alluded to the land's potential and established British entitlement to it.

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[16] Simon Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye: How Explorers saw Australia*, Cambridge, 1996, p.54.

While the analysis of women's travel writing within a feminist theoretical framework has become popular and led to the publication of numerous works, they have had limited application in my own work. Interesting and insightful though these works are their focus has generally been on women travelling not in the colonies of large scale European settlement but in isolated regions of Africa, Asia and South America. In *Discourses of Difference*, Sara Mills combines feminist theory and Foucault to provide an analytical framework for the discussion of women's travel writing.[17] She does not look at the texts from a biographical perspective, that is, how the individual female travel writer exerted her independence within the male dominated field, but instead examines how the marginalisation of women within the context of imperialism, which was identified as masculine and British, affected their writing about colonialism. Because of contemporary understandings of women as feminine, domestic and pure, Mills discerns tensions in the writing of women travellers. She considers that because of the marginal position of women in late nineteenth and early twentieth century society and despite their predominantly middle-class status, women travel writers tended to focus on the individual and domestic rather than on broader issues such as race and society. This has not generally been the case in the accounts by women travellers of Australia.

The travel literature encompassed here is divided into two forms; those by explorers who, in the early part of the nineteenth century, were engaged in the appropriation of Australia for the Empire and those of travellers in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth century whose works acted to reinvigorate and consolidate the Empire. To my knowledge no comprehensive analysis of explorers' and travellers' interpretations of Australia as expressions of imperial rhetoric exists. Some works which examine the accounts of individual explorers and travellers have been published and edited collections of travel writing exist. However their focus is generally on the explorer or traveller rather than a close analysis of their narratives. There are a few works that emphasise a specific theme. For example, in *The Cartographic Eye*, Simon Ryan demonstrates through the deconstruction of explorers' texts how appropriation of the landscape and Aborigines occurred and how Europeans gained power and authority. Ross Gibson's *The Diminishing Paradise: Changing Literary Perceptions of Australia*

[17] Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An analysis of women's travel writing and colonialism*, London, 1991.

and Robert Dixon's *The Course of Empire: Neoclassical Culture in New South Wales 1788-1860* also use travel literature as a basis for their particular arguments. This thesis will provide a thorough analysis of selected published accounts of travel throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with particular attention to exposing the imperial rhetoric they contain.

Temporally, I have analysed selected accounts of exploration and travel in Australia published during the period 1813 to 1914. The starting date of 1813 coincides with the beginnings of European inland exploration; 1850 provides a concluding date for the analysis of exploration literature covered here as it roughly corresponds with the discovery of gold and with the end of convict transportation to the eastern colonies. By the 1850s, much of interior of south-eastern Australia, the northern coastal areas and south-western Australia had been explored and while expeditions continued in the late nineteenth century, they were explorations of central Australia or more localised investigations of limited areas. 1850 also marks the beginnings of an influx of ordinary travellers and tourists. The concluding date of 1914 marks the beginning of World War I and Australia's first major action as a national entity within the British Empire.

Published accounts of exploration by the well-known inland and maritime explorers have mainly been used as sources for the section on exploration. These include Sir Thomas Mitchell, John Lort Stokes, P.P. King, Ludwig Leichhardt, Charles Sturt, John Oxley among others. In all, the published accounts of twenty major explorers of Australia have been studied. Published accounts of maritime explorations have been included, as they were engaged in charting the coastline of Australia and often their surveys anticipated later inland explorations of specific areas. These journeys were undertaken in the service of empire. However the main focus of my analysis of published accounts of exploration has been journals of land explorations as they provide the most fertile avenue for explicating my thesis. Source material of the latter period comes from the works of major late nineteenth century British and Canadian travellers of the calibre of Anthony Trollope, Charles Dilke, Gilbert Parker and James Froude although the work of lesser known travellers has also been used. In addition some works by Australian-born travellers, such as Mae Vivienne and Ellis Rowan have been introduced for comparative purposes. Works by European and Asian travellers to Australia have not been consulted unless they were published in English. Accounts by

women travellers have been used although one difficulty in this area is the scarcity of published accounts by women travelling to Australia especially compared to those by women travelling to Asia, Africa or India.

The thesis is divided in three parts. The first part, of three chapters, covers the history, style and format of travel literature and provides an analysis of the genre in the Australian context. It contains a discussion of the distinctiveness of exploration literature in the early nineteenth century, its structure and devices. I have also examined the complexities of the published accounts by male and female travel writers later in the century and their different approaches to their subject matter. The second part of this thesis contains a detailed analysis of the exploration literature in the period 1813 to 1850. Texts are placed within contemporary intellectual contexts of science, progress and aesthetics exposing a discourse of imperial possession. The final part examines travel literature from 1850 to 1914 in terms of contemporary ideas and opinions; this time emphasising Australia's ongoing connection to Britain and accepting the coexistence of imperial patriotism and evolving national identity. It explores the travellers' evaluation of Australia and Australians with reference to scientific and progressivist views of the environment and society.

Chapter One begins part one of the thesis and consists of an historical overview of travel literature beginning in ancient times and setting out the changing nature of travel literature up to the beginning of the twentieth century. It identifies the dominant motivations for travel in each period and the corresponding structural and thematic changes in travel literature. The chapter pays particular attention to the form of travel literature in ancient and early Christian times, during the middle ages, the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century with some focus on the Grand Tour. The form of travel literature on Australia of the nineteenth century followed a similar structure to that on other settler colonies. It is characterised by the volume of accounts, romantic early accounts of inland exploration moving into a more pragmatic narrative form later in the century. A follow-on effect of industrialisation was more comfortable and faster travel available to a wider section of society. With increasing numbers of travellers came increasing numbers of published accounts. Thus travel literature increased in popularity and accounts became available through magazines, newspapers and lending libraries. In contrast to the travellers of the past, who travelled because of their work

and wrote as a consequence of their official duty, late nineteenth century travellers increasingly journeyed for pleasure as well as business. The accounts published during the mid to late nineteenth century were informative and entertaining, often encouraging migration through stories of adventure and the possibility of personal advancement. The format of the accounts changed as the century progressed; the explorer's day-to-day journal form became less common and the continuous narrative under defined chapter headings appeared more frequently. By the turn of the century some accounts were didactic in tone, stressing the supremacy of the white race but suggestive of a questioning of the belief in progress.

Chapter Two discusses exploration literature as a form of travel literature. It sets out the conventions followed by explorers in the development of their published accounts and how these practices impacted upon the veracity of the account while at the same time increasing its appeal to readers. They were written as first person narratives, a style which personalised the account and gave the explorer hero status and authority. The use of the first person emphasises the author's presentation of the text as accurate day-to-day records of the expedition. The editing process is also considered, as many published accounts were vastly different to the original explorer's field notebook. This process is explained in terms of engaging and informing the reader. As part of the process of enticing and enlightening readers, explorers' journals often contained appendices and additional material including maps and scientific reports. Explorers complied with these established conventions that sustained the imperial rhetoric contained in their narratives.

Chapter Three analyses the nature, style and format of travel literature from 1850 to 1914. In particular it considers and compares the published accounts by male and female travel writers during the period. Their accounts contain fundamental differences that are founded in differing ways of seeing.[18] While commentators on travel literature contend that women travellers wrote more about human nature while men were concerned with public life, the chapter points to the distinction being more blurred. Women travellers did discuss political, economic and administrative matters in their accounts of Australia and male travellers did make observations about private life.

[18] Mills, *Discourses of Difference*. Jane Robinson (ed.), *Unsuitable for Ladies: An Anthology of Women Travellers*, Oxford, 1995. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*.

What is distinctive about male and female travel writers is more the amount of detail contained in their narratives on these themes. Women wrote at length on individuals and society and men on political issues. However Mary Louise Pratt in *Imperial Eyes* contends that it was not just a matter of different spheres of interest or expertise but that women travel writers had "differing modes of constituting knowledge and subjectivity". She asserts that female concern for domestic detail in published accounts was a way of establishing their identity in colonial situations.[19] Women's travel writing is complex and many female travel writers worked within and against the masculine devices of the heroic traveller and the submissive, weak female. Many used an analytical and unemotional approach, using the masculine voice in their texts, fostering empire and meeting the accepted conventions of the genre.

In Chapter Four, the first chapter of part two, imperial rhetoric is revealed through analysing the idea of progress. Enlightenment notions of progress suggested that society progressed through stages of development from savagery to civilised society. In the literature of exploration, it became tied to visions of the development of idealised land. Idealised land was often likened to the Garden of Eden, an abundant but unoccupied land, which was provided by God or Providence for British use. It encompassed all the attributes necessary for the establishment of civil society and merely awaited British settlement to develop to a more advanced state. Through individual initiative and industry, the landscape would advance to a commercial society within the Empire. The promise of progress in Australia became a means of achieving a grand imperial triumph. While explorers did not necessarily discount Aboriginal prior use of the land, they considered them as living in a stage of savagery, an integral part of the landscape like its exotic flora and fauna. Through their understanding of the ideology of progress, explorers dispossessed Aborigines of their land and claimed it as an important part of a progressive empire. Many explorers acknowledged the growing economic and social significance of Australia to the British Empire. Not only were their explorations opening up new lands for settlement and thus agricultural and pastoral pursuits but their published accounts revealed the potential of the country for immigration and thus some relief from the pressures of overpopulation at home.

[19] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*.

Chapter Five discusses how explorers used aesthetic theories to describe and thereby claim the landscape. Aesthetic principles from landscape gardening, and from scholars like William Gilpin, and Richard Payne Knight can be discerned in the images of landscapes presented in the explorers' journals. Their descriptions not only demonstrated a preference for the contrived British "park-like" landscape but also revealed the more elaborate principles of romanticism, the sublime, the beautiful and the picturesque. Landscapes were depicted using Gilpin's picturesque conventions that emphasised roughness, contrast and variety as essential elements. In the picturesque tradition of both illustration and landscape description the limits of the scene were defined, the foreground highlighted and the focus drawn to the middle ground. Knight added subjectivity to aesthetic appreciation. He perceived the picturesque as a perception belonging to a class educated in the principles of painting, and not as an inherent property of an object. The use of aesthetic theories allowed the explorer, as a qualified arbiter of taste, to appropriate the landscape by placing the scene surveyed within the bounds of the picturesque conventions.

In Chapter Six the literature of exploration is examined within the context of science. Scientific societies established in Britain during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries laid down conventions for recording journeys, and collecting and describing specimens. In the nineteenth century the Royal Geographical Society was influential in directing the course of exploration and in broadcasting the results of particular explorations. The chapter looks at the involvement of these organisations, firstly in establishing certain practices for how exploration should be carried out and secondly their motives in influencing the survey and exploration of Australia's coastline and interior including the collecting of flora, fauna and geological specimens. Scientific collecting was an important aspect of exploration and was impelled throughout the nineteenth century by increasing specialisation into fields of botany, geology, zoology and ethnography. At first explorers and naturalists were astonished by the bizarre fauna and flora they discovered in Australia. By the early nineteenth century explorers and naturalists were regularly sending information and specimens back to Britain for further analysis. Findings were read at meetings of scientific societies and published in books and journals. Through imperial science the Australian environment was claimed for the empire and became part of the global Linnaean classificatory system. Imperial science acted as an agent for the dispersion of imperial rhetoric that not only emphasised

Britain's leading place within the arena of global science but also had implications for continuing Australian settlement and Britain's ongoing industrial development.

Chapter Seven begins the third part of the thesis. It examines the travellers' use of metaphors of home and family to tie Australia to Britain and the Empire. The use of these metaphors reinforced a sense of imperial power and prestige among readers both locally and within the Empire, often at a time when imperial decline was feared. However the travellers' views did not discount an emerging national spirit in Australia but suggested that it would co-exist with imperial patriotism. The chapter defines the notion of imperial patriotism and how metaphors of family reinforced the connection of Australia to the British Empire.

Chapter Eight demonstrates how travellers drew upon racial science as the central idea in discussions about Australians. The imperial rhetoric in their accounts linked the environment to human development. Travellers believed that the physical environment of Australia was having both positive and negative effects on the developing Australian race, an effect that served to highlight their own pre-eminent place. As background to the chapter, David Arnold's work *The Problem of Nature* was useful in obtaining an understanding of contemporary ideas about the impact of the environment on human development, particularly in constructing Australians as different and inferior in the imperial travellers' view.[20] This chapter contextualises travellers' observations of the Australian people and brings to light contemporary ideas of the interaction of race, climate and geology.

Ideas about the role of women in the development of a strong imperial race are background to travellers' impressions of Australian women discussed in Chapter Nine. It deals with social and moral issues concerning women in the late nineteenth century. Australia was seen as an experimental ground for analysing these issues, which were also evident in other parts of the Empire. From a position of authority, male and female travel writers revealed the subordinate role of Australian women in society and how they differed in character and role from that accepted for English women. Travel writers revealed in their texts the notion of differing roles for men and women in

[20] David Arnold, *The Problem of Nature: Environment, Culture and European Expansion*, Oxford, 1996.

Victorian and Edwardian society. In this regard Jane Mackay and Pat Thane's essay, "The Englishwoman", has been used to clarify the concept of "separate spheres".[21] The imperial travellers' view was that the family was the centre of Victorian life; the woman's place was to rear healthy children and support the male head of the household as well as uphold and foster the moral and spiritual wellbeing of the family. Such a role would result in a fit and healthy imperial nation at a time when the deterioration of the race was feared. From their superior position travellers directed criticism at Australian women for their part in the decline of the birth rate in the early twentieth century and for the lapses in moral standards that resulted in illegitimate births and prostitution. The opposition of women to their role in Victorian society prompted some travellers to perceive women as solely responsible for societal problems. Such observations about the failings of Australian women appealed to the sense of moral decency of all women throughout the empire as a robust white population equated to imperial power.

Similarly ideas about race influenced travellers' impressions of the Indigenous people of Australia, and thereby sanctioned an imperial rhetoric of superiority. In chapter Ten I examine the travellers' sense of innate superiority based upon contemporary evolutionary laws of nature. However their views were multifaceted. While there was still some appreciation of the primitive nature of Aborigines living in the remote areas of Australia, there was a predominant view in the published accounts that the Aboriginal demise was inevitable.[22] Some travellers displayed open criticism of British policy towards Aborigines. Other travellers' texts link faith in progress to racial theories and thus considered that Aboriginal development had stagnated, as they did not demonstrate a strong motivation to work hard and thereby advance. Not all were pessimistic about the fate of Aborigines, however, and some related successful attempts to civilise and advance Aborigines in Christian communities. Only those of mixed ancestry were destined to survive and travellers depicted these Aborigines in both positive and negative lights. At the same time, Aboriginal society was considered unique to evolutionary science as it provided a link to a previous human developmental stage and a connection to the ancient origins of humankind.

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[21] Jane Mackay & Pat Thane, "The Englishwoman", in Robert Colls & Philip Dodd (eds.), *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920*, Beckenham, 1986, p.192.

[22] As this is a study of nineteenth and early twentieth century writings, words like "primitive" and "progressive" have been used in the sense that they were used in the literature of the period. They are not been placed in inverted commas except in quotation.

In Chapter Eleven, analysis centres on travellers' descriptions of the Australian environment, in particular, how their descriptions are infused with imperial rhetoric. They drew upon the conventions of the picturesque, the link between aesthetics and progress to present an imperial vision of the environment. The picturesque with its stress on the aesthetic sensibility of the traveller remained a concern of many travellers in the late nineteenth century. Many of their descriptions emphasised the conventions of verbal landscape depictions, a convention described by Rhoda Flaxman as "Victorian word-painting".[23] Such reliable pronunciation of beauty enveloped the traveller in a mantle of authority. However an appreciation of beauty and a utilitarian approach to land coexisted in the published accounts of travellers. In their utilitarian approach to the environment, they appropriated the land by cataloguing Australia's resources and industries and predicting the land's future prosperity, often in an attempt to encourage British migration and enhance British prestige and power. However some travellers considered that progress was proceeding too fast and was causing environmental problems that needed to be addressed.

Unpacking the travel writers' baggage examines the cultural underpinnings inherent in travel writing of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and exposes its imperial rhetoric. The thesis is an analysis of some of the ideas that were salient at the time of the individual travel writer's journey and how these ideas formed the foundation for their interpretations of Australia and its responsibility to, and part in, the British Empire. Travel writers were complicit in fostering the imperial view through the ideas they drew upon but they were not necessarily deliberate propagandists of Empire.

[23] Rhoda Flaxman, *Victorian Word-Painting and Narrative: Toward the Blending of Genres*, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1983.

Chapter One
Travel Literature: its historical origins

> …the ideal travel writer is consumed not just with a will to know. He is also moved by a powerful will to teach. Inside every good travel writer there is a pedagogue – often a highly moral pedagogue- struggling to get out. … A commitment to language and to literary artifice must also be there, and the impulse to write must equal the impulse to travel.[1]
>
> Paul Fussell, *The Norton Book of Travel*, 1987.

Travel writing and the history of travel are intrinsically linked. As the mode and motivation for travel changes so does the form of the travel account. Of interest to this thesis are published accounts of exploration and those by other travellers which could be considered guidebooks. The latter provided a pragmatic but occasionally emotive account of people and places, that could be used as guides by later travellers. The subject matter of their narrative was not necessarily unknown to readers. In contrast explorers journeyed into the unknown. Their accounts accentuated the empiricism of scientific observation and placed an emphasis on the description and collection of material while also underlining how new lands and resources might contribute to imperial development. However some crossovers exist as journals of exploration could provide valuable information to later explorers and travellers. This chapter presents the historical origins of these forms of travel literature. It highlights the changes and continuities in their character from ancient times.

Myths and legends provide an early form of travel literature. In these narratives the hero was transformed by his journey. For example, in Homer's *Odyssey* (c.700 BC), the hero, Odysseus is awakened by confronting and overcoming dangers and ordeals that arose during the course of his quest. Sometimes these imaginary journeys took the form of sea voyages, where the hero journeyed with his crew beyond the known world but returned alone to relate stories of heroic feats in exotic lands.[2] Emphasising virtues in human actions these narratives often contained a moral lesson. The idea of the explorer as hero and the journey as quest survived into the nineteenth century although the later accounts lacked the moral message of the ancient epics. For example, the explorer-hero Mitchell set

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[1] Paul Fussell, *The Norton Book of Travel*, New York, 1987, pp.15-16.
[2] J. Seigneuret (ed.), *Dictionary of Literary Themes and Motifs*, New York, 1988, pp.1293-1301.

out into the unknown to confirm geographic lore. He sought a great inland river thought to exist in the interior of Australia – a river that would foster economic progress in Australia.

Although life within Europe during the Middle Ages was often confined to some extent by unrest, the limits of the known world were still being extended and distant peoples and places described.[3] The empirical nature of these travellers' observations of Asia pre-empted later exploration literature. For example, in Marco Polo's account not only was Asian society and culture described but also the natural resources of the various lands.[4] With the invention of printing in the fifteenth century narratives of travel were published in greater numbers and reached a wider audience. During the sixteenth century, Portuguese explorers, such as de Albuquerque, made long sea voyages to Asia, Africa and the East Indies, returning to publish accounts of their voyages. They were followed by the Spanish and French and later the English and Dutch. The New World had been discovered and motives of trade, colonisation, Christianity and gold stimulated journeys by other travellers. The published literature of explorers and travellers expanded knowledge of the known world in the minds of the literate. They discussed new continents and peoples, the annexation of territory, and the development of trade routes.[5] These accounts were usually written in journal form taken from ships' logs compiled during the voyage but often included personal experiences of heroic proportions.[6]

In 1665, the Royal Society formalised empiricism in accounts of explorations when they charged maritime explorers in *Directions to Seamen bound for far Voyages* to:

> study *Nature* rather than *Books*, and from the Observations, made of the *Phaenomena* and Effects she presents, to compose such a History of Her, as may hereafter serve to build a Solid and Useful Philosophy upon.[7]

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[3] Percy G. Adams, *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel*, Lexington, 1983, pp.47-48.
[4] Barbara Korte, *English Travel Writing: from Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations*, (trans. Catherine Matthias), Houndmills, 2000,p.29.
[5] Adams, *Travel Literature*, pp.49-50.
[6] William H. Sherman, "Stirrings and searchings (1500-1720)", in Hulme & Youngs (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, p.26.
[7] *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, I (January 1665/6), pp.140-141 cited in R.W. Frantz, *The English Traveller and the Movement of Ideas 1660-1732*, New York, 1968, p.15.

Collection and classification came to dominate accounts of sea voyages and the observations of seamen were of enormous benefit to the Royal Society.[8] Such narratives of voyages by sea as well as travel on land became exceedingly popular in Britain during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For example, William Dampier's *A New Voyage Round the World,* first printed in 1697, was reprinted three times within a year due to public demand.[9] Often accounts of voyages were published by the Society in its *Transactions* along with other papers related to scientific experiments.[10] Central to these narratives was scientific observation, but such accounts did not lack the entertainment value of adventure in strange and exotic lands.

By the eighteenth century, in an age enlightened by reason and science, travel literature of exploration involved empirical investigation and discussion of the phenomena encountered as a matter of course. Every journey tested a hypothesis and the written account verified the findings. As Samuel Johnson wrote,

> …the use of travelling is to regulate imagination by reality, and instead of thinking how things may be, to see them as they are. [11]

Travel literature based upon sea and land exploration continued to increase well into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Sea voyagers travelled the Pacific Ocean while land explorers tackled the interior of Africa, North and South America and Australia. As an adjunct to their journeys, explorers and travellers often returned to London to present an account of their travels before the Royal Society or later, the Royal Geographical Society.

In some cases sea voyages resulted in more than one account of the expedition being published. Captain Cook's voyage of discovery to the east coast of Australia resulted in not only the official version but also the accounts of Joseph Banks and Dr Solander. In the eighteenth century the British Admiralty attempted to confiscate all journals written during government sea voyages, allowing only the publication of an official carefully edited version of the expedition. However this practice could not always be enforced.[12]

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[8] Adams, *Travel Literature*, pp.38-40.
[9] R.W. Frantz, *The English Traveller and the Movement of Ideas 1660-1732*, New York, 1968, p.11.
[10] *Ibid.*, pp.18-19.
[11] Samuel Johnson, Letter 326, cited in Seigneuret (ed), *Dictionary of Literary Themes and Motifs*, p.1304.
[12] Adams, *Travel Literature*, pp.41-42.

By the early 1800s published accounts were instructive as well as entertaining. They continued to describe personal experience in a day-by-day journal form whilst also including descriptive and scientific passages. Such a format was particularly evident in the early nineteenth century explorers' texts. Accounts of exploration catered to a reading public who, by the mid-nineteenth century, was expanding due to popular education. A wider audience meant different readers had varying needs that had to be satisfied by the published accounts of exploration. Some readers sought adventure. Sturt identified this section of his audience when he asserted that to most of his readers the "narrative will appear little else than a succession of adventures".[13] Sturt admitted that he had "endeavoured to make the narrative of events, some of which are remarkably striking, as interesting as possible".[14] However other accounts took a different form and catered to different audiences. Some were published as official records. These official reports were not published for a popular audience and tended to be analytical in approach focusing on the particular object of the expedition. However public demand could lead in some instances to the official report proceeding to popular publication. The Gregorys' official accounts of exploration throughout the 1840s and 1850s were published in book form as a collection of exploration journals in 1884. The adventure and excitement of the explorer-hero's journey through unknown territory that was emphasised in these accounts made them bestsellers.[15]

The number of exploration narratives published by London publishing houses in the nineteenth century is evidence of their popularity with readers. T. & W. Boone published the journals of Jukes, Stokes and Leichhardt as part of their series entitled *Library of Australian Travels &c.*[16] Other London publishers of travel literature included John Murray and Longman, Brown Green and Longmans. These publishers catered to an informed educated readership. Stokes' and Mitchell's published journals assumed a readership with some aesthetic sensibility while the journals of Leichhardt, Jukes and

[13] Sturt, *Two Expeditions*, p.223.
[14] *Ibid*., p.4.
[15] Korte, *English Travel Writing*, p.88.
[16] Listed under this title in the advertising of other publications by the publisher in Jukes, *Surveying Voyage of H.M.S. Fly*.

Mitchell demanded a readership with considerable scientific knowledge and an interest in broadening that knowledge.

In some cases journals were published to provide a guide for others contemplating journeys in Australia. The Gregorys' published accounts specifically stated in the prefaces that the journals served as works of reference for later travellers in the Australian bush. Eyre indicated in the preface to volume one of *Journals of Expeditions of Discovery into Central Australia, and Overland from Adelaide to King George's Sound* that it was his

> duty to record the knowledge which was thus obtained, for the information of future travellers and as a guide to the scientific world in their inquiries into the character and formation of so singular and interesting a country.[17]

Including maps of the route covered by the particular explorer reinforced the purpose of the published accounts as a guide for future travellers. In addition survey maps were included in the published accounts of Eyre, Sturt, Oxley, Leichhardt, Mitchell, Stokes, Kennedy to assist those undertaking travel into formerly unknown regions. Even more than for journals of land exploration, published accounts of maritime voyages had an explicitly informative function in the inclusion of hydrographic charts.

It is travel literature as guidebook that forms the other type of published account of interest in this thesis. This is particularly evident in the travel literature published by travellers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These were personal accounts of the traveller's experiences of Australia but contained information and observations about Australia and Australians. Such accounts acted as guides for future travellers and emigrants. However this form of travel literature had its foundations in much earlier times.

In ancient times, many Greeks and Romans travelled for practical purposes. For example some travelled to improve their health, others went on religious pilgrimages, many travelled on business as traders and merchants or as government officials. Travelling was slow and arduous and this impacted upon their writing.[18] The accounts of their journeys were like guidebooks - instructive and containing information considered scientific at the

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[17] Edward John Eyre, *Journals of Expeditions of Discovery into Central Australia, and Overland from Adelaide to King George's Sound in the years 1840-1*, Vol.1, London, 1845 p.vi.
[18] Fussell, *The Norton Book of Travel*, pp.21-22.

time.[19] They became a popular and informative type of travel literature. They often contained maps and town layouts, travel itineraries and routes, places to stay as well as costs, things to avoid, and transport advice. One early guidebook written in the second century AD, by Pausanias, which detailed his travels throughout the Mediterranean, Egypt, and Greece, was based upon personal experiences and reliable sources and provided information on travel to foreign places, including local sites and legends.[20]

Accounts detailing journeys constitute another form of travel literature during this period. These accounts were based upon notes, letters, diaries, journals and formal accounts of journeys. They differed from guidebooks in that they were based on the travellers' personal, sometimes emotive interpretation of new places and people rather than an analytical catalogue of facts. The early acceptance of travel literature as a popular and reliable form of literature is demonstrated by the inclusion of Herodotus' narratives of travels to the Near East in a fifth century history of Greece. His narrative *History* was based upon personal journeys to other Mediterranean lands, other travellers' accounts, verified information, and related incidents and local legends. The resultant work, which combined travel with narrative and history, was typical in ancient times and comparable to eighteenth and nineteenth century travel literature.[21] Such literature, Barbara Korte considers, pre-empted future travel literature in two ways, by collecting together travel narratives and by depicting the world as both "empirically observable *and* fantastical".[22]

The travel literature of the Middle Ages included travels on religious journeys and guidebooks focusing on journeys to sites of Christian significance became common. Korte considers pilgrimages to be "one of the most important forms of medieval travel, around which, in the late Middle Ages, there even evolved an early form of tourist industry".[23] These journeys were well-organized religious treks to holy sites by large groups of people. The journey was still difficult and dangerous, and threats to personal safety were ever-present but the pilgrim believed that the pain and anguish suffered on the journey held the

[19] Korte, *English Travel Writing*, pp.21-22.
[20] Adams, *Travel Literature*, pp.38-39.
[21] Seigneuret (ed), *Dictionary of Literary Themes and Motifs*, p.1301.
[22] Korte, *English Travel Writing*, p.22.
[23] *Ibid.*, p.23.

promise of salvation. Guidebooks provided advice, routes and itineraries for pilgrims from western Europe travelling to Rome, Jerusalem and other religious sites by land and sea. However these works rarely mentioned the physical features, flora and fauna of the often-new environments encountered. Such profane matters would have been considered unseemly for a pilgrim devoted to the spiritual world.[24] The numbers of guidebooks declined during the tenth century as the result of restrictions placed on Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land, but they regained popularity following the Crusades in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[25] In addition to the practical guidebooks, accounts appeared in the form of memoirs that emphasised devotion to God.[26] Accounts tended to focus on the holy sites and their significance rather than any personal experience of the journey. For example, *The Book of Margery Kempe* described a number of pilgrimages to holy sites but the pilgrim/narrator had a subordinate place in the text to the description of the pilgrimage itself and the religious meaning of the site.[27]

By the sixteenth century guidebooks were available that offered advice on travel within England and on the continent. These guidebooks aimed at those less interested in religious pilgrimages and more in genteel travel for enjoyment. As accounts of religious pilgrimages began to decline, the concept came to be associated with more worldly quests by secular travellers. For example William Lithgow utilised the term 'pilgrim' in his account, *The Totall discourse of the rare adventures and painefull peregrinations of long nineteene yeares travayles*, which describes his travels through Italy and Greece to the Holy Land. In this account he associated the religious connotations of the term with the more worldly concerns of personal experience, as in his prefatory poem "The Pilgrim's Mourning Ditty".[28] Guidebooks such as James Howell's *Instructions for Forreine Travell* (1642) offered instructions to aid tourists on the continent and in Britain.[29] However while non-utilitarian travel existed in a limited form, increasingly travel literature resulted from more

[24] *Ibid.*, p.26. Korte refers to *curiositas* or the desire to know about the physical world as a suspect motive for travelling particularly by those undertaking pilgrimages to religious sites.
[25] Adams, *Travel Literature*, p.39.
[26] Fussell, *The Norton Book of Travel*, p.24.
[27] Korte, *English Travel Writing*, p.25.
[28] *Ibid*., p.24.
[29] Adams, *Travel Literature*, pp.38-40.

practical travels such as the journeys of merchants, explorers, colonisers, scientists and ambassadors.

One form of travel that became popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the Grand Tour. In line with the empiricism of the age, travel came to be considered a necessary conclusion to a young gentleman's education, which would expand his understanding of the world. A tutor usually accompanied the young man on his journey which could be up to five years duration. Guidebooks offered advice to wealthy parents on tours of Europe that would broaden the knowledge and experience of their sons. France and Italy provided the most important opportunities for advancing their knowledge and acquiring social refinement. In France they experienced court life and studied the language while in Italy they studied classical and Renaissance art and sculpture, history and music. They often returned via a different route, spending time at the universities of Berlin and Amsterdam.[30] The Grand Tour allowed young British gentlemen to mingle with those of the same class in Europe and to study and draw parallels between Britain's increasing prestige and that of the Roman Empire at its height. The Grand Tour established contacts and prepared young gentlemen for careers in politics and foreign affairs. In addition to the intangible benefits of greater understanding through experience, commentators have noted a material consequence of the Grand Tour, which confirmed the social status of the British elite.[31] With some disparagement Fussell comments: "the Grand Tour resembled later consumer tourism in offering an opportunity for buying things not available at home and testifying, when displayed later, to the purchaser's culture and sophistication."[32] The men wrote predominantly of their journey on the continent in letters and diaries or as "arguments about the *value* of travelling" with only some observations published in book form such as Locke's *Travels in France*.[33] Their accounts tended to consist of encyclopaedic descriptions of places visited with little emphasis on personal reflection and the experiences of travel.[34] Thus, Joseph Addison's *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy*

[30] James Buzard, "The Grand Tour and after (1660-1840)", in Hulme and Youngs, *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, p.39.
[31] *Ibid.*, pp.40-41.
[32] Fussell, *The Norton Book of Travel*, p.131.
[33] Adams, *Travel Literature*, pp.65-66. James Buzard, "The Grand Tour and after" (1660-1840), p.38.
[34] Korte, *English Travel Writing*, pp.49-51.

which first appeared in 1705 gained some criticism for the author's departure from the convention of eighteenth century travel literature: "a travel writer must not talk about himself".[35] Works like Addison's acted as guides for further tours of the continent by eighteenth century travellers.[36]

By the late eighteenth century the Grand Tour was no longer the prerogative of just the aristocracy but had become the aim of the "less socially elevated and less well-educated people" and included women and children.[37] However the French Revolution interrupted much British travel to Europe and British travellers were confined to tours of the British mainland. During this time travel that focused on scenery became more popular.[38] In the mid-eighteenth century Edmund Burke published *An Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, which acknowledged the existence of aesthetic emotion. Travellers became concerned with the instinctive experience of beautiful and sublime scenery, which occurred above other thought processes or physical response.[39] With the romantic movement, sensitivity towards scenery grew and a more subjective approach crept into travel literature. By the late eighteenth century, the picturesque arose as an aesthetic category for appreciating scenery that was neither beautiful nor sublime. William Gilpin in his *Three Essays: on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape. To which is added a Poem on Landscape Painting* combined elements of the sublime and the beautiful within a framework giving the whole an association with artistic composition.[40] The picturesque provided the transition from the order of classicism to the wildness of romanticism.[41] Gilpin gave the term "picturesque travel" to that which is motivated by the search for new scenery and the physical and emotional inspiration that could be derived from it.[42] However landscape description was only one area where the

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[35] Charles L. Batten Jr., *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature*, Berkley, 1978, pp.112-113.
[36] Adams, *Travel Literature*, pp.65-66. Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, pp.10-11.
[37] John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, cited in Buzard, "The Grand Tour and after", p.42.
[38] Buzard, "The Grand Tour and after", pp.42-45.
[39] Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View*, London, 1927, p.57.
[40] William Gilpin, *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty, on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape; to which is added a Poem, on Landscape Painting*, London, 1792, p.19.
[41] Hussey, *The Picturesque*, p.4.
[42] Gilpin, *Three Essays*, p.47

subjectivity of the travel writer became more pronounced. It was further revealed in the travel writer's narration of personal travel experiences, which exposed their personality and emotions.[43] After 1815 when European travel recommenced in earnest, the Grand Tour and picturesque travel continued, but a new form of travel emerged; that of scenic tourism catering to large numbers of travellers of less privileged backgrounds.[44]

The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have been referred to as the "heyday of travel and travel writing".[45] It is distinguished by its mass approach and appeal; that is, greater numbers of people from varying backgrounds were travelling for numerous purposes and as a result large numbers of works were published and eagerly swept up by an increasingly literate public. Travel was less restricted; social, political and economic changes beginning in the late seventeenth century dissolved aristocratic privilege that had limited travel to an elite class. By the nineteenth century more people had the option and resources to travel abroad due to the growing democratic nature of British society and continuing industrialisation. Industrialisation had ushered in railway travel and steamships which provided more comfortable and safer means of travel over long distances. It became easier for the growing numbers of middle class businessmen to travel for business and for women and children to accompany them and also for women to travel alone. Furthermore, the establishment of organised travel by Thomas Cook in the mid-nineteenth century, along with guidebooks by Baedeker and Murrays, turned travel into a tourist venture.[46] Fussell states that "For the first time in history travel was convenient."[47]

For those who did not travel, the image of far away places reached a popular audience in Britain via the Great Exhibition and its travelogues featuring moving panoramas of distant places. Illustrations became important in works of travel and by 1914 photographs were common in published accounts. Publishing houses increased publication of accounts to meet the demands for books from increasing numbers of readers. In addition, lending

[43] Korte, *English Travel Writing*, p.54.
[44] Buzard, "The Grand Tour and after", p.47.
[45] Fussell, *The Norton Book of Travel*, p.271.
[46] Buzard, "The Grand Tour and after", pp.47-49.
[47] Fussell, *The Norton Book of Travel*, p.273.

libraries and periodicals like *Blackwood's* magazine made accounts of travel widely available to the public.[48]

Accounts by other British travellers at the time maintained a different focus. By the mid-nineteenth century scenic travellers were common. Their accounts emphasised the sights they visited on their travels. Korte suggests that these travellers differed from explorers in their interpretation of scenery because they were more "driven by the pure pleasure of seeing" rather than directly motivated by imperialist ideology.[49] Korte has a point in her identification of alternative motivations for travel by this time but this form of travel literature still tended to reflect the patriotic feelings of the scenic traveller who often assumed an authoritative tone in the narrative and pursued an imperialist agenda. Such accounts became guidebooks for future travellers and emphasised the personal experience of the traveller in viewing sights for the first time. However some scenic travellers extended the focus of their journey and presented detailed information about the social and political situation in the country visited. Korte notes that often travel writers made distinctions between themselves as travellers gazing upon unknown sights and others as tourists visiting the better-known places. Thus some travellers, who had avoided the haunts and features associated with the blossoming tourist industry, likened themselves to explorers whose journeys were along less-travelled paths.[50]

As the century progressed and commercial and industrial capitalism spread throughout the world the format of travel literature changed. It became more didactic, analysing the colonial situation and conscious of stressing Britain's superiority over its possessions. Helen Carr suggests that much of the British travel writing of the period 1880-1940 revealed "complicity with imperialism".[51] Accounts described the features to be found in British colonies and encouraged further investment in and migration to them. Such literature reinforced British prestige at a time when Britain was uncertain about its future.

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[48] Roy Bridges, "Exploration and travel outside Europe (1720-1914)", in Hulme and Youngs (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, pp.56-63.
[49] Korte, *English Travel Writing*, p.94.
[50] *Ibid*., p.96.
[51] Helen Carr, "Modernism and travel 1880-1940" in Hulme and Youngs (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, p.71.

Developing colonial rivalries and challenges to its belief in racial superiority destroyed Britain's faith in maintaining a dominant position and created uncertainty about the continuation of Western progress.[52] While much late nineteenth and early twentieth century travel literature supported British imperialism, some travel writers openly criticised British policy, particularly the treatment of Indigenous people. However these voices of opposition still maintained general support for Empire and engaged in imperial rhetoric.

Conclusion

The period of this thesis was definitely the "heyday of travel and travel writing" about Australia.[53] The travel literature of exploration dominated the first part of the century and as exploration opened up the continent to settlement and the development of infrastructure travel literature by other travel writers became more prevalent particularly in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As will be explained later in this thesis, these narratives of travel fostered an imperial agenda, first by claiming the land and later by consolidating the connection between Britain and Australia.[54] However the imperial rhetoric that is visible in their texts was not necessarily deliberate but stemmed from the travel writers' background and understandings. In the next two chapters the style and format of travel literature will be examined beginning with travel literature of exploration and then moving into an analysis of travel literature in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in chapter three.

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[52] *Ibid.*, p.73. Carr suggests that transculturation, miscegenation and harsh colonial rule raised questions about the "civilising" mission of the colonising process. She writes "All conspired to make the question of which was the savage and which the civilised a disturbing one to answer." Such disruptions to beliefs in the superiority of the white race caused many commentators to become concerned that the white race was degenerating.

[53] Fussell, *The Norton Book of Travel*, p.271.

[54] See parts two and three of this thesis. Part two: Claiming the land. Part three: Consolidating the connection.

Chapter Two
Australian exploration narratives as travel literature: their style and format

> I felt the ardour of my early youth, when I first sought distinction in the crowded camp and battle-field, revive, as I gave loose to my reflections and considered the nature of the enterprise. But, in comparing the feelings I then experienced with those which excited my youthful ambitions, it seemed that even war and victory, with all their glory, were far less alluring than the pursuit of researches such as these; the objects of which were to spread the light of civilization over a portion of the globe yet unknown, though rich, perhaps, in the luxuriance of uncultivated nature, and where science might accomplish new and unthought-of discoveries; while intelligent man would find a region teeming with useful vegetation, abounding with rivers, hills, and vallies, and waiting only for his enterprising spirit and improving hand to turn to account the native bounty of the soil.[1]
>
> T.L. Mitchell, *Three Expeditions,*1839.

This excerpt from Thomas Mitchell's *Three Expeditions* reveals the explorers' use of nineteenth century literary conventions. His grasp of romantic imagery added emphasis to his authority to comment as he anticipated the future success of the land he discovered. A vision of imperial conquest and beneficence is evoked by his poetic style that drew his imminent exploration of the interior of Australia into the realm of a military campaign. Mitchell was the explorer-hero who conquered and claimed the land for the empire through his explorations as surveyor-general of New South Wales.

It was during the first half of the nineteenth century that much of the coastline and inland Australia were explored. Many of the explorers undertaking expeditions were government employees assigned with official orders to survey the details of the coastline and to ascertain what lay at the heart of *terra incognita*. (Illustration 1) Indeed Australia was considered one of the last unexplored regions of the world.[2] Explorers were not only concerned about the resource potential of the land but also its scientific value. Scientific investigation was an integral part of the expeditions of for example, John Lort Stokes and Phillip Parker King who charted the coastal waters and the adjacent coastline of Australia. Others like John Oxley, Thomas Mitchell, Charles Sturt, Edward John Eyre and Augustus Gregory also had an interest in natural history but were sent into the unknown parts of inland Australia to expand knowledge about the interior of the continent. Sponsors who wanted to find new grazing land and also expand knowledge of the geography of the continent privately funded explorers like

[1] T.L. Mitchell, *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia*, Vol.1, London, 1839, p.5.
[2] Lecture by Charles Sturt at Mechanics Institute in Adelaide in 1840 published in Eyre, *Journals of Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.9.

Illustration 1

UNEXPLORED REGIONS OF MAINLAND AUSTRALIA 1824



Source: J. Bartholomew & KR Cramp, *The Australasian School Atlas*, fourth edition, Oxford University Press, London, 1959

Leichhardt and Hume and Hovell. All were complicit in contributing to British imperialism through their published accounts which emphasised opportunities for the expansion of scientific knowledge, trade, future markets and further settlement.

This chapter examines the style and format of narratives of exploration and how literary conventions were used to broadcast the explorers' imperial rhetoric. These conventions included the language used, the format of the narrative, first person narration, the development of the explorer as hero and the editing process. Compliance with these conventions resulted in a certain uniformity of style and structure in the genre which was received by their readership as authoritative and trustworthy.

To meet the demands of their readerships the tone of these accounts varied although the variations in the individual explorer's style did not mean imperial rhetoric was lost. Indeed Government authorities and scientific bodies often prescribed the literary conventions to be used in published accounts. This meant published accounts of exploration demonstrated a uniformity of style through which the genre gained referential power and authority within society at large. For example, Thomas Sprat wrote in the *History of the Royal Society* that journals of exploration demanded a literary style characterised by

> a close, naked way of speaking; positive expressions, clear senses; a native easiness: bringing all things as near the Mathematical plainness, as they can: and preferring the language of Artizans, Countrymen and Merchants, before that, of Wits or Scholars.[3]

The "close, naked" style is particularly evident in the maritime journals of the early nineteenth century, such as those of King and MacGillivray. Similarly some land explorers subscribed to the unadorned style to accentuate the empirical veracity of their account. Augustus Gregory preferred this approach as it was well-suited to the official report and guide-book nature of his accounts which chronicled daily events, discoveries and descriptions of the environment. His mode of written expression upheld the authority of the text and was testament to the explorer's accurate observations. Sometimes published journals included in the preface an apology for the plainness of the style. While apologising for the "crude and imperfect" nature of his account in his

[3] Sprat, T., cited in Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye*, p.39.

preface, Edward J. Eyre not only revealed the nature of the editing process but also the authority of the simple written style. He wrote:

> Where the principal object, however, was rather to record with accuracy than indulge in theory or conjecture, and where a simple statement of occurrences has been more attended to than the language in which they are narrated, plainness and fidelity will, it is hoped, be considered as some compensation for the absence of the embellishments of a more finished style, or a studied composition, and especially as the uncertainty attending the duration of the author's visit to England made it a matter of anxious consideration to hurry these volumes through the press as rapidly as possible.[4]

The form in which accounts of exploration were to be published often influenced the written style. Publication as a book, or even as an article for a journal like the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, allowed a much freer and more ornamented written style than publication as an official government report. The more subjective descriptions of romanticism were often associated with a more elaborate syntax, involving longer sentences with a diversity of connectives. For example Mitchell in his entry for 4th September 1846 wrote:

> To the westward of the beautifully broken rocky woody range beyond Lake Salvator, a dense smoke also arose, and continued until evening; thus adding much sublimity to the effect of a gorgeous sunset, which poured its beams through the smoke between the rocky pinnacles, as I sat drawing the scene at my camp by the lake, two miles northward of XLV.[5]

Although these differing forms of syntax have been identified in the published journals of exploration relating to Australia, both simple and complex forms could be included in the narrative structure of a single work, the author changing sentence construction to suit the situation. The concise form was regularly used for scientific descriptions, while the more involved and elaborate form was used for landscape depictions intended to arouse an emotional response in the reader. For example Mitchell described land near the Balonne River from the perspective of a scientist,

> That lagoon presented an excellent place for a cattle-station. Water could never fail, as the main stream was at hand, if even the lagoon dried up, which seemed not at all likely. *Psoralea eriantha* was abundant in the bed of the river, along with *Indigofera hirsuta*, and *Crotalaria Mitchellii*. Thermometer, at sunrise, 44˚; at noon, 99˚; at 4 P.M.; at 9, 66˚; - with wet bulb 58˚.[6]

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[4] Eyre, *Journals of Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.viii.
[5] T.L. Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition into the Interior of Tropical Australia*, London, 1848, p.297.
[6] Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition* pp.122-123.

However about a month later he waxed lyrical about the morning light on the Australian landscape. He wrote:

> An Australian morning is always charming, - amid these scenes of primaeval nature it seemed exquisitely so. The *Barita?* or *Gymnorhina*, the organ-magpie, was here represented by a much smaller bird, whose notes, resembling the softest breathings of a flute, were the only sounds that met the ear. What the stillness of even adds to such sounds in other climes, is felt more intensely in the stillness of morning in this. "The rapture of repose that's there" gratifies every sense; the perfume of the shrubs, of those even that have recently been burnt, and the tints and tones of the landscape, accord with the soft sounds. The light red tints of the *Anthistiria*, the brilliant green of the *Mimosa*, the white stems of the *Eucalyptus*, and the deep grey shadows of early morning, still slumbering about the woods, are blended and contrasted in the most pleasing harmony. The forms in the soft landscape are equally fine, from the wild fantastic tufting of the Eucalyptus, and its delicate willow-like ever-drooping leaf, to the prostrate trunks of ancient trees, - the mighty ruins of the vegetable world. Instead of autumnal tints, there is a perpetual blending of the richest hues of autumn with the most brilliant verdure of spring; while the sun's welcome rays in a winter morning, and the cool breath of the woods in a summer morning, are equally grateful concomitants of such scenes. These attach even the savage to his woods, and might well reclaim the man of crime from thoughts likely to disturb the harmony of human existence.[7]

Although the description was punctuated with scientific names, it is his elaborate prose that was prominent and used to stimulate a particular emotive response from his readers.

Explorers were well aware of the power of romantic writing and its ability to influence readers. While also demonstrating the benefit of writing with hindsight Grey used elements of romanticism to heighten the reader's appreciation of the explorer's plight when faced with starvation.

> Here, then, we seated ourselves, and, upon such scanty fare as we had, made a sparing breakfast. This, however, but very insufficiently supplied our wants; and as we sat at this little well, thus surrounded with such fairy scenery, a variety of philosophic reflections crossed our minds, and found vent in words. Nothing could be more delightfully romantic than our present position. Both as regarded danger, scenery, savages, and unknown lands, we were in precisely the situation in which Mr Cooper and other novelists delight to depict their travellers[8]

James Fenimore Cooper, an American author of romantic literature, used the American wilderness landscape as a setting to reveal the tension between civilisation and the wilds

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[7] *Ibid.*, pp.146-147.

[8] George Grey, *Journals of Two Expeditions of Discovery in North-West and Western Australia*, Vol.2, London, 1841, pp.8-9.

of America. Although the setting may have reminded Grey of one of Cooper's works, the dire predicament of the party, brought them back to reality. Grey demonstrated the tension that often existed between romantic imaginings and the harsh reality of the explorer's journey.

Invariably explorers were instructed to keep written records of their expedition which were handed to government authorities on completion. These field notebooks took a particular form. The Secretary of State for the Colonies forwarded the following instructions to Governor Macquarie in April 1816 prior to John Oxley's appointment as leader of the 1817 expedition into inland Australia. Macquarie was instructed that it was necessary for the explorer to

> keep a detailed Journal of his proceedings. In this Journal all observations and occurrences of every kind, with all their circumstances, however minute, and however familiar they may have been rendered by custom, should be carefully noted down; and it is also desirable that he should be as circumstantial as possible in describing the general appearance of the country, its surface, soil, animals, vegetables and minerals, every thing that relates to the population, the peculiar manners, customs, language, etc., of the individual natives, or the tribes of them that he may meet with.[9]

Oxley was not only instructed to maintain his account of his explorations but also directed to collect and present the journals of other members of the expedition to the governor on his return. He was to

> direct all the journals or other written documents belonging to, and curiosities collected by the several individuals composing the expedition, to be carefully sealed up with your own seal, and kept in that state until after you have made your report in writing to me at Sydney, of the result of the expedition. [10]

The purpose of these instructions is unclear but such action would have hindered early and unofficial publication of accounts of the expedition by other members of his party that may have led to action unsanctioned by the government.

Structurally, the most common feature of the published accounts of expeditions was their presentation as accurate representations of the field notebooks kept by the explorer. Typically, the published account gave a date under which were recounted the

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[9] John Oxley, *Journals of Two Expeditions into the Interior of New South Wales, Undertaken by order of the British government in the years 1817-18*, London, 1820, Appendix A, Copy of Instructions from the Right Honourable the Secretary of State, p. 2. http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/o/oxley/john/o95j/

[10] *Ibid.*, Appendix to Part 1, No.1, Instructions for conducting and leading first expeditions, p.2.

events and discoveries of that day, before moving on to the next date. The entry for a particular date could be long or short; sometimes days were missed; often a considerable amount of repetition was entailed. Some accounts however, such as Charles Sturt's, *Two Expeditions into the interior of South Australia, during the years 1828, 1829, 1830 and 1831; with observations on the soil, climate and general resources of the colony of New South Wales*, were not written under daily entries but still retained the temporal progress of the expedition by including dates and times within textual passages. For example Sturt wrote, "On the 21st we proceeded down the river on a NNW course…" and "We reached Mount Harris on the 7th of the month…".[11] Whatever the superficial variations, the published accounts almost invariably conformed to the day-by-day written style, a style that contributed to the establishment of the veracity of the text.

The day-by-day written style might appear the "natural" way in which to represent the explorers' activities. After all, published accounts were usually based on the notebooks and journals updated daily by the explorer in the field. Indeed Mitchell called attention to this daily procedure when he wrote in the preface to his account,

> The following Journals were written at the close of many a laborious day, when the energies both of mind and body were almost exhausted by long continued toil.[12]

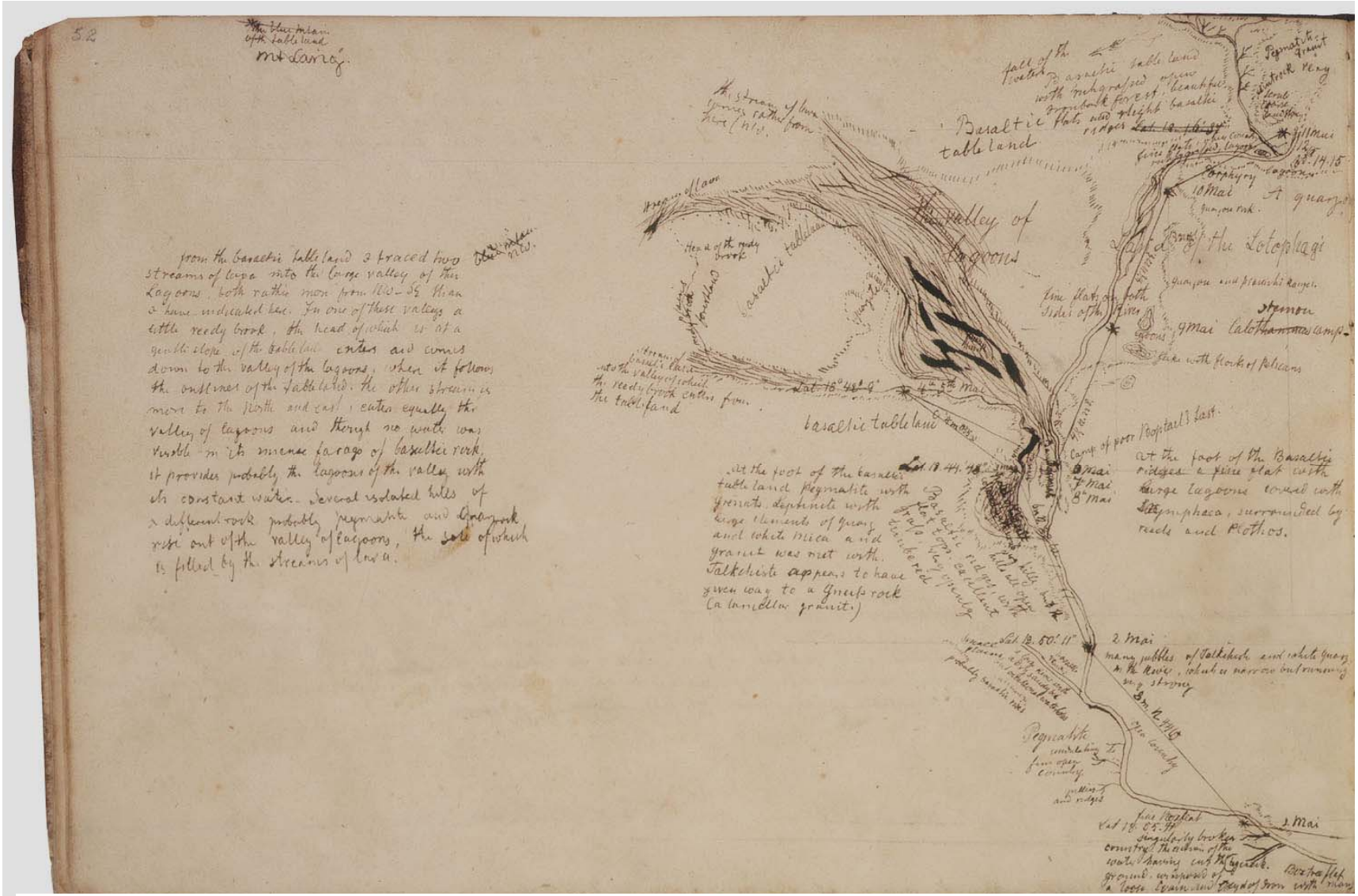
However a comparison of a page from Leichhardt's field notebook with the same date in his published account indicates the disparity between the two. (Illustrations 2 and 3) The published account was not the field notebook but merely had the superficial appearance of one through the explorer's compliance with the literary conventions for exploration and voyage literature that had been set down in the seventeenth century.[13] It was a device that served to authenticate the account, by encouraging readers to believe the text before them expressed the explorers' actual responses to the hardships they endured and the discoveries they made. The sense of authenticity created by the day-by-day record gave the accounts referential power and stimulated the reader to vicariously participate in the process of exploration.

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[11] Sturt, *Two Expeditions*, Vol 1, pp.128, 149.
[12] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, p.iii.
[13] See Adams, *Travel Literature*, and P. Edwards, *The story of the Voyage: Sea-narratives in eighteenth century England*, Cambridge, 1994.

Illustration 2

A PAGE FROM LUDWIG LEICHHARDT'S FIELD NOTEBOOK



Source: http://libapp.sl.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/spydus/RECOPT/PM/FULL1/1416/430783,1?http://image.sl.nsw.gov.au/4/c158/a403001h.jpg

Illustration 3
THE SAME DATE AND LOCATION IN LEICHHARDT'S PUBLISHED ACCOUNT

of the large valley, but that several very large ones were even on its left bank; and that all tree vegetation disappeared from its banks where it passed through a part of the valley of lagoons.

May 9.—As my bullocks were still extremely foot-sore, it was necessary that we should travel only by short stages until they recovered; consequently, the day's journey did not exceed five miles in a N.N.E. direction; and, with the exception of some ridges, upon excellent travelling ground, along the left bank of the river. The latter formed, as I have already stated, the line of separation, first, between basalt and granite, and afterwards between basalt and a quartzose rock (probably baked Psammite). The country was beautifully open and well grassed; the river forming a simple channel, without trees, well filled with water and flowing between chains of lakes and lagoons on either side; one of which was covered with flocks of ducks and pelicans, resembling islands of white lilies.

Beyond the almost treeless flats round the lagoons, Casuarinas and Callistemon re-appeared along the river.

We saw some Blackfellows in the distance, who immediately withdrew as we approached them; but the tribe, which we had met at Reedy Brook, came to the other side of the river, and had much to say; we did not, however, take any notice of them, until we had unloaded our bullocks and finished our luncheon, when I went down to them, and gave

them a horn of one of our slaughtered bullocks. Roper had saved the mane of his horse, and threw it over to them, but it seemed to frighten them very much. We inquired by signs as to the course of the river, and we understood by their answers, that it came a long way from the northward. At Reedy Brook the natives had given my companions to understand that the brook had its source not very far off to the W.N.W., by pointing at their heads, then at the brook, and then in the direction mentioned. I was therefore inclined to trust to their information about the river's source. They threw some yam-roots over to us, the plant of which we were not able to ascertain; and after that they retired.

May 10.—This morning they came again, and, when our bullocks were loaded and we were about to start, I went down to them and took a sort of leave. We had scarcely proceeded half a mile, when we missed the tinkling of our bell, and found that Charley had forgotten to put it on the horse's neck, and had left it behind. Mr. Calvert and Brown, therefore, returned to look for it, and, upon reaching the place where the camp had been made, saw the natives examining and beating every part of it; at the approach of the horsemen, however, they retired to the other side of the river; but when they turned their horses' heads, after having found the bell, the natives followed them, and threw three spears after them—whether it was out of mere wan-

Source: Ludwig Leichhardt, *Journal of an Overland Expedition in Australia*, London, 1847, pp.248-249.

Another standard feature of published explorers' accounts is that they were written in the first person. In this regard also Australian explorers' journals followed the convention of travel literature established since the seventeenth century. The use of this convention personalised the explorers' accounts as the explorer maintained the central and strategic position in the narrative. From this position the explorer selected the action narrated and wrote authoritatively about discoveries made during the journey.[14] However writing in the first person also permitted subjective interpretations of the expedition.[15] This was especially apparent in the romanticism that permeated the published accounts of Stokes and Mitchell and in the introspective style of Leichhardt.[16] Attempted objectivity in first-person narration is to be found in the rational and methodical accounts of explorers like Sturt and Gregory. Despite variations in the depth of subjectivity revealed in the published accounts, one consistent feature of this convention was the way in which it contributed to the image of the explorer as hero. This helped to popularise the literature with the reading public. Moreover, by identifying the explorer with the narrator, the first-person convention led the reader to assume only one voice in the text. This in turn supported its authenticity.[17]

Occasionally, narration changed from first person to third person. Simon Ryan suggests that the authority of the text is challenged by this change, although he acknowledges that the "temporally split narrator" did have some slight benefit in bringing objectivity to the journal.[18] This split is noticeable in Mitchell's *Journal of an Expedition into the Interior of Tropical Australia*. The text of Mitchell's journal was written in the first person, but the preface was written in the third person. He wrote:

> The Journey narrated in this work was undertaken for the extension of arrangements depending on physical geography. It completes a series of internal surveys, radiating from Sydney towards the west, the south, and the north, which have occupied the author's chief attention during the last twenty years; and, as on former occasions, it has enabled him to bring under the notice of men of science some of the earth's productions hitherto unknown…[19]

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[14] Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye*, pp.45-46
[15] Adams, *Travel Literature*, pp.166-167.
[16] See for example Ludwig Leichhardt, *Journal of an Overland Expedition in Australia, from Moreton Bay to Port Essington*, London, 1847, pp.265-268
[17] Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye*, p.46.
[18] *Ibid.*, p.48.
[19] Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, p.vi.

By writing in the third person, Mitchell detached himself from the author-explorer of the journey. However far from challenging the authority of the text, Mitchell's objective view of the expedition in the preface validated the veracity of the text and checked the subjectivity of the first person narrative. Indeed in his *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Northern Australia*, Mitchell as "the author" used the third person to make claims that he had "faithfully described what he attentively observed; neither his pencil nor his pen has been allowed to pass the bounds of truth."[20] Mitchell separated his role as the explorer who undertook the journey from his role as the author of the published account as the processes involved in exploration were different from those involved in producing the text. He revealed the demarcation of his responsibilities in the production of his account – firstly that of the explorer-hero who faithfully maintained the day-by-day field notebook and secondly the explorer-author who edited the field notebook and produced it for publication. The fact that Mitchell, the explorer was responsible for both parts provided the reader with some reassurance as to its objectivity and reliability. Contrary to Ryan's view, the occasional change in the position of the narrator within the text actually supported the authority of the account.

In contrast the third person narration by William Bland of Hume and Hovell's journey into southern Australia lacks the transparency of an account written in the first person by those who undertook the actual journey. There is something incongruous about an account presented as a day-by-day journal of the explorers' expedition but narrated in the present tense by someone who did not participate in the journey. Through his editing Bland became an obvious onlooker, articulating the course of the explorers' journey spatially and temporally. But such a position questions the immediacy and objectivity of an account written by the explorers themselves. For example the challenge to the authority of an account written in the third person was apparent in Bland's following entry:

> Friday, November 26. – They start this morning at half past five, and proceed S.W. by S. with a range of forest hills on their right hand, (to the westward) in the direction of a hill, of which they had taken the bearings yesterday.[21]

The immediacy of the explorers' traversing the landscape is lost in the intrusion of the narrator overseeing their path.

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[20] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.1., pp.iii-iv.

[21] W. Bland (ed.), *Journey of Discovery to Port Phillip, New South Wales; by Messrs W H Hovell and Hamilton Hume in 1824 and 1825*, Sydney, [1831], p.48.

Writing in the first person served to promote the significance of the author and thereby his authority and the veracity of his account. Where, as was usually the case, the author was also the leader of the expedition, the account was constructed to convey to the reader the crucial role of the leader's expertise and ingenuity in achieving a successful outcome. The accomplishments of the explorer-leader were often enlarged to superhuman proportions while the role of other members of the expedition was represented as minor or neglected entirely. The leader became a heroic figure. This is particularly noticeable when Sturt's first person narration is compared with Bland's in the third person. Both related a potentially dangerous encounter with Aborigines. In Sturt's entry, his authority as explorer-hero is apparent in the immediacy of the situation,

> They stood threatening us, and making a great noise, for a considerable time, but, finding that we took no notice of them, they, at length, became quiet. I then walked to some little distance from the party, and taking a branch in my hand, as a sign of peace, beckoned them to swim to our side of the river, which, after some time, two or three of them did. But they approached me with great caution hesitating at every step they soon, however, gained confidence, and were ultimately joined by all the males of their tribe. I gave the *first* who swam the river a tomahawk (making this a rule in order to encourage them) with which he was highly delighted. I shortly afterwards placed them all in a row and fired a gun before them: they were quite unprepared for such an explosion, and after standing stupefied and motionless for a moment or two, they simultaneously took to their heels, to our great amusement. I succeeded, however, in calling them back and they regained their confidence so much, that sixteen of them remained with us all night, but the greater number retired at sunset.[22]

In contrast, Bland related Hume's actions. The explorer-as-hero image is compromised by the intrusion of the narrator into the situation. This stimulates the reader to question the exactness of the account and challenges the authority of the explorer. Bland related:

> About two hours after this occurrence, as two of the people were employed in procuring fire-wood, in a small clump of trees, not far from the tent, two natives sprung towards them from behind the trees. These, however, on the men presenting their muskets at them, made signs of peace. Mr. Hume who was at hand now approached, when laying down his arms, and beckoning to the men to do the same, the natives followed the example, and after much conversation, but of which not a word was understood by either party, they proceeded with Mr. Hume to the tent. These people by degrees began to be a little better understood…[23]

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[22] Sturt, *Two Expeditions*, Vol.2, pp.90-91.
[23] Bland (ed.), *Journey of Discovery*, pp.69-70.

The early land explorers of Australia, such as Oxley, Mitchell, Sturt, Eyre, Leichhardt and Kennedy, were portrayed – or portrayed themselves – as romantic heroes. (Illustration 4) They encountered, and usually overcame, hardships including food and water shortages, encounters with Aborigines and the death and sickness of members of the expedition. They were the harbingers of progress through their discoveries which expanded geographic knowledge and predicted a productive future for the land. The explorer-hero journeyed from civilisation into savagery, as Eyre related in his account:

> From the crowded drawing room of civilized life, I had in a few hours been transferred to the solitude and silence of the wilds and from being but an unit in the mass of a large community, I had suddenly become isolated with regard to the world, which, so far as I was concerned, consisted now only of the few brave men who accompanied me, and who were dependant [sic] for their very existence upon the energy and perseverance and prudence with which I might conduct the task assigned to me.[24]

Eyre felt it his imperial duty to disclose the mysteries of the interior of Australia and "plant that flag which has floated proudly in all the known parts of the habitable globe, in the centre of a region as yet unknown, and unvisited save by the savage or the wild beast."[25] His action would begin the process of civilisation. But at the end of the journey the explorer drew attention to his re-engagement with those things that symbolised civilisation. Mitchell wrote:

> At length, I came upon a dusty road, presenting numerous impressions of the shoes of men and horses; and after having been so long accustomed to view ever a solitary, naked footmark with interest, the sight of a road marked with shoes, and the associations these traces revived, were worth all the toil of the journey. The numerous conveniences of social life were again at hand, and my compass was no longer required, for this road would lead me on without further care to the happy abodes of civilized men.[26]

The explorer-heroes Sturt, Mitchell and Leichhardt were educated men of taste who had an appreciation of the scientific, economic and aesthetic potential of the landscape. Sturt traced the course of rivers in the Murray-Darling system and discounted the theory of an inland sea; Mitchell was lured by the quest for an inland river that would lead to the Gulf of Carpentaria and lucrative trade with the East; while Leichhardt was questing after the advancement of personal and scientific knowledge. These quests became akin

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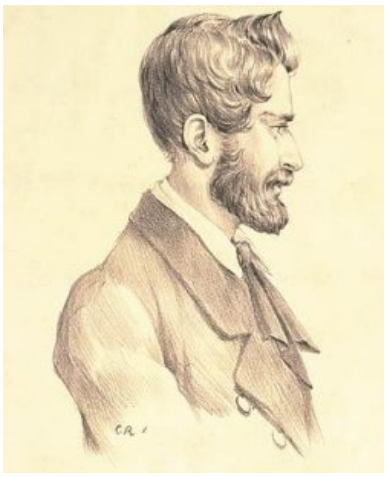
[24] Eyre, *Journals of Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.23.
[25] *Ibid*.
[26] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.341.

Illustration 4

Explorers 1813-1850



Edward John Eyre
A010346



Ludwig Leichhardt
A020090



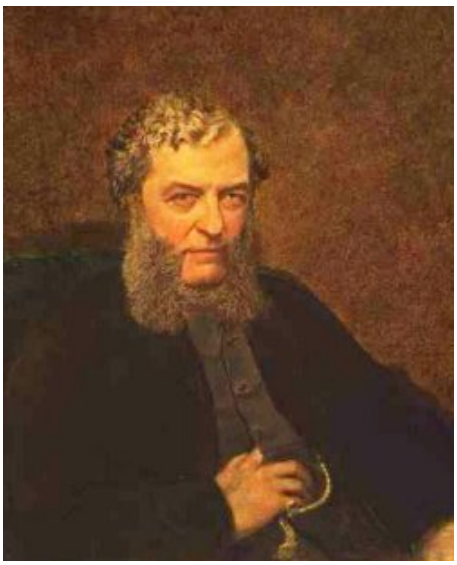
Major Thomas Mitchell
A020206



John Oxley
A020273



Charles Sturt
A020458



John Lort Stokes
A020449

to religious pilgrimages rewarded by the discovery of scientific knowledge, a large inland river or an ideal landscape suitable for the establishment of civil society.

Heroism seems to have been intrinsic to the exploration narrative. No doubt this was connected with the role of exploration in advancing the progress of the Empire and of the Colony. However there was a persistent tendency to extol the heroism not so much of the expedition party as of the individual leader, even if the leader was not the author of the published account. This tendency is well exemplified in Carron's account of the Kennedy expedition of 1848. Carron, although writing in the first person, portrayed the leader of the expedition rather than himself as hero. In his account, the explorer-leader Kennedy was faced with hardships in attempting to penetrate rainforest and mountainous terrain with heavy equipment and livestock, the eventual shortages of provisions, sickness and death of expedition members and hostility from Aborigines that eventually led to his death. As the expedition progressed the explorer-hero's ability to overcome the enormous difficulties was stretched beyond human endurance. Carron, explorer-author of the account, related how Kennedy had the ability to divert the men's minds from the hardships they encountered on a daily basis and encouraged them to hope for an improvement to their plight.[27] Kennedy's decision to leave the weaker members of the party at Weymouth Bay to await rescue by ship resulted in the survival of some members of the party, one of whom was Carron who eventually published his account of the expedition, immortalising Kennedy as explorer-hero.[28]

In other accounts the heroism of the explorer-leader was contained in his first person narrative which portrayed the explorer-leader as superhuman, as somehow better able to endure hardship than other members of the expedition. For example in 1840-41 Edward Eyre led an expedition to traverse 850 miles of unknown territory between Adelaide and King George's Sound in Western Australia. Eyre demonstrated his heroic proportions in the early stages of this journey with his firm determination "never to return unsuccessful, but either to accomplish the object I had in view, or perish in the attempt."[29] The expedition was plagued by extreme temperatures, lack of water,

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[27] W. Carron, *Narrative of an Expedition, undertaken under the Direction of the Late Mr Assistant Surveyor E.B. Kennedy for the Exploration of the Country Lying Between Rockingham Bay and Cape York*, Sydney, 1849, p.21

[28] *Ibid.*, p.67.

[29] Eyre, *Journals of Expeditions of Discovery*, Vol.1, p.300.

arduous terrain, the theft of supplies and weapons and the murder of Baxter by Aborigines. However Eyre remains the hero of the narrative as despite the obstacles placed in his way and the depletion of his party he proclaimed "at all hazards, I was determined to proceed onwards".[30] After the murder of Baxter, Eyre was left alone with Wylie, one of his Aboriginal guides whose loyalty he questioned. However Eyre the hero continued valiantly onwards and remained positive and resolute throughout the expedition despite his deprivations. The appearance of changes in the landscape encouraged him to continue and to believe that they had overcome the worst part of their journey.[31] However his difficulties continued until the couple were relieved and revived by an unexpected encounter with a French whaling ship, which "rendered us comparatively fresh and strong…and entered upon the continuation of our undertaking with a spirit, an energy, and a confidence, that we had long been strangers to".[32] Finally, on reaching the end of his journey, Eyre the hero, with the hint of some remorse at the sacrifices endured in the course of his exploration, reflected:

> For a moment I stood gazing at the town below me – that goal I had so long looked forward to, had so laboriously toiled to attain, was at last before me. A thousand confused images and reflections crowded through my mind, and the events of the past year were recalled in rapid succession. The contrast between the circumstances under which I had commenced and terminated my labours stood in strong relief before me.[33]

But however much the published accounts appeared authentic, they had almost invariably been edited substantially. Editing may have been necessary to transform brief and monotonous ships' logs and field notebooks into texts that would engage and inform the reader. Editors claimed that this was done without endangering the veracity of the account. Yet considerable pains were taken to make the published version resemble a real field journal. They were usually written in the first person and followed the course of the expedition temporally and spatially. For example Leichhardt's published account of his field notebook appeared as Leichhardt's narration of his journey from Moreton Bay to Port Essington, a distance of 3,000 miles, which took him more than twelve months.

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[30] *Ibid*., p.354.
[31] *Ibid*., Vol.2, p.18.
[32] *Ibid.*, p.79.
[33] *Ibid.*, pp.108-109.

Some explorers' journals appear to have been subjected to relatively little editorial intervention or elaboration prior to publication. The editor of A.C. Gregory's journals commended the explorer's journal and did not deem it "desirable to alter or amend the impressions or views recorded at the time, but simply reproduce the journals as originally compiled."[34] While the editor's praise of the text gave it reliability, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to establish the authenticity of the editor's claim. However the published account certainly has all the monotony of a genuine field notebook.

The editing process frequently resulted in delayed publication. William Bland, the editor of Messrs. W.H. Hovell and Hamilton Hume's *Journey of Discovery to Port Phillip New South Wales by Messrs. W.H. Hovell and Hamilton Hume: in 1824 and 1825* gave three reasons for the delay in publishing the explorers' account until 1837. Firstly the explorers thought their journey would not be of interest to the public and they had to be persuaded to publish their account; secondly the editor became ill for several months; and thirdly the printer could not obtain paper to print the book in the colony.[35] Edward Eyre was delayed in offering his account of his expedition to the public as he was assigned pressing government duties.[36] George Grey was similarly delayed.[37] In another example Captain P.P. King, in the preface to his *Narrative of a Survey of the Intertropical and Western Coast of Australia* performed between the years 1818 and 1822, stated:

> Since the return of the Expedition, my time has been occupied in arranging the narrative, and divesting it of such parts as were neither calculated to amuse the general reader, nor to give information to the navigator; but this has been so much impeded by the more important employment of constructing the Charts of the Survey, as to defer until the present season the publication of the events of a voyage that was completed nearly three years ago.[38]

In many instances appendices and additional material were added to the published accounts. These could be detailed maps of the expedition route or scientific reports on specimens collected during the expedition or lengthy discourses on aspects of the journey designed to elaborate journal entries and maintain the interest of the reader.

