An Atlas of a Difficult World


by

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BA (Hons)

This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Western Australia, Department of English, 1998.
This thesis is an account of the *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia* (1886-1888), a publication that was issued in serial form to commemorate the centenary of the European colonisation of Australia.

Chapter one, 'Promises and Premises', outlines the manner in which the *Atlas* came to be produced, and exposes the forms of language by which the makers of the *Atlas* sought to promote their publication.

The second chapter, 'The Neo-Picturesque', situates the *Atlas* within the traditions of picturesque publications, and in particular, the specific kinds of descriptive illustrated works appearing in the late nineteenth century.

'History's Telescope', the third chapter, discusses the representation of history within the *Atlas*, both in terms of the narratives that were drawn upon and in terms of the visual strategies that were pursued in the illustrations.

Where chapter three deals with the representation of history, chapter four, 'Making Life', is a discussion of the means by which the makers of the *Atlas* articulate a present-day world characterised by an insistent colonial modernity.

Chapter five, 'Sight and Light, is concerned with detailing the particularities of vision within the representational world of the *Atlas*. Using descriptions of caves and forests as case-studies, it is argued in this chapter that the makers of the *Atlas* sought to ensure that the world they presented to their readership was fully visible.
Issues of visuality are explored further in chapter six, 'Photographic Friction', where the relationship between illustration and photography in the Atlas is pursued. The possibilities and limitations of photographic reproduction shape the manner in which the Atlas pictures its world.

The final chapter in this study, 'In Conclusion: Pagespace', draws together the previous chapters through a discussion of the illustrations in the Atlas. Specifically, it is argued that the manner of illustration – the way that the pictures are situated in the pages, the techniques of framing, and the devices employed to accentuate the depth of vision – are all indicative of the broader necessity in the Atlas to maintain a relationship of certainty between its world and the means of its representation.
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A Note on the Illustrations

I have felt at times a degree of sympathy with the makers of the *Atlas* in the task of including illustrations. There is more than a hint of irony in the fact that I am often talking about the importance of illustration, while at the same time illustrating this point with illustrations of illustrations. Beyond illustration, I have sought to use the pictures as an independent visual dimension in this thesis. Many of the images have been cropped to include the surrounding letterpress in order that the effect on the printed page is retained. Unless otherwise stated, the numbers in parentheses represent the page number in the *Atlas* from which the illustration derived.

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An earlier version of the material appearing in chapter two appeared
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‘I promised to show you a map you say
but this is a mural
then yes let it be these are small distinctions
where do we see it from is the question.’

Introduction

"Curious" wants some information about the *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia* of which she has 10 volumes.

'I Investigator' Column, Melbourne *Weekly Times*, 6 April, 1983.

I first read the *Atlas* while researching the writings of Ada Cambridge, a popular novelist in late nineteenth-century Australia. The critics and historians I admired were those that engaged with what might be called, for want of a more precise term, the everyday imagination. There was a fascination for me in idle thoughts and, more importantly, in the possibility that taking place behind the most innocuous or banal acts of social living – making a building, reading a newspaper, walking in a park, selling a book – is the ceaseless play of fantasy and internalised stories. I was interested in studying the popular literature of the nineteenth century in Australia, and to this end I had begun to survey this literature (collected into genres such as romance, adventure, and crime) in order that I might start to pace out the thoroughfares of the everyday imagination. Poring over E.M. Miller's bibliographies I noted down those writers with the longest publication lists. Most of the names were unknown to me, yet I sought out and read many of these books, searching for ways in which they might be productively discussed, looking for points of convergence, patterns, distinctions. Wishing to know more about the authors, I looked for biographical information and noted the places in which such writers had published and found in passing that Ada Cambridge had contributed, under her married name of Cross, to a publication called the *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*. It was a large book in three bound volumes and profusely illustrated with engravings. The preface indicated that the work had been published to commemorate the centenary of

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settlement in Australia. It occurred to me that for a work which was calling itself an ‘Atlas’, there did not appear to be many maps. Instead there were chapters detailing the sights and histories of the various Australasian colonies, and other chapters on such topics as geology, flora, fauna, and commerce. The pictures were interspersed ingeniously through its pages. Struck by the grandiose proportions of this publication, as well as its elegance, I began to make some enquiries about the publication. The present study is the result of those enquiries.

The *Atlas* is not an unknown work. Those who have written about the cultural life of nineteenth-century Australia have noted that the making of the *Atlas* was a large scale publishing project in Sydney in the 1880s. Richard White, for instance, registered the appearance of the *Atlas* as one of the signs that during this time there was a shift in the centre of colonial cultural dynamism from Melbourne to Sydney.² Shirley Walker has taken a similar line in an essay published in the *Penguin New Literary History of Australia*.³ Similarly, those who have written about people involved in the *Atlas* have recorded this involvement. In two recent biographies of Ada Cambridge, one mentions briefly her involvement with the *Atlas*, the other does not.⁴ Lurline Stuart’s biography of James Smith notes his work for the *Atlas* but accords it little attention, and when Conor Macleod wrote her husband’s hagiography it was called *Macleod of “The Bulletin”* and not *Macleod of “The Atlas”*.⁵ Partly this is because it was the product of a loose assemblage of individuals, each of which only contributed a small part of the final product. The

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editor, Andrew Garran, was an important journalistic and political figure but his role with the Atlas seems to have been largely executive. It was not the product of any single founding genius, nor was it the definitive publication of any particular person's life. As a result, if the Atlas is discussed critically or historically it is in the form of the passing mention, the sub-plot, or the episode. The Atlas is not a subject in its own right, but an interlude in the narratives of other subjects.

Nevertheless, the sheer number of illustrations in the Atlas have made it a useful source of imagery. When the producers of Australians, 1888 wished to illustrate a discussion by Graeme Davison about the changing role of women in the workforce they selected 'Melbourne Telephone Exchange' (230). Another Atlas illustration, 'Native Troopers Dispersing a Camp' (340) is reproduced in this same publication to elucidate Henry Reynolds' discussion of frontier relations. Likewise, in Beverly Kingston's volume of the Oxford History of Australia, a high proportion of the illustrations are drawn from the Atlas. The pictures in the Atlas lend themselves to this kind of usage. The elegant and well-executed lines of the engravings possess a certain clarity of purpose. They seem peculiarly appropriate to the conveyance of historical messages and social trends. After all, they were designed to be illustrations – not just to depict, but to show. Yet while these pictures may well be useful as a ready-made pool of images of 1880s Australasia, in turning the illustrations into an iconic currency what is lost is the scheme and rationale that brought these images into being. The present study

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seeks to take a more critical approach to the illustrations and the writings in the *Atlas*.

The high quality of the pictures in the *Atlas* and their proximity to the emergence of the new art paradigm known as the Heidelberg School has brought the publication some prominence within the narratives of Australian art history. Since William Moore, art historians have found in the *Atlas* project an important focal point for those artists who are credited with the development of Australian art.\(^8\) In terms of the present study, however, the limitation of works based on this premise is that the *Atlas* only comes into view in relation to other and apparently more momentous movements in the history of art. The most comprehensive of these art-historical studies has been Leigh Astbury’s *The City Bushmen*.\(^9\) Astbury’s book attempts to locate the sources of imagery for the paintings of the Heidelberg School. The enduring value of his work lies in the way that it interweaves the fascinating but largely undiscussed visual language of the mass media, especially illustrated books and newspapers, with rather more familiar debates about local styles in painting. For Astbury, the *Atlas* acted as a kind of sorting house, helping to cull from the jumbled images in the local illustrated press the sacred iconography of the Heidelberg School. While Astbury raises the profile of the *Atlas* within the visual culture of late nineteenth-century Australia, its importance still rests on the extent to which it contributed to a broader narrative of national artistic self-emergence. While the *Atlas* undoubtedly played a role in the stylistic convergences that led to certain trends in Australian art, its existence was by no means dependent upon such events, nor should its significance rest on the depth of these associations.

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The obverse of Astbury's argument has appeared in a thesis by Therese Burnett held in the Power Institute at the University of Sydney. Burnett's study, 'The Picturesque Atlas of Australasia: the Art of Selling Nationality' is a richly detailed account of the emergence of the Atlas, its historical and generic antecedents and its somewhat inglorious demise. While Astbury looked forward through the Atlas at the styles which it helped bring into prominence, Burnett looks backward through the Atlas to the genres that determined its shape. Rather than placing the Atlas within the narrative of Australian artistic fulfilment, Burnett argues that it is a largely derivative publication that draws its key elements from North American and European formulae. Identifying the publishing formulae for the Atlas is useful, but retains innovation as the key term of reference. Innovation, a topic of such concern for historians of art, is an issue which tends to push the Atlas into forms of discussion which render it ancillary. Historians of Australian art, disappointed by the seeming absence of innovation in the Atlas, have come to regard the publication as a conduit through which innovation has flowed.

I wish in the current study to pursue a form of discussion that does not enclose the Atlas in narratives and roles that constantly direct its significance elsewhere. Reading the Atlas as an image reservoir of the period, or as a prelude to the Heidelberg School, or as the local product of a foreign publishing formula, is perfectly valid but to do so inevitably diminishes the Atlas. In all of these approaches the work only gains significance by virtue of its place within a broader scheme or agenda. Rather than rejecting such arguments, I have sought to reorient them in ways that keep the Atlas in the forefront of the

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10 Therese Burnett, 'The Picturesque Atlas of Australasia: The Art of Selling Nationality,’ Unpublished Honours Thesis, University of Sydney, 1989 (Held in the Power Research Library). The fortunes of academic research threw this work across my path at a relatively late stage, but the work has been useful in confirming my suspicions on some issues and clarifying the grounds of my arguments on others. I am indebted to Professor Joan Kerr, a teacher of Burnett, for drawing my attention to this work and the work of Peter Dowling at Monash.
discussions in this study, and to prevent it collapsing into the reductive categories of source, component, or product.

To a certain extent this has involved writing a 'history' of the *Atlas*, but this term needs some qualification for it is a conceit of history that it is possible to separate it from its sources.\(^\text{11}\) Rather than writing a history as such, this study seeks to conduct an historical dialogue. The interest of the *Atlas* for me was in the patterns of its thinking and the relationship that subsisted between this publication, its makers, its readers, and the everyday imagination. I wished to re-read the *Atlas* in order to trace the patterns of the everyday imaginings that it enacted, to understand the kind of idle thoughts that would lead to the making of such a work. The difficulty with that view of history which separates history from its sources is that works such as the *Atlas* are reductively figured as pools of useful data, which can be dipped into according to one's needs. In rejecting this model in favour of one which sees a text as a form of structured knowledge, this thesis undertakes a form of diagnosis in which the text embodies the symptoms of a cultural condition.

What this study tries to do, then, is to get away from this separation of the architecture of 'history' from the imagined bedrock of its 'sources'. It takes as its enabling imperative the need to examine in detail the way in which a text functions, the complexities of a text, the instabilities in its regimes of signification. It is not sufficient to view a text simply as a document or a shard of evidence that can then be adduced unproblematically to support an historical proposition. The same caveat, I suggest, also applies to images. In other words, what this study attempts in relation to the *Atlas* is to allow the critical process of historical interpretation to flow in both directions. To not only source history, but to historicise its sources. There is in this line

\(^{11}\) 'Labelling an inscription as a primary source gives it a character of authenticity and immediacy. It supports the conviction that the inscriptions are the past itself.' Greg Dening, *The Death of William Gooch: a History's Anthropology* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1995) 54.
of thinking, of course, a whiff of circularity. How does one historicise a source, for instance, without already having some notion of its place in history? And how then can history have come into being without being the product of its sources? But this circularity is less of a critical shortcoming, I would suggest, than an inescapable part of any historical project. One shines the light of history into the *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia* only to find that it already possesses its own shifting incandescence.

In exploring these relationships, I have followed three lines of enquiry. The first line involved reading about the picturesque, to read about its history as a philosophical idea and to read works which pursued, explicitly or implicitly, picturesque projects. The second line I pursued was to survey books written in the nineteenth-century that were 'about' Australia. Aided in this task by the significant holdings in the 'Australian Collection' held at the Reid Library at the University of Western Australia, I was fortunate to have been given permission to roam the shelves and view in chronology the diverse publications that emerged in the century that followed the European occupation of the Australian continent. I read almanacs, memoirs, emigration handbooks, travelogues, exploration narratives, exhibition reports, special issue newspaper supplements, geological and scientific surveys, and promotional pamphlets in order that I might hear the various voices that participated in the public articulation of Australia. My final line of enquiry was to read into the cultural history of Australia in the 1880s and more generally into the visual culture of the late nineteenth century. I used these readings as a way of providing a ground for the historical dialogue that I began to conduct with the *Atlas*.

It is worth highlighting one dimension of these relationships at the outset. As an illustrated publication and as one which travelled under the banner of the picturesque, the imaginative relationships that the *Atlas* encouraged were distinctly visual in nature. The very
fact of book illustration points to a certain kind of visual need. 'It would, now-a-days, be an absurdity,' explained Frederic B. Schell, artistic editor of the *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*, 'for a publisher to appeal to the "people" through the pages of a periodical without illustrations.'\(^\text{12}\) Schell's remarks highlight the generic importance of illustration to publications such as the *Atlas*. By the mid-1880s, pictures were no longer an extravagance, a novelty, or even an option. For popular periodical publications at least, they were a requirement of the genre. As Schell puts it: 'You would hardly spend much time over a modern magazine – most of you, I think – unless you were first seduced by the temptation of pictures, some of them staring at you from the cover, others peeping from between the leaves. In the life of magazines, indeed, pictures and popularity have become synonymous.'\(^\text{13}\) In the magazine, images were both the point of entry or 'seduction', as Schell calls it, and the lure that kept the pages turning. The "people" (a term whose commodified status is acknowledged by Schell's quotation marks) want to see pictures, they desire pictures, 'breathing, living pictures of the life around us'.\(^\text{14}\) Yet this infiltration of the image into the pleasurable economies of reading is, as the tone of Schell's article indicates, the result of a quite specific historical transformation.