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[34] A.C. & F.T. Gregory, *Journals of Australian Explorations*, Brisbane, 1884, preface.
[35] Bland, (ed.), *Journal of Discovery;* p.i.
[36] Eyre, *Journals of Expeditions*, Vol.1, p. iii.
[37] Grey, *Journals of Two Expeditions*, Vol.1, pp.v-vi.
[38] Captain P.P. King, *Narrative of a Survey of the Intertropical and Western Coasts of Australia performed between the years 1818 and 1822*, Vol.1, London, 1827, p.vii.

This material supported the explorers' accounts and added force to their interpretations. Charles Sturt in the preface to his *Narrative of an Expedition into Central Australia* acknowledged the need to include background information about Australia's progress to the date of publication of his account. The provision of this information would not only put the reader "in possession of all the facts, with which I myself am acquainted, as to the character of those portions of it, which had been explored, before I commenced my recent labours" but it also secured the reader's interest in his narrative and enabled the reader "to judge whether the conclusions at which I arrived, and upon which I acted, were such as past experience ought to have led me to adopt."[39] To another published account by John Oxley a report by the Governor of his tour over the Blue Mountains in 1815 was appended.[40]

Sometimes these discourses, which were added during the editing process, were of a scientific nature written by experts in natural history, such as Sir William Hooker, Reverend W.B. Clarke, and Captain P.P. King.[41] In Leichhardt's account of the Burdekin region, a detailed description of the geology by Reverend W.B. Clarke was included in the published journal as a footnote to the normal daily entry.[42] The published accounts of the expeditions generally contained acknowledgments of the contributions of these authorities, either in the preface or in the body of the work.[43] Leichhardt expressed his thanks to Captain P.P. King for his editing the account, to S.A. Perry, Deputy Surveyor General at the time, for drafting the maps, and to Reverend W.B. Clarke for his scientific assistance.[44] These discussions catered to an educated reading public interested in scientific knowledge and added to the authority of the account. The continuity of the narrative was not lost however, as these discourses were often included under the cover of the usual daily record or as footnotes.

Normally editorial intervention was meant to be unobtrusive, to carry the impression that the published journal accurately mirrored the explorers' experiences as they

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[39] Captain Charles Sturt, *Narrative of an Expedition into Central Australia, performed under the authority of Her Majesty's Government during the years 1844, 5, and 6 together with a notice of the province of South Australia in 1847*, Vol 1, London, 1849, pp.i-ii.
[40] Oxley, *Journals of Two Expeditions*, Part 1, Appendix 2, pp.3-6.
[41] Adams, *Travel Literature*, pp.43-44 points out that this was standard practice in contemporary travel literature.
[42] Leichhardt, *Journal of an Overland Expedition*, pp.212-213.
[43] Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, p.vi. Leichhardt, *Journal of an Overland Expedition*, pp.v-vi.
[44] Leichhardt, *Journal of an Overland Expedition*, pp.v-vi.

happened. However, sometimes passages were interpolated that pre-empted things to come even though at that particular point in time they could have no idea what was going to happen. These passages reinforce the fact that although structured as a continuous daily account of the expedition, published accounts were compiled after the event with the benefit of hindsight. The interpolated passages allowed explorers to accentuate and elaborate on certain points with the text. An example is Leichhardt's journal entry for the 16 January 1845 when his party was at the Mackenzie River in Central Queensland:

> Murphy shot an Ostioglossum, a Malacopterygious fish, about three feet long, with very large scales, each scale having a pink spot. We afterwards found this fish in the waters flowing into the Gulf of Carpentaria; both on its eastern and western sides; and, according to the natives of Port Essington, to whom I shewed the dried specimen, it is also found in the permanent waterholes of the Coburg Peninsula.[45]

In a similar manner Mitchell in his entry for 8 May 1846 stated:

> These trees were all so alike in general form that I was convinced this was their character, and not a *lusus naturae*. [A still more remarkable specimen of this tree was found by Mr Kennedy in the apex of a basaltic peak, in the kind of gap of the range through which we passed on the 15th of May, and of which he made the accompanying drawing.][46]

Mitchell included Kennedy's discovery of an exceptional specimen of the same species of tree a week later to emphasise the scientific peculiarity of the tree. Here the future event is contained in parenthesis to distinguish it from the rest of the daily record. Gregory in his account of the North Australian Expedition described the geology of the Gilbert River region in terms of its mineral resources. The description was followed by a statement that disrupted the usual daily account of the journey by pointing out that it was "in this locality that the Gilbert Gold Field was afterwards discovered".[47]

In *The Cartographic Eye*, Ryan states that retrospective writing increases the likelihood of "memory error" occurring in the interpretation of the account.[48] He also suggests that the authority of the text is challenged by a split in the voices of the explorer and the narrator when events are recollected and inserted in the text at a later date.[49] However, the occasional insertion of comments with the benefit of hindsight probably did more to

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[45] *Ibid*., pp.111-112.
[46] Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, pp.153-154.
[47] Gregory, *Journals of Australian Explorations*, p.179.
[48] Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye*, p.49.
[49] *Ibid.*, p.48.

support than to challenge the veracity of the account. It allowed the writer to emphasise particular episodes in the text and to validate their observations. Although somewhat incongruous in a work written as a daily record of events, such interpolations were part of the normal editing process of the explorer's journal, which was aimed at creating a readable and informative account of the expedition.

Conclusion

By the early nineteenth century Australia remained one of last regions of the world to be investigated by explorers in the service of empire. Accounts of geographic and scientific exploration, which focused on the discovery and description of landscape not formerly catalogued by Europeans, predominated. These accounts were informative and emphasised the land's possibilities for development as part of the British Empire. They contained scientific observations and adventure, which entertained readers and informed them of the novelties to be found in the young colony. In presenting the narratives of their journeys for publication these explorers adhered to a long-established literary tradition set down for explorers in earlier times. Typically, published accounts of exploration were presented as first person narrations of daily activities undertaken during the course of the expedition and although the texts were edited to create greater audience interest and the style of prose of the individual explorer varied, they came to be considered reliable and factual by readers. It was their conformity to the literary conventions for exploration narratives together with image of the heroic explorer that maintained and supported the authenticity of the accounts and the explorer's authority to comment. These literary conventions underpinned much of the explorers' imperial rhetoric which claimed the land for the Empire.

Chapter Three
Travel literature of Australia 1850-1914: its nature, style and forms

> So far as I am aware, a woman has not yet written a book on Australia. Those which have appeared present the man's point of view; consequently, the position of women in the country which pioneered them into citizenship has hardly been touched upon, much less properly set forth in its vital bearing on national life. It is therefore, my purpose to deal more especially with the women of this country, and what they are doing with the enlarged powers which have been bestowed upon them.[1]
>
> Jessie Ackermann, *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*, 1913.

In this epigraph the American evangelist and feminist Jessie Ackermann highlights one of the fundamental differences in travel writing by men and women. It was that men and women travellers emphasised different subject matter in the composition of their narratives, a factor that often resulted in a different tone in the text. However she also revealed another facet of women's travel writing – the adoption of the masculine voice by some women travellers in their narratives. By the late nineteenth century women as well as men were publishing accounts of travel and while subtle differences are sometimes discernible in the texts, their accounts are surprisingly similar as both wrote from a position of authority imbued with imperial rhetoric. In the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the style and format of the published accounts changed to some extent. It tended not to be presented in the journal format that recorded the day's activities but related the travellers' experiences under specific chapter themes, that emphasised a place or feature of Australian society. Despite the loss of day-by-day recording, most travellers continued to write in the first person. Notwithstanding these changes and the subtle differences in the travel writing by men and women travellers, travellers maintained their authority to comment on Australia and Australians. As with the literature of exploration the publication of their work within the genre of travel literature gave their texts referential power and confirmed the reliability of their observations.

This chapter examines travel writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, discussing the nature of travel literature, as well as its style and forms. In particular it

[1] Jessie Ackermann, *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*, London, 1913, pp.ix-x.

explores travel literature by male and female travellers pointing to the similarities and subtle differences.

By the 1850s the means of travel to Australia had improved considerably. Thus the numbers of travellers also increased. As more travellers came to Australia so the amount of travel literature on Australia increased. These accounts took varied forms, from accounts of journeys to specific locations to more generalised observations of Australia. However by the 1850s the accounts were more didactic as male and female travel writers were less concerned with adventure and the picturesque and more employed in describing Australia's progress, its society and resource development within the imperial context. This is not to say that adventure and descriptive passages were absent but more that the informative nature of the literature dominated. The instructive tone of these accounts remained prominent in accounts up to World War I and the "subjectivity" and imaginative approach of the traveller, distinguished by Carr as a feature of British travel writing during the period was less apparent.[2] Adventure does reappear in the early twentieth century texts. It is indicated by the shift in emphasis from urban travel to outback journeys, often using unconventional means, which allowed the traveller to describe new and different places in an exciting and entertaining manner.

The nature of travel writing

The travel literature of Australia is wide-ranging but can be divided into a number of focal areas that developed in parallel or are combined in their narrative structure. These can be categorised as exploration, adventure, emigration and progress. Exploration as travel literature has already been discussed in the previous chapter and while it continued into the latter part of the nineteenth century the accounts tended to be less romantic in tone and more utilitarian in approach to the landscape.

For some travellers the lure of the unknown, the promise of riches or social advancement prompted a desire to travel. Travel to Australia satisfied the need to escape from normal everyday life to a different situation that promised adventure. Episodes of heroism and

[2] Carr, "Modernism and travel", p.74

adventure are present in accounts of exploration, but they were also present in the literature of the gold rushes and the literature of the outback. The traveller's narrative followed a traditional pattern of romance literature with three stages, the traveller-hero's departure and call to adventure, the initiation where the traveller is faced with trials and has to struggle to overcome difficulties to survive and finally the traveller's return having conquered two worlds.[3] Gold rush literature was full of adventure, from the tension of sea travel to distant shores to the excitement on the goldfields. In his account of five years' adventures on the Victorian goldfields, Henry Brown related his mishaps and exciting experiences, including descriptions of camping out in the bush, getting lost and dangerous encounters with bushrangers.[4] Brown's journey begins with his decision to go to the Victorian goldfields. Once on the ship his adventures begin and continue throughout his five years in Australia. During his travels and experiences Brown gains understanding of Australia and Australians that reformed his previously held beliefs about Indigenous people and the working class. Such literature portrayed Australia as an outpost of empire, a land of adventure, where self-appraisal and advancement were possible.

From the 1890s the outback became a focus for some travel literature. Outback travels were exciting as they offered a different environment which stimulated the reader's interest. It was subject matter that was unique to Australia; something that promoted the vastness of Australia's potential but also fostered a distinctive Australian identity within the empire. Some accounts developed a comparison between urban and rural life in Australia. Gilbert Parker divided his account into urban and rural Australia while Francis Adams separated his accounts into descriptions of the *Pacific Slope* and the *Eastern Interior*. In both, the outback provided a distinctive focus, dominating discussion of urban life. It was praise for the ability of Australians living in the outback to endure flood and drought that shines through in their accounts. Other travel writers discussed the condition of Australian Aborigines, both in an urban setting and in the bush. Travellers maintained some interest in Aboriginal culture particularly those found in the outback where they had been less seriously affected by European contact. Francis Birtles undertook a journey by bicycle

[3] Kathryn Hume, *Romance: A Perdurable Pattern*, 1974, cited in Adams, *Travel Literature*, p.150
[4] Henry Brown, *Victoria, as I found it, during five years of adventure*, London, 1862.

through the outback from Sydney to the Gulf of Carpentaria and back through central Australia. (Illustration 5) His adventures in the outback are illustrated by his narrative of his experiences of bushfire, encounters with hostile Aborigines and snakes as well as the hardships of life in the bush and the sense of loneliness indicative of outback travel.[5] Some literature emphasised Australia's economic progress particularly its resource development as well as adventure. Kilroy Harris travelled from Newcastle to South Australia via the Gippsland Forests, the Western District and crossed the "Ninety Mile Desert" to Adelaide. (Illustration 6) In his account Harris described how Australians lived in the bush and the developments that had occurred since European settlement.[6] However there is a suggestion that Harris considered his journey heroic and exciting as he subheaded his account "being an account of the longest Overlanding journey ever attempted in Australia with a single horse".[7]

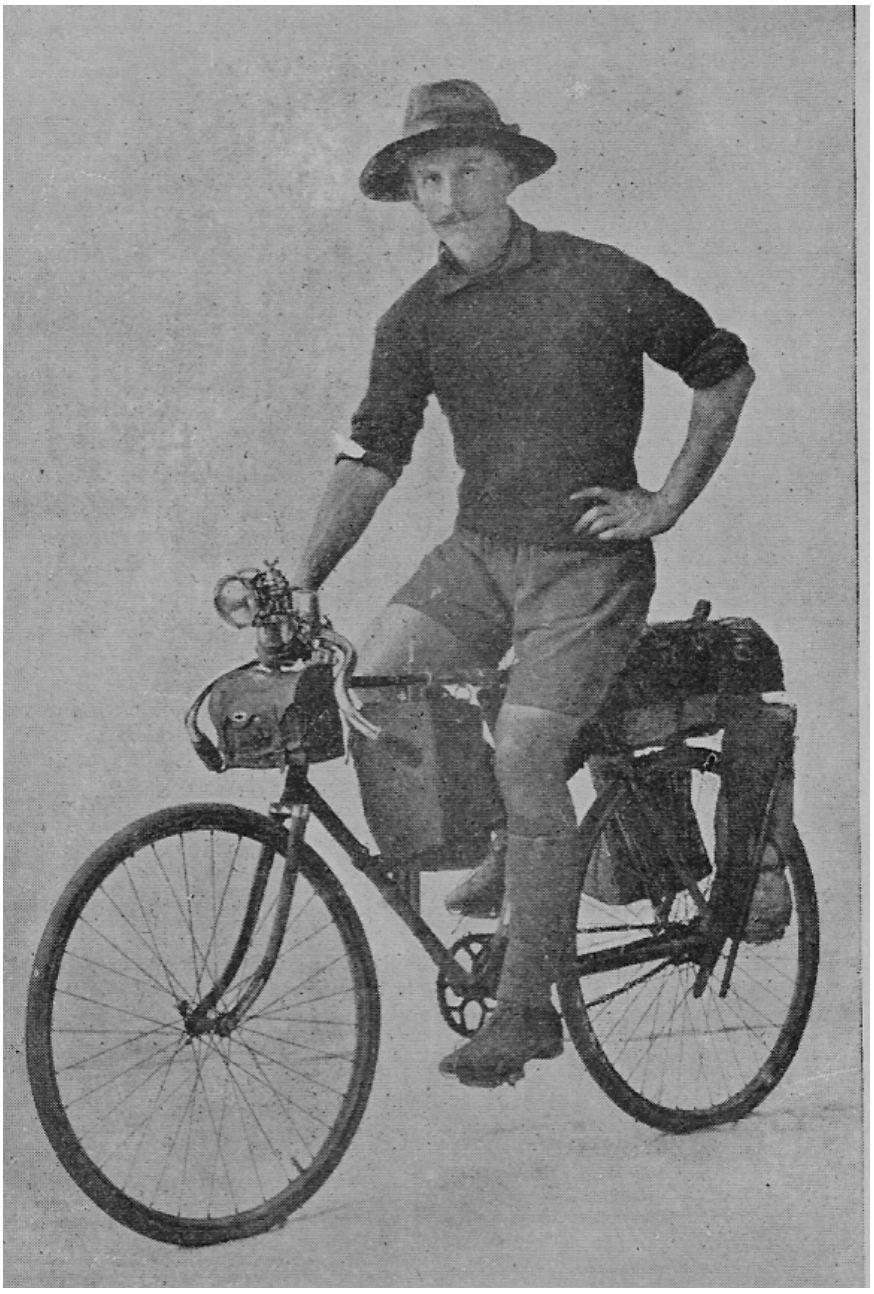
Roy Bridges contends that emigration was an essential part of the spread of British capitalist influence. Emigration created markets for manufactured goods and as a result of the need for further sources of raw materials and new markets world trade increased. Further investment in the wider world was stimulated by the expansion of railways, telegraph and shipping to and within colonial possessions.[8] Many travel accounts indirectly encouraged migration through their exciting narratives while others were more direct in their support and openly set out advice to potential migrants. Travel accounts incorporated advice for intending emigrants in the form of appendices or in chapters in the text. Ellen Clacy in *A Lady's visit to the Victorian Gold Diggings*, combined both explicit and veiled approaches and concluded her adventure narrative of life on the goldfields with an appendix entitled *Who should emigrate?*. Entertainment was contained in her escapades whilst travelling through the Victorian goldfields and in her adventures with bushrangers in the Australian bush. In the mid-nineteenth century such exploits encouraged those with a

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[5] Francis Birtles, *Lonely Lands: through the heart of Australia*, Sydney, 1909.
[6] Captain Walter Kilroy Harris, *Outback in Australia, or three Australian Overlanders*, fourth edition, London, 1924.
[7] *Ibid.*, title page.
[8] Roy Bridges, "Exploration and travel outside Europe" 1720-1914, in Hulme & Youngs, *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, p.60.

Illustration 5

Francis E. Birtles



Source: Francis E. Birtles, *Lonely Lands: Through the Heart of Australia*, N.S.W. Bookstall Co., 1909, facing p.10.

Illustration 6

Captain Walter Kilroy Harris



Source: Captain Walter Kilroy Harris, *Outback in Australia or Three Australian Overlanders*, fourth edition, The Colonizer, London, 1924, facing title page.

sense of adventure to journey to Australian and thereby alleviate Britain's failing ability to support an increasingly redundant population. Clacy herself suggests that

> any book treating of Australia would be sadly deficient were a subject of such universal interest to be left unnoticed; and where there are so many of various capabilities, means and dispositions, in need of guidance and advice as to the advantage of their emigrating...[9]

Indeed, Dr John Shaw stated in his account published in 1858, that not to include reference to emigration in accounts of travel was to omit "one of the most striking, important, and characteristic features of the last hundred years".[10] He considered emigration a means of providing homes for Britain's increasing and poverty-stricken population as well as a way of creating a solid foundation for a strong and loyal British empire.[11] Often the encouragement was subtler, hidden within a narrative of Australian progress and potential.

Finally, there is the greater body of travel literature which chronicles Australia's progress and potential. Many travel writers appreciated the Australian environment in terms of its potential to progress. While earlier travel literature had emphasised the societal and cultural imperatives of progress, the idea that society progressed through stages of development from savagery to civilisation, by 1850 published accounts displayed a more utilitarian notion of progress. Travellers catalogued the resources of the landscape in an attempt to encourage further development. Such literature demonstrated Australia's contribution to the Empire. These accounts form two types; one, which incorporates the narrative into the chronicle of the traveller's journey from colony to colony, and the other, where the journey is unspoken. While some commentators may argue that the latter form does not constitute travel literature, as the journey is not explicit in the text, it cannot be ignored as in order to comment at all, the writer had to undertake some form of travel. The travellers' journeys within Australia are implied in the variety of places and topics discussed. Such texts usually follow chapter headings on varying subjects rather than following the course of the journey. For example, E.C. Buley focused his account on elements of Australian life. His chapters had specific themes with titles such as "On the Wallaby Track", "Industrial Pioneers", "The Australian at Play", "A White Australia", and

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[9] Mrs Charles Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold Diggings of Australia in 1852-53*, 1963, p.147.
[10] Dr John Shaw, *A Gallop to the Antipodes, returning overland through India*, London, 1858, p.10.
[11] *Ibid*., p.11.

so on. While Buley referred to specific locations like the Riverina and Kalgoorlie in his analysis he does not discuss the process of travelling from one place to another.[12]

Barbara Korte notes that commentators on travel literature have characterised travel writing as heterogeneous in form and content, often combining poetry, science and anecdotes in the one account. However she suggests there is one feature that is common to the genre and that is, travel accounts "tell the story of a journey".[13] While this is generally the case as most travel writers reproduce the chronology of their journeys in their narrative, it does not apply to those accounts where the progress of the journey is not foregrounded but implied. Such is the case in some accounts of Australia covered in this thesis. The account becomes "object-orientated", that is, Australia and Australians are the focus of the traveller's concern and the journey to Australia and throughout Australia is inferred through changes in textual focus. These accounts take a form not unlike guidebooks for intending travellers emphasising the social, political and economic conditions in Australia. Alfred Buchanan asserted that his approach was more direct and reliable than those by travellers who repeated their journey in an often-fictional narrative. He maintained

> The object of a novel is, as a general rule to reflect life and temperament in a selected environment. For various reasons it has become the fashion to achieve this end by indirect means. An author goes to Italy, and writes a book about Italy. He tells us the things about Italy, and the people of Italy, that we want to know; but in order to discover these things we have to read many pages dealing with imaginary persons, for whose adventures we may or may not care, and in whose personality we may or may not believe.[14]

Buchanan, who was an Australian resident, considered his impressions held more authority than those travellers who spent limited periods of time travelling within a defined country. Other accounts also focused on the traveller's impressions of Australia rather than their journey. Some published accounts like that of R.W. Dale were compilations of earlier articles written for newspapers and journals.[15]

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[12] E.C. Buley, *Australian Life in Town and Country*, London, 1905.
[13] Korte, *English Travel Writing*, p.9.
[14] Alfred Buchanan, *The Real Australia*, London, 1907, p.v.
[15] Reverend R.W. Dale LLD, *Impressions of Australia*, London, 1889.

Style and format

Travel writers claimed objectivity in the preface to their accounts, a claim which helped confirm their authority to comment. Josiah Hughes' preface to *Australia Revisited in 1890* emphasised the objective nature of his account. His account, he wrote, was "from an independent source, uninfluenced by party or self interest".[16] However travel literature was never objective. The writer's narrative was constructed from observations made during the course of his/her journey, and was influenced by the importance of meeting the reader's expectations and by the traveller's own knowledge and belief systems. In this way imperial rhetoric coloured a traveller's view of Australia and Australians. Other travel writers justified their observations and the shortcomings of their accounts. Michael Davitt commented that his account was constrained by the temporal restrictions of his journey.

> The following pages are an outcome of a recent seven months' journey through the seven Australasian colonies. The limited time occupied in the tour affirms, of course, the equally limited means afforded for learning enough of these countries to write with authority upon their populations, resources, politics, and progress. Nothing is claimed, however, by the author beyond an opportunity of gratifying a desire to make these distant and intensely interesting lands a little better known to the public of Great Britain and Ireland than they are at present.[17]

Barbara Korte asserts that the nature of travel writing is defined in the imbalance between accounts which are explorer/traveller centred ("subject-orientated") and those where the journey's object take prominence ("object-orientated"). Those that are "object-orientated" are accounts that are concerned specifically with conveying information and in which the travel writer's personal sentiments are backgrounded. For example, accounts of exploration and scientific observation are "object-orientated" as their main emphasis is on relating the details of geographic discoveries and scientific curiosities with generally lesser stress placed on the explorer's or naturalist's personal thoughts and feelings. The other form is "subject-orientated" and brings to the fore the traveller's feelings in his/her encounter with a different environment. These include first person narratives of journeys that incorporate the travel writer's personal experiences, in an often-entertaining manner.[18] For example, Ellen Clacy's account was subject-orientated; it was written as a first person

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[16] Josiah Hughes, *Australia Revisited in 1890*, London, preface.
[17] Michael Davitt, *Life and Progress in Australasia*, 1898, preface.
[18] Korte, *English Travel Writing*, p.6.

narrative of her experiences on the goldfields. In contrast, E.C. Buley's published account was object-orientated; it was a detached account of Australia and Australians without reference to his own experience in travelling. Korte's development of subject-orientated and object-orientated travel writing is pertinent to the analysis of travel literature during the period of this thesis. Much of the literature researched is "object-orientated", while "subject-orientated" texts form only a minor body of work. However in both approaches the traveller confirms his/her authority through literary conventions.

While travel accounts are based upon journeys that have actually occurred one of the peculiar features of travel writing is its potential for deception. Published accounts were reconstructions of the actual journey, written from notes and diaries kept during the course of the trip. In many accounts, the journey was embroidered or edited before publication to achieve a more authoritative and interesting work. Sometimes dialogue based upon conversation held during the course of the journey was added to the narrative. However these related conversations were the result of the traveller's subjective impressions of the encounter as there was little possibility that the conversation could be remembered exactly. The inclusion of dialogue tends to link the account more closely to the genre of fiction, however it also has the effect of adding animation to an otherwise tedious and distanced report. St Michael Podmore admits in his preface that he had "adopted a conversational style, and his book teems with stories of incident and adventure."[19] (Illustration 7) He included interviews with local settlers he met on his travels throughout Australia.[20] While, on one level of interpretation, the incorporation of direct speech gave his account authenticity, on another it exposed the constructed and fictional nature of travel writing; that is, has the author related the conversation as it actually occurred or has he edited it or written it from memory?

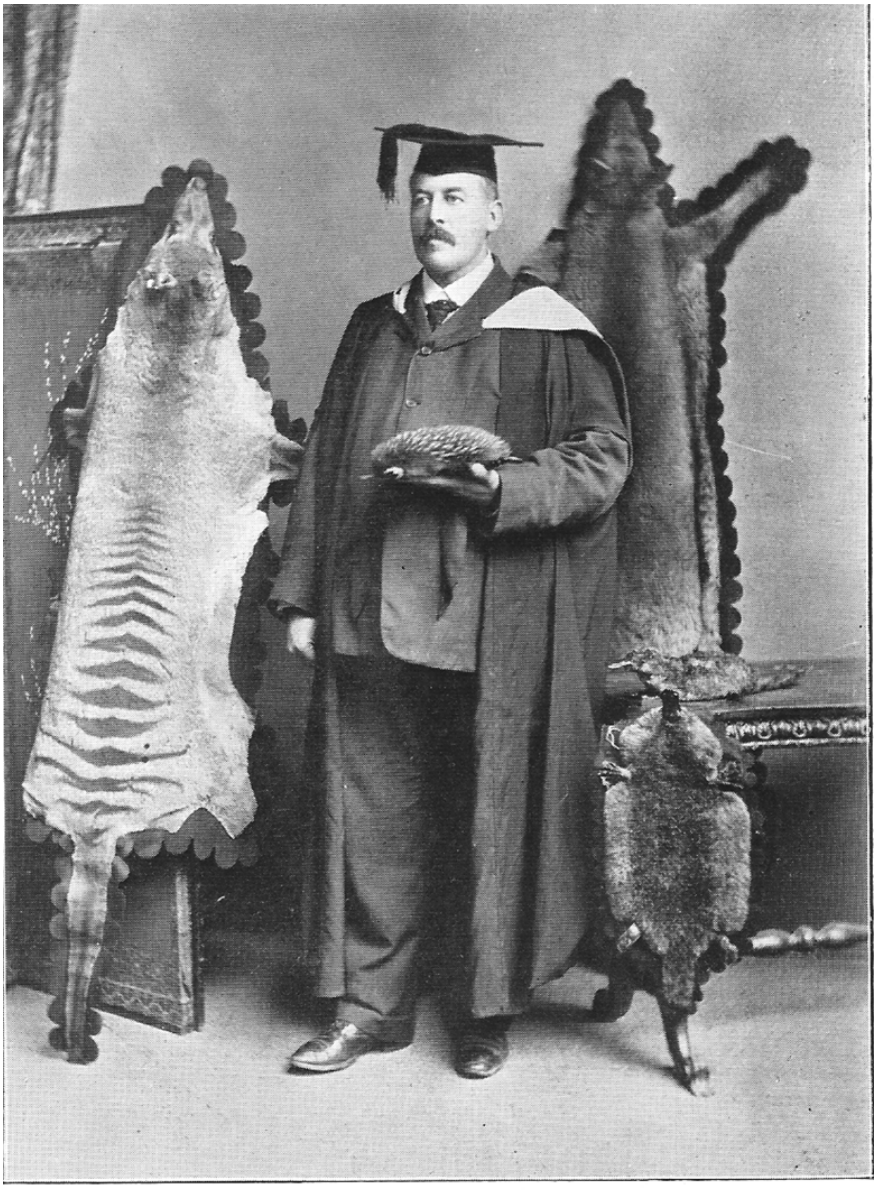
Overwhelmingly travel writers stress the authenticity of their accounts. For example, Reverend John Morison defended the reliability of his account, stating:

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[19] St Michael Podmore, *Rambles and Adventures in Australasia, Canada, India, etc.*, London, 1909, preface.
[20] See for example Podmore, *Rambles and Adventures*, pp.18-20.

Illustration 7

St Michael Podmore



THE AUTHOR LECTURING ON THE TASMANIAN FAUNA.
[ECIDNA, PLATYPUS, TASMANIAN WOLF, ETC.]

Source: St. Michael Podmore, *Rambles and Adventures in Australasia, Canada, India, etc.*, L. Upcott Gill, London, 1909, facing p.90.

> Not the least of writer's objects in the following chapters is to give a trustworthy view of life and manners, for the guidance of those who may be interested in the subject.[21]

The use of the first person combined the traveller and narrator and gave the account the veracity of autobiography. This may be extended so that the traveller, narrator and the author of the account are one. The reader assumed that the persona disclosed in the texts was the same as the traveller. However, as had been previously mentioned these accounts are reconstructions of the journey, and just as the travel writer edited and omitted parts of his or her journey, so too the travel writer constructed his or her identity for the reader. For example Francis Birtles and Kilroy Harris constructed themselves as the heroes of their narratives of outback adventure, while other travellers, like James Froude, created the persona of the authoritative intellectual.

Sometimes the narrator/traveller distanced himself/herself from the journey to retain a sense of objectivity in the account. Gilbert Parker shifted between first person narration and third person and distanced himself from discussions of sensitive issues. Such literary manoeuvres gave his account authenticity. Sometimes instead of using "I" he refers to himself as "the traveller", "enthusiastic spectator", or "commissioned traveller"; at other times he utilised the strategy of direct speech to relate local concerns which are discussed by representative individuals who are given fictional names. For example, he related a discussion on water conservation and irrigation between squatters, members of mining and squatting companies and a bookkeeper.[22] Such methods distanced the traveller/narrator from the narrative and suggested the author's objectivity. Parker further asserted his objectivity in his prologue, by referring to the fact that he was different to the "casual traveller" who "thinks it pleasanter to write praise than history" because he bluntly discussed the effects of drought and floods in Australia.[23]

In referring to the writing process the traveller asserted the veracity of the account. Gilbert Parker led the reader to believe that

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[21] A Clergyman [John Morison], *Australia as it is or Facts and Features, Sketches and Incidents of Australia and Australian Life, with Notices of New Zealand,* Melbourne, 1967, (1867), p.2.
[22] Gilbert Parker, *Round the Compass in Australia,* London, 1892, pp.61-63.
[23] *Ibid*., p.5.

> These words are written en route and they are begun at one point and finished at another 500 miles away perhaps. And so it is, that what is recorded above, has been carried in my pocket through many new districts, since it first ran from the pen.[24]

Similarly, Anthony Trollope asserted "I will, too, take the reader into my full confidence, and let him know that my book has been written as I went on. I do not know that I could have done my task other."[25] While such affirmations stress the reliability of the traveller's observations as the possibility of error of recollection was removed, it is known that Trollope edited his manuscript to a more entertaining version for publication.

Differences between men's and women's travel writing

By mid-nineteenth century more women travellers were publishing accounts of their travels in Australia. A comparison of accounts by male and female travellers reveals some underlying differences. Elizabeth Rigby in the *Quarterly Review* in 1845 noted the stylistic differences between the two. Rigby was criticising recent published accounts of travel by women travellers and made some comparison with accounts by male travellers. In the tone of the texts she noticed that the

> gentleman's [was] either dull and matter-of-fact, or off-hand and superficial, with a heavy disquisition where we look for a light touch, or a foolish pun where we expect a reverential sentiment, either requiring too much trouble of the reader, or showing too much carelessness in the writer – and the lady's – all ease, animation, vivacity, with the tact to dwell upon what you most want to know.[26]

Returning to their differing emphasises, she contended that women know more about human nature while men are concerned with public life. She maintained that both observations are equally valuable, as to understand the public life of a country, knowledge of its private life must be known. Rigby considered that good travel literature should combine both views by supplying "each other's deficiencies, and correct[ing] each other's errors, purely for the good of the public".[27]

In his two-volume work *North America* published in 1862 Anthony Trollope reflected upon his mother's published account of America, *Domestic Manners of the Americans,* a very

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[24] *Ibid.*, p.230.
[25] A. Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, eds. P.D. Edwards, & R.B. Joyce, St Lucia, 1967, (1873), p.64.
[26] [Elizabeth Rigby], "Lady Travellers", *Quarterly Review*, Vol.76, June & September, 1845, p.99-100.
[27] *Ibid.*, p.99.

successful travel work, published thirty years earlier. In his criticism he conceded an innate difference between men and women's travel writing. He maintained that his mother "saw with a woman's keen eye and described with a woman's light but graphic pen, the social defects and absurdities which our near relatives had adopted into their domestic life". However while not belittling the value of her work he declared that

> she did not regard it as a part of her work to dilate on the nature and operation of those political arrangements which had produced the social absurdities which she saw, or to explain that though such absurdities were the natural result of those arrangements in their newness, the defects would certainly pass away, while the political arrangements, if good would remain. Such a work is fitter for a man than for a woman.[28]

Harriet Clark reiterated this sentiment when noting the differing emphasis of men and women travellers in the 1890s.(Illustration 8) Clark observed:

> When a man and a woman are journeying "around the World" together they are likely to see all things through different glasses. The man may, perhaps, have a clearer vision and a wider outlook; but the woman, with more leisure, and with more opportunities in some directions because she is a woman, will notice little things which have escaped the larger vision, and yet are none the less interesting.[29]

By the time the Clarks were publishing their account, such views were generally accepted.

In the literature on Australia, male travel writers did tend to concentrate on the political, economic and administrative aspects of the country, while women writers were more concerned with describing the detail of people's lives and surroundings. However it is not intended to imply that women travellers did not discuss political, economic or administrative matters or that men did not make observations about private life.[30] It was more a matter of the degree of detail contained in their accounts, women writing at length on domestic life and men comprehensively on political issues, as was the accepted practice.

Mary Louise Pratt contends that the emphasis in women's travel writing on domestic settings was not just a matter of different spheres of interest or expertise but also of

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[28] Anthony Trollope, *North America* (2 vols), 1862 cited in Korte, (trans Catherine Matthias), *English Travel Writing*, p.114.

[29] Harriet Clark, *Glimpses of Life in Far-off Lands, as seen through a Woman's eyes*, in Francis Clark, *Our Journey around the World*, Hartford, 1895, p.593.

[30] See for example Mae Vivienne, *Travels in Western Australia, being a description of the various cities and towns , goldfields, and agricultural districts of that State*, Carlisle, 1993, (1901).

Illustration 8



Source: Rev Francis E. Clark, *Our Journey around the World*, A.D. Worthington & Co. Publishers, Hartford, 1895, facing p. 593.

"differing modes of constituting knowledge and subjectivity". Writing with reference to two women travellers in South America she asserts,

> If the men's job was to collect and possess everything else, these women travelers sought first and foremost to collect and possess themselves. Their territorial claim was to private space, a personal, room-sized empire. From these private seats of selfhood, Graham and Tristan depict themselves emerging to explore the world in circular expeditions that take them out into the public and new, then back to the familiar and enclosed.[31]

In a similar manner the women travellers in Australia ventured from secure personal spaces to explore the surrounding countryside. In some instances this space was domestic, the rural or urban establishment of an acquaintance or an hotel or guesthouse. From these bases they pursued their particular interest, developing self-assurance and independence.

Ellis Rowan and Marianne North both describe their domestic settings from a gendered position that revealed its intimacy and familiarity. (Illustrations 9 and 10) Occasionally their personal space was more immediate and confined and took the form of temporary accommodation and means of conveyance. Harriet Clark felt "a homelike feeling" come over her when she settled in the family's stateroom on the steamship after weeks of travelling on land living out of trunks. She related that it was like moving into a new house. Clark wrote

> This berth shall be my room; this net which holds so many little things shall be my bureau; this hook shall be my wardrobe…Perhaps I can even have two hooks.[32]

Once her space was claimed as home, Clark was secure and eager to explore the space outside their cabin. Ellen Clacy described travelling to the goldfields in a wagon and her tent on the goldfields. May Vivienne often hired a horse and buggy and drove herself from mining camp to mining camp. (Illustration 11) All automatically disclose and take possession of their personal space before venturing into the outer, masculine world. Male travel writers are seldom as personal in their approach preferring to consciously articulate their journeys without reference to domestic detail.

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[31] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes,* pp.159-160.
[32] Clark, *Glimpses of Life in Far-off Lands,* p.597.

Illustration 9

Ellis Rowan



Source: Ellis Rowan, *The Flower Hunter, The adventures, in Northern Australia and New Zealand, of flower painter Ellis Rowan*, CollinsAngus & Robertson, North Ryde, nd, facing p.8.

Illustration 10



Source: Mrs John Addington Symonds (ed.), *Recollections of A Happy Life: being the autobiography of Marianne North*, Vol.II, Macmillan and Co., London, 1893, facing title page.

Illustration 11



May Vivienne

Source: May Vivienne, *Travels in Western Australia*, Hesperian Press, Carlisle, 1993, facing p.1.

While Pratt differentiates male and female journeys, Karen Lawrence defines the narrative distinctions of male and female travel literature. Lawrence asserts that for male travel writers "the plot of the male journey depends on keeping woman in her place".[33] However the female travel writer works within and against the masculine devices of the heroic traveller in opposition to the submissive domestic female.[34] May Vivienne epitomised the heroic female travel writer who worked within and against the male perception of the female stereotype. She often travelled alone with horse and buggy, sometimes getting lost, sometimes incurring damage to her buggy, or encountering dangerous situations. After visiting the Londonderry mine where repairs were undertaken to her buggy, she was faced with the ten-mile return journey to Coolgardie in the late afternoon. Refusing the offer of an escort, she stated that she "did not fear the Australian bush at all" and "drove on quite happily", confident of her own ability. When confronted by two swagmen, "who looked at me so hard" she handled the situation with self-assurance by "whipp[ing] up the horse and [getting] on as quickly as [she] could".[35] However in unfamiliar surroundings and with the night closing in she started to wonder whether she was lost again. Her composure and resourcefulness in following the telegraph lines saved her from danger and she found to her relief that she was

> at Burbanks again, and on the main road, so I was all right, and drove merrily along, meeting only a carter or so walking by the side of their teams, who, seeing a lady driving alone, said, "Good-night, missus," and went steadily on. As we got to the rise of the hill at Montana the presence of hundreds of lights gave me welcome to the Queen City of Gold, so there was a safe ending to that day's journey, and both myself and horse were quite ready for a good supper when we arrived at the hotel.[36]

Dea Birkett in *Spinsters Abroad* states that by assuming a male persona, "they [women travellers] were claiming a freedom from the gender restrictions of their home societies."[37] May Vivienne travelled to mining and forestry camps. She assumed a male persona by travelling alone by buggy through the bush but she regained femininity on her re-engagement with the urban environment. Lawrence asserts that male travel writers

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[33] Karen Lawrence, *Penelope Voyages: Women and Travel in the British Literary Tradition*, Ithaca, 1994, p.1.
[34] *Ibid*., pp.1-2.
[35] Vivienne, *Travels in Western Australia*, p.110.
[36] *Ibid*.
[37] Dea Birkett, *Spinsters Abroad: Victorian Lady Explorers*, Oxford, 1989, p.140.

perpetuate the male-female stereotype or exclude women completely concentrating on the "rhetoric of mastery, conquest, and quest".[38] She claims that female travel writers have a more open-ended approach, being more concerned with process rather than a particular goal and being more sceptical rather than confident of their own authority and ability to conquer all.[39] While the texts of women travellers on Australia tend to be less authoritative in tone than the travel literature by men, Lawrence's contention that male travellers make use of phallic and penetratory terms to define heroic movement through space is not apparent in the travel literature by male travel writers covered here.[40] Although not present in the travel literature covered in this thesis, this notion would appear to be more relevant in travel literature of exploration and adventure. Male middle-class travellers in Australia, particularly in the late nineteenth century, tended to confine their travels to city and surrounding countryside, not venturing into unexplored regions where such imagery would seem more appropriate. Strangely enough, in the late nineteenth century travel literature of Australia, it was mainly women travellers who journeyed through the less populated areas of the bush, women like May Vivienne, Ellis Rowan and Marianne North.

Women's approach to travel writing

Like their male counterparts, women travellers kept diaries and journals, wrote letters and when they returned home, wrote and occasionally published their accounts. However unlike male travel writers they were rarely commissioned to travel.[41] In addition those who did produce accounts not infrequently found publishers received their work less favourably than that by male travellers. Often they had to be encouraged to seek publication, and sometimes they were published anonymously or under assumed names. These women were not usually professional travel writers, solely dependent on the publication of their work for their livelihood, although many were able to supplement their income through their writing. Isabella Bird was already a published author prior to her South Pacific travels. She had anonymously published an account of her travels in America in 1856 as well as published articles in magazines *Leisure Hour*, *Good Words* and *Family Treasury*.

[38] Lawrence, *Penelope Voyages*, p.20
[39] *Ibid*., pp.20-21
[40] *Ibid*., p.2
[41] Robinson, *Unsuitable for Ladies*, p.xii.

Similarly Jessie Ackermann had published in the *Woman's Home Companion* prior to her Australian journey and Ada Cambridge had published prior to her posting to Australia, although her early literary efforts had a strong devotional character in the form of hymns and articles in religious magazines. Later Cambridge became a prolific author of Anglo-Australian romantic fiction and many of her novels were serialised in the *Australasian*, *Sydney Mail* and the *Age*.[42] Similarly Mary Gaunt, Australian born and one of the first women admitted to the University of Melbourne, published short stories and articles in journals such as the *Argus*, *Sydney Mail* and the *Australasian* prior to embarking upon her travels.[43] In contrast to the established literary character of these women, Ellis Rowan's account of her travels in Australia and New Zealand was based upon letters written to her husband. Others adopted an autobiographical approach, with the account of their observations of Australia intertwined with personal experience. In the latter years of their lives, Ada Cambridge and Marianne North composed accounts of Australia in the form of personal memoirs. Ellen Clacy and May Vivienne are conspicuous as travellers who published accounts soon after returning home. However in most cases the published article or account was a consequence of their journey and not the reason for it.

Self-deprecation and excuses

As a result of the public importance placed on men's travel writing, it was possibly not surprising that women travellers felt the need to point out the limitations of their work. While such apologies were not confined to women travellers, they were certainly more common in accounts by women travellers. Barbara Korte notes that even highly independent women travellers such as Isabella Bird believed they needed to justify their work to their readership. However she considers

> Bird's apologetic gestures are quite incongruous with the image which her texts otherwise project of her. Self–justifications and affirmations of modesty only barely conceal her enthusiasm for travel and her pride in achievements that were often quite unwomanly.[44]

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[42] William H Wilde, J Hooton, B Andrews, *The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature*, 2nd ed, Australia, 1994, p.144. Audrey Tate, *Ada Cambridge, Her Life and Work, 1844-1926*, Melbourne, 1991, pp.30-34.
[43] Wilde, Hooton, Andrews, *The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature*, p.310.
[44] Korte, *English Travel Writing*, pp.114-115.

Thus, Korte suggests that it was women's subordinate place in Victorian society, the "angel in the house" role that seemed to warrant such apologies. However such an approach to their work also revealed the complexities of some of their writing. Through emphasising their acceptance of a subordinate position in society not only was it possible that their work would be published but also that they would gain authority to some extent, continue to work within the male-centred genre and thus endeavour to expand its boundaries.

Ellen Clacy was a diminutive, young Englishwoman who accompanied her brother to the Victorian goldfields. Whilst in Australia she found an eligible partner and married before returning to England and publishing the account of her travels. Her humble, self-effacing tone in the introduction to her account acknowledged her inferior position as a woman working within a literary genre dominated by men. Apologising for the limitations of her account of her visit to the gold fields of Victoria, she wrote

> It may be deemed presumptuous that one of my age and sex should venture to give to the public an account of personal adventures in a land which has so often been descanted upon by other and abler pens; but when I reflect on the many mothers, wives, and sisters in England, whose hearts are ever longing for information respecting the dangers and privations to which their relatives at the antipodes are exposed, I cannot but hope that the presumption of my undertaking may be pardoned in consideration of the pleasure which an accurate description of some of the Australian Gold Fields may perhaps afford to many; and although the time of my residence in the colonies was short, I had the advantage (not only in Melbourne, but whilst in the bush) of constant intercourse with many experienced diggers and old colonists – thus having every facility for acquiring information respecting Victoria and the other colonies.[45]

At a surface level her self-deprecating introductory remarks stress her unworthiness to comment due to her limited literary skills, her age and gender. As a result she did not step beyond the bounds of womanly behaviour. However beneath the surface she skilfully worked to promote her particular interest in women's lives during the gold rush. She defended the writing of her account by publicising the importance of the information she presented to those female members of families left behind in England. She asserted the accuracy of the information contained in the account by stating that it was gained from reliable local sources. The sources were miners and colonists, masculine and therefore factual and authoritative. Cleverly, however, by so doing she shifted the responsibility for

[45] Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold Diggings*, p.9.

any misinformation away from herself to the miners and colonists from whom she obtained the information.

Marianne North, a flower-painter travelled the world out of a desire to see and paint flowers in their natural environment. In the preface to Marianne North's autobiography, her sister and editor, Mrs J.A. Symonds defended Marianne's lack of professional expertise as a botanist:

> My sister was no botanist in the technical sense of the term: her feeling for plants in their beautiful living personality was more like that which we all have for human friends. She could never bear to see flowers uselessly gathered – their harmless lives destroyed.[46]

It was the feminine and nurturing side of Marianne North that was accentuated to excuse and compensate for the lack of specialist knowledge in botany. In a similar fashion it was Ellis Rowan's creative side that justified her account.

> My love for the flora of Australia, at once so unique and so fascinating, together with my desire to complete my collection of floral paintings, has carried me into other colonies, Queensland, and some of the remotest parts of the great Continent of Australia. The excitement of seeking and the delight of finding rare or even unknown specimens abundantly compensated me for all difficulties, fatigue, and hardships. The pursuit has made me acquainted with many strange phases of colonial life; it has carried me into the depths of jungles, to distant islands, to wild mountain districts, and has brought me in contact with the aboriginal races, often in peculiar circumstances.[47]

Rowan acknowledged her femininity by admitting a lack of physical strength and so conformed to the "weak female" stereotype of nineteenth century women. However she was able to discount this perceived weakness by the serious pursuit of "rare and unknown specimens", work that contributed to the botanical knowledge of Australia. Through practicing their artistry, an accepted feminine accomplishment, North and Rowan contributed to botanical observations working within and through masculinist discourses. In the process their accounts gained authority.

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[46] Marianne North, *Recollections of a Happy Life: being the autobiography of Marianne North,* ed. Mrs John Addington Symonds, Vol.1, London, 1893, p.vi.

[47] Ellis Rowan, *The Flower Hunter: The adventures, in Northern Australia and New Zealand, of flower painter Ellis Rowan,* Sydney, [1992], (1898), p.v.

Use of masculine voice and authenticity

The travel literature written by men tended to be analytical and unemotional in approach. This feature of their writing tended to give their accounts transparency and authority. Many accounts by male travel writers presumed an official nature and the writer used an authoritative tone supported by the use of statistics that tended to distance the author from his subject matter, while female travel writers adopted a narrative approach similar to that of the novel. The female travel writer documented her interaction with people and the landscape she encountered to a greater extent than male travellers. Hoock-Demarle contends that this approach allowed female travel writers to

> avoid the trap of bureaucratic technicity, the preserve of official masculine discourse, which they recognize has little impact on the masses. They also escape from the facile socio-sentimentality that is beginning, not without success, to exploit the genre of the pamphlet.[48]

Hoock-Marle's view of the nature of women's travel writing is relevant to the women travel writers who came to Australia. Rosamond and Florence Hill interrupt their excursions into the South Australian landscape with visits to benevolent institutions. Their description of Magill School, a home for destitute children, was detailed but not sentimental and did not contain statistical information. For example they wrote:

> No money has been spared – a site was obtained at Magill, a healthy and beautiful spot, and a palatial edifice was erected, bearing comparison in all respects, cost included, with the most showy of our English pauper school; and a similar system of treatment was established to that pursued at home.[49]

Their description was still authoritative but was clear and concise and not constrained by official terminology and statistics as Reverend R.W. Dale's impression of the South Australian education system was. He observed:

> In South Australia the schools are divided into six classes, according to the results of the annual examination by the inspector:…Head-masters of schools placed in the first five classes receive a bonus varying from £24 in the first class to £16 in the fifth class. Headmistresses receive a bonus varying from £16 if their schools are in the first class to £12 if they are in the fifth. Schools in the sixth class carry no bonus.[50]

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[48] Marie-Claire Hoock-Demarle, "Le Language littéraire des femmes enquêtrices," in Stéphane Michaud, ed., Un fabuleux destin: Flora Tristan, Dijon, Editions Universitaires, 1985 cited in Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p.161.

[49] Rosamond and Florence Hill, *What we saw in Australia*, London, 1875, p.137.

[50] Dale, *Impressions of Australia*, p.144.

This excerpt is just a small part of a larger chapter where he compared the varying theoretical approaches to education in the colonies he visited. His observations are supported by a great deal of statistical information which gave his account an authoritative tone.

Generally the style of women travel writers was less constrained than that of male travel writers, and often incorporated emotional responses to situations and surroundings within the text. However some women travel writers gained authority and met the accepted conventions of the genre by using the masculine voice in their texts. This gave their accounts veracity although sometimes emotional responses and concern for the intricate detail of the places and people encountered interrupted their masculine tone. In *Travels in Western Australia*, May Vivienne catalogued the economic progress of the colony, using facts and figures to support her assessment. Tension exists between the parts of her account where she used an analytical approach and those parts where she employs descriptive techniques that derive from an appreciation of the picturesque. Of the agricultural area of Mount Barker she wrote

> Over 55 acres of fruit trees of different kinds, bearing lovely fruit, testify to the excellence of the soil. Two thousand apple trees seem to be specially prolific. In another part of the Mount Barker district, Mr Miller's estate, comprising more than 5000 acres, has a fine orchard of over 6000 fruit trees of all descriptions. Two other orchards, not quite so large but with much exquisite fruit, are not far off, and the old homestead of St Werbergs, where the late Colonel Warburton resided, is a place of much interest. [51]

However when she described the view from Mount Eliza she displayed concern for the intricate beauty of the setting,

> I have seen many beautiful places in the other colonies, and in New Zealand; but the view from Mount Eliza on a spring morning in the season of blossom, when every wild bush is ablaze with flowers, is a sight never to be forgotten, I felt I must stay for a while and gather some of the beautiful and quaint wild-flowers, which are far more varied than any I had ever before seen. … Many kinds of trees and flowers abound, callistemon, with its brilliant scarlet plumes; the petrophila, and with its exquisite velvety softness; banksias, honeysuckles, verticordias, with their lemon-centred foliage; the beautiful snowflake flower; the sweet-smelling, rich yellow hibbertia; the pretty blue gardenia, the lovely lilac hibiscus, or native tulip, fringed

[51] Vivienne, *Travels in Western Australia*, p.12.

> lilies, satin flowers and others too numerous to particularise, form a picture so strikingly beautiful that I shall never forget the magnificent scene of green hills and flowery dales, country and town, blue sky and opal water, stretching far and wide.[52]

W.H. Davenport Adams in his late nineteenth century book *Celebrated Women Travellers of the Nineteenth Century* praised Isabella Bird as a great traveller, because she assumed all the qualities of a good male traveller: "Endurance, courage, promptitude, decision, the capacity for quiet and accurate observation, the ready adaptability to circumstances".[53] Bird possessed an "artist's temperament", having an innate ability to convey the scenes she viewed into words. Davenport stated that

> A sense of the beautiful and a power of expressing that sense so as to make it felt by others, is the primary and indispensable qualification of the traveller. He must have eyes to see and ears to hear; and that his fellow may the wiser, better, and happier for his enterprise, he must have the faculty of describing what he has seen and heard in language of adequate force and clearness.[54]

Bird gained authority by her acceptance into the masculine world of travel writing. However this was not confined to her written style but extended to her disposition. Adams declared that Bird "carried in her bosom a man's heart, and was never wanting in courage or resolution".[55]

Jessie Ackermann presented her account as the first authoritative account written by a woman about Australia. It differed from previous accounts by women which had made use of the masculine voice and excluded the part played by women in the development of Australia. Her intention was to centre her narrative on the lives of Australian women,

> to outline, briefly, the natural, political, industrial, social, religious, and home settings in which the women of Australia "live, move, and have their being" as equal citizens with men.[56]

However, like Vivienne, she makes use in her text of governmental facts and figures taken from the Commonwealth statistician and various State government departments in order to

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[52] *Ibid*., p.22.
[53] W.H. Davenport Adams, *Celebrated Women Travellers of the Nineteenth Century*, London, 8th edition, 1903, pp.436-437.
[54] *Ibid*., pp.425-426.
[55] *Ibid*., p.433.
[56] Ackermann, *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*, pp.ix-x.

enhance her credibility and authority. The use of such information, perceived by feminist commentators on travel as masculine in origin, could be perceived to compromise her strong feminist stance.

May Vivienne's extensive use of statistical information gave her account authenticity. However, in the author's note to her account, she felt she had to defend the figures quoted against accusations of embellishment. She pronounced that

> Some readers may be disposed to question the accuracy of my statements regarding the mines, and the actual wealth in gold of the State, I can assure them that these statements are absolutely devoid of exaggeration, and capable of being easily verified.
> This is true also of what is said respecting timber, fruits, and agricultural produce.[57]

Her tone was not passive, and not dissimilar to some male travel writers who defended their information. Her motive for offering such detailed information was to encourage settlement in Western Australia.[58]

Conclusion

Like explorers, travellers complied with the conventions of travel writing, establishing their authority and the reliability of their texts. The imperial rhetoric in their narratives on Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries fostered emigration by demonstrating Australia's progress and uniqueness as well as entertaining and informing readers. Their accounts were more utilitarian in approach than the romantic accounts of earlier explorers. By the mid-nineteenth century female as well as male travellers engaged with Australia and Australians. In terms of the accounts by male and female travel writers covered here it is difficult to define specific differences in expression. In the *Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, Susan Bassnett asserts that

> In terms of stylistic features, there is no way that women's travel writing can be differentiated from that of male writers, though a case could perhaps be made for differences in emphasis, in selection of material, in the relationship between the traveller and the putative reader.[59]

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[57] Vivienne, *Travels in Western Australia*, p.iv.
[58] *Ibid*.
[59] Susan Bassnett, "Travel writing and Gender" in Hulme & Youngs, *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, p.240.

Women travel writers did emphasise different subject matter which resulted in a different text which was often more subjective and personal in tone. Their travel writing was characterised by the devices they used to work within the accepted conventions of the genre. A novelistic style where a narrative unfolds and individual characters are developed in some detail, such as Ellen Clacy's approach in describing her experiences on the Victorian goldfields, was one technique. The use of apologies, and the masculine voice are further indications of the tactics employed by women travellers to work within the conventions of travel writing. But such devices are not solely confined to women travel writers, as some male travel writers on Australia also applied these techniques. Perhaps the most striking characteristic of women's travel writing is that although women travel writers wrote within the conventions of the genre and often portrayed themselves as tough and heroic, they do not completely distance themselves from their femininity. Their concern with the need to maintain femininity reflected the fact that they were travelling and writing within a male dominated world where society dictated distinctive behaviour for women. Because of their subordinate position in society their writing exposed complex responses that were as varied as their individual backgrounds and experience.

PART TWO: CLAIMING THE LAND

Imperial rhetoric and the literature of exploration 1800-1850

Part two explores the imperial rhetoric of exploration literature which worked subtly to incorporate Australia into the British vision of empire. Through contemporary ideas of progress, aesthetics and science, explorers described and understood a new landscape and its people. Belief in progress allowed them to envision a land of settled communities that were industrious and socially refined. Aesthetic theories of the picturesque and romanticism placed the landscape within the bounds of European understanding and appreciation. The conventions of the picturesque validated explorers' descriptions of an improved landscape suitable for settlement while romanticism added an emotional response to the environment. The pursuit of scientific knowledge was an important part of the imperial mission. Through the collection and systematic description of specimens, explorers incorporated Australia into a global web of scientific knowledge. Scientific societies and organisations such as the Royal Geographical Society, the Royal Society and the Royal Gardens at Kew encouraged and legitimated their journeys. While these contemporary ideas have been covered separately in the next three chapters, it should be stressed that they are often combined within passages of text in a symbiotic association that enriched the imperial rhetoric contained in the accounts.

Chapter Four
"a great reserve provided by nature":
Progress and the cultivation of idealised land

> We had at length discovered a country ready for the immediate reception of civilized man ; and destined perhaps to become eventually a portion of a great empire. Unencumbered by too much wood, it yet possessed enough for all purposes; its soil was exuberant, and its climate temperate; it was bounded on three sides by the ocean; and it was traversed by mighty rivers, and watered by streams innumerable. Of this Eden I was the first European to explore its mountains and streams – to behold its scenery- to investigate its geological character – and, by my survey, to develop those natural advantages, certain to become, at no distant date, of vast importance to a new people.[1]
>
> T.L. Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, 1839.

No philosophy was more central to the maintenance of the British Empire in the nineteenth century than the idea of progress. In the epigraph above Mitchell predicted the future of Australia Felix but he also revealed the nature of British progress as imperial in character, guided by Providence and motivated by economic incentive. Moreover, Mitchell considered himself the harbinger of progress to an untouched land that had been set aside by God for British use. He described an idealised land which he likened to the biblical Garden of Eden, abundant and still to be occupied. It encompassed all the attributes necessary for the establishment of civil society and merely awaited British settlement to develop to a more advanced state. Through individual initiative and industry, the landscape would advance to a commercial society within the Empire. As a consequence of this economic understanding of progress, explorers, like Mitchell, considered the landscape uninhabited. While explorers did not necessarily discount the presence of Aborigines or their prior use of the land, they considered them as living in a stage of savagery. Aborigines were a part of the idealised landscape like its exotic flora and fauna. Through their understanding of the ideology of progress, explorers dispossessed Aborigines of their land and claimed it as an important part of a progressive empire.

This chapter examines the rhetoric of imperial progress in early nineteenth century accounts of exploration. It focuses on the explorers' self-perceptions and their belief in the inevitability of progress and how Providence not only guided them to land suitable for settlement but also anticipated its future. Furthermore, it considers the economic rationale of progress, namely that human industry in pastoralism, agriculture and commerce was the means whereby the Australian landscape would advance to a higher

[1] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.2, p.171.

stage. The chapter also looks at the explorers' understanding of the natural law of economic and social progress that underlay their descriptions of Aborigines. Their contemplation of the theory of progress prompted some explorers to question its benefit, as it would destroy the innocence characteristic of the savage state. Finally, the chapter discusses the explorers' assessments of the desirability and viability of the British civilising mission to advance Aborigines towards a higher stage of development.

Progress and nineteenth century accounts of exploration

The intellectuals of the Enlightenment conceived a world governed by scientific rationalism and free from superstition. In their increasingly secularised world, the scientific reality of human progress could be defined with laws and principles developed to chart the progress of society. The Scottish model of progress as expounded by Adam Smith in the *Wealth of Nations* set out economic factors as the driving force of progress. He considered that individuals were innately selfish and sought to better their own situation, but it was understood that in the process of individual advancement, benefits flowed through to society fostering social and economic advancement for all. Smith believed that evidence from the past suggested an identifiable sequence of development through four stages from primitive society through to advanced civilisation. Other intellectuals formed a theory of progress that identified it as having a cyclic form. Using historical evidence, progress could be explained as a continuing process of development, stagnation and decline, which made way for a higher stage in the cycle of progress.[2] The ideology of progress inspired an optimistic outlook. It was based on the view that "civilisation has moved, is moving, and will move in a desirable direction" towards the attainment of perfection.[3] Britain provided an example of the success of progress. Through industrialisation, mercantilism and colonial acquisitions during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a belief in continued progress was sustained into the nineteenth century.

J.B. Bury urges that progress was understood in secular terms, divorced from religious belief in providential design. He asserts:

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[2] Peter J. Bowler, *The Invention of Progress: The Victorians and the Past*, Oxford, 1989, pp.7-14.
[3] J.B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry into its Origin and Growth*, New York, 1960, p.2.
James H.S. Bossard, "The Concept of Progress", *Social Forces*, Vol.10, No.1, October 1931, p. 5. http://www.jstor.org/

> The process must be the necessary outcome of the psychical and social nature of man: it must not be at the mercy of any external will; otherwise there would be no guarantee of its continuance and its issue, and the idea of Progress would lapse into the idea of Providence.[4]

Whilst Bury accepted that both beliefs could be held by the individual, he believed that their underlying assumptions were incompatible.[5] In more recent years commentators on progress such as Nathan Rotenstreich, David Spadafora and Robert Nisbet have challenged this understanding.[6] In their interpretations, the idea of progress and Christian conceptions of Providence were interrelated.[7] From the accounts of exploration of Australia in the early nineteenth century covered in this thesis, there is evidence that Providence and progress were intertwined. Underlying the ideology of progress in the literature was a strong belief in Providence. Providence was the hand that guided explorers to suitable land where Christian settlement and strong commercial centres would develop. However it was human industry that impelled imperial progress not Providence. Providence guided and protected the explorer, as its agent, during the course of his journey of discovery. The belief in Divine Providence and the optimism contained in the philosophy of progress inspired explorers' discussions about the future of the Australian landscape and its inhabitants.

The explorer as the harbinger of progress

Although the idea of progress was secularised and rationalised to some extent by the early nineteenth century, explorers often advanced a form that was not only British and imperial but also Christian. Explorers believed their imperial mission was directed by Providence. While the land was claimed in a symbolic way by raising the British flag and proclaiming possession of the land on behalf of the crown, the explorer was guided to idealised land by Providence. For example, Eyre was ceremonially presented with a Union Jack by Captain Charles Sturt, who stated:

> This noble colour, the ensign of our country, has cheered the brave on many an occasion. It has floated over every shore of the known world, and upon every island of the deep. But you have to perform a very different, and a more difficult duty. You have to carry it to the centre of a mighty continent, there to

[4] Bury, *The Idea of Progress*, p.5.
[5] *Ibid*., pp.21-22.
[6] David Spadafora, *The Idea of Progress in Eighteenth Century Britain*, New Haven, 1990. Nathan Rotenstreich, "The Idea of Historical Progress and its Assumption", *History and Theory*, Vol.10. No.2, 1971, pp.197-221. Robert Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress*, New York, 1980.
[7] Rotenstreich, Spadafora and Nisbet use understandings of the idea of progress throughout history to identify instances of its ongoing ties to and dependence upon religious philosophy.

> leave it as a sign to the savage that the footstep of civilized man has penetrated so far. Go forth, then on your journey, with a full confidence in the goodness of Providence; and may heaven direct your steps to throw open the fertility of the interior, not only for the benefit of the Province, but of our native country; and may the moment when you unfurl this colour for the purpose for which it was given to you, be as gratifying to you as the present.[8]

The explorer, with God on his side, was the agent of progress. Mitchell depicted himself as a Moses-like figure leading his party through a harsh environment, believing "that He, who led Israel like a flock, would guide and direct our little party, through the Australian wilderness before us."[9] At one point on his expedition in 1846, he considered himself primitive man, an Adam-like figure, pondering: "The 'gorgeous curtains of the East' over grandly formed clouds harmonised well with my sentiments on awaking, again to trace, as if I had been the earliest man, the various features of these fine regions of earth."[10] Mitchell considered himself closest to God in such untouched regions; philosophically he reflected:

> Young, I think, has said, that a situation might be imagined between earth and heaven, where a man should hear nothing but the thoughts of the Almighty; but such a sublime position seems almost attained by him who is the first permitted to traverse extensive portions of earth, as yet unoccupied by man; to witness in solitude and silence regions well adapted to his use, brings a man into more immediate converse with the Author both of his being, and of all other combinations of matter than any other imaginable position he can attain. With nothing but nature around him; his few wants supplied almost miraculously; living on from day to day, just as he falls in with water; his existence is felt to be in the hands of Providence alone; and this feeling pervades even the minds of the least susceptible, in journeys like these.[11]

The explorer not only was guided by Providence but also protected by it during his expedition. Stokes attributed the preservation of the explorers from injury from the explosion of a fowling piece to God's protection while doing His work. He contended that:

> Without intending to be presumptuous, we may be permitted to believe that we were spared partly on account of the service in which we were engaged – so beneficial to humanity so calculated to promote the spread of civilization, which must ever be the harbinger of Christianity.[12]

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[8] Eyre, *Journals of Expeditions*, Vol.1, pp.19-20.
[9] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.165.
[10] Mitchell, *Journal of an expedition*, pp.310-311.
[11] *Ibid*., pp.315-316.
[12] J. Lort Stokes, *Discoveries in Australia, with an Account of the Coasts and Rivers explored and surveyed during the Voyage of HMS Beagle, in the Years 1837-38-39-40-41-42-43 by Command of the*

Implicit in their belief in the doctrine of Divine Providence was their self-perceptions as harbingers of imperial progress. Mitchell took this responsibility to the extreme when he considered that through his exploration the land came into history. He declared:

> We advanced with feelings of intense interest into the country before us, and impressed with the responsibility of commencing the first chapter of its history. All was still new and nameless, but by this beginning, we were to open a way for the many other beginnings of civilized man, and thus extend his dominion over some of the last holds of barbarism.[13]

Prior to his discovery the land waited in limbo. Through his explorations, survey and naming, the land came into existence as part of the British Empire and settlement and the first stage of progress was instigated.

Mitchell explored and surveyed an extensive part of the interior of eastern Australia and while he was recognised as a competent, reliable surveyor, his published accounts exuded a superiority that emphasised his pre-eminent role in opening up the land for settlement. Mitchell the explorer was engaged in a heroic endeavour that would induce settlement and thus strengthen British imperial progress. For example, after leaving the river Murray, Mitchell ascended Pyramid Hill and considered this responsibility:

> A land so inviting, and still without inhabitants! As I stood, the first European intruder on the sublime solitude of these verdant plains, as yet untouched by flocks or herds; I felt conscious of being the harbinger of mighty changes; and that our steps would soon be followed by men and the animals for which it seemed to have been prepared.[14]

Mitchell deemed the land to be in a state of nature but provided for British use. Through his survey of the land pastoralism would begin and the land progress.

In a similar manner, George Grey anticipated the progress of land that would be discovered through his explorations of north western Australia:

> Great then was my joy, when all my preparations were completed, and I felt the vessel gliding swiftly from Table Bay into that vast ocean, at the other extremity of which lay the land I so longed to see, and to which I was now bound, with the ardent hope of opening the way for the conversion of a barren wilderness into a fertile garden.[15]

Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. Also a Narrative of Capt Owen Standley's visits to the Islands in the Arafura Sea, Vol.2, London, 1846, p.282.

[13] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.36.

[14] *Ibid.*, Vol.2, p.159.

[15] Grey, *Journals of Two Expeditions* Vol.1, p.35.

Grey was very much aware of his role in the land's advancement towards civil society when he explored the coast of western Australia around the Gascoyne River. He recorded:

> I however felt conscious that within a few years of the moment at which I stood there, a British population, rich in civilization, and the means of transforming an unoccupied country to one teeming with inhabitants and produce, would have followed my steps, and be eagerly and anxiously examining my charts; and this reflection imparted a high degree of interest and importance to our present position and operations.[16]

Explorers self-consciously portrayed their achievements as contributing to the grand civilising enterprise of the British Empire. The explorer, often an agent of the colonial and/or British government, played a vital role in advancing a belief in British imperial progress. Bolstered by confidence in continuing progress the explorer idealised landscape and espoused its potentiality and readiness to advance from a natural state to a civilised and higher stage. In this way the ideology of progress became a way of establishing the imperial claim over the land.

An idealised and ancient land

The land the explorers idealised in their descriptions was found in the unexplored parts of Australia. This was land in its original state as God/Nature/Providence had provided it.[17] In 1846, Mitchell conceived the possibilities of the land in Central Queensland to provide the foundations for advancement to civil society. In an idyllic setting, he envisaged its future:

> The charm of a beginning seemed to pervade all nature, and the songs of many birds sounded like the orchestral music before the commencement of any theatrical performance. Such a morning, in such a place, was quite incompatible with the brow of care. Here was an almost boundless extent of the richest surface in a latitude corresponding to that of China, yet still uncultivated and unoccupied by man. A great reserve, provided by nature for the extension of his race, where economy, art, and industry might suffice to people it with a peaceful, happy and contented population.[18]

Like the epigraph at the beginning of the chapter, Mitchell alluded to the untouched, pristine state of the discovered land. It was an earthly paradise, free from the misery that pervaded British industrial society in the mid-nineteenth century - a land that

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[16] *Ibid.*, p.359.
[17] God, Nature and Providence seem to be used interchangeably.
[18] Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, pp.292-293.

evoked the promise of societal rebirth. He considered it an enchanting place that awaited tranformation through British settlement and human industry.

Mitchell believed that British imperial progress was positive and constructive not aggressive and destructive. He regarded the future establishment of rural settlement on land he discovered and named Australia Felix as:

> a lasting monument of the beneficial influence of British power and colonization, thus to engraft a new and flourishing state, on a region now so desolate and unproductive; but this seems only possible under very extensive arrangements, and by such means as England alone can supply:-
>
> *Here the great mistress of the seas is known*
> *By empires founded, - not by states o'erthrown*[19]

While idealised land could be perceived as fertile and peaceful it could also be considered "desolate". But the word "desolate" pointed to how the land was devoid of signs of economic use, in the British sense, and was not necessarily used to denote the fertility of the soil. It was "desolate" and "unproductive" because it was not settled, not because it lacked potential. The use of such words did not erode the image of an idealised landscape but exposed the utilitarian understanding of land based in the idea of progress that was held by explorers.

With this view of land, explorers imagined the extent to which idealised land could be developed to become an important part of a progressive British Empire. As he commanded a view over the Plains of Promise in northern Australia, John Lort Stokes contemplated the progress of civilisation:

> In that direction, however, no curling smoke denoted the presence of the savage; all was lonely and still; and yet even in these deserted plains, equally wanting in the redundance of animal as in the luxuriance of vegetable life I could discover the rudiments of future prosperity, and ample justification of the name which I had bestowed upon them. I gazed around, despite my personal disappointment, with feelings of hopeful gratitude to Him who had spread out so fair a dwelling place for his creatures; and could not refrain from breathing a prayer that ere long the now level horizon would be broken by a succession of tapering spires rising from the many Christian hamlets that must ultimately stud this country, and pointing through the calm depths of the intensely blue and gloriously bright skies of Tropical Australia, to a still calmer and brighter and more glorious region beyond, to which all our sublimest aspirations tend, and where all our holiest desires must be satisfied.[20]

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[19] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol 2, p.334.
[20] Stokes, *Discoveries*, Vol.2, pp.319-320.

This was an ideal setting for British settlement. It was open and park-like and unsettled. Stokes considered God created the region for the development of civil society. The commercial port of Investigator Road would ship produce from the fertile interior of northern Australia overseas and would result in the "habitations of civilized man, and the heaven-ward pointing spires of the Christian Church."[21] He was impelled in his exploration by the thought that Christian settlement would one day be developed on the site. This thought, "added to the zest with which [the party] prosecuted [their] subsequent researches."[22] The notion that God had provided such areas for British progress was common in published accounts of exploration. Mitchell expressed a similar sentiment at the beginning of his published account of his three expeditions when he wrote, "the author was led cheerfully on, by an eager curiosity to examine a country which is yet in the same state as when it was formed by its Maker."[23]

Explorers invariably preferred open, park-like landscapes that they deemed were prepared by Nature or God for the purpose of British colonisation.[24] Mitchell imagined Australia Felix in this manner in the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter. It was "open and available in its present state, for all the purposes of civilized man."[25] At an earlier point in his narrative he noted that:

> Flocks might be turned out upon its hills, or the plough at once set to work in the plains. No primeval forests required to be first rooted out, although there was enough of wood for all purposes of utility, and as much also for embellishment as even a painter could wish.[26]

While Mitchell's depictions of idealised landscapes had aesthetic value, he connected aesthetic appreciation to the land's economic potential. In a stable, fertile environment such as Australia Felix, where individual freedom was not restrained and human industry prospered, the further progress of society was inevitable. Mitchell considered that the region awaited only the "enterprising spirit and improving hand" of "intelligent man" "to turn to account the native bounty of the soil."[27]

Rural development

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[21] *Ibid.*, p.272
[22] *Ibid.*, pp.272-273.
[23] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.1, preface.
[24] See Chapter 5 for further discussion of aesthetic preferences for park-like landscapes.
[25] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.2, p.333.
[26] *Ibid.*, p.271.
[27] *Ibid.*, Vol.1, p.5.

Explorers considered civil society in Australia would be founded on the active participation of British settlers in rural development. Leichhardt described the Isaacs River region in terms of its potential for pastoralism. Eagerly he wrote:

> The fine open country between the two ranges through which it breaks, we shall not probably find a country better adapted for pastoral pursuits. There was a great want of surface water at the season we passed through it; and which we afterwards found was remarkably dry one all over the colony ; the wells of the natives, however, and the luxuriant growth of reeds in many parts of the river, shewed that even shallow wells would give a large supply to the squatter in cases of necessity; and those chains of large water-holes which we frequently met along and within the scrubs, when once filled, will retain their water for a long time.[28]

However he recognised that settlers would have to deal with some opposing environmental influences in the surrounding area, including the scrub which formed "a refuge of hostile natives and a hiding place for the cattle".[29]

For Mitchell the Claude region offered the potential for rural development. He refers regularly in his journal to the types of grasses, the supply of water and the fertility of the soil. All were essential to the success of rural endeavours. He wrote of the region near the Claude:

> Then across one of the richest plains I had ever seen and on which the *Anthistiria australis*, and *Panicum loevinode*, the two best Australian grasses grew abundantly. The soil was black; the surface quite level.[30]

As the expedition party proceeded on their exploration they ascended a hill "which commanded a view over an extent of similar country, large enough for a county".[31] The description of well-grassed, open land recalled the improved state of the gentleman's park:

> Beyond the valley we arrived at open downs of the richest soil, and of an extent not to be embraced by the eye at any one point of view. The finest sorts of grass were fast springing up, and curious herbs were beginning to shoot from the rich alluvium in the vallies.[32]

Soil type was an important indicator of the potential of the land to sustain pastoralism and agriculture. The combination of fertile soil and an adequate water supply prompted

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[28] Leichhardt, *Journal of an Overland Expedition*, p.229.
[29] *Ibid.*, p.172.
[30] Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, p.232.
[31] *Ibid.*, p.292.
[32] *Ibid.*, p.291.

Bland, the editor of Hume and Hovell's account, to relate that the open plains the explorers had discovered were suitable for pastoral purposes.

> The soil excellent, a rich red loam, thinly wooded, and although parched, the grass luxuriant, plentiful, and of the best quality, and with water sufficient either for sheep or horned cattle.[33]

The relationship between soil type and pastoral potential was often noted by Hume and Hovell during their explorations. At another point, Bland recounted:

> The general appearance of the country, together with that of the soil, is rich and beautiful. The grass having apparently been burnt early in the season, and being now in full seed, is fresh and luxuriant, frequently as high as their heads, and seldom lower than their waists. [34]

Occasionally explorers considered that due to soil type the land was more suitable for agriculture than pastoralism. Sturt noted:

> The soil upon it was good, excepting in isolated spots, where it was sandy. Vegetation was scanty upon it, but, on the whole, I should conclude that it was fitter for agriculture than for grazing. For I think it very probable, that those lands which lie hardening and bare in a state of nature, would produce abundantly if broken up by the plough. I called this Hamilton's plains, in remembrance of the surgeon of my regiment.[35]

Mitchell considered the regions he explored near the Gwydir would "become an important addition to the pastoral capabilities of New South Wales".[36] However the establishment of civil society also relied upon other resources. Grey observed that the tablelands near the Glenelg river "afford[ed] good timber, particularly pine" while Bland recounted that though the river valley of the Ovens River was "scantily wooded" the "timber trees [were] of the most valuable description."[37]

Often an extensive view of the landscape offered all possibilities, pastoral, agricultural and commercial. Mitchell noted of the Murray River valley:

> One or two spots seemed very favourable for farms or cattle stations. The soil in these grassy flats was of the richest description: indeed the whole of the country covered by reeds, seemed capable of being converted into good wheat land, and of being easily irrigated, at any time by the river.[38]

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[33] Bland (ed.), *Journey of Discovery*, p.37.
[34] *Ibid.*, p.42.
[35] Sturt, *Two Expeditions*, Vol.2, p.48.
[36] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.141.
[37] Grey, *Journals of Two Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.272. Bland (ed.), *Journey of Discovery*, p.47.
[38] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.2, p.138.

In addition the river would provide communication so that "produce might be conveyed by it at such seasons to the sea shore."[39] The climate was healthy as there "was no miasmatic savannah" and the land ready for pastoral development as there was no "dense forest to be cleared".[40] Mitchell considered this extensive tract of land provided the necessary elements for cattle properties

> affording excellent winter grass, back among the scrubs to which cattle usually resort at certain seasons ; while at others they could fatten on the rich grass of the plains, or during the summer heat enjoy the reeds amid abundance of water. We found on these plains an addition to the common grasses. The fine open country afforded extensive views, and to the eastward and south-east, we saw hills with grassy sides, and crowned with callitris. Through the intervening valley flowed the Murray, the course of which was seldom visible, as no trees grew along its border.[41]

Important to the economic progress of the Australian colonies was not only finding a means of transporting produce from the interior to the coast but also the establishment of secure harbours for those sailing along the coastline and overseas. Grey predicted the potential of the natural landscape near the Glenelg River in north-western Australia to progress to the commercial stage of economic development. Such a vista restored the explorer on his journey.

> The horses and sheep revelled in the luxuriant pasture. The hill we had encamped on formed a sort of plateau; behind us stood dark mountains, and in our front lay fertile plains, from which green hills rose one behind the other, until they were lost in the distance, without any perceptible change in the character of the country. To the eastward the prospect was similar, as well as to the westward, except that in this direction the hills were more lofty, and behind these the tropical sun was hurrying down with a rapidity of movement never witnessed by those who live in the gloomy climes of the north. The men all looked healthy and full of hope; the cool sea-breeze refreshed my feverish frame: I painted in fancy the rapid progress that this country would ere long make in commerce and civilization, and my weakness and fatigues were all forgotten.[42].

This fertile region also boasted a navigable river and "three of the finest harbours in the world, in each of which the tide rose and fell thirty-seven and a half feet, I could not but feel we were in a land singularly favoured by nature."[43] Grey considered that the establishment of a colony focusing on cotton growing in north western Australia would

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[39] *Ibid.*
[40] *Ibid.*
[41] *Ibid.*
[42] Grey, *Journals of Two Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.163.
[43] *Ibid.*, p.179.

have considerable economic advantage for Britain due to its vicinity to potential Asian markets.[44]

Encouragement of emigration from Britain was an underlying theme in the explorers' published accounts. As previously mentioned explorers often chronicled Australia's fortunate condition at the beginning of their journey using its rapid progress as an example of the success of the Empire's civilising mission. This impressive record of progress together with the cataloguing of resources and the recording of the settlement potential of land travelled through during their exploration provided material that could further emigration to Australia. Emigration had a twofold benefit as it not only forecast individual freedom and advancement but would also relieve the burden of overpopulation in Britain. As Sturt observed:

> The evils resulting from a surplus population in an old community, were never more seriously felt than in Great Britain at the present moment. Assuming that the amount of surplus population is 2,000,000, the excess of labour and competition thus occasioned, by diminishing profits and wages, creates, it has been said, an indirect tax to the enormous extent of 20,000,000l. per annum. It has appeared to many experienced persons, that it is in emigration, we should best find the means of relief from this heavy pressure; particularly if the individuals encouraged to go out to the colonies were young persons of both sexes, from the industrious classes of the community. Even if no more than three couples were induced to emigrate from each parish in England in ten years, the relief to the springs of industry would be very great.[45]

Bland extolled the virtues of land discovered by Hume and Hovell for rural settlement in the area "extending from Port Phillip, and Western Port, to the settled districts of Bathurst". The well-watered, accessible land he recounted was suitable for agricultural and pastoral purposes and was "fully adequate to receive, at the lowest estimate, the entire supposed present surplus population of the Mother Country".[46]

Surroundings that promised the freedom of the individual encouraged industry and initiative that not only contributed to the advancement of colonial society but also bolstered imperial progress. By the 1820s free immigrants were settling in Australia in increasing numbers and with various assisted immigration schemes further free settlement occurred in the 1830s and 1840s. The impact of the gold rushes saw even greater numbers arrive in Australia in the 1850s. Mitchell was impressed by the

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[44] *Ibid.*, p.274.
[45] Sturt, *Two Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.lxv-lsvi
[46] Bland (ed.), *Journey of Discovery*, p.87.

industry of some emigrants. In the published account of his *Three Expeditions* he related his encounter with an elderly Scottish settler. He praised individual qualities of diligence and energy which had led to his success and which encouraged the emigration of family members. Mitchell described his farm:

> Sleek cattle filled his stock-yard, his fields waved with ripe grain, and I had the satisfaction of learning from him, that he had written for his family, and that he soon expected their arrival in the colony.[47]

The publication of such anecdotes served the imperial mission by emphasising the success of settlers prepared to undertake hard work and reinforced the benefits of continued British emigration.

According to the dominant contemporary view, the middle classes were important to the continuing progress of civilisation as they advanced an optimistic view that connected faith in progress with faith in economic growth. They were motivated by individual self-interest and profit and their involvement in increasing industrialisation of the eighteenth century had elevated them to prominence in the early nineteenth century.[48] However many members of the middle classes were reluctant to emigrate to Australia because of their concerns about the extent of civil society. Grey attempted to allay such concerns in his published account by relating his personal experience. He considered "that civil and military establishments in New South Wales, form the elements of as good society as it is the lot of the majority to command in Great Britain."[49] Grey noted the beneficial results of individual industry in two middle-class gentlemen settlers he described. He believed they "were far happier than many an idle young man I have seen lounging about in England, a burden to himself and his friends; for it must be borne in mind that they were realizing a future independence for themselves."[50] It was imagined that through individual effort, improvements occurred in wealth, the division of labour and interdependence, knowledge and morals. In this economic rationale of progress it was optimistically considered that the benefits from the individual's desire for economic advancement flowed on to the poorer sections of society, so that all

[47] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.27.
[48] Sidney Pollard, *The Idea of Progress: History and Society*, Harmondsworth, 1971, p.104.
[49] Sturt, *Two Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.lix.
[50] Grey, *Journals of Two Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.318.

society progressed.[51] However the explorer's view of the ability of the Aborigines to progress was more complex.

Aborigines and the idea of progress

Theories of socio-economic and biological development reinforced notions of imperial power and authority. They helped to explain why some people had progressed further than others and influenced British assumptions and policies towards Indigenous people. While the subtleties of the British mission to bring liberty and civilisation to "savage" nations are evident in the explorers' descriptions of the character, customs and manners of Aborigines they encountered, their understandings about the ability of Aborigines to progress were often diverse.

Generally explorers considered Aborigines to be living in a state of savagery where they supported themselves by hunting animals and gathering wild fruits and seeds. They observed that Aborigines did not live in settled communities or engage in domesticating animals or growing food. As a result of their perceived primitivity, many explorers had a philosophical interest in the Aboriginal way of life. At one point during his 1830s expeditions, Mitchell extolled the nobility of Aboriginal life in southern New South Wales.[52] Likewise, on his 1846 expedition, he celebrated the superior physical appearance of his Aboriginal guide. He believed that living in a state of nature had endowed Aborigines with excellent health and physical condition, far superior to civilised people. His Aboriginal guide was

> a very perfect specimen of the genus homo, and such as never is to be seen, except in the precincts of savage life, undegraded by any scale of graduated classes, and the countless bars these present to the free enjoyment of existence. His motions in walking were more graceful than can be imagined by any who have only seen those of the draped and shod animal. The deeply set yet flexible spine; the taper form of the limbs; the fullness yet perfect elasticity of the glutei muscles. The hollowness of the back, and symmetrical balance of the upper part of the torso, ornamented as it was, like a piece of fine carving, with raised scarifications most tastefully placed; such were some of the characteristics of this perfect "piece of work". Compared with it, the civilised animal, when considered merely in the light of a specimen in natural history, how inferior! … Such health and exemption from disease; such intensity of existence, in short,

[51] Pollard, *The Idea of Progress*, pp.66-67, 72-76. Ronald L Meek, *Society Science and the Ignoble Savage*, Cambridge, 1976, pp.116-118, 150-155.
[52] Mitchell, *Three Expedition*, Vol.1, p.170.

> must be far beyond the enjoyments of civilised men, with all that art can do for them [53]

In this almost homoerotic description Mitchell idealised his Aboriginal guide's physical condition as superior to that of Europeans. His romantic appreciation of this Aborigine could be perceived as a criticism of British industrial society with its increasing social problems and economic inequalities. He continued, comparing the life of Aborigines living in the stage of savagery to that of life in the Garden of Eden before the fall. Mitchell considered Aborigines preferred

> the land unbroken and free from the earliest curse pronounced against the first banished and first created man. The only kindness we could do for them, would be to let them and their wide range of territory alone; to act otherwise and profess good-will is but hypocrisy. We cannot occupy land without producing change, fully as great to the aborigines, as that which took place on man's fall and expulsion from Eden. They have hitherto lived utterly ignorant of the necessity for wearing fig leaves, or the utility of ploughs; and in this blissful state of ignorance they would, no doubt, prefer to remain. We bring upon them the punishments due to original sin, even before they know the shame of nakedness. Such were the reflections suggested to my mind by the young savage as he tripped on lightly before me by the side of his two half-civilised brethren of our party, who, muffled up in clothes, presented a contrast by no means in favour of our pretensions to improve and benefit their race.[54]

Throughout Mitchell's published account he engaged in philosophical discussion about Aborigines. Ironically, while Mitchell occasionally considered himself as the Adam-like figure surveying the potential of a pristine landscape, he also described his Aboriginal guide as Adam-like, uncorrupted by progressive commercial society. His comparison of the guide with those of his "two half-civilised brethren" revealed his reservations about the British civilising mission and the effect of British progress on Aborigines.

Mitchell's published accounts demonstrate the diversity of views that could be held by one explorer. At times he idolised the noble savage, but he also displayed some hesitation about their mode of life. Aborigines were living in a stage of savagery, an integral part of the idealised and primeval landscape,

> living in common with other animals simply on the bounty of nature; artless, and apparently as much afraid of us, and as shy as other animals of the forest. It

[53] Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, pp.64-65.
[54] *Ibid.*

> seemed strange, that in a climate the most resembling that of Milton's paradise, the circumstances of man's existence should be the most degrading.[55]

His discussion demonstrated the authority of his European understanding about the stages of progress. Later in his account he suggested Aborigines lived in a symbiotic relationship with their environment. Their practice of burning grass was vital to maintaining the balance of the ecosystem. As Mitchell observed: "Fire, grass, kangaroos, and human inhabitants, seem all dependent on each other for existence in Australia; for any one these being wanting, the others could no longer continue."[56] He believed that European settlement and pastoralism were disrupting the relationship that Aborigines had with the land, resulting in their demise.

The failure of Aborigines to utilise the land in a European way was a sign of their savage state. Their savagery allowed explorers to describe idealised land as "unoccupied", "unproductive", and "uncultivated"; words which can be directly connected to notions of economic progress.[57] The land was "unoccupied" because it did not indicate civil society and "unproductive" and "uncultivated" because it was not utilised for the benefit of a settled population. It was the absence of human interaction with the land in agricultural and pastoral pursuits reminiscent of Britain that evoked such language. In Mitchell's entry for 1 September 1846 he wrote that the Mantuan Downs near the Claude River was of

> boundless extent of the richest surface in a latitude corresponding to that of China, yet still uncultivated and unoccupied by man. A great reserve, provided by nature for the extension of his race, where economy, art, and industry might suffice to people it with a peaceful, happy, and contented population.[58]

The historian D.W.A. Baker has argued that Mitchell's statement could be interpreted as indicative of Mitchell's support for the doctrine of *terra nullius*.[59] In recent years the concept has been used by historians and lawyers to explain British possession of Aboriginal land with the result that it has developed a number of distinct meanings. Literally it means a land without people, but it has also been used to indicate a land without a sovereign or a land without visible signs of land ownership. Baker appears to

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[55] *Ibid.*, pp.98-99.
[56] *Ibid.*, p.412.
[57] Grey, *Journals of Two Expeditions* , Vol.1, p.359. Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.2, p.334.
[58] Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, p.292.
[59] Dr. M. Connor, "Error Nullius Revisited", The Samuel Griffith Society, Vol.16, Chapter four, pp.1-11. www.samualgriffith.org.au/papers/html Bain Attwood, "*The Law of the Land* or the Law of the Land?: History Law and Narrative in a Settler Society", *History Compass*,Vol.2, 2004, pp.1-30.

understand *terra nullius* to be the first, that is, the landscape was unpeopled. Certainly Mitchell did use the words "uninhabited" and "unoccupied" but their meaning differed from Baker's as Mitchell associated these words with the lack of evidence of economic use of land. Explorers like Mitchell demonstrated an understanding of land use that involved cultivation of the soil. The land was "unoccupied" and "uninhabited" because it was not utilised in a recognised European manner not because it was unpopulated.

Baker claims that Mitchell's position was ambiguous as a few days later he revealed his "Mabo decision" when he recognised Aboriginal use of the land in their practice of firing the grass to encourage new growth that would attract animals.[60] Mitchell observed Aborigines had modified the landscape through firing to create "open forest, which had become green as an emerald with the young crop of grass. These plains were thickly imprinted with the feet of kangaroos, and the work is undertaken by the native to attract these animals to such places."[61] This later description of Aboriginal land management practices and control of the land was not a sign of his ambiguous position but recognition of their cultural traditions and demonstrated the diversity of understandings about Aborigines held by explorers. Extensive evidence in the published accounts definitely suggests explorers did not perceive Australia as a land without people. Even D.W.A. Baker agrees that Mitchell recognised Aborigines and their use of the land. Baker's difficulty lies in coming to terms with Mitchell's diversity of views and the tensions they create within his narrative. Furthermore, Baker fails to recognise the role of the doctrine of progress in the explorer's description of Australia and its Indigenous inhabitants.

Grey believed that Aborigines had an understanding of land ownership. To demonstrate this he included a letter from John Dunmore Lang to Dr Hodgkin, an advocate for Indigenous people, extracted from Reports of the Aboriginal Protection Society. In the letter Lang revealed some of the finer points of his understanding of Aboriginal land management and cultural practices that led him to believe the

> Aborigines of Australia have an idea of property in the soil in their native and original state and that that idea is, in reality not very different from that of the European proprietors of sheep and cattle, by whom they have, in so many

[60] D.W.A. Baker, *The Civilised Surveyor: Thomas Mitchell and the Australian Aborigines*, Carlton South, 1997, p.178. Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, p.306.
[61] Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, p.306.

> instances been dispossessed, without the slightest consideration of their rights or feelings. [62]

Lang believed that Aboriginal ownership was reinforced by the fact that they had named landforms in their tribal area. He reinforced his point by ending his letter with a latin phrase *Nullum sine nomine saxum,* which not only emphasised the significance of the naming process in European and Aboriginal understandings of ownership but also implied the close connection of Aborigines to their land.[63]

Lang's letter demonstrated an ethnographic and humanitarian view of Aboriginal culture; Aborigines were living in a savage state, but his research suggested similarities between Aboriginal and European use of land. Aborigines did not "cultivate the soil", Lang reported, but subsisted by hunting and gathering and lived a nomadic life within set boundaries. He noted that while they did not erect fences they believed that the native animals within their tribal area belonged to them in a similar manner to European settlers who owned sheep and cattle on their property. Aborigines fired the landscape to encourage the growth of new grass and aid hunting. Lang observed:

> the country is occupied chiefly for pastoral purposes, the difference between the Aboriginal and the European ideas of property in the soil is more imaginary than real, the native grass affording subsistence to the kangaroos of the natives, as well as to the wild cattle of the Europeans, and the only difference indeed being, that the former are not branded with a particular mark like the latter, and are somewhat wilder and more difficult to catch.[64]

Implicit in Grey's account of Aborigines was a belief in the British civilising mission to raise Indigenous people from their savage state. He paternalistically approached this duty. While he considered Aborigines were less advanced than Europeans, common humanity suggested that Aborigines could advance given the right motivation. Such understanding provided the foundation for Grey's later "report on the best means of promoting the civilization of Aboriginal Inhabitants of Australia" which the Colonial Office circulated to the governors of the other colonies. In it, he advocated policies to assimilate Aborigines into European civilisation albeit at the suppression of their own

[62] John Dunmore Lang to Dr Hodgkin in Grey, *Journal of Two Expeditions*, Vol.2, p.236.
[63] Latin for "No stone lacks a name" John Dunmore Lang to Dr Hodgkin in Grey, *Journal of Two Expedtions*, Vol.2, p.236.
[64] John Dunmore Lang to Dr Hodgkin in Grey, *Journal of Two Expeditions*, Vol.2, pp.233-234.

cultural traditions, laws and beliefs.[65] He refuted philosophical understanding that celebrated the life of the noble savage as free and not constrained by culture. Grey considered that such understandings were erroneous and believed that Indigenous people could not progress while they retained their traditional cultural practices:

> But to believe that man in a savage state is endowed with freedom either of thought or action is erroneous in the highest degree. He is in reality subjected to complex laws, which not only deprive him of all free agency of thought, but, at the same time by allowing no scope whatever for the development of intellect, benevolence, or any other great moral qualification, they necessarily bind him down in a hopeless state of barbarism, from which it is impossible for man to emerge, so long as he is enthralled by these customs; which, on the other hand, are so ingeniously devised, as to have a direct tendency to annihilate any effort that is made to overthrow them.[66]

Eyre's account of the Aborigines of Australia reflected a similar belief that custom was inhibiting Aboriginal progress:

> Custom has, however, from time immemorial, usurped the place of laws, and with them perhaps, is even more binding than they would be. Through custom's irresistible sway has been forged the chain that binds in iron fetters a people, who might otherwise be said to be without government or restraint. By it, the young and the weak are held in willing subjection to the old and the strong. Superstitious to a degree they are taught from earliest infancy to dread they know not what evil or punishment, if they infringe upon obligations they have been told to consider as sacred. All the better feelings and impulses implanted in the human heart by nature, are trampled upon by customs, which, as long as they remain unchanged, must forever prevent them from rising in the scale of civilisation and improvement[67]

The views of Eyre and Grey can be traced to British humanitarian concerns that emerged from the 1837 "Report from the Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements)". This committee was concerned about the suffering of Indigenous people that was occurring as a result of British colonialism. Further the Committee considered ways to improve the welfare and protection of Indigenous people within its growing Empire.[68] These two explorers advocated assimilation in their approach to the progress of Australian Aborigines. They believed that Aboriginal progress was tied to equality

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[65] Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867*, Chicago, 2002, p.37. "Sir George Grey", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A010439b.htm

[66] Grey, *Journals of Two Expeditions*, Vol.2, pp.217-218.

[67] Eyre, *Journals of Expeditions*, Vol.2, p.384.

[68] Julie Evans, *Edward Eyre: race and colonial governance*, Dunedin, 2005, pp.99-100. "Report from the Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements) with Minutes of Evidence Appendix and Index", *British Parliamentary Papers*, Volume 2, Anthropology/Aborigines, 1837.

before the law which could not occur while Indigenous people were constrained by observance of customary laws and traditions.[69]

A diversity of views on Aboriginal ability to progress existed in the early nineteenth century. Generally they were considered low on the scale of humanity with innate uncivilised tendencies governed by custom that hindered their advancement. Occasionally explorers rejected generalisations that appeared in the press and were made by uninformed commentators and which cast Aborigines in disparaging light. The explorers' observations were made over the course of extended journeys, which allowed for longer ethnographic observation and thus greater understanding. For example, Eyre also noted the misrepresentation and maligning of Aborigines as "the lowest and most degraded of the human species, … generally considered as ranking but little above the members of the brute creation."[70] Although he did not agree with such deprecating generalisations, he still considered Aborigines "savages" with "many vices" but no worse "than in many other aboriginal races."[71] Eyre repudiated commentators who asserted that Aborigines were "irreclaimable" and "unteachable"; instead, he proposed that they could be civilised if comprehensive and culturally sensitive policies were put in place.[72]

Like Eyre, Grey noted the misrepresentation of Aborigines in the public mind. In a chapter in his account which dealt with the impact of Europeans on Aborignies, he claimed the public were "prejudiced" in their views of Aborigines and generally considered them a "very inferior race, in fact as one occupying a scale in the creation which nearly places them on a level with the brutes." These assumptions about Aborigines, he believed, would be hard to eradicate, but if not stamped out, would lead to an uncertain future where Aborigines either died out or became a minority living in a degraded state.[73] Aborigines, Grey noted, were as "apt and intelligent as any other race of men…they are subject to the same affections, appetites and passions as other men."[74] He believed that their savage customary laws were a hindrance to their advancement

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[69] *Ibid.*, pp.99-100.
[70] Eyre, *Journals of Expeditions*, Vol.2, p.153.
[71] *Ibid.*
[72] *Ibid.*, pp.154-155.
[73] Grey, *Journal of Two Expeditions*, Vol.2, p.367.
[74] *Ibid.*, p.374.

towards civilisation. Paternalistically Grey advocated teaching Aborigines British laws to supersede their own laws

> so that any native who is suffering under their own customs may have the power of an appeal to those of Great Britain; or to put this in its true light, that all authorized persons should, in all instances, be required to protect a native from the violence of his fellows, even though they be in the execution of their own laws.[75]

Although he considered their law barbaric, he perceived, by analogy with other Indigenous subjects of the empire, that Aborigines too had the ability to advance to a civilised state by being made amenable to British law.[76] His imperial rhetoric, while demonstrating Britain's humanity and benevolence towards Aborigines, reinforced the British belief in its own assumed superior justice system.

British officials liked to portray their colonisation as philanthropic, as conveying enlightenment and civilisation to Indigenous people. There are numerous examples of explorers observing the ability of Aborigines to adapt to European civilisation. Sturt considered that a willingness to barter was a sign that Aborigines could progress beyond their barbarous state: He observed:

> We occasionally exchanged pieces of ironhoop for two other kinds of fish, the one a bream, the other a barbel, with the natives, and the eagerness with which they met our advances to barter, is a strong proof of their natural disposition towards this first step in civilization.[77]

While some early nineteenth century explorers accepted the capacity and aptitude of Aborigines to be civilised, many discerned impediments to their advancement. Such barriers were not only a result of their adherence to customary ways but also related to the clash of two disparate cultures. For example, Mitchell observed that Aborigines would not survive contact with European civilisation as settlement was disrupting their mode of existence. He noted that Aborigines were disappearing from the settled areas as they

> could no longer enjoy their solitary freedom; for the dominion of the white man surrounded them. His sheep and cattle filled the green pastures where the kangaroo (the principal food of the natives) was accustomed to range, until the stranger came from distant lands and claimed the soil. Thus these first

[75] *Ibid.*, p.375.
[76] *Ibid.*, p.377.
[77] Sturt, *Two Expeditions*, Vol.2, p.113

> inhabitants, hemmed in by the power of the white population, and deprived of the liberty which they formerly enjoyed of wandering at will through their native wilds, were compelled to seek a precarious shelter amidst the close thickets and rocky fastnesses which afforded them a temporary home, but scarcely a subsistence, for their chief support, the kangaroo, was either destroyed or banished.[78]

Yet Mitchell observed a willingness amongst some Aborigines to accept civilisation, particularly his guides. While he considered equality of treatment was the key to civilising Aborigines, it had not been successful because Aborigines had a strong attachment to the bush that lured them back when their attempt to fit into the British way of life was challenged. Mitchell suggested a social experiment that would remove an Aboriginal couple from Australia, thus obviating the compelling attraction of their traditional land and allowing the civilising process to take place unencumbered. The success of this couple might inspire other Aborigines to "attain a state of equality with the white men".[79] Despite his belief in equality of treatment in dealings with Indigenous people, Mitchell's account exudes the paternalism of the white colonising race. He concluded his discussion by stating that Britain, as "the nation so active in the suppression of slavery" should "consider betimes, in taking up new countries, how the aboriginal races can be preserved; and how the evil effects of spirituous liquors, of gunpowder, and of diseases more inimical to them than even slavery, may be counteracted."[80]

Eyre, like Mitchell and other explorers, considered that Aborigines were a dying race. While this was regarded as the inevitable result of contact with a progressive civilisation, he called for efforts to allay the speed of the their demise. However his comments also reveal much about the British civilising mission:

> For the account given of the Aborigines the author deems it unnecessary to offer any apology; a long experience among them, and an intimate knowledge of their character, habits, and position with regard to Europeans, have induced in him a deep interest on behalf of a people, who are fast fading away before the progress of a civilization, which ought only to have added to their improvement and prosperity. Gladly would the author wish to see attention awakened on their behalf, and an effort at least made to stay the torrent which is overwhelming them.[81]

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[78] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.10.
[79] Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, pp.414-417.
[80] *Ibid.*, p.417.
[81] Eyre, *Journals of Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.x

Following British policy of the humane treatment of Indigenous people, Aborigines were exposed to and interacted with a modern and progressive civilisation which would encourage their progress towards a higher stage. However, Grey expressed concern that this had not happened as the Aboriginal race had rejected British progress and was fading away. His imperial rhetoric revealed the humanity and concern of a British official following British policy towards Indigenous people but it also evoked a sense of British authority in the colonising process.

Conclusion

Throughout their published accounts explorers engaged in imperial rhetoric that claimed Australia as part of the British Empire. Ideas of social and economic progress provided a theoretical background for establishing their claim. It underlay their vision of Australia's potential for economic and societal progress through individual freedom and labour. It also explained a diversity of views about the ability of Aborigines to progress. Some explorers considered that Aborigines could progress and merely needed to overcome their customary ways by assimilation to British cultural and legal traditions. Others perceived similarities and differences between British and Aboriginal understanding of land ownership. While some explorers recognised the ownership by Aborigines of traditional areas, the narratives did not extend to discussion of their sovereignty of Australia as a whole. At times explorers described the land as "unoccupied" or "uninhabited" but such words did not relate to the absence of Aborigines but to their failure to utilise the land in a European manner. Explorers regarded Aborigines as an integral part of an idealised landscape.

Although progress provided a way of explaining the landscape, a belief in Providence guided the journeys of explorers and legitimated their claims. Australia was generally considered a land created by Providence for British settlement. The land merely awaited improvement by British settlers who would further claim the land through agriculture and pastoralism. The explorers' descriptions of the landscape and the stories of settlers' success suggested to readers that Australia was an ideal location for British migrants. But the theory of progress was only one philosophical idea that provided a way of appropriating the landscape and its people. Inextricably intertwined with their use of the idea of progress that predicted economic and social advancement in Australia

was the establishment of an aesthetic appreciation of the land that proffered familiarity and emotional attachment.

Chapter Five
"scenes of surpassing beauty": aesthetic appreciation of the landscape

> This ravine, in the luxuriance of its vegetation, and the great size of the trees, as well as in its rapid stream, at times leaping in cascades, or foaming in rapids, resembled those we had before seen in the sandstone ranges, but it differed from them in the greater height of the surrounding hills and cliffs, which being overshadowed with hanging trees and climbing plants, presented as rich a painting as the eye could behold; and as these grew golden with the rays of the setting sun, or were thrown into deep and massive shadows, I could not but regret that no Claude of the tropics had arisen, to transfer to canvas scenes which words cannot express.[1]
>
> George Grey, *Journal of Two Expeditions,* 1838.

This epigraph from the explorer George Grey's explorations in north-western Australia underlined the preference for the conventions of the picturesque and romanticism in describing scenery in exploration literature. The picturesque elements of the scene prompt the explorer to liken it to one worthy of painting by an artist like Claude Lorraine. Besides revealing the aesthetic preferences of the explorers such descriptions were a form of imperial rhetoric as the aesthetic ideals drawn upon provided a way for explorers to understand and claim the landscape. The conventions of the picturesque placed order on the land that made it familiar and controllable. Moreover, the understanding that emerged about Australia through the use of these principles encouraged wider appreciation. The use of picturesque theory subdued tensions that existed between concern to present an idealised landscape and the desire to capture the uniqueness of the Australian landscape. It concentrated on the visual representation of the land in a known style, an image that was extended through supporting illustrations. An emotional connection to an idealised land was stimulated through romanticism. Inspired by nature, the explorer responded spontaneously in subjective and lyrical descriptions. Ultimately the images of the land they created in their accounts appropriated the land for the Empire by placing it within the bounds of contemporary European aesthetic understanding and appreciation.

This chapter explores how the picturesque aesthetic and romanticism operated within early nineteenth century accounts of exploration to strengthen imperial rhetoric. It looks in particular at how these ideas were used to describe Australia and its Indigenous people and how the subsequent descriptions were a way of making it familiar, stimulating emotional attachment and substantiating British claims.

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[1] Grey, *Journals of Two Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.216

By the nineteenth century aesthetic theories provided conventions for viewing the landscape that were an influence on literature, art, landscape gardening, architecture and travel.[2] The concept of the picturesque had been developed in the late eighteenth century by aesthetic theorist and artist, William Gilpin who extended the notions of the sublime and the beautiful to give the whole scene an association with artistic composition.[3] The picturesque as an aesthetic ideology was a way of seeing which not only operated upon the senses and sensibilities of the viewer but also upon the reader. Explorers envisioned idealised landscapes using Gilpin's idea of picturesque beauty which emphasised the essential elements of roughness, contrast and variety. If they were lacking, scenes could be improved by altering the features or adding gradations of colour and/or shadows or even omitting elements when their inclusion would reduce the impact of the scene's picturesque qualities. While the picturesque aesthetic provided conventions to improve scenes, often in Australia explorers perceived that Nature had provided idealised landscape that did not require the usual improvement associated with picturesque composition.

The picturesque provided the transition from the order of classicism to the wildness of romanticism.[4] The aesthetic theorist, Christopher Hussey stated that the "picturesque was necessary to enable the imagination to form the habit of feeling through the eyes."[5] In many accounts of exploration the picturesque is combined with romanticism which emphasised "the individual, the subjective, the irrational, the imaginative, the personal, the spontaneous, the emotional, the visionary, and the transcendental."[6] In particular, romanticism was characterised by a reliance on the imagination, subjectivity of approach and freedom of thought and expression. The celebration of human emotion and the idealisation of nature were at its centre. The explorer responded spontaneously and emotionally to the landscape; often associating the moods of nature with the moods of members of the expedition. The explorer's response emphasised feeling and imagination over reason, logic and science. This developed alongside a rational view of

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[2] Hussey, *The Picturesque*, pp.4,8,27,28. Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque, Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800*, Aldershot, England, 1989, p.26.
[3] Gilpin, *Three Essays*, p.19.
[4] Hussey, *The Picturesque*, p.4
[5] *Ibid*.
[6] "Romanticism," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 2006. Encyclopaedia Britannica Online. http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article-9083836.

landscape as the setting for scientific, religious and historic representation, although it did not usually exclude such themes from the overall account. Whilst the picturesque and romanticism are often intertwined, in this chapter they are dealt with separately to stress the particularities of the two approaches.

The picturesque

Most of the explorers covered here had an aesthetic appreciation which demonstrated an understanding of the picturesque as Gilpin used the term, that is, to "denote such objects, as are proper subjects for painting".[7] For a scene to contain picturesque beauty it had to consist of the elements of roughness, variety and contrast. The picturesque explorer sought his objective in idealised Nature; a natural, undeveloped landscape, but one which he might proceed to improve through subtle embellishments according to the conventions of the picturesque. Gilpin stated that the aim of picturesque description was to

> Bring the images of nature as forcibly and as closely to the eye as it can, by high colouring. High colouring is not a string of rapturous epithets, but an attempt to analyse the views of nature: to mark their tints and varied lights and to express this detail in terms as appropriate and vivid as possible.[8]

Mitchell proficiently employed the picturesque aesthetic in his descriptions and sketches of the landscape. He was competent in the use of its conventions and in particular "high colouring", which he used in interpreting natural scenery for the reader. His descriptions often combined concern for picturesque composition with romanticism to arouse the emotions and the imagination of the reader who delighted in the prospects of the lush setting described. Viewing a backwater of the Murray, Mitchell recorded:

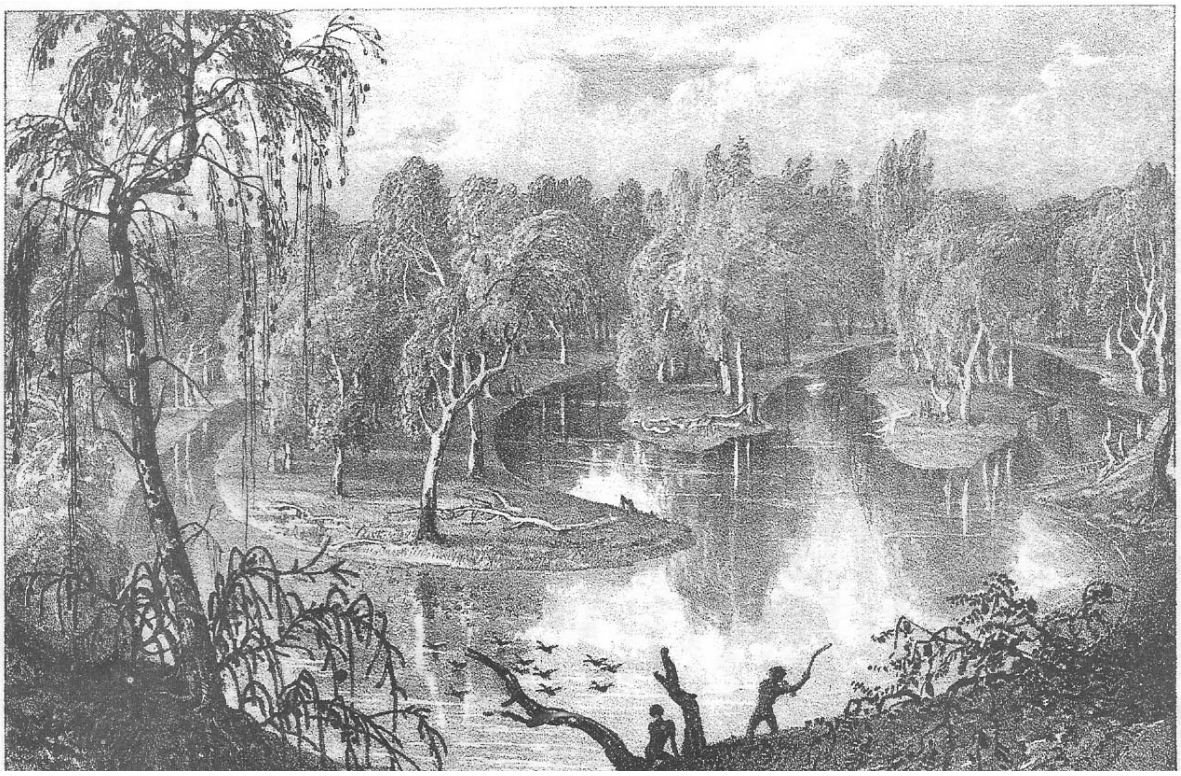
> On crossing a point of [a sandhill], we came upon a most romantic looking scene, where a flood branch had left a serpentine piece of water enclosing two wooded islands of rather picturesque character; the whole being overhung by the steep and bushy slope of the hill. The scenery of some lakes thus formed, was very fine especially when their rich verdure and lofty trees were contrasted with the scrub which covered the sand-hills nearest the river, where a variety of shrubs, such as we had not seen, formed a curious foreground.[9]

Mitchell's description and the supporting illustration prompted the reader to visualise a scene of sylvan beauty.(Illustration 12) Nature had provided an idyllic setting that was

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[7] Gilpin, *Three Essays*, p.36.
[8] cited in Hussey, *The Picturesque*, p.34.
[9] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.2, p.132

Illustration 12



Backwater of the Murray

Source: T.L. Mitchell, *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia,* Vol.II, London, 1839, facing page 133.

fertile and had a reliable source of water. At other times Mitchell composed the elements of the scenery in terms of the conventions of landscape painting. The foreground was framed, the middle distance described and the limits of the view defined. While the main party remained encamped at the Claude River, Mitchell, after struggling through brigalow for some miles, sketched the visual reward of a

> scene of surpassing beauty, that gradually opened to us. That long-lost tree, the graceful Acacia pendula, received us in the foreground, and open plains, blended with waving lines of wood extended far into bluey distance, beyond which an azure coronet of mountains of romantic forms, terminated the charming landscape.[10]

In his account, Mitchell demonstrated the "love of novelty" that was at the foundation of the picturesque explorers' quest.[11] The landscape that delighted Mitchell was described for the reader as a landscape painting was painted by the artist. The foreground functioned to prevent the viewer's attention from straying away from the focal point of the scene and led the viewer's focus into the important middle-distance.[12] In Mitchell's description of the landscape the foreground was framed with the darker foliage of the acacias, the wavy lines of trees constituted the lighter and open middle-distance and distant mountains formed the boundary of the scene. This descriptive technique while conforming to picturesque conventions subtly conveyed imperial rhetoric. It forced the reader's visualisation of the scene to the important open plains and aroused associated ideas about the possibilities of the landscape.

As if to demonstrate their familiarity with landscape art, explorers made frequent reference to artists. In the epigraph at the beginning of the chapter, Grey likens the scene before him to one worthy of a painting by Claude Lorrain. The glen, which Mitchell viewed after proceeding through Stephenson's Pass, reminded him of the beauty and grandeur of the nature works of English artist, John Martin. Mitchell explained:

> This gap I called Stephenson's Pass; it led into a spacious glen surrounded on all sides but the N.W. by mountains such as I have described, recalling to my memory the most imaginative efforts of Mr. Martin's saepia drawing, and showing how far the painter's fancy may anticipate nature.[13]

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[10] Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, p.229.
[11] Gilpin, *Three Essays*, pp.47-48.
[12] Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, p.29. Andrews states that this device was part of the conventions of picturesque composition.
[13] Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, p.237.

The recollection of this drawing highlighted that aspect of picturesque composition that was to mould representations of nature into an ideal form. It is interesting that Mitchell, by rendering the scene as one comparable to such idealised nature, suggested that the scene at Stephenson's Pass did not need the usual improvement associated with picturesque composition.

The textual representation of the landscape by the explorer and the subsequent appreciation of the landscape scenery by the reader were tied to an aesthetic appreciation of landscape art. Mitchell clearly shows awareness of the interconnection between the two in his use of the conventions of landscape painting in written descriptions and in the reference to renowned painters such as Claude Lorraine, Salvator Rosa and John Martin. Not only were their names used in the naming of landscape features but their works became a reference point for the aesthetic appreciation of the scenery he observed.

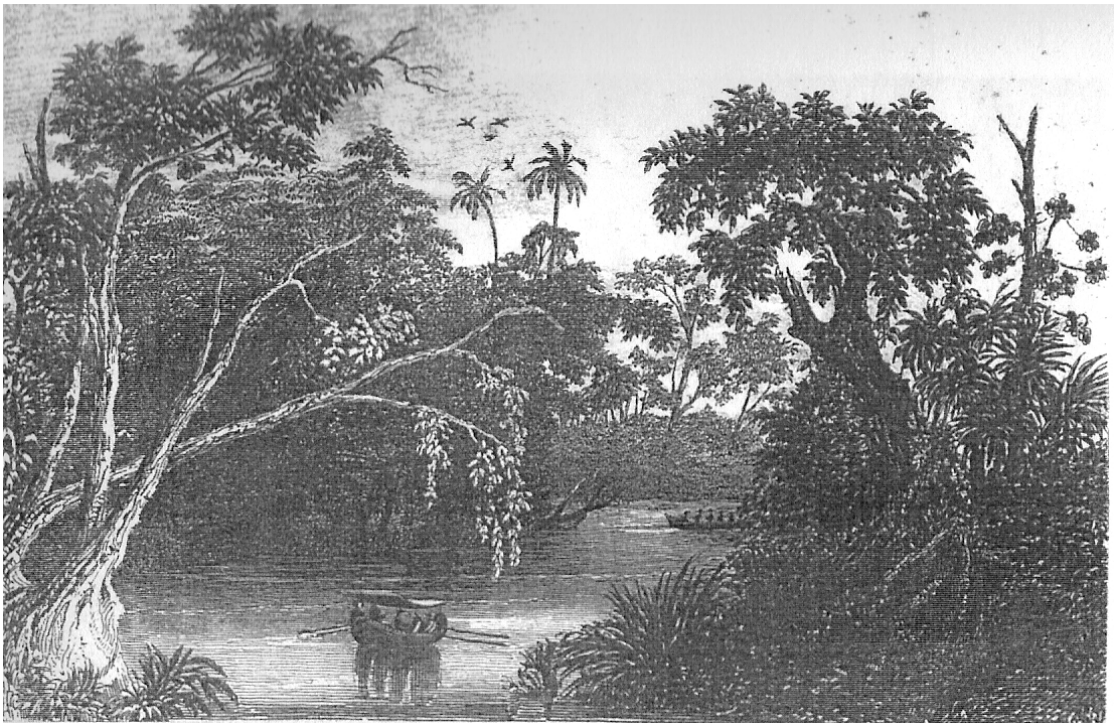
A concern for picturesque composition was not unique to Mitchell. It is evident in many of the published accounts of exploration. Passages extolling the picturesque nature of scenery were often accompanied by an illustration also following picturesque composition. For example, Stokes included illustrations in his account, sometimes adding further detail and at other times briefly allowing the illustrations to define the beauty of the scene. In one instance, after a lengthy textual description of the beauty by night and day of one channel of the Albert River, Stokes continued by enriching the description of the beauty of its south branch with reference to the illustration in the front of volume one.[14] This illustration was composed with trees defining the limits of the scene and the focus drawn to the boat in the middle distance (Illustration 13). Concern for depicting the variety of vegetation types provided contrast to the scene. The landscape depicted was rich, abundant, exotic and ideal.[15]

In Mitchell's *Three Expeditions,* the illustration and accompanying description of the *Fall of Cobaw* follows the familiar pattern of picturesque description but in this case, Mitchell enhanced the scene by drawing attention to its contrast and variety as essential elements. Mitchell wrote of the scene at the *Fall of Cobaw*,

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[14] Stokes, *Discoveries in Australia, with an Account of the Coasts and Rivers explored and surveyed during the Voyage of the HMS Beagle*, Vol.2, London, 1846, p.315.
[15] *Ibid.*, Vol.1, illustration facing page 1.

Illustration 13



South Branch of the Albert River

Source: J. Lort Stokes, *Discoveries in Australia,* Vol.I, 1846, illustration facing p.1.

> I rode up the bank towards a noise of falling water, and thus came to a very fine cascade of upwards of sixty feet. The river indeed fell more than double that height, but in the lower part, the water escaped unseen flowing amongst large blocks of granite. I had visited several waterfalls in Scotland, but this was certainly the most picturesque I had witnessed; although the effect was not so much in the body of water falling, or the loud noise, as in the bold character of the rocks over and amongst which it fell. Their colour and shape were harmonized into a more complete scene than nature usually presents, resembling the "finished subject" of an artist, foreground and all. The prevailing hues were light red and purple-grey, the rocks being finely interlaced with a small-leaved creeper of brightest green. A dark coloured moss, which presents a warm green in the sun, covered the lower masses, and relieved and supported the brighter hues, while a brilliant iris shone steadily in the spray, and blended into perfect harmony the lighter hues of the higher rocks, and the whiteness of the torrent rushing over them. The banks of this stream were of so bold a character, that in all probability other picturesque scenery, perhaps finer than this, may yet be found upon it.[16]

Once again Mitchell presented an idealised scene from Nature that did not appear to require the usual assistance of the artist to meet the conventions of picturesque composition. The contrasting colours and irregularity of the rocks particularly engaged Mitchell.

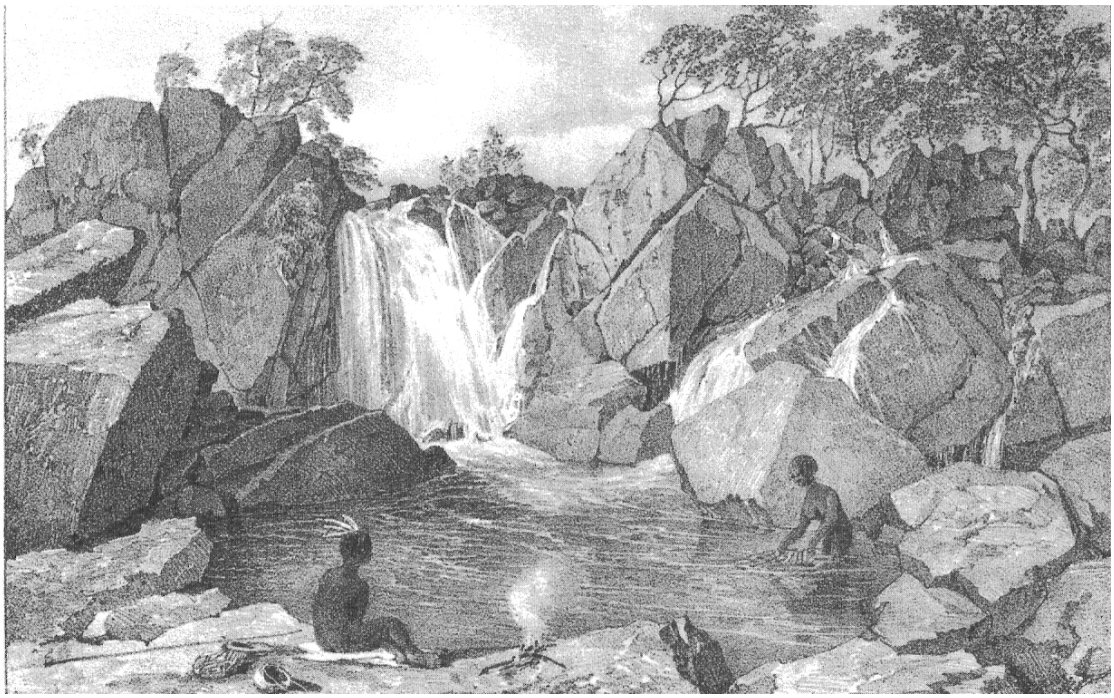
However there was some tension between Mitchell's assertion that the scene was "more complete than nature usually presents" and his accompanying illustration. In his sketch Mitchell added the figures of two Aborigines in the foreground who are not mentioned in the text but who introduced a scientific dimension as well as arousing associated ideas of the untouched, wild and romantic nature of the setting.[17] (Illustration 14) By placing Aborigines within the bounds of the picturesque composition, Mitchell depicted them as "noble savages", inferior but dignified and undisturbed. While the inclusion of figures was accepted in picturesque composition to improve the qualities of the scene, implicit in his addition of Aborigines was imperial rhetoric of race that suggested British authority to manipulate Aborigines.

The scenery of the Glenelg River led Mitchell to lyrically describe and sketch it according to the picturesque. Inspired by the setting he noted:

> The scenery on the banks was pleasing and various: at some points picturesque limestone cliffs overhung the river, and cascades flowed out of caverns hung with stalactites: at others, the shores were festooned with green dripping shrubs

[16] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.2, p.286.
[17] Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye*, pp.66-67.

Illustration 14



Fall of Cobaw

Source: T.L. Mitchell, *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia,* Vol.II, London, 1839, facing p.286.

> and creepers, or terminated in a smooth grassy bank sloping to the water's edge. But none of the banks consisted of water-worn earth; they were in general low and grassy, bounding the alluvial flats, that lay between the higher points of land.[18]

Roughness and disorder are highlighted in Mitchell's portrayal of the scene using words like "festooned" and "dripping" for the plants, the cliffs that "overhung" the river and "cascades" that "flowed out of caverns hung with stalactites". Adding variety through the smoothness of the "grassy bank" and "alluvial flats" enhanced its aesthetic qualities. Mitchell's contrived description was supported by an accompanying illustration, not unlike Stokes' South Branch of the Albert River, which suggested the role of the picturesque explorer as the harbinger of civilisation to a pristine, untouched land. (Illustration 15) The civilisation that Mitchell brought to the supposedly unexplored regions of the southern interior was British and imperial, signified by the Union Jack unfurled on the boat. Moreover, implicit in his description of the land along the banks of the river were opportunities for further British settlement.

Picturesque and park-like – the nexus of aesthetic and economic value of land

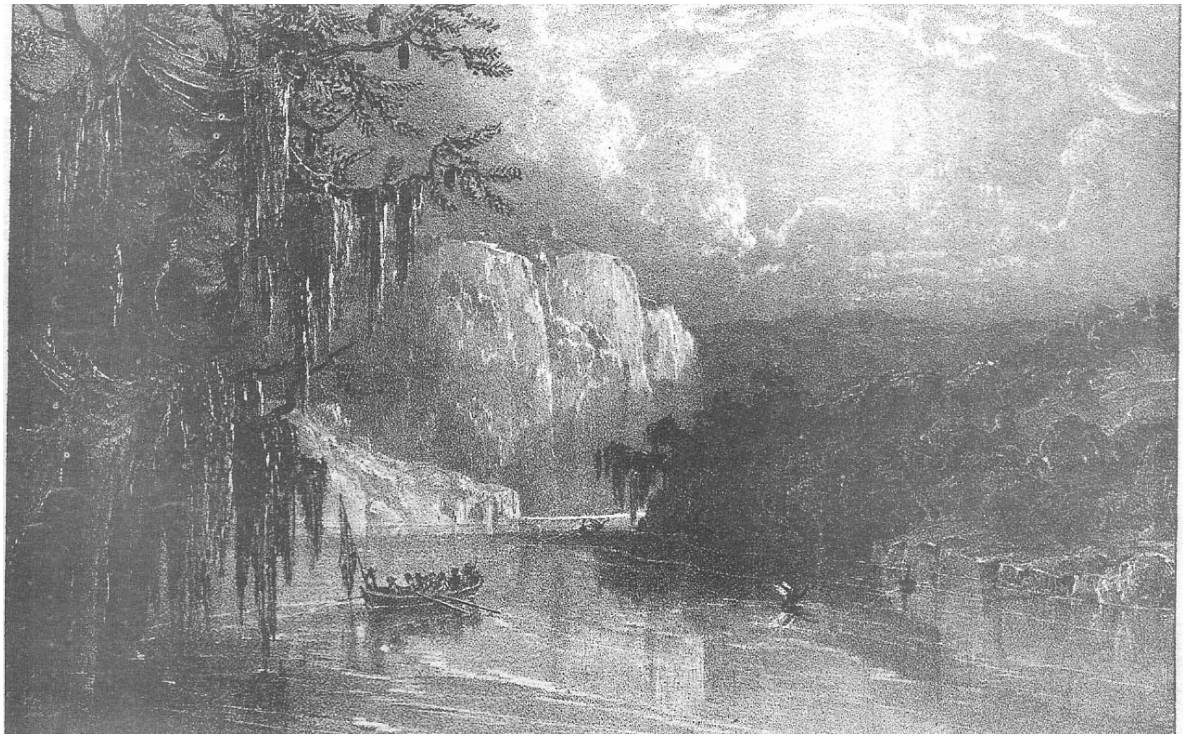
The picturesque aesthetic often combined with an appreciation of the economic value of land in accounts of exploration covered here and operated to reinforce the imperial rhetoric implicit in the texts. As a picturesque explorer, Oxley was delighted by the discovery of a scene of picturesque composition, which did not require correction.[19] He wrote enthusiastically:

> A mile and a half brought us into the valley which we had seen on our first descending into the glen: imagination cannot fancy anything more beautifully picturesque than the scene which burst upon us. The breadth of the valley to the base of the opposite gently rising hills was, between three and four miles, studded with fine trees, upon a soil which for richness can nowhere be excelled; its extent north and south we could not see: to the west it was bounded by the lofty rocky ranges by which we had entered it; this was covered to the summit with cypresses and acacia in full bloom: a few trees of the sterculia heterophylla, with their bright green foliage, gave additional beauty to the scene. In the centre of this charming valley ran a strong and beautiful stream, its bright transparent waters dashing over a gravely bottom, intermingled with large stones, forming at short intervals considerable pools, in which the rays of the sun were reflected with a brilliancy equal to that of the most polished mirror.[20]

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[18] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.2, p.223.
[19] Gilpin, *Three Essays*, pp.49-50.
[20] Oxley, *Journal of Two Expeditions*, p.32

Illustration 15



The River Glenelg

Source: T.L. Mitchell, *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia*, Vol.II, 1839, facing p.225.

While he was concerned to describe the scene according to picturesque composition as he defined its limits and drew the reader's attention to the foreground where there was a fertile valley with abundant water, his depiction also indicated an understanding of the elements of picturesque beauty: roughness, smoothness and variety. The descriptive words chosen by Oxley supported his aesthetic appreciation of the scene and highlighted the fecundity and availability of the land for settlement.

Explorers often described the landscape by comparison to English country estates which reflected Gilpin's preference for scenery with contrasts and irregularities. The beauty of nature was contained in the contrasting colours brought about by the effect of changes in light on elements of the scene and in the variety of landforms it contained. Mitchell demonstrated an appreciation of such picturesque scenes which contained open and undulating land with irregular groupings of trees.[21] Describing land near the Gwydir River, he wrote:

> Penetrating next through a narrow strip of casuarinae scrub, we found the remains of native huts; and beyond this scrub, we crossed a beautiful plain; covered with shining verdure, and ornamented with trees which, although "dropt in nature's careless haste", gave the country the appearance of an extensive park.[22]

In such passages Mitchell revealed his aesthetic sensibility, although in this instance he not only conveyed an understanding of the picturesque but also its application in landscape gardening.

This trend in landscape gardening was directly linked to the picturesque aesthetic and Gilpin's belief that "nature is most defective in composition; and must be a little assisted. Her ideas are too vast for picturesque use, without the restraint of rules."[23] Landscape gardeners such as William Kent, "Capability" Brown and Humphrey Repton extended the picturesque into landscape gardening to create freer, less formal gardens with an emphasis on irregularity and artful disorder. Through the use of ha-has instead of fencing, man-made lakes and the strategic plantings of trees, a naturalistic style of landscape was created that became the accepted standard of landscape gardening. David Watkins suggests that the development of an irregular form in landscape

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[21] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*,Vol.1, p.192. Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, p.251..
[22] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.90.
[23] Gilpin, *Three Essays*, p.67.

gardening coincided with a reaction to the enclosure movement when the landscape was formalised through the fencing of open fields for productive use.[24] These English country estates characterised an elite section of British society which was considered to command an aesthetic sensibility.[25] The gentleman's park that evolved from the popularity of less formal gardens epitomised the convergence of the economic value of land with its aesthetic appreciation. While still productive these parks were aesthetically pleasing. They demonstrated picturesque preferences for irregularities, contrasts and variety which became part of the formulae for creating informal landscaped gardens in the picturesque style.[26]

Explorers demonstrated an appreciation of Australian scenery that was considered park-like and picturesque. Generally the explorer's preference was for open, undulating land with detached groups of trees and contrasting vegetation. Such land was compared to the contrived country estates in England. But as already mentioned such estates also had an economic value related to their productive use. The explorer's aesthetic preference for park-like landscapes and undulating and productive landscape scenery reflected the British idealised rural image that became popular through the development of country estates. Consequently the imperial rhetoric of explorers praised those aspects of the natural landscape that were not only picturesque but also productive, linking aesthetic preferences to the economic value of land. Oxley journeyed "through a beautiful picturesque country of low hills and fine valleys" near his camp at Limestone Creek. Describing the park-like quality of the landscape the detached groupings of trees and the open grassed areas, he stated "I never saw a country better adapted for grazing of all kinds of stock than that we passed over this day."[27] Sturt offered confirmation of his earlier prediction of the potential of park-like scenery on the shores of Lake Victoria. He contended:

> the SW shore of the lake is low and grassy, and beautiful umbrageous trees adorn it, in number not more than two or three to the acre.… On the 15th I again moved so as to keep pace with him, and was highly delighted at the really park-

[24] David Watkin, *The English Vision, The Picturesque in Architecture, Landscape and Garden Design*, London, 1982, p.1.
[25] Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology, The English Rustic Tradition 1740-1860*, London, 1986, pp.9-14.
[26] Gilpin, *Three Essays*, p.28.
[27] Oxley, *Journal of Two Expeditions*, p.1

> like appearance of the scenery. This pretty locality is now occupied as a cattle run, and must be a place of amusement as well as profit.[28]

He considered the landscape not only profitable but also visually pleasing, reminiscent of a contrived pleasure-ground of sparse groups of shady trees in an undulating grassed plain. Such estates were used for hunting and sport-shooting as well as agriculture.

In making a comparison with country estates in England, the explorer implied that the land was provided for British use. As mentioned in Chapter Four, in many instances Nature/God/Providence had provided land that did not need to be improved and simply awaited settlement. For example Sturt observed:

> It would have been impossible for the most tasteful individual to have laid out pleasure ground to more advantage, than Nature had done in planting and disposing of various groups of trees along the spine, and upon the sides of the elevations that confined the river, and bounded the low ground that intervened between it and their base.[29]

Oxley likened the soft, undulating tranquil landscape he discovered to the country estates of the British elite. He noted on August 15:

> From several of the hills over which our route led us, we had the most extensive and beautiful prospects; from thirty to forty miles round, from the north to south, the country was broken in irregular low hills thinly studded with small timber, and covered with grass: the whole landscape within the compass of our view was clear and open, resembling diversified pleasure grounds irregularly laid out and planted.[30]

He not only linked the park-like scenery to its productive potential through analogy to the gentleman's country estate but also through his observations of its support of Aboriginal populations. He considered that the prevalence of Aboriginal fires in the area denoted "we were in country which afforded [Aborigines] ample means of subsistence; far different from the low deserts and morasses to the south-west".[31]

In *The Cartographic Eye*, Simon Ryan suggests that class connection to land and its appropriation are perpetuated through explorers likening landscape scenery in Australia to the gentleman's park, a symbol of the British establishment and aesthetic taste.[32] His analysis of the explorers' descriptions of park-like landscape is provocative, contending

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[28] Sturt, *Narrative of an Expedition*, Vol.1, pp.94-95.
[29] Sturt, *Two Expeditions*, Vol 2, p.152.
[30] Oxley, *Journal of Two Expeditions*, p. 30.
[31] *Ibid*.
[32] Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye*, pp.72-73.

that the explorer's understanding of the picturesque aesthetic meant that park-like landscapes were connected to wealth and privilege. Thus Ryan suggests that explorers considered such landscapes in Australia were provided for the development of civilised society, as Indigenous people living in savagery would have been unable to create such a landscape.[33] This assumption played a "large role in the journals' construction of the 'park-like' lands which they described as the products of accident, or as areas divinely intended for colonial settlement."[34] He asserts that descriptions of "park-like" landscapes reinforced imperial authority to appropriate the land and revealed a "fundamentally intentionalist stance, which project[ed] English class privilege onto the Australian landscape".[35] His analysis demonstrates the strong connection between the picturesque aesthetic and the economic value of the land explorers described. However in his concern for deconstructing the texts to support his thesis, Ryan is preoccupied with intent on the part of the explorer and tends to undervalue the aesthetic sensibility of the explorer as a man of taste whose descriptions were the automatic response to scenery and, although imperialist in tenor, were much less intentionalist.

While the illustrations that accompanied the explorers' texts combined the picturesque with the productive, the figures adorning the illustrations evoked the bucolic charm of the landscape. These figures were an important feature of conforming the illustrations to picturesque composition. Gilpin suggested that while industrious figures were more pleasing in a sketch of a scene where the moral message was significant, idle figures were suited to the picturesque as they added dignity to the scene without intruding on its naturalism.[36] He stated that sketchy figures might be used sparingly in drawing picturesque landscape:

> to mark a road – to break a piece of foreground –to point out the horizon in a sea-view – or to carry off the distance of retiring water by the contrast of a dark sail, not quite so distant, placed before it.[37]

Indeed in Gilpin's picturesque aesthetic, figures were meant "merely as the ornament of scenes". He continued:

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[33] Ryan overlooks the fact that some explorers recognised that Aborigines in their fire-stick farming were responsible for the park-like quality of the landscape. See Chapter 4.
[34] Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye*, p.73.
[35] *Ibid*., pp.73-74.
[36] Gilpin cited in C. Hussey, *The Picturesque*, p.118.
[37] Gilpin, *Three Essays*, p.77.

> In the human figure we contemplate neither exactness of form; nor expression, any farther than it is shewn in action: we merely consider general shapes, dresses, groups, and occupations; which we often find casually in greater variety, and beauty, than any selection can procure.[38]

In Stokes's account, figures not only break up the foreground but also animate the landscape and accentuate the vastness of the *Plains of Promise* depicted. The inactive shepherd-like figures in the centre of the illustration surveyed the extent of the plains as if heralding the approach of civilisation. (Illustrations 16 and 17)[39] In Sturt's *The View from Stanley Range* the figure in the middle distance appeared to be surveying the landscape through a telescope. This figure and the smaller one walking up the slope heightened the extensive nature of the surrounding landscape and conveyed the infinite potential of the undulating and open plains.[40](Illustration 18)

Gilpin approached the use of animals in picturesque composition in a similar manner. Again they are not meant to be detailed or to be the focus of attention but were introduced to add to the deficiencies of an apparent idealised landscape.[41] The inclusion of herd animals in the illustrations in explorers' published accounts reinforced the imperial rhetoric of pastoral settlement.[42] (Illustrations 19 & 20) Mitchell's illustration of the River Darling in his *Three Expeditions* is worthy of more discussion.(Illustration 21) The scene he composed demonstrated and reinforced the imperial mission. In the foreground expedition members tend grazing flocks of sheep and cattle while in the background on the far side of the river Aborigines appear engaged in a corroboree. Implicit in the illustration was the prediction of advancing civilisation in the form of pastoralism subduing a romantic landscape that was wild and uncivilised.

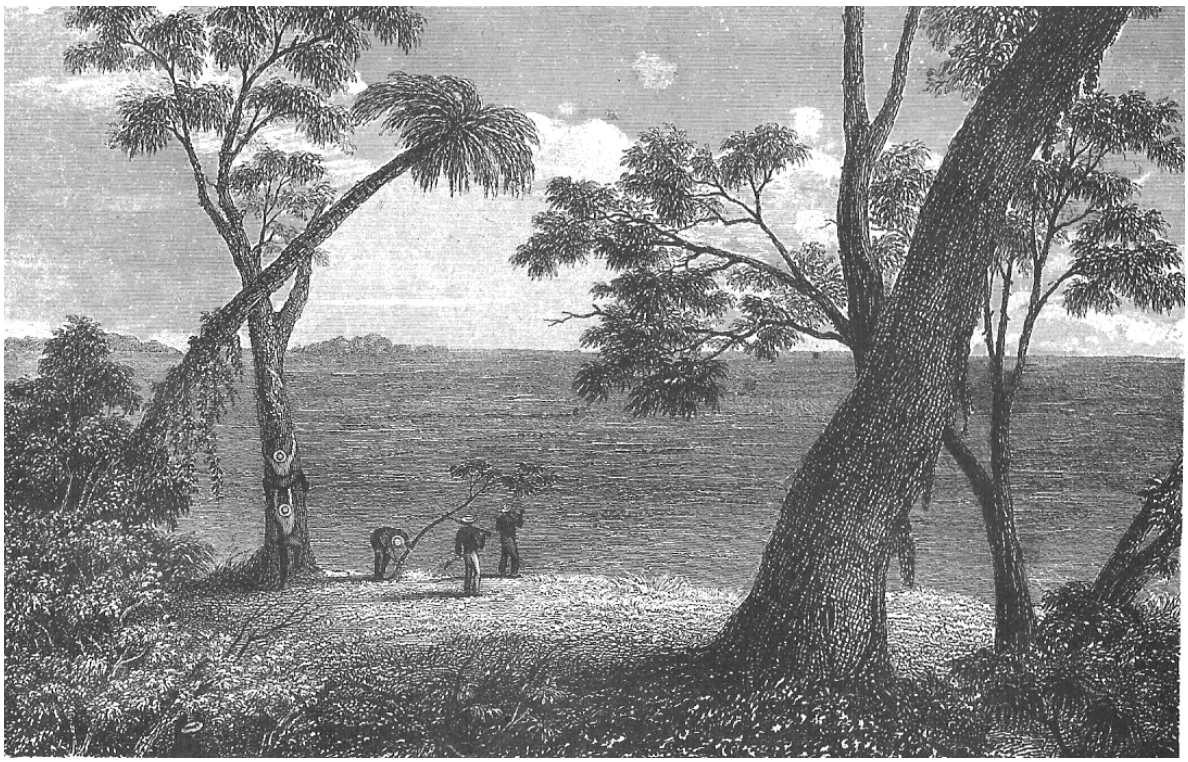
Romanticism

While conventions of the picturesque provided a formula for envisioning a landscape, the romanticism of the texts evoked an emotive response. Romanticism, blended with

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[38] *Ibid*., pp.44-45.
[39] Progress and the environment has been covered in detail in Chapter 4. Hussey, *The Picturesque,* pp.117-119. Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque,* p.25.
[40] Sturt, *Narrative of an Expedition,* Vol.2, facing title page
[41] Gilpin, *Three Essays,* p.45.
[42] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions,* Vol.1, The River Darling, facing p.297. *Ibid*., Vol.2, The Yarrayne, facing p.160. Grey, *Journal of Two Expeditions,* Vol.2, Crossing cattle over the Murray River, near Lake Alexandria, facing p.186.

Illustration 16



First View of the Plains of Promise Albert River

Source: J. Lort Stokes, *Discoveries in Australia*, Vol.II, London, 1846, facing p.316.

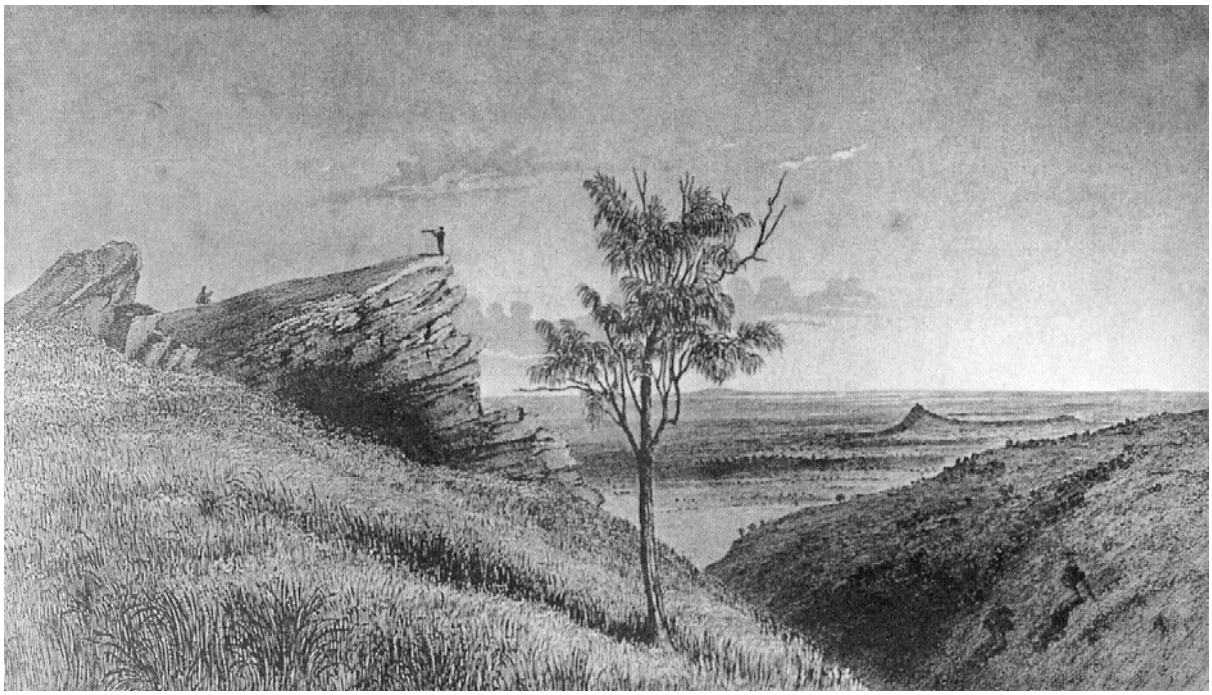
Illustration 17



Last View of the Plains of Promise Albert River

Source: J. Lort Stokes, *Discoveries in Australia*, Vol.II, London, 1846, facing p.317

llustration 18



View from Stanley Range

Source: Sturt, *Narrative of Expeditions into Central Australia,* Vol.II, London, 1849, facing title page.