This demand for images was decisively registered in the expansion of the illustrated press. Images in book and periodical publication is a key axis of change in the textual culture of the nineteenth century.\(^\text{15}\) The earliest mass-produced illustrated periodicals were based around the repression of idle thinking, and the attempt to make reading

\(^{12}\) Frederic B. Schell, 'How Books are Illustrated,' *Centennial Magazine* 1.2 (September 1888): 118-121.

\(^{13}\) Schell 118.

\(^{14}\) Schell 119.

'useful'. The *Penny Magazine* was first published in 1832 under the auspices of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. Its editor, Charles Knight, hoped that the magazine would 'awaken the reason and lead the imagination into innocent and agreeable trains of thought.' Illustrated newspapers brought another dimension to the practice of printing images. The appearance of the *Illustrated London News* in May 1842 was significant for the way that it marked the symbiosis in word and image of 'news', a present tense lifeworld of continuously unfolding visual events. The success of the illustrated press and its accessibility to a population of varying literacy has prompted Patricia Anderson to claim that, 'the new inexpensive printed image . . . became the first medium of regular, ongoing, mass communication.'

The emergence of illustrated publications was replicated in America in periodicals such as *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* and *Harper's Weekly*, and in Australia with newspapers such as the *Illustrated Sydney News*, the *Illustrated Sydney Mail*, the *Illustrated Australian News*, and the *Australasian Sketcher*. There is a dearth of critical interest in illustrated newspapers, caused in part no doubt by the sheer magnitude of the material. Elizabeth Webby has produced valuable surveys of Australian periodical literature without which more specialised studies such as mine would hardly be possible. In this context, it is also important to mention a recent unpublished thesis which has attempted to give sustained critical attention to illustrated newspapers in Australia. Peter Dowling's *Chronicles of Progress: The Illustrated Newspaper of Colonial Australia, 1853-1896*

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16 Charles Knight, 'Reading for All', *Penny Magazine* 1 (1832)1; cited in Patricia Anderson 53.

17 Patricia Anderson 3.

(Monash, 1997) uses a content analysis methodology to conduct a 'taxonomical survey' of the image subject matter of Australian illustrated newspapers from the latter half of the nineteenth century. Dowling surveyed twenty-five different newspapers and over fifteen thousand illustrations in order to create this taxonomy, and his study provides an interesting sideline on the image world of the *Atlas*.

At a professional level, illustrated newspapers and magazines were the economic mainstay of *Atlas* artists, like William Macleod, Julian Ashton, Frederic Schell, and Albert Fullwood. Moreover, in terms of its approach to the process of illustration, and more generally, in its visualisation of the world, the *Atlas* owes a great deal to the illustrated press. The use of illustrations in publishing, as Schell points out, profoundly altered readerly expectations. It created a dialogue between text and image on the printed page in which pictures are often used to authenticate the words, and where the words, as it were, talk out of the pictures. In the illustrated book or newspaper, the text and the illustration become structurally involved in the effect that each produced.

In pursuing this study of the *Atlas* I have drawn particular inspiration from Sylvia Lawson's history of the *Bulletin* magazine, *The Archibald Paradox*. In writing a cultural history of a single – albeit unique and significant – publication, Lawson's book has provided something of a model for the present study. Her work fruitfully blends biography with cultural history to provide an arresting and nuanced account of the *Bulletin* and those people responsible for its production. Yet, as the title of her study suggests, the history of the *Bulletin* is told by using as its central reference point, J.F. Archibald, its founding editor. Archibald makes an ideal counterpart to the magazine he helped create. The contradictions and exuberances in the man can be set against those found in the

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work. It seems impossible to tell the story of one without telling the story of the other. They almost appear to share, and this is partially a product of Lawson's approach, a common subjectivity.

The *Atlas*, however, has no Archibald, no irascible and foible-ridden mastermind who might serve as its subjective correlative (to invert Elliot). Yet like the *Bulletin*, it seems to have what might be called an identifiable 'character'. It is for this reason that I have introduced into the present study the figurative device of referring to the *Atlas* as though it somehow possessed the capacity to assess its options, make decisions or act in its best interests. In short, I write as if the *Atlas* was bestowed with a kind of subjectivity. It might be called the conceit of the sentient book. I am not wishing to be flippant in using this device. I am quite aware that the *Atlas* is a publication and not a person, indeed that it was a publication made by a very large number of quite different people. In personifying the *Atlas*, I simply wish to draw attention to the fact that as a work it possesses certain predilections, preferences, representational habits, and quirks. In other words, that it possesses those unities of character to which one traditionally ascribes the concept of personal identity.

Stemming from the conceit of the sentient book is a second conceit which might be called 'the world of the *Atlas*'. The world of the *Atlas* is the name which is given from time to time to the environment that is called into existence (addressed, interpolated, called out to) in the pages of the *Atlas* by the habits of representation that are relied upon. In other words, I am suggesting through this device that the *Atlas* generates through its words and pictures a social matrix that invites recognition as the world. This posited world can only be made real through agreement, that is, by the sharing of presuppositions between the text and its readers. The world of the *Atlas* transpires in the space of negotiation that exists between the page and the reader. Simplicity or reduction is not the aim of these conceits: quite the contrary. The subjectivity I claim for the *Atlas* is
no less problematic or fissured than any other subjectivity. If what I have done can be viewed as a biography of a book, then I am an appropriately postmodern biographer. Indeed, to introduce a subjectivity seemed a useful way of gathering together the commonalities in the Atlas project without foreclosing the existence of ruptures, inconsistencies and paradoxes.

Moreover, the ascription of a collective subjectivity to the Atlas has also been a strategy for coping with the proliferation of names that one encounters when studying this work. Partly this proliferation of names was an intentional ploy on the part of the Atlas Company, who understood the power of personal reputations. Its publicity often contained long lists of the star contributors, emphasising the cumulative authority that accrued to the Atlas through these multiple experts. Its recruitment policy, moreover, reflects this heightened appreciation of the value of public profile. The employment of Andrew Garran, James Smith, William Traill, and William Macleod suggests a hunger for recognition at this level. In the Atlas, this impulse extends also to the need for experts, 'specialists along the many lines in which the various numbers and chapters of the book will travel.' The text,' reports the Times in London, 'is produced by a special staff of writers, including a number of specialists.' To this end, the Atlas Company commissioned geologists, botanists, ethnographers, historians, economists, cartographers and meteorologists. These respective experts would, by their very pre-eminence, vouchsafe the comprehensive ambitions of the Atlas. It was a book to be trusted, a book in which a reader could feel the reassuring hand of authority supporting its weight.

But the proliferation of names did not lead necessarily to a deepening in understanding of the Atlas. In pursuing each of these names, I had experienced a flicker of excitement that new light would be shed

20 See Appendix I.
21 'Australia Illustrated,' Bulletin 26 June 1886: 16.
on the *Atlas*. People, some people anyway, are traceable units in public records. Names are recorded, alphabetised, collated and indexed. There is a feeling of certainty in tracing these names. Yet while the facts of these lives were sometimes revealed, the character of the *Atlas* became no more obvious. I could speculate about the psychology of Andrew Garran, the editor, consider his political drift from English Whig to Colonial Tory, imagine the effects of his worsening health and increasing dependence on opiates – all these might be deliberated upon without delivering a closer understanding of the *Atlas*. To follow along the lives that lie submerged beneath the proper nouns of the sources need not take you closer to the significance of the *Atlas*. Why, after all, should it be any other way? The *Atlas* touched lives without transforming them.

There are also the names that go un-named. Of the seventy or so names I have recorded as being associated with the *Atlas*, some of them I know a good deal about, some have kept diaries, or written memoirs, or been the subject of biographies written by contemporaries or more distant scholars. Of others in this seventy I know very little beyond, perhaps, a surname gleaned from a single newspaper report. I find no listings in dictionaries of biography, no cross-references in other sources. Some I suspect to be misprints or errors made in transcription by journalists. Moreover, many people who helped fashion the *Atlas*, quite possibly the majority, lie outside of my list of the visible seventy. Their names do not register in the promotional literature of the *Atlas*. The *Atlas* does not cast interesting tangential light on their written lives for they have no written lives. The people who are visible in the making of the *Atlas* are ‘contributors’, those who sign their name to their work – whether this be in the form of writing, editing, drawing or engraving.

As well as helping to deal with a proliferation of different contributors, the conceit of subjectivity is a way of working with the multiplicity of claims made on behalf of the *Atlas* by its proponents.
and reviewers. The makers of the *Atlas* seemed to have ensured that it would be all things to all people. It was, according to the *Age*, 'an epitomised history . . . of this great continent and its dependencies from the discoveries of Captain Cook down to the present time.'\(^{23}\) The *Daily Telegraph*, however, wrote that the *Atlas* was 'a book whose prime motive was the illustration of Australian scenery.'\(^{24}\) For Julian Ashton, speaking to an assembled audience in Sydney, the *Atlas* was announced as a work which 'will give an impetus to art, not only in the colony but throughout Australasia.'\(^{25}\) Before another audience in Melbourne, the Governor of Victoria, praised the work as a publication 'promoting the fast growing sentiment of federation.'\(^{26}\) In England, a review in the *Times* found the *Atlas* to be a useful history of the Australian colonies and 'an adequate and trustworthy account of their present state in its many aspects.'\(^{27}\) Was the *Atlas* really all of these things? Is there any way of making sense of a publication that was so overdetermined by a multitude of missions? Is the *Atlas* beset by taxonomic confusion, or is it merely maximising its potential appeal?

Yet it is important not to get too carried away with the uncertainties that hold the *Atlas* in their shade, nor with the equally disconcerting splashes of light that shine from its publicity machine and distort the project into a multitude of contradictory shapes. Beneath the shadow and the light is a very simple and rational institution: a factory. What could be more banal and ordered? At the heart of the *Atlas* project is an intense and fascinating bureaucratic spirit. Under the streamers and balloons of its rhetoric sits a production line.

'Let us see now,' rang the parodic echo of the *Bulletin* as it contemplated the publishing leviathan that had emerged across town

\(^{27}\) 'Picturesque Australasia,' *Times* 30 November 1887: 5.
from its own more humble premises in Pitt Street, 'the first thing necessary to a good book is a good head, if many departments several good heads.' The building at Wynyard-Square which housed the makers of the *Atlas* was divided, as the *Bulletin* article suggests, into 'departments'. It included, for instance, an engraving department with a staff of at least fourteen full-time engravers, from at least four different countries, who laboured in their painstaking task under the supervision of an American named Horace Baker. There was a cartographic department, supervised by a civil engineer named D.M. Macdonald who was assisted by another man named Arnold Sulon, whose particular responsibility was to supervise the engraving of these maps in coloured ink. There was also an art department, headed by another American, Frederic Schell, that was filled with pictures intended for inclusion. The printing room was presided over by still another American, Mr. Emerich of New York, who ordered that the press be disassembled and washed four times a day, submerged each time 'in a bath that leaves no more trace half-an-hour afterwards than an ordinary christening.' A separate department devoted to electrotyping plates, was administered by a Mr. Everson and his 'four stalwart sons all taught by himself in the intricate and difficult art' of electrotyping plates from the precious engraved wooden-blocks. The final room in the manufactory was staffed, it seems, entirely by women, who were employed to bind the sheets into volumes.

The heavy investment the *Atlas* made in personnel was matched by an equally heavy investment in materials and machinery. The publication that emerged from the end of the Wynyard Square production line in 1886, was 'printed on paper worth three-pence a sheet, with ink that costs a guinea a pound and by a machine that is scoured down four times a day'.

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imported directly into Sydney despite a recently imposed tariff on such goods. The paper was specially calendered to carry the most subtle shades of tonal variation. The press was a 'patent stop-cylinder press' designed and built by Hoe & Co. for the purpose of 'fine art printing'. This penchant for expensive specialised equipment chimes in some way with the showcasing of experts, and the fondness for departmentalisation. All these practices are repeatedly emphasised in the promotional literature of the *Atlas*, and what they evoke is a project that possessed a great faith in the capacity of systematic approaches. It seems to take an almost Fordist joy in its organisational order. This is the message that emits from the mechanics of the *Atlas*, and from its quaint but persistent bureaucracy. The subjectivity that I have bestowed on the *Atlas* for the purposes of this study is intended to carry with it the tension that must always exist in a work such as this between its proliferating purposes and its systematic production.

My study thus begins by tracing the production of the *Atlas*, paying particular attention to the promotional rhetoric that was used to market the work. As a commercial project, the success of the *Atlas* hinged continually and absolutely on its ability to promote itself in ways that found resonance with its creditors and its potential market. In other words, the *Atlas* was faced with the ever-present and somewhat exhausting task of articulating its *raison-d'être*. It is through these articulations – clichéd, overlapping, misleading, contradictory, hyperbolic – that one sees not only something of what the *Atlas* was, but something of what the *Atlas* had to be, and how its coming into being was conditioned by the insistent languages of public expectation. Taking its lead from these languages, the *Atlas* appears in many guises, crusading on many fronts, taking up causes and relinquishing them with equal alacrity. Attempts at definition are frustrated not by a shortage of analogies or a paucity of self-reflexivity, but rather by the reverse. Reading the promotional literature of the *Atlas* one is overwhelmed by a bewildering assertion
of purposes, statements of intent, rubrics, aims, and objectives. In the opening chapter, ‘Promises and Premises’, I draw lines through this rhetoric and begin to label the barrows the Atlas is called upon to push. I argue that a distinctive feature of the Atlas is the political inflexion of its public performances, which were linked in turn to the sentiments generated by the centenary of the European occupation of Australia.

In the second chapter, ‘The Neo-Picturesque’, I broaden the focus to characterise the generic quality of the Atlas. The purpose is not simply to identify its immediate antecedents but to understand in what manner the Picturesque Atlas of Australasia was in fact picturesque. What did it mean to be picturesque at this time? The argument that I put forward is twofold: firstly, that the picturesque is best viewed as a sensibility rather than an idea; and secondly, that the nature of picturesque publications underwent a significant reorientation in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The picturesque sensibility is based around a particular visual hunger, that Christopher Hussey described in his early study on the subject as ‘this habit of viewing and criticizing nature as if it were an infinite series of more or less well composed subjects for painting.’ The Atlas retains the traditional picturesque sensibility but the range of its operation is governed by the newly acquisitive, pervasive and progress-oriented parameters of the neo-picturesque world. The urge to see, at the heart of the picturesque sensibility, becomes in this new version of the picturesque, wedded to an urge to count and compend the material signs of modernity and progress.

Material progress was the principal armature for the historical narratives in the Atlas. ‘History’s Telescope’ is a discussion of the problematics of colonial history in the Atlas, its preoccupations and ambivalences, and its strategies of visualisation. The chapter

explores the tensions between the traditional tendency of the picturesque to render its historical objects as inconsequential, or more precisely to place its objects outside of history, and the colonial imperative to inscribe a significant European-based history of Australia. Moreover, as an illustrated publication, the Atlas was faced with the additional task of rendering these narratives in a visual form. It does this by pursuing a number of visual strategies, including the use of historical re-enactments, historical portraits and the repeated illustration of monuments. In its pictures the Atlas seeks to combine the practices of history, memory, visuality and materiality to produce a concrete and visible history of the European in Australia. In the chapter I also pursue, however, the frailties of this visual project and the way that oppositional voices in the Atlas complicate this central progress-oriented historical plot.

Bound up with this desire to thematise history in terms of material progress is the concern to locate modernity as the insistent message of colonial success. In the Atlas, the written accounts of each colony are divided, broadly speaking, into historical and descriptive 'sketches'. The chapter 'Making Life' traces the ways in which the Atlas described the condition of its world. I read the Atlas as a form of self-articulation which seeks, in its own words, ‘to give the world the best delineation of the Australian colonies, and the every-day life of their people.’ The kinds of stories and pictures the Atlas used to provide this delineation suggest a world which took pleasure in its systematic processes, in the ceaseless bustle of its cities, and the reach of its informational networks. The world of the Atlas was a world of transparency, plenitude and continual movement. In its maps, descriptive tours, regional audits, and iconic illustrations the Atlas enacts this world.

The visual practices of the Atlas are revisited in the fifth chapter, 'Sight and Light'. Here what is explored are the particularities of

seeing in the *Atlas*. The picturesque hunger for sight is played out in the way the *Atlas* seeks to describe certain veiled or hidden regions of its Australian world. In particular, the descriptions of the Jenolan caves create a space within colonial Australia in which the practices of illuminating the dark can be continually re-enacted. It was an activity which Australians of the 1880s found some deal of pleasure in performing, and the history of the Jenolan caves is used as a way of setting the Jenolan descriptions in the *Atlas* within this contemporary phenomenon of cave tourism. A second veiled region for which the *Atlas* betrays an interest is the forest. As with the Jenolan caves, the dense mountain forests of Victoria presented the *Atlas* with an opportunity to flex its scopic muscle. In these descriptions, light is shown to find its way into Australia’s darkest corners, and the expansion of civilised life in the world of the *Atlas* is measured by its ability to be displayed.

Any discussion of visual practices in the nineteenth century must take into account the role of photography. The issue has been usefully tackled in William Gaskins’ unpublished PhD Thesis, *On the Relationship Between Photography and Painting in Australia, 1839-1900*. Gaskins argues for a ‘symbiotic’ relationship between painting and photography in Australia in which each form interpenetrates the other in diverse ways. The relationship between the *Atlas* and photography was similarly complex and multidimensional. In ‘Photographic Friction’ I revivify the dilemmas that the *Atlas* faced in this regard and to follow the pathways of its negotiations between competing visual media. In many ways, the relationship between the *Atlas* and photography was characterised by ambivalence and embarrassment. The importance of photography was downplayed in the promotional literature of the *Atlas*, yet it is clear the *Atlas* was reliant on photography in a number of respects. Moreover, while the *Atlas* generally chooses not to acknowledge the instances when it uses photographs as sources for illustrations, it does make certain exceptions to this rule. The acknowledged use of
photographs in the depiction of Aboriginal people, in particular, highlights both the epistemological status of photography for the *Atlas* and the representational imperatives that motivated its makers regarding indigenous people.

The argument in this study is not, as should be clear, based around the traditional notions of causation, the search for antecedents or the identification of trends. Instead it is an argument about the patterns of signification within the *Atlas* and the relationship they bear to the contemporary imagination in Australia in the mid-1880s. Each chapter constitutes a stage in the diagnosis of this relationship. The subjectivity that is given to the *Atlas* and its projected 'world' is used to help give a shape and a focus to the space of this relationship. It is a space that I suggest is filled with the imperatives of sight. Whether it is history, the hidden corners of the land, the troubling visage of the indigenous other, or the bustle of an insistent modernity, the key representational demand is visibility. In the final chapter I argue that the very layout of the pages in the *Atlas* enhances the representational force of this visibility.

The final, concluding, chapter thus focuses directly on the pages of the *Atlas*. 'Pagespace' begins by highlighting the extent to which the *Atlas* project was geared toward a very particular form of pagespace, involving the pervasive interspersing of illustrations in the text. The stylistics of the *Atlas* are situated within the context of 1880s aestheticism in Australia, and the influence of contemporary American magazine drawing. Without dismissing the importance of these stylistic trends, the discussion then attempts to move past style as a vehicle for explanation and to tease out the particularities in the illustrations of the *Atlas*. At the centre of this discussion is the apparent contradiction between a set of graphical devices that are aimed at accentuating the quality of depth in the drawings, and another set of devices that appear calculated to assert the inescapable flatness of pictures drawn onto the pages of a book. I argue that the
illustrated pages of the *Atlas*, through a range of diverse and partially contradictory devices, fundamentally affirm the solidity, singularity and mimetic susceptibility of the real by uniting the effects of depth with the effects of materiality.
Chapter 1
Promises and Premises

To understand the *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia* (1886-1888) it is worth considering the events which occasioned its publication. Fortunately, the *Atlas* wears its occasionality on its sleeve. It was timed to coincide with the centenary of European settlement in Australia. In its promotional literature, the *Atlas* was put forward as a kind of centennial progress report, a snapshot of Australia on its hundredth birthday. It was an unashamedly celebratory publication, a work designed to capitalise on the percolating sentiments of Australian patriotism that the centennial occasion was expected to generate.

The Australian centenary of 1888, however, was a vexed event. It was not just that the people of the Australian colonies were unsure about how to celebrate the occasion, but that there was, according to Maya Tucker, considerable 'confusion amongst the public as to what was actually being celebrated on 26 January.' Tucker paints a picture of celebrations that were alternatively grandiose and abortive, spasmodic and banal. There were statues and yachting regattas, speeches and public dinners. What, after all, did the centenary mean in a loose collection of colonies habitually accustomed to looking 'home' more than at each other? Responses ranged, according to Graeme Davison, between 'optimistic and pessimistic, committed and apathetic.' The very idea of a 'national' day of centennial

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1 To consider, in other words, what Gadamer called the work's 'occasionality'. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Second, Revised Edition [trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall] (New York: Continuum, 1994 [1975]), 144. ‘Occasionality means that their [i.e. works of art] meaning and contents are determined by the occasion for which they are intended, so that they contain more than they would without this occasion,’ 144.

2 Maya Tucker, 'Centennial Celebrations 1888', *Australia, 1888* 7 (April 1981): 12. I am indebted to Tucker's insightful and detailed account of these celebrations. Particularly useful is the way that Tucker’s article explores differing reactions to the centenary throughout the Australian colonies.

celebration, as opposed to the various colony-based 'foundation', 'separation', and 'settlement' days, was itself novel and its success rested primarily on the industry and efforts of grass roots lobbying by groups such as the Australian Natives Association and committed federationists like Sir Henry Parkes and Alfred Deakin.4

Indeed, the timing of the centenary was not ideal. In the previous year, large-scale celebrations had been organised for the occasion of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. The Jubilee, with all its fanfare and imperial hoopla appears to have drained some of the celebratory spirit out of the colonies. Indeed, the prospect of another grand celebration hot on the heels of the Jubilee, gave rise to a certain weariness. There is only so much energy that a society can muster for the celebration of what Greg Dening has termed 'public metric moments'.5 Unlike yearly or seasonal rituals, these anniversaries and jubilees make claims which are singular and momentous and never-to-be-repeated. The ebb and flow of time, is replaced with solemn metric blocks.

The mixed reaction to the event was partly a function of social position and geography. While the governors and premiers of the various colonies were shipped in luxury to Sydney to wine and dine at the expense of its debt-laden tax-payers, there was little in terms of symbolism around which popular sentiment could congeal. The jubilation of booming Melbourne was balanced by the relative quiet of a recessed Adelaide.6 Celebrations in Hobart, Perth, Brisbane and regional Australia were respectful if, on the whole, rather subdued. New South Wales, which saw itself as the obvious epicentre of centennial celebration, was beset by spiralling public debt and was forced to endure a series of austerity budgets.

4 'Centennial Celebrations 1888.' 12.
Yet the problems of New South Wales were more than financial. Celebrating the centenary meant remembering the occasion of its settlement and the sting of its carceral past. It was an issue that would resurface a century later when the Australian Bicentennial Authority, 'refused to support the First Fleet Re-enactment project because it focused on the convict past.'\(^7\) In the mid-1880s, however, the prosperity of convict-free Victoria ensured there was a good deal to celebrate in that colony and, more importantly, the means with which to do so. Melbourne's Centennial International Exhibition, which ran from August 1888 to February 1889 was as much an advertisement of Victoria's material wealth as a commemoration of one hundred years of European settlement on the Australian continent. In the acerbic pages of the Sydney Bulletin, a sniping anti-centenary campaign continued from at least the middle of 1886. 'There are,' it suggests, 'most excellent reasons why this so-called centenary should not be celebrated at all.'\(^8\) For the Bulletin, January 26, 1788 was not a day of glorious inception, but 'the day we were lagged'.

For all this, the centenary was a significant public occasion, and its approach prompted many and varied proposals for a suitable manner of marking the event. A popular choice was to hold an exhibition. In the public culture of the Victorian age exhibitions were the pulse points of civilisation, a pavilionised microcosm of industry, empire, technology, 'the arts', and the ever-evolving history of the race. By the mid-1880s the exhibition urge, what Tony Bennett terms the 'exhibitionary complex', was well and truly established in Australia.\(^9\) Thus it was hardly surprising when a meeting convened at Sydney's Town Hall by the Trades and Labour League of New South Wales on


the 10th of August in 1886 passed a motion requesting the colonial government to arrange the holding of a 'National Centennial Exhibition in Australia in the year 1888'. However, while many in the Trades and Labour League saw considerable advantages flowing from a centennial exhibition, the financially troubled government of Patrick Jennings were less eager. Indeed, even at the Town Hall meeting, consensus was difficult to find. Some members continually interrupted proceedings with shouts of disagreement. When plans to build a new exhibition building were announced, someone shouted, 'We don't want it. They'll burn it down as they did the other.' Sydney's previous exhibition building, the 'Garden Palace', built for the exhibition of 1879 was consumed by fire in 1882.

Dissent against the exhibition was also voiced in the Sydney papers. A letter to the editor of the Sydney Morning Herald failed to comprehend what possible progress had been achieved either in the nine years since the previous Sydney exhibition in 1879, or indeed, the two years since the 1886 London exhibition to which New South Wales had sent in the opinion of the writer, an exhibit that was inferior to all the other colonies. Even those who favoured an exhibition differed on how the event should be conducted. Another writer to the Herald suggests that if an exhibition is to be held, then it should be intercolonial rather than international to prevent a recurrence of the effects produced by the 1879 exhibition, 'namely, a market flooded with foreign and unsuitable articles.' At the meeting at the Town Hall these objections were ascribed to 'a few interested shopkeepers.' An increasingly agitated J.E. West, President of the Trades Hall Committee, not only seconded the exhibition motion but branded 'anyone who voted against it' as 'a traitor to his country.'

12 H.S.S. Bond, letter, Sydney Morning Herald 16 August 1886: 5.
13 Owen Blachett, letter, Sydney Morning Herald 16 August 1886, p.5.
But not all who opposed the exhibition did so on protectionist grounds. There was a feeling amongst some that while exhibitions served many useful purposes, they suffered from the fact of being inherently ephemeral. The centennial was felt to be an occasion that was not simply to be marked in passing, but to be preserved for posterity. Norman Selfe, a Sydney engineer, pointed out that the city was in need of a plaza that would set it on an equal footing with the great urban centres of Europe, and thus proposed 'a grand centennial square' as the appropriate manner of consummating the centenary.\textsuperscript{14}

Such a proposal, reasoned Selfe, would not only provide 'relief employment to some hundreds of unemployed artisans and labourers in reproductive work,' but constituted 'a rational solution of the problem, How can we best celebrate our centenary?'\textsuperscript{15}

In the end, however, much of this debate proved academic for the people of New South Wales. Patrick Jennings, determined to keep the budget in check, resisted any grand or expensive proposals. On 24 January 1888, the centennial celebrations in Sydney were inaugurated in a more modest fashion by the unveiling of a statue of Queen Victoria at Hyde Park. Two days later on the 26th, one hundred years to the day after the arrival of the First Fleet, Sydney's 'Centennial Park' was opened, but it opened without Henry Parkes' proposed 'State House' that was to be its centrepiece. The 'State House' was to have been a vast marble pantheon dedicated to the past and future successes of New South Wales and Australia. In his biography of Parkes, A.W. Martin suggests that the aging politician saw this proposed edifice as 'the real monument to the centenary, a building "for the education of the soul of citizenship"', to consist of a

\textsuperscript{14} Norman Selfe, letter, \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} 11 August 1886: 11.