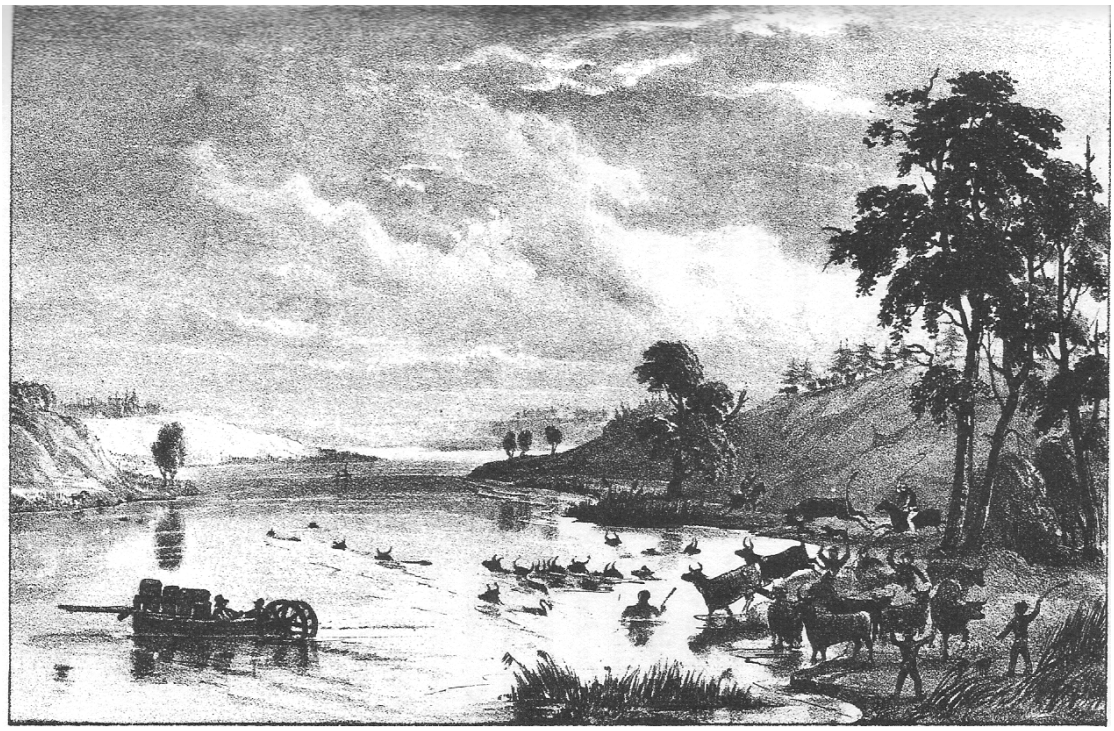
Illustration 19



The Yarrayne

Source: T.L. Mitchell, *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia*, Vol.II, London, 1839, facing p.160.

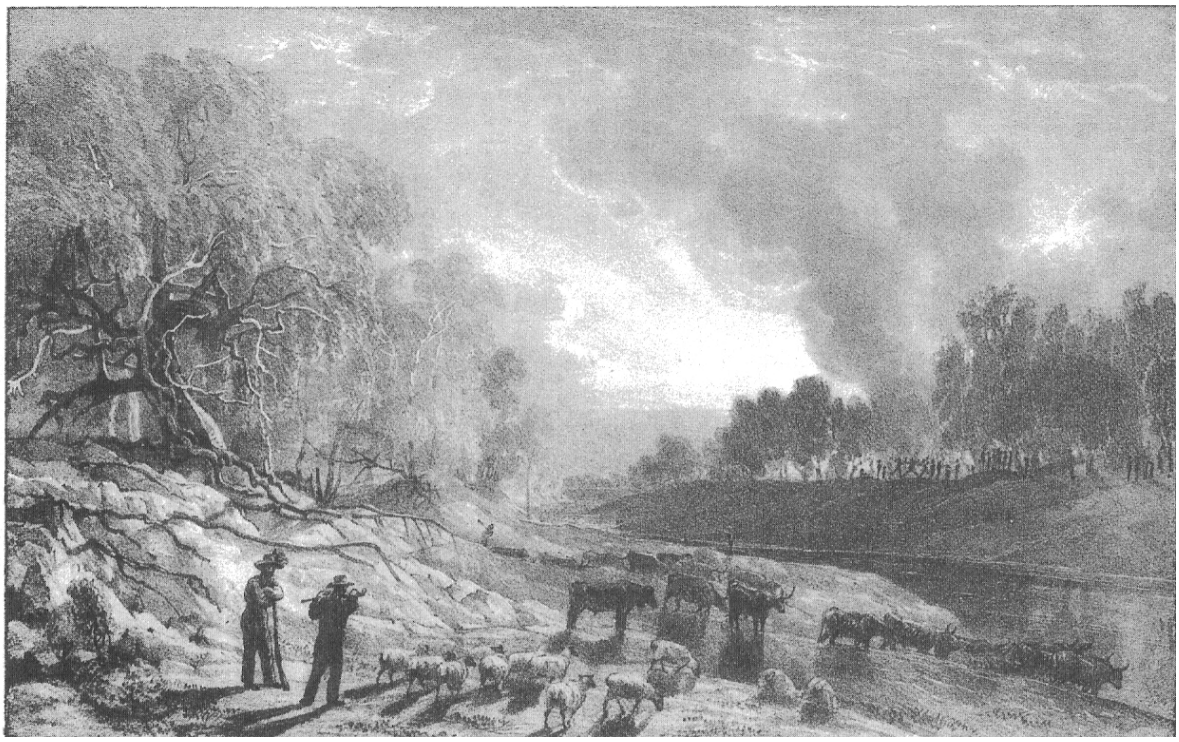
Illustration 20



Crossing Cattle over the Murray Near Lake Alexandrina

Source: George Grey, *Journals of Two Expeditions of Discovery*, Vol.II, London, 1841, facing p.186.

Illustration 21



The River Darling

Source: T.L. Mitchell,*Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia,* Vol.I, London, 1839, facing p.297.

concern for the picturesque, was evident in Grey's description of the country around Gantheaume Bay. He wrote:

> On reaching the valley I have before-mentioned we found a small stream, and following this to the northward for about a mile, came out upon one of the most romantic and picturesque-looking estuaries I had yet seen: its shores abounded with springs, and were bordered by native paths, whilst the drooping foliage of several large sorts of Casuarina, the number of wild swans on its placid bosom, and the natives fishing in the distance, unconscious of our presence, imparted to the whole scene a quiet and a charm which was deeply felt by those who had now for so many days been either tossed about by the winds and waves, or had long been wandering over barren and inhospitable shores. We did not, indeed, find much good land about this estuary, but there were rich flats upon each side of it, whilst the nature of the rocks, and the lofty and peculiar character of the distant hills, gave promise of the most fertile region I had yet seen in extra-tropical Australia.[43]

Grey composed the scene according to picturesque composition, in the process emphasising the calming effect of the scene on the party after an arduous journey at sea and through difficult country, at the same time anticipating the future journey with optimism.

David Arnold suggests a connection between romanticism, the appreciation of nature in one's country, and the development of national identity. He links the growth of romanticism in England to a "growing sense of pride in this 'green and pleasant land'".[44] Romanticism had developed as a reaction to the Industrial Revolution and the political upheaval in Europe in the late eighteenth century. This effect was particularly noticeable in the celebration of nature and delight in rural life. Associated with the idealisation of nature was often a pensive melancholy that evoked awareness that the landscape was being transformed. Writers such as William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge cultivated a fervent appreciation of English scenery and rural life that demonstrated an emotional and philosophical attachment to England.[45]

However romanticism was not confined to the British setting; travel writers took it into the imperial context where it became incorporated into commentary on imperial destiny. Explorers observed romantic tradition to idealise the Australian landscape, emphasising its ancient and untouched qualities and implying Australia was a land provided for

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[43] Grey, *Journals of Two Expeditions*, Vol.2, pp.3-4.
[44] Arnold, *The Problem of Nature*, p.137.
[45] *Ibid.*

British settlement. Their published accounts established an emotional connection to a strange land that enveloped it in a known aesthetic framework that made it familiar and appreciated. Thus the landscape was brought into the imperial imaginings of the explorers' readership.

In their journeys explorers travel backward temporally and figuratively from civilisation to savagery. Their expeditions begin at a site of civil society such as a vice-regal function, an established and prosperous farm or commercial centre. From this point the journey assumed epic proportions as the explorer travelled away from civilisation into the interior of Australia in the search for untouched land suitable for the development of civil society.[46] Eyre, Mitchell and Sturt reveal this motif in their published accounts. The motif of the backwards journey contributed to the romanticism in their accounts as it accentuated the veracity of the explorer's discovery of a seemingly untouched land in Australia. The image of a pristine landscape reinforced the imperial rhetoric that Australia was a primordial land awaiting development. In establishing the notion of a pristine Australia explorers emphasised the wild disorder of the environment. For example Grey described a ravine near their landing at Hanover Bay:

> The romantic scenery of this narrow glen could not be surpassed. Its width, at bottom, was not more than forty or fifty feet, on each side rose cliffs of sandstone, between three and four hundred feet high, and nearly perpendicular; lofty paper-bark trees grew here and there, and down the middle ran a beautiful stream of clear, cool water, which now gushed along, a murmuring mountain torrent, and anon formed a series of small cascades. As we ascended high the width contracted; the paper-bark trees disappeared; and the bottom of the valley became thickly wooded with wild nutmeg and other fragrant trees. Cockatoos soared, with hoarse screams, above us, many-coloured parakeets darted away, filling the woods with their playful cries, and the large white pigeons, which feed on the wild nutmegs, cooed loudly to their mates, and battered the boughs with their wings as they flew away.[47]

The setting was exotic. Grey used images of abundance, disorder and sublimity to create a primordial setting. Towering cliffs, grand trees and foaming water created the wild, primitive nature of the ravine. Luxuriant vegetation and the cries of birds contributed to the wildness of the scene. Through such a description the reader could wonder at the primordial condition of Australia. Mitchell also romantically described some settings. From Mount Greenock he considered the eastward vista:

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[46] See Chapter 2 for more detail on the backward journey. Also Dixon, *The Course of Empire*.
[47] Grey, *Journal of Two Expeditions*, Vol.1, pp.93-94.

> The surface presented the forms of pristine beauty, clothed in the hues of spring; and the shining verdure of these smooth and symmetrical hills, was relieved by the darker hues of the wood with which they were interlaced; which exhibited every variety of tint, from a dark brown in the foreground, to a light blue in extreme distance. ... In travelling through this Eden, no road was necessary, nor any ingenuity in conducting wheel carriages, wherever we chose.[48]

Mitchell combined romanticism with picturesque composition, defining the boundaries of the view and its contrasting tones as well as conjuring up notions of the pristine nature of the landscape. His explicit use of an analogy to the biblical Garden of Eden inspired appreciation and delight in a bountiful region. This together with its fertility and the ease of access through the area anticipated British settlement. Similarly in Sturt's published account of his expedition into Southern Australia favourable climate and the untouched and fertile nature of romantic scenery implied its suitability for British settlement.[49]

Mitchell in particular resorted to romantic writing often incorporating the picturesque. Inspired by the landforms of Central Queensland to recall the paintings of Salvator Rosa, Mitchell wrote:

> Travelling along the bank of this stream, we found it flowing, and full of sparkling water to the margin. The reeds had disappeared, and we could only account for the supply of such a current, in such a country, at such a season, by the support of many springs. We made sure of water now for the rest of our journey; and that we might say of the "Labitur et latetur in imne volubilis aevum". The hills overhanging it surpassed any I had ever seen in picturesque outline. Some remembered gothic cathedrals in ruins; others forts; other masses were perforated, and being mixed and contrasted with the flowing outlines of evergreen woods, and having a fine stream in the foreground, gave a charming appearance to the whole country. It was a discovery worthy of the toils of pilgrimage. Those beautiful recesses of unpeopled earth, could no longer remain unknown. The better to mark them out on my map, I gave to the valley the name of Salvator Rosa. The rocks stood out sharply, and sublimely, from the thick woods, just as John Martin's fertile imagination would dash them out in his beautiful sepia landscapes. I never saw anything in nature come so near these creations of genius and imagination.[50]

Here was a fertile landscape that Mitchell considered pristine and ready for settlement. In this passage he romantically captured the wildness of the setting and its picturesque character.

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[48] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.2, p.276.
[49] Sturt, *Two Expeditions*, Vol.2, pp.21-22.
[50] Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, pp.224-225.

In particular the imagery of ruins was important in evoking emotion. Such an analogy appealed to the memory of the reader who recalled to mind the grandeur of the past and who associated the untouched landscape described with its future potential. Some ruin imagery was associated with a political message that suggested power; that the landscape could be liberated from its savage state and contribute to the development of civil society. For instance, Mitchell described a rocky pinnacle by analogy to a defensive tower. He observed:

> at the gorge of this valley, there stood a sort of watch-tower, as if to guard the entrance, so like a work of art, that even here, where men and kangaroos are equally wild and artless, I was obliged to look very attentively, to be quite convinced that the tower was the work of nature only. A turret with a pointed roof, of a colour corresponding, first appeared through the trees, as if it had been built on the summit of a round hill. On a nearer approach the fine tints of the yellowish grey rocks, and the small pines climbing the sides of the hill abruptly rising out of a forest of common trees, presented still a very remarkable object. I named this valley 'Glen Turret,' and this feature "Tower Almond", after the ancient castle, the scene of many early associations, and now quite as uninhabited as this.[51]

The sublimity of rocky landscapes conjured up an image of the majesty of the scene that aroused associated thoughts of ruined fortifications and implied command over the landscape in the future.[52](Illustration 22) Stokes also used the analogy of ruins to describe the rocky appearance of Cape Upstart:

> In the afternoon we left the anchorage we had been the first to occupy, and standing out of the bay, were much struck by the rugged outline Cape Upstart presents. The huge bounders scattered over the crest of the hills, give it the appearance of a vast mass of ruins, the clear atmosphere bringing it out in bold relief against the sky.[53]

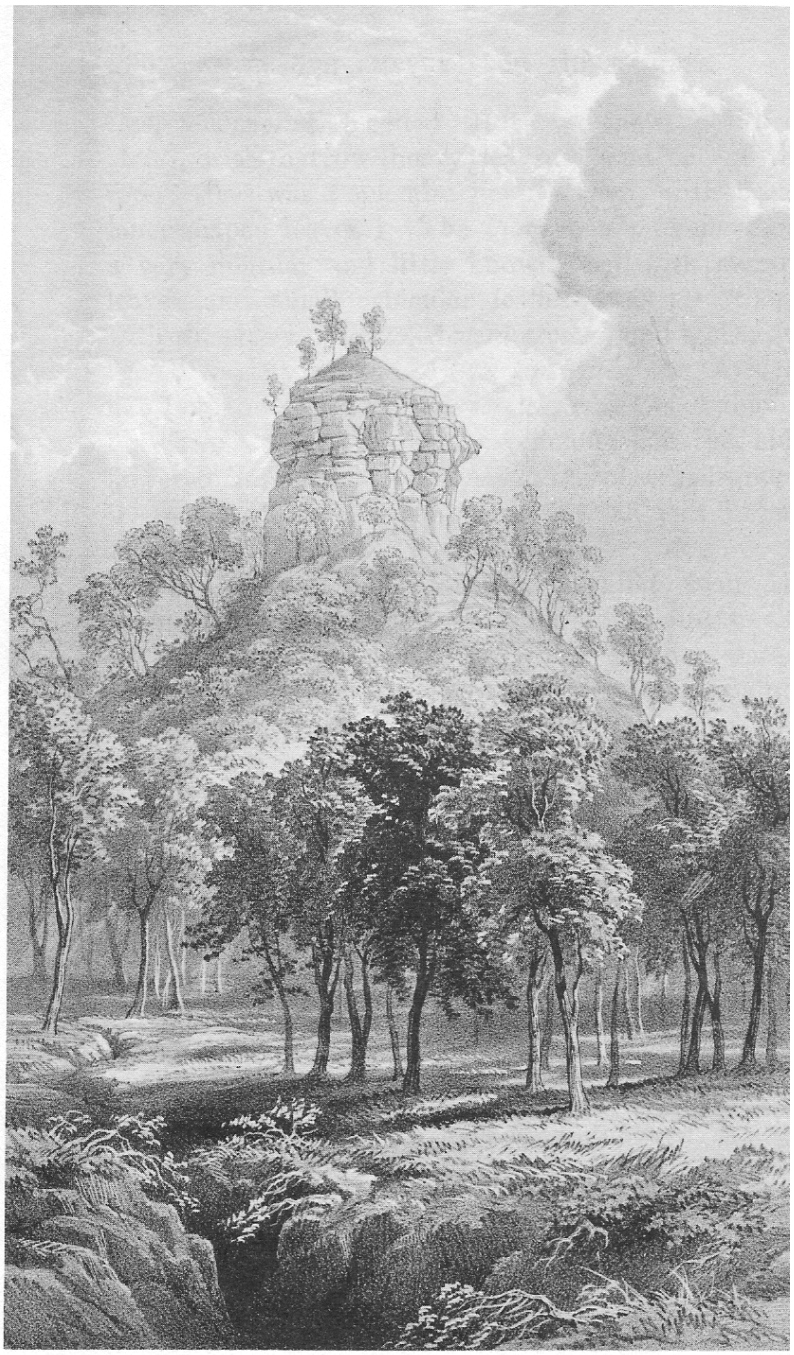
Such scenes aroused feelings of awe and wonder which recalled an ancient past and prompted associated thoughts of power and grandeur.[54] This was a landscape with infinite potential for the empire.

Views of mountain scenery aroused some of the romantic sentiment espoused in the published accounts and enabled the explorer to predict the bountiful appearance of the landscape for British settlement. Julia Horne has traced the history of the aesthetic

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[51] *Ibid*., p.237 with illustration facing page.
[52] Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, p.45.
[53] Stokes, *Discoveries in Australia*, p.337.
[54] Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, pp.45-50.

Illustration 22



Tower Almond

Source: T.L. Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, London, 1848, facing page 237.

appreciation of mountain scenery from its beginnings in the eighteenth century through to John Ruskin in the nineteenth century. She maintains that "mountains were thought to extend the sensibilities and develop character…to enlarge and ennoble the human spirit".[55] The sublimity of mountain landscapes featured prominently in exploration literature as illustrations as well as textual descriptions.

In their descriptions of mountains explorers often referred to the emotional response they aroused. They were sublime as "rocky precipices" or "sharp inaccessible pinnacles" with beauty in their subtle colours, a "deep blue colour", and "blue distant ranges"[56] Their sublime qualities provided the weary explorer with fortitude after extended periods travelling through monotonous terrain. A new hope and determination was reflected in the attitude of the members of Leichhardt's expedition by the sudden appearance of mountains in an otherwise monotonous landscape:

> We had travelled so much in a monotonous forest land, with only now and then a glimpse of distant ranges through the occasional clearings in the dismal scrub, that any change was cheering. Here an entirely open country – covered with grass, and apparently unbounded to the westward; now ascending, first, in fine ranges, and forming a succession of almost isolated, gigantic, conical, and domed-topped mountains, which seemed to rest with a flat unbroken base on the plain below – was spread before our delighted eyes. The sudden alteration of the scene, therefore, inspired us with feelings that I cannot attempt to describe…[57]

However, sublime scenery not only inspired explorers to continue their journeys but also drove them into depression. Eyre considered "some imposing scenery, consisting of cliffs from six to eight hundred feet in height, rising perpendicularly from their bases, below which were recesses, into which the sun never shone," held a "gloomy grandeur" that stimulated melancholy which coincided with their feelings of desolation in a barren landscape.[58]

Nonetheless descriptions of mountain scenery produced some of the most visionary passages in explorers' accounts. From mountain summits, explorers could allow their imaginations to contemplate the future of the landscape. Stokes visualised the future

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[55] Julia Horne, "Travelling Through the Romantic Landscapes of the Blue Mountains", *Australian Cultural History*, No.10, 1991, pp.86.
[56] Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, p.220. Jukes, *Narrative of the Surveying*, pp.90-91. Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, p.207. Leichhardt, *Journal of an Overland Expedition*, p.241.
[57] Leichhardt, *Journal of an Overland Expedition*, p.123.
[58] Eyre, *Journals of Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.123.

potential of the "plains of promise" that burst upon him when he gained an elevated position.[59] Here he saw a pristine landscape, a fact highlighted by the stillness and tranquillity of the setting – a "new and untrodden country".[60] From this he anticipated British settlement of the landscape.[61] Stokes perceived himself the first human to view such a landscape, giving him the visionary capability to predict its future.[62]

Of course, mountains also served a practical purpose by providing a site for surveying and plotting a course. Leichhardt highlighted their importance as a means of plotting a course through the landscape to be traversed while Mitchell systematically used mountains to survey and to check the accuracy of his map.[63] From Mt Owen, Mitchell gained an "extensive view" to the eastward and south-east which allowed him to "intersect many of the summits observed therefrom; thus adding extensively to the general map, and checking my longitude, by back angles into the interior."[64]

Romanticism and Aborigines

In the romantic perception of the Australian landscape, Australia was untouched and ancient. Aborigines were incorporated into the romantic appreciation of landscape as an integral part of the natural environment of prehistoric Australia. Rod Macneil suggests that by placing Aborigines within a wild and uncultivated setting outside of settlement "the landscape becomes 'decultured' – a purely natural environment of flora and fauna, erased of an indigenous population and thus readily available for colonisation."[65] Aboriginality was synonymous with the natural environment and the romantic depictions of their manners and customs only served to heighten and reinforce opinions about Australia's antiquity. Explorers demonstrated an aesthetic appreciation of Aborigines as noble savages living in a state of savagery: they were passive and child-like, wise and dignified or wild and excited. Their romantic descriptions were sentimental and intensified feeling about the landscape although scientific and rational observations were also present in their accounts. Aborigines were idealised as noble savages with parallels in their behaviour to an ancient past. They were living in

[59] Stokes, *Discoveries in Australia*, Vol.2, p.316.
[60] *Ibid*.
[61] *Ibid*., p.319.
[62] See previous chapter for more detailed discussion of Stokes' vision of the landscape.
[63] Leichhardt, *Journal of an Overland Expedition*, p.186. Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, p.202.
[64] Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, p.202.
[65] Rod Macneil, "Time after time: temporal frontiers and boundaries in colonial images of the Australian landscape", in Lynette Russell (ed.), *Colonial Frontiers – Indigenous-European encounters in settler societies*, Manchester, 2001, p.49.

harmony with their environment, free and unconstrained by civil society. Aborigines were invariably exotic, mysterious or untouched; depictions which supported the idea of the landscape as primordial. The rhetorical image of Aborigines as part of the natural environment, ancient and uncultivated, justified and foreshadowed British settlement.

The eulogising of Aborigines as noble savages living in a state of nature contributed to the image of Australia as a wilderness. The quality of life of Aborigines was sometimes considered superior to that of individuals living in civilised society. Aborigines were unaffected and lived a simpler and therefore happier existence. Their life was idyllic, their wants and needs few and adequately provided by their environment. During the course of his expedition to explore the river Darling, Mitchell described Aborigines in their natural setting:

> The evening was beautiful; the new grass springing in places where it had been burnt, presented a shining verdure in the rays of the descending sun; the songs of the birds accorded here with other joyous sounds, the very air seemed alive with the music of animated nature, so different was the scene in this well-watered valley, from that of the parched and silent region from which we had just descended. The natives, whom we met here, were fine looking men, enjoying contentment and happiness, within the precincts of their native woods. Their enjoyment seemed derived so directly from nature, that it almost excited a feeling of regret, that civilised men, enervated by luxury and all its concomitant diseases, should ever disturb the haunts of these rude but happy beings.[66]

Mitchell not only celebrated an idealised nature but also extended the image to include Aborigines. While appreciating them as noble savages untouched by civilisation, he predicted the certainty of British settlement. He continued the description of the encounter, romantically composing the scene in the moonlight with the haunting sound of the flute in the background. As if pre-empting the future he ended his description of the scene with: "The cattle were refreshing in green pastures."[67] Furthermore Mitchell's illustrations of Aborigines often completed their romantic image as noble savages. His illustration of Talambe, a young Aborigine of the Bogan River depicted a scarified young man, his head adorned with leaves and his body draped with cloth over one shoulder reclining in an idealised setting.(Illustration 23)

To accentuate the idea that Aborigines were an integral part of the natural landscape, they were described as materialising out of the surrounding bush. Leichhardt likened

[66] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.1, pp.170-171.
[67] *Ibid*., p.171.

Illustration 23



Talambe

Source: T.L. Mitchell, *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia*, Vol.I, London, 1839, facing p.318.

one Aborigine he met to a Greek god who "stepped out of the forest with the ease and grace of an Apollo".[68] Likewise Mitchell, while noting in a footnote the similarity of the ceremony to the ancient Greek gesture of supplication, described the emergence of the Aboriginal chief and young Aboriginal boy from the forest. Although impatient to gain information on the whereabouts of Cunningham from Bogan River Aborigines, Mitchell imaginatively related their appearance:

> I expected to see their chief; at all events, from these silent woods something was to emerge, in which my guides were evidently much interested, as they kept me waiting nearly an hour for
>
> "Th' unseen genius of the wood."
>
> At length a man of mild but pensive countenance, athletic form, and apparently about fifty years of age, came forth, leading a very fine boy, so dressed with green boughs, that only his head and legs remained uncovered; a few emu-feathers being mixed with the wild locks of his hair. I received him in this appropriate costume as a personification of the green bough, or emblem of peace.[69]

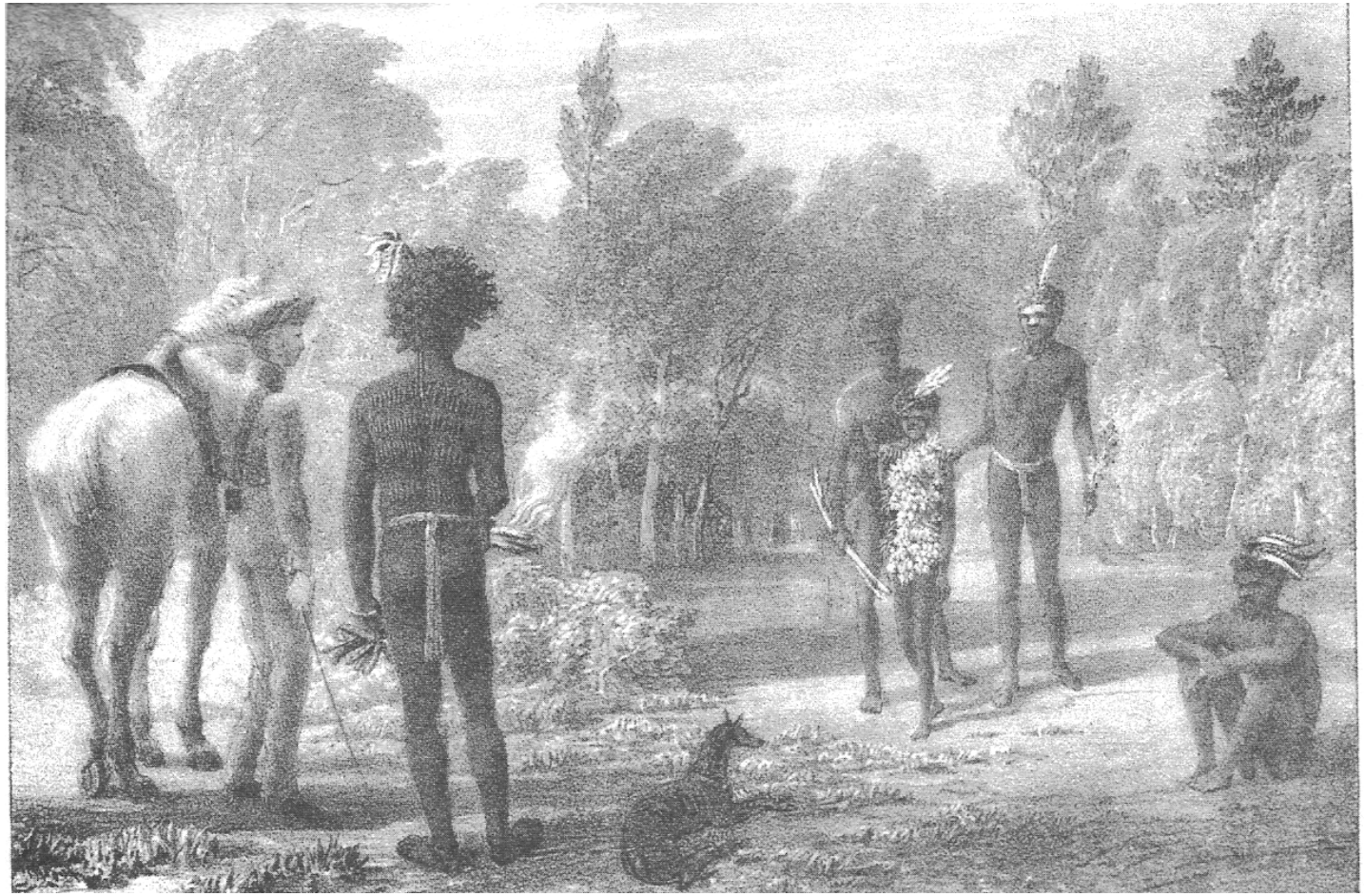
(Illustration 24) The use of the ancient Greek analogy, along with the apparent sagacity and calmness of the older Aborigine, elevated the noble savage image and extended the romanticism of the scene. The parallel produced considerations about the progress of all civilisations. Through this understanding comparisons could be drawn with British civilisation, which emphasised its progressive nature and reinforced the further success of imperial progress.

The actions of Aborigines in their natural surroundings recalled to Mitchell a romantic Scotland of pagan rituals and ancient druids. Quoting from Sir Walter Scott's *The Lady of the Lake* Mitchell paralleled the wildness of the Australian setting to that of the Scottish highlands. With a taste for the mysterious and irrational, he described the Aborigine's behaviour:

> It was obvious the ceremony belonged to some strange superstition. He occasionally turned his back towards each of us, like "the grisly priest with murmuring payer;" he touched his eye-brows, nose, and breast, as if crossing himself, then pointed his arm to the sky; afterwards laid his hand on his breast, chaunting with an air of remarkable solemnity, and abstracted looks, while at times his branch
>
> "he held on high,
> With wasted hand and haggard eye,
> And strange and mingled feelings worke,

[68] Leichhardt, *Journal of an Overland Expedition*, p.502.
[69] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.1, pp.193-194.

Illustration 24



First meeting with the chief of the Bogan tribe

Source: T.L. Mitchell, *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia*, Vol.I, London, 1839, facing p.194.

While his anathema he spoke."[70]

Demonstrating his appreciation of his own national origins and native folklore Mitchell used the parallel of the priest in Scott's poem to sentimentalise the Aborigine he met and incorporate him into the wild and ancient landscape.

Stokes also evoked an emotive response to an Aboriginal grave-site in the Gulf country that aroused thoughts of classical times and ancient cultures.[71] He described the scenery surrounding the site in picturesque fashion evoking associations with Greek myths:

> The eastern bank had become steep, overhanging, and clothed with a mass of luxuriant creepers ; whilst on the opposite side was a low woody patch, partly immersed by the lake-like glassy water of the river, into whch (sic) one slender tree dipped its feathery crest, appearing like another Narcissus, to admire its own beauty in the stream. In front, the eye could penetrate far down the reach hemmed in as it was by trees that clustered thick on the water's brink. To the right was what might be called an open glade in the midst of it rose a tree the branches of which were laden with a most singular looking bundle or roll of pieces of wood.[72]

Continuing in a romantic style he evoked the atmosphere of loneliness the scene aroused:

> There was an air of loneliness in the spot, perfectly in keeping with the feelings this strange discovery naturally called forth; and from the few recent signs of the natives, it would appear that here, as in other parts of the continent, spots where the dead lie are kept sacred. Some dark brown and black hawks perched on the trees near, looking like so many mutes stationed to shew respect to the departed; but their intentions were of a different character, as they were waiting, I imagine, for some friendly gust of wind to shake off the covering of the deceased.[73]

He then returned to a more empirical mode to comment on the distribution of this practice throughout colonial Australia. Finally he indulged in ethnological speculation by noting its similarity to the burial customs of noble savages such as the ancient Scythians.[74] Completing the romanticism of the scene, Stokes' published account of the voyage included a picturesque illustration. (Illustration 25).

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[70] *Ibid*., Vol.1, pp.249-250.
[71] Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, pp.7-72; Hussey, *The Picturesque*, p.69.
[72] Stokes, *Discoveries in Australia*, Vol.2, p.295.
[73] *Ibid*., p.295.
[74] *Ibid*., p.297.

Similarly Mitchell sketched and described an Aboriginal burial ground. His romantic

Illustration 25



Burial Reach Flinders River

Source: J. Lort Stokes, *Discoveries in Australia*, Vol.II, London, 1846, facing p. 295.

description and accompanying illustration highlighted the eerie atmosphere and exoticism of the scene:

> The burying-ground was a fairy-like spot, in the midst of a scrub of drooping acacias. It was extensive, and laid out in walks, which were narrow and smooth, as if intended only for "sprites;" and they meandered in gracefully curved lines, among the heaps of reddish earth, which contrasted finely with the acacias and dark casuarinae around. Others gilt with moss shot far into the recesses of the bush, where slight traces of still more ancient graves, proved the antiquity of these simple but touching records of humanity. With all our art, we could do no more for the dead, than these poor savages had done.[75]

The illustration supported his description and confirmed the primeval nature of the Australian landscape complete with noble savages in the foreground.(Illustration 26)

Conclusion

Throughout the published accounts of exploration tensions exist between the explorer's aesthetic sense and the reality of his journey. Mitchell best enunciated this conflict in the following description of a scene near Rodrigo Ponds:

> While I stood near this spot, awaiting the arrival of the party, which was still at some distance, I overheard a female singing. The notes were pleasing, and very different from the monotonous strains of the natives in general. Just then, I had been admiring the calm repose of the surrounding landscape, gilded by the beams of a splendid setting sun, and anticipating a quiet night for the party. The soft sounds, so expressive of tranquillity and peace, were in perfect unison with the scene around. Nothing could have been more romantic, nevertheless I could most willingly have dispensed with the accompaniment at that time, so associated were all our ideas of the natives, with murder and pillage.[76]

Mitchell conveyed the picturesque and romantic qualities of the park-like setting but he could not forget past encounters with more hostile Aborigines and the need for vigilance against sudden attack from them. While at times the explorer merged the picturesque with a more pragmatic and scientific understanding of the landscape, at other times he idealised Australian landscape, as one that did not need the usual improvement associated with picturesque composition. At still others his use of romanticism established emotional connection to an ancient and untouched land. Through a well-developed aesthetic sensibility, the explorer described Australia and incorporated it into the imperial vision.

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[75] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.321.
[76] *Ibid*., p.117.

Illustration 26



Burying Ground of Milmeridien

Source: T.L. Mitchell, *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia*, Vol.I, London, 1839, facing p.321.

Chapter Six
The ardour of geographical research: Imperial science and the landscape

> From Mount Macedon I reconnoitred Port Phillip at the distance of sixty miles. In this region the party crossed ranges of granite, others of trap rock, the woods forming open forests which only partially covered the country. This, even in its present state, seems nearly all available for the purposes of agriculture and grazing; and being almost without any aboriginal inhabitants, it is consequently in the best state for the reception of British emigrants. [1]
>
> T.L. Mitchell, *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, 1837.

The epigraph above demonstrates how science worked to support the imperial mission. Mitchell described the geological nature of the area and from this suggested the suitability of the land for European settlement and pastoral and agricultural use. Such optimism based upon science encouraged the development of Australia. Through scientific investigation and collection in Australia by explorers like Mitchell, imperial science claimed Australia as an integral part of the Empire. The discovery of the east coast of Australia in the eighteenth century expanded scientific knowledge of the known world and placed the Australian environment under the gaze of imperial science. By the early nineteenth century explorers and naturalists were regularly sending information and specimens back to Britain for further analysis. Findings were published in books and as articles in journals. Through imperial science the Australian environment was claimed for the empire. Its geography, geology, botany and Indigenous people were systematically described, classified and placed within scientific nomenclature. Australia became part of the imperial scientific framework. While explorers' discoveries were valuable to the expansion of scientific knowledge, the information gained in the areas of geography, geology, botany and ethnography also had implications for the prestige and economic future of the Empire. Imperial science acted as an agent for the dispersion of imperial rhetoric that encouraged and justified immigration, strategic settlement and resource development.

This chapter explores the role of imperial science in directing the course of the explorer's journey and in the systematic approach taken by them. In particular the chapter examines the influence of scientific societies in this process and how they broadcast the imperial view through their publications and lectures.

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[1] T.L. Mitchell, "Account of the Recent Exploring Expedition to the Interior of Australia", *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol.7, 1837, p.277. http://www.jstor.org/

Explorers set out with a particular purpose in mind - to answer questions about the unknown and to expand knowledge of the geography and natural history of the land. The information obtained was used to further the course of empire. In the early nineteenth century much of inland Australia was still unknown in terms of its geography, botany and geology. As Allan Cunningham pondered in 1832 in the second volume of the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*:

> Amidst the ardour with which geographical research has been patronized and prosecuted in almost every other portion of the globe, it is a subject of surprise and regret that so little anxiety should have been shown by geographers, and even by men of science in general, to increase our knowledge of the interior of the Australian continent.[2]

He linked the acquisition of geographic knowledge to the imperial enterprise. Further exploration in Australia held the potential to reveal land suitable for new colonial settlements. He noted in particular that Australia's

> eastern and western shores, … are daily exciting more and more interest in this country; and, should the tide of emigration continue to flow, as it has done for some years past, new land must be thrown open to meet the wants of the settlers.[3]

Cunningham's paper revealed the centrality of exploration and the expansion of geographical knowledge to the course of settlement in Australia. He narrated the discoveries of earlier explorers, such as himself and John Oxley whose command of the systematic study of the land had opened up access to the interior and ongoing settlement. He described the Darling Downs as "an extensive tract of clear pastoral country", the lower sections of which presented

> flats, which furnish an almost inexhaustible range of cattle pasture at all seasons of the year – the grasses and herbage generally exhibiting, in the depth of winter, an extraordinary luxuriance of growth. From these central grounds, rise downs of a rich, black, and dry soil, and very ample surface; and as they furnish an abundance of grass, and are conveniently watered, yet perfectly beyond the reach of those floods, which take place on the flats in a season of rains, they constitute a valuable and sound sheep pasture.[4]

In the conclusion to his paper, Cunningham urged further expeditions to reveal

> the real features and character of Central Australia, - its animal and vegetable productions, - the extent to which a region so remote from the coasts is peopled,

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[2] Allan Cunningham, "Brief View of the Progress of Interior Discovery in New South Wales", *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol.2, 1832, p.99. http://www.jstor.org/

[3] *Ibid*

[4] *Ibid.*, p.112.

> and that which would not be the least interesting in the inquiries of such exploring parties – its system of rivers.[5]

On this last question he proposed an expedition to the north-western coast of Australia to ascertain

> whether or not Australia, with a surface equal nearly to that of Europe, discharges on its coast, a river of sufficient magnitude to lead, by a long, uninterrupted course of navigation to its central regions; by which alone a knowledge of the capabilities of such distant parts of the interior may be acquired, and the produce of the soil be one day conveyed to its coast.[6]

In this passage Cunningham revealed the role of hypotheses in the process of geographical exploration. Explorers systematically described the environment in an accepted form, making comparisons with known geographic features in other parts of the world and then proceeding to make further assumptions about the still unknown parts. The American historical geographer J.L. Allen employs the concept of "geographic lore" to explain how assumptions and knowledge interacted in the process of exploration. Geographic lore ranged from the empirical, based on known geographic facts, to conjecture, to the imagined, a belief that the desired object of exploration actually did exist. Using the known as a model, rational extrapolations about the unknown were made. However while exploration expanded empirical geographic knowledge, myths contained in non-empirical geographic lore often remained. These myths were transferred to less known regions. In this way geographic lore was dynamic, constantly changing as the unknown became empirically known.[7]

Geographic lore impelled the search for the Great South Land in the eighteenth century.[8] As discoveries were made in the Pacific and Indian Oceans the area in which the Great Southern Continent could potentially be found diminished.[9] After the discovery and settlement of Australia geographic lore continued to motivate exploration. Empirical and non-empirical geographic lore supported the idea that a large navigable river existed in the interior which would allow easy communications

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[5] *Ibid.*, p.131.
[6] *Ibid.*, p.132.
[7] Allen, "Lands of Myth", pp.41-61.
[8] W. Eisler, *The Furthest Shore: Images of Terra Australis from the Middle Ages to Captain Cook*, Cambridge, 1995. W. Eisler & B Smith (eds), *Terra Australis: The Furthest Shore*, Sydney, c.1988. G. Williams, "New Holland – The English Approach" in John Hardy and Alan Frost (eds), *Studies from Terra Australis to Australia*, Canberra, 1989, pp.85-92. Gibson, *The Diminishing Paradise*, 1984.
[9] Gibson, *The Diminishing Paradise*, pp.1-6.

between the southern colonies and northern Australia and Asia.[10] The chief motive of King's hydrographic survey of the coastline in 1818-1822 was "to discover whether there be any river on that part of the coast likely to lead to an interior navigation into this great continent."[11] Much of the exploration of the interior of Australia in the early nineteenth century was motivated by the search for either an inland sea or a large navigable inland river. It was a commonly held belief that because the other continents of the world like Africa and America had such rivers, inland Australia would contain the same.[12] Indeed Mitchell set out in 1831-32 in search of such a river flowing to the north-west. His journey was based upon known geographic facts and a report from a runaway convict. Mitchell believed that a watershed existed in the north-west which separated the Kindur of Barber the convict and the Darling river which had been discovered by Sturt.[13] While Allan Cunningham challenged Mitchell's theory of a watershed that would be the origin of a great river leading to the north-west, the dynamism of geography as a science was apparent in his suggestion that further exploration of the northern interior should be undertaken to confirm his refutation.[14]

Associated with the discovery of a great river was the location of a fertile region suitable for settlement.[15] Stokes conducted a hydrographic survey of the coastline of northern Australia urged on by these beliefs. His survey included a search for any large rivers in the Gulf of Carpentaria region. Stokes imagined that a fertile region with large navigable rivers flowing into the Gulf was waiting to be discovered on the western side of the coastal ranges of north-east Australia.[16] Although widespread settlement did not eventuate in the Gulf country, systematic descriptions of land like that of Stokes which included soil types, vegetation and other resources possibly contributed to Australia's selection as a new home for British emigrants.

Implicit in Leichhardt's account to the Royal Geographical Society was the suitability of land on the Mitchell River for further settlement. He described:

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[10] Allen, "Lands of Myth", p.46. Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, New York, 1987, pp.56-57.
[11] King, *Narrative of a Survey*, p.xxvii.
[12] Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, p.3
[13] T.L. Mitchell, "Recent Information from Australia", *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol.2, 1832, pp.318, 332. http://www.jstor.org/
[14] *Ibid*., pp.318, 333.
[15] Allen, "Lands of Myth", p.46. Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, pp.56-57.
[16] See previous chapter on progress for a description of the Plains of Promise as suitable for Christian settlement. Stokes, *Discoveries in Australia*, Vol.1, p.340.

> Plains, open forest land, lagoons full of fish, and covered with the broad leaves and showy blossoms of the nymphaea, gave a great variety to this fine country, well adapted for the breeding of cattle and particularly horses, though deficient in good timber.[17]

The expansion of geographic knowledge also had a strategic importance. Exploration of the coastline both by land and sea provided information about sites that might become harbours and port settlements that would facilitate easier communication between Australia, Asia and the rest of the Empire.[18] As well as external communication exploration increased communication between points of settlement within Australia and provided maps for settlers and others to follow. Leichhardt considered one of the most important results of his exploration was a route for later travellers to follow

> between the east coast of Australia and the east coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria, along a river with running water, through a fine country; that of the Nonda Country, and of the big plains at the east side and at the head of the Gulf; that of a communication between Limmen-bight and the South Alligator River, along running streams and creeks. The future will show how far the country along the big rivers between the head of the Gulf and the Limmen-bight is available.[19]

While information on the geography of new lands was published as explorers' journals, it was also of interest to scientific organisations like the Royal Geographical Society. Findings were read at meetings of members in London and later the papers were published in their journal where they met the demand, not only of members but a wider audience. The Royal Geographical Society was an influential body whose main object was the "promotion and diffusion of that most important and entertaining branch of knowledge GEOGRAPHY." Its support of the imperial agenda was obvious in its statement of objectives that geography was "of the first importance to mankind in general, and paramount to the welfare of a maritime nation like Great Britain, with its numerous and extensive foreign possessions."[20] Thus a cooperative and supportive relationship existed between the Society and the British government. The government passed on relevant information to the Society and the Society advised government in matters related to geographic exploration. It also sponsored and contributed to

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[17] Ludwig Leichardt[sic], "Account of Dr. Ludwig Leichardt's Expedition from Moreton Bay to Port Essington, Australia", *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, Vol.16, 1846, p.223. http://www.jstor.org/

[18] This is covered in detail in the chapter on progress.

[19] Leichardt, "Account of Dr. Ludwig Leichardt's Expedition", p.238.

[20] "Prospectus of the Royal Geographical Society:" *Royal Geographical Society*, Vol.1, 1831, p.vii. http://www.jstor.org/

expeditions. For example George Grey's exploration of the north west of Australia was funded by the Royal Geographical Society:

> To gain information as to the real state of North-Western Australia, its resources, and the course and direction of its rivers and mountain ranges; to familiarize the natives with the British name and character; to search for and record all information regarding the natural productions of the country, and all details that might bear upon its capabilities for colonization or the reverse; and to collect specimens of its natural history.[21]

In addition to funding expeditions the Society also provided support in the form of equipment. Two new sextants were provided by the Society for Sturt's expedition into Central Australia. Even when the Society was not directly involved in the expedition, many explorers ultimately presented or had papers read at meetings of the Society and were rewarded for their efforts. Indeed Edward Eyre, Charles Sturt, Ludwig Leichhardt and Paul Strzelecki were awarded the Society's gold medal for their contribution to geography.[22] Such awards legitimated the explorers' discoveries and popularised their accounts. The Society was complicit in the imperial mission as they circulated imperial rhetoric based in science to a wider audience through libraries as well as newspapers and other journal publications.[23]

The economic imperative of geographical exploration was explicit in the Royal Geographical Society's instructions to geographers. Geography was not just concerned with describing the origins of landforms but was also important to imperial economic progress, a point taken up by the William R. Hamilton, President of the Royal Geographical Society in 1838. The geographer

> must likewise lay before us the different productions of the earth, diversified as they are by soil, climate, and exposure; he must describe to us all the varieties of animal life which that soil supports, from those which are invisible to the eye, to the lords of the forests, and to man himself. Here indeed, other sciences and other inquirers will come to his assistance; but he must be the pioneer, who is to unlock the treasures which we want to possess; he is to point out the way which others are to go; he is to declare to us, "Here you may search, with the hope that your labours will not be unrewarded; here will only waste your time, for you will find nothing to repay your toils."[24]

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[21] Grey, *Journals of Two Expeditions*, Vol. 1, p.4.

[22] "Presentation of Gold Medals", *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, Vols.13, 1843, pp.xi-xiv, Vol.16, 1846, pp.xxxv-xxxviii, Vol.17, 1847, pp.xxiii-xxvii. http://www.jstor.org/

[23] Ian Cameron, *To the Farthest Ends of the Earth, The History of the Royal Geographical Society 1830-1980*, London, 1980, pp.21-22.

[24] William R. Hamilton, "Address to the Royal Geographical Society of London", *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, Vol. 8 1838, p.xxxix. http://www.jstor.org/

Within the study of geography was concern for information pertaining to geology, botany and ethnography. Hamilton defined geography in his 1838 address to the Society,

> Geography, as its name imports, is, in its simple sense, a delineation of the Earth – and would seem at the first blush to be a plain, easy, and, I might almost add, homely acquirement; but the result of experience, and a little reflection, prove to us that it is of a very opposite character: it involves, in the general acceptation of the term, the application of History, Astronomy, Geometry in its most extended sense, Natural Philosophy, Statistics, and to a certain degree, Geology.[25]

At the turn of the nineteenth century geology was a relatively new science. By the early nineteenth century William Smith had completed the first geological map of the whole of Britain and catalogued fossils characteristic of each geological strata. The study of fossils became a way of determining the relative age of rocks.[26] By the early 1830s Charles Lyell had published his *Principles of Geology* the definitive work in geology for much of the nineteenth century.[27] In that groundbreaking work Lyell had overthrown earlier understanding about the formation of earth by maintaining that the formation of the landscape was the result of volcanic and water action.[28] However nineteenth century geology had a very practical application as it was used to determine the location of mineral resources necessary for British industry and steam shipping and in determining and improving the fertility of soil for agricultural and pastoral development.[29]

Mitchell's keen interest in geology pervaded his accounts. In his *Journal of an Expedition into the Interior of Tropical Australia*, the geological features of the downs adjacent to the Claude River raised questions for Mitchell, which he elaborated in his account. He described the landscape with reference to geology but questioned the origin of black soil in a region thought originally to be a sea-floor. He considered

> The fossil wood of such plains has no appearance of having been exposed to fire. The Acacia pendula grows on the skirts of them, and indicates a salsolaceous soil. These circumstances are obvious to everybody, but no

[25] *Ibid.*, p.xxxviii.
[26] William Smith in T.I. Williams (ed.), *A Biographical Dictionary of Scientists*, London, 1969, p.480.
[27] The twelfth edition of this work was published in 1875 following Lyell's death. Williams, *A Biographical Dictionary of Scientists*, p.343.
[28] Mott T. Greene, *Geology in the Nineteenth Century, Changing Views of a Changing World*, Ithaca, 1982, p.71.
[29] Robert A Stafford, "Annexing the landscapes of the past: British imperial geology in the nineteenth century", in John M. MacKenzie, *Imperialism and the Natural World*, Manchester, 1990, p.68.

> geologist has yet explained to us the causes of such changes as may have produced that rich black mould, on which trees now silicified, formerly grew; or these wide plains and downs of rich earth, above red sandstone formation. One has called the interior of Australia a "dry sea-bottom;" but this phrase admits of no easy application to such cases as these. Fragments of a ferruginous conglomerate of water-worn pebbles, apparently identical with those in the basin of the Darling, in some places accompany these angular fragments of fossil wood.[30]

Concerns about soil type demonstrated the practical application of geology in determining the potential of an area for agricultural and pastoral purposes. Such descriptions were comparative, that is, the explorer utilised his acquired understanding of European geology to describe and make assumptions about the geological structure of Australia. Through this process, Australia was incorporated into imperial science and the geological description of productive soils became a means of making a quasi-territorial claim.[31] Science provided a means whereby the land's potential was undeniable and British settlement inferred.

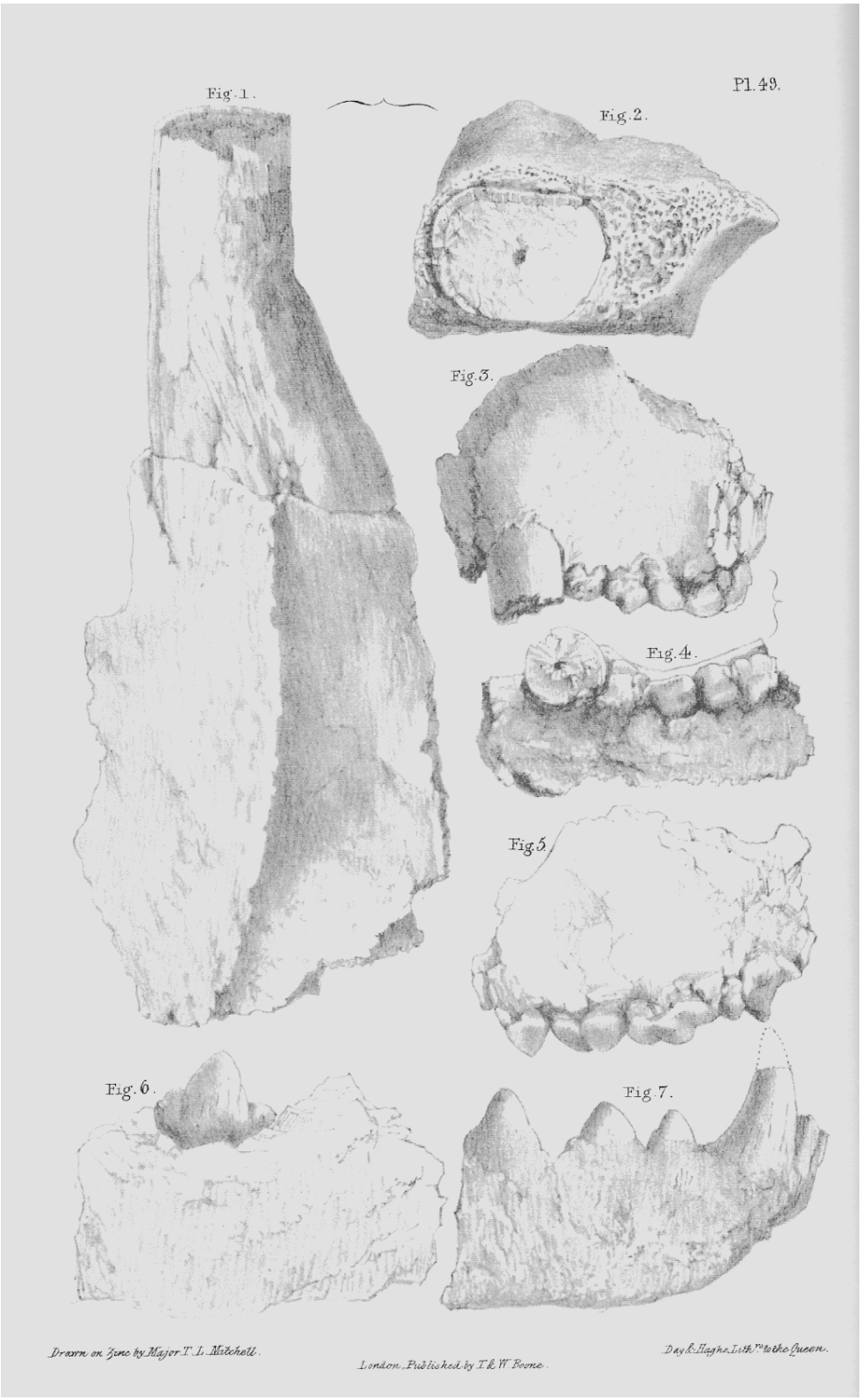
Australia came to be considered in imperial science as having extinct and living fossils which provided a link not only between past and present life forms but also connection between British and colonial landscapes.[32] Mitchell's survey of the Wellington Caves acquired great importance after his fossils were sent to Hunterian Museum, Royal College of Surgeons, where they were analysed by Professor Richard Owen. Owen had systematically described and placed the fossil remains within their biological genera.[33] Those of the genus *Diprotodon* became significant to Darwin in his development of the law of the succession of types that anticipated evolutionary theory.[34](Illustration 27) Mitchell's survey of the Wellington Caves was sent to the Geological Society in London where it was read and published in 1831.[35]

Societies like the Geological Society and other individual British specialists analysed specimens sent to them and compiled inventories of the resources of new lands like Australia. Their professional opinions were published as appendices in accounts of exploration or in specialist journals. For example Mitchell thanked his "scientific

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[30] Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, p.293.
[31] Stafford, "Annexing the Landscapes of the Past", pp.71, 76.
[32] *Ibid*., p.81.
[33] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.2, pp.359, 369.
[34] Stafford, "Annexing the Landscapes of the Past", pp.81.
[35] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.2, p.359.

Illustration 27



Diprotodon

Source: T.L. Mitchell, *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia,* Vol.II, London, 1839, facing p.369

friends in England" for their interest in his exploration.[36] This type of analysis of geological specimens, including the classification of soil types and vegetation, provided indications of possible locations for further settlement. From Mitchell's expedition and the work of surveyors in his department, he was able to compile maps of the geological structure of Australia.[37] Using these maps he contended that he was "able to determine the relative value of the land in the districts recently explored – and to compare it with that of the country previously known."[38] Analysis of the geology of Australia, he believed, would indicate the quality of soil and thus "where to look for arable land amidst barrenness".[39] For instance he noted that areas of "Trap rocks form good soil on decomposition, as is shewn in the rich district of the Illawarra, Cowpastures, Valley of the Hunter, Liverpool Plains, Wellington Valley, and Burree."[40] However Mitchell was not only interested in agricultural and pastoral land. He noted that the appearance and geology of Mr Blaxland's property not only suggested its productive potential but that the land also contained mineral resources worthy of mention. It had

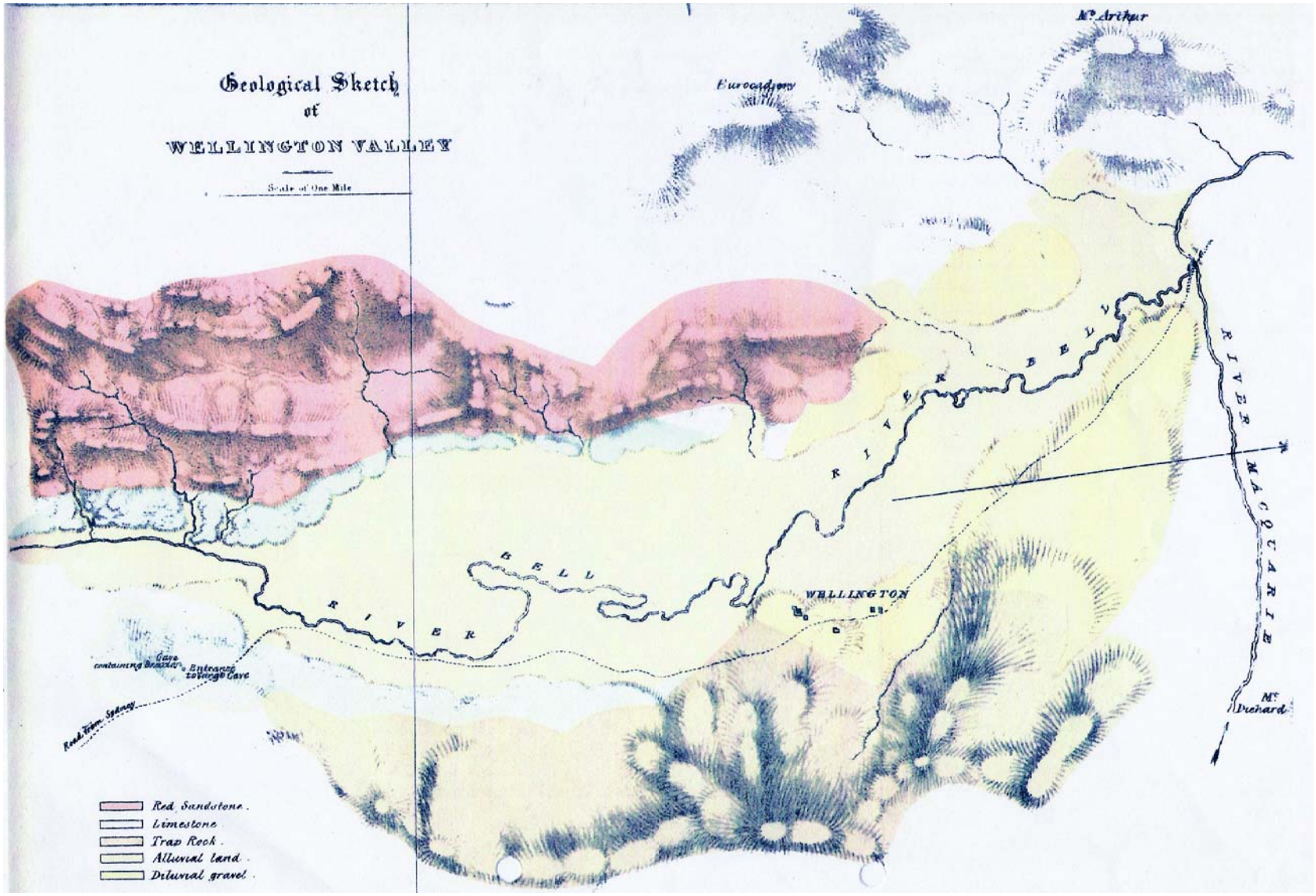
> that peculiar, undulating character which appears in the southern districts, where it closely resembles furrows, and is termed "ploughed ground." This appearance usually indicates a good soil, which is either of a red or very dark colour, and in which small portions of trap-rock, but more frequently concretions of indurated marl, are found. Coal appears in the bed and banks of the Wollombi, near Mr Blaxland's station, and at no great distance from his farm is a salt spring, also in the bed of this brook……This deposit contains numerous fossil shells, consisting chiefly of four distinct species of a new genus, nearest to *hippopodium*; also a new species of *trochus*; *atrypa glabra*, and *spirifer*, a shell occurring also in older limestones of England.[41]

Mitchell's geological maps of Australia delineated the boundaries of various soil types and suggested areas of potential settlement. These and other maps drawn by surveyors in service of empire added to geographic knowledge which was collated at the centre of the empire, information which was destined to be used to further imperial agendas. Like other official documents such maps gained referential power that implicitly legitimated British territorial claim.(Illustration 28)

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[36] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.2, p.353.
[37] *Ibid*., p.354.
[38] *Ibid*., p.353.
[39] *Ibid*., p.354.
[40] *Ibid*., p.356.
[41] *Ibid*., p.14.

Illustration 28



Geological Sketch of Wellington Valley

Source: T.L. Mitchell, *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia*, Vol.II, London, 1839, facing p.359.

Like Mitchell, the explorer and geologist Paul Strzelecki was concerned with describing the resources of the landscape he explored. In 1845 he published his *Physical Description of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land* which was a comparative account of the history of survey, climate, botany, zoology, ethnography and colonial agriculture of Australia. It included a systematic geological examination of parts of New South Wales and Tasmania. In the preface to his account Strzelecki included a letter from members of the Tasmanian community who acknowledged his contribution to scientific and economic progress. They wrote:

> We are conscious that much is owing to your scientific knowledge, and to your indefatigable exertions; much that will, from henceforth, advance the progress of science, and the development of the natural resources of Tasmania;[42]

Besides his thorough discussion of the aforementioned, Strzelecki included a detailed final section in which he described the state of agriculture in the colonies at the time of his expedition as well as a prediction of its future.[43] Strzelecki considered that geology provided a way a determining the future use of areas as soil type was an indication of fertility. He wrote:

> From what has been said, it follows that the soils of the two colonies consist of two distinct classes, within which all the minor varieties may be included: the *first*, impoverished by denudation, and which yields only pasture for grazing; the *last*, enriched by the drift, presenting every inducement for agriculture.[44]

Again geological comparisons were made to known places. In this case Strzlecki compared the uncultivated soils in Canada, United States and South America to those in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land and found the Australian types inferior in fertility.[45] However he recognised that native vegetation was well-adapted to the soil and grew well and thus did not discount the future of the environment.[46] He believed in the future progress of the colony as the character of settlers indicated they were not used to the "easy, quiet, and smooth way of passing through life" but were accustomed to:

> Difficulty of position, labour, anxiety, hard struggles, and all the wear and tear of life, … the elements in which that race thrives, and in which the Anglo-Australians will not fail to thrive likewise, and to work out their own prosperity in the truly national way.[47]

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[42] P.E. Strzelecki, *Physical Description of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land*, London, 1845, p.v.
[43] *Ibid*., p.vii.
[44] *Ibid*., p.363.
[45] *Ibid*., pp.360-361.
[46] *Ibid*., p.361.
[47] *Ibid*., p.369.

He contended that improvements to the fertility of the soil and thus an increase in its productivity would be possible through scientific farming.[48] He noted that in terms of improvements in agriculture:

> The era is grand, and unparalleled in British history! The highest nobility lead the way to a new national glory – the glory of the perfection of agriculture! The Dukes of Richmond, Rutland, Portland, Buccleugh, and Sutherland, Lords Spencer, Ducie, and Aberdeen, Sir Robert Peel, &c. &c., are at the head of at the movement, and identifying themselves with that noble profession, *"upon which the welfare and development of the whole human species, the richness of states, and all commerce, depends."*[49]

Geological knowledge was also important in terms of resource development. As a result imperial scientific bodies fostered continued exploration of Australia by colonial scientists and explorers. This was not confined to Australia but was part of a widespread imperial movement to develop an inventory of resources. The geology of Australia was of particular interest as geologists in London were interested in correlating geological knowledge with information on other parts of the world where mineral resources had been discovered. From these correlations imperial scientists developed assumptions about the location and potential of Australia's mining resources. Moreover geological assay suggested the worth of these mineral resources to Britain's ongoing industrial development. By the late 1840s the discovery of mineral resources in Australia suitable for mining operations enhanced the economic growth both in the colonies and the British Empire. Roderick Murchison, President of the Royal Geographical Society and the Geological Society understood the importance of geological specimens to imperial science. A firm supporter of the British Empire he encouraged ongoing geological surveys in Australia and employed the results obtained for the promotion of immigration and resource development.[50] As Robert Stafford suggests, Murchison

> believed that the role of the scientist as a pioneer of economic development was being enacted with miraculous success in the southern colonies, and he promoted further research to press the advantages won and stimulate a similar approach in other British colonies and spheres of interest.[51]

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[48] *Ibid*., p.458.
[49] *Ibid*., 460-461.
[50] Robert A Stafford, *Scientist of Empire, Sir Roderick Murchison, Scientific Exploration and Victorian Imperialism*, Cambridge, 1989, pp.33-39.
[51] *Ibid*., p.33.

While geological and geographical information uncovered about Australia was of importance to the imperial economy, botanical exploration of Australia did not reveal any plants suitable for imperial economic development on a broad scale. Settlers had to transplant exotic species in their new home that were suitable for economic use. However Australian flora created great excitement in London scientific circles and was eagerly received within the corpus of not only European botanical science but a developing global web of scientific knowledge. Imperial science with its organisations and professional expertise legitimated their incorporation into this web through the methodical description and naming of collected specimens according to European systematic formula.

In the early eighteenth century, the Swedish naturalist, Carl von Linné (Linnaeus in Latin) developed a system of identifying plants and animals. Through his *Systema Naturae* explorers, naturalists and even non-professionals were able to classify, record and name the unknown flora and fauna they encountered.[52] His sexual system of classification was a European construct that simplified the classification process to a limited number of characteristics. By the early nineteenth century the Linnaean system provided a global classificatory system accepted by explorers and scientists engaged in the service of Empire throughout the world. Through this system they were able to understand and claim the strange flora and fauna they encountered.

The connection of the system with imperial exploration in Australia began with Banks and Solander who had been a student of Linnaeus. However the link became more evident and compelling when James Edward Smith purchased Linnaeus' collection and books on his death. These works eventually formed the core of the library of the Linnean Society of London.[53] Alexander McLeay held the secretaryship of the Linnean Society of London from 1796-1816 and later established the Linnean Society of New South Wales when he was colonial secretary under Governor Darling. McLeay fostered science in the colony and also sent many specimens back to London. At his estate at Elizabeth Bay he grew exotic plants from around the world, which he distributed in an

[52] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, pp.24-25, 27.
[53] Carl Linnaeus, in Williams (ed.), *A Biographical Dictionary of Scientists*, pp.331-332.

imperial manner to settlers for propagation.[54] Thus the land was claimed through the propagation of foreign species.

Carron, the botanist attached to Kennedy's expedition, had gained botanical knowledge through his experience as a gardener at Cambridge University and working in Alexander MacLeay's garden at Elizabeth Bay.[55] In his account of the journey Carron focused on placing the vegetation within a European framework using a known botanical taxonomy. His scientific appreciation of the botanical diversity of the north Queensland rainforest was apparent in his empirical description. At the camp of June 30 he described the surroundings with reference to its botany:

> In the scrub near our camp I found a species of *musa*, with leaves as large, and the plants as high, as the common banana *(M. paradisiaca)*, with blossoms and fruit, but the fruit was not eatable. I also found a beautiful tree belonging to the natural order *myrtacae*, producing on the trunk and large branches only abundance of white, sweet scented flowers, larger than those of the common rose apple *(jambosa vulgaris)*, with long stamens, a very short style, slightly two cleft stigma, five very small semi-orbicular petals, alternate with the thick fleshy segments of the calyx, broad lanceolate leaves, the fruit four to six inches in circumference, consisting of a white fleshy, slightly acid substance, with one large round seed, the foot-stalk about one inch long. This is a most beautiful and curious tree (fruit perhaps not always one-seeded). Some specimens I saw measured five feet in circumference, and were sixty feet high, the straight trunks rising twenty or thirty feet from the ground to the branches, being covered with blossoms, with which not a leaf mingled. There were ripe and unripe fruit mingled with the blossoms, the scent of the latter being delightful, spreading perfume over a great distance around; I had frequently noticed the fragrance of these blossoms while passing through the scrub, but could never make out from whence it arose. It resembles the scent of a ripe pineapple, but is much more powerful.[56]

This passage from Carron demonstrated the botanist's concern for following Linnaeus' systematic process for classifying plants through identification of specific characteristics; the plant's stamen, stigma, calyx, its leaves, flowers, fruit and seed. While Mitchell included a list of new plants in the front of his published account, they had been systematically named by Dr John Lindley, Professor of Botany at London University, Fellow of the Royal Society and member of the Horticultural Society. A similar list in the account of his later expedition included known species as well as

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[54] Lucile H. Brockway, *Science and Colonial Expansion, The Role of the British Royal Botanic Gardens,* New York, 1979, pp.66-67.
[55] L.A. Gilbert, "William Carron, Botanist and Explorer, 1821-1876", *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal*, Vol.47, Part 5, October 1961, p.292.
[56] Carron, *Narrative of an Expedition*, pp.24-25.

many newly discovered species.[57] Paul Carter points to the pleasure of the botanist in bringing plants into "the logic of universal reason" through collecting the unusual and unique and bringing them into general understanding through the systematic naming of new forms.[58] Implicit in such descriptions was imperial rhetoric – that by classifying botanical specimens within the global taxonomic system, explorers and scientists made a territorial claim upon new environments.

Organisations like the Horticultural Society, the Linnean Society of London, the Royal Gardens at Kew and the Royal Society had government support and royal patronage and were sent a regular supply of botanical specimens discovered in Australia. These organisations had a pivotal role in botanical science in the collection, classification and dissemination of knowledge. Following Cook's voyage natural history specialists became an accepted part of exploration parties, collecting new species of flora, fauna and geological specimens. The importance attached by the Admiralty to the need for natural history specialists to accompany the voyages of survey can be found in the supplementary instructions to King to

> receive on board Mr A Cunningham, a botanist, now in New South Wales, who has received the orders of Sir Joseph Banks to attend you; and you will engage any other person, if there be such in the colony, who possesses a competent knowledge of Mineralogy or Natural History… You will exercise your own discretion as to landing on the several parts of the coast which you may explore; but on all occasions of landing, you will give every facility to the botanist, and the other scientific persons on board to pursue their inquiries; and you will afford them such assistance in the pursuit as they may require.[59]

While at Endeavour River, Cunningham collected a variety of seeds and other curious plants which eventually formed part of his extensive botanical collection. Banks was later to acknowledge Cunningham's contribution to the collection at Kew, advising him in 1820:

> I have received safe and in good condition the numerous things you have sent me, and the Royal Gardens have materially benefited by what we have had from you.[60]

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[57] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.1, pp.iv, x-xi. Ann Moyal, *A Bright and Savage Land*, Ringwood, 1993, p.92. Mitchell, *Journal of an Expedition*, pp.432-437.
[58] Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, p.20.
[59] King, *Narrative of a Survey*, Vol.1, London, 1827, pp.xxx-xxxi.
[60] Banks to Cunningham, 14 April 1820, cited in Moyal (ed.), *Scientists in Nineteenth Century Australia*, p.29

The Royal Gardens at Kew became a centre for plant collection, hybridisation and redistribution to parts of the empire. Cunningham, a botanist trained at Kew, not only collected specimens for Sir Joseph Banks but also was responsible for the planting of seeds of familiar European species at the various landfalls. Directions to King had stated that he was to provide himself with

> the seeds of such vegetables as it may be considered most useful to propagate on the coasts you may visit, and you will take measures for sowing or planting them in the fittest situations, with a view not only to their preservation, but to their being within the observation and reach of succeeding navigators.[61]

As well as providing sustenance for future mariners voyaging along the coast, the planting of European species at isolated spots along the coast was undertaken for scientific reasons. These experiments could indicate the fertility of the soil and the suitability of the area for European species. King indicated an element of reciprocity in the process. At Cape Tribulation, he stated that "Mr Cunningham, in return for the plants he collected, sowed peach and apricot stones in many parts near the banks".[62] The successful planting of European species in a foreign setting also meant that European features became part of the landscape giving it greater familiarity in European eyes. It would domesticate the land to European needs and preferences.

The garden Grey planted in north western Australia also indicated how imperial science perpetuated the desire to not only colonise the land with settlers but also with exotic animals and plants. Grey observed that the garden he had planted on arrival in north-western Australia with species from Timor, Brazil and the Cape of Good Hope was thriving on his departure four months later,[63]

> The only marks of our residence in this valley were a few shattered bark huts, young cocoa-nut plants, a bread-fruit, and some other useful trees and plants, I felt very loath the leave the spot. I considered what a blessing to the country these plants must eventually prove, if they should continue to thrive as they had yet done, and as I called to mind how much forethought and care their transport to their present position had occasioned, I would very gladly have passed a year or two of my life in watching over them, and seeing them attain to a useful maturity. One large pumpkin plant, in particular, claimed my notice. The tropical warmth and rains, and the virgin soil in which it grew, had imparted to it a rich luxuriance: it did not creep along the ground, but its long shoots were

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[61] King, *Narrative of a Survey*, p.xxviii
[62] *Ibid*., p.222.
[63] Lieutenant Grey & Lieutenant Lushington, "A Brief Outline of the Recent Expedition to the North-West Coast of Australia", *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, Vol.8, 1838, p.459. http://www.jstor.org/

> spreading upwards amongst the trees. The young cocoa-nuts grew humbly amidst the wild plants and reeds, - their worth unknown.[64]

These plantings, common among explorers served the needs of later travellers and were not just confined to coastal locations. They demonstrated the imperial mission to colonise and thereby improve the colonial landscape.[65] But they could have another benefit. In a paper read to the Royal Geographical Society, Grey hoped that the colonising of the area with exotic plants and animals would be "a blessing to the natives and to the country."[66] Grey's passage indicated explorers were conscious of the role expected of them by imperial scientists.

Most expeditions included members with experience in natural history. On Leichhardt's journey there was not only himself but also John Gilbert who was appointed by John Gould to collect zoological specimens. The problems encountered in collecting specimens as well as preparing and preserving them during the course of an extended journey in difficult conditions were recorded by Gilbert and Leichhardt. In one of the last entries in his diary before he was killed by Aborigines, Gilbert related that while sitting skinning birds to add to his collection, with a specimen case opened between his legs to "air the specimens enclosed," a *Milvus isurus* "darted down, and to [his] surprise and vexation fairly carried off" his last specimen of a new Honey-sucker.[67] Later on, after Gilbert's death, when three of their horses were drowned, Leichhardt was forced to discard his and Gilbert's collection that had been collected during the course of expedition, to lighten the load on the remaining horses. With some regret Leichhardt related the loss of the collections:

> Unable to increase the load of my bullocks, I was obliged to leave that part of my botanical collection which had been carried by one of the horses. The fruit of many a day's work was consigned to the fire; and tears were in my eyes when I saw one of the most interesting results of my expedition vanish into smoke. Mr. Gilbert's small collection of plants, which I had carefully retained hitherto, shared the same fate. But they were of less value, as they were mostly in a bad state of preservation from being too much crowded. My collection had the great advantage of being almost complete in blossoms, fruit, and seed, which I was

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[64] Grey, *Journals of Two Expeditions of Discovery*, Vol.1, p.236-237.
[65] Alan Frost, "The antipodean exchange: European horticulture and imperial designs", in David Philip Miller & Peter Hanns Reill, *Visions of Empire, Voyages, botany, and representations of nature*, Cambridge, 1996, pp.58-79.
[66] Grey and Lushington, "A Brief Outline", p.459.
[67] Friday 27, Journal of John Gilbert, cited in Moyal, *A Bright and Savage Land*, p.45.

> enabled to ensure in consequence of the long duration of our expedition, and the comparative uniformity of the Australian Flora.[68]

Unscheduled delays during the expedition allowed Allan Cunningham to add to his collection of specimens. At one stage the party was held up by bad weather at Fitzroy Island and in another they were delayed at Endeavour River repairing one of the boats.[69] King wrote that at Fitzroy Island the botanical specimens collected by Cunningham included

> A nutmeg tree *(myristica cimicifera,)* two species of olive *(olea paniculate and notoloea punctata)*, and three palms, viz. the *corypha australis* or large fan palm, the *seaforthia elegans*, and another, remarkable for its prickly leaves. We also found and procured seeds of *sophora tomentose*, and a plant of the natural order *scitamineoe*, *hellenia coerulea*, Brown: two parasitical plants of *orchideoe* were found growing upon the bark of trees in the shady place near our watering-place; one was *dendrobium caniculatum*, Brown; the other was also subsequently found at Cape Grafton, and is not yet described; it has oblong, three-nerved, thick and leathery leaves; we saw no quadrupeds, and but very few birds.[70]

Some of the scientists who became influential in imperial science served apprenticeships as collectors. In 1802, Robert Brown, one of Joseph Banks' collectors, served Matthew Flinders as naturalist during the voyage of the *HMS Investigator*. Seeds collected on the voyage were sent back to Kew Gardens and delighted Banks.[71] In 1830, Brown, by then Fellow of the Royal Society and a founding member of the Royal Geographical Society, presented a paper to the Society which was later published in its journal. In that paper he discussed the botany of the Swan River area, developed from specimens collected by Charles Fraser and sent to him by Alexander McLeay, naturalist and Colonial Secretary. While the botanical evidence suggested the soil of the area was poor quality, Brown did not discount the potential of the region as Fraser had reported an abundance of *Anthistiria australis* (kangaroo grass) in the area and Captain Stirling's despatch had mentioned how stock had "even fattened on the natural herbage of the country" in a dry season.[72] Brown's paper demonstrated the authoritative role of the imperial scientist in furthering botanical understanding of Australia, not just to peer groups but to a wider audience. The understanding gained

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[68] Leichhardt, *Journal of an Overland Expedition*, p.445.
[69] King, *Narrative of a Survey*, pp.206-207, 211-215, 224.
[70] *Ibid*., pp.206-207.
[71] Moyal, *A Bright and Savage Land*, p.21.
[72] R. Brown, "General View of the Botany of the Vicinity of Swan River", *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol.1, 1831, pp.17-18. http://www.jstor.org/

was intrinsically and implicitly connected to establishing the economic value of the land and in encouraging further settlement.

Occasionally explorers had to consume unknown plants and fruits to supplement their diet. Grey and his party supplemented their breakfast with a grape-like fruit that he considered a species of cissus. He noted:

> We met altogether with three varieties of this plant, all of which were creepers, but differing from each other in their habits, and in the size of their fruit. Two of them generally ran along the ground, or amongst low shrubs, and the third climbed high trees; this latter kind bore the finest fruit, and it was a plant of this description which I to-day found. Its fruit, in size, appearance, and flavour resembled a small black grape, but the stones were different, being larger, and shaped like a coffee berry. All three produced their fruit in bunches, like the vine, and the day being very sultry, I do not know that we could have fallen upon any thing more acceptable than this fruit was to us.[73]

An understanding of what plants and fruits were safe to eat came from a number of sources. These included observations on the diet of Aborigines encountered and the knowledge of Aboriginal guides who accompanied them and the explorer's own knowledge of botanical science. Sometimes their sampling of new foods had adverse effects as Leichhardt discovered at the Mackenzie River:

> The long-podded cassia was plentiful, and its young seeds tasted well, but considerably affected the bowels.[74]

When they encountered the pods later in their journey, they modified their treatment of the seed. Leichhardt related:

> The bean of the Mackenzie was very abundant in the sandy bed of the river; we roasted and ate some of its fruit; it was, however, too heavy, and produced indigestion: Mr Phillips pounded them, and they made an excellent substitute for coffee, which I preferred to our tea, which, at that time, was not very remarkable for its strength.[75]

This and other native foodstuffs assisted Leichhardt and his party in avoid scurvy, a disease that had such devastating affects on other expeditions.[76] Leichhardt's fortunate situation was the result of his knowledge of botanical science which allowed him to distinguish those plants, fruits and seeds likely to be edible and then to sample small

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[73] Grey, *Journal of Two Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.211.
[74] Leichhardt, *Journal of an Overland Expedition*, p.105.
[75] *Ibid*., pp.282-283.
[76] Sturt, *Narrative of an Expedition*, Vol.1, p.314. Eyre, *Journal of Expeditions of Discovery*, Vol.2, pp.34, 39. Grey, *Journal of Two Expeditions of Discovery*, Vol.1, p.212.

portions to determine their effects.[77] Often it was the resemblance to known European species that prompted explorers to sample plants. Mitchell described his process of determining whether a plant was edible:

> The perfume of this herb, its freshness and flavour, induced me to try it as a vegetable, and we found it to be delicious, tender as spinach, and to preserve a very green colour when boiled. This was certainly the most interesting plant hitherto discovered by us; for independently of its culinary utility, it is quite a new form of Australian vegetation, resembling, in a striking manner, that of the south of Europe.[78]

Such information had enormous potential for new settlers in isolated areas and subtly made botanical connections between Australia and Europe.

As well as understanding the flora, fauna and geology of unknown lands, the Royal Geographical Society of London considered an understanding of the culture and society of Indigenous people fundamental to geographic knowledge. In the President's address to the Society in 1838, William R. Hamilton stressed the point that

> Before we can satisfactorily delineate and describe any one country, much more the whole globe which we inhabit, we must make ourselves well acquainted with the early inhabitants of its several divisions – the various migrations which have transferred the different hordes and tribes from one place to another, each successively driving out its predecessor – the various colonial establishments which have been planted, for the purposes of commerce or conquest, or for avoiding the evils of a super-abundant population – the origin, progress, dispersion, and amalgamation of languages; – and, what is the most essential for the present time, we must know the various forms of government now existing – the different religious sects – the political and moral state of the inhabitants – their commercial and agricultural resources – their manufactures, arts, and usages: and all this from the lowest state of the savage, to the highest refinement of civilized life.[79]

The specificity of Hamilton's instructions indicated a scientist's interest in understanding the culture and origin of Indigenous groups. He considered exploration had a four-fold benefit:

> in promoting the wealth and commerce of the world – in extending the sphere of human happiness – in opening the benefits of civilization to myriads of human beings – in bringing us into communication with the new world, and generally in hastening our approach to a full knowledge of the configuration of the globe.[80]

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[77] Glen McLaren, *Beyond Leichhardt, Bushcraft and the Exploration of Australia*, South Fremantle, 1996, p.164, p.295 endnote 145.
[78] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.1, p.254.
[79] Hamilton, "Address to the Royal Geographical Society of London", pp.xxxviii-xxxix.
[80] *Ibid*., p.xli.

Explorers like Charles Sturt were often charged with this task in their instructions. In his list of instructions prior to undertaking his expedition into the interior of southern Australia, Sturt was directed to

> note the description of the several people whom you may meet, the extent of the population, their means of subsistence, their genius and disposition, the nature of their amusements, their diseases and remedies, their objects of worship, religious ceremonies, and a vocabulary of their language.[81]

Thorough knowledge of Aboriginal society, culture and language was essential to the success of the imperial mission to colonise and develop Australia. It guided Britain's paternalistic policies towards Aborigines who were perceived as inferior and also rendered their dispossession acceptable in the minds of readers. With these philanthropic and economic prospects in mind, the Royal Geographical Society funded and eagerly awaited the publication of the account of Grey's expedition into north-western Australia as it would "contain much to interest them, not only in geography and in the light thrown upon the origin of the races who now inhabit this vast island, but in the natural history, geology and other branches of science."[82] The published account did not disappoint in regard to expanding knowledge about the local Aborigines as it provided comprehensive ethnographic observations in ten chapters. These chapters were devoted to their language, culture, society and the influence of Europeans. The narrative implied the need to protect and defend Aborigines through a policy of civilisation and assimilation which would raise them from their perceived degraded status. While Grey was concerned about the perception of Aborigines as "on a level with brutes", believing instead in monogenism, that is, all human beings were descended from a single pair of ancestors and thus were racial equals, his policies reflected a paternalism which demanded a view of Aborigines as inferior and childlike and in need of protection.[83]

Eyre also devoted a number of chapters of his account to describing the physical appearance, language, customs of Aborigines and their interaction with European settlers. It is apparent that Eyre had some understanding of mid-nineteenth century racial theory when he described the physical appearance of Aborigines:

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[81] Sturt, *Two Expeditions* Vol. 1, pp.187-188.
[82] Grey and Lushington, "A Brief Outline", p.454.
[83] Grey, *Journal of Two Expeditions*, Vol.2, p.367.

> The male is well built and muscular, averaging from five to six feet in height, with proportionate upper and lower extremities. The anterior lobes of the brain are fairly developed, so as to give a facial angle, far from being one of the most acute to be found amongst the black races. The eyes are sunk, the nose flattened, and the mouth wide. The lips are rather thick, and the teeth generally very perfect and beautiful, though the dental arrangement is sometimes singular, as no difference exists in many between the incisor and canine teeth. The neck is short, and sometimes thick, and the heel resembles that of Europeans. The ankles and wrists are frequently small, as are also the hands and feet. The latter are well formed and expanded, but the calves of the legs are generally deficient.[84]

Eyre's description emphasised the facial characteristics of the Aborigines he encountered and reflected the importance of comparative anatomy to early nineteenth ethnology. In the late eighteenth century, Peter Camper measured facial angle to indicate the position of various races within a hierarchy that placed Europeans at the top and other races below with apes and chimpanzees at the bottom. His measurement of the angle "between a horizontal line through the nose and ear, and the line of the face" suggested that "the more protruding jaw, the greater the angle and the closer to the angle of the ape".[85] The work of scientist George Cuvier in the early 1800s revisited the work of Peter Camper and suggested that the cranial measurement was connected to 'animality' and 'intelligence'.[86]

Eyre's description suggested an understanding of physiognomy and facial angle measurements and while his comments are not derogatory, they emphasised the differences between Aborigines and Europeans that suggested Aborigines were lower in the hierarchy of races. Moreover his description of Aboriginal women implied that they were inferior to Aboriginal men which positioned them even lower in the order. He wrote:

> In the female the average height is about five feet, or perhaps a little under. The anterior part of the brain is more limited than in the male; the apex of the head is carried further back; the facial angle is more acute; and the extremities are more attenuated. The latter circumstance may probably be accounted for from the fact, that the females have to endure, from a very early age, a great degree of hardship, privation, and ill-treatment.[87]

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[84] Eyre, *Journal of Expeditions*, Vol.2, pp.206-207.
[85] Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain 1800-1960*, Oxford, 1982, pp.8-9.
[86] *Ibid*., pp.12-15
[87] Eyre, *Journal of Expeditions*, Vol.2, pp.207.

Eyre did not confine his comments to physiology but also included discussion of their culture which included the insertion of illustrations of items worn by Aborigines and the weapons used by them. (Illustrations 29 and 30). Such illustrations emphasised the primitive nature of Aboriginal society in readers' minds.

Strzlecki's account suggested that he also had an understanding of racial theory. His account provided a detailed account of the physical appearance of Aborigines with particular emphasis placed on the face which he defined as the "characteristic feature of the race".(Illustration 31) The face presented

> a facial angle of 75º and 85º. It is marked by a low forehead, eyes large, far apart, and half covered by the upper lid, with a conjunctiva of the purest white, spotted with yellow; the iris invariably a dark brown, the pupil large and of a jet black; a nose broad and flat, the frontal sinuses being remarkably prominent, the nostrils extending and wide-spread; cheeks generally hollow, with prominent malar bones; a wide mouth, with large white teeth, and thick lips; the lower jaw unusually short, and widely expanded anteriorily.[88]

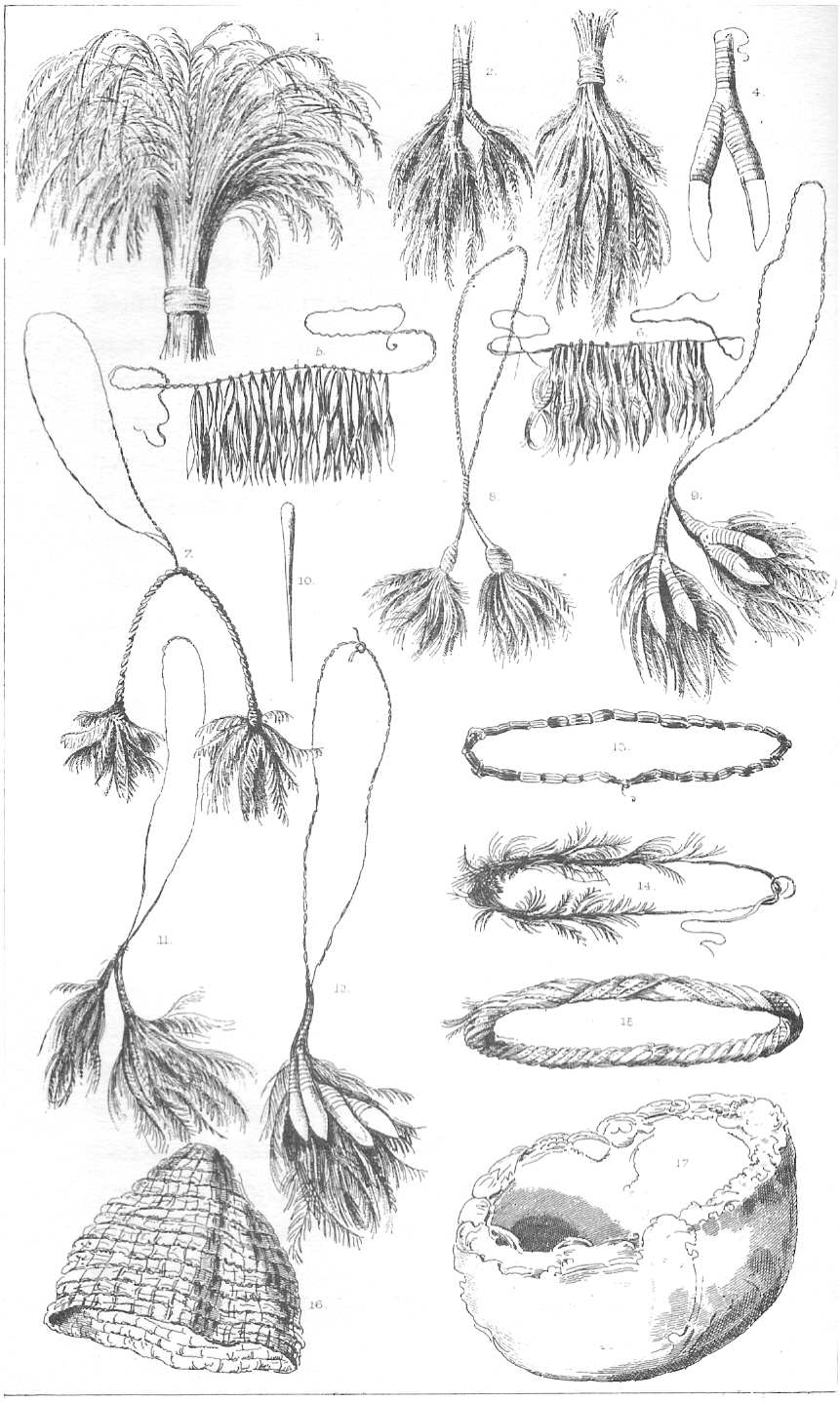
His description suggested Cuvier's scale of human races whereby intelligence was measured at "30º for apes, 70º for Negroes, 80º for Europeans and 90º for ancient Greek sculptures of men and 100º for sculptures of the divinities".[89] Strzlecki's measurement of facial angle demonstrated disagreement with Cuvier's scale as he placed Aborigines somewhere within the range of Negroes and Europeans. Nevertheless his description still emphasised differences between Aboriginal and European facial structures and evoked an image of physiological variation as comparison was drawn to a known and assumed superior white model.

Some scientists and explorers used craniometry, physiognomy and phrenology to link skull features with innate temperament and faculties.[90] Sturt was aware of these scientific studies when he described Pulcanti, an Aborigine taken prisoner at Lake Victoria and taken to Adelaide. He considered the

> bold savage would have submitted to torture without a groan; he was the most repulsive native in aspect that [he] ever saw, and had a most ferocious countenance. The thick lip and white teeth, the lowering brow, and deep set but

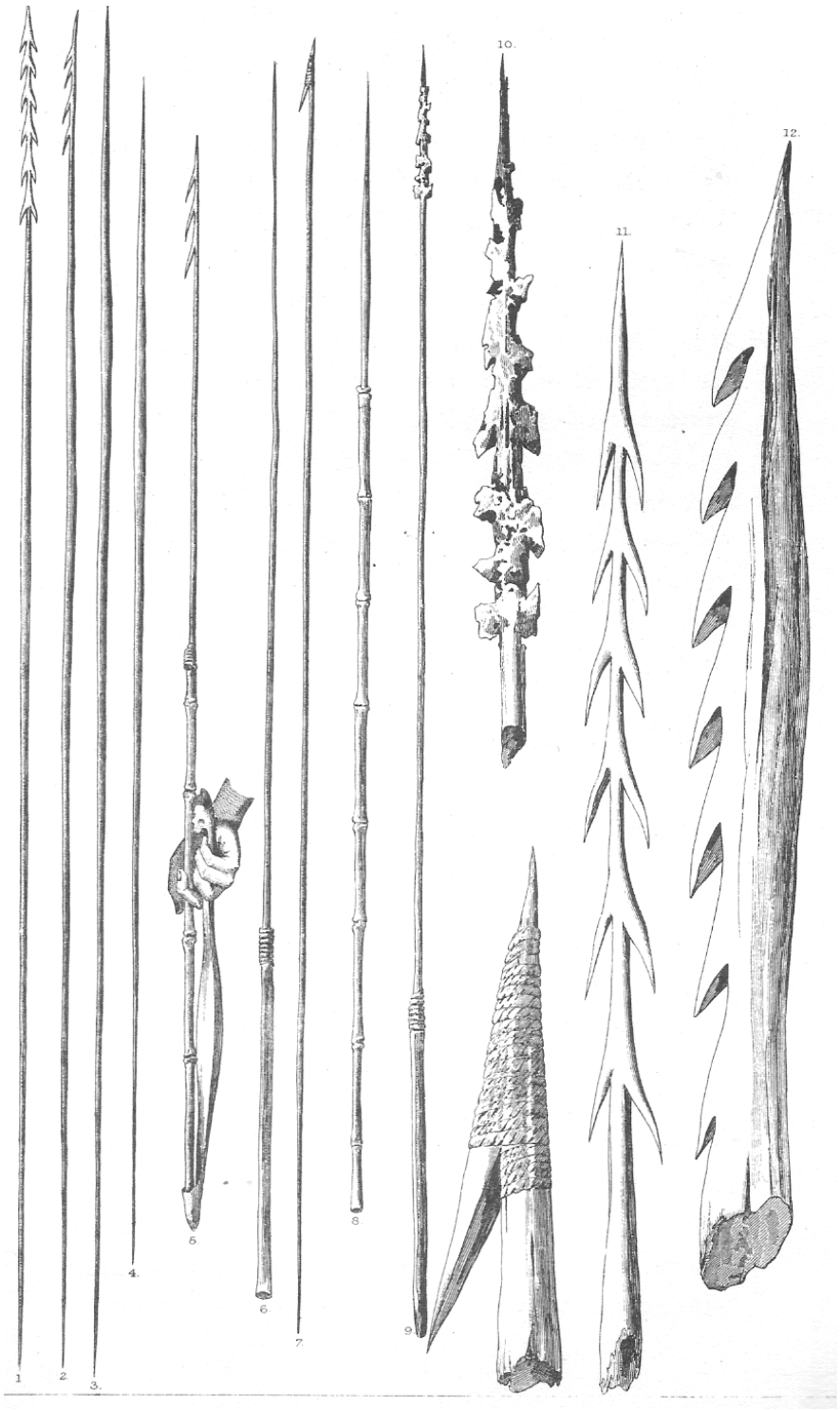
[88] Strzelecki, *Physical Description of New South Wales*, pp.334-335.
[89] Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science*, p.14.
[90] Robert J.C. Young, *Colonial Desire, Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, London, 1995, pp.122-123. Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science*, pp.20-21

Illustration 29



Implements
Source: Edward Eyre, *Journal of Expeditions of Discovery*, Vol.II, London, 1845, facing p.209.

Illustration 30



Weapons
Source: Edward Eyre, *Journal of Expeditions*, Vol.II, London, 1845, facing p.306

Illustration 31



Jemmy
Native of the Hampshire Hills, Van Diemen's Land
Source: P.E. De Strzelecki, *Physical Description of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land*, London, 1845, facing p.333.

> sharp eye, with the rapidly retiring forehead all betrayed the savage with the least intellect, but his demeanour was now quiet and inoffensive.[91]

While Sturt's description indicated knowledge of physiognomy and craniometry and their connection to animality and intellect, the innate savagery suggested by the Aborigine's cranial features was not supported by the self-control he displayed in Sturt's presence. This behaviour prompted Sturt to express scepticism about the exactness of these sciences in general. Later in the second volume of his account he elucidated his reservations. After relating an incident that demonstrated Aboriginal moral conscience, he noted:

> It will be borne in mind, that I have not here spoken of their personal appearance. That that generally is against them, cannot be doubted. If there is any truth in phrenology, they must have their share of the brutal passions. The whole appearance of the cranium indeed, would lead to the conclusion that they possess few of the intellectual faculties; but, in a savage state, these are seldom called forth. They are nevertheless, capable of strong attachment, are indulgent parents, and certainly evince a kindly feeling towards their relations[92]

Sturt's questioning of nineteenth century scientific ideas revealed the tensions that often existed between the explorers' understanding of racial theories that guided British policies towards Indigenous people and the reality of the explorers' encounters.

Nineteenth century racial theory also considered human origins. In the early nineteenth century a monogenetic perspective prevailed. Monogenists believed that all human beings were one species, descendants of Adam and Eve. Hence it was considered that the geographical origin of humankind lay somewhere in Asia.[93] By mid-century polygenist arguments were more prominent. Polygenists considered physiological and anatomical variations along with comparative psychology, craniology and linguistics and advocated that differences between racial groups indicated separate species of human beings.[94] Tension in explorers' understanding of these two positions was often apparent in their texts. Stzelecki's account of Aborigines revealed his reservations about the monogenist view of one pure source of human beings. He observed: "In his physical appearance, [the Aborigine] does not exhibit any features by which his race

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[91] Sturt, *Narrative of an Expedition*, Vol.1, p.90
[92] *Ibid*., Vol.2, p.277-278.
[93] Young, *Colonial Desire*.
[94] Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science*, pp.1-3. George W. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, New York, 1987, p.26.

could be classed or identified with any of the generally known families of mankind."[95] Thus Stzelecki could not trace the ancestors of Aborigines or establish links to other "primitive races of mankind".[96] However rather than take a polygenist approach he reasserted a monogenist view that "on such subjects as the origin of a human race, we must be satisfied with the simple declaration of Scripture" that is, a single human origin of humanity in Adam and Eve as written in the Bible.[97]

Philology and linguistics also provided a basis for understanding the geographic origin of different races and classifying them. Consequently Aboriginal languages were of interest to explorers as it was assumed that they provided a way of determining the origins of Aborigines. Eyre, Grey and Mitchell provided details about the Aboriginal languages spoken in different parts of Australia. In an appendix to Mitchell's *Three Expeditions* he inserted a table of English words and their Aboriginal language equivalent collected in various parts of the New South Wales and compiled from a range of sources.(Illustration 32) Mitchell found a "striking similarity in eight words, and it appears singular, that all these words should apply to different parts of the human body".[98] He confined this uniformity in vocabulary to the south-eastern and south-western portions of Australia, seeing no consistency with the languages of the northern coast where he inferred that changes in dialect occurred more frequently. He considered that the words that occurred consistently on the southern coast provided philologists with specimens of the vocabulary that could be tested in places north of Australia. Such comparative analysis could contribute to determining the origin of Aborigines. Mitchell noted a slight similarity between a few Aboriginal words and the words used by Indigenous people on some of the islands in the Pacific.[99]

Similarly Grey included a comparative vocabulary of Aboriginal dialects for Swan River, King George's Sound, South Australia and Sydney but suggested that the dialects all had a common origin.[100] Grey assumed that Aborigines came from the north and migrated to the distant parts of Australia. He provided a vocabulary table that highlighted the similarities in commonly used words throughout the country. His theory

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[95] Strzelecki, *Physical Description of New South Wales*, p.336.
[96] *Ibid*., p.333.
[97] *Ibid*.
[98] Mitchell, *Three Expeditions*, Vol.2, p.340.
[99] *Ibid*., pp.340-341.
[100] Grey, *Journals of Two Expeditions*, Vol. 2, p.208.

Illustration 32

APPENDIX.

VOCABULARY OF WORDS HAVING THE SAME MEANING

IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF AUSTRALIA.

	King George's Sound.*	Raffles' Bay.†	Karaula in lat. 29°.	Wellington Valley.‡	Lachlan, Regent's Lake.	Moreton Bay.§	Wollondilly River.
Head	*Caät*	Warhee	*Kanga*	Bullong	Ballang	Maggol	Bubyong
Hair of the head	Kion	Away, ea	. .	. .	Ooran	Kâbboey	Darreng
Eyes	*Mial*	Dala	*Mil*	. .	*Mil*	*Mill*	*Mil*
Nose	Chiangohet	Y, ē, ne	*Murro*	. .	*Murro*	*Murro*	Nógorro
The cheeks	Gnieluck	Adiera or adgara	. .	. .	Tàkal	Tággal	
The beard	Gnanuck	La mur mur	Yerry (beard or chin)	. .	Yàrreng	Yarreu	Yarreng
The lips	Tawa	La mar jala	. .	. .	Moondo	Tàmbora	
The teeth	Gnoluck	*Ei yeu*	*Elera*	. .	*Yeèrang*	*Deer*	*Yerra*
The tongue	*Talien*	*Arrad*	*Talley*	. .	*Tallèng*	Choorogòng	*Darline*
The mouth	Talgomet	Là wae	Nyèy	. .	Nyàn	Wongah	Mundo
Ears	Twany	O, tomare	Binna	. .	Ota	Bidna or pidna	Kurré
Neck	*Woort*	Ebanaiche	*Oorr*	. .	*Worro*	. .	Kanga
Breast	Twambar	Anabad	. .	. .	Bergin	. .	
Mamillæ	Piap	O, ye or age	Nammo	. .	Nammo	Hammo	Ny-apung
Abdomen	Copul	Ei, wood	Cunna	Barabing	Porpin	Diggery	Bendy
Umbilicus	Peell	Wan, hor, eæ	. .	. .	Beràyn	Môberee	
Nates	Pāre	Abaicha	. .	. .	. .	Nárral	
Penis	Maik	Ma, mure	. .	. .	Dònn	Doogi or Toogi	
Thighs	Tawell	Etanela	. .	. .	Tarra	Tarra	Darra
Leg	Woolet	Murando	. .	Böoyon	Bòyo	Pyyoo	
Calf of the leg	. .	. .	Ooroga	. .	. .	Puyso	
Foot	*Tian*	E lood	*Tinna*	*Dinnung*	*Tinnang*	*Chidna*	*Dyenna*
Toe	Perigur	Eiman	. .	. .			
Shoulders	Moonk	Nandìe, ya	Wallar	. .	Cannà	Kicka	Parowra
Elbow	*Gnoyong*	Mirenan	. .	. .	*Nyòona*	O'pee	*Nyuna*

* From Mr. Scott Nind. † Dr. Wilson. ‡ Mr. Larmer. § Major Clunie, late Commandant.

Source: T.L. Mitchell, *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia,* Vol.II, London, 1839, Appendix.

that Aborigines were of Asiatic origin was supported by cave drawings of clothed figures that reminded Grey of the descriptions from the Prophet Ezekiel.[101] Eyre also noted connections between the different dialects and provided a comparative table of English words with the corresponding word in the regional Aboriginal languages.[102] He believed:

> Australia was first peopled on its north-western coast between the parallels of 12º and 16º S. latitude. From whence we might surmise that three grand divisions had branched out from the parent tribe, and that from the offsets of these the whole continent had been overspread.[103]

However in Strzelecki's account of the languages of Australian Aborigines he questioned such generally held monogenist beliefs. He considered that not enough was understood about the structure of the language to indicate a common root.[104] He criticised explorers and travellers who jumped to such conclusions when a thorough understanding of the languages of the Aborigines had not been undertaken. He observed that "The limited state of our knowledge respecting the language of Australasia presents also a barrier to inquiry into the force, activity, tendency, and advancement of the mental faculties of its natives."[105] Moreover Strzelecki was convinced that the contemporary approach of philosophers and naturalists to classifying Indigenous races was not appropriate. In a footnote to his text, he firmly stated:

> Hitherto physical geography, in describing "man", has classified him according to the characteristics which his external organisation presents. Philosophers, in the contemplation of his destiny, rejecting that classification, have viewed him merely as a member of the whole human race; but the day is perhaps, not far distant, when both philosophers and naturalists will admit that it is the instinctive and mental faculties peculiar to each race, and in perfect accordance with the local circumstances in which that race is placed, which constitute the true principles of that classification. The study of this instinct, which may be looked upon as a guide to the politics and morality of every race, has been lost sight of; and this is the fruitful source of all the errors and failures of political and religious regenerators, who labour, in opposition to the history of past and modern ages, to reduce all the races of mankind to one uniform standard of customs and institutions.[106]

He advocated that the thorough understanding of each race should include a study of their "instinctive and mental faculties". Strzelecki's account of Aboriginal physiology

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[101] *Ibid*., Vol.1. facing p.214 and p.215.
[102] Eyre, *Journals of Expeditions*, Vol.2, pp.395-397, 400-402.
[103] *Ibid*., p.405
[104] Strzelecki, *Physical Description of New South Wales*, pp.336-337.
[105] *Ibid*., p.338.
[106] *Ibid*.

and languages seems to suggest that he was moving towards a polygenist view that not only considered their physical and linguistic differences from Europeans but also investigated their intellectual and cultural differences.[107] Regardless of their particular approach to describing and commenting on Aboriginal culture and society, explorers emphasised how Aborigines were different to Europeans. Such descriptions, while often based upon differing understandings of the origin of human beings, invariably placed Aborigines in an inferior position. This type of imperial rhetoric fostered a paternalistic approach to their governance and allowed their dispossession.

Conclusion

Imperial science in the guise of organisations such as the Royal Geographical Society, the Royal Geological Society, the Royal Society and the Royal Gardens at Kew as well as through government authorities fostered scientific exploration that had pragmatic and paternalistic objectives. British industrialisation motivated the collation of information and the collection and systematic description of specimens from new lands. Theories of race based on comparative anatomy, psychology, craniology and linguistics placed Aborigines in an inferior position through comparison to a superior white model and reinforced notions of European superiority and paternalism. The information collected contributed to the development by the imperial centre of an inventory of resources and understanding that could be utilised in the imperial endeavour. In the process of scientific exploration explorers incorporated Australia not only into imperial science but also into a global scientific understanding which reinforced its economic potential for further settlement and resource development. Scientific organisations at the centre of empire were instrumental in legitimating and dispersing this information which reinforced territorial claims over Australia.

[107] Young, *Colonial Desire*, p.66.

PART THREE: MAINTAINING THE CONNECTION

Imperial rhetoric and the literature of travel 1850-1914

Part three examines the imperial rhetoric contained in travel literature in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which worked to convey an image of Australia's connection to Britain and the empire. Through a literary approach that employed metaphors of family, travel writers established the perception of Australia's emotional and psychological ties to Britain and loyalty to the Empire. Contemporary theories about race, the environment and progress provided an intellectual context that founded travel writers' discussions about Australia and its physical links to Britain. For example, a fear of how degeneration of the Anglo-Saxon race would affect the future of the British Empire provided a background for travellers' observations of how the Anglo-Saxon race had adapted to the Australian environment. Environmental and biological determinism explained the appearance of Anglo-Australians, native-born Australians and the Australian type. While these descriptions of Australians were not always positive they emphasised the connection of Australians to Britain and the Empire. Fit and healthy Australians equated to a fit and healthy nation and a robust and prestigious empire. Travellers emphasised the importance of Australian women to this objective, as they were the moral guardians of the nation and the progenitors of the ensuing generation. Travellers also justified the dispossession of Aborigines based on racial theories. While the interaction of people and their environment preoccupied travellers' discussions, they also considered the adaptation of the Australian environment to British progress. A utilitarian view of the Australian environment moulded aesthetic appreciation with progress into a British form so that Australia was viewed as making an important contribution to the British Empire. Even discussions of environmental problems that resulted from British settlement could be considered in a positive light. Travellers perceived Australia's economic potential as limitless and adding prestige to the Empire. These ideas with a strong focus on environment are covered separately in the next five chapters.

Chapter Seven
Family Ties:
Imperial patriotism and metaphors of "home" and "family"

> England's greatness is too near to us at home to create sentiment; - but in the far Antipodes loyalty is the condition of the colonist's mind. He is proud of England, though very generally angry with England because England will not do exactly what he wants. … He does not like to be told that he is to be divided from her. He is in truth loyal. He always speaks of England as home.[1]
>
> Anthony Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand,* 1873.

The metaphors of "home" and "family" in travel literature evoked a powerful metaphysical bond that reminded readers of the cohesiveness of the British Empire. "Home" denoted a stable, structured environment that could be relied upon. Socialised as British and identifying with an Anglo-Saxon (sometimes Anglo-Celtic) heritage, Australians desired to belong to the imperial family. Metaphors of "home" and "family" are interwoven into travel literature of Australia and emphasised the Australian sense of belonging to Britain. Britain was "Home", the secure place to and from which excursions were made. While home is a familial place, connected with family memories and places, it is also a cultural or political domain to which the individual is connected by ethnicity or political institutions. Although the use of these metaphors is not exclusive to travel literature of Australia, the choice of them by travel writers strengthened the imperial rhetoric in their narratives. They used home and familial metaphors to stimulate imperial patriotism and show the Empire as unified whilst also acknowledging Australia's eventual self-determination.

Metaphors of "home" and "family" are used interchangeably in the travel literature covered here. Britain was "home" in the psyche of Australians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Indeed Australian identity, both individual and collective, was connected to their psychological acceptance of this understanding. Bonds of birth, ancestry and tradition tied Australians to Britain and stimulated a pan-Britannic nationalism. The exposition of the concept of home by symbolic anthropologist Mary Douglas contributes to an understanding of Australia's attachment to Britain. She suggests that the idea of home can transcend place, extending beyond physical boundaries, and can exist in an intangible sense, within the individual and the group and

[1] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand,* p 54.

that it may only be visible in the maintenance of certain cultural, social and political practices.[2] This is the case with diasporas where communities have settled outside their native territory, real or imagined, but retain a strong loyalty to their place of origin based on cultural, political and religious ties. Robin Cohen, a sociologist, has identified differing forms of diaspora including the imperial diaspora which is particularly pertinent in the case of British migration to Australia. He defines an imperial diaspora as one that is

> marked by continuing connection with the homeland, a deference to and imitation of its social and political institutions and a sense of forming part of a grand imperial design – whereby the group concerned assumes the self-image of a "chosen race" with a global mission.[3]

Such was the situation in Australia where the established British social and political institutions created a bond of loyalty and deference to Britain.

Home is a flexible term that can incorporate multiple locations. Steven Grosby asserts that the establishment of familiarity through "patterns of activity whose meaning is familiar to one" was important in the connection between the familial home and identification with a homeland.[4] Both home and homeland are "where one's life and one's family is propagated, sustained and transmitted."[5] Grosby contends that as infants are familiarised with their immediate surrounds they also establish cognition of the wider concept of 'homeland' by being socialised into wider groups and allegiances.[6] Home becomes then the locus of the accepted cultural, political and social norms of an individual or group; "home is here and there", in Britain and Australia.[7]

Writing at a time when the British had withdrawn their soldiers from the colonies, Anthony Trollope observed Tasmanians to be particularly attached to Britain and appreciative of the security that emblems of British rule conveyed. He remarked:

> There is with them all a love of home, – which word always means England, – that touches the heart of him who comes to them from the old country. "We

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[2] Mary Douglas, "The Idea of a Home: A Kind of Space", *Social Research*, Vol.58, No.1, 1991, pp.288-290. Nigel Rapport, "The Topic of the Book" in N Rapport & A Dawson, *Migrants of Identity: Perceptions of Home in a World of Movement*, Oxford, 1998, pp 6-7. Steven Grosby, "Homeland", in Athena S Leoussi (ed), *Encyclopaedia of Nationalism*, New Brunswick, 2001, pp129-131.
[3] Robin Cohen, *Global diasporas: An introduction*, London, 1999, p.67.
[4] Steven Grosby, "Homeland", p.130.
[5] *Ibid.,*
[6] *Ibid.,* pp.130-131.
[7] Rapport, "The Topic of the Book", p.7.

> do not want to be divided from you. Though we did in sort set up for ourselves, and though we do keep our own house, we still wish to be thought of by Great Britain as a child that is loved…"[8]

In this passage Trollope reinforced the image of the Tasmanians' sense of belonging to Britain as "home". He made the distinction between "house" and "home", the former suggesting a mere place to reside, rather than the sense of belonging that "home" conveyed. The Tasmanian "house" had not yet become "home". Trollope used the analogy of a child who looks to a parent for comfort to describe Tasmanians who maintained a dependence on Britain for their security.

This chapter examines the concept of imperial patriotism and how metaphors of "home" and "family" were used in its constructions. It analyses the imperial rhetoric contained in these metaphors and how travellers constructed the sense of belonging and loyalty as the collective response of Australians to Britain and the empire. It explores the use of these metaphors in travellers' discussions of Australia's evolving national sentiment and how Anglo-Saxonness and Anglo-Celtic ethnic nationalisms provided genealogical and psychological ties to Britain at the same time as cultural identity was undergoing transformation.

Imperial patriotism

In explaining how imperial rhetoric operated to stimulate imperial patriotism some elaboration of the ideological concept of patriotism is pertinent. Daniel Bar-Tal's social psychological perspective on patriotism is relevant in providing the connection between metaphors of "home" and "family" and the loyalty of Australians to empire. For Bar-Tal, patriotism is

> an attachment of group members towards their group and the country in which they reside. This attachment is reflected in beliefs and emotions that individuals hold.[9]

Attachment to groups is part of the normal socialisation process of individuals from childhood. The desire to belong to a group that is positively evaluated is important in providing the individual with a sense of security and in stimulating cooperative

[8] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, p.520.
[9] Daniel Bar-Tal, "Patriotism as Fundamental Beliefs of Group Members", *Politics and the Individual*, Vol.3 No.2 1993, p.45.

behaviour.[10] At a fundamental level, patriotism is distinguished by the interrelated nature of attachment to ethnographic group and affinity to place, even when a person is not resident in that place. Political changes or ideological shifts do not affect it. To the group, patriotism serves the functions of stimulating "unity, cohesiveness and mobilization".[11]

Imperial patriotism might be considered a form of pan-Britannic nationalism which united people of British origin throughout the world. It was the collective and learned response of the imperial diaspora to feelings of displacement and isolation when disconnected from Britain. Its foundation was a sense of belonging to an imagined community of Anglo-Saxon racial heritage which adhered to British traditions and institutions. In Australia, patriotism stimulated feelings of loyalty and belonging to Empire that joined differing ethnicities and impelled them to support, trust and defend the Empire. An identification with Britishness provided the glue for imperial patriotism. Genealogical ties were an understandable source of identification with Britishness as in the nineteenth century, many Australians still had ties to an extended family resident in Britain. While membership of the pan-Britannic group was characterised by genetic links to Britain, it was also imagined and based on feelings of psychological belonging to Britain. Furthermore these psychological bonds continued long after the "blood ties" weakened.[12] Britishness and Anglo-Saxonness came to define the imperial patriotism of Australians and infused Australian nationalism as it developed.[13]

In Australia in the late nineteenth century imperial patriotism was considered to be stronger than it was in Britain. As Anthony Trollope indicated in the epigraph at the beginning of the chapter imperial patriotism was greater at the peripheries than at the

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[10] Bar-Tal, "Patriotism as Fundamental Beliefs of Group Members", p.48. Daniel Druckman, "Nationalism, Patriotism, and Group Loyalty: A Social Psychological Perspective", *Mershon International Studies Review*, Vol.38, 1994, pp.44-45.

[11] Bar-Tal, "Patriotism as Fundamental Beliefs of Group Members", p.45.

[12] Russell McGregor, "The Necessity of Britishness: ethno-cultural Roots of Australian Nationalism", *Nations and Nationalism* Vol.12, No.3, 2006, pp.493-511. Neville Meaney, "Britishness and Australian Identity: The Problem of Nationalism in Australian History and Historiography", *Australian Historical Studies*, No.116, April 2001, pp.76-90. Walker Connor, "Beyond reason: the nature of the ethnonational bond", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.16, No.3, July 1993, pp.373-389. Peter Cochrane, "Britishness in Australia", *Voices*, Vol.6, No.3, 1996-97, pp.63-74. Peter Cochrane, "Anglo-Saxonness: Ancestors and Identity", *Communal/Plural: Journal of Transnational and Cross-cultural Studies,* Vol.4, 1994, pp.1-16.

[13] British and Anglo-Saxon are often used interchangeably in the travel literature covered here. However Anglo-Saxon is at times used in discussions related to race.

centre. Implicit in his "England's greatness is too near to us at home to create sentiment" was British complacency about the empire. It was not until subjects were physically alienated from Britain through relocation that their sense of belonging to the pan-Britannic group activated imperial patriotism.[14] John Foster Fraser also commented that patriotic loyalty in Australia was greater than in Britain although he distinguished between loyalty to the empire and loyalty to Great Britain, noting that the majority of Australians were conscious of being an integral part of the British Empire.[15] In the colonies the sense of belonging to the empire created loyalty and cohesion that fostered imperial prestige. In his recent work, *The Absent-minded Imperialists,* Bernard Porter has explored how imperialism was received in Britain and concludes that it was more important within the colonies than with the majority of British people. He argues that it did not involve large sections of the population in Britain but remained important mainly to the middle and ruling classes.[16]

In some instances travellers perceived contradictions in Australian loyalty, as if imperial patriotism and Australian nationalism were necessarily in tension. Fraser, who visited Australia in the early twentieth century, considered Australia was a "paradox", patriotic to the empire but displaying the beginnings of national sentiment. He explained the strength of imperial patriotism as the result of the common British ancestry of Australians. It was the "warm and generous love for the Motherland" that explained the weakness of national spirit.[17] He asserted that nationalist aspirations for independence were weak but would develop "out of Imperialism" when state rivalries were set aside and national ideals awakened.[18] He predicted that "when the national tree blossoms, the crop of good will be enormous. For one of the things that has hampered Australia's progress has been the absence of the national ideal."[19]

Travel writers continually reminded readers of the "blood ties" between Australia and Britain, which evoked a sense of continued belonging to the imperial family. This form of imagery was significant as it established a psychological bond that lasted long after

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[14] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, p 54.
[15] John Foster Fraser, *Australia: the Making of a Nation*, London, 1910, pp.11-12, 18.
[16] Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society and Culture in Britain*, Oxford, 2004.
[17] Fraser, *Australia: the Making of a Nation*, p.11-12.
[18] *Ibid*., p.18.
[19] *Ibid*.

settlers' attachment to Australia evolved, and the actual genetic ties to Britain had weakened. Writing ten years after Federation, Ernest Scott suggested the enduring nature of the emotional bond of Australians to Britain and the empire. Scott contended that the "average citizen of the Commonwealth troubles himself very little about Imperial affairs" but in times of crisis and spurred on by imperial rhetoric, the average citizen was enthusiastic and responsive to the Empire's need. Scott perceived Australia's response to the Empire as loyal "in a very real if vague fashion".[20] Advocates of Australian nationalism stressed the coexistence of Australian nationalism with imperial patriotism and maintained displays of pride in Australia's continued attachment to Britain and the empire, which varied from open public demonstrations of loyalty to personal expressions of connection to Britain. For example, the nationalist William Sowden, who advanced Australian national aspirations while remaining loyal to the British crown, praised the loyalty of Australians to Britain:

> when the National Anthem is sung in any part of the Commonwealth, every mother's son among the audience, indoor and outdoor, wet or shine, hot or cold, doffs his hat, and remains thus uncovered until the last strains of the patriotic song have died away.[21]

The existence of imperial patriotism was understandable given familial ties to Britain through the number of British-born Australians. James Jupp estimates that in 1861 52% of the population were overseas-born settlers. Of these, 38.7% were born in Great Britain and 13.7% were born in Ireland. By 1901 only 13.1% of the population were born in Great Britain and 4.9% in Ireland.[22] Despite the decline in the numbers of British-born settlers by the turn of the century, the majority of Australians still claimed British ancestry. In 1870, Anthony Trollope visited his son who had settled in Australia. He spoke from personal experience when he acknowledged the strength of familial ties in Australia, asserting, "We know that the Australians are bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, as fully as though they still stood on English soil."[23] R.H. Horne insisted that genealogical ties should transcend disputes between Britain and Australia. He declared:

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[20] Ernest Scott, "Australia and the Empire", *Round Table: A Quarterly Review of the Politics of the British Empire*, Vol.1, August 1911, pp.497-500, in J. Arnold, P. Spearitt and D. Walker (eds*), Out of Empire: The British Dominion of Australia*, Port Melbourne, 1993, p.21.

[21] W. Sowden, "The Anglo-Australian Position from an Australian Point of View" in *An Australian Native's Standpoint: Addresses by Will. J. Sowden*, London, 1912, pp.62, 65-66.

[22] James Jupp, *Immigration*, Sydney, 1991, pp.125, 127. Jupp's percentages for the population for 1861 are Aboriginal 13.4%, Native-born 34.6% and Overseas-born settlers 52%.

[23] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, p 350.

> Now, there is no need for any "true-born Briton" to be angry with any other native Briton, or with any natural descendant, for making the above remark on the simple question of the size and condition of a piece of earth. Is it not rather a cause for the self-gratulation and sympathy of England, that men who are not merely descended from her race, but the majority of whom are actually of present flesh-and-blood relationship, have furnished an additional example of the energies of her nature, and established, within a few years, a progressive and loyal colony – the richest of all her foreign possessions – at the very antipodes of her maternal fields?"[24]

In Horne's imperial rhetoric, it was the English-born settlers who were advancing the Australian colonies as an integral part of the British Empire. These settlers were part of the imperial family and displayed the vigour and progressive spirit of their British forebears.

Through imagery that evoked a sense of belonging to not just an immediate family in Britain but a wider imperial family travel writers reinforced an image of Australian loyalty to Britain and the empire. In developing this imagery metaphors were a powerful textual device that strengthened the travellers' imperial rhetoric of Australia's relationship with Britain.

The use of metaphor

When the metaphor of "mother" was used in travel literature, Britain became mother and the colonies of settlement were the offspring. The words "home" and "mother" are both symbolic of origin and belonging. The "mother" metaphor signified the reproductive role of the centre and created a means of group belonging and unification in the colonies. Queen Victoria provided the personification of the "mother" image. The image constructed of her was comparable to the image of mother in a Victorian middle class family where the female role "was biological and spiritual, dedicated to the production and rearing of healthy children, the support of men and the guardianship of … spiritual and moral values".[25] Queen Victoria's fecundity and maternal capabilities were unquestionable as she had given birth to nine children. She was perceived as the reproductive centre of an imagined imperial family. In later life, she took pleasure in the image of herself as the imperial mother of 398 million subjects.[26] The outpourings of grief in Australia upon her death in 1901 were likened to the loss of one's own

[24] R.H. Horne, *Australian Facts and Prospects,* London, 1859, p.100.
[25] Mackay & Thane, "The Englishwoman", p.192.
[26] Gavin Souter, *Lion and Kangaroo: The Initiation of Australia*, Melbourne, 2000, p 50.

mother, a mother who had nurtured and guided a daughter, Australia, throughout her growth from the infancy of colonial self-government through to adulthood and Federation.[27] However, the construction of a mother image at the head of empire contrasts with the paternalism of Britain's administration. John Hirst has suggested that the image of the monarchy in Australia was less associated with political power and more concerned with generating a feeling of support, belonging and security in the colonies.[28] Indeed, Queen Victoria may be perceived as the feminine counterpart to Westminster's patriarchal management of the imperial family.

Even the American traveller, Mark Twain was familiar with the use of the "mother" and "daughter" metaphors to portray the relationship between an imperial power and its colonies. In *Following the Equator*, published in 1897, Twain adopted the metaphors to reveal Australia's relationship with Britain. By this time England was characterised as the aging and frail mother, not unlike Queen Victoria herself, and Australia was the daughter fast approaching adulthood and independence. Twain was touched by the habit of Australians talking about England as "mother":

> It was always pretty to hear it, and often it was said in an unconsciously caressing way that made it touching; in a way which transmuted a sentiment into an embodiment, and made one seem to see Australasia as a young girl stroking mother England's old gray head.[29]

Twain supported the recurring maternal theme in travel literature, which accentuated the Australians' bond of common origin and their sense of familial belonging to Britain.

Just as family relationships are intricate and there are times of disagreement and discontent, so too travellers perceived tensions in Australia's relationship with Britain. Occasionally, commentators perceived the relationship between Britain and Australia as one-sided. Britain, as the parent, provided guidance and the material resources that nurtured the colonies. However, some saw little reciprocation from its Australian children. Charles Dilke portrayed the Australian colonies as selfish children, stating: "When a Briton takes a survey of the colonies, he finds much matter for surprise in the one-sided nature of the partnership which exists between the mother and daughter

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[27] *Ibid.,* pp 52-3.
[28] J. B. Hirst, *The Strange Birth of Colonial Democracy: New South Wales 1848-1884*, North Sydney, 1988, pp 78-79.
[29] Mark Twain, *Following the Equator: A Journey Around the World,,* Vol 1, New York, 1897, p.130.

lands."[30] He was referring specifically to the one-sided nature of Britain's defence of Australia. The defensive arrangements were funded by British taxes levied on British citizens at a time of increasing population and mounting individual poverty, while the colonies contributed little.

The Australian commentator Frank Fox perceived Australia as a loyal but spoilt child. Australia was the problem child of the imperial family, "an indulged, an unruly, and yet a warm-hearted and generous child." He continued:

> The unruliness and waywardness of Australia at various epochs of her relations with the Mother-country would, if they were considered separately, probably suggest a rebellious and ungrateful nature. When they are considered side by side with the magnificent expressions of loyal affection evoked at times of crisis, they give the truer picture of a community sound at heart, Anglo-Celtic in temperament, with some of the faults of a race always impatient of any outside control a little accentuated by the free-and-easy conditions of Australian life; but with all the virtues of the stock in robust growth. [31]

Fox considered Australia's rebellious behaviour as a sign of the "genesis of Australian nationalism, which was always intensely British in its intolerance of outside interference and which had always a note of enterprise and courage".[32] He used the family metaphor to suggest that the character of Australian nationalism exhibited traits inherited from its British parents. Furthermore, he believed that the development of Australian nationalism did not preclude imperial patriotism, but that the two were mutually supportive.

However, not all images of mother were positive and nurturing. W.J. Sowden of the Australian Natives Association reproached Britain for the stigma acquired from Australia's convict origins. He asserted that Australia was "born in obloquy and bred in contemptuous neglect", the dumping ground for Britain's convicts. His statement demonstrated the moral attitudes of the late nineteenth century, implying that Australia was born of a promiscuous mother, an illegitimate child of Britain but one who had overcome the shame and "the stigma of the birthstain".[33] Nevertheless, even while

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[30] Charles Dilke, *Greater Britain,* Geoffrey Blainey (ed.), North Ryde, 1985, (1869), p.142.
[31] Percy F Spence and Frank Fox, *Australia*, London, 1910, p 205.
[32] *Ibid.,* p 207.
[33] Sowden, "The Anglo-Australian Position from an Australian Point of View", in *An Australian Native's Standpoint,* p 96.

condemning Britain's moral lapses, Sowden conceded there was still a feeling of belonging to the imperial family; Australians were the "loyal sons of the Empire". [34]

The mid-nineteenth century was the beginning of a period of prosperity and security for Britain. Relinquishing the empire became a focus for political debate but such debates did not envisage the loss of loyalty to Britain in the settler colonies. From the 1840s and 1850s Gladstone and his fellow liberals followed a policy of "freedom and voluntaryism", by which the settler colonies were largely self-governing but remained voluntarily bound to Britain and the empire by ties of loyalty and kinship. By the 1860s Conservative Party members were advocating a more centralised empire: a unified entity which strengthened the monarchy and reinforced a feeling of imperial patriotism. This did not mean that the Conservatives opposed self-government, but that they advocated colonial self-government within an imperial federation. Britain's paternalistic approach to the governance of its colonies established cohesion and thereby sustained their global position. Its policies emphasised familial concern, which guided development but also used force when necessary. Central to British imperial administration was its educative role, to lead its possessions towards a more advanced stage, at which point the colony would qualify for some form of self-government. Metaphors of family were apt in discussions of colonial self-determination, as colonial development, like child rearing, was a lengthy process by which the colony developed through stages at the guidance of its imperial parent. [35]

Travellers also used other metaphors that described the Australian colonies as "young", "youthful", "new", or as "offshoots", "leaves" or "branches" of a long-established tree to create a vivid image of British nurturance. Contributing to this impression of British concern and guidance was the use of possessive pronouns by travel writers which implied British authority. Travel writers used the metaphors of development to accentuate the familial bond between the Australian colonies and Britain. In so doing a strong genetic connection was established and any praise of Australian achievements could be interpreted as British self-glorification through the empire's accomplishments.

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[34] *Ibid* ., pp 96-7.
[35] Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study of Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought*, Chicago, 1999, pp 11,198-200.

Anthony Trollope likened the establishment of the British colonies of settlement to swarming bees:

> Our people are going out from us, as bees do, - not that the old hive is deserted, but that new hives are wanted for new swarms. For a while it is our duty to take some care of these new homes. The most populous [United States] has long been freed from our control and our protection, and is successful. To say that the others also will be freed is only to say they also will be successful.[36]

Frank Fowler used the metaphor of the English rose, a cutting of which was transplanted in a tropical location, to create an image of British nurturance of its colonial possessions:

> …it must be interesting to watch the progress of free English institutions in a distant country – to see how the Red Rose blooms in tropic soil – to learn how this fine young colony of ours has built up and strengthened her constitutional edifices, so as to confer the greatest amount of freedom on her people, without recourse ever being had to the extreme measures resorted to by America before a similar system of political emancipation was obtained, and like conditions of prosperity secured.[37]

In both examples parental responsibility was accepted. Britain nurtured its possessions until such time as they could be self-governing. Their ancestry assured the success of the colonies.

During the process of development the child/colonies would mature through life experiences which were "as certain as the disorders of childhood".[38] Such trials, James Froude stated, were fundamental to gaining wisdom and understanding as:

> Nations cannot mature, any more than each individual of us, without having their school lessons drilled into them by painful processes, *ἐυ πάθει μαθεῖυ* is the law of human progress, from the growth of the schoolboy to the growth of the largest community."[39]

He predicted that Australians would serve a successful apprenticeship as they were of "English blood", while the familial ties that bound Australia and Britain would continue to strengthen.[40] Using metaphors of biological maturation, and looking towards the Federation of the Australian colonies, Anthony Trollope maintained:

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[36] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, p.58
[37] Frank Fowler, *Southern Lights and Shadows: being brief notes of three years' experience of social, literary and political life in Australia*, London, 1859, p.60.
[38] J. A. Froude, *Oceana or England and her Colonies*, London, 1892, p.185.
[39] *Ibid,* Greek – Approximate English translation "From experience comes knowledge"
[40] *Ibid.*

> As Australia becomes older, and as the number of her leading children who are Australian-born becomes greater, as the tendency to lean upon the mother country becomes slighter, the feeling for the newer patriotism will grow up; and with the feeling of Australian pride will grow the conviction that Australia, to be great and strong, should be one.[41]

At times the roles were reversed and the Australian colonies appear to have been nurturing Britain. Froude asserted, "The life of a nation, like the life of a tree, is in its extremities. The leaves are the lungs through which the tree breathes, and the feeders which gather its nutriment out of the atmosphere."[42] Recognising a more symbiotic relationship Trollope considered that British success was inseparable from the progress of its colonies stating that "The one may be consequent on the other. The greatness of the nation may be perpetuated by the strength of her off-shoots."[43]

These metaphors, which evoked a sense of origin, were used by travellers to establish Australia's connection to Britain. The maintenance of this connection, as well as those with its other colonies, was imperative to preserving the strength of the British Empire. In their imperial rhetoric travellers noted fervent imperial patriotism in Australia but they also considered the presence of an evolving national spirit. Mostly travel writers saw the two as coexistent.

Ethnicity

The familial bond demonstrated by metaphors of mother/daughter or tree/leaves was extended to encompass the connection to an Anglo-Saxon heritage. Anglo-Saxon ancestry explained Britain's global pre-eminence and inherent superiority, and justified further imperial expansion. Britain believed strongly that the creation of a homogeneous empire characterised by common origin, customs and institutions stimulated cohesion and loyalty over a vast geographic area.[44] By identifying the ancestry of Australians as ancient Briton or Anglo-Saxon, a heritage that accounted for the character of the people and the potential for the colonies to progress, travel writers not only made Australians an integral part of the imperial process, but also affirmed their allegiance. It was because of an historic link to an ancient British past that

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[41] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, p 352.
[42] Froude, *Oceana*, p 334.
[43] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, p.60.
[44] Cochrane "Anglo-Saxonness: Ancestors and Identity", p 4. Richard White, *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980*, St. Leonards, 1981, p.47.

Australia thrived. It developed a bond that joined individuals in a perception of common origin. Cochrane writes that Anglo-Saxonness carried

> its own, distinctive connotations which marked out identity through difference and anchored all sorts of claims to virtue, achievement and destiny deep in history.[45]

Nonetheless, this Anglo-Saxonness was in the people's perception of themselves rather than in the reality of their ancestry. Walker Connor, in his discussion of the nature of the ethnonational bond, states that

> it is not *what is* but *what people perceive as is* which influences attitudes and behaviour. A subconscious belief in the group's separate origin and evolution is an important ingredient of national psychology.[46]

At the foundation of Britain's global prominence was a belief in its racial superiority, substantiated by the elaboration of evolutionary ideas which suggested that some races were more fitted to survive and advance than others. Expressing a view that reflected evolutionary ideas, Charles Dilke described the character types in the British colonies of settlement:

> The type of the Anglo-Saxon of the future, growing up in Canada, and in South Africa, and in Australia, may not be everywhere the same: the South African English are browner than the Canadians; the Australians taller and more given to outdoor sport; but essentially the race continues everywhere to be ours, differentiated from the people of the old country and from the Americans of the United States by a healthier cheerfulness of life.[47]

Anglo-Saxon heritage explained the success of Britain and was the foundation for a faith in a progressive civilisation in Australia. The Canadian traveller Gilbert Parker declared:

> Against all dangers that beset Australian life there may, therefore, be seen the element of a great activity – the latent strength and the conquering faculty of the Anglo-Saxon race.[48]

It was the Anglo-Saxon traits of strength and love of freedom, confirmed in history, that gave Australians the ability to overcome difficulties and control their environment. Such statements encouraged further emigration to Australia at a time when the British population was growing and poverty was increasing. In the mid-nineteenth century, Frank Fowler predicted that Australia would attract immigrants

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[45] *Ibid.,* p.7.
[46] Connor, "Beyond reason: the nature of the enthnonational bond", p.376.
[47] Charles Dilke, *Problems of Greater Britain*, London, 1890, p 696.
[48] Parker, *Round the Compass in Australia*, p 142.

and would become "the noblest monument of Saxon rule and enterprise, and one of the greatest marvels of modern progressive civilization".[49] By the late nineteenth century Australia was considered invaluable to Britain as the "recipients of [Britain's] redundant population" and, indeed, it was conceived by Anthony Trollope to be the British mission to "populate such lands".[50] Other travellers believed that the British race was provided by God to undertake His work on earth. The American Reverend Francis Clark asserted that the Englishman was "a mighty and potent factor in the world's civilisation wherever he settled".[51] He avowed, "If ever there was a providential race raised up of God to do a particular work in the world and exert a mighty civilizing agency, that race is the Anglo Saxon." [52] At the heart of the travellers' rhetoric of empire was their belief that the strength of the British Empire lay in its Anglo-Saxon racial origin. This racial origin could account for the success of British progress.

Part of the Enlightenment theory of social and economic progress was the pattern of the rise and fall of empires. It was believed to follow a westward progression from ancient Greece to Augustan Rome to England.[53] Anglo-Saxonness was linked to the rise of the British Empire and, due to their ancestry, the Australian colonies would develop into a form of England's greatness in the southern hemisphere. Some travel writers believed that the transplantation of Anglo-Saxonness in Australia would alleviate the seeming decay of Britain. J.A. Froude declared:

> Amidst the uncertainties which are gathering round us at home – a future so obscure that the wisest men will least venture a conjecture what that future will be, it is something to have seen with our own eyes that there are other Englands besides the old one, where the race is thriving with all its ancient characteristics.[54]

The character traits of Anglo-Saxonness were often synthesised with the legacies of ancient Greece and Rome. Gilbert Parker included a proem to his account, which predicted a return to an ancient past, and foresaw the establishment of a civilisation in Australia that would rival the glories of ancient Greece and Rome. He concluded the proem with a prediction that

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[49] Fowler, *Southern Lights and Shadows*, p. .65.
[50] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand,* p 744.
[51] Clark, *Our Journey around the World*, p76.
[52] *Ibid.,* p.76.
[53] Dixon, *The Course of Empire*.
[54] Froude, *Oceana*, p 15.

> …The New South rising with her forehead bare –
> Her forehead bare to meet the smiling sun –
> Australia, in her radiant panoply;
> And far-off kingdoms see her work begun,
> And her large hope has compassed every sea.[55]

Parker saw Australia as a "young, valorous, buoyant country, a robust and progressive civilisation, which [was] reviving in these latter days the glory and the puissance of a decayed South [classical civilisation]."[56]

Others took this idea further, developing a grander vision of progress with Australia as the actual centre of the British Empire. In 1859, travel writer R.H. Horne's vision extended beyond mere dependent colony status, anticipating:

> Here, amidst the Australasian and Austral-Indian group, compact in feeling and action, being cemented by a Federal Union, would be a fair scene to which you might shift the seat of empire; …and renew the youth and the domain, of old England.[57]

The child, Australia, would become the parent, the reproductive centre of empire. Horne linked human development with progress, and predicted a new cycle of progress in the Australian region. While Anglo-Saxonness was perceived as the foundation stone upon which the success of Australia and the British Empire had been built, the reality of their ancestry was more diverse. In their imperial rhetoric travel writers found ways to explain the attachment of some Australians to regional ethnicities.

From the travel literature covered here, travel writers perceived the ethnic nationalisms that existed in Britain as diluted in the colonial setting. They considered that the blending of Anglo-Celtic groups through closer association established a strong British patriotism, displayed in an emotional attachment to, and participation in, the British Empire that transcended the attachment to ethnonational group. Even the Irish became more British whilst retaining some of the spirit of Irish national sentiment. The Irish politician Michael Davitt wrote:

> I found my countrymen, as a rule, sharers in this general sentiment of Australian attachment to the empire. I noticed in many houses I entered in my tour, particularly those of Catholic clergymen, the picture of the Queen; but almost always flanked by that of Mr Gladstone, and, not unfrequently, by either Mr

[55] Parker, *Round the Compass in Australia,* p 1.
[56] *Ibid.,* p 143.
[57] Horne, *Australian Facts and Prospect,* p 219.

> Parnell, Mr Dillon, or Mr William O'Brien – a somewhat incongruous association. On almost all public or semi-public occasions they likewise drink Her Majesty's health.[58]

Here the two forces of imperial patriotism and ethnic nationalism coexisted. The Catholic clergymen demonstrated loyalty to the British Empire in the display of the icons of Empire; the British Queen and Home Rule advocate William Gladstone alongside those of Irish nationalists Charles Parnell, John Dillon and William O'Brien.

Welsh migrants also have been recognised as maintaining the distinctive elements of their ethnicity that set them apart from English migrants. Aled Jones and Bill Jones in their exploration of the Welsh diaspora note that large Welsh communities developed in Victoria during the gold rushes of the mid-nineteenth century. Their ethnic nationalism took the form of maintaining "Welsh-language religious and cultural life in Australia into the 1870s and beyond".[59] While they retained strong cultural and religious ties to Wales, their distinctive cultural identity gradually transformed once they settled in Australia. By the 1860s some commentators frowned upon the growing reliance on the English language at eisteddfods.[60] This was the case in 1890 when Josiah Hughes considered that "The programme of the meeting was gone through in a very primitive, sociable, free-and-easy manner, more like a caricature than a real, actual, sober Eisteddfod".[61]

Nevertheless, Hughes perceived the annual eisteddfod competition at Ballarat as a celebration of Welshness in Australia. He recounted the opening speech of Mr D.M. Davies MLA, Minister of Public Works, who praised Welsh ethnicity in Australia as combining the social and intellectual refinement of the Welsh literary and cultural tradition with the vigour of outdoor pursuits popular in Australia to create a nation of physical and mental endowment. Despite his positive impression of Welshness in Australia, Davies anticipated the inevitable demise of the Welsh nation.

> That the Welsh, as a nation, shall die is inevitable: there is nothing exceptional or terrible in this to a nation any more than to an individual; every man who comes into the world is but a unit in the infinitude of numbers, and a nation is

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[58] Davitt, *Life and Progress in Australia*, pp.130-131

[59] Aled Jones & Bill Jones, "The Welsh World and the British Empire c.1851-1939: An Exploration", in Carl Bridge & Kent Fedorowich, *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity*, London, 2003, p.62.

[60] Bill Jones, "Welsh Identities in Colonial Ballarat", *Journal of Australian Studies*, No.68, June 2001, pp.34-38.

[61] Hughes, *Australia Revisited*, p.155.

> only a drop as compared with the sea of human beings that have and will exist on this earth. The life of the longest-lived period is too small a space of time to be compared with the continuation of intelligent existence on this globe. It is our selfishness that has over magnified our importance. Human conceit and ignorance made man and the world he lives in the centre of the universe, and on this assumption the wildest systems of theology and philosophy were built.[62]

Davies' speech resonated with the history of the political amalgamation of Wales that had begun centuries earlier and which, by the mid-nineteenth century, had established Wales as an integral part of Britain.[63] He believed the Celtic races of Wales, Scotland and Ireland had contributed significantly to Britain's intellectual and military greatness.[64] In their article, Aled Jones and Bill Jones examine this contribution of the Welsh to the British Empire and suggest that there was a perception amongst the Welsh that Welshness in the form of intellectual, cultural and religious traditions would save the British Empire from its Anglo-Saxon materialism.[65] Their research refers to increasing numbers of Welsh involved in imperial service as "soldiers, administrators, educators, industrialists, businessmen, engineers, surveyors and religious missionaries" by the late nineteenth century.[66] While they recognise the Welsh migrant experience was diverse, their study suggests that Welsh ethnic nationalism was maintained in diasporic communities in the late nineteenth century and coexisted with loyalty to the British Empire.[67]

Gilbert Parker noted how the blending of British regional ethnicities in Queensland would present itself. He contended that:

> The Queenslander will survive, and he will be robust in mind, as he will be warm in his physical vigour. The Irishman, the Scotsman, the Englishman, and the native[born], are distinct enough up here now, but one can see the fusion going on; the levelling down and the levelling up; the Irishman gaining directness and industrial confidence; the Scotsman gathering adaptability and warmth; the Englishman leaving off his insularity; and the native[born] borrowing the good points of the others, and possessing also the feeling of certainty that, being of the soil, he can match them all, beat them at a bargain, and still be friends with them. [68]

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[62] D.M. Davies in Hughes, *Australia Revisited*, pp.153-154.
[63] Kenneth O. Morgan, "Welsh Nationalism: The Historical Background", *Journal of Contemporary History,* Vol.6, No.1, Nationalism and Separatism, 1971, pp.153-172.
[64] Davies in Hughes, *Australia Revisited*, p.154.
[65] Rev John Thomas in Jones and Jones, "The Welsh World and the British Empire", p.60.
[66] Jones and Jones, "The Welsh World and the British Empire", p.59.
[67] *Ibid.,* pp.59-62.
[68] Parker, *Round the Compass*, p.231

As a Canadian observer of the interaction between ethnic groups he predicted that each group would transform and be transformed through close contact. It was not a merger where Englishness was being imposed upon other ethnic groups but a subtle association of cultures where several identities could coexist.

Percy F. Rowland commented on the Australian national character in 1902 and distinguished the coexistence of multiple identities, although he asserted that provincial identities weakened rapidly when transplanted to Australia. He reiterated Parker's contention that closer association between groups accelerated this process. Although the Irishman lost "the crudity of his provincialism" through contact, "in temperament he remained Irish; no doubt his religion and his instincts kept him in line with other Irish colonists" but his "Irishism is not the Irishism of the Irish in Ireland."[69] The Irish in Australia were different as they were isolated from the political, economic and social conditions of English hegemony that influenced Irish nationalism in Ireland. Travel writers suggested that political and cultural tensions which existed in Britain were moderated in Australia.

Ties to distinct cultural groups remained in other forms that were non-political. Davitt emphasised the perpetuation of Irish ethnicity through the Catholic education system, which instilled in students a concept of their genealogical community:

> [The Irish nuns] instil into their minds a love of the fatherland of their parents which will ensure a kindly and lasting link of sympathy between the "old land" and its sons and daughters at the farthest end of the end.[70]

According to Patrick O'Farrell, Catholic education, with a focus on Irish heritage, history, language and literature, sustained the common identity and ancestry of Irish Catholics whilst at the same time assimilating them into the Australian community.[71]

Belonging to the group could be strengthened by belief in the psychological bond of common ancestry that extended beyond ethnic background. The transplantation of British institutions and culture socialised native-born children to be part of the British family and reinforced the loyalty of Australians. Travel writers commented on the

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[69] P.F. Rowland, "The Beginnings of an Australian National Character*", The Nineteenth Century and After: a Monthly Review*, Vol.52, No.307, September 1902, p.401.
[70] Davitt, *Life and Progress in Australasia*, p.126.
[71] Patrick O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia: 1788 to present*, third edition, Sydney, 2000, pp.162-164.

presence of these institutional similarities which emphasised the solid basis of the Australia/Britain relationship. Richard Twopeny noted the similarity in political institutions:

> The chief interest of Australian politics lies in their relation to those of the Mother Country. Having imported their whole constitution and law books holus-bolus from England, each colony has been engaged ever since its foundation in fitting them to its circumstances. The legislative equipment of the young Australias corresponded pretty nearly to the tall hats and patent-leather boots which fond mothers provided for the aspiring colonists.[72]

The dominance of English as the language spoken in settler society emphasised the extent of Britishness in Australia. James Jupp states that "half the Welsh, one-fifth of the Irish and one-tenth of the Scots could speak or understand a Celtic language in mid nineteenth century Australia".[73] Yet he maintains that these groups assimilated towards the English culturally and linguistically once in Australia and that little evidence exists to suggest that the "languages survived beyond the second generation".[74] Travel writers commented on the form of the language and accent they found in Australia. James Froude, indicating a hint of surprise, recorded that on arrival in Australia:

> The first thing that struck me – and the impression remained during all my stay in Australia – was the pure English that was spoken there. They do not raise the voice at the end of a sentence, as the Americans do, as if with a challenge to differ from them. They drop it courteously like ourselves. No provincialism has yet developed itself. The tone is soft, the language good, the aspirates in the right places.[75]

The accent and tonal properties of the language he encountered were those of "pure English" without the regional dialectical variations that existed in Britain. Froude considered that this was due to the education system and demonstrated how "English they yet were" while admitting that the people were still in an "imitative stage" and that the language would develop regional qualities with the development of individuality in the colonies.[76] While some contended that a regional version of English existed in the colonies, Mark Twain accounted for the origin of the accent as lower-class English or "costermonger". He wrote:

> All over Australasia this pronunciation is nearly as common among servants as it is in London among the uneducated and the partially educated of all sorts and

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[72] Richard Twopeny, *Town Life in Australia*, London, 1883, p.148.
[73] Jupp, *Immigration*, p.36.
[74] *Ibid*.
[75] Froude, *Oceana*, 1892, p.73.
[76] *Ibid,*, p.163.