\textsuperscript{15} Selfe 11. Economic statistician Timothy Coghlan noted that 'In 1885 the public works expenditure of the Government [of NSW] amounted to £5,250,000, and in 1888 it fell to £2,700,000. This meant the throwing out of employment of 15,000 men. Had the ordinary labour market been in a flourishing condition, such a decrease in the labour employed by the Government must have produced some lowering effect, but as the reverse was the case, the men could not find employment at all, and crowded into Sydney to demand help from the Government.' Timothy A. Coghlan, \textit{Labour and Industry in Australia}, 4 volumes (London and Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1918) vol. 3, 1452.
repository for historical manuscripts, a gallery for statuary and works of art, and a mausoleum to be "the resting place of eminent persons, who shall have been ordered a public funeral by both Houses of Parliament". After considerable debate on the issue, Jennings rejected the proposal as he had all others which would have placed heavy demands on the treasury. Unfortunately, the delays in reaching a decision on the extent of refurbishments to the Lachlan Swamps meant that on the occasion of its opening, Centennial Park was still far from completion. The shabbiness of its inchoate gardens provided a discordant backdrop to the pronouncements of success made by the official party. The *Bulletin* suggested that the appropriate monument to the centenary had, in fact, already been completed in 1886: 'The Bondi sewer opening fête stands conspicuously as the one appropriate item in the whole of this ill-timed display: the centenary of the day on which the crime of England became wedded to the virgin wealth of Australia is indeed a fit one to be commemorated in a drain.'

Yet despite the derision of the *Bulletin*, the centenary remained important not just as a backward-looking gesture toward the mother country, but as an event which lent substantial impetus to the process of colonial federation. While many agreed in principle to federation, and found its various arguments in relation to tariffs, infrastructure, defence, and immigration compelling, the details were proving difficult to resolve. For the proponents of federation, the centenary was a reminder not only of what had been achieved in the hundred years since 1788, but what remained to be achieved. H.S.S. Bond objected to the exhibition because it served no useful purpose in uniting the Australian colonies; in fact, according to Bond, 'no exhibition will tend in this direction, else we could point

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18 "'Nation' is a big word to use but . . . though it is rather the symbol of what shall be than the expression of what is, still, if ever there was a time when it was fitting to use the word it is now." *Sydney Morning Herald* 31 January 1888; cited in Trainor 73.
to our last as furthering that object; instead of which the exhibition "went to blazes," and it would appear that federation was therein consumed, without leaving a trace behind. Bond urged that all these grandiose spectacles should be traded for the single concrete political reality of federation. If this could be achieved then 'we could well afford to grant three weeks free intercolonial rail travelling to jubilate around, and to view an Exhibition not centred in one particular spot, but throughout Australia.'

Thus the centenary, particularly in New South Wales, presented itself as a public policy conundrum. It was an event that could neither be avoided nor satisfactorily embraced by all sides. Added to this was the embarrassment that the colony of New South Wales was quite simply too poor to afford its own birthday party, a position underscored by the fact that the 'Centennial' exhibition was being held in Melbourne, a city still many years short of its century. It is with a faint note of perversity, then, that in this climate of equivocation, restraint and ambiguity, the Picturesque Atlas Publishing Co. launched a publishing project of unprecedented grandeur in Sydney.

In August of 1886, Julian Ashton addressed the topic of the approaching centenary in a speech to assembled political dignitaries on the occasion of the visit of Governor and Lady Carrington to the Atlas building in Wynyard Square. 'New South Wales,' he announced, 'was approaching a memorable time in her history, namely, her hundredth birthday,' and while 'her infancy was over . . . she was too young to go without a birthday present to mark the event.' Who would provide such a gift? Who would step forward and provide a present worthy of this historic occasion? These were the questions implicit in Ashton's address. And if the questions were

19 Bond 5.
20 'Some aspects of the Sydney centennial celebrations of January 1888,' writes Trainor, 'were unequivocal, but not many.' Trainor 71.
implicit then the answer certainly was not. ‘If the Government should
unwisely decide to hold no commemoration of this important period in our
history, but to leave the matter in private hands,’ then, Ashton had no doubt
that, ‘amongst all the schemes proposed for the celebration of our centenary,
that for magnitude of design, for the effect it would produce upon the outside
world, as to our resources, or for the impetus it would give to all matters
pertaining to art in the colonies, none could compare with such a publication
as the “Picturesque Atlas of Australasia,” the last number of which would be
completed about the year 1888.’22 The makers of the Atlas would step into the
breach left by the financially crippled New South Wales government.

There is a certain suggestiveness in the idea that the centenary was to find its
apotheosis in paper.23 Indeed, the Atlas accomplished in paper many of the
aims that rival centennial schemes had proposed to be conducted in stone,
steel and glass. Its imposing large-scale format gave to it a monumental
quality. W.B. Dalley, the Attorney-General of New South Wales called the
Atlas a ‘beautiful memorial’, while the Age, whose support for the Atlas was
not without reservation, found it to be a ‘striking monument.’24 Its range of
chapters, moreover, which would cover history, geography, art and the
sciences, had the compendious and displayable qualities of an exhibition,
while its numerous historical portraits would serve the purpose of the
historical pantheon proposed by Parkes as the centrepiece of Centennial Park.
The Atlas therefore united within the dimensions of a single project, the
virtues of the monument, the colonial exhibition and the historical
pantheon. It combined permanence with public profile, grandeur with
accessibility, and a singularity of presence with the totality of its purview.

23 A.W. Martin had a similar feeling in relation to Parkes’ proposed ‘State House’: ‘Authorized, but not
begun in time for the celebrations, the building was in fact never to take shape. Ridicule, then apathy and
finally lack of money left it eventually a memory – a paper memorial to Parkes’s taste for grandeur.’
Martin 370.
Although based in Sydney, by using contributors from across the colonies it enfranchised colonists in a way that other centennial functions could not. The *Atlas* thus put itself forward as a genuinely 'national' undertaking, enacting in its pages a federation that was proving elusive in the world of colonial politics.

- II -

On Monday 23 August 1886 the recently arrived Governor of New South Wales, Lord Carrington was conducted, in the company of his wife, through the Picturesque Atlas Publishing Company's headquarters at 14 Wynyard Square. It was a gala day at Wynyard Square, 'the company's offices were tastefully decorated with flags, flowers, and evergreens for the occasion, and over the door of the main entrance a shield had been placed with the word "Welcome" upon it.' Travelling through the building's 'various departments', the vice-regal party visited the 'picture rooms' which held the sketches carried out by the various artists employed by the *Atlas*. The party found much to admire in the sketches of Schell, Fullwood, Ashton and Macleod. In the 'map room', under the supervision of Mr. D. McDonald, they viewed maps showing annual rainfall; agricultural information (including the location of pastoral runs, stock routes, and dams); railways, post and telegraph; early exploration of Australia; and, 'a facsimile of Governor Phillip's map of Sydney in 1792.' The printing and electrotyping rooms were visited, and 'various processes were explained'. The department of the engravers was also 'closely inspected'. When the Carringtons entered the binding room, they must have been surprised and delighted to find themselves 'heartily welcomed' by the 'female
employés' who launched into a stirring rendition of 'God Save the Queen'.

After this comprehensive tour, the visitors retired to Pfahlert's Hotel for a luncheon organised and paid for by the proprietors of the Atlas Company. In the procession of toasts that followed the meal, Lord Carrington thanked his gracious hosts and confessed to feeling 'astonished to find that he was to be entertained at that magnificent banquet'. He had been very much impressed with what he had seen at Wynyard Square and believed that the Atlas 'would give an impetus to art, not only in this colony but throughout Australasia, and always remain a specimen of the best style of American, Canadian, and Australian enterprise.' With that, Lord and Lady Carrington begged pardon and departed, allowing the remainder of the toasts to take place in their absence. The role the Atlas would play in the advancement of 'Art' in the Australian colonies became the dominant theme of this particular occasion.27 Attorney General of New South Wales, W.B. Dalley, went on to toast those 'silent and accomplished men of literary excellence and artistic culture who, with admirable discrimination, had been brought together by the enterprise and liberality of the directors of the company to produce this beautiful memorial, were boldly and clearly marking by their labour our purely intellectual advancement.'

Of the many claims that are made on behalf of the Atlas, this claim of marking 'intellectual advancement' is one of the more far-reaching. And yet it is a claim that is consonant with a movement at this time to extend the assertion of Australian 'national' maturity to the non-material fields of endeavour. The Centennial Exhibition in Melbourne in 1888 was the first in Australia to include musical concerts and an art gallery.28 Success in the arts was felt to mark the refinement of national spirit, a refinement that the exigencies of the

28 Davison, Australia 1888 25.
pioneering spirit had until recently prevented from taking place. 'In Australia,' remarked Julian Ashton in his response to Dalley 'on behalf of Australian Art', 'as in all young countries, people have had quite enough to do to provide themselves the necessities of life, without finding leisure to cultivate those tastes which beautify and adorn it.' And it was the proprietors of the Atlas, with their willingness to employ at least a smattering of local artists, who were bravely taking this process forward. Ashton, of course, was speaking not simply as President of the New South Wales Art Society, but as a commissioned artist of the Picturesque Atlas Publishing Company.

The final address of the afternoon was delivered by United States Consul Griffin, who proposed a toast to 'Australia and the Australians'. Griffin was inclined to be optimistic about the prospects of Australia, referring to it as a 'magnificent Empire of States'. He concluded by noting that if it were possible to see, as he had, the spectacular enterprise of projects like the Atlas then there might be less alarm 'about the magnitude of [the] public debt' of New South Wales. And so the proceedings ended on the rather disconcerting subject of financial viability.

The debt of the New South Wales government had been a matter of concern for some time, and indeed stood as the chief impediment to the implementation of any of the various grand public schemes that had been proposed for the celebration of that colony's centenary. Yet fiscal concerns may well have been an uncomfortable subject for others sitting at their tables at Pfahlert's Hotel. The obverse to the expansionist rhetoric of the Atlas was the risk that the investment that was being outlaid in unprecedented amounts in pursuit of publishing grandeur would never be recovered. This quality of risk was, from an early stage, associated with the project. In fact, it becomes part of the promotional drama of the Atlas, both feared and celebrated. A report in the Argus, for instance, concludes by noting that 'the undertaking is evidently being prosecuted with a lavish
outlay of capital, indicative of the confidence of its promoters in its ultimate success, their main reliance being on the sale of the work in Europe and America.\textsuperscript{29} Two years later, on the launch of the initial portions of the work in 1887, the soaring cost of the \textit{Atlas} was again a newsworthy feature: 'The original estimate of £60,000 for the cost of the work has, the publishers state, already been largely exceeded, and it is to be hoped that the subscription for this truly magnificent book will be sufficiently large to recoup the heavy outlay incurred on a striking monument of literary enterprise, and an \textit{edition de luxe} of which the country may be justly proud.'\textsuperscript{30}

A certain heedlessness regarding cost became a recurring motif in the rhetoric of the \textit{Atlas} publicity machine. The extravagance of expenditure promoted a version of events in which the company's actions took on the character of a public service, a remarkably generous gesture of good faith in the emerging Australian nation. It was a generosity of heart that demanded reciprocation in the Australian public, and the subscriptions gathered for the \textit{Atlas} suggest that a significant readership existed. While in 1886 a print run of between twenty and thirty thousand was projected, by 1888 an article in \textit{Table Talk} was announcing that 'Australians may feel a pardonable pride in the fact that up to the present time, fifty thousand subscribers at ten guineas have been obtained for that magnificent publication, \textit{The Picturesque Atlas of Australasia} – and that the canvas is still in progress.'\textsuperscript{31} In fact, 50 076 contract notes were signed for the \textit{Atlas}, which, as Burnett notes, constituted approximately 1.3% of the population of the Australian colonies at this time.\textsuperscript{32} As the writer of the article in \textit{Table Talk} reflected: 'Half a million sterling is not a bad contribution from little more than three millions of people.'\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{29} 'Arts Notes,' \textit{Argus [Melbourne]} 31 October 1885: 12.
\textsuperscript{30} 'Arts Notes,' \textit{Age [Melbourne]} 2 April 1887: 5.
\textsuperscript{31} Rev. of the \textit{Picturesque Atlas of Australasia}, \textit{Table Talk} 4 May 1888: 3.
\textsuperscript{32} Burnett 2.
\textsuperscript{33} Rev. of the \textit{Picturesque Atlas of Australasia}, \textit{Table Talk} 4 May 1888: 3. Elizabeth Webby describes \textit{Table Talk} as 'the most successful of a line of more general weeklies which dates back
And while the rhetoric of the *Atlas* was expansive, it also made an effort to be inclusive. In describing its map of New South Wales, a report in the *Daily Telegraph* notes that every township, hamlet, settlement and outpost regardless of its obscurity was represented. 'It is only fair,' the article reflects, 'that these handfuls of bark huts should receive a just share of attention at the hands of the publishers, for, if we are not mistaken, it will be in those very cabins, humble though they be, that the monthly subscription will be paid most cheerfully and that “Picturesque Australasia” will receive the most ardent admiration.' Despite such rhetorical gestures, the pricing structure of the whole project quite clearly took the *Atlas* out of the reach of most people living in Australia in the mid-1880s. At a cost of 5 shillings per monthly issue it may have seemed extravagant to many. Even a largely supportive account of the *Atlas* in the *Daily Telegraph* conceded that the subscription cost ‘sounds a large sum for a popular book.’ Daily newspapers at this time sold for a penny, about a quarter of the cost of a two-pound loaf of bread. A copy of the *Bulletin* could be purchased for sixpence. In the bloated costing structure of the *Atlas*, sixpence would barely cover the cost of two sheets of the imported paper on which it was printed. More daunting still was the subscription cost, since the *Atlas* was only available to subscribers. At ten guineas it would have taken a stockman two or three months to earn the amount of the

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subscription, and the situation was little better for other workers.\textsuperscript{39} The cost of the \textit{Atlas} placed it out of the realistic range of working people who were in no position to devote a quarter of their annual wages to a picture book.