> conditions of people. That mislaid y is rather striking when a person gets enough of it into a short sentence to enable it to show up.[77]

Language was an aural and verbal tie to Englishness but visual symbols also evoked a sense of belonging and kinship that operated beyond genetic links and rational thought.[78] Symbols of Britishness appealed to the subjectivity of Australians, not to their reason. Trollope related the Tasmanians' feelings of the sight of redcoats in the colony:

> We [the Tasmanians] like to have among us some signs of your power, some emblem of your greatness. A red coat or two in our streets would remind us that we were Englishmen in a way that would please us well.[79]

The symbol of British military might gave the Tasmanians reassurance psychologically that they were English. Similarly, Australians felt pride and connectedness to Britain in the display of the Union Jack. In 1865 Britain passed the *Colonial Naval Defence Act* which authorised the establishment of naval defence forces by the colonies and stipulated the flag that colonial vessels of war should display. The flag was a blue ensign with the emblem of the colony in a scutcheon, near the edge of the flag, fartherest from the staff. While the flags were originally specified for naval vessels they eventually had a more general use and exist as the flags of the Australian states today.[80] Froude noted that a member of the Legislative Council of New South Wales and advocate of Imperial confederation, William Bede Dalley called for the "English flag again" that is, the Union Jack, because Australians bitterly resented having a different flag imposed on them by Britain:

> Australians do not like a bar sinister over their scutcheon, as if they were bastards and not legitimate; and surely of all ill-considered measures in our dealings with the colonies, the dignity of forcing upon them a difference in the flag was the very worst.[81]

Psychologically, Australians felt disassociated from Britain like an illegitimate child rejected by its parent.

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[77] Twain, *Following the Equator*, 1897, p.130.
[78] Connor, "Beyond reason: the nature of the ethnonational bond", pp.384-385.
[79] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand,* p.520.
[80] "Flags", in John Shaw (ed.), *Collins Australian Encyclopedia*, Sydney, 1984, pp.244-245, p.493.
[81] Froude, *Oceana*, pp183-184. "William Bede Dalley", in Graeme Davison, John Hirst, Stuart Macintyre (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Australian History,* Melbourne, 1998, p.171.

Sometimes the metaphors of family revealed the complexities of the relationship between Australia and Britain. With reference to tariff protection in the colonies, the Irish politician, Michael Davitt, suggested that while family ties remained strong, an evolving spirit of independence went beyond the kinship bond into the area of developing national individuality:

> The daughter colonies of Great Britain are devoted and true to "Home", as the old countries are called at the antipodes, but they make "Home" pay all the same for the privilege of trading with their distant relations.[82]

With increasing numbers of native-born Australians by the 1890s, Francis Adams discerned a change in Australian attachment to Britain which exposed an emerging national identity distinguishable by its egalitarian nature:

> Ten years ago England was spoken affectionately as the Old Country or Home. Now it is "home" or more sarcastically "'ome". The inverted commas make all the difference, and the dropped "h" contains a class contempt.[83]

The lower case "h" suggested that while Britain was still home in the minds of colonists, they were appraising the relationship with some dissatisfaction. Intriguingly, in both these cases, continuing loyalty to Britain and empire coexisted with blossoming ties to Australia and increasing national consciousness. Twopeny predicted that

> When the purely Australian element gets the upper hand, the keeping of the British connection will become merely a question of advantage and opportunity. In time of peace the advantage is decidedly on the side of the present state of things. The events of war might reverse the position.[84]

Through an increase in native-born Australians and under the challenge of war, it was predicted that an Australian national sentiment would strengthen. While Australian troops had been involved in imperial conflicts such as in the Sudan and the Boer War, it was not until World War I that the national myth of Anzac was born and nurtured by Australian society. Previous involvement had been founded in patriotic loyalty for the British Empire but sometimes the beginning of national spirit was apparent. Australian travel writer, May Vivienne, wrote of watching the departure of a troop ship from Fremantle for the Boer War. The provincialism of the colonies was set aside as one soldier demonstrated the cohesiveness of the soon-to-be Federated Australia by passing a bottle of whisky around all the colonial troops with "real federal spirit". Nevertheless

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[82] Davitt, *Life and Progress in Australasia*, p 27.
[83] Francis Adams, "Social Life in Australia", *Fortnightly Review*, Vol.56, July-December 1891, p 400.
[84] Twopeny, *Town Life in Australia*, p 173.

she continued by describing the ship's departure with reference to Australian loyalty to the empire. She observed:

> When the time came for the troopship to leave, some affecting scenes took place between mothers, sisters, wives and soldiers, but all bore up as bravely as possible. Were they not going for the glory of Old England and the honour of the beloved Queen?[85]

Australian involvement in World War I continued to emphasise the coexistence of Australian nationalism with imperial patriotism. Stephen Alomes states that imperial patriots and Australian nationalists gained from Australia's involvement in the First World War and in the establishment of the Anzac legend. He contends that "it appealed both to imperial patriots and to some nationalists on the Left who related the diggers' human qualities to the tradition of the earlier digger and bushman."[86] Alomes considers that Australia's involvement in World War I unified Australia as a nation and achieved recognition of it as an integral part of the empire. Australia remained a loyal offspring of the British Empire.

Conclusion

Metaphors of "home" and "family" added force to imperial rhetoric that expressed Australia's attachment to Britain. Such metaphors evoked a sense of imperial unity and bolstered Britain's preeminent position. Furthermore they contributed to the perception of Australia's growing individuality and the inevitability of separation from Britain in some form. They also emphasised that the ties of kinship, both real and imagined, would continue to bind Australia to its parent in patriotic loyalty. Evidence of imperial patriotism as observed and recounted by travel writers reinforced the British imperialist vision of a unified and cohesive empire. Imperial patriotism coexisted with an evolving Australian nationalism.

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[85] Vivienne, *Travels in Western Australia,* p.46.
[86] Stephen Alomes, *A Nation at Last: the Changing Character of Australian Nationalism 1880-1988*, North Ryde, 1988, p 62.

Chapter Eight
Science, Physical Environment and the Australian type

> There is no sign, as far as I can see that the race is deteriorating. The "Australian natives" are taller, especially in New South Wales, than their parents; their spirits are higher; they have abounding physical vigour.[1]
>
> R.W. Dale, *Impressions of Australia*, 1889.

At the centre of Reverend Dale's observations in 1889 was a fear of racial degeneration. However his thoughts reveal a wider contemporary discussion. As already mentioned in an earlier chapter, it was believed that the success of the British Empire was built upon its Anglo-Saxonness. The degeneration of the Anglo-Saxon type would have adverse effects on the British Empire. Australia provided an ideal setting for observing the effects of relocation on the Anglo-Saxon type. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries travellers were preoccupied with race and how the environment had led to adaptations in the character and physical appearance of the Anglo-Saxon type.[2] The Australian type Dale described was considered healthier and more robust than its British cousin. However not all travellers were as confident and tensions exist in the published accounts about whether Australians were a degenerative form of the Anglo-Saxon type. Travel writers used discourses of race and environment as the scientific basis for imperial rhetoric that linked the Australian environment to the evolution of a distinct Australian type. They maintained that the physical environment of Australia was having both positive and negative effects on the developing Australian type. A fit and healthy Australian was perceived as an essential factor in maintaining the strength of the British Empire, particularly a strong white British Empire. However when the Australian type was compared to its British cousins and found to be lacking, the descriptions tended to reinforce the superior nature of the British Anglo-Saxon type and highlighted the fear held about degeneration.

This chapter examines contemporary scientific ideas about the impact of environment on racial type. It analyses travellers' descriptions of native-born Australians and how they differed from those Australians, born overseas. In particular it focuses on what they considered to be the Australian type. Whether they viewed the Australian people as a

[1] Dale, *Impressions of Australia*, p.23.
[2] White, *Inventing Australia*, pp.66-67.

positive or negative racial form, their discussions highlighted imperial rhetoric that was based on a fear of racial degeneration and of the imperative of maintaining the strength of the British Empire.

Contemporary ideas about the effect of the environment on race and society

At the basis of their imperial rhetoric about Australians was a body of scientific views on climate, geology and disease. In the mid-nineteenth century scientists held that "cold climate races" were industrious and creative as survival demanded planning for times of scarcity. In contrast "tropical climate races" were indifferent and lazy as the necessities of life were abundant and easily obtained. Lamarck's theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics supported theorists' assumptions that the energies and habits developed in cold climates were passed on to descendants and allowed the continued progress of Europeans. Conversely tropical races were destined to remain child-like and undeveloped due to their inherent laxity.[3] Espousing a polygenist view of race, Josiah Nott contended in 1857:

> Each realm possesses a group of human races, which, though not identical in physical and intellectual characters, are closely allied with one another, and are disconnected from all other races … the climates of the earth may be divided in PHYSICAL and MEDICAL; and that each species of man, having its own physiological and pathological laws, is peculiarly affected by both climates.[4]

His views were not confined to polygenists. Other commentators held a similar assumption that when races were transplanted outside their designated location they would degenerate.[5] It was predicted that the change in climate would disrupt the normal behaviour that people displayed in their natural environment; many would drink more and sexual excesses were probable due to increased temperatures which would cause "surexcitation of the sexual organs".[6] The removal of Anglo-Saxons from a cold temperate climate to the warmer temperate climate of Australia would have detrimental physical and moral effects on the

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[3] David Walker, "Climate, Civilization and Character in Australia, 1880-1940", *Australian Cultural History*, No.16, 1997/98, pp.80-81.

[4] Josiah Nott cited in David N Livingstone, "Climate's Moral Economy: Science, Race and Place in Post Darwinian British and American Geography", in Anne Godlewska & Neil Smith, *Geography and Empire*, Oxford, 1994, p.138.

[5] Nancy Stepan, "Biological Degeneration: Races and Proper Places", in J.E. Chamberlin, and S.L. Gilman (eds), *Degeneration The Dark Side of Progress*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1985, p.99.

[6] William Ripley (1899) in Stepan, "Biological Degeneration", p.103.

settlers. The Australian-born children of emigrants who settled in Australia inherited traits their parents had acquired through acclimatising to their new environment. Changes in diet and way of life were considered to change the racial type in both positive and negative ways.[7] Dr James Kilgour, a physician from Victoria, connected the changes in the physical appearance of Australians he encountered in 1850s to the process of acclimatising undertaken by their emigrant parents.[8] He considered the leanness and lack of muscular tone he observed in the people was similar to that visible in the Australian Aborigines and local horses and cattle. Referring to Mullar's theory that species of animals and plants undergo modifications when adapting their original traits to the climate and environment of a new location, Kilgour contended that the Anglo-Australian race he observed demonstrated evidence of the peculiarities of climate at work. In children, the colour of hair and eyes were "very generally light in hue, while adults had "a frame more slender than that which characterizes their European prototypes."[9] Although he observed no notable alteration in complexion he predicted that, based upon evidence of European settlement in the Americas, the "Australian sun will deepen the hue of the present races, subjected to its influences."[10] Kilgour speculated that changes in climate produced physiological changes in the individual, and that these would be manifest in an Anglo-Australian race. Such a race had the potential to be distinctive and Kilgour imagined that they might be like "the inhabitants of southern France" – fond of drinking, impulsive but courageous – however due to influences other than climate and environment he predicted the descendents of immigrants were more likely to retain some British characteristics.[11]

Charles Dilke who visited Australia in 1867 was concerned about whether the Anglo-Saxon type would thrive or disappear completely when placed in a new environment. Noting that the decline of the Anglo-Saxon type was a fear not confined to the settlement of British migrants in Australia, he posed the question "Can he [the Anglo-Saxon type] thrive except where mist and damp preserve the juices of his frame? He comes from the fogs of the

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[7] Warwick Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness: Science, Health and Racial Destiny in Australia,* Melbourne, 2002, pp.62-65.
[8] James Kilgour M D, *Effect of the Climate of Australia upon the European Constitution, in Health and Disease*, William Vale, Geelong, 1855, pp.6-7.
[9] *Ibid.*, p.14.
[10] *Ibid*.
[11] *Ibid.*, p.16.

Baltic shores, and from the Flemish lowlands".[12] He noted how the climate in Australia, which was hot and dry, had changed the type already. In South Australia he distinguished changes in the type which could be traced to the hot, dry climate. South Australian men, he wrote,

> are thin, and fine featured, somewhat like the Pitcairn Islanders, while the women are all alike – small, pretty, and bright, but with a burnt-up look. The inhabitants of all hot dry countries speak from the head, and not the chest, and the English in Australia are acquiring this habit; you seldom find a 'corn-stalk' who speaks from the chest. [13]

Dilke seemed uncertain whether the changes were permanent, "or a temporary divergence produced by abnormal causes, and capable of being modified by care."[14] However his fear of racial degeneration did not stop his imperial rhetoric that promoted continued emigration from Britain. He considered Australia as a "refuge and future home" for impoverished British rural labourers: a place where colonial land legislation was beginning to encourage small rural holdings to combat the larger pastoral holdings of squatters.[15]

In 1871, Dr Andrew Ross, a New South Wales physician and politician, feared the signs of degeneration were already present in native-born stock. He put forward his views on the effect of the Australian climate on the European immigrant, observing that "white native born subjects fall far short in too many instances of the standard of health, strength, durability, and even longevity of their parents."[16] This was not the direct effect of climate on the constitutions of racially feeble immigrants but physiological changes which had been stimulated by associated changes in diet and behaviour brought about by climate and relocation. Ross contended that frequent use of horses, smoking, alcohol consumption and a diet high in meat protein had resulted in an attenuated and slender frame in the native-born, which was inferior to the European immigrant. He found the unsuitability of the

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[12] Dilke, *Greater Britain*, p.166.
[13] *Ibid.*, p.151.
[14] *Ibid.*, p.166.
[15] *Ibid.*
[16] Andrew Ross, MD, "The Climate of Australia, viewed in relation to health, especially its influence on the constitution of the European immigrant", *New South Wales Medical Gazette*, Vol.1, No.5, February, 1871, p.132.

European diet in the Australian environment also was a cause of the accelerated decay in the Aboriginal population who had come into contact with Europeans.[17]

The centrality of climate in substantiating views about place and race was reinforced by corresponding theories about the earth's geological development and the evolution of organisms. Some exponents of natural history held that with each stage of the earth's geological development came a corresponding development of organic life forms from simple organisms to progressively more complex forms.[18] They contended that human development in its highest form was found in regions such as Greece, where there was a rich variety of natural resources and where the soil had undergone its latest development. Subsequent migrations from ancient Greece had led to the development of civilisation in other areas throughout the world where soil and climate were favourable. Scientific opinion was supported by evidence of the success of such civilisations in the historic record. But as in theories on climate and racial development, it was considered that the transplantation of Anglo-Saxons from regions of quaternary formation to the mesozoic and tertiary stratas of Australia would result in "an inevitable degeneration" of the race, not the development of a great civilisation.[19] In 1880 Henry Ling Roth discounted this theory by citing numerous exceptions. He stated that Australians possessed the means to improve both climate and soil through the planting of trees, which would increase rainfall in the interior. He envisaged that the continuing advances of science would promote progress in Australia, as had been the case to date. Roth stated that progress in Australia in wheat, wine, wool, beef and sugar production provided a good demonstration that soil and climate would not necessarily lead to degeneration. He contended that the same was true of the Anglo-Australians, soil and climate would lead to their progress not degeneration.[20]

Theories about the interconnections between climate and race continued to be advanced in the early twentieth century. Racial changes brought about by climate were considered to

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[17] *Ibid.*, pp.134, 232.
[18] Anon, "Will the Anglo-Australian Race Degenerate?", *The Victorian Review*, Vol.1, November 1879, pp.114-115. Arnold, *The Problem of Nature*, pp.25-29.
[19] Anon, "Will the Anglo-Australian Race Degenerate?", pp.114-115.
[20] Henry Ling Roth, "The Influence of Climate and Soil on the Development of the Anglo-Australian Race", *The Victorian Review*, Vol.1, October 1880, pp.848-849.

occur over time and travel writers were often uncertain of the extent of those changes. In their rhetoric they did not necessarily see the changes as degenerative to the race as a whole. Published in 1907, *The Real Australia* contained Alfred Buchanan's observations of Australia and its people. He appeared to tentatively support the theory that humans evolved into a new race when placed outside their climatic zone. He observed that people in Australia tended to be different "physically and morally, from that in the Northern Hemisphere".[21] However he questioned whether the theory was supported by physical evidence, as at the time of his observations it had only "produced a crop of half results, of insufficiently proven theories, and of partially established types".[22] Another commentator, Percy F. Rowland contended that the English race transplanted in Australia held its own against the influence of climate and other environmental factors. However he did concede that climatic influences were gradual and subtle changes in the race may not be easily detected.[23] These two views demonstrated the tensions in the travel writers' views of the effect of climate and environment on racial types that existed at the beginning of the twentieth century. At the basis of their indecision were scientific theories that pondered degeneration.

However by the beginning of the twentieth century it was generally accepted that the climatic influence on humans in the southern areas of Australia was far from detrimental. Nevertheless the climate of northern parts of Australia continued to be seen as physically debilitating to the white race. John Foster Fraser, a self-proclaimed authority on climate and heredity, claimed to be able to distinguish between those Australians who lived in the southern temperate climate and those who lived in the tropics according to their dynamism in business.[24] In *Australia, the Making of a Nation,* published in 1910, he proclaimed:

> Humidity, undoubtedly, has an effect on the energy of the people. Now, mark how pleasant, soft-voiced and delightful the Queenslanders are. Come south and you find more commercialism in the air of Sydney than in Brisbane. Drop further south still, to Melbourne, and there, there is really something like energy. Continue south till you get to New Zealand, and there you can pass from the charming easy

[21] Buchanan, *The Real Australia*, pp.2-3.
[22] *Ibid*., p.3.
[23] Rowland, "The Beginnings of an Australian National Character", pp.400-401.
[24] Fraser, *Australia: the Making of a Nation*, pp.52-54.

> manners of the top of the north island until you get amongst the rugged, determined business men who live at the bottom of the south island.[25]

At the time of his visit he found that Australians were much like British people, but predicted that, with the passage of time their new physical and social environment, with a diversity of climates would produce distinctive types.[26] He followed the work of Dr Alexander Buttner who contended that where both parents were Australian born "the weakening effect of climate shows itself more and more strikingly with each succeeding generation."[27] While he noted the link between climate and changes and degeneration of racial type, he was not critical of Australia as a place for further settlement. His imperial rhetoric emphasised continued emigration not just from Britain but also from other parts of Europe particularly from Germany. He considered German agricultural workers were virile and made good colonists. He believed that they had been instrumental in the development of the United States and that the consideration of emigration to Australia from mainland Europe was a means of strengthening the Anglo-Australian type.[28]

The success of white settlement in the tropics was a topic of concern for travel writers in the late nineteenth century. Using scientific theories of place and race, they employed imperial rhetoric which advanced the idea that white people could not work in the tropics. From the 1860s such theories justified the use of Indigenous labour by colonials on plantations in the Pacific.[29] The use of cheap Pacific Islander labour became an integral part of the colonial experience in the South Pacific.[30] As a consequence it was not surprising that some travel writers supported the use of Pacific Islander labour in Australia. Its use was not only necessary as it was considered that white labour could not work on those sugar farms north of the Tropic of Capricorn but was also politically and economically expedient to sugar growers. Anthony Trollope noted that the use of Pacific

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[25] *Ibid.*, pp.52-53.
[26] *Ibid.*, pp.58.
[27] *Ibid.*, p.54.
[28] *Ibid.*, pp.57-58.
[29] Trish Mercer, *White Australia Defied: Pacific Islander Settlement in North Queensland*, Townsville, 1995, p.1.
[30] Clive Moore, Jacqueline Leckie and Doug Munro (eds), *Labour in the South Pacific*, Townsville 1990, p.xxxi.

Islander labour fostered debate within the Colony of Queensland.[31] He believed that the white man disliked the manual labour of cultivating sugar cane in Queensland's tropical climate.[32] In the 1880s R.W. Dale speculated that Australia's future development in tropical areas would never be undertaken by the white European race although

> Englishmen, Scotchmen, Irishmen may find the capital, and may direct the labour; … the labourers themselves, who must form the great majority of the population, will be coloured people.[33]

However at the same time as there was support for the use of Pacific Islander labour other travel writers emphasised philanthropy as it was feared that the use of this form of labour anticipated a return to a type of slavery. Although Charles Dilke highlighted his concern over the suitability of the white race to settle in the tropics, he was critical of the action Queensland had taken in the sugar and cotton regions where "coloured labour is now almost exclusively employed, with the usual effect of degrading fieldwork in the eyes of European settlers, and of forcing upon the country a form of society of the aristocratic type".[34] His stance was not surprising given he was a liberal politician, experienced in colonial issues and a staunch defender of the cause of oppressed Indigenous subjects. Later concerns for maintaining a white Anglo-Saxon race in Australia forced sugar growers to relinquish their Pacific Islander labourers as part of a "White Australia" policy.

Concern about the degeneration of the race continued into the early twentieth century. Frederic C. Spurr contended that "white Australia" and the notion that white man could not survive in the tropics was hindering development in northern Australia particularly in areas like the Northern Territory where "the natural wealth and resources of the north are almost incredible".[35] In the tropical climate of Queensland he predicted changes in the outward appearance of white settlers:

> But let it be understood that the pure white man who enters this tropical territory will not long remain white. He may retain all the instincts belonging to the white races, but his skin will be tanned, darkened, and in course of time perhaps blackened, under the powerful rays of the Northern sun.[36]

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[31] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, Chapter VIII *passim.*
[32] *Ibid.*, p.178.
[33] Dale, *Impressions of Australia,* pp.49-50.
[34] Dilke, *Greater Britain*, pp.90-92
[35] Frederic C. Spurr, *Five Years under the Southern Cross: Experiences and Impressions*, London, 1915, p.79
[36] *Ibid.*, p.88.

Fraser believed that although the British had demonstrated an ability to live and work in the tropics, in the long term the tropical climate would have a debilitating effect, particularly on the physiology of offspring.[37] "The tropics", he wrote, "are bad places for the breeding of white children; the conditions of nature are altogether against them; they grow up lanky, weedy, and without stamina."[38] Such views were topical due to the use of cheap Pacific Islander labour on sugar plantations in the tropics and Australia's evolving immigration policy, which excluded all but European migrants. The adventurous Australian, Francis E. Birtles, supported the idea of white Australia; however he also believed that "nature [had] located the various races in places best suited to their physiques". [39] The theory that some races were more suited to tropical climates than others, in Birtles' opinion, justified the use of black labour in tropical regions. In such areas he contended the white man could not perform manual labour. He wrote "Let the Australian be master and the Negro be man, as he expects and is willing to be, and we need have no fear for the future."[40] However Birtles differentiated between the ability of Europeans to maintain health in the tropics and their capacity to work and succeed economically in the same environment. In his narrative he considered that "the Australian or the Britisher could thrive and rear a race of hardy descendants" even in tropical regions like the Northern Territory.[41] Failure to thrive in the tropics was connected to poor personal, domestic and public hygiene:

> discoveries of modern times indicated that tropical countries had their special diseases that required special means for their prevention. The adoption of such means had enabled France and America to accomplish in their tropical possessions that which a few years ago would have been regarded as impossible.[42]

Birtles believed that white settlers could live successfully in the tropics if they were able to control the pathogens, which caused disease and debilitation but they could only profit if they had cheap black labour available for the manual work.

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[37] Fraser, *Australia: the Making of a Nation*, p.54.
[38] *Ibid*., p.180.
[39] Birtles, *Lonely Lands*, p.76.
[40] *Ibid*.
[41] *Ibid*., p.174.
[42] *Ibid.*, p.176.

Not all commentators viewed the settlement of Anglo-Saxons in tropical climates as degenerative. Some suggested a more pragmatic approach to white settlement in the tropics. In his mid-nineteenth century book, *The West Indies and the Spanish Main*, Anthony Trollope advocated the union of people of Anglo-Saxon descent with local black populations. Far from perceiving the union as unnatural and leading to the physical and moral decline of Anglo-Saxons as some scientists contended, he considered that with time these unions would lead to a new race better suited to tropical climates.[43] Such a race "would be fitted by intellect for civilization; and fitted by physical organisation for tropical sun."[44] He asserted that Anglo-Saxon intelligence would be combined with the local black people's resistance to climate and result in a race "capable of living and working in the climate without inconvenience" and with the passing of time, he envisaged a new race capable of self-determination.[45] Possibly Trollope saw sponsorship of such a view as a way of securing British withdrawal from Jamaica at a time of economic downturn and political tension when tariff preferences for British sugar had ended. Later in the century in his account of Australasia Trollope expressed a different view on interracial unions. This time he took the view that miscegenation would lead to a degenerative form who despite attempts to train towards western ways would "always return to the bush and become some black man's gin".[46] He considered that the offspring of white fathers and black mothers would "not become a race as they have done in the western world".[47] In Australia, large scale white settlement had achieved success for the British Empire, but the Indigenous population had demonstrated no sign of progress beyond a savage state. Trollope contended that the genetically inferior Aboriginal minority was doomed to extinction in the face of increasing white settlement.[48] When placed beside his descriptions of Pacific Islanders who had "civilisation within their reach" and who "will work, and are anxious to

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[43] Stepan, "Biological Degeneration: Races and Proper Places", p.106. The British anatomist Sir William Lawrence contended that "un-natural unions" of different races would result in the physical and moral deterioration of the European. While the union would have beneficial effects for the dark races, the stain of "blackness" would remain, long after the colour had been absorbed in whiteness, in the presence of a particular smell exuded by descendants of the union.

[44] Anthony Trollope cited in Young, *Colonial Desire*, pp.142-143.

[45] *Ibid.*, p.142.

[46] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, pp.110-111.

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] *Ibid.*, pp.113.

gather to themselves and to keep the fruits of their labour", Trollope's belief in a racial hierarchy was revealed.[49]

Contemporary scientific ideas fuelled the debate on degeneration of the Anglo-Saxon racial type in Australia. Travel writers expressed these views in their observations of native-born Australians.

Native-born

By 1861 34.6 per cent of the population of the Australian colonies was native-born.[50] Travel writers' imperial rhetoric regularly described these Australians by the differences they embodied to the Anglo-Saxon type. Labelled variously as "cornstalks", "gumsuckers", "native-born" and "young colonials", they were thought to embody a new race whose physical appearance and nature had evolved in response to a new environment. This new race was both positively and negatively drawn. The nineteenth century emigrant mechanic, Alexander Harris, noted how connection with their surroundings was establishing cohesiveness amongst the native-born. They were "growing up a race by themselves; fellowship of country has already begun to distinguish them and bind them together in a very remarkable manner".[51] They were perceived as distinctive from the British race. It was the connection of the environment to divergence from the Anglo-Saxon type that particularly interested travel writers and resulted in an often-contradictory discussion that nevertheless was infused with a sense of the travel writers' racial superiority. The native-born Australian was reduced to a biological specimen to be analysed and located within a hierarchy of racial types.

British traveller and journalist, Frank Fowler's discussion of the character of native-born Australians contained some of these contradictions. He seems unsure whether the colonial young-stock was a beneficial offshoot of the Anglo-Saxon race or whether they were degenerative. Fowler described the Australian boy as

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[49] *Ibid*., p.175.

[50] Jupp, *Immigration*, p.125. The term native-born was given to the Australian-born descendants of European settlers and did not include Aborigines. Jupp estimates the percentage of the population who were Aborigines in 1861 as 13.4%.

[51] A. Harris cited in John Molony, *The Native Born: the First White Australians*, Carlton South, 2000, p.54

> a slim, dark-eyed, olive-complexioned young rascal, fond of Cavendish, cricket, and chuckpenny, and systematically insolent to all servant girls, policemen, and new-chums. His hair is shiny with grease, as are the knees of his breeches and the elbows of his jacket. He wears a cabbage-tree hat, with a dissipated wisp of black ribbon dangling behind, and loves to walk meditatively with his hands in his pockets, and , if cigarless, to chew a bit of straw in the extreme corner of his mouth. His face is soft, bloomless, and pasty, and you fancy if you touched his cheek you would leave the stamp of your finger behind.[52]

Fowler deemed the young colonials lazy, indolent and profane but he derived some delight in their disrespectful behaviour towards new-chums. On the positive side he considered they were more able and shrewder than cockney youth as they were independent and working from a very early age.[53] Such self-reliance, ill-manners and swearing, Fowler expected of working-class adult males but not juveniles. Their appearance and demeanour deviated from what he accepted as the model of youths of similar age and social class in Britain. R.H. Horne agreed with Fowler's description but suggested it was the social environment that was influencing the degenerative type. He enlarged the cohort to include young men working in clerical occupations, whom he claimed had no relish for wider education.[54] Horne noted that it was a rare phenomenon to meet the son of a gentleman who had followed in his father's footsteps and gained university education. Up to a point, Horne blamed the social environment of the colonies for the poor character of colonial youth. He was, however, optimistic that the strengthening of the population by the continued influx of young men of a better model would

> "work up" very well as the social wheels progress. Give us two or three millions of inhabitants, and all the institutions, promises, and performances of a vigorous young nation of the nineteenth century will rapidly be evolved and do honour to their ancestors and their race.[55]

Biologists held the view that continued migrations of healthy and moral individuals would maintain the strength of the racial type in colonial settings, thus warding off degeneration.[56] In a similar manner travellers implied that continued immigration was a means of maintaining the strength of the Anglo-Saxon race in Australia. In the 1870s, Anthony

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[52] Fowler, *Southern Lights and Shadows*, pp.22-23.
[53] *Ibid.*
[54] Horne, *Australian Facts and Prospects*, p.93.
[55] *Ibid.*, p.95.
[56] Stepan, "Biological Degeneration: Races and Proper Places", p.103.

Trollope expressed concern about the possibility of degeneration when the numbers of suitable young emigrants declined and the numbers of colonial born increased.[57] R.W. Dale raised the same question but he questioned whether the strength of the Australian or local colonial types would withstand the test of time once the effects of the frosts and snows of the northern hemisphere had diminished. He posed the question as to whether the lack of such climatic influences would have a negative physiological impact and result in weakened muscle tone and reduced stamina in the individual.[58]

However, during his visit in the late 1880s, Dale did not perceive any signs that native Australians were deteriorating.[59] As far as he was concerned bush children were not healthier or more vigorous than city children, a feature often noted by other commentators. It was the climate and prosperity of Australia that was instrumental in forming the characteristic qualities of its people but Dale contended that much of the reason for the vitality of the race was that those who had settled Australia from Britain were above-average in strength and enthusiasm.[60] Australia, he wrote,

> has been settled by men and women with more than the average physical energy, and with a fearless and adventurous spirit. They were an excellent stock, both physically and morally; and their children inherit their admirable qualities.[61]

Addressing a British readership, Dale asserted that "They are ourselves- but ourselves with a difference;" and while he described a typical Australian type he also perceived subtle variations in the temperament and character of the people of each colony.[62]

Other commentators placed less emphasis on immigration as a means of maintaining racial strength. According to Dr John Shaw, a new race, of Anglo-Saxon ancestry, would evolve under the "stimulating influence of the Australian sun" and purge itself of its "heavier and roast-beef qualities" gained under English skies.[63] The resultant race were like those he

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[57] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, p.453.
[58] Dale, *Impressions of Australia*, pp.40-41.
[59] *Ibid.*, p.25.
[60] *Ibid.*, p.23.
[61] *Ibid.*, p.24
[62] *Ibid.*, p.40.
[63] Shaw, *A Gallop to the Antipodes*, p.58.

observed in Melbourne, industrious, vital and energetic.[64] Dilke also described young Australians as active and healthy although he was conscious of the number of variations that existed. He was particularly taken by the native-born Australians, and commented:

> The fitness of the term "cornstalks" applied to the Australian-born boys was made evident by a glance at their height and slender build; they have plenty of activity and health, but are wanting in power and weight. The girls, too, are slight and thin; delicate, without being sickly[65]

Reverend Clark directly connected the climate of Australia to its positive effect on the physiology of Australian men and women. Using America and England as comparisons he contended that the favourable Australian climate had increased participation in outdoor pursuits and would produce "a fine race of men physically."[66] However, he cautioned that moral qualities might be lost in the process. [67]

Michael Davitt commented that the "Australian born of British or Irish parents, is the best physically developed man of either of these races."[68] The reason for the superior physical appearance of the native born was the "dry and healthful climate", the "atmosphere of the limitless eucalypti forests", "the outdoor life and labour" of rural workers, good food and the "ordinary luxuries" of life.[69] All contributed to "the vigorous frame, manliness of bearing, and stamp of independence characteristic of the average Australian".[70] He considered the lifestyle of Australians compared favourably to that of the inhabitants of the United States but he also compared the physiology of Australian women to that of women in Spain and Italy and noted the reproductive potential of Australian women. He stated: "Complexions may not be as fair nor cheeks as rosy as those you see at Punchestown or the Oaks, but the face is equally as handsome, while the build is finer and firmer, and gives hope of a more vigorous offspring."[71] The health of Australian-born women had wider implications than just their role in producing healthy children. It was believed that the

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[64] *Ibid.*, pp.58-59.
[65] Dilke, *Greater Britain*, p.87.
[66] Clark, *Our Journey Around the World*, p.93.
[67] *Ibid.*
[68] Davitt, *Life and Progress in Australasia*, p.118.
[69] *Ibid.*
[70] *Ibid.*
[71] *Ibid.*, p120.

strength of the nation and empire was measured by the physical attributes of its individual members.[72]

The real Australian

By the 1890s preoccupation with the Anglo-Australian type as an evolutionary development of the Anglo-Saxon type had diminished and there emerged perceptions of a distinctive Australian type exemplified by bushmen and women. Travellers believed that it was possible to identify national types and that their characteristics were at least partly a result of climate and geology. In their imperial rhetoric some travel writers connected the Australian type to Australia's growing sense of nationhood, a sentiment, which was both distinct from, and attached to, feelings of loyalty to Britain and the Empire. Indeed travel writers attempted to distinguish between Anglo-Australians and the real Australian. This new race was invariably found in the interior, west of the Great Dividing Range. Here arose a myth that linked climate, hardship and isolation with the appearance of an authentic national type who was stoic, egalitarian, intelligent and taciturn. It was a commonly held belief that these traits had evolved through interaction with the inland environment of Australia and were not necessarily inherited.

Francis Adams emphasised the positive influence of the environment on the development of a unique Australian type that he considered more genuine and superior to the hypocritical and pretentious Anglo-Australian and British types. He distinguished between the people of the interior and those who lived on the coastal plains, predicting that:

> In another hundred years the man of the Interior – the veritable "bushman" – will be as far removed from the man of the sea-slope as the Northern Frenchman from the Southern, as the Castilian from the Andalusian.[73]

He praised the uniqueness of the bushmen and women of the interior as epitomising the real Australian. Although the people of the coast demonstrated some signs of adaptation to their environment, Adams noted that they retained much that was English in character and manner. He asserted that "The one powerful and unique national type yet produced in

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[72] See *Chapter nine: Moral guardians of the nation::Travellers perceptions of Australian women 1850-1914* for more detail on the role of women in furthering a strong nation and empire.
[73] Francis Adams, *The Australians: A Social Sketch*, London, 1893, p.13.

Australia is …the Bushman".[74] Refined elements of the type were present in the squatter and station manager and although the selector was closer to the bushman, the true bushman was to be found in the "shearers, boundary riders and general station hands", Adams wrote.[75] For Adams the Anglo-Australian had been "absorbed in the Interiors much more rapidly than on the sea-slope and in the towns".[76] He stressed that the "true British type" could not survive in the climate of the interior, as the Englishman had a historic association with the sea and could not subsist so far from it. [77] In the bush, women lost their "antique insipid prettiness and fashion-plate nullity still so dear to the heart of the average Englishwoman!".[78] The new type of Australian woman was strong, honest and assertive.[79] Adams' maintained a position of authority in his discussions of the evolution of the Australia type and its comparisons with the British type although his rhetoric was anti-imperialist and socialist in tenor.

Gilbert Parker also identified the development of a national type in the rural areas of Australia. In the interior, "where the climate, soil, and natural movement are at work", the Englishman or native-born became after ten years an Australian, "distinct from every other nationality".[80] Parker perceived that because of their ability to cope with the unexpected and often trying situations that occurred in the bush, the true Australians were "an upstanding race of men, irascible yet hospitable; strenuous and stalwart yet not robustious; explosive yet not troublesome; uncompromising yet generous; hardy, honest, and true".[81] He compared the Australian bushman to the Canadian frontiersman, and concluded that the differences were due to different climatic conditions, which impacted upon demeanour and character. The cold climate imposed restriction on behaviour that made the Canadian frontiersman "hardy, firm and decisive in action. He [was] more alert, more temperate, and more subdued than the man of the back-blocks, as the up-country of Australia is called."[82]

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[74] *Ibid.*, p.165.
[75] *Ibid.*
[76] *Ibid.*, p.166
[77] Francis Adams, "The Labour Movement in Australia", *Fortnightly Review*, Vol.56, July-December 1891, p.187
[78] *Ibid.*, p.183.
[79] *Ibid.*
[80] Parker, *Round the Compass in Australia*, pp.80-81.
[81] *Ibid.*, p.81.
[82] *Ibid.*, p.439.

The climate of Canada fostered optimism and hope in the frontiersman. Pessimism and hopelessness were the character traits that distinguished the Australian bushman. The bushman was "careless, drawling, opulent in manner, and has a fervid tendency to tea and swizzles".[83] In a similar way to Adams, Parker associated the Australian bushman with the shepherd and drover of the interior who were wildly romantic figures, spiritually connected to the unique bush landscape. According to Parker the bushman's character contrasted starkly with that of the Canadian frontiersman because the bushman had a more symbiotic relationship with his environment:

> The shepherd or drover is most picturesque when he is out on the plains, on, as it were, his native heath, among the myall, the mulga, the quondong, the stay-a-while, and the wattle trees; where he sits by his little fire on the banks of some creek, and with his billy of tea and his dog muses and drones and philosophises with a deal of pessimism. The shepherd and boundary-rider of Australia is reserved almost to taciturnity. [84]

Parker considered that unlike the impact of the Canadian frontier on the frontiersman, the isolated frontier of Australia produced negativity and introversion in the real Australian, which displayed itself in "a sense of irresponsibility, a cavalier-like hopelessness, a riding the track of life for all that it is worth."[85] He predicted that the Australian bushman would lose his romantic image and distinctive character when the wildness of the frontier was overtaken by settlement and infrastructure development.[86]

The influence of the environment was an integral part of Jessie Ackermann's observations and comments on the evolution of the real Australian woman. She suggested that the real Australian would develop in the interior. Ackermann used the example of feminist and South African patriot Olive Schreiner's deeply ingrained association with her homeland, an association which was visible in the vivid and emotive descriptions contained in her novel, *The Story of an African Farm,* to demonstrate how the physical environment becomes a part of the person. She considered that "peoples are in a true sense a very part of their surroundings" but in Australia this had not as yet occurred.[87] Ackermann wrote, "Correctly

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[83] *Ibid.*, pp.438-439.
[84] *Ibid.*, p.441.
[85] *Ibid.*, p.442,
[86] *Ibid.*, p.444.
[87] Ackermann, *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*, p.36.

speaking, it cannot be said that there is yet a generation of Australians who bear the imprint of Australian atmosphere. The country is too young."[88] With time, she believed, the vastness and openness of the landscape would be inscribed in the character of the people. Ackermann held that the "Never Never" was the soul of Australia. It was where

> weak women are made strong, and courage finds birth in a single day of struggle; where Hope chases the shadows of Despair that lower and often settle upon the heavy grind of daily toil. [89]

Certain aspects of their environment were impacting upon the identity of women in Australia, in particular "the blowing sands of the "Never-Never" have made women brave to endure. The sweeping fires which threaten property and life have armed them with almost superhuman strength."[90] She suggested that in the remote areas of Australia the beginning of a distinctively Australian form of womanhood was emerging. These girls were "free, independent, and unconventional".[91] They possessed attributes similar to American girls the "chief differences are those which would naturally arise from surroundings, climate, and methods of training".[92]

Suggestive of his support for the women's movement, Francis Adams similarly described Australian women as having independent spirit but lacking the decorum of the English lady. Melbourne women, he wrote, were "Restless, frank, energetic, they have little prudery, and are well able to look after themselves."[93] Likewise "the Australian girl" of the interior "will not sink her individuality in that of her husband, and tolerate neglect and even outrage under the rococo plea of fulfilling a divinely-ordained 'duty'."[94] He considered that in the bush environment Australian girls and boys were socialised in an environment of equality and openness which carried through into married life and resulted in a more equitable society and more unrestricted interaction.[95] Australian women demonstrated a lack of subservience to their fathers and husbands, which contrasted sharply

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[88] *Ibid.*, pp.36-37.
[89] *Ibid.*, p.59.
[90] *Ibid.*
[91] *Ibid.*, p. 206.
[92] *Ibid.*, p.207.
[93] Adams, *The Australians*, p.28.
[94] *Ibid.*, p.152.
[95] *Ibid.*

to that of English women and impressed upon Adams Australia's future as a democratic and equal society.

These three travellers, one British, one American and one Canadian, all imagined the Australian type would evolve in the unique environment of the interior of Australia. Adams and Parker, who were travelling in Australia in the 1880s, connected the emergence of the Australian type with the development of a distinctive national identity and form of nationalism. However their political visions of Australia were divergent. Adams' views reflected those of a minority of radical republicans of the 1880s. He was anti-imperialist and against social inequality. He believed the success of democracy in Australia would be impelled by the activism of rural workers. In contrast, Parker's rhetoric presented a Canadian's view which envisaged Australian nationhood as part of the Imperial Federation movement. Parker supported Joseph Chamberlain's idea of an Imperial Federation of the colonies of settlement, all autonomous but loyal to the Empire. Australian Federation was a necessary step in the process towards establishing an Imperial Federation. At the time of their travels in Australia these two debates were current, one emphasising republicanism while the other debated Australia's participation in an Imperial Federation.

Adams perceived the bush as the birthplace of Australian national identity and bushmen and women as the instigators of an independent Australian nation. He was committed to a vision of Australia as a republic, politically independent from Britain, where social inequality had been erased. In *The Australians,* he formulated a number of oppositions, the most obvious, the urban-rural dichotomy. This binary opposition supported his political vision. The association of the city with vice and social decay fostered the perception of the Australian interior as the birthplace of the real Australian. Adams painted the city as evil; Melbourne was "pagan" and typically Australian, although its society was outwardly English in style.[96] He perceived Melbourne as a distorted form of English civilisation, whose people were attempting to create English society and institutions but without an historic understanding of their foundations.[97] Adams associated Anglo-Australians in the

[96] *Ibid*., p.28.
[97] *Ibid*., p26.

cities of the sea-coast with the capitalist class who were exploiting the working class in an increasingly urbanised and alienating world.[98] The city with its vice and alienation stood in opposition to the purity and integrity of the interior where he identified the evolution of a new Australian race. Even as the Anglo-Australians were absorbed, and native Australians took their place, a veneer of Englishness was retained in the city; stylish but common, self-confident but ignorant, outwardly devout but materialistic.[99] He described them as products of their city environment:

> Lean and high-strung, with the alternations of languor and activity which the terrible changefulness of their climate gives them, they wear themselves out in all they do, mistaking the exercise of nervous energy for pleasure.
> They have in their underside the taint of cruelty.
> The vigorous Anglo-Saxon, with his profuse exclamations of wrath, is giving way to the new exemplar of a suppressed viciousness twice as dangerous.
> The more angry the Victorian – and one may as well say the Australian – becomes, the slower he speaks, drawling out his oaths, and staring like a wild beast about to spring.
> The street-riots of the Melbourne "larrikin" are as different as can be from the "rows" of the London or Birmingham "rough".
> It is the difference of tigers and bears at angry play.[100]

Adams linked the appearance of the Australian type with the development of republican nationalism in Australia. He considered the frontier colony of Queensland demonstrated the greatest potential in this regard and he openly supported Sir Thomas McIllwraith's anti-imperial federation stance in the late 1880s.[101] It was "in Queensland, the colony of youth and enterprise, the home of all the daring and restless spirits of Victoria and the South generally, that we find political activity and advance".[102] This notion of the frontier giving birth to democratic ideas and stimulating racial adaptations coincided with the views of other commentators at the time.[103] Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis contended that American democracy was born in the independence and self-sufficiency of the farmers

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[98] Meg Tasker, *"Struggle and Storm": The Life and Death of Francis Adams*, Carlton South, 2001, p.156.
[99] Adams, *The Australians*, pp.26-27.
[100] *Ibid*.
[101] Tasker, *"Struggle and Storm"*, pp.133-137.
[102] Adams, *The Australians*, p.34.
[103] Graeme Davison, "Frontier" in G. Davison, J. Hirst, S. Macintyre (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, Melbourne, 1998, p.pp.269-270.

of the American west.[104] Similarly, Adams asserted that the Australian bush frontier would be instrumental in the development of a true national type. It was this type that would lead the cause of Australian democracy and nationalism. Adams perceived the genesis of Australian nationalist sentiment in Queensland, in the political action over the use of Kanaka labour in the northern part of the colony. Here, he predicted disunity over labour might split the colony into two opposing factions as had happened in America between "North and South, democrat and aristocrat".[105]

Using the American experience of the Civil War, which had threatened the survival of democratic unity, Adams evoked the strong association of the Australian national type with Australian nationhood. He credited the preservation of the union during the Civil War to the support of the rank and file from the western states of America. So in Australia it would be "the Interior … the heart of the genuine Australia, [that] … if needs be, will do as much for the nation and the race."[106] His comparison augured similar passion for national unity amongst the bush people of Australia whom he imbued with democratic socialist aspirations. In an 1891 article in the *Fortnightly Review,* Adams praised the bushman type as a unionist and a socialist. He observed that the real Australian of the interior had united with unionists of the eastern coast in a political grouping of labour unions, to gain political voice and oppose urban and rural capitalism.[107] The aim of the movement was to eradicate privilege and inequality within society, which was fostered by the capitalist class.[108] Adams linked this capitalism with Anglo-Australians of English background and/or sentiment.[109] He believed it was the real Australians, the native-born Australians of the interior, who were demonstrating individuality, initiative and nationalist sentiment.

The Canadian, Gilbert Parker presented similar but opposing views about the Australian type and Australia's connection to Britain. Like Adams he considered that it was in the rural areas of Australia that an Australian type would evolve. However in his imperial

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[104] Frederick J. Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, Rinehart & Winston, New York, 1962, (1920).
[105] Adams, *The Australians*, p.38.
[106] *Ibid*., p.171
[107] Adams, "The Labour Movement", p.190.
[108] Stuart MacIntyre, "Australian Labor Party" in Davison, Hirst, MacIntyre (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, p.48.
[109] Adams, "The Labour Movement", p.193.

rhetoric, the real Australian had a dual identity that was not only distinctively Australian but was also loyal to the Empire. The two were compatible. Parker also made distinctions between urban and rural Australia. However his work was less concerned with creating a good/bad, rural/urban opposition but more with considering the multiplicity of identities. He asserted that the real Australian was hard to define in the cities because the English influence was so strong. Also environmental influences had affected the character of city people. Because the climate was milder more time was spent out-of-doors and there was less attachment to home, both of which had stimulated strong independence in the people.[110] Parker observed these hybrid Australians "were not a race of weak-knees; they have breathed pure air; they have a sense of social and political freedom, and work stares them in the face."[111]

Parker also used the American example of north and south to distinguish Australians. However in Parker's parallel the political character of people living in northern and southern Australia was less pronounced:

> In Australia there are not great extremes of climate. Differences are incidental, not absolute. The northern man has a trifle more of freedom of speech and action than his comrade of the southern provinces. He has more fire and dash. The south being colder, tends to more sturdiness and reserve; yet it is but a variation in the type, not an unlikeness. The methods of living in the north and the south differ slightly.[112]

However unlike Adams, Parker perceived the unrest caused by the trade unions as characteristically English, not as directed by the people of the interior. The movement, he asserted, had its origin in English struggles for freedom and power, ideas which were implanted in the minds of dwellers in the Australian cities.[113] Such political action would lead to nationhood and to his vision of Australia as one of a number of nations within the Imperial Federation – all independent but loyal to the Empire. An Imperial Federation that would strengthen the British Empire.

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[110] Parker, *Round the Compass in Australia*, p.107.
[111] *Ibid*., p.112.
[112] *Ibid.*, pp.82-83.
[113] *Ibid*., p.81.

Parker's imperial rhetoric predicted federation for Australia but within an environment of ongoing loyalty to the Empire. Adams presented a minority and opposing political view as an anti-imperial federationist who supported republicanism in Australia and the dismemberment of the empire. Although their political views were opposing, they both considered the distinctive inland environment would provide the catalyst for the development of a distinctive national type and national identity.

Conclusion

In their discussions of the Australian people they encountered, travel writers maintained the authority of their superior position as observer. Their authority was supported by their imperial rhetoric that placed Australians in an inferior position to that of the British Anglo-Saxon type. Scientific ideas about the impact of climate and environment on the Anglo-Saxon type influenced their rhetoric. In the early nineteenth century it was presumed that when the Anglo-Saxon race was removed from its proper place of habitation, it would degenerate. As a consequence of these ideas the native-born were often considered a degenerative form of the Anglo-Saxon type and some travellers called for continued migrations of Anglo-Saxons to Australia to halt degeneration. However to other travellers degeneration was not present in the Australian-born but comparisons were made between Australians living in the city and those living in the bush. In some instances it was in the bush that travellers considered that the Australian type was most distinctive. There, the physical environment had impacted upon those of Anglo-Saxon heritage and a national type was appearing in the form of the Australian type. Fear of degeneration infused much of the imperial rhetoric of travellers, as it was perceived a healthy race corresponded to a strong nation contributing to a robust British Empire. Travel writers predicted the emergence of an Australian national identity and nationhood with the evolution of the Australian type. Nevertheless in the late 1880s, when discussions regarding Federation and Australia's place in the Empire were beginning, most travellers perceived Australia's future as autonomous but maintaining a continuing loyalty to the British Empire. A radical minority anticipated otherwise.

Chapter Nine
Moral guardians of the nation: Travellers' perceptions of the role of Australian women

> The children were fully prepared for bed, and were eagerly anticipating their hour: their very own hour. First, came the mother's talk on the conduct of the day, and how they had treated each other. Then followed apologies for rudeness, kisses of forgiveness, a general clearing up of all the day's accounts, ready to begin a new and clean page on the morrow. After these confessions, not wrung from them, the puckered lips, moist eyes, and the sweet resolve to "be better to-morrow" – happiness reigns in each little heart; then comes a chapter of the favourite story, followed by a romp with "Dad". The day closes with clasped hands and upturned faces they kneel about the mother's knee, then-oh, the joy of it! – good-night kisses, each resolved to have the "last".[1]
>
> Jessie Ackermann, *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*, 1913.

In the above epigraph, a woman's role was characterised as maternal. The family was the centre of Victorian society with women having a domestic and nurturing role. Young female members of the family were guided by their parents, who instilled in them the need for constant self-appraisal, in order to fulfil their future responsibility as wives and mothers. However by the end of the nineteenth century the role extended beyond the immediate family into the community at large as motherhood became increasingly important to the future of the nation. Maternity became a moral responsibility and the public duty of fit women who were identified as white, married and middle-class. Middle-class women were constructed as chaste and decent, and in their role as mothers and homemakers they provided moral guidance and sanctuary from the immoral excesses of the outside world. Moral fortitude and fitness to reproduce were considered essential qualities in women who would produce strong and healthy children as part of a strong and healthy race, ensuring a strong future nation. National strength was important to maintaining a prestigious British Empire at a time of intensifying imperial rivalries and perceived threats to Australia from developing Asian empires. The imperial rhetoric contained in travel writers' observations of Australian women was part of a wider imperial mission to mobilise motherhood not only in the national interest but also for the empire. Indeed this imperial rhetoric was not confined to how Australian women were viewed by travellers but also was visible in descriptions of women of Anglo-Saxon ancestry throughout the British Empire.[2]

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[1] Ackermann, *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*, pp.89-90.

[2] For example see Moyles and Owram, *Imperial Dreams and Colonial Realities: British Views of Canada, 1880-1914*, Chapter 8.

By the early nineteenth century, the continued movement of rural workers to the new industrial cities and a rapidly increasing population was creating social upheaval in Britain. The nation was finding it difficult to provide enough food for its growing population and many workers were living in miserable, cramped and unhealthy conditions close to the factories and industries where they worked. The middle-classes also felt the brunt of change and found cause to question the effects of change upon society. They were surrounded by social dislocation, and middle-class men were under increasing pressure to succeed in the growing capitalist world; thus they turned increasingly to the home and woman as its centre as a sanctuary from the decaying social order of the outside world.[3] Women's responsibility for the maintenance of a moral society was highly valued. Virtuous women were positive role models who created and raised a moral society while the immorality of some women was manifested in the incidence of prostitution and illegitimacy. The perceptions of women as either moral or immoral had implications for the future of the nation and the empire due to women's role in producing fit future citizens.

During the late nineteenth century Australia came to be considered the "Social Laboratory of the World". Australia provided a *tabula rasa* from which the blight of its convict origins had been erased and where the social concerns inherent in Britain would be overcome.[4] The fresh and unsullied environment of Australia would have a positive effect on British settlers, who would forge a positive future for the nation and the empire. In the mid-nineteenth century travellers focused on Lamarckian ideas which suggested that an individual's adaptation to their environment could be passed to offspring. A women's function was to bear and raise children as responsible members of society, to support her husband, and to run the household.[5] As eugenics gained acceptance in the late nineteenth century motherhood and racial purity and fitness became the central focus of marriage.[6] With the growing influence of hereditarian evolutionary ideas, it was thought that an individual's characteristics were fixed, as a child would be born with traits inherited from

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[3] Carol Christ, "Victorian Masculinity and the Angel in the House", in Martha Vicinus (ed), *A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women*, Bloomington, 1977, p.146.
[4] C.L. Bacchi, The Nature-Nurture Debate in Australia, 1900-1914, *Historical Studies*, Vol.19, 1980, p.200.
[5] Neil Smelser, "The Victorian family", in British Family Research Committee (eds.), *Families in Britain*, London, 1982, p.64.
[6] Anna Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood", in Frederick Cooper & Ann Laura Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, Berkeley, 1997, p.91.

their parents. Thus the eugenics movements advocated government policies centred on the control of reproduction so that a fit and healthy race developed. Morality was a central concern of both ideas.[7] This chapter examines the travellers' perceptions of Australian women as either moral or immoral and their place in furthering the imperatives of nation and Empire.

The effects of the environment on the morality of women

Armed with these understandings of human development and morality, travel writers described Australian women. In Australia they assumed that the environment was impacting upon the temperament and physiology of Australian women. Their texts demonstrated an appreciation of the positive effects of the environment on women as well as its adverse and objectionable results.[8] Some travellers considered that the crude and unsophisticated environment of mid-nineteenth Australia was affecting the moral fibre of Australian women. For example, Melbourne and the gold fields were deemed immoral and presented a situation where unprotected women could be corrupted. It was understood that in order to maintain their virtue, women in nineteenth century society needed to be protected. As a rule the protector was a husband or male relative. In some situations working-class women came to Australia under the protection of a philanthropic organisation. Ellen Clacy suggested that women who emigrated into this environment should be healthy and capable and "not fastidious or 'fine-ladylike'" and that they should not go to Australia unless they "go under suitable protection".[9] She predicted a positive outcome for healthy, working-class emigrant women who, given the imbalance in the ratio of males to females in the colonies, would find that "The worst risk you run is that of getting married and finding yourself treated with twenty times the respect and consideration you may meet with in England."[10] Thus Clacy implied that moral working-class women, provided they were suitably protected, could escape the decay and corruption of Britain's urban slums to the promising environment of Australia where, through marriage, they would contribute to the development of a moral colonial society.

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[7] Grant Rodwell, "`Persons of Lax Morality': Temperance, Eugenics and Education in Australia, 1900-30." *Journal of Australian Studies*, No.64, March 2000, pp.62-63.

[8] This has been covered in greater detail in the previous chapter.

[9] Clacy, *A Lady's visit to the gold diggings*, p.151.

[10] *Ibid.*

While there was a tendency to view working-class women as more susceptible to the influences of social decay, moral corruption could transcend class bounds. The women Horne observed on his travels did not fit the ideal of nineteenth century womanhood and he considered their immoral behaviour was a threat to stable colonial society. But Horne was careful to separate these women from the decent and more refined women, who through no fault of their own, had fallen upon hard times and been forced into prostitution to survive.[11] Demonstrating understanding and sympathy he pondered the reasons for their decline,

> It may be they have not been "brought up to work," and have no skill in any way; and, maybe, if they have, they cannot find employment. Many female accomplishments might be mentioned of which no use could be made for some time, even by the aid of the best introduction of friends there is no hope, even if the time could be endured. They are truly unfortunate. No mother, no sister, no brother, no friend, - they vainly endeavour to obtain some employment short of the menial one for which they have not strength, if otherwise fitted for it. They linger on in respectable lodgings till their last shilling is gone – and they become what they are.[12]

Horne maintained a mid-nineteenth century view of women as modest, gracious and well-groomed. His British middle-class values concerning women were apparent in his comments on sections of female society in the Australian gold rush era. At times he was critical of the immorality he observed in Australian women, considering them far more depraved than English women of the same type while at other times he demonstrated a humanitarian understanding of their plight. However he also revealed the authority of his British background in his concern for the future of colonial society.

Prostitution

As a group, travel writers tended to make generalisations about the character and appearance of prostitutes in Australia, linking the incidence of prostitution to the innate weakness of women who were not only prone to temptation but also easily induced into immoral activities by malevolent individuals. Working-class women were identified as forming the largest group involved in prostitution although some acknowledged the involvement of middle-class women. However, the participation of middle-class women in

[11] Horne, *Australian Facts and Prospects*, p.90.
[12] *Ibid*., p.91.

prostitution was more often described with a degree of sympathy and understanding. Travel writers made a clear distinction, based purely on appearance and behaviour, between those working-class women they considered prostitutes and those they thought respectable, which suggests that while they were confident in their identification of prostitutes, there is scope for some doubt as to the actual incidence of prostitution in Australia. Mostly, travel writers considered prostitutes as a distinct "class" of immoral women, not as individuals drawn into the business as a means of existence. Although prostitution was scarcely ever mentioned directly, it was alluded to through reference to the women as "servants of all work", a "social plague", "unfortunate girls" and "nymphs of the street". They were stereotyped: gaudy in appearance, loud and lurid in behaviour, and non-contributors to society.[13]

Theatres were often considered to be centres of immorality frequented by prostitutes, and where the respectable could clearly be distinguished from the corrupt by behaviour and dress.[14] Such was the case when Frank Fowler noted that the "upper boxes are usually given up to that class of the community who are partial to pink bonnets and cheeks to match".[15] Their behaviour was particularly abhorrent and distressing to him; they were prone to "lively flirtations, with an occasional dash of fighting," which was "carried on in these delectable regions in the most flagrant and unblushing manner."[16]

Fowler considered the open display of vice in the young colonial cities to be of serious concern. Prostitution in the older European cities, he considered, was a result of overpopulation, a factor not evident in the colonies. Fowler appeared to support the idea that overcrowding in cities, which was a result of industrialisation, had broken down traditional social values and led to immorality. It was believed working-class women, in particular, were most vulnerable to the corrupt influences of the manufacturing centres. Jeffrey Weeks suggests that this was because working-class girls in England were "less

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[13] Fowler, *Southern Lights and Shadows*, p.40. Horne, *Australian Facts and Prospects*, p.90. Buchanan, *The Real Australia*, p.18

[14] Michael Mason, *The Making of Victorian Sexuality*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994, p.98.

[15] Fowler, *Southern Lights and Shadows*, p.39.

[16] *Ibid*.

socially protected than they had been in pre-industrial communities".[17] For Fowler Australia presented cause for grave concern, as Sydney and Melbourne were fledgling cities, and were just emerging from the "simplicity of nature and primal purity".[18] Australia was a "social anomaly".[19] While it was industrialisation that was linked to a rise in immorality in Britain, Fowler suggested that it was the disruption to society caused by the gold rush that resulted in innocent young girls quickly falling into prostitution on arrival in the colonies, particularly when confronted with the temptation of the "gauds and glitter" of a "land of gold".[20] He declared:

> The large bachelor population, climatic peculiarities, the idle voyage out, plenty of money for little work on arriving, are some of the causes, perhaps, which send so many women adrift in Australia.[21]

He observed "Girls, with baby English faces" became "women scarred with years of stolid sensuality; decrepid harlots, blind with age and gin".[22] Fowler did qualify his observations by stating that it was only the weak women who fell into prostitution and these would have done so in any city where they lived. To Fowler the incidence of prostitution was far higher in Australia than in older European cities however he qualified what might have been considered a very negative view of Australian women by stating that the moral tone of the general population was decent and that the great number of churches in the eastern colonies provided moral guidance. As a liberal, Fowler supported social and political reform and praised attempts to reform fallen women through benevolent institutions similar to those in Britain.[23]

By the 1870s concerns about race were linked to the incidence of prostitution in Australia. Although Anthony Trollope accepted that prostitution existed in the colonies, he asserted that it was less prominent than in the larger towns of Britain.[24] Nevertheless Trollope

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[17] Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics & Society: The regulation of sexuality since 1800*, second edition, Harlow, 1989, pp.64-65.
[18] Fowler, *Southern Lights and Shadows*, p.39.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid.* p.41
[21] *Ibid.* p.41f
[22] *Ibid.* pp.39-40
[23] R. G. Gerring, Introduction to Fowler, *Southern Lights and Shadows*, p.26. Bede Nairn, Geoffrey Serle, Russel Ward (eds), *Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 4, 1851-1890*, D-J, Carlton, 1979, pp.208-209. Fowler, *Southern Lights and Shadows*, pp.40-42.
[24] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, p.109.

considered that the incidence of prostitution in Australia was related to issues of race, in particular Chinese emigrants. Fuelled by fear of miscegenation of the white Anglo-Saxon race and the antagonism to Chinese generally, writers conjured up notions of evil Chinese preying upon innocent Anglo-Saxon women and enticing them into prostitution.[25] Trollope laid the blame for the vice and prostitution that he saw in Victoria on the Chinese, whom he described as almost innately corrupt:

> They have no women of their own, and the lowest creatures of the streets congregate with them in their hovels. But this is far from being the worst of it. Boys and girls are enticed among them, and dwell with them, and become foul, abominable, and in-human.[26]

When he visited Australia after the turn of the century, Alfred Buchanan suggested that the economic environment was a cause of prostitution in Australia, which was "much in evidence in Australia".[27] Prostitution was so obvious, he wrote that "There is scarcely a main street in which after dark, the evidences are not visible of that which the hypocrite censures, and which the wise man merely deplores."[28] Buchanan considered that the poor wages paid to women meant they were forced into prostitution to supplement their incomes rather than face destitution and possible death: "Her unending sacrifice for there is no doubt that it is a sacrifice, chosen as the less of two sacrifices."[29] He contended that those who considered that women engaged in prostitution for pleasure were wrong:

> The pleasure, facetiously so called, is the outcome of an industrial system under which the working womanhood of the country is expected to feed and clothe and house itself on ten shillings a week, or less. [30]

Despite the introduction of the basic wage for male workers in 1907, the inequity in male and female wages was such that women received much lower wages than men. Buchanan declared that through the payment of low wages to women, they were forced into prostitution to survive. He stated, "It is an obvious truth that Australia is always in danger of being injured, politically, by its statesmen, while it is always being rescued, socially, by

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[25] Kathryn Cronin, " 'Orientals, Leprous-Fitted/Blood-Diseased and Small Pox Pitted', The urban anti-Chinese movement", in Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders & Kathryn Cronin, *Race Relations in Colonial Queensland: A History of Exclusion, Exploitation and Extermination*, St Lucia, 1975, pp.298-299.
[26] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, p.400.
[27] Buchanan, *The Real Australia*, pp.16.
[28] *Ibid.*, pp.16-17.
[29] *Ibid.*, p.17.
[30] *Ibid.*

its nymphs of the street".[31] He suggested that because women accepted poor wages and continued to supplement their incomes with earnings from prostitution, their employers prospered. He considered the ongoing payment of low wages to women allowed further investment in industries and thus contributed to Australia's continued prosperity.

Illegitimacy

While Dale did not make a direct connection between prostitution and illegitimate births in late nineteenth century Australia, he did suggest an association by concluding his statistics on illegitimacy with a note that there was a considerable amount of prostitution in the major cities of Australia.[32] Travel writers compared the incidence of illegitimacy in Australia to that in Britain and made assumptions about Australia and Australians.[33] However they tended to disagree about the rate of illegitimate births in Australia, the cause and how to solve the problem. Some travel writers stressed that the rate of illegitimate births in Australia was no higher than in Britain. Dale asserted, "Illegitimacy is less common than in England and Wales and much less common than in Scotland, but more common than in Ireland".[34] Other travellers found not only that the rate of illegitimate births was greater in Australia, but that the age of the mothers was younger. Fraser declared:

> When I was in Melbourne Chief Justice Madden spoke out against this evil. Statistics were produced to demonstrate the startling amount of illegitimacy; cases were even quoted of girls of thirteen years of age having children.[35]

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the incidence of illegitimacy was believed to be increasing with women of lax morals bearing the burden of criticism.[36] Certainly travel writers like Fraser assumed a lack of morality in the developing society as the reason for the prevalence of illegitimate births.[37] While this may not have been vastly

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[31] *Ibid.*, p.18.
[32] Dale, *Impressions of Australia*, p.250.
[33] Gordon A Carmichael's analysis of birth statistics provides a useful indicator of the Australian condition during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He reveals that while nonmarital births were always a minority of total births, the rate of illegitimate births in Australia increased until around 1900 when it began to slow. Gordon A Carmichael, "From floating brothels to suburban semirespectability: two centuries of nonmarital pregnancy in Australia", *Journal of Family History*, Vol.21, No.3, July 1996, pp.287-288.
[34] Dale, *Impressions of Australia*, p.250.
[35] Fraser, *Australia: the Making of a Nation*, p.123.
[36] Shurlee Swain & Renate Howe, *Single Mothers and their Children: Disposal. Punishment and Survival in Australia*, Cambridge, 1995, p.10.
[37] Fraser, *Australia: the Making of a Nation*, pp.123-124.

different from the situation in cities such as London or Edinburgh, it is interesting to note that the traveller John Foster Fraser asserted that the warm climate of Australia was a factor in the early sexual maturity of young Australian men and women. In addition by the early twentieth century he noted that there was a noticeable "weakening of religion" in Australia.[38] He observed that schools focused less on Christian teachings and their Sunday Church services were poorly attended due to the outdoor lifestyle of Australians with its emphasis on picnics and beaches. Finally, he blamed parents for their failure to provide appropriate guidance to their children who walked the streets at all hours in large numbers from a very young age.[39] Fraser called for Australia to provide "the proper guardianship of the purity of its young womanhood."[40] It was the chastity of Australian woman that was being eroded by a lack of control and the corrupting influences of a rapidly changing society. Fraser presented a middle-class British male opinion that reflected British middle-class values placing high importance on religion and self-control.

In the late nineteenth century Jessie Ackermann maintained an evangelist's view and considered that unmarried mothers were the innocent victims of malevolent men.[41] She pointed out the discriminatory nature of a solution which implied that the woman was to blame for the illegitimate birth of a child and which failed to recognise the male's responsibility for his actions. She wrote:

> "Something must be done to guard the purity of your young womanhood"; but what about guarding the virtue of the young manhood? – or the old manhood, for that matter? Some of us who have long been familiar with Rescue Homes and similar institutions, realise a fact which must be taken into consideration in solving the problem: *each of these children had a father!*[42]

Ackermann presented a pragmatic and enlightened opinion when she considered illegitimacy a worldwide problem that resulted from a decline in the moral standards of people and that Australia's rate of illegitimate births was lower than in many other countries. She declared that illegitimacy was not related to climate, citing evidence that

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[38] *Ibid.*, p.124.
[39] *Ibid*
[40] *Ibid.*
[41] Dee Garrison, "Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work, 1890-1945", *Journal of Social History*, Vol.28, No.4, Summer 1995, pp.901-904.
[42] Ackermann, *Australia from a Woman's point of view*, p.174.

"Iceland with a climate like that of central United States, [had] the small percentage of illegitimacy; while Austria and Norway reach the highest level: that of 20 per cent as against the 6.2 per cent of the Commonwealth."[43] For Ackermann illegitimacy was class related, was more prevalent in the industrial working class and was not necessarily a new issue.[44] She contended that, "the morals of the industrial population are a matter of vital moment. There is certainly a measure of immorality among girls, and there are also numbers of girl mothers unmarried".[45] Again, the traveller suggested a connection between the working-classes and the incidence of illegitimacy. However she did not necessarily see its incidence in Australia as any greater than in other parts of the world.[46] Ackermann's comments on illegitimacy and its prevalence amongst the working class suggested that a decline in moral standards would have wider ramifications for society. As much of her text focuses on the development of the Australia as a nation and the appearance of a distinctive national type forged by the environment, it is possible to infer that she perceived illegitimacy as a threat to national strength.

Decline in birth rate

The decline in the birth rate became a problem of most industrial nations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and Australia was not excluded from discussions of the trend. Travel writers noted a decline in the Australian birth rate, which they implied was the result of women's selfish actions. Women's lives in the nineteenth century were an endless cycle of pregnancy and childbirth followed by further pregnancy. However, by the late nineteenth century women were becoming more assertive and able to control their own fertility. While the population of women of child-bearing age increased, the number who were married declined. The severe economic depression of the 1890s may have led young men and women to delay marriage and childrearing.[47] In addition, married couples were limiting the number of children they had. The decline in the birth rate became all the more

[43] *Ibid*., p.175.
[44] Ackermann refers to the "industrial population" and members of the "industrial occupations" thus implying those members of the working class who were engaged in industries from mining to factory work.
[45] *Ibid.*, p.232.
[46] *Ibid*. In recent times Grimshaw, Lake, McGrath and Quartly have reiterated this nineteenth century assumption stating that chastity before marriage was of lesser concern for the working-classes. P. Grimshaw, M. Lake, A McGrath, M. Quartly, *Creating a Nation*, Ringwood, 1996, p.92.
[47] Graeme Davison, "Population" in Davison, Hirst, Macintyre (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, p.516

noticeable as the number of immigrants settling in Australia declined in the late nineteenth century.[48] By the early twentieth century the continuing decline in the birth rate was seen as a serious sign of national decay.[49] In New South Wales in 1903, a Royal Commission was ordered to investigate "the causes which have contributed to the decline of the birth rate in New South Wales and the effects of the restriction on child-bearing upon the well-being of the community".[50] The health of mothers and the care of children became a national focus as social education programs were introduced in an attempt to redress the problem and improve the health of the Australian nation. Travel writers after the turn of the century were aware of the concerns prominent Australians expressed about the declining birth rate. Some, such as E.C. Buley, merely related the fears of individual Australians, while others, like the American journalist Jessie Ackermann, offered comprehensive comments on the problem.

Buley related T.A. Coghlan's concern about the declining birth rate. He wrote:

> Mr Coghlan, the statistician whose paper upon the subject first called public attention to this development of Australian life, decided as a result of his early investigations that Australian-born women do not bear so many children as the Euorpean women who emigrate to Australia. Fuller inquiry, however, convinced him that in this conclusion he had been mistaken. The decline of the birth-rate is more intimately connected with the rapid growth of the capital cities, where the conditions of life approximate more closely to those of the Old World. Mr Coghlan's carefully reasoned paper upon the subject has resulted in the appointment of a commission, empowered to inquire fully into all the circumstances affecting this phase of Australian life.[51]

There is a suggestion in Buley's imperial rhetoric that the decline in the birth rate and the "corresponding decline in the physical or moral fibre of the Australian woman" were linked to the changing role of women, away from Victorian society's domestic and maternal figure to a more involved role in the public sphere.[52] He observed:

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[48] Geoffrey Sherrington, "Settlement 1881-1914", in James Jupp (ed), *The Australian People: An Encyclopedia of the Nation, its People, and their Origin*, Cambridge, 2001, p.51.
[49] Davison in the *Oxford Companion to Australian History* cites a fall of 22 per cent in the number of births per 1000 married women aged 15 to 45 years in the period 1891-1901. Davison, Hirst, MacIntyre (eds), *Oxford Companion to Australian History*, p.516.
[50] Neville Hicks, *'This Sin and Scandal': Australia's Population Debate 1891-1911*, Canberra, 1978, p.xv
[51] Buley, *Australian life in Town and Country*, pp.128-129.
[52] *Ibid.*, pp.128.