The expense of the \textit{Atlas} placed significant pressure on the company to maximise its sales. Extravagant vice-regal banquets in Sydney, and later in Melbourne, created the desired publicity for the \textit{Atlas} by ensuring coverage in the local press. However, this general public interest needed to be converted into subscriptions. Writing many years later, Julian Ashton remembered the marketing of the \textit{Atlas} particularly vividly:

As soon as the first parts were ready for distribution a number of American book canvassers appeared on the scene, each of them an adept in his particular province. One canvassed the various religious bodies, and looked like a parson and spoke like one; one whose duty it was to interview banks and merchants was a fine style of man, well set-up and well groomed and attired in the latest fashion. He drove from store to store in a hansom-cab, his appearance gaining him instant admission into the presence of general managers before whom he set forth in well chosen phrases the quality and object of the \textit{Picturesque Atlas of Australasia}. Others were dispatched to the country districts, travelling from station to station, equally well playing their part.\textsuperscript{40}

Indeed, Julian Ashton was himself co-opted into the task of marketing the \textit{Atlas}: ‘It was arranged that I should interview Mr Alfred Deakin, then Premier of Victoria, show him the proofs already executed for the \textit{Picturesque Atlas}, and endeavour to enlist the sympathy of his Government in the publication as a means of advertising Australia all over the world.’\textsuperscript{41} He recounts being booked onto a train in Sydney where he was met at the station by Silas Moffett with sandwiches and a small bottle of champagne for the

\textsuperscript{39} I am relying on Coghlan’s statistics for the labour market in New South Wales in the late 1880s: \textit{Labour and Industry in Australia}, Vol. 3, 1440-48.

\textsuperscript{40} Julian Ashton, \textit{Now Came Still Evening On} (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1941) 45. For an expanded discussion of the marketing methods of the \textit{Atlas}, see Burnett 31-47.

\textsuperscript{41} Ashton 45.
journey. Ashton does not explain how, but believes that Deakin 'helped the publication in many ways.'

However, despite the excitement of its press releases, the vision of outback subscribers hidden in 'every bark hut', the talk of 'world-wide circulation' and sales in 'Europe and America', there were clouds brewing on the financial horizons of the Atlas project. Unfortunately, although 'as an artistic production, it was the largest and most complete undertaking of its kind,' and one which 'did much to interest Australians in the scenic splendours of their own continent,' and though it was endorsed by politicians and governors, financially the Atlas failed. 'Owing to various causes,' remarks Moore, 'the publication was not a financial success, the shareholders having to face a loss of half a crown in the pound.' The 'lavish outlay of capital' which the Argus report noted in 1885 was never recovered.

Indeed, by the time that the Picturesque Atlas Publishing Co. was eventually liquidated in 1896, it had been the subject of numerous legal actions and parliamentary petitions. One of the major issues of dispute concerned the length of time that copies took to reach subscribers. Instead of arriving at monthly intervals, many customers only received their copies en masse after a period of some years. As a consequence, many refused to pay and the company took legal action to enforce the contracts they had signed. A Select Committee of the New South Wales Parliament heard evidence of high pressure sales tactics on the part of the Atlas Company and of inordinate delays in the delivery of parts. While no fraud was ever

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42 Ashton 46.
43 'every bark hut,' Daily Telegraph 21 August 1886: 9; 'world-wide circulation,' Daily Telegraph 14 August 1886: 9; 'Europe and America,' Argus 31 October 1885: 12.
44 Moore, vol. 1, 232.
45 Moore, vol. 1, 232.
46 For an intriguing account of these disputes see Burnett 48-56.
47 Burnett writes that the marketing of the Atlas was 'organised along the lines of a military campaign which stressed the importance of intelligence, organisation, assessment, planning, tactics and strategy, in order to achieve victory.' 32.
proven the protracted dispute led to the passing of legislation intended to avoid a repeat of the problems encountered with the selling of the *Atlas*. The singular grandeur of its production, coupled with a financial loss that was intimated almost from its outset, place the *Atlas* in a curious light. It is part noble nationalist project, and part international swindle. For these reasons, and particularly the way it balances between the grandness of its projections and the harsh reality of its returns, the *Atlas* is a publication beset with the mixed feelings of the centennial occasion.

- III -

Nearly a year before Lord Carrington had toured the *Atlas* factory in Wynyard Square, an exhibition of mainly black and white drawings was held in Melbourne at Julian Ashton's studio in Collins Street East. There were, according to the *Argus*, approximately fifty pictures, including "portraits of Van Diemen, Cook, Dampier, and other navigators . . . , representations of the street architecture of Australian towns and cities, specimens of the landscape scenery, flora, and fauna of the colonies, typical examples of the aboriginal races, picturesque episodes in the history of the country, &c." This iconic array assembled in Ashton's studio was not simply a chance for some of the leading artists in the colonies to display their work, but was "intended as a sort of progress report of the preparations which have been made for a great work to be entitled "The

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48 The 'Book Purchasers Protections Act of 1890,' New South Wales No.12 1890, had three provisions. The first was aimed at ensuring the 'total liability' of the subscriber under the contract was fixed in advance. The second created an obligation on the part of the vendor to provide a duplicate of the contract of sale, and made the enforceability of the contract conditional upon producing a signed receipt of this duplicate. The final provision was an evidentiary clause which empowered the court to determine the value of the 'printed matter' and placed the onus of proof of such value on the vendor.

49 Ashton had been employed by the Picturesque Atlas Publishing Company since 1883: see Moore, vol. 1, 233.
Picturesque Atlas of Australasia."\(^{50}\) The October 1885 exhibition was thus a sort of progress report on a progress report.

The origins of the *Atlas* date from the early 1880s. At this time, Julian Ashton, nearing the end of his contract in Melbourne at David Syme’s *Age* newspaper, was visiting Sydney at the invitation of Howard Smith. He received a telegram from two book publishers, McNeil and Coffey, requesting a meeting with the artist. Going to see them at their Market Street office, Ashton was told of a plan to prepare a ‘great work to be known as the *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*.'\(^{51}\) A three-year contract was proposed, but in the end Ashton signed for one year at £800. McNeil and Coffey were representatives of the Picturesque Atlas Publishing Co., ‘the same enterprising Anglo-Canadian firm that issued “Picturesque Canada,” certainly one of the most beautiful examples of wood engraving and typography we are acquainted with.'\(^{52}\) The person behind the scheme was not an Australian, but ‘an American book-canvaser’ named Silas Lyon Moffett.\(^{53}\) His name appears in an article in the *Age* reporting the Collins Street exhibition at Ashton’s studio: ‘The main object of the show is to give some idea of the nature of the illustrations to be furnished by the forthcoming work called *Pictorial Australasia*, the materials for which are being slowly built up by Mr. Moffat [sic], the agent of the firm which has undertaken its accomplishment.'\(^{54}\)

Moffett was a key figure in the birth of the *Atlas*. According to William Moore, Moffett ‘was sent out to Australia by a Canadian publisher on a purely commercial undertaking, the idea being to write up the big men of Australia, provided they subscribed so many guineas for a publication which was to boom the commerce and

50 Artists exhibiting included Buvelot, Tom Roberts, the Ashtons, Mather, Paterson, Macleod, Cayley, Fullwood, and Pigenit. ‘Arts Notes,’ *Argus* 31 October 1885: 12.
51 Ashton 35.
52 ‘Arts Notes,’ *Argus* 31 October 1885: 12.
53 Moore 232. Moffett is also mentioned as ‘Moffat’ in ‘Arts Notes,’ *Age*, 5 November 1885: 5.
54 ‘Arts Notes,’ *Age* 5 November 1885: 5.
industry of the country. This kind of collective vanity publication, often gathered together under titles such as 'men of mark', was not unusual at this time. It was a kind of group hagiography where the costs of production were dispersed amongst the subjects through their subscriptions. However, according to Moore, Moffett who he describes as 'a strange mix of visionary and cute business man', expanded the scope of the publication and changed its focus. Instead of an embellished 'men of mark' style book, he 'planned a work which would outline the discovery, settlement, and development of Australia, the chapters to be written by specialists in their subjects and illustrated by the best artists available.'

In the early stages of the project, Moffett recruited Ashton and also the established Sydney artist, and future owner of the Bulletin, William Macleod. Macleod was useful not merely in his capacity as an artist with a facility for portraits, but for his business acumen. There was a feeling, indeed, that it was the latter which was his true talent. 'His bluntishly effective draughtsmanship was,' according to Sylvia Lawson, 'strangely mixed with a rather keener capacity for business management.' Over the course of the next two years, many more local artists were commissioned (including A.H. Fullwood, George Ashton, Frank Mahony, Louis Belton, and Mary Ellis Rowan) and the accumulation of artwork for the Atlas began in earnest. At the time of the Collins Street exhibition in October of 1885, some fifty works had been completed for display.

Indeed the end of 1885 signalled an intensification of work on the Atlas. On November 6 of that year William Macleod and Frank Coffey called on the recently retired former editor of the Sydney Morning Herald, Dr. Andrew Garran. Garran received a letter

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56 See discussion in Ch.3, 'History's Telescope'.
57 Moore, vol. 1, 232.
58 Moore, vol. 1, 232.
offering him 'the position of Editor of our forthcoming work the Picturesque Atlas of Australasia, the salary to be at the rate of £400 a year payable quarterly.' Two days later Garran sent his acceptance, agreeing to commence his engagement from 1 January, 1886. The appointment of the esteemed former editor of Sydney's largest circulation daily was somewhat of a coup for the Atlas proprietors. Garran had joined the Herald as an assistant editor at the invitation of John Fairfax in 1856. He went on to edit the paper from 1873 to late in 1885, when ill-health prompted his resignation. His editorials, while lucid, were often didactic and righteous. J.A. Froude said of Garran in 1886, that he was 'right-minded even to the point of rigidity.' At the Bulletin he was simply known as 'the doctor'.

Although editor, there are several signs that Garran's role with the Atlas was not a defining one. The same forces that had turned the Atlas machinery before his arrival - Moffett, Macleod, Coffey, O'Neill - still seem to be turning it after his arrival. Indeed, much of the groundwork had already been accomplished by the time of his appointment at the start of 1886. Garran's diaries do not mention the Atlas frequently. His appointment by Parkes to the Legislative Council in 1887 suggests that after so many years as a journalist and newspaper editor, he was now choosing to make politics his central professional pursuit. While occasional meetings regarding the Atlas are noted, the entries deal mainly with family engagements, with political matters before parliament, and with an apparently debilitating series of ailments. Garran's written contributions to the Atlas are also minimal. The picture emerges, then, of an editorial position that was part-time and executive. The remuneration package of £400, while hardly insignificant, appears modest. Julian

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60 Andrew Garran, Diary 1860-1901, MS 2001/1/1, Garran Family Papers, National Library of Australia: 6 November 1885: 'Coffee and Macleod called to offer editorship of Picturesque Atlas of Australasia @ £400 a year.'
62 Nairn 233.
63 'Australia Illustrated,' Bulletin 26 June 1886: 16.
Ashton, for instance, earned twice as much for his work as an artist with the *Atlas*. Garran himself received £1500 as a salary when appointed president of the Council of Arbitration in 1892. Nevertheless, the £400 spent on Garran, was an important investment on the part of the Atlas Company. In hiring Garran, the Company purchased credibility and profile. Andre Garran’s long-standing post as editor of Sydney’s most influential daily plugged the *Atlas* into the most elevated political networks of the colony.

The Picturesque Atlas Publishing Co. was officially registered in New South Wales on 15 February, 1886.64 By the middle of 1886 the *Atlas* was in full swing. Two months before the Carringtons’ tour of Wynyard Square, the *Bulletin* ran a short but typically double-edged article reporting the imminent publication of the first numbers of the *Atlas*:

For the first time in her hundred years of history, Australia has a chance of fair illustration, in a great work which the Picturesque Atlas Publishing Co. are about to introduce to the world. The *Atlas* has been pretty well introduced to Australia. In the days of its first inception, the proprietors were as well aware of the advantages of a proper introduction as any mother of the world with a half-dozen daughters, whose expenses are at least equal to their attractions. And so the men cleverest and best trained in this work of introduction were brought over from America to rouse up the sluggish interest of Australia. You met them of course, all of you. You gave them your order? Of course you did, and now you want to know what sort of book you are to get.65

In its jokey second-person address and tone of sceptical expectancy, the *Bulletin* report satirises the somewhat quixotic grandeur of the *Atlas* project in the face of a stubbornly apathetic public. Yet even in a paper which made an art-form out of humiliating the press establishment and other sombre institutions, there is a hint of admiration, a kind of reverent irreverence. The conceptual audacity of the *Atlas* is applauded and pilloried in the same movement:

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64 New South Wales, *Register of Companies* No.11/11782. See Burnett 31-47.
'With infinite labour, and care, and zeal each department performs its allotted task, and the result is perfection.' The key word here is 'zeal'. For the Bulletin, the Atlas is a project of biblical proportions, and pretensions. The report parodies the Atlas by slipping into a mock Old Testament register: 'All these good men were brought together, and set to wander up and down in this Australian world, and to go to and fro in it. And many of them have been and returned, and have brought their sheaves with them of full portfolios . . . .' The Bulletin report concludes with a directive to each of its readers to, 'take his pen and write to the Picturesque Publishing Co., Limited, Wynyard-square, Sydney, praying that his name may be forthwith placed on their subscription list,' and to renew their Bulletin subscription while they were about it.