> The Australian woman who earns her own living has had to encounter less prejudice and opposition than has been the case elsewhere. In the professional class women have come rapidly to the front, and women doctors, dentists, and lecturers are matters of everyday existence, being accepted as readily as their male counterparts.[53]

Such a change had wider implications, as motherhood was important to the future of the nation. The change in the role of women developed as a result of growing industrialisation, which led to changes in lifestyle and greater equality for women. Although Buley accepted that women in the working-class were still victimised he considered that educated women had gained greater equality in formerly male-dominated areas and had greater independence. They were able to vote, could earn a living and obtain success in business.[54]

Jessie Ackermann devoted a complete chapter to fertility rates at the turn of the century in Australia in her account. She considered state led programs would counter the continued decline in birth rate. In "Mothers, Children and the Birth-Rate", she stated that the decrease in the birth rate prevailed mainly in middle-class families where enlightened women had developed a greater understanding of the many facets of child-rearing. In addition, she wrote,

> Girls, as well as young men, are less and less inclined to marry, but are generally disposed towards business pursuits, for which they must be trained. … This involves greater expense in rearing a family, and providing all that is expected for them until they are grown and properly launched in life. As the children come along it usually means increasing sacrifice on the part of the mother, which often reaches the point of giving up all extras for herself, and ends in doing without help, even when obtainable.[55]

The decline was related to economics, she contended: the more children a mother produced the greater the cost to the family and the greater the burden on the mother's health as she attempted to meet the needs of the family. Ackermann applauded the positive initiatives of the state in the social development of Australia. In particular she supported training programs that would teach mothers how to rear fit and healthy children. She noted that state support of scientific motherhood, which included "mothers' schools" and advances in the treatment of childhood illnesses had decreased child mortality and led to an "increase in

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[53] *Ibid.*, p.129.
[54] *Ibid.*, pp.130.
[55] Ackermann, *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*, pp.94-95.

the population among the white race".[56] This was despite a decline in the number of marriages and the number of the children per family within the middle-class.[57] Ackermann praised the recent laws that controlled the occupations of mothers during and after pregnancy as contributing to the development of fitter children.[58] She claimed that:

> Women, in Australia especially, have advanced in a knowledge of scientific motherhood. They are seriously considering themselves as life-givers. In contemplating the far-reaching consequences as such they have a new and enlarged vision of their life-giving rights, as well as of their responsibilities. Science has come to their aid and declared that no living woman, no matter how strong she may be, can do justice to children either by way of care or otherwise, unless there is at least a period of three and a half or four years between births. Women have come to feel that, in the best interests of the future race, it is better to rear three or four physically sound and mentally fit citizens than help to swell the increasing flood of poorly equipped specimens of humanity, that make up so large a number of the rank and file of the race.[59]

Signifying her feminist perspective on motherhood, Ackermann supported methods of contraception, most probably abstinence, that gave women the ability to limit the number of children born. Such control exerted by mothers, she emphasised, would result in a fit and healthier race and ultimately a strong nation. Ackermann considered that it was for women to decide "when they were mentally, spiritually and physically able to take on the conditions of motherhood, and carry them out to the highest betterment of the human family."[60] Her encouragement of the procreation of the "fit" and criticism of government's failure to legislate to "prevent the procreation of the unfit" went even further in her support of state intervention in reproduction and denoted her support for eugenics.[61]

While Ackermann espoused views based upon feminist and eugenicist beliefs, other travel writers held the view that women were avoiding their motherhood role for selfish reasons that would have wider imperial ramifications. For example, British travel writer John Foster Fraser expressed his concern over the declining birth rate in Australia, declaring: "The antagonism to large families is a serious menace to the Commonwealth. All

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[56] *Ibid.*, pp.95.
[57] *Ibid.*, pp.94-96.
[58] *Ibid.*, p.96.
[59] *Ibid.*, p.98.
[60] *Ibid.*, p.98.
[61] *Ibid.*, pp.98-99. Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast: English Feminism and Sexual Morality 1885-1914*, , London, 1995, pp.231-232.

publicists agree that there is a growing shirking of the responsibilities of parenthood."[62] He continued by quoting a passage from the report of the Royal Commission in which the author highlighted the importance of procreation to the "British race" and to the Australian nation. The author of the report stated that the declining birth rate was "a grave disorder, sapping the vitals of a new people, dispelling its hopes, blighting its prospects, and threatening its continuance."[63] Fraser concluded by noting that Australians generally did not appreciate their civic duty to ensure the future of the nation through procreation. However it was not only the declining birth rate that would lead to national decay but also the high rate of infanticide and abortion. In quoting the Sydney City Coroner, Fraser noted that they were viewed as felonious crimes that contributed to the decline in the birth rate. Fraser also added the view of the Presbyterian General Assembly that the "selfish refusal of parentage", whether through contraception or abstinence, was a "crime both against humanity and against God".[64] Such actions would lead to non-Christian races overrunning Christian races and thus to "race suicide".[65] Fraser voiced a common outlook held at the end of the nineteenth century, which emphasised that a healthy and expanding population was a source of national strength, and that fears about the continuing decline in the birth rate, the procreation of the unfit and the high incidence of infanticide and abortion would erode the nation's vigour and ultimately the empire's prestige. With such ideas floating around in contemporary society, it was not surprising that anxiety developed about the domination of European nations by non-European races, a factor which influenced immigration policies in Australia over the next few decades.

Alfred Buchanan maintained a more promising view about the decline in the birth rate that did not predict national decline. His background as a lawyer and journalist gave him a pragmatic approach to the evidence before him. He was not convinced that the declining birth rate would lead to race suicide. Ministers and politicians, he related, noted that the working classes continued to reproduce, while the middle and upper classes, through self-interest, limited the number of children they produced. Buchanan considered fears about

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[62] Fraser, *Australia: the Making of a Nation*, p.124.
[63] Report of Royal Commission cited in Fraser, *Australia: the Making of a Nation*, p.125.
[64] Fraser, *Australia: the Making of a Nation*, pp.125-126.
[65] *Ibid*., p.126.

the decline in the birth rate were alarmist, as historic evidence suggested that the birth rate was always stronger than the death rate. He contended that recent improvements in disease prevention and the reduced incidence of war would lead to a continual increase in the population, such that "in fifty years, even at the present rate of increase, there will be 8,000,000 people in the Commonwealth".[66]

Women's responsibility for child rearing

Women as mothers had a central role in producing and rearing a moral and fit society as part of a grander vision of national strength and imperial prestige. While the physical and social environment was blamed for the immorality of some Australian women, it was also linked to changes in child rearing practices. Some travel writers considered that the environment was having positive effects on children's socialisation while others were fearful of the ramifications of a freer, outdoor upbringing. In British society, women's role was to produce and rear children and their child-rearing practices were highly structured and organised. In middle-class and upper class families children were separated from the adult members of the family and supervised by nursemaids, nannies and governesses as "this was regarded as the best way to begin to train character and prepare children for their eventual adult duties and responsibilities."[67] Such upbringing was thought to instil the obedience and respect necessary for a moral society. In Australia, as British travel writer Marianne North found, a different socialising process was taking place that connected the outdoor environment to the development of independence in children from a very early age.[68]

Jan Kociumbas suggests that concerns about child health may have been a reason for greater outdoor socialisation in middle-class families in Australia. She considers that continued high infant mortality and the belief that miasmas spread infectious disease may have prompted changes in child-rearing practices which placed a greater emphasis on fresh air. [69] While this idea about the transmission of disease and the benefits of pure air was not

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[66] Buchanan, *The Real Australia*, pp.36-37.
[67] F.M.L. Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society: A Social History of Victorian Britain 1830-1900*, London, 1988, p.126.
[68] North, *Recollections of a Happy Life*, Vol.2, p.119.
[69] Jan Kociumbas, *Australian Childhood: A History*, St. Leonards, 1997, p.95.

confined to Australia, Australia had a milder climate than Britain, which may have made outdoor child-rearing more noticeable to travel writers. Kociumbas suggests that the need for pure air may have influenced changes in the style of housing and led some middle class families to move to outer suburban areas and country estates where it was thought the air was pure and uncontaminated.[70]

In the late nineteenth century the British flower painter, Marianne North, in describing Mrs Moffat's daughters, maintained that because they had been brought up in the bush they had developed traits of independence, resourcefulness and unselfishness but had not lost the cultural refinement necessary to be respected members of society. Displaying the strength of character developed through a life in the bush, and despite the danger to her, the eight year old Jo Moffat offered to climb to the top of a eucalypt and bring down a koala for North to paint. Her experiences with Mrs Moffat and her daughters led her to recommend "all young men who want good useful wives [to]… seek them in Australia".[71]

The adaptation of women's nurturing role to differing environmental surroundings was also illustrated by North's description of the ability of women to tame native animals. Sir Henry Parkes' daughter, Lily, was described by North as an industrious and unselfish girl who lived in the solitude of the Blue Mountains with her mother. Lily was so assimilated to her environment that, as well as knowing the local flora and fauna, she also cared for and tamed injured animals and birds, later releasing them back to their bush environment. North related that some of the birds returned to the house occasionally and looked in the window, "former pets which wished to see her [Lily] again."[72] The assimilation to the environment began at an early age: North was amazed at the close relationship a baby, at a lonely house outside Albany, had with a cockatoo and a magpie. The baby played with the tamed birds, from time to time feeding the magpie bread and butter.[73] In describing Australian children as independent and resourceful, travel writers suggested that these traits were imprinted on the individual's character from childhood through the mother's close

[70] *Ibid.*
[71] North, *Recollections of a Happy Life*, Vol.2, p.119.
[72] *Ibid.*, pp.138-139.
[73] *Ibid.*, p.151.

involvement in the child's upbringing, brought about by the lack of nursemaids and nannies and the encouragement of an outdoor life.

Jessie Ackermann who also travelled throughout Australia in the late nineteenth century implicitly linked changes in child rearing practices to the development of a promising nation. She contended that due to a favourable climate in Australia and the lack of domestic help, children were not confined to the nursery but supervised out of doors on

> the lawn or sand, where even the baby is free to crawl about at will investigating the mud-pies and play-houses of the older ones. If one of them trips and falls, unless injured, the busy mother calls from some point where she has them in sight: "Get up, that's a little man," or "Don't cry; don't be a baby!" The tears are dried without coddling, and the imaginary hurt is cured without any interruption in the work of the always busy mother. This does not mean neglect, but it spells in very large letters the beginning of independence of the children of Australia.[74]

However Ackermann also criticised the excess of outdoor play, asserting that it translated into a lack of manners indoors, and suggested that outdoor play should be moderated because "an over-developed love for pleasure and excitement is bad, very bad". She was not generally critical of family life and upbringing and stated that Australian women were "royal mothers" and predicted that:

> In time the romp wears off. The "good will to others," which is really the spirit of the child, finds expression later in a grace of manner that will, in the future, stand to the credit of the young people of Australia.[75]

It would appear that by the late nineteenth century alternative child rearing practices had developed in Australia which moved away from the strict, distant and regimented British method towards a more lenient, inclusive and casual upbringing that developed as an adaptation to changes in the physical and social environment.[76] It is interesting that it was women travel writers who considered these changes as having an encouraging effect on the development of Australian children.

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[74] Ackermann, *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*, p.87.
[75] *Ibid*,. pp.86-89.
[76] A. Burns and J. Goodnow, R. Chisholm and J. Murray, *Children and Families in Australia: Contemporary Issues*, second edition, Sydney, 1985, pp.46-49. The authors support the view that Australian children were socialised outdoors to a greater extent than children in Britain and Europe. As a result Australian children became independent and resourceful from an early age.

Not all travel writers perceived the different child rearing practices of Australians as having a positive effect. The employment and retention of suitable domestic staff to care for children was a problem in Colonial Australia. The unequal ratio of men and women in the colonies meant that many women, who, had they stayed in Britain, would have been employed to assist in the care of children, married shortly after arrival in Australia.[77] This situation resulted in mothers becoming more involved in child rearing. Richard Twopeny frowned at the child rearing practices of Australian mothers, who included babies in everyday family life unlike in English middle-class families. This practice, he declared, had resulted in the badly behaved Australian baby:

> Nurseries are few and far between. He is lashed into a chair by his mother's side at meals; he accompanies her when she is attending to her household duties, and often even when she is receiving her visitors…Wherever his mother goes, baby is also taken. He fills railway carriages and omnibuses, obstructs the pavement in perambulators, and is suckled *coram populo* in the Exhibition. There is no getting away from him unless you shut yourself up altogether. He squalls at concerts ; you have to hold him while his mother gets out of the omnibus, and to kiss him if you are visiting her house.[78]

Twopeny continued the comparison into childhood and emphasised the differences between the native-born boy and his English equivalent. He discerned differences in the native-born, which he linked to nurture. The boy's environment sustained his physical needs but it lacked the discipline of an English upbringing. The Australian boy's lifestyle, which emphasised the outdoors, cultivated a boy who was

> Able to ride almost as soon as he can walk, he is fond of all athletic sports; but it is not till leaving school that his athleticism becomes fully pronounced; thus reversing the order observed in England, where the great majority of the boys, who are cricket and football mad at school, more or less drop those pursuits as young men.[79]

Indoors, he considered, the native-born was less restrained and more offensive than the English boy. Twopeny concluded that the boy's unrepressed childhood was reflected in his later behaviour in professional and business life.[80] According to him parental discipline was lacking in Australia and resulted in the "naughty boy and wilful girl" whose independence and self-assurance were viewed locally as holding promise for Australia's

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[77] Grimshaw, Lake, McGrath, Quartly, *Creating a Nation*, p.91.
[78] Twopeny, *Town Life in Australia*, pp.82-83.
[79] *Ibid*., p.88.
[80] *Ibid.*, p.89.

future.[81] Twopeny was not convinced and revealed the superiority founded in his own British childhood in his assertion that Australian children demonstrated inferior characteristics to those of English children.

Larrikinism

Travellers identified larrikin behaviour as a possible consequence of the lack of parental guidance and of living in poor conditions in Australian cities and towns, particularly in the 1890s. They commented on its presence on Australian streets in their published accounts. In so doing they compared them to similar groups in other parts of the world and considered larrikinism in Australia of greater prevalence and a serious threat to society. Unemployment, the lack of parental supervision, rapid urbanisation and poor social planning all contributed to the appearance of larrikins on the streets of colonial Australia's cities. In Australia, it was perceived as having its origins in rapid population growth that occurred with the gold rushes of the 1850s. As fathers disappeared in search of gold, women and children were left to fend for themselves and many vagrant children roamed the streets with little supervision. The rapidity of urbanisation added to the developing social problems as poor town planning created substandard housing and high rents for the working-classes. Many working-class youth worked as unskilled labour in factories; however, as efficiency in the industrial process increased, leisure time became greater and youths were left idle. Some of these youths dressed in a particularly outrageous fashion and congregated together in gangs on street corners. They harassed passers-by and were often involved in petty larceny and prostitution.[82]

Travel writers bring to light the ambiguity of larrikin behaviour and had varying opinions as to its prevalence and deleterious effect on society. However they all distinguished one defining feature of larrikin behaviour which was that their antics and appearance flouted the accepted social norm for youth behaviour. In comparing Australian larrikins with similar groups which existed in Europe and Britain, travel writers generally noted that the situation

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[81] *Ibid.*, pp.101-102.

[82] James Murray, *Larrikins: A Nineteenth Century Outrage*, Melbourne, 1973. Manning Clark in Clem Gorman (ed), *The Larrikin Streak: Australian Writers look at the Legend*, Sydney, 1990, p.37. John Rickard, "Lovable larrikins and awful ockers", *Journal of Australian Studies*, No. 56, March 1998, pp.78-86.

was worse in Australia. Buley wrote "The larrikin has his equivalent in most big cities, and may not differ much in type from the English Hooligan, the American Tough, or the French Apache" but he maintained that the incidence of youth gangs was greater in Australia than in the Old World.[83] Similarly, the Hill sisters observed that larrikin behaviour on Australian streets was "even more audacious than is their class usually at home".[84] However Twopeny, while he acknowledged that larrikinism was troublesome in Australian cities, contended that the crime associated with it was less severe in Australia than in European cities.[85]

While larrikins were not usually guilty of the more serious crimes, their "licentious and obscene behaviour" was offensive and affronting to passers-by. The Hills observed

> "Larrikin" seems to be almost synonymous with our "rough", except that it applies to young persons only at present, and that these appear to be even more audacious than is their class usually at home. …The "larrikin" indulges in the coarsest and most insulting language addressed to inoffensive passers-by, and this is sometimes attended with personal violence, which we were told may be encountered in even the best streets of Melbourne. [86]

Their actions were often perceived as stemming from the effect of detrimental social surroundings. The Hills thought it the result of a lack of parental control and guidance during childhood. However, they noted that the Government was trying to prevent the problem and had spared neither money nor attention in the search for a solution. [87]

Besides the relationship between the incidence of larrikinism and poverty and urbanisation, some travel writers considered the deviant and immoral behaviour of larrikins as a sign of societal degeneration that could lead to national decay and which had implications for the empire at large. Degeneracy had not only physiological manifestations but also produced offensive conduct. It was regarded as a sign of atavism or the failure of the natural selection process and did not augur well for the future of the nation.[88] At the turn of the century Buley contended that "the larrikin pushes, or gangs, are recruited from youths of

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[83] Buley, *Australian Life in Town and Country*, p.84.
[84] F. & R. Hill, *What we saw in Australia*, London, 1875, pp.345-346.
[85] Twopeny, *Town Life in Australia*, p.126.
[86] F. & R. Hill, *What we saw in Australia*, pp.345-346.
[87] *Ibid*., p.346.
[88] Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, p.224.

working-class whose tastes incline in the direction of brutality and conspiracy."[89] To Buley, it was degenerative types who were attracted to the "pushes" by the sense of belonging to an adventurous and secret society.[90] The larrikin, he contended

> when his worst passions are roused he is a positive source of danger, and the perpetrator of many cowardly crimes, the consequences of which he too often contrives to escape. His existence may well be a source of uneasiness to those concerned in the future of the new nation.[91]

Twopeny distinguished between larrikinism in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney and felt able to define its social origins in each case. He asserted that larrikinism was a localised phenomenon in urban centres, and was particularly prevalent around seaports:

> Adelaide has an advantage in being seven miles distant from its seaport, which naturally retains a large portion of the noxious element. Melbourne has two disadvantages, which tend to make it the sink of Australia – firstly in its metropolitan character and central position, and secondly in the admission of a large number of bad characters at the time of the gold-diggings. Sydney, of course, retains traces of the old convict element – an element, however, which must be acknowledged to have contributed to the good as well as to the bad qualities which are peculiar to New South Wales.[92]

While Melbourne presented the perfect formula for the development of larrikinism, Twopeny suggested that its presence in Australia was a phase in the development of urban centres. However he considered that while larrikins were a problem of society, they were not usually involved in burglaries and serious crimes. Dale had a similar view of larrikins. They were "a little wild, reckless, and insubordinate" but not violent.[93] He linked their bad behaviour to climate and a daily diet high in meat products.[94] He considered that discipline was the solution to their unruliness and suggested the establishment of a Cadet Corps where military discipline would instil them with better manners and behaviour. Other travel writers echoed such solutions to the problem. When Alfred Buchanan visited Australia at the turn of the century, he was full of apprehension about Australian youth, declaring:

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[89] Buley, *Australian Life in Town and Country*, pp.84-85.
[90] *Ibid*.
[91] *Ibid*., p.86.
[92] Twopeny, *Town Life in Australia*, p.126.
[93] Dale, *Impressions of Australia*, p.251.
[94] *Ibid*.

> It was impossible to say anything new about the Australian larrikin, just as it is impossible to exaggerate the heights of his lawlessness, or to plumb the depths of his depravity.[95]

The larrikin was "a living monument of hopeless vulgarity and inexpressible vice", a person who had "reached the summit of irresponsibility".[96] Buchanan called for laws to prevent youth from declining into depravity.[97] Richard Twopeny warned of an increase in the anti-social actions of larrikins in Melbourne. However while he espoused the benefits of implementing corporal punishment for serious offences among this working-class group, he acknowledged they formed an influential body at election time whose votes could

> turn the scale at elections. Their kith and kin form the majority of the population and therefore of the electorate. However much a member of Parliament or a Minister may recognise the necessity of meeting a social danger, he can hardly afford to do it at the expense of his seat.[98]

Travel writers were concerned about the rise in the presence of larrikins on Australian streets. They expressed fear about their impact on the future of Australian society and the nation. However their fear had a wider context as it was not only Australia that was threatened by this form of social deviance but also other parts of the world.

Conclusion

Travel writers' impressions of Australian women were guided by contemporary understanding that women were the guardians of a moral and stable society and a strong nation. Their influence was considered to extend from the home into society and the nation. Because of this defining role in society they were open to criticism when they deviated from the image. Travellers considered some Australian women self-centred as economic and personal growth took priority over family and home and thus they were perceived to be contributing to the decline in the birth rate, the maintenance of which was a source of national strength. Other travel writers explained the incidence of immorality in Australian women as the result of a developing industrial society. Like the declining birth rate, the prevalence of female immorality also raised fears of social and national decay in

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[95] Buchanan, *The Real Australia*, p.14
[96] *Ibid.*
[97] *Ibid.* p.15
[98] Twopeny, *Town Life in Australia*, p.99.

Australia. In the process of describing Australian women, travel writers exposed their authority as observers by maintaining a position of superiority. Travel writers' comments on Australian women also indirectly related to Australia's contribution to the empire. Australia was viewed as the dutiful daughter of an imperial mother, thus signs of immorality and social decay in Australia ultimately stimulated fears about continuing imperial prestige and power.

Chapter Ten
"…a quaint relic from the prehistoric times": Travellers' perspectives on Australian Aborigines

> …he was a highly interesting savage, a quaint relic from the prehistoric times when the icthyosaurus was a living reality.[1]
>
> Percy F.S. Spence and Frank Fox, *Australia*, 1910.

According to Frank Fox, the Aborigine had never advanced beyond the developmental stage of savagery and would never progress to "a national, nor even to a well-organised tribal stage of development".[2] He speculated that "It was as though the race, segregated by some strange accident from the rest of humanity, and left to stagnate in an eddy of the human stream had, though incapable of real progress, been able to refine in details upon its settled primitivism."[3] Ideas stemming from racial and evolutionary science provided the background for discussions of Aborigines by travel writers in this period. Through their constructions of Aborigines as either exotic or dying or both, travel writers defined them as inferior to Europeans and thus subordinated them in their imperial rhetoric.

Many travellers believed that Aborigines were primitives with savage tendencies, low on the scale of humanity. At the same time, they appreciated the integrity of Aborigines living in their natural state and were fascinated by their outstanding bush skills and the distinctiveness of their culture. Moreover, by the late nineteenth century Aboriginal society was considered unique to evolutionary science, as it seemed to provide a link to a previous human developmental stage and a connection to the ancient origins of humankind.[4] What was distinctive about late nineteenth and early twentieth century descriptions of Aborigines by travel writers was the sense of closure in their discussions about Aborigines. Firstly, there was a sense of finality in the ongoing process of dispossessing Aborigines of their culture and land, and secondly, in the inevitability of Aboriginal demise which was premised upon evolutionary laws of nature. Implicit in these themes was the subordination of Aborigines to a superior race.

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[1] Spence and Fox, *Australia*, p.133.
[2] *Ibid*.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp.136-137.

For travellers journeying throughout Australia during the period 1850-1914, the plight of Aborigines presented a sad and tragic counterpoint to the progress of the British Empire. Like explorers in the early nineteenth century, travellers at the end of the century expressed regret for the loss of innocence occasioned by Aboriginal contact with white civilisation. Confronted with such destruction of cultural innocence and because Aboriginal extinction was considered a *fait accompli*, many travel writers only briefly discussed Aborigines, thereby marginalizing them in their accounts. Very little space was devoted to in-depth discussions of their condition and very few travellers expressed more than a passing interest in their culture. Those who did devote a chapter or at least a few pages, were interested in their primitiveness, noble and ignoble, which could be of scientific interest and which provided a contrast to the industrial society the writers came from. These travellers carried more in their suitcases than their personal effects; they arrived with preconceived ideas about Indigenous peoples that were influenced by contemporary ideas of race and progress. Their discussions of Aborigines were founded on ideas which ranked people according to their stage of development and which placed Aborigines low on the scale, primitives destined to become extinct in the face of the power of progressive Anglo-Saxon civilisation.

This chapter examines descriptions and discussions about Aborigines contained in late nineteenth and early twentieth century travel literature and how these expositions positioned Aborigines as inferiors in the racial hierarchy which allowed their dispossession and explained British policy towards them.

A primitive people

Aborigines who lived in tribal groups in the more isolated parts of the bush were granted the dignity of primitive people uncorrupted by civilisation. In making the distinction between Aborigines who lived a traditional life and those who lived on the fringe of settlement, travellers incorporated romantic notions into their work that impelled the reader to look to the Aborigine as a link to their own ancient past. They emphasised the positive

[4] Russell McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory, 1880-1939*, Carlton South, p.39.

and romantic aspects of Aboriginal culture, their dignity, independence, endurance and skill. The image of the dignified primitive was occasionally put in terms of their physical appearance. "The Gulf native is a fine, well-built specimen," wrote Francis Birtles in 1909.[5] (Illustration 33) Carl Lumholtz described Herbert River Aborigines (Illustration 34) as small but with

> remarkable control over their bodies. They bear themselves as if conscious that they are the lords of creation, and one might envy them the dignity and ease of their movements. The women carry themselves in a dignified manner, and do not look so savage as the men.[6]

The stature, muscular tone and facial expressions of some Aborigines gave them the dignity of "noble savages". Other travellers perceived less of the classical savage and more of the primal savage in their physical appearance. Trollope revealed that he considered Aborigines to retain more of the characteristics of simian ancestry than other races. He observed, "To my eyes the deportment of the dignified aboriginal is that of a sapient monkey imitating the gait and manners of a do-nothing white dandy."[7] Such a description reinforced the subordinate position of Aborigines and justified British policies that were aimed at controlling and ameliorating their condition. The French travel writer L.P. Blouet also noted the ape-like characteristics of the Aboriginal race. He declared:

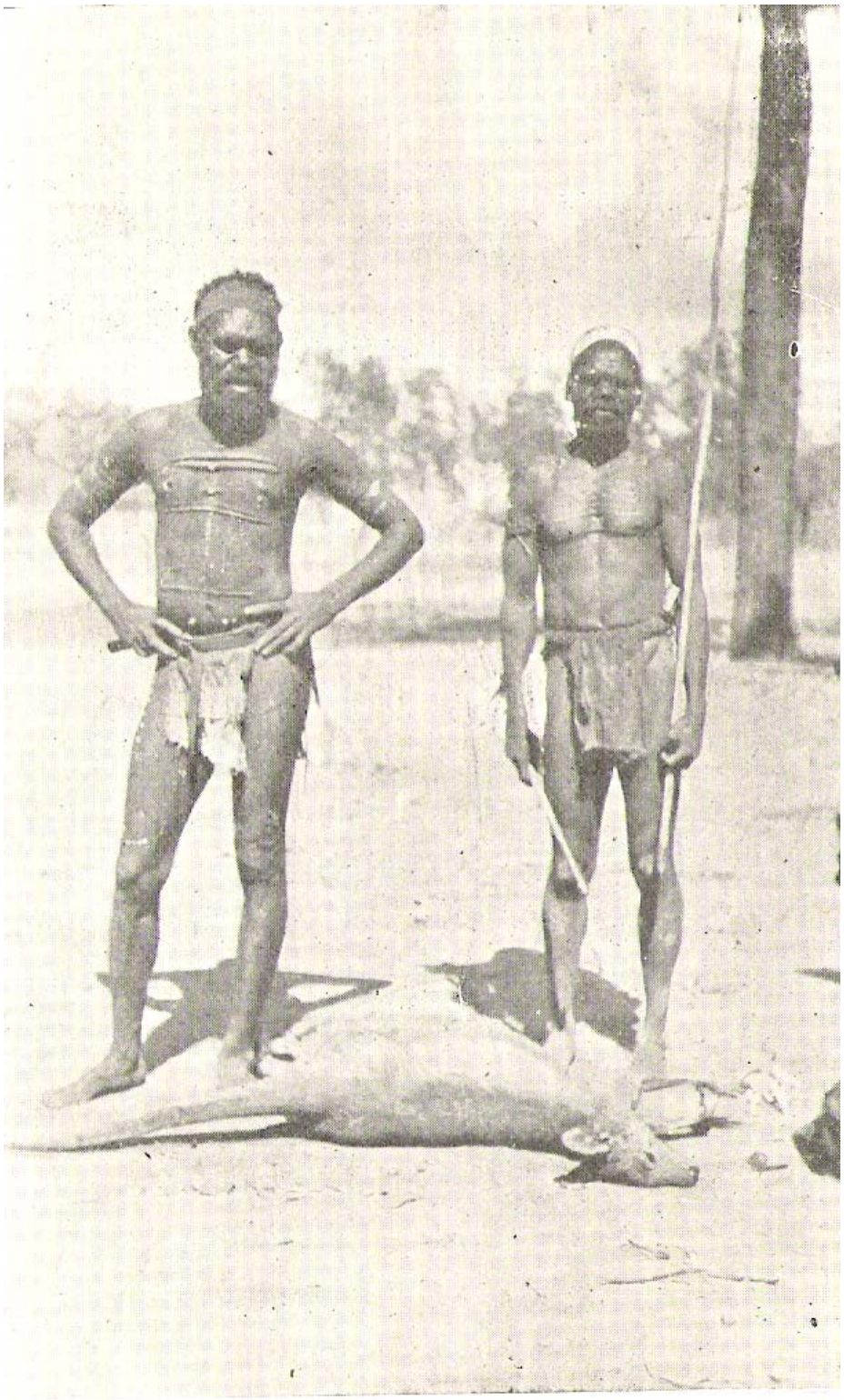
> The type is a horrible one. The body is badly formed, the legs thin, and the arms like those of an orang-outang; the forehead is high, narrow, and receding; the eyes dull; the chin scarcely exists, and is almost merged in the lower jaw, which is receding and very large. The hair is long and fuzzy, and looks like a crow's nest.[8]

Blouet's description was more graphic and derogatory than Trollope's. In this case it was not only their stature that was indicative of their closer connection to earlier ancestors than the white race but also their physical features: the forehead shape, the receding chin and thin arms and legs, all reminiscent of humankind's ape-like ancestors. While both of these descriptions were disparaging, implicit in Blouet's use of satire was underlying criticism of

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5 Birtles, *Lonely Lands*, p.80.
6 Lumholtz, *Among Cannibals*, p.145.
7 Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, p.100.
8 Max O'Rell,[L. Paul Blouet] *John Bull & Co.: The Great Colonial Branches of the Firm: Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa*, London, 1894, p.143.

Illustration 33

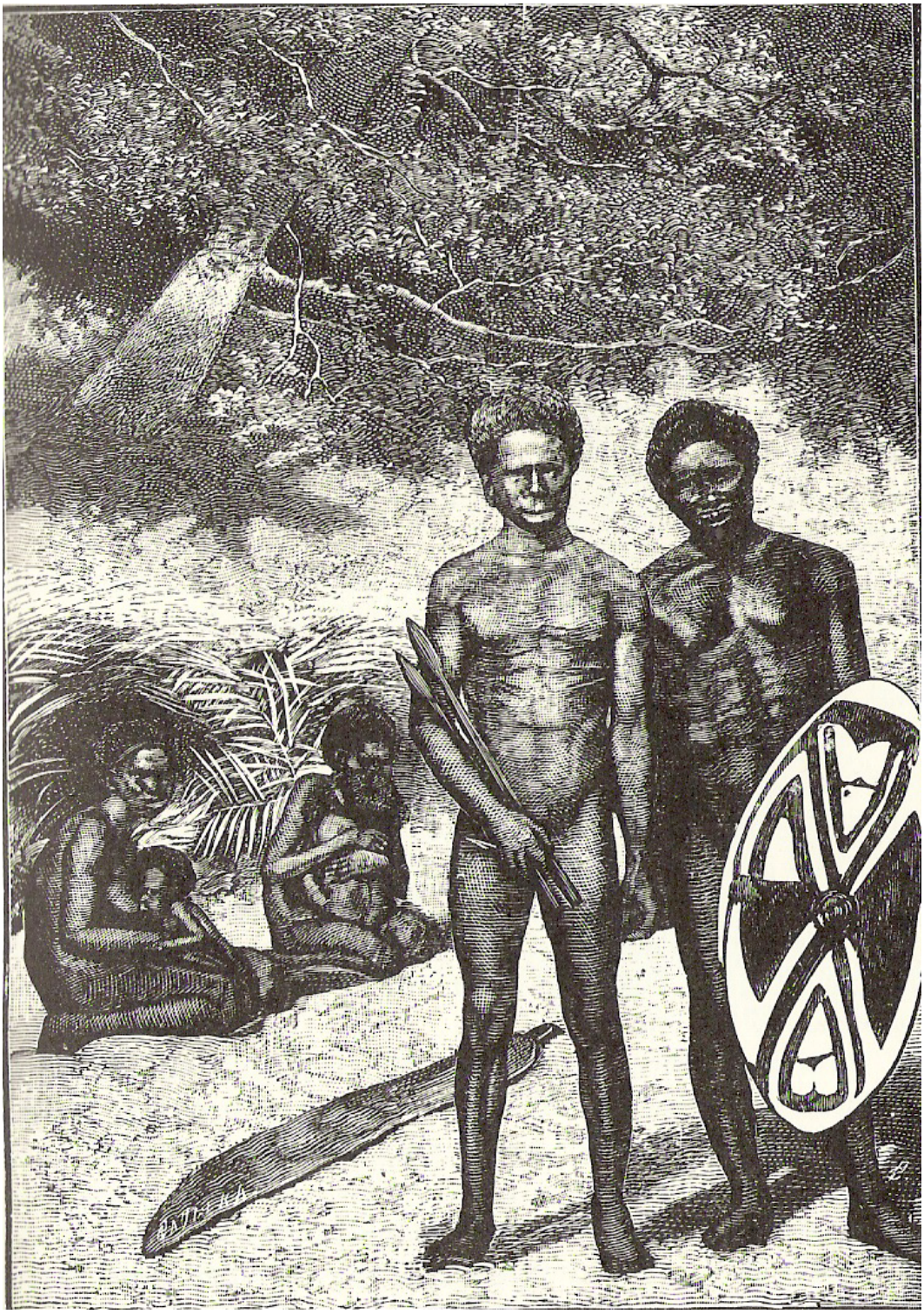


"WILD FELLAHS," GREGORY, N.T.

Lonely Lands.

Source: Francis Birtles, *Lonely Lands*, N.S.W. Bookstall Co., Sydney, 1909, facing p.86.

Illustration 34



Source: **Carl Lumholtz, *Among Cannibals*, John Murray, London, 1889, page 147**

British imperialism. After a particularly graphic description of a drunken Aboriginal woman, he remarked: "There is another convert for the English to be proud of".[9]

While life for Aborigines living in the remote areas was sometimes harsh, they managed to maintain their independence from white civilisation. They had a well-developed set of beliefs which explained the world around them; an efficient kinship system that defined their place within society and their obligations to other members of the group, and their own laws to maintain order. Travellers' interpretation of the customs and practices of Aborigines, such as corroborees, cannibalism and initiation rituals recognised very little of this. Rather they harkened to exoticism and primitivity. Descriptions of corroborees in accounts of travel emphasised the primitive nature of Aboriginal culture and the savagery and wildness of the scene. The painted bodies dancing in the moonlight to ancient beats and chants fascinated travel writers. In the mid-nineteenth century Fowler was attracted by the primeval sounds of a corroboree he witnessed:

> About twenty naked blacks, painted hideously, with blue stripes along each rib and down each leg, – white around each eye, and splashes of red upon the forehead, – were dancing beneath the moon and grunting all the while with a husky *hooh! – hooh! – hooh!* So as to keep a very *common* time. Five or six "gins" one with a little boy upon her back, were sprawled upon the ground, tomtoming on opossum rags, piling the fires with fresh logs, and occasionally breaking in with a wild chorus of
>
> "Corinda briar,
> Corinda briarre!"
>
> Prolonging the last syllable for nearly half a minute. Catlin would have given a little for the picture.[10]

For Fowler it was a romantic scene worthy of the brush of George Catlin, an American artist of the mid-nineteenth century who specialised in painting North American Indians and their way of life.[11] Such scenes not only indicated the connection of Indigenous people to nature but also reminded the traveller of humankind's ancient origins.

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[9] *Ibid*., pp.144-145.
[10] Fowler, *Southern Lights and Shadows*,p.90.
[11] Elizabeth Johns, Andrew Sayers, Elizabeth M. Kornhauser & A. Ellis, *New Worlds from Old: 19th Century Australian and American Landscapes*, Canberra , 1998, p.236. George Catlin, a lawyer, rejected the legal profession in favour of travel in west and south-west of North America. There he documented the lives of North American Indians. His Indian Gallery collection of 600 paintings was exhibited in New York in 1837. Later he travelled to London and Paris with the collection.

While staying at Somerset on Cape York in the 1880s, Ellis Rowan witnessed corroborees and was drawn by the exoticism created by a night time performance of the dance. Describing the scene she noted:

> they wear masks representing birds of different species, or alligators. Last night they were pelicans, and they imitated all the movements of these birds in their dances, which were almost graceful, but it was on the whole a most grotesque sight to see the fire-light flickering on their huge beaks ornamented with feathers, while round their waists they wore the young white leaves of the cocoa-nut palm torn into shreds. Those who did not dance, sang or chanted and kept time, beating on a sort of drum.[12]

Here the firelight gave the scene a wild and romantic feel, distorting the forms of the Aboriginal dancers. At another corroboree she stressed the primitive and savage nature of the sounds and movements of the participants. At Hambleton she observed:

> Then with infuriated yells they advanced and retreated in and out of the fires, dancing faster and faster, and shouting "Ough! Ough!" as each footstep went with a thud on the ground, until, fairly exhausted and streaming with the heat, they suddenly all retired into the darkness of the surrounding bush.[13]

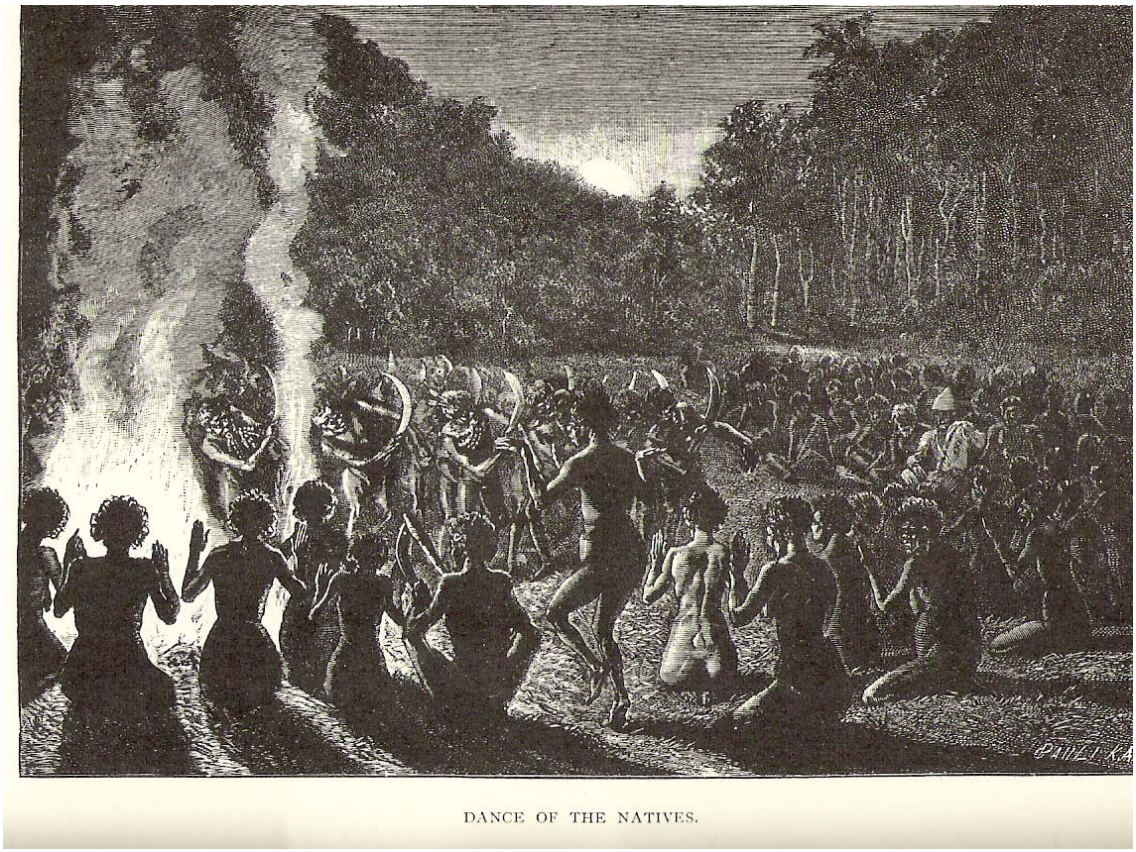
Aborigines emerged from the surrounding bush, danced around the fire, filling the observer with awe and on completion of their dance merged back into the blackness of the bush. The travellers' reactions to the dance reiterated earlier explorers' views that Aborigines were an integral part of the natural landscape.

Carl Lumholtz considered the corroboree he witnessed an "utterly childish dance" which he likened to a pantomine. Nevertheless he presented an ethnographer's observations, describing the music, the actions of the dancers and their ornaments. (Illustration 35) He revealed distaste for one female dancer who offended his moral values, remarking:

> She was middle-aged, with a pair of beautiful eyes, but her limbs were slender, and she had a large protruding stomach. The very uniform hopping movements of her lean body were not graceful. She kept her arms extended and spread the long slender fingers of her hands as far apart as possible. The sight of this woman jumping up and down in the same place, in the attitude above described, and with

[12] Rowan, *The Flower Hunter*, p.114.
[13] *Ibid.*, p.37.

Illustration 35



DANCE OF THE NATIVES.

Source: Carl Lumholtz, *Among Cannibals*, John Murray, London, 1889, p.260.

> her large breasts dangling, was truly disgusting. But the woman seemed to enjoy herself wonderfully, and she was not relieved by any of the other women.[14]

In their descriptions of corroborees travellers positioned the Aboriginal participants as mere scientific specimens scrutinised by a "superior" European race.

By the early 1900s, as Elsie Masson and her party watched the proceedings of a Northern Territory corroboree, the dance signified not only the traveller's fascination with Aboriginal culture but their belief in the Aboriginal demise. She described the scene:

> A ring of dark crouching forms sat round the concrete, each beside a small fire of flowing embers. In the centre of the concrete, which shone a blank white in the moonlight, five or six wild figures stamped and gesticulated, while one man squatted on the ground before them, clapping two boomerangs together and singing his harsh song. The chant began high up and wandered restlessly about like a strayed ghost seeking its grave, until at last it fell contented to a low growl, so deep that it was hardly a note at all. …With what strange sadness that chant was burdened! The desolate melancholy of desert places, the mystery of dark, swirling rivers, the cries of birds and beasts in the primeval bush, all the struggle for life of this lonely people in a vast land seemed to find voice in the wild minor cadence.[15]

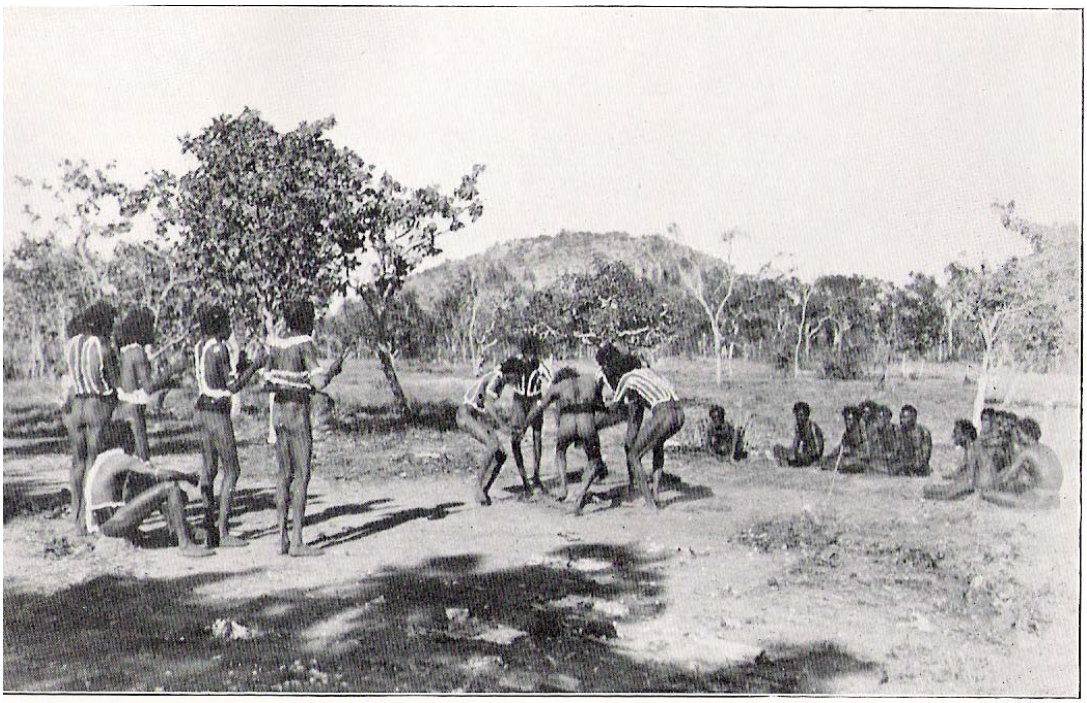
The imagery used by Masson was that associated with death and sorrow. Masson considered the fading sounds of the corroboree as they returned home played out the evolutionary pronouncement of survival of the fittest.[16] The sound of the piano and the gramophone overwhelming the sounds of the corroboree was "prophetic…of the fate of this primitive people relic of a bygone era." [17] Masson combined images of Aborigines as exotic with the inevitability of their demise to explain the position of Aborigines in the Northern Territory – it was contact with civilisation that was destroying them culturally and physically. (Illustration 36)

Discussions of tribal customs also provided a means of emphasising the savagery of Aborigines. While their customs were often abhorrent to travel writers, discussions emphasised the closeness of Aborigines to their natural world. Buley believed the hunter

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[14] Lumholtz, *Among Cannibals*, p.259.
[15] Elsie Masson, *An Untamed Territory: The Northern Territory of Australia*, London, 1915, pp.63-64.
[16] *Ibid.*, p.67.
[17] *Ibid.*

Illustration 36



Photo, Professor Baldwin Spencer.

BLACKS AT CORROBOREE.

Source: Elsie Masson, *An Untamed Territory*, MacMillan & Co Ltd., London, 1915, facing p.64.

gatherer lifestyle of Aborigines in the remote areas of Australia revealed a lower stage of development of the people. He observed:

> Of agriculture he had not even the most primitive idea, and relied for food upon the wild fruits and vegetables of the land, and upon the game secured during his fishing and hunting expeditions.[18]

However another traveller, Philip H. Gibbs, romanticised the lifestyle by contrasting it with the pressures of industrialised society. He considered that Aboriginal

> wants are few compared with those of civilised man. He does not have to worry over tailors' bills or the latest style of fashion. In summer he goes without any clothing at all and in the winter wraps himself in kangaroo skins.[19]

It was their integrity in pursuing a traditional life unaffected by civilisation that was appreciated by some travellers. Anthony Trollope contended: "Their laws, especially with regard to marriage are complex and wonderful. Their corroborees, or festival dances, are very wonderful".[20]

Some customs were repugnant to travel writers and considered indicative of a heathen state but they had an essential purpose, which was explained by the traveller. Trollope asserted that the strict observance of tribal law played an important part in the practice of cannibalism in Aboriginal society. Using the work of Samuel Bennett, Trollope related that cannibalism, at the time of the bunya festival, was not a question of "the disgusting cruelty, the frightful inhumanity, or the curious physiological question involved", but was dictated by tribal laws, "laws arising out of the necessities of their existence, and the indirect proof afforded of the severe pressure on the supply of food".[21] In this case, Trollope believed, invited tribes practised cannibalism to compensate for not being able to touch the animals in another tribe's domain. Gibbs also suggested similar pressure on resources as a motive for Aboriginal customs. He described the Aborigine as

> a very hard hearted person, and he has nasty way of abandoning his old father and mother to die of starvation in the Australian bush when he or she becomes a burden

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[18] Buley, *Australian Life in Town and Country*, p.153.
[19] Philip H. Gibbs, *Australasia: the Britains of the South*, London, 1903, p.135.
[20] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, p.107.
[21] *Ibid.*, p.106.

> to him. On the other hand, he is a devoted father himself, and often when a boy-child dies a parent will mourn for it bitterly and passionately for years.[22]

The practices of infanticide and the abandonment of elderly people, which they assured readers were necessary to Aboriginal survival, emphasised the primitivism of Aboriginal customs.

While the Aboriginal practice of ritual scarification of their bodies, was its sign of courage and manhood, it was also considered a badge of savagery. (Illustration 37) Lumholtz noted:

> The natives are as fond of decorating their bodies as a sailor is, but they do it clumsily with a sharp stone or a clam-shell, with which primitive instruments they cut parallel lines across the breast and stomach. To keep the wounds from healing they put charcoal or ashes in them for a month or two until they well up in rough ridges. … In the course of time these peculiar lines, which in young men are conspicuous and as thick as one's little finger, become indistinct, so that on old men they are scarcely visible.[23]

While such customs held meaning for Aboriginal society as a sign of maturity and acceptance of responsibility, travel writers through their exposition were confirming the primitive and thus inferior nature of the people which was demonstrated by their ability to endure pain and discomfort.

Life in the bush gave Aborigines skills unparalleled in European culture. However they were appreciated by travel writers as signs of their less evolved state. Lumholtz noted the agility and ingenuity of Aborigines in climbing tall trees in the Herbert Valley rainforest. They were "more skilful in climbing than any of the other natives I had seen up to this time" he observed.[24] Aborigines also were praised for their keen senses which made them proficient trackers, and their natural abilities which made them good stockmen in the pastoral industry.[25] Buley stated:

> Aborigines make splendid stockmen, for they are good natural horsemen, and their keen sight and hearing, as well as their instinct for observation, are of the greatest advantage in this work. It more closely resembles their natural life, providing them

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[22] Gibbs, *Australasia: the Britains of the South*, pp.134-135.
[23] Lumholtz, *Among Cannibals*, pp.149-150.
[24] *Ibid*., pp.97-98.
[25] Buley, *Australian Life in Town and Country*, p.158.

Illustration 37



A YOUNG BOY FROM HERBERT RIVER,
SHOWING ORNAMENTAL SCARS.

Source: Carl Lumholtz, *Among Cannibals*, John Murray, London, 1889, p.149

> with plenty of change and excitement, and with the nomad existence to which they have always been accustomed.[26]

Aboriginal women made good domestic servants in the bush; their faithfulness and cheerfulness correlated to a perception of the childlike nature of less evolved people.[27] Fox noted Aboriginal proficiency in constructing the boomerang which he considered a paradox in such primitive people. He contended:

> In the manufacture and use of the boomerang, for instance, the Australian aboriginal is unique. It is a throwing stick that if it misses the object at which it is aimed, it comes back to the feet of the thrower. The boomerang shows a knowledge of the effect of curves on plane surfaces which would make the fortune of an aeroplanist if he could apply its secret.[28]

While Mae Vivienne was thrilled by an Aboriginal demonstration of boomerang throwing she did not think that the development of the boomerang was unique, and stated "a weapon almost the same was used by the Abyssinians hundreds of years ago, and still earlier by the people of ancient Egypt."[29]

Tales of escape from Aboriginal attacks added adventure to accounts of travel. By the late nineteenth century travel throughout Australia was relatively safe; Aborigines had been subdued and travellers were unlikely to be attacked. However some travellers were still able to incorporate the adventure of Aboriginal attack into their narratives, particularly those who travelled through the more remote parts of Australia where Aborigines still lived a traditional life. Francis Birtles related an incident where he was nearly speared by Aborigines while he was travelling by bicycle in 1907 through the isolated interior of the Northern Territory.

> Attracted by the howling of the pups and the screaming of their women folk they stood like statues, with spears poised and eyes ablaze, awaiting my oncoming. It did not take me long to grasp the situation, and, concluding that a flash past would be my best move, I put my head down and pedalled for all I was worth. The rush rather upset their calculations, for, although fully a dozen spears were sent whizzing after me and the sound of their peculiar "singing" sent a few shivers down my spine I escaped unscathed. One spear better judged than the rest found an opening between the spokes of my front wheel, but the angle at which it struck and the speed

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[26] *Ibid.*
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] Spence and Fox, *Australia,* p.137.
[29] Vivienne, *Travels in Western Australia*, p.176.

> at which I was going caused it to snap and the broken half caught me a severe rap on the right arm. … I rode fully fifty miles before I camped that night, and as a precautionary measure I lit no fire, but was content to have a cold tea.[30]

Birtles was perpetuating the image of the Aborigine as hostile and treacherous, at a time when such incidents were few. He added adventure or tall stories to his narrative for the readers' enjoyment.

Even when such incidents did not affect the traveller directly, they delighted in relating accounts of Aboriginal hostility towards white settlers that exposed frontier violence and the Aboriginal savagery in the past. Mae Vivienne included in her narrative of her travels in Western Australia, an account of the Aboriginal massacre of white settlers in the 1840s. She reported:

> York is one of the oldest Western Australian towns, and enjoys the distinction of being the place where the first official execution took place in 1840. The wife of a settler, Mrs Cook, and her infant, were murdered by aborigines during the absence of her husband. The murderers escaped into the bush, and were only brought to justice through a tribal quarrel which resulted in some natives betraying them. They were conveyed to the scene of their crime and hanged in chains, in the presence of a large gathering of natives.[31]

Vivienne was concerned not only with the violence of the Aboriginal attack on a defenceless woman but also with relating the punishment meted out to the perpetrators. In relating this event and others like it in her account she kept alive the concept of the savagery of Aborigines on the frontier, who were often dealt with soundly or subdued by the firm hand of European justice.

Some travel writers were ethnographers and made closer observations of traditional Aborigines than most. While exploring the rainforest of the upper Herbert River, the Norwegian ethnographer Carl Lumholtz reflected:

> Here I was to find the natives in their original condition, uninfluenced by intercourse with the white man. I had long desired to study these savages – the Australian aborigines, the lowest of the human race – in their actual conditions of

[30] Birtles, *Lonely Lands*, pp.141-142.
[31] Vivienne, *Travels in Western Australia*, p.16.

> existence; for the ethnological student no phase of human life is so interesting as the most primitive one.[32]

Majority scientific opinion in the late nineteenth century held that as different races demonstrated differing rates of evolution, it was possible to rank them according to their stage of social and biological development. The white race exhibited the highest degree of evolutionary development brought about by successful interaction with their environment while Aborigines were ranked lowest, constrained by environmental factors which did not stimulate biological or societal adaptations. Australia was of particular interest to scientists, as not only were the flora and fauna unique, but the Indigenous people displayed a distinctiveness that could be explained in terms of their lower stage of evolution. It was considered that Aborigines provided an indirect link to humankind's apelike ancestors.[33] Anthropologist Baldwin Spencer stated that Aborigines were "the most backward race extant", an example of an earlier stage of human development. Aborigines had not advanced beyond a stone age existence as they had not had the impetus to advance which came from competition with more advanced races.[34]

Travel writers demonstrated an awareness and understanding of contemporary ideas about human evolution. Nearly all travel writers ranked Aborigines low on the evolutionary scale. Travellers' discussions of Aboriginal development were related to their physical appearance, behaviour and material culture which demonstrated their low developmental stage. Anthony Trollope wrote:

> These people were in total ignorance of the use of metals, they went naked, they ill-used their women, they had no houses, they produced nothing from the soil. They had not even flint arrow-heads. They practiced infanticide. In some circumstances of life they practised cannibalism. They were savages of the lowest kind.[35]

He placed Aborigines lower than Africans and although he considered African civilisation low, he contended that the African had redeeming qualities; he could be "taught to work for his bread".[36] The Aborigine could not, as he was innately idle:

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[32] Lumholtz, *Among Cannibals*, p.113.
[33] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies*, p.39.
[34] Walter Baldwin Spencer, cited in McGregor, *Imagined Destinies*, pp.41-42.
[35] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, p.105.
[36] *Ibid*., pp.108-109.

> the dignity of black deportment of which one hears not unfrequently is simply the dignity of idleness…His sinews are never tired and torn and stunted by burdens, and he can go erect…This so called dignity has to me been the most odious part of his altogether low physiognomy.[37]

Trollope contended that the dignified bearing of Aborigines was in fact an indication of their low developmental stage and indolence. It indicated their savagery, the fact that they only worked to service their immediate needs and were not worn down and crippled by heavy work.

Gibbs asserted that Aboriginal life was either one of plenty or of starvation. They did not prepare for contingencies. Gibbs noted:

> The blackfellow has one great failing, which is the cause of needless suffering to him – that is, a lack of thriftiness. He has not learnt the lesson of the squirrel, which hoards up a store of nuts at their time of ripening to provide him with food through the winter.[38]

It was believed that without the impetus to advance the Aboriginal race had failed to progress beyond the primitive stage.

Evolutionary theory and the idea of progress were entwined to explain biological and social development. Evidence of the successful advancement of the white race was contained in their social and economic progress. Indicative of the Victorian belief in progress were attempts to educate and advance Aborigines on the developmental scale. However because of their inferiority they were incapable of the progressive Victorian attitude of hard work and individual and societal advancement. Gibbs noted their only concern was their immediate needs and that most Aborigines had a "rooted dislike to settled work of any kind, or to staying in one part of the country. They wander about in tribes, having no interest in life except to get food for themselves and their families, and to shelter themselves from bad weather."[39] Trollope asserted that "for years, probably for many centuries, they have made no progress" and even European attempts to civilise them and thereby advance their culture had been unsuccessful.[40] Another travel writer R.H. Horne

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[37] *Ibid.*, p.109.
[38] Gibbs, *Australasia: the Britons of the South*, p.135.
[39] *Ibid*., p.133.
[40] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, p.107.

observed in the 1850s that while Aborigines were "quick to acquire the vices of civilization, the aborigines have shown little capacity and no desire to assimilate themselves to its virtues and refinements".[41] Rosamond and Florence Hill noted that in Adelaide a school for Aborigines had been established, but they observed that although the students were apt to learn basic lessons they were unable to find permanent employment when they finished school. Many, they stated, "returned to their wild life, while the few who hung about the town were shiftless and destitute, and exhibited in an intensified form the vices of civilisation".[42] According to travellers, when Aborigines found employment they were inconsistent workers who often reverted to their traditional lifestyle. Buley noted Aborigines made good stockmen because the life was closely associated with their natural ways but, he observed, "should the tribe to which they belong make its appearance in the neighbourhood, they at once grow unsettled and sullen and nothing will restrain them from 'going wild' for a time at least."[43] He considered that this pattern increased as they got older and they became "less diligent and attentive to their duties."[44]

Infrequently travellers were more optimistic about the Aborigines' ability to progress under the supervision of the Christian churches or government authorities. The Hill sisters related the success of the establishment of a Christian mission at Poonindie in South Australia. Aborigines had been converted from their savage ways and been taught that hard work was of benefit to them and their community.[45] They noted some cottages had gardens. They were "humble little thatched dwellings, generally containing only one room," which was "occasionally divided into two or more parts by a curtain or other simple means of separation." They observed that they "found [the houses] extremely clean and tidy; and the good fires the natives love to keep – for they are very sensitive to cold – made them bright and cheerful."[46]

Their description of the houses at Poonindie, reminiscent of a rustic scene, demonstrated that Aborigines were assimilating to Christianity and the European way of life. They

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[41] Horne, *Australian Facts and Prospects*, pp.168-169.
[42] R. & F. Hill, *What we saw in Australia*, p.179.
[43] Buley, *Australian Life in Town and Country*, p.158.
[44] *Ibid.*, p.158.
[45] R. & F. Hill, *What we saw in Australia*, p.188.

noted that even those Aborigines who had retained the nomadic lifestyle occasionally attended the school and church.[47] Implying some criticism of the past treatment of Aborigines by Europeans, the Hills contended that such institutions would increase:

> our knowledge of the nature of the blacks, developing their higher powers, and promoting good-will between their race and our own, effect more to protect them from injustice and cruelty than any police regulations can achieve.[48]

However such views were in a minority in the body of travel literature covered here, as most travel writers believed that Aborigines had an inability to progress and would disappear when engaged in competition with the more successful Anglo-Saxon race. For Buley "even the most intelligent and best-intentioned efforts to civilise this people have proved abortive and injurious to them."[49]

Travellers' accounts often contrasted the progressive nature of the Anglo-Saxon race with the perceived inactivity of Aboriginal society. The American traveller Reverend Clark used a comparison of technologies to demonstrate the contrast between the "vanishing bushmen" and the "majestic white race".[50] The "vanishing bushmen" in their dug-out canoes paddled out to meet the "all-conquering whites" in their "full powered ocean steamer" to beg for tobacco. After the meeting, the ship steamed away and the canoes disappeared. Clark used this as an analogy for the fate of native peoples in the face of progressive civilisation. With a sense of closure he remarked, "so the black races are disappearing, while the Anglo-Saxons keep steadily on their way, conquering and to conquer."[51] Gilbert Parker also contrasted European with Aborigines. On one side of the Darling River was evidence of the progressive Anglo-Saxon settlement of Australia while on the other side "Aboriginal Australia [held] … its sorry court" as a dying race.[52]

Travel writers believed that natural laws existed which dictated that Aborigines could not survive contact with civilisation. McGregor states "Aboriginal extinction was a corollary

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[46] *Ibid*., p.184.
[47] *Ibid.*
[48] *Ibid*., p.189.
[49] Buley, *Australian life in Town and Country*, p.153.
[50] Clark, *Our Journey around the World,* p.129
[51] *Ibid.*
[52] Parker, *Round the Compass in Australia*, pp.25-26.

of their primitivity. A race so undeveloped and immature could not possibly survive in competition with the superior and progressive Europeans".[53] As British traveller, R.H. Horne contended, the lowly position of Aborigines was dictated by "laws of nature" which decreed "that some nations and tribes of the earth shall be stationary, and that others shall be progressive".[54] He suggested that it was the fate of such societies to succumb to the more advanced races. Buley asserted that nothing could be done to avert the fate of Aborigines "for it dates back to an era before the stone age, and cannot be in any way reconciled with the conditions of today".[55] Fox declared the Aboriginal demise to be so certain that it was possible to estimate "a date on which 'the last post' will be sounded over the Australian, as it has been over the Tasmanian aboriginal race."[56] When Trollope visited his son in Australia in the 1870s he noted that Aborigines were diminishing in numbers. This he put down to the more progressive race subjugating the less progressive; it was their "fate to be abolished".[57] Trollope, demonstrating a modicum of compassion, stated that:

> Of the Australian black man we may certainly say that he has to go. That he should perish without unnecessary suffering should be the aim of all who are concerned in the matter.[58]

Other travellers also advocated kindness towards a dying race.[59] Harris supported the establishment of Government reserves so that the "remaining days of the race" could be "spent in peace".[60] This was something he felt not even those who supported a white Australia policy would condemn. [61] Spurr likened one such government settlement, Cornanderrk, to a mausoleum. He considered the idyllic natural setting and the silence which enveloped the site portended a dying race. "What more fitting as an accompaniment of death than the solemn stillness which already heralds the eternal stillness of the tomb?" he wrote.[62]

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[53] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies*, p.48.
[54] Horne, *Australian Facts and Prospects*, p.168.
[55] Buley, *Australian Life in Town and Country*, p.156.
[56] Spence and Fox, *Australia*, p.141.
[57] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, p.112.
[58] *Ibid.*, p.113.
[59] Buley, *Australian Life in Town and Country*, p.160.
[60] Harris, *Outback in Australia*, p.161.
[61] *Ibid*.
[62] Spurr, *Five Years under the Southern Cross*,p.154.

Complacency in their acceptance of the inevitability of the Aboriginal demise and condemnation of British policy which had initiated their end created tensions in some travel writers' narratives. There was an inability to see Aboriginal survival as a possibility. This was understandable given that British anthropologists maintained that primitive people would not survive engagement with white civilisation as they were "unaccustomed to making rational choices of any sort. Primitive social systems were extremely fragile – the products of instinctive reactions and unconscious adaptations."[63] In theory, it was the survival of the fittest and the primitive and instinctive nature of Aboriginal people that meant they could not survive contact with the progressive Anglo-Saxon race. It was a proven scientific certainty that despite attempts to protect Aborigines and help them to progress along the scale of development, "they [were] destined to disappear soon".[64] Demonstrating the inevitability of Aboriginal demise held by many travellers, Michael Davitt remarked: "The white man's presence means death to the black man of Australia, and nothing will avert his doom."[65] Although Davitt and other travellers may have condemned the "civilising" mission of colonialism, with its policy of "Bibles first, bombshells after", as unjust and hypocritical, nothing could avert the evolutionary laws of nature that decreed Aboriginal demise when placed in contact with a more progressive and sophisticated race.[66]

It was not just violence, addiction and disease which was leading to their extinction but even kindness stemming from the more well-intentioned actions of Europeans. Fox stated:

> Of almost as great deadliness to these poor aborigines was the kindness which they met with in some quarters from the whites. With kindness came clothes and the habit of house-dwelling; and clothes and confinement meant, in time phthisis. With kindness of a sort came, too, rum and tobacco.[67]

When Aborigines took up European ways they were placed in a more precarious position, he asserted, as they became addicted to European vices and these meant death.[68] Such

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[63] Henrika Kuklick, *The Savage Within: the Social History of British Anthropology 1885-1945*, Cambridge, 1991, p.93.
[64] Davitt, *Life and Progress in Australia*, p.36.
[65] *Ibid*.
[66] *Ibid*., p.39. O'Rell, *John Bull & Co*., p.143
[67] Spence and Fox, *Australia*, p.139.
[68] Spurr, *Five Years under the Southern Cross*, p.153.

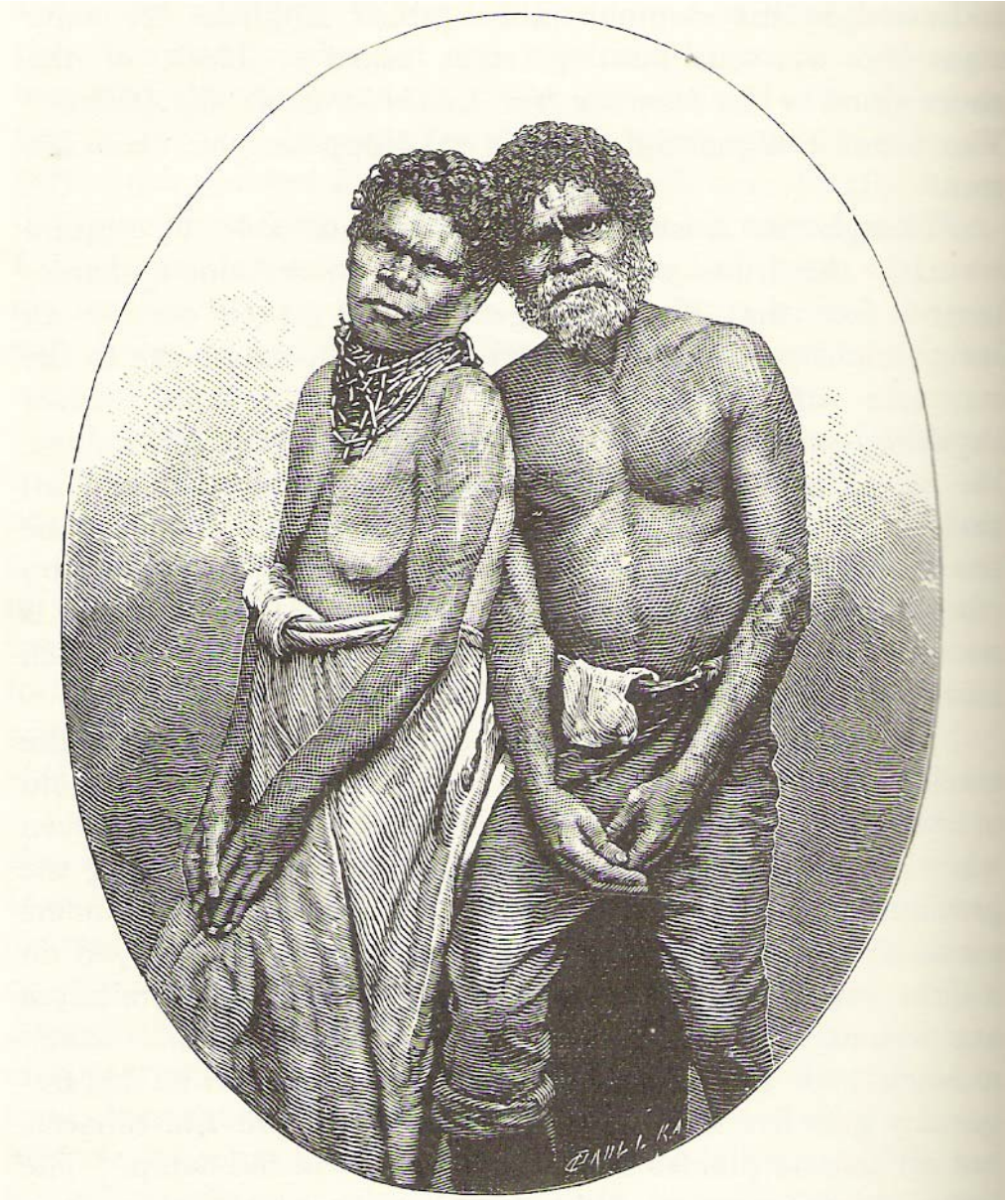
Aborigines were nearly always depicted as degraded and corrupt; as contaminated by contact with civilisation as depicted in the illustration from Lumholtz's account. (Illustration 38) Buley observed the differences between the two groups of Aborigines; one the dignified savage and the other the weak savage, "Interesting as the black-fellow undoubtedly is while he remains in his wild condition, when he comes into close contact with the white man he presents a spectacle that is pitiable and pathetic."[69] Michael Davitt also observed the collapse of the Aboriginal traditional way of life upon contact with Europeans. He noted some Aborigines "are found near towns or mining camps as tramps and beggars, and bear all the evidences of their doubly degraded condition under the influences of drink and disease."[70] Under such conditions Aboriginal women were mistreated within their society and substance abuses developed.[71]

Aborigines, like other native people, were considered to have an innate weakness which made them unable to resist temptation when alcohol, opium or tobacco were available. Alcohol was to the Aborigines, according to Horne, "the fatal emissary that will sweep his tribe from the face of the earth, and in the course of a few brief years reduce his race to a dark fragment of colonial history".[72] Rosamond and Florence Hill observed, "Drink is as terrible a snare to the Australian native as to the Red Indian. Having once tasted it, he craves for more, and a very small quantity makes him utterly mad."[73] Travellers considered alcohol became the "ruling vice" of Aborigines and they would sell their land over and over in order to obtain it.[74] While travellers suggested that the dependence on alcohol was destroying Aboriginal health, a factor most travellers found tragic and regrettable, they did not necessarily accept any responsibility on the part of Europeans. They considered the demise of the Aboriginal race to be inevitable; alcohol, opium, violence and disease were just hastening the event. As primitive people, Aborigines were considered incapable of making rational choices, particularly when it came to the vices of

[69] Buley, *Australian Life in Town and Country*, 156.
[70] Davitt, *Life and Progress in Australasia*, p.37.
[71] *Ibid*.
[72] Horne, *Australian Facts and Prospects*, pp.168-169.
[73] R. & F. Hill, *What we saw in Australia*, p.190.
[74] Horne, *Australian Facts and Prospects*, pp.168-169.

European society. They bore the moral responsibility for their predicament as their stage of development was low

Illustration 38



"THE LONELY OLD PEOPLE," NATIVES FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF TOWNSVILLE.

Source: Carl Lumholtz, *Among Cannibals,* John Murray, London, 1889, p.370.

ar han making rational decisions about the implications of their choice. Buley observed:

> The opportunities for obtaining drink and opium are too many and too frequent, and these tribes are also diminishing in number. This rapid decay of an interesting race, unfortunate as it is, would appear to be inevitable. The unvarying testimony of all the authorities upon the subject goes to prove that contact with civilisation is fatal to the Australian black.[75]

Some travel writers held the Chinese responsible for Aboriginal demise. Buley noted that despite laws to prohibit it, the Chinese bribed the Aborigines with offers of opium in order to get them to work. He noted: "indulgence in this poisonous drug is even more fatal to the blacks than spirits, but they readily acquire the craving for it, and will do anything for a small quantity."[76] Some travellers used statistical evidence to support their views of the impending demise of Aborigines. Gibbs noted that only 70,000 Aborigines remained in Australia in 1903 whereas there had been twice that number when the colonies were established in 1788.[77]

When travellers discussed the inevitability of Aboriginal demise, they were referring to "full-blooded" Aborigines and not those of mixed ancestry. Some travellers noted that Aboriginal blood would continue to flow in those of mixed descent. Davitt asserted:

> Half breeds, …, are very vigorous specimens of the mixed colours and are likely to perpetuate some of the blood of the latest racial victim to European civilization.[78]

Travellers viewed those of mixed origin in either an optimistic or pessimistic light. Often their positive description related to the identification of dominant white traits in the individual. The Hills observed many of the inhabitants of Poonindie were the result of Aboriginal and white unions. They described them as "very intelligent, and some of them are extremely handsome, though usually their aspect is mournful."[79] As evidence of their

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[75] Buley, *Australian Life in Town and Country*, pp.152-153.
[76] *Ibid*., p.159.
[77] Gibbs, *Australasia: the Britains of the South*, p.130. Buley, *Australian Life in Town and Country*, p.152.
[78] Davitt, *Life and Progress in Australasia*, p.36.
[79] R. & F. Hill, *What we saw in Australia*, p.185.

optimism they considered the success of one youth of mixed descent, who taught at the school in the school teacher's absence. He was a Christian and had a gentle, calm manner.[80]

Other travellers considered the negative results of mixed relationships. In this case it was suggested that the destructive elements of the Aboriginal's character dominated. Buley contended that while the presence of children of mixed origin was a reproach to the behaviour of whites, it held larger implications for blacks, for it signified "the absence of any vestige of morality in either black man or woman."[81] It was the innate immorality of primitives that was evident in the resultant children. Spurr noted that while mixed marriages between Aborigines and whites occurred, the children of the marriages were not accepted in school any more than those whose parents were both Aborigines. Such behaviour by white children, he declared, indicated that discrimination was as prevalent in Australia as it was in the United States.[82] Like other commentators many travel writers predicted a bleak future not only for individuals of mixed descent but for Aborigines generally. It was a future that disregarded any rights they had over the land.

Possessing the land

Not only did evolutionary science explain the Aboriginal demise but it also justified their dispossession. International law stipulated that ownership of "discovered" land was guided by whether the inhabitants practiced agriculture and had developed the land by constructing buildings and towns.[83] Aborigines were considered not to have settled habits or cultivate the soil but roamed about the coastal fringe, living off the land and sea, with no attachment to the land or structured form of society. Australia was considered a land belonging to no one, although Cook and Banks admitted that they did not survey the inland and accounts published following the voyage stated that the interior was "either wholly desolate, or at least still more thinly inhabited than the places which have been visited."[84] However as

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[80] *Ibid*.
[81] Buley, *Australian Life in Town and Country*, p.156.
[82] Spurr, *Five years under the Southern Cross*, p.155.
[83] Richard Broome, *Aboriginal Australians: Black Response to White Dominance 1788-1980*, North Sydney, 1982, p.26. Henry Reynolds, *The Law of the Land*, Ringwood, 1987, p12.
[84] Cited in Reynolds, *The Law of the Land*, p.32.

settlement developed opinions diverged and many Europeans came to question the legality of British tenure as they realised that the Aborigines did have connection to their land. Settlers observed that Aborigines had a developed and spiritual sense of ownership of land and an understanding of tribal boundaries. The land was utilised and tended but in a somewhat different manner to European understanding. Nevertheless this was alien to many British travellers, who came from a progressive society where land served a utilitarian purpose, to be developed in order to advance the individual and society. Australian land lacked the visible evidence of Aboriginal progress; buildings, agriculture and a recognisable system of government. The view of Aboriginal primitivism became entrenched and as time passed British sovereignty was assured despite questions related to the legality of British acquisition.[85]

By the late nineteenth century travel writers displayed degrees of acceptance of the fact that Aborigines had been in possession of the land when Europeans had settled Australia. However it is unclear what they meant by possession, that is, whether it was legal ownership or mere custody of the land until the arrival of a more advanced civilisation. Buley wrote that prior to European settlement "the black-fellow roamed in undisputed possession of the continent", but did not question present British ownership."[86] General acceptance of the theory of the demise of the Aboriginal race meant travel writers could acknowledge Aboriginal prior possession of the land. For example Gibbs declared: "The black people to whom Australia belonged before white men had discovered the great island-continent are rapidly dwindling away".[87]

Some travellers implied Aboriginal possession was only temporary as they were not sophisticated and advanced enough to appreciate the potential of the land. Spurr acknowledged that Aborigines were the custodians of the land until the arrival of a higher civilisation:

> When the first settlers came to Australia they found in possession of the country a black population, representing a humanity low down in the scale. The native population was never in reality so large as many persons have imagined. It is

[85] Reynolds, *The Law of the Land*, pp.35,39.
[86] Buley, *Australian Life in Town and Country*, p.153
[87] Gibbs, *Australasia: the Britains of the South*, p.130

> difficult to arrive at exact figures, because in the north there are still large numbers of natives living in a state of practical savagery. These roam about at their will. Where the white man has penetrated, however, the black has gradually receded. When the black adopts "civilised" ways, his already precarious existence becomes yet more precarious. Affecting the white man's vices – the first thing he naturally copies – he speedily runs down the hill and passes off the scene. The native population is being gradually but surely wiped out.[88]

Trollope stated that the Aborigines had resisted Europeans' attempts to civilise them because in their opinion:

> the land was theirs and the fulness thereof, or emptiness as it might be. The white man was catching all their fish, driving away their kangaroos, taking up their land, domineering over them, and hanging them in chains when they did that which to them was only natural and right. [89]

However while Trollope understood the reasons for Aboriginal resistance he did not advocate returning the land to the Aborigines. He was certain that if a policy of not dispossessing native people had prevailed in the world it would have made little difference to the situation which developed when an advanced civilisation and a backward society met.[90] The weaker society was destined to die out. Parker also linked Aboriginal extinction to dispossession and violence but tended to accept responsibility on the part of Europeans for the plight of Aborigines. He observed:

> They are victims of a policy of Reprisal; of an unwritten word which went forth from high places: "Disperse the aboriginal'….Destruction came upon the men, and destruction and worse upon the women, and here they are…"Well, mate, how are you?" said the traveller to a grey-beard. … But this new scene before us suggests nothing of the gloomy thought that comes with a view of a fading people, upon whose lands another race have made distraint. [91].

Davitt, who displayed some personal resentment towards Britain, was much stronger in his condemnation of British dispossession of Aborigines, asserting that British law was one-sided and had justified the dispossession and violence meted out to Aborigines.[92] While such criticism was damming to Australia and to the prestige of the empire, it came from a position of authority and was narrated in a tone that indicated his superiority.

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[88] Spurr, *Five Years under the Southern Cross*, p.153
[89] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, p.105.
[90] *Ibid.*
[91] Parker, *Round the Compass in Australia*, pp.26-28

Conclusion

Like the exploration literature of the early nineteenth century, the imperial rhetoric of travellers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century positioned Aborigines as inferiors. By the late nineteenth century there was less discussion of Aborigines in travel literature and it was only those travellers journeying through the more remote parts of Australia who discussed Aboriginal culture in detail. In the early years of settlement information about Aboriginal culture was important in furthering settlement of newly explored land but by the late nineteenth century much of Australia had been explored, Aborigines dispossessed of their land and moved onto to reserves and missions. While there continued to be the occasional reference to Aborigines as noble savages, travellers concentrated more on the primitive nature of Aboriginal culture. In their narratives they created a stereotypical image of Aborigines as primitives who were at a lower stage of development. The travellers' expositions of Aboriginal customs and practices confirmed the perceptions of their savagery and immorality. While Aborigines of mixed ancestry would survive contact they were usually not considered in a positive light. Successive travel writers authenticated these images and contributed to the establishment of the inferior position of Aborigines. As inferiors Aborigines were excluded or marginalised from European society and dispossessed of their land. Racial and evolutionary science provided the intellectual framework that influenced travellers' observations of Aborigines and suggested Aborigines would not survive contact with a more advanced civilisation. By the early twentieth century travellers were resigned to the inevitability of Aboriginal extinction.

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[92] Davitt, *Life and Progress in Australia*, p.34.

Chapter Eleven
Picturesque and progressive:
The Australian landscape from a traveller's point of view

> I walked up in the twilight to the esplanade at the gate of the public garden, and I think I have never in my life gazed on a scene so entirely beautiful. It was not for the trees and flowers. They were lovely, and anywhere in Europe would be celebrated as a wonder. But there was not the science, there was not the elaborate variety, which I had admired at Ballarat. Sydney is many degrees hotter. Tropical plants which there require glass to shelter them, at Sydney breathe luxuriantly the free air of heaven; but the roses and lilies of the temperate zone, which are the fairest flowers that blow, grow feebly there, or will not grow at all. It is the situation which gives to the Sydney garden so exquisite a charm. The ground slopes from the town to the sea with inclining lawns, flowerbeds, and the endless variety of tropical flora. Tall Norfolk Island pines tower up dark into the air, and grand walks wind for miles among continually varying landscapes, which are framed by the openings in the foliage of the perfumed shrubs. Within the compass of the garden the sea forms two deep bays, one of which is reserved for the ships of the squadron. … Behind the anchorage were rocky islands, with the deserted ruins of ancient batteries, now useless and superseded by ampler fortifications inside the bluffs. Merchant ships lay scattered over the outer harbour, and a yacht or two lay drifting with idle sails. Crowded steam ferry-boats were carrying the workmen home from the city to distant villages. On wooded upland or promontory shone the white palaces of the Sydney merchants, and beyond again were the green hills, softened by distance and the growing dusk into purple, which encircle the great inlet of Port Jackson.
>
> As a mere picture it was the loveliest that I had ever looked upon.[1]
>
> J.F. Froude, *Oceana,* 1892.

In the above epigraph, James Froude used "word painting" to depict the uniqueness and picturesque nature of the Sydney botanical gardens and harbour.[2] He not only described the scene but gave it economic value through his imperial rhetoric, a value that consolidated imperial progress. Froude visited South Africa, Australia and New Zealand in 1885 to gain material for his book *Oceana* in which he enunciated a political vision of a Commonwealth of British colonies. His account of Australia was enriched by his developed aesthetic sensibility. Froude followed the picturesque convention of landscape description in the epigraph, painting the harbour vista in words beginning with the gardens in the foreground, moving to the ships in the middle distance and finally limiting the scene with the green hills in the background. His description included imperial rhetoric that promoted an appreciation of those elements in the scene that were evidence of the colonies' progress – the busy harbour with merchant ships and

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[1] Froude, *Oceana*, pp.144-145.

[2] Nineteenth century art and architecture critic, John Ruskin, used the term "word painting" to define the process of textually painting a scene, such as Froude's harbour side view. Recently, the literary scholar Rhoda Flaxman has defined Victorian word painting as "extended passages of visually oriented descriptions whose techniques emulate pictorial methods." The travel writer, from the observer's perspective, framed the view, defining its boundaries, and then progressively moved through the landscape, describing its composition. The reader was engaged by its worthiness for illustration, and by the precise choice of words and imagery, often contrasting the colour, texture and size of elements within the view. The scene was thereby translated into a textual illustration following picturesque composition in art. Flaxman, *Victorian Word-Painting and Narrative*, pp.9-10.

ferry boats and the grand houses of the merchants. Froude supported his picturesque description with an illustration of the scene. (Illustration 39)

While travellers might focus on the aesthetic value of the scene before them, landscape description in the late nineteenth century, like that in the earlier part of the century was often characterised by the merging of aesthetic value with ideas of progress. In their narratives travellers used the conventions of the picturesque and romanticism to envision the landscape's future and to convey their appreciation of its potential. At the same time a utilitarian approach to land, often devoid of aesthetic appreciation but infused with scientific understanding, was visible in their assumptions that any environmental problems were temporary or a sign of the land's fecundity.

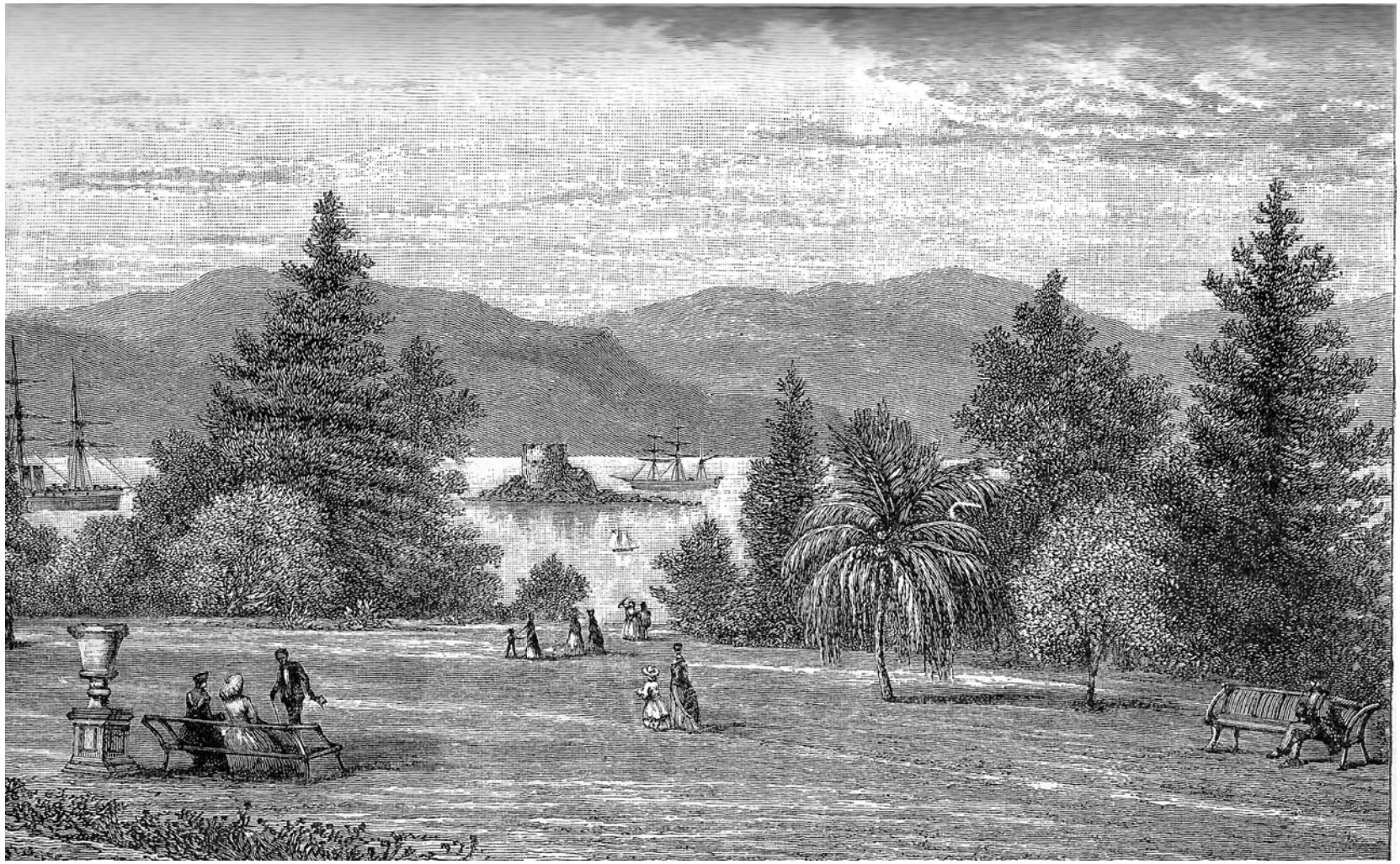
This chapter explores the traveller's position as a purveyor of Australian landscape description and reveals the philosophical understandings at the basis of their appreciation. It considers the prominence of the idea of progress in aesthetic appreciation and the role of science in explaining environmental problems. The chapter suggests that the imperial rhetoric of landscape description in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries consolidated Australia's economic potential to further the prestige of the empire.

Landscape from the traveller's perspective

Like an artist illustrating a scene worthy of artistic representation, the traveller employed word-painting to evoke the values of the scene surveyed. This was a position of some power as erudite travellers could compose scenes that suggested outstanding beauty and economic potential to the reader. Besides their power to paint the scene in words, the traveller could discriminate between what scenes or parts of scenes to include and what to omit. It is evident from their published accounts that some travel writers were aware of this position as they contemplated the tension between the reality of the scene they chose to describe and its reconstruction in their narratives.

Mary Louise Pratt identifies three means by which the description of landscape gave the travel writer a sense of power. First, as in Froude's description, the scene was

Illustration 39



Source: J.A. Froude,*Oceana*, Longmans Green, and Co., London, 1892, facing p.144.

"aestheticised" in a language that draws upon artistic composition by defining its boundaries and tonal proportions. The description of the scene conveyed the heightened sensibility of the travel writer and appealed to the aesthetic sensibility of the reader. Next, the "density of meaning" of the scene was presented through the use of descriptive modifiers which indicated the significance and substance of the scene. For example, "breathe luxuriantly the free air of heaven" gave depth to Froude's description of the vigour of tropical plants in the gardens and "deserted ruins of ancient batteries" added power to the old fortifications in the harbour by allusion to past civilisations. Finally by defining the limits of the scene for the reader the travel writer indicated his/her "mastery" over the landscape. The scene was reduced to a static view, interpreted from the travel writer's vantage point at a particular point in time.[3] The abundant and progressive scene Froude chose to describe before him promoted his imperial rhetoric of colonial progress.

Anthony Trollope acknowledged this ability of the traveller to control the textual representation of scenery. He also was conscious of the underlying difficulties the travel writer faced in attempting to evoke its values. He suggested, "the charm conveyed has been in the words of the writer, not in the beauty of the place".[4] He noted that there were often differences between textual description and the reality of a setting. Trollope wrote: "I doubt whether I ever read any description of scenery which gave me an idea of the place described, and I am not sure that such effect can be obtained by words."[5] He contended that Scott and Byron both eloquently conveyed the picturesque and romantic nature of a scene, a textual form which stimulated people to visit the site. Nevertheless, he also emphasised the limitations of word-painting; that describing a scene eloquently did not necessarily confirm the reality of its beauty for the individual observer. Trollope was conscious of the tension between the individual's response to particular scenery and its textual representation by other travellers. He contended that the appreciation of the scene was contained within the individual's emotive response, which no textual representation could evoke. In making such assertions he was conscious of his own inadequacy to paint the beauty of Sydney Harbour in words:

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[3] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, pp.204-205. David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, fourth printing, Durham, 1999, p.19.
[4] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, p.229.
[5] *Ibid.*

> I know that the task would be hopeless were I to attempt to make others understand the nature of the beauty of Sydney Harbour. I can say that it is lovely, but I cannot paint its loveliness.[6]

Other travellers also felt lacking in the ability to describe the vista before them. Some resorted to quoting the picturesque descriptions of the same scene by other writers.

From an altitude of 4,200 feet above Hobart, Josiah Hughes admitted to his failings both as an artist and as a writer and thus resorted to another traveller's description of the scene.[7] While he was noble in his admission of inadequacy, his statement also emphasised the parallels between landscape art and textual description in the nineteenth century. Because of the height of Mt Wellington, the observer's view was vast, almost an aerial view of the surrounding landscape. The picturesque description that followed emphasised the vastness and clarity of this prospect, in particular, the variety and contrast accorded to elements of the landscape by the atmosphere. A biblical allusion was used to describe the scene. The author likened the panorama, with a shaft of light illuminating part of the vista, to Goshen in Egypt where the Israelites settled after being given the land by the Pharaoh.[8] The overall scene presented was compared to the beauty and grandeur of Cleopatra, ruler of Egypt.[9]

> "Of the magnificence of the prospect from the top of Mount Wellington, one may say, as Mark Antony said of Cleopatra's beauty,
>
> 'Age cannot wither it,
>
> Nor custom stale its infinite variety.'
>
> The vastness of the field of vision, the lucid transparency of the atmosphere, and the interchange of mountain, valley, sea, and river, combine to fascinate your gaze at the time, and to haunt your memory ever afterwards, and the very clouds which occasionally blur the scene confer additional beauty upon it; for, sometimes, as they break away to seaward, they disclose one of the islands of the estuary so completely detached from the line of the horizon as to appear as if suspended in the heavens; and, sometimes, a strong sunbeam striking on the valley of the Huon, while all around is mist and purple shadow, kindles the tract of country it illuminates into such a lustre that it appears to be actually transfigured, and recalls to your recollection the light which abode on the land of Goshen, when impenetrable darkness had settled upon the rest of Egypt, as it flashes in the sunlight or fades in the shadow. The Derwent gleams like a sheet of burnished silver, or assumes the colour of turquoise, while the undulating

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[6] *Ibid*.
[7] Hughes does not refer to the author by name. Hughes, *Australia Revisited*, pp.259-260.
[8] Goshen was the fertile land in which there was light at a time when darkness reigned over the rest of Egypt.
[9] Hughes, *Australia Revisited*, pp.259-260.

> country inland seems to advance towards or recede from you according as it vividly reveals itself in the light, or grows indistinct in transitory gloom. The city of Hobart sloping to the water's edge looks like a collection of the tiniest of toy houses dropped by a child in play, and the altitude at which you stand, coupled with the amazing extent of country comprehended in the view, enables you to realize the prospect visible from a balloon."[10]

The scene described

Although some travellers may have doubted their ability to adequately describe the qualities of the scene before them, most drew upon aesthetic principles derived from a European context in their attempt to communicate its values to their readers. Often in their descriptions of Australian landscape travel writers defined the distinctive Australian landscape with reference to these conventions. In this way they asserted their authority to describe and claim the Australian environment. Sometimes these conventions were incompatible with a landscape consisting of eucalypt forests and native undergrowth but the travel writer with a heightened aesthetic sensibility still found qualities of the picturesque in Australian scenery. In some instances it remained the park-like scenery reminiscent of English estates which had been appreciated by explorers in the early nineteenth century. James Froude likened the pastoral property of *Ercildoun* in Victoria to the symbol of English progress, the large country estate. He described his approach to the property thus:

> The scene had gradually become less dreary. Trees became more frequent and there were stubbles where crops had been reaped. We came at last to a gate, which needed only a lodge to be like the entrance to a great English domain.
>
> The park-like character was more marked when we drove through – short grass, eucalyptus trees, and blackwood trees scattered over it like the oaks at Richmond; the eucalypti, ancient and venerable, with huge twisted trunks and spreading branches, being exactly like oaks at a distance, while the dark green blackwoods glowing picturesque between them might have passed for yews. Sheep were browsing in hundreds, perhaps in thousands, and on a wooded ridge which was behind I was told there were deer.[11]

While he acknowledged Australian tree species, he likened them to oak and yew trees rather than describing their unique and distinctive appearance.

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[10] *Ibid.*
[11] Froude, *Oceana*, pp.104-105.

Often the textual composition of picturesque scenes was not so explicit but was supported by the inclusion of illustrations. In *Among Cannibals,* Lumholtz described a picturesque stream setting near Rockhampton. On the facing page was an illustration of it. Alluding to the universal nature of aesthetic appreciation and with his sensibility unhindered despite the monotony of Australian forest vegetation, Lumholtz savoured the picturesque nature of scenery featuring:

> beautiful woody scenes along the streams, often indeed so charming that we fancy ourselves transported to an ideal landscape. It is not necessary to be a special lover of nature in order to be captivated by the picturesque arches of the trees over the winding stream, where the silence is broken only by the shrill cry of the cockatoo or the tittering ha! ha! ha! ha! of the laughing jackass. Suddenly, as we walk through the vine-scrub, a lizard will throw itself down into the water with a great splash to disturb a poor water-hen that has become absorbed in its own meditations on the strand.[12]

Except for the mention of Australian native birds the scene Lumholtz described could have been in Europe. The tranquillity of the setting he depicted was interrupted only by the calls of the native birds and the density of the vegetation contrasted with the movement of the water. The illustration facing the text, while composed of native Australian vegetation, demonstrated the traveller's mastery over the landscape in his use of the conventions of picturesque composition: an open grassed area in the foreground, the stream in the middle-distance, overhanging gum trees and vines framing the whole scene. Here the power of the travel writer to claim the Australian landscape by placing it within the parameters of late nineteenth century aesthetics was revealed not only in words but also in the accompanying illustration. (Illustration 40)

As discussed in an earlier chapter, in the late eighteenth century the picturesque was imbued with romanticism. The use of romanticism established a sensual connection to the scene surveyed through the use of imagery and metaphor that evoked an emotional and often spiritual response. However the picturesque traveller had to be a patient and devoted observer to fully appreciate the scene. When sailing south down the coast of West Africa in 1850, Shaw contended that the variety and contrast apparent in the tropical ocean sky observed over the course of a day, and which was particularly visible in the formation of clouds in tropical latitudes, was so extraordinary that they could not be reproduced in works of art but had to be experienced sensuously. He wrote that, "It

[12] Lumholtz, *Among Cannibals,* pp.28-31.

Illustration 40



Source: Carl Lumholtz, *Among Cannibals*, John Murray, London, 1889, facing p.28

is in these latitudes that nature is dressed not only in her best, but at the same time in her most varied costume."[13] Shaw believed that the "careless traveller" was impatient and unfeeling and not "alive to her [Nature's] beauties". The hurried traveller did not have the time to absorb and appreciate the beauty of Nature's changing scenes. Such a traveller could be likened to the tourist on a package holiday, whose brief visits to sights did not allow time for the full development in the individual of aesthetic appreciation. According to Shaw the "good observer" was devoted to constant observation,

> otherwise he will see only a part instead of the whole. It is not under the meridian splendour of a tropical sun at noon that these beauties are most striking, although at that time they are often incomparably grand. The traveller must be up at sunrise, and forget not to glance at the evening sunset.[14]

Shaw departed from the appreciation of the static picturesque scene and recognised the aesthetic value of the variety and contrast of the scene over the course of the day.

Shaw's patience heightened his aesthetic sensibility and awakened reflection on the resemblance of the travellers' journey to the journey through life. His ship travelling through tropical waters exemplified the unity of art and nature, of "man in his voyage through the wide waters in her immediate connection with heaven and earth".[15] The picturesque nature of the scene was contained in the unity and harmony of the ship gliding smoothly through the sea,

> She is comparable to nothing else in the world besides, because there is nothing in the world of art more beautiful than herself when moving in her native element. When sailing, she seems to be the connecting link between the firmament and the waters, the point of union between earth and heaven, for her masts seem to pierce the very sky, while her hull is gracefully ploughing the main. In the dock she is crippled, in the river she is asleep, on the ocean she is rocked and perfectly awake, but in the trades she is in her element, a proud monument of art alone in the wide world, surrounded by the glorious works of nature. "All nature is but art unknown to thee." Is she not emblematic of man in his voyage through the wide waters in her immediate connection with heaven and earth? – and what a perfect specimen of art she is to be in perfect keeping and harmony with those glorious scenes of tropical latitudes.[16]

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[13] Shaw, *A Gallop to the Antipodes*, p.33
[14] *Ibid*.
[15] *Ibid* , pp.32-33.
[16] *Ibid* , p.32.

In this setting art and nature were in perfect harmony. Here art, in the form of the ship sailing in Nature's sea, was tested and withstood the discerning eye of the traveller in search of the picturesque. Shaw believed:

> Art is never so fine as when it will bear the inspection of the critical eye in these wonderful regions, where every imperfection and wrinkle, and want of symmetry, have to stand in the centre of a world of perfection, lit up by the glorious rays of the sun, bounded by the brilliant heavens above, and below by the sparkling and dancing waves of the ocean.[17]

However at times travellers accentuated the awesome power of nature over humanity. The sublime nature of some scenes was awe-inspiring and provided strength and fortitude to the picturesque traveller. Shaw recounted the emotive response to the development of a storm at sea:

> A dark black cloud rapidly advanced towards us, underneath which the sky was as clear and serene as the sunset of the tropics, while the lightning was playing fearfully on the margin of the black cloud at the time when all was serene and cloudless, presenting a scene of uncommon splendour and sublimity. It was a fearful sight, not so much from the appearance of the thing as from what was likely to follow, having at the time an unusual press of canvass[sic] exposed.[18]

He captured the eerie calm before the storm, the heightened excitement of the observer and the alarm aroused by the helplessness of a ship at sea.

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, descriptions such as the prospect from elevated ground conjured up an emotive response as the traveller could reflect upon the past and predict the future.[19] Mountain scenery aroused romantic sentiment such as that visible in Fox's description and illustration of the Blue Mountains:

> These mountains, so named because of their intense blue colour when seen at a distance, though not lofty, are grandly picturesque. From the top ridge at various points little waterfalls leap down from one to two thousand feet. Sometimes a great, sheer, cliff face, fifteen hundred feet high, stretches for miles flanking rugged valleys of great beauty. World travellers remark that the Blue Mountains have a greater air of wildness and primeval savagery than any other mountain range.[20]

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[17] *Ibid* , pp.32-33.
[18] *Ibid* , p.42.
[19] Julia Horne, "Travelling Through the Romantic Landscapes of the Blue Mountains", p.86. See *Chapter 5 "Scenes of surpassing beauty": Aesthetic appreciation of landscape in travel literature 1813-1850.*
[20] Spence and Fox, *Australia*, pp.115-116.

Fox's description reflected the romantic sentiment of Governor Macquarie's account of the Blue Mountains nearly one hundred years earlier when he recorded "a view is obtained particularly beautiful and grand. Mountains rising beyond mountains, with stupendous masses of rock in the foreground, here strike the eye with admiration and astonishment".[21] It was the untamed and disorderly aspects of nature that revealed an ancient and savage past which Fox and other visitors found appealing – the feeling of discovering a land in the state of nature. (Illustration 41)

In his account of his journey to the Victorian goldfields published in 1862, Henry Brown recreated the emotion of the moment when a scene was first viewed from high ground. It had been an arduous journey to reach the summit of the hill, near Bendigo, often through difficult country, but the view from the peak made the difficulties of the journey fade into the background. Brown's description of the scene captured his emotional response to the scene before him,

> So when we turned round, after having ascended to the pinnacle of the hill, nothing had really prepared me for the magnificent bold expanse of country that was spread out before me. Could this be the land over which I had toiled so wearily! The bad roads, more, and difficult crossings, had all vanished out of sight, and in their place, as far as the eye could reach, there were wooded heights and peaceful valleys. The sun shone brilliantly, and the purity of the atmosphere gave a clearness and a beauty to the view, over a great range of country, but beyond the tranquilizing power that nature, in its vastness, always has over the human mind, there was nothing to touch either the heart or the imagination; the sombre dull foliage gave the scene a heaviness, which the want of life and animation greatly increased, and the longer the gaze was continued, still sadder became the feelings.[22]

Brown's description conveyed the changes in the response of the observer, from the initial elation on reaching the summit and viewing the landscape through which they had just passed, through to the growing apprehension of the silent, monotonous landscape with its dense and dark vegetation which foreboded further difficulties. Demonstrating the romantic's love of metaphor and metamorphosis, Brown's harrowing journey to the goldfields was likened by one of his travelling companions to the journey through life:

> it is ever so in life, we fight and struggle onward to some little eminence, and during the contest, old age surprises us, and when we turn round and gaze over

[21] "Government and General Order", in J.A. Richards (ed.), *Blaxland - Lawson – Wentworth, 1813* cited in Horne, "Travelling Through the Romantic Landscapes of the Blue Mountains", p.94.
[22] Brown, *Victoria as I found it*, p.131.

Illustration 41

Blue Mountains



Source: Percy F.S. Spence & Frank Fox, *Australia*, Adam and Charles Black, London, 1910, between p.36 and 37.

> the past, we forget the roughness of the road, and only see the picturesque and beautiful country in which the weary fight was fought.[23]

While the landscape was frequently claimed using emotive terms, travel writers also noted another romantic preference for the grotesque, mysterious and supernatural. The use of the word "weird" suggested that the scenery had a strange and supernatural cast. Mark Twain was fascinated by the Australian landscape, which was unusual and surprising to him. He considered:

> To my mind the exterior aspects and character of Australia are fascinating things to look at and think about, they are so strange, so weird, so new, so uncommon-place, such a startling and interesting contrast to the other sections of the planet, the sections that are known to us all, familiar to us all.[24]

It was the aspects of the landscape that were exotic that captured Twain's attention, particularly the differences in climate and landscape between the seacoast and the inland regions. Rev. Dale listed the "'weird' scenery" as one of the distinctive aspects of Australian travel.[25]

The use of "weird" could also evoke the uncanny, mysterious character of the environment, arousing an emotive response reminiscent of romanticism. Fox contended that: "To the casual observer the Australian bush is melancholy, even repelling. It is permeated, according to a local poet, with an air of "weird expectancy"."[26] However, he continued, a greater understanding of the Australian environment allowed the alluring nature of the "savage beauty of the forests" to be revealed to the observer. This attraction to the bush was sensual and Fox demonstrated its appeal by the inclusion of Howard Carr's ode to the Australian forest. In Carr's poetic description Nature was personified and the aesthete's relationship with the Australian bush likened to a sexual encounter:

> See the swelling breasts of the gums,
> Hearts panting for the Invisible above, tugging at their chains;
> Immortal longing in those wistful shapes,
> …
> Shy, virginal, mysterious, the Bush's lov'liness is but for her true lover:

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[23] *Ibid* , p.132.
[24] Twain, *Following the Equator*, p.118.
[25] Dale, *Impressions of Australia*, p.3.
[26] Spence and Fox, *Australia,* p.108.

> For him the veil is drawn aside, and the couch made ready:[27]

It was not conquest of Nature but a mutually satisfying relationship. It was only the aesthete, spiritually at one with nature, who could appreciate the bush and to whom the Bush would respond and receive "her true lover flowing with tenderness".[28]

In true romantic style, Australian scenery stirred feelings of solitude and melancholy. For example, Florence and Rosamond Hill found solitude in travelling home at sunset. The landscape was bathed in a "rich flood of mellow light" which had a calming effect on the travellers.[29] For Marianne North, riding through a forest of bunya pines aroused feelings of seclusion that allowed contemplation of the majesty of the trees and their utilisation by Aborigines.[30] Often the monotony of landscape created a melancholy mood in the account. Ellen Clacy's comments conveyed the effect of the landscape upon the mood of travellers. She described the scenery passed on their difficult journey to Melbourne during the Victorian gold rush era:

> "And is *this* the beautiful scenery of Australia?" was my first melancholy reflection. Mud and swamp – swamp and mud – relieved here and there by some few trees which looked as starved and miserable as ourselves. The cattle we passed appeared in a wretched condition, and the human beings on the road seemed all to belong to one family, so truly Vandemonian was the cast of their countenances.[31]

In this instance Clacy found all elements of the landscape depressing. The traveller Gilbert Parker considered that the "sadness of Australian scenery" in the hot, dry outback stimulated feelings of despondency, but he was not completely damning of the environment. In a very positive manner, he declared that "over this gloomy area hundreds of thousands of sheep were depasturing and doing well".[32]

Some travellers featured the supernatural and the divine in their description of the landscape. They saw the religious significance of the environment; an environment that

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[27] *Ibid* , pp.109-110.
[28] *Ibid*.
[29] R. & F. Hill, *What we saw in Australia*, p.105.
[30] North, *Recollections of a Happy Life*, Vol.2, p.114.
[31] Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold Diggings*, p.17.
[32] Parker, *Round the Compass*, pp.17-18

was created by God for human use. Shaw quoted passages from poets including Milton to emphasise God's power as creator. From Milton he quoted:

> "These are thy glorious works, Parent of Good;
> Thine this universal frame; that sitt'st above
> These heavens - to us invisible, or dimly seen ; yet these
> Declare – declare thy goodness beyond thought -
> Thy power divine."[33]

Appreciation of the landscape was bound up in its connection to God; it resonated with the glory of God and his "excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love".[34] In some travellers there was awareness of the tension between Nature as God's creation and improved Nature. James Froude wrote:

> We had been passed through Purgatory in the morning that we might enjoy Paradise afterwards – literally Paradise – for Paradise means Park, and here was a park worth the name. I have already expressed my admiration of the Australian gardens, but this at Ballarat excelled them all.[35]

The hot environment of the Victorian goldfields was likened by Froude to Purgatory. It was the improved parts of Ballarat, the botanical garden, which was considered Paradise, a place where complete contentment and happiness could be obtained.

Progress and the appreciation of landscape

Some environmental commentators, such as Williams Lines, have viewed the pursuit of progress in Australia as single-minded and unappreciative of the environment.[36] However, analysis of travel writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reveals a more complex aesthetic appreciation of the environment, its beauty and potential. Environmental appreciation was often pragmatic but drew upon conventions of the picturesque. Travel writers appreciated land in its natural and developed states, as they considered it provided the ideal ground for the development of a society that would contribute to the ongoing success of the British Empire.

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[33] Imperfect quote from John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book V, cited in Shaw, *A Gallop to the Antipodes*, p.36.
[34] Jonathon Edwards, cited in Shaw, *A Gallop to the Antipodes*, p.37.
[35] Froude, *Oceana*, pp.112-113.
[36] William Lines, *Taming the Great South Land: A History of the Conquest of Nature in Australia*, North Sydney, 1991, pp.110-112.

Often travel writers explained progress in Australia by making comparisons with familiar landscape settings in their homeland. Such descriptions demonstrated the connection between the picturesque aesthetic and the idea of progress. Florence and Rosamond Hill described an afternoon's ride through a rural setting near Poltalloch:

> In the afternoon we had a delightful drive through the paddocks, over the luxuriant grass, every now and then sighting mobs of fine cattle, looking perfectly at their ease as they grazed or reclined on the rich sward. With the lake on one side, and low green hills dotted with shea-oak on the other, we could have fancied ourselves driving through an English park.[37]

Nature in Australia had been improved through pastoralism. The rural scenes that unfolded on Davitt's railway journey from Adelaide to Broken Hill prompted him to think of his native Ireland. In his description of the Australian landscape, agriculture and domesticity denoted progress. The picturesque vistas he described were reminiscent of a rural Irish setting, complete with brush fencing:

> Many flourishing orchards are seen alongside of rough-built but comfortable looking cottages. Orange and olive trees abound, but almost all kinds of fruit are found to thrive under the congenial conditions of soil and climate which prevail. Flowers are seen round almost every dwelling, adding their brightness and charm to a picture of "peace and plenty" such as passes before the traveller's eyes in the railway journey over these plains.[38]

The abundance that Nature provided in Australia was affirmation of British progress. By linking signs of Nature's abundance to the picturesque in their descriptions travel writers affirmed British progress as beneficial and non-destructive.

Occasionally, progress was seen as sanctioned by God. James Froude described a roadside hotel near Ballarat where the emigrants were "'singing the Lord's song in a strange land'". His picturesque composition of the scene before him contained the elements of English rustic scenes:

> We stopped for a few minutes at a roadside hotel, near the end of the embankment, to rest our horses. It was tidily kept and picturesquely situated. The little wicket gate was open. I strayed in and found myself in the garden of an English cottage, among cabbage-roses, pinks, sweet-williams, white phlox, columbines, white lilies and orange, syringas, laburnums, lilacs. Beneath the railings were beds of violet and periwinkle, and on a wall a monthly rose was

[37] R. & F. Hill, *What we saw in Australia*, p.105.
[38] Davitt, *Life and Progress*, p.62.

> intertwining with jessamine and honeysuckle. The emigrants who had made their home there had brought with them seeds and cuttings from the old home.[39]

Froude concentrated on those aspects of the scene that were distinctively English; the English flowers and the cottage with its "wicket gate". By focusing on these aspects of the scene he implicitly celebrated the successful transplantation of progress in a British form in Australia, a position that anticipated a promising future for Australia generally.

R.H. Horne in *Australian Facts and Prospects*, published in 1859, devoted a chapter to the "Rise and Progress of Victoria". Horne asserted that Victoria had progressed rapidly from "seven years ago a sheep-walk, and now exporting to the mother-country seventeen or eighteen millions of gold and other produce per annum."[40] For him progress was a natural law that determined the advancement of Europeans but not of Aborigines and other non-Europeans. There was an appreciation of land in its natural state in his words. Nature, he considered, provided the "progressive man" with an environment to be utilised in the development of civil society.[41] He anticipated the course of societal development in Australia, reflecting that:

> Before his footsteps, the savage desert of sand, of stones, or marsh and bog, of grim forest, of rank luxuriance, or of choking weeds, becomes a station, and a farm, a homestead, a smiling pasture, where order reigns, and where the unbroken silence, which once menaced the imagination of the lost man with famine and fever and delirious death, now only suggests the tranquillity of peace and of plenty…. The absolute facts are before us in yonder homestead, cleared, built up, fenced about, fashioned out of timber, and from trees felled by the owner's unfailing arms, at the cost of many pounds of sweat, and many a broken axe – his house, his trenches, his yard, his garden, his paddock, and his crops all smiling – the solid product of the understanding, of sound common sense, and man's irresistible hand.[42]

Regardless of the type of environment, progress was achieved through hard work and perseverance: "Still he advances, and, finding at length some directing watercourse, or shepherd's hut, he lives to dig for gold, and build a thriving house. But these, though the first, are the smallest of the conquests of the progressive man of Victoria."[43] Horne

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[39] Froude, *Oceana*, pp.111-112
[40] Horne, *Australian Facts and Prospects*, p.168.
[41] *Ibid*., pp.170-171.
[42] *Ibid.*, pp.170-172.
[43] *Ibid*., pp.170-171.

appreciated how the land was developed and looked forward to greater advancements still to come.

Some travellers accentuated the theme of progress as the development of civilisation out of the wilderness. Canadian traveller Gilbert Parker compared the natural landscape with that arising from the construction of the railway network in Queensland. The fertile, tropical vegetation near Cairns was indicative of land in its natural state, but it was the railway that would bring civilisation.

> It is, after all, a relief to turn from the full ripeness of the tropic hills and valleys to the might of civilisation beside it – to the iron girders and the huge hickory piles, to the pick and the shovel, and the belt of steel, which is the path of civilisation.[44]

In their descriptions of the landscape travel writers intertwined progress and descriptions of the natural and cultivated landscape to convey not exploitation, but the naturalness of the process of development.

However, travellers were aware of the tension created by combining what might be considered incompatible elements. Gilbert Parker noted that, "while man's ingenuity held you on one hand, Nature, in sumptuous attire, brooded over you on the other."[45] His aesthetic sensitivity to picturesque landscape was evident in his appreciation of the beauty, abundance and vigour of the north Queensland rainforest landscape described on his journey from Cairns to Herberton:

> The wild banana lifted up its wide fronds twenty-five feet in the air; the fig-tree shot down innumerable roots from a hundred feet into the earth, making for itself palisades of strength, and buttresses like wings to a majestic stage in a forest of Arden. The wild pumpkin trailed its yellow blossoms in the wealth of grass; the pools along the way were panoplied with glorious water-lilies; and ferns rivalled the pawpaw and the slender palm in height. The fruit hung thick upon some pawpaw trees, but, while mouths watered, tongues could not taste; there was not time. And what fruits they are! One has not tasted the best that Nature gives till a breakfast has been made off the grenadilla,[sic] a bulky elder brother of the passion-fruit; or the pawpaw, a direct relative of the musk-melon. The prettiest thing that one can see is the palm – as straight, yet as willowy as a lily – reaching up to touch the pale green leaves of the acacia-cedar; or to pay its compliments to the sound and royal kauri pine.[46]

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[44] Parker, *Round the Compass*, p.246.
[45] *Ibid.*, p.243.
[46] *Ibid.*, pp.241-242.

He used analogies of defensive and supportive structures to convey the strength of vegetation growth and descriptive words that heightened the vitality and fecundity of the natural landscape. His appreciation of the natural beauty of the landscape coexisted with pleasure in landscapes that, while they portended the destruction of natural beauty, explicitly demonstrated the genius of progress:

> And while you are filled with the pleasure of it, there will startle your senses a view of the ocean miles away; and, between you and it, the camps of navvies, the noiseless villages, and the thick swamp where the death-adder and black snake hide, and where the fire-fly flashes in the gloom; then, from such sensations you will be roused by the agonised engines and the grinding of the wheels upon the rails. You are making a great curve now called the Horseshoe Bend.[47]

The reality of progress was the railway that carried development to the interior of Australia.

While nature was yielding to the advance of the railway in north Queensland, Vivienne concentrated on those aspects of the natural world that contributed to abundant yields in Western Australia. At Newcastle on the Avon River she observed:

> It is a splendid farming district; the soil will grow almost everything. I saw some magnificent oranges and vegetables. The cattle are as fat and sleek as can be. Rain had been falling when I was there, and now the sun was shining and a beautiful rainbow arose over the hills. The pink everlasting flowers – acres of them – surrounded by the green grass, the pretty winding river, the white bridges and long good roads made up a very pleasant picture. There is plenty of good land around here waiting to be taken up and utilised.[48]

There was appreciation in her words; the fertile soil and rainfall had resulted in productive agriculture and pastoralism. However the natural productions of the landscape were not forgotten. Vivienne sets the progress of the landscape within a natural setting of lush grass, acres of native flowers and a scenic river. Her picturesque description not only confirmed European ability to change the landscape through the introduction of exotic plants and animals but also demonstrated the harmonious relationship between Nature and progress and confirmed the success of the colonising process in Western Australia.

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[47] *Ibid.*, pp.241-242.
[48] Vivienne, *Travels in Western Australia*, p.86.

Parks and gardens replicating the formal European styles were not only products of aesthetic taste but were also signs of British imperialism as they confirmed British ability to control and change the natural landscape. Froude noted that the beauty of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens was the work of renowned Prussian horticulturalist, Dr Richard Schomburgk whose gardening philosophy stemmed from Goethe in "taking care of the beautiful and leaving the useful to take care of itself"[49] Schomburgk had an international reputation as a scientist. He had trained as a gardener in Germany but had been a member of a joint British/Prussian scientific expedition to British Guyana before emigrating to Australia in 1849. On his arrival he engaged in farming prior to becoming director of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens in 1865.[50] When Froude visited the Gardens in the early 1880s he observed that they contained ornamental plants rather than fruit trees. The gardens contained plants from all over the world:

> The flowers with which we are familiar as exotics in our forcing-houses luxuriate as in their natural home. The oleander towers and spreads in pale pink glory. The crimson hibiscus glows among the bananas; passion-flowers – blue, purple, and scarlet – hang in careless festoons among the branches. The air is loaded with perfume from datura, orange-flowers, stephanotis, and endless varieties of jessamine. Araucarias, acacia-trees, Norfolk pines, tulip-trees, &c., are dispersed over the lawns, grouped, not as science would order them, but as they would be arranged by a landscape painter.[51]

Whilst he considered the picturesque nature of the scene, he also contemplated the link between aesthetics and progress:

> Whether it be the genius of the country, or some development of the sense of beauty from the general easiness of life, or the readiness of soil and climate to respond to exertion, certain it is that the public gardens in the Australian towns are the loveliest in the world, and that no cost is spared in securing the services of the most eminent horticulturists. [52]

Froude appreciated the Australian environment, its physical character and responsiveness to hard work and he was assured of the success of horticulture in the Australian colonies.

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[49] Froude, *Oceana*, p.75.
[50] Richard Aitken, David Jones & Colleen Morris, *Adelaide Botanic Garden Conservation Study*, p.25, http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/botanicgardens
[51] Froude, *Oceana*, p.76.
[52] *Ibid.*, p.75

For Marianne North, the best example of imperial progress in Australia was the urban environment of Melbourne:

> Melbourne is a noble city, and its gardens are even more beautiful than those of Sydney, with greater variety of ground, and lovely views over the river. The distant city towers make an imposing group from all sides, standing as they do on the top of an isolated ridge of high ground. Fine atmospheric effects are produced, as in London, by the abundance of smoke which hovers over the busy town. It is by far the most real city in Australia, and the streets are as full of quickly-moving people as those of London. The dracaenas in the many gardens about it were loaded with great flower-branches, and the ti-tree was everywhere gay with bloom, reminding one of the May bushes at home. [53]

Signs of the industrial progress of the city; the smoke and the hustle and bustle of the streets, are set amidst the more natural setting of gardens and the river and suggest the spontaneity of combining indications of progress with aesthetic appreciation.

As a result of the gold rushes of the 1850s Victoria's progress was rapid in comparison to the other colonies. Travellers were preoccupied with the exceptional character of this advancement. Their comments are particularly noticeable in the travel accounts of the late nineteenth century. Statistics related to the colony's progress could even have an aesthetic value as Charles Dilke noted. He considered these comparable with creative endeavour and the attainment of perfection in the world of art:

> The exact economical position that Victoria occupies is easily ascertained, for her statistics are the most perfect in the world; the arrangement is a piece of exquisite mosaic. The brilliant statistician who fills the post of Registrar-General to the colony had the immense advantage of starting clear of all tradition, unhampered and unclogged; and, as the Governments of the other colonies have for the last few years taken Victoria for model, a gradual approach is being made to uniformity of system. It was not too soon, for British colonial statistics are apt to be confusing. … Statistics are generally considered dull enough, but the statistics of these young countries are figure-poems. Tables that in England contrast jute with hemp, or this man with that man, here compare the profits of manufactures with those of agriculture, or pit against each other the powers of race and race.[54]

Implicit in Dilke's image of Victoria was a link between aesthetics and progress. Aesthetic appreciation extended beyond the appreciation of landscape into the realm of physical signs of economic progress that he compared to a figure-poem. Such an association was apt as a figure-poem was constructed in a printed form that suggested

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[53] North, *Recollections of a Happy Life*, Vol.2, p.141.
[54] Dilke, *Greater Britain*, 1866, p.98.

its theme and reinforced its sentiment.[55] In this case, Dilke considered that the arrangement of the statistics was poetic and appealed to the reader's aesthetic sensibility.

Melbourne was seen as the manifestation of Victoria's rapid advancement. In rejecting criticism of the sprawling development of Melbourne, the Canadian traveller Gilbert Parker described its attraction as that of a "metropolis" which though "expansive and broad-shouldered" was uniform in layout.[56] Melbourne was

> new, powerful, eager, and conscious of a fine commercial strength. Its architecture suggests all that by its very contrasts – by the Parliament buildings, suited to a city of two millions, dwarfing to meanness neighbouring buildings of form consistent with an earlier and more pioneer-like growth. To put wealth and progress and success in ample visible expression, – that is youthful, it is natural, it is Australian.[57]

Parker recognised Melbourne's foremost position, its striking architecture reflecting its current status and advancement. He made a comparison of Australian cities and defined their essence:

> Sydney gives the impression of beauty, of soundness, and of home; Melbourne of progress, of courage, of success, and of expansion; Adelaide of comfort, of well-to-do-ness, and something akin to godliness, – for it is gloriously clean, – and of home also. Brisbane is new, brawny, uneven, and half finished.[58]

By the turn of the century other colonies were being lauded as progressive. Mae Vivienne in her account of Western Australia published in 1901, catalogued the economic progress of that state. Her account was celebratory of the progress made in Western Australia and predicted a promising future. She related:

> Our young country has a chance of great and lasting prosperity for population increases and new people settle on the rich lands to cultivate them. Mr Throssell says: "We look forward to seeing our harbour filled with ships laden with not only gold, timber, pearl shell and wool products of the colony, but also with golden grain, wine and fruit." Our Agent-General in London, Sir E. Wittenoom, recently said at a dinner in Paris: "There is something fascinating in the phenomena of the rise of this new colony of Western Australia, which ten years ago, with an area equal to nearly half that of Europe, had only the population of the Isle of Man. Gold reefs were discovered, and the population advanced with great strides in less than four years from 50,000 to 186,000."[59]

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[55] "Pattern poetry." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 2005. Encyclopaedia Britannica Online. <http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article-9058751>

[56] Parker, *Round the Compass in Australia*, pp.101-102.

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] *Ibid.*, p.100.

[59] Vivienne, *Travels in Western Australia*, p.91.

She celebrated Western Australia's rapid progress and the extent and potential of its resources. Her prediction of Western Australia's future, based upon further immigration and the expansion of primary and secondary industries, implicitly reinforced the imperial mission to encourage emigration and thereby relieve British social and economic problems.

A utilitarian approach

In their celebration of Australia's economic progress in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, travel writers often adopted a utilitarian approach to the environment. While they appreciated the beauty of land in its natural state they also considered that the land and its resources were there to use. However by the 1880s travel writers observed environmental problems occurring as a result of settlers' desire to make their new home more like their old. Nevertheless they did not necessarily see these as having long term detrimental effects. Indeed in their rhetoric of environment and progress they considered the opportunistic success of exotic species as confirmation of the fertility of the land and a natural process – a sign of God's handiwork or Darwin's natural selection at work.

In their cultural baggage settlers brought long-established methods of agriculture and pastoralism which they used in their approach to their new land. Land was cleared and European crops planted, weeds subsequently introduced and cloven-hoofed animals pastured. These were established at the expense of the distinctive and different natural species of Australia. As Thomas Dunlap writes, settlers "have understood their land through their European culture, but in each country and era they have had to apply its concepts to their own situation".[60] In time, farming and pastoral practices adapted to the new environment but the Australian environment had changed and it was not surprising that in some parts of Australia settlement was unsuccessful. Introduced plants and animals did not always thrive as droughts, floods, and the natural environment often took their toll. Anthony Trollope noted that squatters in Queensland

[60] Thomas Dunlap, "Ecology and environmentalism in Anglo settler colonies", in T. Griffith and L. Robin (eds), *Ecology and Empire: Environmental History of Settler Societies*, Carlton South, 1997, p.76.

not only faced economic difficulties, but also were confronted with problems stemming from the natural environment, including

> drought, floods, footrot among their flocks, wild dogs, - or dingoes, - which prey upon their lambs and flurry their sheep, grass-seed which injures the wool, and works its way through the skins of the lambs, utterly destroying the poor little bleaters, grass that is overgrown and rank, grass that won't grow, poisonous grass, too much grass, no grass, - and then that worst of all miseries, panic in the wool trade.[61]

At no stage did Trollope consider the unsuitability of placing European sheep in a different climate and physical environment. Rather, through this omission he regarded the introduction of pastoralism as a natural process of European settlement. In his narrative there was no recognition that pastoralism had destroyed the natural vegetation and allowed aggressive native spear grass to proliferate which caused problems for the sheep.[62]

In the mid-1880s overstocking during periods of drought was of particular interest to the New South Wales Royal Commission on Water Conservation as it caused "the unutterable anguish of the many thousands of animals, which in a period of drought perish by slow degrees from hunger and thirst".[63] The commission was concerned with stock losses and the economic implications for pastoralists. The cyclic nature of drought and flood in Australia absorbed Gilbert Parker who spent some time travelling with the commission. After the prologue to his account, Parker devoted the next two chapters to Glimpses of Australian Life, one to Australia in time of flood and the other to drought. His account emphasised not only the dichotomous nature of the Australian environment but also Parker's aesthetic sensitivity due to his often-poetic description of the landscape. Parker considered inland Australia was characterised by an endless cycle of drought and flood, "a land of tested and perilous uncertainty" [64] Inland Australia was "a basin, not a plateau, a vast and arid sponge which drinks up moisture at a marvellous rate, and still is thirsty".[65] The hardship of drought was imprinted on the faces of rural women, the "burning land soon tak[ing] the bloom from the cheek and the light from

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[61] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand,* p.140.
[62] Eric Rolls, "The Nature of Australia" in Griffith and Robin (eds), *Ecology and Empire,* pp.39-40.
[63] Tim Bonyhady, *The Colonial Earth,* Carlton South, 2000, p.284.
[64] Parker, *Round the Compass,* p.5
[65] *Ibid.*

the eye".[66] Its influence on the rural inhabitants was combined with the visual impact of stock dying a lingering death:

> See, as the coach passes into a paddock, these eyeless lambs. Fallen through starvation and weakness, the ravenous crows have picked out their eyes. They strew our path, and far to where the plain becomes one leaden grey are white spots innumerable – dead and dying sheep. It is numb despondency, over which the carrion-crow cries a hateful requiem.[67]

Parker considered the cycle of drought and flood a natural process and did not question the land's ability to sustain pastoralism. He evoked melancholy through his descriptions of the flood and drought stricken landscape but he also emphasised the inhabitants' enduring and optimistic nature acquired from an acceptance of the cycle of drought and flood as a natural process in subduing the land. On a positive note he concluded Chapter II:

> Here and there loss would be occasioned by the flood, but the country would be a paradise for cattle for two seasons, the wool could be got to the coast, and the hearts of the people, as the land itself, would be refreshed.[68]

Early settlement involved the widespread clearing of native vegetation and trees from the land.[69] Colonists and colonial authorities considered that this was necessary for the landscape to progress from a state of savagery to pastoralism, agriculture and ultimately to commerce.[70] From the1850s enlightened individuals began to question such actions. While the British traveller R.H. Horne asserted the aesthetic and economic benefits of transplanting English trees to Australian conditions, he warned against wholesale land clearing. He declared that settlers "never think of planting trees for the shade and influence".[71] Horne considered that "The indiscriminate and wholesale clearing of timber may be attended with very bad consequences."[72] These consequences related to evidence from the *New York Tribune* which suggested that felling trees had an adverse affect on humidity and the amount of rainfall received. The relationship between deforestation and climate was the topic of scientific speculation during the nineteenth century. In Australia the debate peaked in the 1860s with comments by the Government

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[66] *Ibid.*, pp.45-46.
[67] *Ibid*, p.41.
[68] *Ibid.*, p.34
[69] Thomas R Dunlap, *Nature and the English Diaspora: Environment and History in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand*, Cambridge, 1999, p.49.
[70] Bonyhady, *The Colonial Earth*, pp.79-90.
[71] Horne, *Australian Facts and Prospects*, 1859, p.186-188.
[72] *Ibid.*

Astronomer, Robert Ellery and the Government Botanist, Baron Von Mueller, that supported the retention and planting of trees.[73] In 1864, George Perkins Marsh published in New York and London *Man and Nature*, which supported the theory and contributed to the establishment in Australia of State Forests.[74]

While Horne was against the indiscriminate destruction of the natural environment, he was not averse to the introduction of exotic species. His imperial rhetoric was utilitarian; the native environment was there to be utilised but on a needs basis only. By the mid-nineteenth century this view had gained a following in Australia in elite government and scientific circles. In the 1830s when Thomas Shepherd had lectured in Australia on the application of British landscape gardening to the Australian environment, an appreciation of how the natural vegetation could be moulded to create park-like scenery was already apparent.[75] Shepherd explained that

> in place of cutting down our splendid forests right forward without distinction, we have only to thin out, and tastefully arrange and dispose them, to produce the most pleasing effects. The country could by this means, at a very small cost, and with less labour than is required by the indiscriminate destruction of our native trees, present an exterior to the eye of the stranger, and the resident in the Colony, such as no other country in the World I believe could furnish.[76]

Introduced species flourished in Australia, brought in by settlers and Acclimatisation Societies to overcome feeling of alienation and to satisfy the interests of amateur and discriminating naturalists. Thomas Dunlap states that acclimatisers did not consider the ecological consequences of their actions but

> focused on species, which they saw as things living on the neutral backdrop of the land. Within a wide range of climate, plants and animals would adapt – in the word of the day, acclimate – and take their place as part of the country.[77]

By the 1880s this vision had come into question and some travel writers demonstrated concern at the consequences of introducing exotic species into unfamiliar surroundings. Many species thrived in the Australian climate and overwhelmed native species. However the emotional comfort obtained from introducing familiar plants and animals

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[73] Bonyhady, *The Colonial Earth*, pp.164.
[74] *Ibid.*, pp.165.
[75] Thomas Shepherd cited in V. Crittenden, *A Shrub in the Landscape of Fame: Thomas Shepherd Australian Landscape Gardener and Nurseryman*, Canberra, 1992, pp.154-155.
[76] *Ibid.*, p.152.
[77] Dunlap, *Nature and the English Diaspora*, p.55.

did not outweigh the economic costs of their introduction. Reverend Clark wrote in his account published in 1894:

> Many of these brilliant flowering plants are indigenous and others have been imported, such as the gorgeous golden gorze, and the equally golden cape-weed, which, however beautiful it looks when the sun shines upon it of a bright spring morning, is a pest as utterly detested by the farmers as the white weed of our northern meadows. By the way, when will people learn to experiment less recklessly with the products of other zones? When will we learn the lesson, that for the most part, the trees and plants and birds and insects which God has settled in the land, are best adapted to that country, and that we are running great risks when we try to naturalize other citizens that are foreign to these climes?[78]

Clark compared the introduction of these species with the experience of their introduction in America. As a Christian he believed that God had created all things and had placed them in a specific environment for a particular reason and they should not be interfered with by acclimatisation to other places. He contended that the sparrow was a pest, a "chattering, mischievous, pugnacious little bird…spreading his ravages through two great continents."[79] European domesticated animals taken to the colonies of settlement as "food, leather, fiber, power and wealth" adjusted rapidly to their new surroundings with the development of large populations in a short period of time.[80] According to contemporary theories of natural selection, their survival and success meant the demise of Australian native species. Anthony Trollope lamented:

> It is strange but undoubtedly the fact that animals brought from Europe and acclimatized in Australia, are already thrusting out the aboriginal creatures of the country.[81]

He noted that the numbers of emus and kangaroos were being reduced by the spread of sheep throughout New South Wales. While noting the spread of European bees and sparrows, Trollope perceived the rabbit was the greatest pest affecting pastoralism. Rabbits had been introduced into southeast Australia in 1859, had reproduced at an alarming rate and had spread across much of southern Australia by the 1880s.[82] Trollope observed that:

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[78] Clark, *Our Journey around the World*, pp.104-106.
[79] *Ibid.*, p.105.
[80] Alfred W. Crosby, "Ecological Imperialism: The Overseas Migration of Western Europeans as a Biological Phenomenon", in Donald Worster (ed.), *The Ends of the Earth: Perspectives of Modern Environmental History*, Cambridge, 1988, p.109.
[81] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, p.211.
[82] Bonyhady, *The Colonial Earth*, pp.290-291. Crosby, "Ecological Imperialism", p.110.

> The rabbit has become so great a plague in Victoria and parts of Tasmania that squatters in some localities are spending thousands with the hope of exterminating them.[83]

It was the costliest and most difficult pest to eradicate.[84] Trollope continued: "One gentleman informed me that he himself had expended over £15,000 in subduing the rabbit on his own run."[85] Even with such evidence before him Trollope maintained his imperial rhetoric that the ability of some of these introduced species to thrive in the Australian environment was a sign of "Australian fecundity".[86]

James Froude had some doubts about the extent and numbers of the rabbits in Victoria. Although he admitted that rabbits had multiplied greatly since their introduction and had become a nuisance to farmers, he suggested that the problem was somewhat exaggerated:

> Had their numbers been so vast as has been alleged, had they really been eating the sheep off the pastures, I must and should have seen more of them than I did see. In an open glade of the forest a few miles from Ballarat, there were, perhaps, a hundred of them playing about, a third of these, by the by, being black. One might see as many, however, on a summer evening outside any wood in England where game is preserved. I suppose the Australian farmers want the traditionary reverence for the *feræ naturæ* which are bred for sport. [87]

For Froude the numbers of rabbits he observed while travelling in Australia were not greater than in the English countryside. This fact alone convinced Froude that rabbit numbers in Australia were not out of control. Needless to say in his rhetoric, Froude, like Trollope, considered the Australian environment similar to that of Britain and that the adaptation of rabbits to Australia would follow a similar course to the rabbit in its English environment and that no harm would result.

In his account of a conversation between a traveller and a squatter, Parker recounted the difficulty faced by pastoralists in trying to stop the damage done by rabbits. Government intervention and requirements hindered the squatters' attempts, increasing costs without alleviating the problem. The squatter complained:

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[83] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, p.211.
[84] Libby Robin, "Ecology: A Science of Empire", in Griffith and Robin (eds.), *Ecology and Empire*, pp.70-71.
[85] Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, p.211.
[86] *Ibid*.
[87] Froude, *Oceana*, pp.102-103.

> "As if bad land laws and drought were not sufficient," said Cawdor, "we were sent the rabbits. We wanted to grapple with the difficulty ourselves, each man working away on his own lines, and getting some consideration by reduction of rents or longer tenure. But no. The government, being the landlord, appointed rabbit-inspectors and the elaborate machinery of a trapping system, all of which cost them at the rate of one thousand pounds a day; of which we must pay half and the government half. I spent as much as four thousand pounds a month on my run. Some rabbiters earned fifty pounds a month, trapping. They could drink champagne, while I had to stick to my billy of tea. Plenty of squatters spent a thousand pounds a month for nothing. Trapping could not possibly destroy the rabbits; and eventually the government found that out, that is, after it had spent well up to a million. Now we have come to our original proposition to do what we can to stay this plague by rabbit-fencing, poisoning, and all that. Thank God, the whole of the colonies are not overrun, or there would be a poor outlook. Queensland, by dint of rabbit-fencing, has kept the invaders from New South Wales, and Victoria has not yet been slaughtered badly by them."[88]

Despite the effects of the rabbit plague, Parker, displaying the superiority of a member of the British Empire, concluded to the squatter, "And yet the country prospers".[89]

Conclusion

Travel writers espoused imperial rhetoric about the landscape through their use of contemporary ideologies of aesthetics, progress and science. These theories, placed within the conventions of travel writing, located the landscape within an imperial context. The picturesque aesthetic provided a language for claiming the landscape that demonstrated not only the travel writers' heightened aesthetic sensitivity but also their superiority as observers. In the travel literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries progress was a predominant theme. Travel writers incorporated signs of progress into the picturesque aesthetic as they catalogued the land's resources and the developing state of the colonies. Such exaltation of the progressive nature of the colonies served an imperial purpose by furthering the prestige of empire.

While travel writers praised aspects of the Australian landscape they also noted the results of European settlement. They considered agricultural and pastoral settlement successful, but they also were conscious of the problems that had arisen in the process. Nevertheless, most travel writers were not overly concerned about the destruction of native flora and fauna by introduced species as the successful adaptation of the

[88] Parker, *Round the Compass*, pp.70-71.
[89] *Ibid*., p.71.

newcomers demonstrated the productive nature of the Australian environment. With a mindset of economic progress and nostalgia for an old world environment they encouraged the ongoing use of the land's resources and celebrated the land's fertility and resilience as new species adapted and spread in the new environment of Australia.

Conclusion

> After all is said, it is on ourselves that the future depends. We are passing through a crisis in our national existence, and the wisest cannot say what lies before us. If the English character comes out of the trial true to its old traditions- bold in heart and clear in eye, seeking nothing which is not its own, but resolved to maintain its own with its hand upon its sword – the far-off English dependencies will cling to their old home, and will look up to her and be still proud to belong to her and will seek their own greatness in promoting hers. If, on the contrary (for among the possibilities there is a contrary), the erratic policy is to be continued which for the last few years has been the world's wonder; …then, in ceasing to deserve respect, we shall cease to be respected. The colonies will not purposely desert us, but they will look each to itself, knowing that from us, and from their connection with us, there is nothing more to be hoped for. The cord will wear into a thread, and any accident will break it.
> And so end my observations and reflections on the dream of Sir James Harrington. So will not end, I hope and believe, Oceana.[1]
>
> J.A. Froude, *Oceana*, 1892.

This was how James Froude ended his account of his travels through South Africa, New Zealand, Australia and the United States. Froude was a well-educated middle-class traveller. By the time of his visit to Australia in 1885 he had received acclaim as a historian and author. His account was indicative of how the travellers' views of Australia and Australians were influenced by their background and contemporary concerns. Whilst in Australia Froude was entertained by the governor and feted by the elite of the colonies of Victoria and New South Wales. A prominent concern at the time of his visit was imperial defence and Froude was earnest in his praise of New South Wales Acting Colonial Secretary, William Bede Dalley, in sending a colonial contingent to assist British forces in the Sudan. Froude was an imperialist and perceived this action as a sign of Australia's loyalty to Empire and its integral place in the formation of an imperial federation. In his conclusion to *Oceana* Froude considered the relationship between Britain and her colonies and the future of the British Empire. He was an unabashed propagandist of Empire who endorsed the idea of an imperial federation and Oceana. Froude was explicit in his imperial rhetoric, unlike other travel writers covered in this thesis whose support for the British Empire was more subtle and implied.

This thesis provides an examination of some of the travel literature about Australia published during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Over one hundred works have been analysed covering a period from 1813 to 1914. During this period changes in the form of travel literature can be discerned that corresponded with technological

[1] Froude, *Oceana*, pp.340-341.

developments in the means of travel and in the individual travel writer's background and motivation for travelling. As would be expected there is a noticeable shift from a dominance of exploration literature in the period 1813 to 1850 as Australia was explored and opened up for settlement to one, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, where there was a profusion of travel literature by ordinary travellers who considered Australia's progress since settlement and its future potential.

The literature examined also demonstrates the changes in the literary conventions followed by travel writers. Explorers, like Thomas Mitchell in the early nineteenth century, followed a format set down two hundred year earlier. His published account reflected his field notebook, as his narrative was constructed as a diary of his exploration as it occurred although it was prepared and edited after the journey took place. Late nineteenth and early twentieth century accounts subordinated the traveller's journey to a thematic approach that emphasised elements of Australian life, such as its economic progress and society, rather than accentuating the progress of the traveller's journey. In the 1870s Anthony Trollope, for example, arranged his account under headings related to the six colonies he visited, with chapters in each section on contemporary topics of interest. For example, under the part on Queensland there are chapters on the "Occupation of land", "Gladstone and Rockhampton", "Aboriginals", "Gold", "Squatters and their Troubles", "Darling Downs", "Sugar. Labour from the South Sea Islands", "Government" and "Labour". While the journey was implied, the narrative of events that occurred during the course of the journey from place to place was given less attention. It was the theme that was of importance to travel writers and which they anticipated would be of greater interest to potential readers.

Together with these changes in the form and structure of travel literature there appeared changes in the written style and tone of the texts. In the 1820s and 1830s, Oxley, Stokes and Mitchell voiced a romantic and emotional interpretation of the landscape which was evoked through the use of imagery and metaphor. By the late 1850s the romantic tone of travel literature had begun to wane. It was partially replaced by a pragmatic and utilitarian response to Australia. While metaphor and imagery are still evident, the overall tone of the published accounts was less romantic. The traveller became less prominent as the romantic hero of the narrative unlike the explorer in the earlier part of the nineteenth century.

Nevertheless throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the texts consistently demonstrated how the travel writers' cultural baggage as well as contemporary ideas and concerns influenced their observations. For example, explorers in the early part of the nineteenth century drew upon aesthetic theories to describe the Australian landscape. Such a framework for description placed the unique environment of Australia within British understandings, making it familiar. In the late nineteenth century ideas about race provided travellers with the means to assess the adaptation of the Anglo-Saxon race to their new environment and consider their continuing role in contributing to a strong British Empire.

Theories of race and evolution justified ongoing British dispossession of Aborigines throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. From such an intellectual basis travel writers positioned Aborigines as the lesser other: a primitive people at a lower stage of development. By the latter period of this thesis, Aborigines were marginalised in the travel literature: a dying race who would not survive European settlement. In many cases travellers did not mention Aborigines at all or only in passing. This silence in the travellers' narratives was a subtle form of imperial rhetoric as lack of discussion of Aborigines indirectly legitimated British actions.

The explorers' and travellers' cultural baggage was a medium for dispersing imperial rhetoric to readers. Sometimes explicit but often subtle, the travel writers' imperial rhetoric emphasised Australia's inherent Britishness and manifest loyalty to Britain and conveyed the image of Australia as an important part of a cohesive and progressive British Empire. This image remained in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but the texts revealed an evolving and separate cultural identity although it was one that was built upon British cultural and political traditions. Travellers generally considered imperial loyalty and evolving Australian identity would coexist even after Australia obtained federation and self-determination.

Fundamental to these images of Australia was imperial rhetoric that initially placed the unknown landscape within an established framework of progress, science and aesthetics, and later celebrated the survival of British cultural traditions while acknowledging deviations. Explorers' published accounts were a way of claiming the

land for the empire. Their narratives were infused with images of the land's economic benefits and potential for settlement, which they promoted to their readership subtly through their discourse. Later travel writers emphasised the connection and portrayed the British Empire as unified with Australia as a loyal, successful and prosperous member of that Empire. Even the texts of non-British travel writers, such as the Prussian, Ludwig Leichhardt, the American evangelist Reverend Francis E. Clark and the Canadian Gilbert Parker, contained imperial rhetoric. Indeed most travel writers arrived with prior understanding of Australia's position in the British Empire which they reinforced in their narratives.

In both the published accounts of explorers and those by later travellers, ideology and contemporary issues provided the framework upon which the travel writers built their perceptions of Australia. The travel writers' authority to comment permeated their narratives, validating the observations presented and suggesting and encouraging a supportive response from their readers. Travel writers were not necessarily deliberate propagandists of empire but they almost always carried the imperial agenda in their baggage.

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