- IV -

'Every man in Australia who had any name and fame,' complained the Bulletin with a mixture of irony and awe, 'was instantly put in commission – L Buvelot, J Mather, J. Roberts, J Paterson, Pigurenet, the Collingridges, the Ashtons, M’Leod, Hoyte, Cayley, Fullwood.' The more modestly funded proprietors of the Bulletin could only marvel at the seeming ease with which the Atlas swallowed virtually the entire artistic community of the Australian colonies. As a fledgling magazine, the Bulletin had had its own difficulties in finding suitable artists to employ. Limitations in the Bulletin’s printing machinery had initially precluded the use of William Macleod’s tone drawings, and their attempts to secure Julian Ashton, who drew in lines, were prevented by his contract with David Syme of the Age. Continuing in tone of mock indignation, the Bulletin

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65 'Australia Illustrated,' Bulletin 26 June 1886: 16.
67 C. Macleod 13.
writes of how the Atlas Company, not content with commissioning virtually every artist currently in the colonies, imported several more from America. The distinguished illustrator, Frederic Schell, 'a man which you may find attached to some of the best work in Harper’s and Scribner’s magazines, and most of the high and fine art publications of New York', was recruited to head the artististic division of the Atlas Company. Schell, according to the Bulletin, possessed 'the special faculty of . . . fitting artistic ideas to the exigencies of steam printing.' And with Schell came two other American artists: 'In addition to all purchaseable Australian talent, he obtained the assistance of Mr. Smedley and Mr. Fitler, both known to all who know anything of the later and more beautiful development of book illustration.'68

The involvement of the illustrators Schell, Smedley and Fitler points to the North American origins of the Atlas already mentioned in relation to Silas Moffett. Schell, Smedley and Filter had all drawn extensively for Picturesque Canada (1882-84) which was published in Canada by Belden Brothers, a Canadian publishing firm specialising in regional atlases. Also, the supervisor of maps employed by the Atlas, Mr. D. MacDonald, was a civil engineer employed by the Beldens in the preparation of a series of Canadian 'County Atlases'.69 Julian Ashton, who remembered the Atlas to be a 'tremendous undertaking', particularly recalls the extensive use of American personnel in its production: 'The firm brought over from America three competent illustrators, excellent wood-engravers and men expert in the publication of maps, together with the machinery, paper and ink.'70 That Howard Beldon had also visited Australia in 1885, helps to build a strong case for the involvement of this company in the Atlas venture, and Therese Burnett has argued compellingly for

68 'Australia Illustrated,' Bulletin 26 June 1886: 16.
70 Ashton 39.
this linkage.\textsuperscript{71} She characterises the \textit{Atlas} as a formula publication, which extended a successful North American genre to the colonies of Australia. And, despite the impression from Moore's account, it is quite clear that Silas Moffett did not draw his ideas for the \textit{Atlas} out of the ether, but followed the general pattern pursued in \textit{Picturesque America} (1872-74), \textit{Picturesque Europe} (1875-79), and \textit{Picturesque Canada} (1882-84).\textsuperscript{72} A glance at these publications reveals substantial similarities, particularly in terms of typography and the kinds of illustration they employ.

Claims of singularity are also undermined by the presence of a parallel project, \textit{Cassell's Picturesque Australasia} (1887-1889) financed by British publishing giant Cassell \& Co, and edited by the University of Melbourne academic, Professor E.E. Morris. Cassell had been involved in the previous picturesque works where it appears to have had a reciprocal arrangement with publishers in North America. \textit{Picturesque Canada}, for instance, published in North America by Belden Bros., was published in Britain by Cassell. A similar co-publication arrangement existed with Appleton of New York. \textit{Picturesque Europe} was published in America by Appleton while \textit{Picturesque America} was published in Britain by Cassell. In Australasia, however, such an arrangement was not reached, with the result being two separate 'Picturesque' publications being produced, one in Sydney at Wynyard Square by the Picturesque Atlas Publishing Co., and the other in England at the 'Belle Sauvage' printing works of Cassell \& Co.

The success of the Cassell publishing house casts light on the kind of reading market that the \textit{Atlas} was seeking to capture in the Australian colonies and suggests something of the commercial logic

\textsuperscript{71} See discussion to this effect in Burnett 2-12.

behind such publications. John Cassell (1817-1865), the carpenter turned coffee merchant, turned mass publisher, built his publishing empire on factual publications with popular appeal. He saw this as both commercially shrewd, and socially beneficial. Official Cassell historian, Simon Nowell-Smith reports him as saying, 'Give the people mental food and they will not thirst after the abominable drink which is poisoning them.'

He made his fortune through the sale of popular anthologies, almanacs, illustrated bibles and cheap reprints of literary classics. Nor, according to Victor Neuborg, did John Cassell's death in 1865 alter the production policies of the publishing firm he established, with 'popular education . . . the overwhelming characteristic of what was issued.'

Picturesque Australasia was thus in a venerable tradition of informational publishing from the house of Cassell.

The period after John Cassell's death in 1865 leading up to the publication of Picturesque Australasia in 1887-9 was one of dramatic expansion for the Cassell publishing company. The three magazines Cassell produced in 1865 had increased to seven by 1888. Similarly, while in 1865 Cassell employed approximately 500 people, by 1888 it was employing close to 1200 people. Its 'Belle Sauvage' printing works, built during the 1870s, covered 13 000 square feet and housed thirty six presses. In the late 1880s, the manager of these works claimed them to be 'the largest concern of the kind anywhere in the world.'

The company was also expanding overseas. Cassell opened a New York branch in 1860, a Paris branch in 1871, and a Melbourne branch in 1884. Australasia was clearly emerging as an important publishing market, and Ward, Lock opened an Australian branch shortly after Cassell. Cassell, however, was at the forefront of this expanding Australasian market. According to Nowell-Smith,

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75 Nowell-Smith, especially chapter 6 'Expansion 1865-1888' and appendix 4 'Cassell's in Australia and New Zealand.'
76 Nowell-Smith
77 Nowell-Smith 111.
'Cassell's were the first London publishers to maintain a resident representative in Australia; the first to build their own premises on their own site in Australia; and the first to maintain a resident representative in New Zealand.' Wallace Kirsop has characterised the opening of local branches of international publishers like Cassell in the Australian colonies in the late 1880s and 1890s as a 'British invasion'. Less sensationally, the commercial expansion of international publishing firms into Australia indicates the maturation of the colonial economies into viable markets for direct book-selling.

The company seems to have flourished in Australia, continuing with its successful formula based on periodicals, cheap classic editions, assorted 'Family Bibles', juvenile fiction, illustrated histories, how-to and informational books on topics such as medicine and home-improvement, and a host of other gazettes, yearbooks, reviews, annuals and journals. A particular specialty of the Cassell company was the 'part-issue', which were lengthy, and usually illustrated, publications issued initially in serial form, but also sold subsequently as bound editions. Another practice employed frequently by Cassell's, particularly in relation to its part-issues, was the tying of popular works to topical occasions, and in particular the commemorative publication. As Nowell-Smith remarks: 'Not an international event of any significance was allowed to pass without a part-issue explaining its historical setting.' Cassell's History of India, for instance, was marketed for well over fifteen years by making use of the interest generated by a succession of Indian political events and royal visits:

The first visit of the Prince of Wales to India was celebrated by James Grant's Cassell's History of India, 1876-7 ('with a life-like

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78 Nowell-Smith, appendix 4, 265.
80 Nowell-Smith 102.
portrait of His Royal Highness'); this was still running, and more than ever topical, when the Queen was proclaimed Empress of India; a reissue was begun on the outbreak of the second Afghan war in 1878, another in 1885 when there was trouble with Russia over the Afghan frontier ('with a large map in colours shewing the Russian advances in Central Asia'), and yet another in 1889 when the Prince of Wales eldest son set out for India . . .

The 1870s and 80s were peppered with books targeted to capture popular interest in current events, and when interest in a topic was re-kindled the books were re-issued. However, it was anniversaries that were, from a marketing point of view, particularly prized because they were by their nature, completely predictable. The commercial beauty of an anniversary was that it would generate interest in advance of the event. This was the happy scenario when the centenary of the war of independence allowed Cassell to promote its *History of the United States* (1875-1877). This was also the opportunity offered by the centenary of Phillip's fleet arriving in Port Jackson.

Undoubtedly, the conditions must have seemed propitious in the mid-1880s for Cassell to publish a commemorative part-issue about Australia. Not only had the company recently opened its Australian office, but the approaching centenary was just the type of commemorative occasion that could be relied on to generate the public interest needed to successfully market a part-issue. A formula for regional description was already well-established at Cassell & Co. The format for the publication would follow the lines of the five volume *Picturesque Europe*, produced in 1876-9, and succeeded by similar works devoted to America, Canada and the Mediterranean. *Picturesque Europe*, in its original issue was, according to Nowell-Smith, 'the most expensively priced work ever yet produced by Cassell, its large-paper edition being offered for sale at 20 guineas in

81 Nowell-Smith 102-103.
82 Nowell-Smith 101.
cloth and 50 guineas in morocco gilt. The plan appears to have been to consolidate the arrival of Cassell into Australia with a similarly expansive publication. In the end, the product was perhaps a little more modest. Certainly, the Cassell’s *Picturesque Australasia* does not seem to have been resourced to the same degree as the *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*. Howard Dennym joining Cassell’s Melbourne office when it opened in 1884, recalled the publication as one of the significant early projects for Cassell’s Australasian operation: ‘Two artists were engaged in England to visit Australia to make drawings for *Picturesque Australasia*, a four-volume work in many bindings, edited by Professor E.E. Morris of Melbourne University’. There seems to have been little of the public grandstanding that accompanied each stage of the production of the *Atlas*. The relatively low public profile of *Picturesque Australasia* suggests a certain seamless corporate approach to the project. Rather than publishing a unique textual monument, *Picturesque Australasia* was just one more project in the endless round of illustrated histories and geographies produced at Belle Sauvage.

Unfortunately, it was not quite business as usual, the main problem being that unlike a good majority of Cassell’s publications, *Picturesque Australasia* was not a commercial winner. Howard Denny remembered the work to be ‘only a limited success,’ and adds rather revealingly that, ‘we considered it fortunate that many hundreds of the last volume were lost at sea.’ Perhaps the Australasian market had already reached saturation point in terms of picturesque publications. The fact that a very similar part-issue publication had been issued, and heavily marketed, immediately prior to its appearance could not have helped. But again, the relationship is not clear. It seems the capacity of the projected readership to absorb two relatively expensive part-issue publications

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83 Nowell-Smith 101. At a mere ten guineas, the *Atlas* was comparatively cheap compared with *Picturesque Europe*.
84 Nowell-Smith, appendix 4, 266.
85 *The House of Cassell*, p.266 [Appendix 4]
fell short of the expectations of both publishers, but it is also entirely possible that each work contributed to their mutual failure as viable commercial ventures.

- V -

The fact that the *Atlas* bore substantial generic debts to publications in Europe and America should not signal the end of the interest that it holds. It is important not to leave a published work stranded in the web of its antecedents, but to follow its trajectory as a cultural project. As important to the *Atlas* as its generic influences were its local contributors, and it is possible to trace interesting cross-fertilisations between the internationally conceived *Atlas* and locally developed publishing ventures. As co-tenants of the same city it is not surprising to see, for instance, that many of those associated with the *Atlas* had, or later formed, connections with the *Bulletin*. The assistant editor of the *Picturesque Atlas*, F.J. Broomfield, was a journalist from the opposite end of the political spectrum to Andrew Garran. He had written for a number of left-wing newspapers including the *Freeman’s Journal*, the *Australian Worker*, and the *Bulletin*. In the 1890s, Broomfield became sub-editor with the *Bulletin*, playing a major part in the development of that magazine’s literary pages. There was a further *Bulletin* connection in the contributions of W.H. Traill, who wrote the extensive ‘Queensland’ sections of the *Atlas*. Traill controlled the *Bulletin* during much of its formative period, from 1881 to 1886, and despite the subsequent antipathy of its founding genius Archibald, is credited with setting the magazine on a sustainable footing. Finally, there was William Macleod. With the departure of William Traill from the *Bulletin*, Macleod gained a controlling interest and remained an important figure with the magazine over the next forty years.87

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Although centred in Sydney, efforts were made by the makers of the *Atlas* to ensure that other colonies were enfranchised through the use of local contributors. In particular, they would have been keenly aware of the crucial importance of ensuring a strong presence in Victoria. Melbourne’s economic fortunes were diametrically opposed to Sydney’s, and it was imperative that the *Atlas* took advantage of the booming economy in the southern metropolis. High profile Victorian contributors were sought and found. Alexander Sutherland, author of *Victoria and its Metropolis* (1888), contributed, as did G.B. Barton and Ada Cambridge. However, the key Melbourne contact for the Atlas Company was James Smith. Smith, who wrote the majority of the Victorian and Tasmanian sections, was a substantial figure in the cultural life of Melbourne. Like Garran, he had decades of experience as a journalist and editor with his city’s top newspapers and reviews. And, like Garran, his public stature ensured the *Atlas* had access to key government and media networks.

For all this, questions over local content continued to haunt the Atlas Company. In Britain, the *Times* reviewed the publication with that brand of patronising praise that was specifically set aside for events taking place in the colonies. ‘This work,’ it announced, ‘is all the more remarkable in that it is entirely produced in Australia. The illustrations are all engraved there, the maps all drawn and engraved, and the whole book printed there. It would be difficult to produce anything finer in Europe or America.’ These ‘remarkable’ achievements, however, are qualified by a reminder ‘that most of the artists, engravers and cartographers have been imported for the

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purpose from England and the States, which in itself does credit to the enterprise of the company which undertakes the work."\(^{90}\)

The debate over whether the *Atlas* was ‘Australian’ or ‘foreign’ was not just an issue of social identity but was intimately connected to the political and economic debates of the 1880s over the issue of tariffs. ‘It is with something approaching mortification,’ wrote a Melbourne *Age* journalist in relation to the *Atlas*, ‘that we find so much of the art employed in the work and the materials to be used in its construction to be derived from American sources.’\(^{91}\) David Syme, the editor of the *Age* was a leading figure in the cause of protective trade policies and strongly supported their continued application to Victoria.\(^{92}\) As an issue, protection presented both a compelling argument and recurring stumbling block in pursuit of federation.\(^{93}\)

The extent to which the *Atlas* was dependent on foreign investment goes to the very heart of the free trade debate that was the principal ground of colonial rivalry between Victoria and New South Wales.

While the Melbourne *Age* decried its heavy reliance on ‘American sources’, the *Sydney Morning Herald* found much to be praised in the flow of external capital and ingenuity into New South Wales.

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\(^{90}\) In fact, while the American contribution was decisive – all the material, machinery, and much of the expertise – the specific contribution ‘from England’ was virtually nil. Indeed, the direct contribution of other European nations, particularly Germany, was arguably greater than that of England. The engraving staff were particularly polyglot, and included two Australians, seven Americans, four Germans and an Italian. The two Australians were the Collingridge brothers, George and Arthur. ‘The other gentlemen engaged in this department,’ writes the *Telegraph*, ‘are Messrs, Negri (an Italian, Schwartzberger, Buchner, Miller, Hirschmann (all Germans) Irwin, Sharp, Smith Hayman, Brockway and Bacher (Americans).’ The seventh American was Horace Baker, the supervisor of the department, responsible for approving each block before it was forwarded to the electrotyping department. ‘Picturesque Atlas of Australasia: Genesis of Australian Art – II,’ *Daily Telegraph* 21 August 1886: 9.


\(^{93}\) ‘The Federal impulse of 1880 was in the first place a reaction from the ultra-Protectionist policy of 1878-9 some of whose imposts, and the Stock Tax in particular, being directly aimed at intercolonial imports, naturally provoked great bitterness of feeling on the border.’ Alfred Deakin, *The Federal Story: the Inner History of the Federal Cause* (Melbourne: Robertson and Mullers, 1944) 9.
which the *Atlas* had generated.\textsuperscript{94} In fact, according to the *Herald*, ‘it was entirely owing to the fact that Sydney is – or rather was – a centre of free trade that the business was originally established in this city’:

As soon as the proprietors became aware that the duties levied at the port of Melbourne on the particular quality of paper, as well as the machinery they proposed to import, would form a very serious tax upon their estimated profits, they naturally determined to make Sydney their headquarters in order to avoid those duties. As their operations extend throughout the whole of the colonies, it will be seen that Melbourne thus lost the opportunity of becoming the seat of a new enterprise of great interest and importance.

It was precisely this ability of foreign companies to play one colony off against another that provided one of the most pressing arguments for federation and a common customs duty. In the event, although the proprietors of the *Atlas* had chosen Sydney on the basis of its free trade status, by the time they established operations, the financially pressured New South Wales government had imposed a regime of import duties: ‘It was somewhat unfortunate for the Atlas Company that they had no sooner made their arrangements for carrying on business in Sydney that the new tariff introduced by the present government began to tell heavily on their importations.’\textsuperscript{95} The tariff, indeed, had been introduced as part of the budgetary rescue package brought in by Jennings to repair the New South Wales government’s revenue base.\textsuperscript{96}

While Melbourne was not chosen as the location for the *Atlas* factory, it remained important as a market. As part of its Melbourne campaign, the proprietors of the *Atlas* orchestrated a large-scale publicity event for March of 1887. As it had done in Melbourne two

\textsuperscript{94} *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 August 1886: 7.
\textsuperscript{95} *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 August 1886: 7.
\textsuperscript{96} Although Jennings tariff was motivated by a need to raise revenue, it was brought in at a time when the sentiment for protectionism was resurgent in New South Wales: ‘Twenty protectionists were returned to the assembly in the election of late 1885, and in 1886 rallies and organization out of doors were to presage a newly-effective form of electoral management not unlike that witnessed in the selectors' campaigns of the late seventies.’ Allan Martin, *Henry Parkes: a Biography* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1980) 356.
years previously in Ashton's Collins Street studio, the Atlas Company based the event around an exhibition. The venue this time was the Athenaeum. Garran travelled to Melbourne for the event, and also to catch up with several Victorian-based contributors to the Atlas, including James Smith and the Bartons.97 The Melbourne launch was reported in the Illustrated Australian News of April 2, 1887:

A very large and influential gathering assembled on March 22 at the Athenaeum, in response to an invitation issued by the directors, artists and literary staff of the Picturesque Atlas Publishing Company Limited, for the purpose of inspecting the advance drawings and artists' proofs of their forthcoming publication.

The ‘gathering’ included the Governor of Victoria, Sir Henry B. Loch, and ‘the leading members of the journalistic, legal, medical and various other professions,’ and was accompanied by all the ‘customary loyal toasts’ that marked vice-regal attendance. The report offers some further suggestions about the aim of the work, and reflects the broadened dimensions of the project. It was ‘to provide an atlas illustrating the rise and progress of Australia, showing the continent as it was in the year 1606 and its condition at the present time.’ In short, it was ‘to afford a panorama of Australian life.’ Favourable media publicity was also gained in the Age. ‘The great work,’ it reports, ‘now upwards of 12 months in progress, describing and delineating Australasian history and topography on a scale of unprecedented luxury and splendour, begins to redeem its promises made by its projectors, who have issued the first nine numbers of their Picturesque Atlas, containing 150 pages of folio letter press, with illustrations innumerable and of endless variety.’98

The Melbourne historian H.G. Turner, called upon to toast ‘Literature and Art,’ pronounced that ‘the Atlas would show the

Certainly, several of the key personnel – Andrew Garran, William Macleod, James Smith, Julian Ashton, William Traill, F.J. Broomfield – were persons who had at least been long time residents of the Australian colonies. There is also no doubt that the work of producing the *Atlas*, excluding the materials of production, took place in its Wynyard Square facility in Sydney. However, Turner’s further assertion that the *Atlas*, ‘with the solitary exception of the paper itself, [was] the result of Australian talent and skill,’ was clearly an exaggeration, yet it was an exaggeration that was in keeping with the mood of the occasion. Part of the problem, however, for those proponents of the *Atlas* that sought to establish the project as conclusively Australian is that the imported ‘materials’ were not simply an incidental feature of the publication. The proprietors of the *Atlas* were claiming to bring for the first time to Australian shores the techniques of ‘fine art printing’, as practiced in such sumptuous American journals as *Century* and *Harper’s Monthly*. In other words, the *Atlas* was staking one of its claims to greatness on the material splendour of the pages itself.

Where the theme of Carrington’s tour of Wynyard Square had been the progress of Art in Australia, the exhibition at the Athenaeum significantly broadened the terms of reference for the *Atlas*. A wide-ranging speech by Governor Loch pointed out that the ‘growing and established importance of Greater Britain’ were embodied in the scope and quality of the *Atlas*. As a representative of the crown such pronouncements were not unpredictable, yet the Governor was also at pains in his address to point out that the *Atlas* ‘would operate greatly in promoting the fast growing sentiment of federation.’ Moreover, Loch’s speech provided explicit vice-regal endorsement not only for the federation movement, but for the role of the *Atlas* as

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100 *Illustrated Australian News* 2 April 1887: 55.
101 *Illustrated Australian News* 2 April 1887: 55.
102 *Illustrated Australian News* 2 April 1887: 55.
an agent of national consciousness. ‘The atlas,’ he continued, ‘would have a powerful effect in showing that Australia had one history, and in reality one people.’103 Unity of history and race, Loch insists, were essential components in the assertion and dissemination of nationhood. Through the Atlas, national singularity would be both announced and textually enacted.104 Loch’s sentiments reveal a conscious recognition of the ideological function of the Atlas, a function that was toasted by the Governor and duly applauded by the local Victorian intelligentsia.

Loch, for his part, was repaid for his patronage of the Atlas with a large portrait, ‘Sir Henry Brougham Loch’ (179), in the ‘Historical Sketch of Victoria’, and glowing appraisals of himself and Lady Loch by James Smith: ‘No movement calculated to prove of advantage to the religious, moral, intellectual or economic progress of the colony has ever failed to elicit their cordial co-operation and support’ (253).105 Smith also wrote in an earlier chapter that his Excellency and Lady Loch ‘were peculiarly well qualified, both by character and temperament, for the leadership of society in this distant land’ (179). A final gesture of gratitude comes in the form of a small cameo drawn by Lady Loch from the window of their summer house in Mount Macedon and included in the Victorian chapters of the Atlas. It is the only picture by Lady Loch in the Atlas and is rather at odds with the other illustrations.

These meagre quid pro quos between politician and publication signal a feature of the Atlas that is lacking in its related European and North American publications. High level political involvement is a significant dimension of the genesis of the Atlas. At the various publicity events, the governors of both New South Wales and

103 Illustrated Australian News 2 April 1887: 55.
Victoria were in attendance, as well as a train of government officials and politicians. Deakin, a member of the Australian Natives Association and an active federationist, was also a sympathetic advocate of the project. G.B. Barton, the brother of the first Australian prime minister Edmund Barton, contributed to the *Atlas*. Edmund Barton’s private secretary, and one of the architects of the Australian constitution, Robert Garran, was the son of the editor of the *Atlas*, Andrew Garran. To the extent that the book carries weight as a document of public sentiment, then, the involvement of names like Deakin, Garran and Barton point to the *Atlas* being very near to the centre of political and in particular federal political mass during the mid-1880s.

The political inflexion of the *Atlas* must be seen to derive partly at least from the moment in which it was published. Bound with the pages of the *Atlas* are the sentiments of the centennial occasion, particularly its political preoccupations with unifying the colonies through a common history. The Australian centenary opened up a space for the language of ‘national’ progress that was seductive to the political imagination, and the *Atlas* as a centennial publication sought to build and sell itself within this space.

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105 The parenthetical numbers refer to pages in Andrew Garran, ed., *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia* 3 vols. (Sydney: The Picturesque Atlas Publishing Co., 1886-88). All subsequent references to the *Atlas* will be made according to this method and will refer to this edition.
Chapter 2
Australia and the Picturesque

The problem with stylistic change in Australia is that one never knows quite where it ought to be located. On the one hand one might wish to start thinking about a 'local' tradition, where a degree of generational continuity and the dynamics of an increasingly metropolitan society suggest the legitimacy of cultural autonomy. Alternatively, one might be overcome by the sensation that the Australian colonies were so much in the orbit of Britain, or indeed Europe, or indeed increasingly, America, that it is futile and misleading to search for explanations of how something is produced in Australia simply by looking at Australia. Australian culture, according to this manner of thinking, is simply the refraction of cultures that are elsewhere.1 Certainly, one faces this dilemma with the Atlas. Reading Picturesque Canada and Picturesque America, it is impossible not to be struck by the similarities of these works to the Atlas in terms of the style of drawing, the choice of illustrations, the typography, and the production standards. One feels drawn to conclude as Therese Burnett did, that here we have a 'totally planned, imported product' that owed its entire appearance to a 'predetermined format'.2 What else can be said? The Atlas was simply a franchised extension of a winning formula, 'a vessel to be filled with the local brew'.3 Nevertheless, there are important reasons for taking the explanation of the Atlas beyond the point of identifying its predecessors.

1 The Subaltern critique of historicism takes this line. Dipesh Chakrabarty has suggested that displacing the non-western world ('elsewhere') into the realm of the 'not yet' is the defining gesture of historicism. It leads to a world view that has modernity as a 'trickle down' phenomena that always begins in the West before reaching 'elsewhere' in a necessarily corrupted and attenuated form. 'The Project of Provincializing Europe', Graduate Colloquium, Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, Australian National University, Canberra, 10 August, 1998. Sodipta Kaviraj suggests, in a similar vein, that this preoccupation with a central causality leads to the defining of the non-centre in terms of anachronism. 'The Imaginary Institution of India,' Subaltern Studies VII, ed. Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandrey (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992) 5-9.
2 Burnett 2.
3 Burnett 4.
Firstly, if indeed the Atlas was a product of the newly created world of the franchise (and there is certainly a compelling argument for this position), then the issue of which product came first becomes less important since they were all, so to speak, members of the same family. To say that the Atlas derived from Picturesque Canada helps one to trace the contingencies of the sequence of production, but not to account for the broader fact of their collective appearance. Related to this is the possibility of larger scale conceptual shifts which are in a real sense de-centred in that they occur neither in Britain, America, Canada or Australia but in a cultural space that connects and encompasses all of these places. Picturesque America, Picturesque Europe, Picturesque Canada and the Atlas need to be understood not as a sequence of publications which somehow influenced each other, but as a kind of simultaneous phenomenon that is the product of more general conditions. Finally, and most importantly, there is the issue of local difference. Is it sufficient to explain a book by pointing to its similarity with another? For all its stylistic predeterminations, the Atlas is its own work, employing its own set of artists and authors. The emphasis on history in the Atlas is far beyond that of either of its American cousins. The Atlas is geographically programmatic in its organisation, while both Picturesque America and Picturesque Canada are eclectic in this respect. Indeed, the very fact of it being an 'atlas' with a serious and sustained cartographic component was a significant deviation from its parallel works elsewhere. The point of course is not to deny commonality, but to realise that one cannot understand a work simply by pointing to the features it shares with related works.

What this chapter seeks to pursue is a form of explanation which both accounts for the transnational character of the Atlas and allows space for the local elements of its creation to be registered. Where similarities with other publications occur they have been noted but the primacy of the Atlas as a work which bears its own relations to its social moment is a position I seek to maintain throughout this study.
Moreover, I wish to fit the *Atlas* within a broader history of the picturesque which might take within its compass the origins of this aesthetic movement but also its subsequent and varied manifestations in the course of the nineteenth century. Here I will be arguing for the existence of a certain kind of picturesque sensibility and for a decisive reconfiguration of this sensibility in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

- I -

There have been several penetrating studies of the picturesque in the early colonial culture of Australia. In particular, the work of Bernard Smith, Robert Dixon and Paul Carter has highlighted the centrality of the picturesque as a ‘way of seeing’ in the colonies. The picturesque, they point out in various ways, was part of the equipment of settlement. Topographical and picturesque artists arrived in the colony of New South Wales at a very early stage. Artists such as John Eyre, Absolom West and Joseph Lycett conducted a series of colonial tours about Sydney and the surrounding regions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, sketching and painting what they saw. These ‘views’ in watercolour, often accompanied by explanatory texts, were printed and sold by subscription to a relatively small and essentially wealthy readership in Britain and Australia. As a genre of book, the views were in the tradition of picturesque travel writing and illustration pioneered by William Gilpin in the late eighteenth century.

What separates the colonial picturesque tour from its domestic cousin, and indeed from the journey of exploration, is the condition of self-presence.

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Like Gilpin, colonial picturesque artists had travelled in search of a pristine and picturesque nature, a pre-modern land of aesthetic purity. Gilpin’s picturesque tours were nostalgic for an era without change, in which the patterns of nature could be viewed and assessed according to the principle of artistic composition. However, the colonial artist carried a second, and in many ways contradictory imperative, which was to illustrate the emergence of civil society in the antipodes. Lycett’s *Views in Australia* (1824), for instance, contained a mixture of views, some which depicted picturesque nature, and others which depicted agricultural and proto-urban scenes. This mixture of images, argues Dixon, constituted an iconic narrative that was used to measure the progress of civil society in the colonies of Britain’s empire. As he puts it: ‘A scenic tour from Sydney to the outlying districts of the settlement also became an historical and philosophical tour through the phases of empire.’ Whereas Gilpin had travelled outside of time and outside of history to find the picturesque in Britain, colonial artists like Lycett built their picturesque tours around the march of history and the progress of settler society.

Aboriginal people formed an important marker in this progress. Groups of Aboriginal ‘figures’ were used, according to Bernard Smith, ‘to fulfil the function of a pictorial embellishment of topographic landscape, providing a local touch and pointing to the contrast between primeval life and the busy progress of the town.’ Aboriginal figures, in other words, help the artist stage the narrative of colonial progress. In Joseph Lycett’s ‘Distant View of Sydney’ (1824), to take a representative example, a group of indigenous people

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5 Gilpin began publishing his journeys in the 1780s. Their publication was thus directly contemporaneous with the first European settlement of Australia.
7 Dixon, *Course of Empire* 56.
8 B. Smith, *European Vision* 165.
are shown in the foreground marching obligingly westward. This leaves the centre of the picture to be occupied by the emerging commercial metropolis of Sydney, with its windmills, multi-storey architecture and tall ships plying the harbour. In this philosophical tour, 'the Aborigine' was both an historical reference point and an icon of alterity. Clusters of Aboriginal people were a persistent badge of otherness, pinned on to the corner of a canvas that now featured European civilisation as its centrepiece. Thus in these pictures, Aboriginality, as it was conceived by European settlers, had a way of framing the Australian colonial world by delimiting the fields of racial identity and historical narrative. Although pictorially marginalised, Aboriginal people were crucial to colonial space precisely because they formed its margins.

Australia of course was not unique in its susceptibility to picturesque depiction and description. Nicholas Thomas, Mary Louise Pratt and others have shown that the language of the picturesque pervaded the writings of empire. The expansion of British territorial interests and a greater commitment to colonial administration created a demand for ways to talk about places that were new and different. Moreover, there was a pragmatic interest in, wherever possible, aestheticising the imperial project. As a result, the picturesque becomes a preferred mode of vision in the colonies. While tapping a growing interest in the exotic possibilities of colonial life, it also provided a useful counter-balance to administrative reports or scientific surveys. As a way of seeing, 'the picturesque eye' became a significant feature of the global expansion of British territory in the nineteenth-century, an expansion which included in no small measure the Australian colonies. There, as elsewhere, the picturesque eye was often found to be wearing imperial spectacles.

9 Lycett n. pag.
The most accessible examples of this imperial picturesque eye occur in the travel and descriptive literature that flourished in the nineteenth-century. The geo-politics of empire opened new horizons to the would-be picturesque traveller. This political expansion was matched by a growth in the public interest about the far-flung corners of the Empire, an emergent interest that was accommodated by a growing stream of travel literature and factual publications describing these newly-realised realms. Two who were to take advantage of this interest were the Daniells, Thomas and nephew William.\textsuperscript{11} Entrepreneurial in spirit, the Daniells saw as early as the 1780s the economic potential of the views trade in British India. Initially they earned money by engraving picturesque views for sale as decorative prints to officers in the British East India Company. Not long after returning to London in 1794, however, they set about publishing a collection of their aquatint prints under the title of \textit{Oriental Scenery: Twenty-Four Views in Hindoostan} (London, 1795).\textsuperscript{12} In 1810 they produced a cheaper, popular edition of their aquatints, \textit{A Picturesque Voyage to India by the Way of China} (London, 1810) which included the following remarks concerning the role of art in the colonies:

Science has had her adventurers, and philanthropy her achievements: the shores of Asia have been invaded by a race of students with no rapacity but for lettered relics; by naturalists, whose cruelty extends not to one human inhabitant; by philosophers, ambitious only for the extirpation of error, and the diffusion of truth. It remains for the artist to claim his part in these guiltless spoliations, and to transport to Europe the picturesque beauties of these favoured regions.\textsuperscript{13}

As a mission statement, the Daniells' proclamation is interesting in several ways. It constructs imperialism as a multi-disciplined intellectual venture involving science, philanthropy, philosophy

\textsuperscript{12} For details of publications by the Daniells, see Archer 219-33.
\textsuperscript{13} No reference given, cited in Archer 224.
and now art. It plays with the metaphor of conquest by invoking terms such as ‘invaded’, ‘rapacity’, ‘cruelty’, ‘extirpation’ and ‘spoliation’, but disarms it by drawing upon the implied innocence of science and art. What harm, it is asked, can there be in knowledge? What possible harm could be caused in the ‘extirpation of error, and the diffusion of truth’? Still less threatening, then, must be the practice of art. This whole process of artistic imperialism is given by the Daniells the further legitimacy of a square deal, where Asia exchanges its own ‘picturesque beauties’ in return for European truth and knowledge.

The studies of Smith, Dixon and Carter show a close correlation between the development of picturesque discourse and the practices of colonialism in Australia and the Pacific. The articulation of the imperial picturesque by the Daniells can be compared with similar pronouncements made by Australian explorers such as Thomas Mitchell and Charles Sturt. ‘The beautiful recesses of unpeopled earth, could no longer remain unknown,’ wrote Mitchell. The artistically-minded Mitchell felt, like the Daniells, that art could help to bring them within the folds of knowledge: ‘The better to mark them out of my map, I gave to the valley the name of Salvator Rosa.’

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14 W.J.T. Mitchell argues that the medium of landscape ‘might be seen more profitably as something like the “dreamwork” of imperialism,’ a way of imaginatively engaging with the world that was consonant with the practices of empire-acquistion. ‘Imperial Landscape,’ Landscape and Power, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) 10.

15 Nicholas Thomas has considered the role of the picturesque in the colonial relationship between Britain and India: ‘In the expensive but popular aquatints of William Hodges, the Daniells, Henry Salt and James Fraser, India is not a place, but a series of views and scenes; the sense that a building is not a functional structure of some kind, but a monument or sight does not arise merely from the fact that the landscape or edifice is represented, but is further emphasized by the frequent presence of small groups of Indians in and around the structures, who are entirely idle – seemingly present just as tourists. Indian labour and the complexity of Indian social life may well be elided in these images for aesthetic reasons rather than consciously political ones, yet the picturesque apprehension of the subcontinent catered for a colonial imaging by making the place archaic, decayed and available to antiquaries’ (54-55).


Yet the picturesque, as it appeared in the literature of travel in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, would appear to differ significantly from the picturesque as it was conceived in late nineteenth-century illustrated compendia such as the *Atlas*. Even by the middle of the century, Bernard Smith detects a certain expansion in the terms of reference of the picturesque in Australia during the nineteenth century. In works such as G.F. Angas' *Savage Life and Scenes in Australia and New Zealand* (1847) or Louisa Anne Meredith's *My Home in Tasmania during a Residence of Nine Years* (1852) that lie broadly within the tradition of the picturesque travelogue, the application of the term seems to go beyond its traditional definitions.18 'The term picturesque,' he notes, had by mid-century 'widened to cover exotic things not intrinsically picturesque.'19 Yet this also begs the question of what might be considered 'intrinsic' to the picturesque.

It is in fact even more difficult to fit the large scale picturesque compendia such as *Picturesque America, Picturesque Europe, Picturesque Canada*, and the *Atlas* within this picturesque tradition. In the *Atlas* and its generational counterparts, the discussions and illustrations are not confined, as the accounts of Angas and Meredith were, to the description of scenery, but deal extensively with history, science, politics and the bustle of modernity. It seems a very different and expanded form of the picturesque that is able to encompass these further dimensions. Even in an illustrated work such as E.C. Booth's *Australia* (1874-76), the closest the *Atlas* comes to an Australian precursor, seems to be separated by a decisive difference in scope and character from the later picturesque compendia.20 The well composed, elegant and sedate drawings of Booth's *Australia* share more in quality with those of the early topographical tradition than

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19 B. Smith, *European Vision* 150.
they do with the *Atlas*. These variations in the application of the picturesque suggest that it was prone to a degree of semantic flux.

- II -

Today the word ‘picturesque’ has become a useful way of saying ‘pretty’ without sounding trite. To describe something as picturesque suggests a greater and more refined degree of aesthetic evaluation. In Britain, in the early part of the eighteenth century its meaning was both more limited and more literal. It was used quite simply to refer to ‘subjects suitable for painting’. In other words, to be picturesque was to conform to the compositional format that was considered pleasing in a painting. Yet presumably painters chose to paint those things which were pleasing in the world. Which then existed first, art which informs our understanding of beauty in Nature, or Nature’s beauty which informs our practice of art? This is the fundamental circularity at the centre of the picturesque.

As the term was applied increasingly to scenery, the reference to painting became more symbolic. Painting became a more or less silent referent to an idea of natural beauty that involved symmetry, balance, and an order between the various components of the scene. An ordered composition which balanced the foreground and the middleground, the colour of sky and land, the shape of trees and mountains, the quantity of light and dark, all in a way which promoted the smooth but interested movement of the eye across the scene. In the eighteenth-century, the pleasures of the picturesque

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22 E.H. Gombrich explains the circularity of the picturesque in these terms: ‘In the past, painters were expected to look for a corner of nature which was by general consent “picturesque”. Few people realize that this demand was somewhat unreasonable. We call “picturesque” such motifs as we have seen in pictures before. If painters were to keep to those they would have to repeat each other endlessly.’ *The Story of Art* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1978 [1950]) 411.
were pre-eminently scopic, a practice of seeing in terms of this underlying aesthetic order. The picturesque tour was a journey based around the pleasures of seeing and was concerned with bringing the hidden beauties of nature within the confines of the visible.

The intricate intellectual history of the picturesque has occasioned a considerable amount of critical interest in the course of this century. The interest has been largely centred on the late eighteenth-century, and particularly on the 1790s, or what Ann Bermingham calls 'the Picturesque decade'. Traditionally, the picturesque has been viewed as a philosophical fad, or alternatively, as a transitional phase nestled in between the major artistic paradigms of neo-classicism and romanticism. The picturesque, so the story goes, appears on the intellectual scene in a flurry of treatises and scholarly dialogues before disappearing equally as precipitately in a cloud of satire. Particular attention has been paid to the origins of the movement and the series of debates it provoked amongst its key proponents, such as William Gilpin, Uvedale Price, William Payne Knight, Humphrey Repton and 'Capability' Brown. The sudden and inglorious demise of the picturesque is accepted as both final, inevitable, and something of a shame. Christopher Hussey's seminal history, The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View (1927), attempts a broad intellectual recuperation of the picturesque. Hussey contends that far from being inconsequential, the picturesque movement was the spark that would eventually lead to the modernist conflagration. He argues that in the history of art, picturesque aesthetic theory performed an important enabling role. According to Hussey, it was the artistic concern for roughness and sudden variation advocated by

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24 Bermingham, Landscape and Ideology 57-85.
late eighteenth-century picturesque theorists such as Uvedale Price that paved the way for Constable and Turner in the nineteenth-century, who in turn made possible the emergence of impressionism, and from there it was just a short jump to post-impression and abstract art.

Amongst other questionable linkages, one of the major problems with Hussey’s narrative is that, in actual fact, the picturesque did not disappear in the nineteenth century. Despite Hussey’s eulogy, the picturesque did not perish as a martyr to the cause of artistic modernity. If it did, why does the National Union Catalog of holdings in North American research libraries list over 230 titles published after 1800 beginning with the word ‘Picturesque’?25 And why, more to the point, do substantial publications such as the Atlas choose to go under the banner of the picturesque? Perhaps what Hussey and others are really describing is not so much the death of the picturesque but its fall from grace, its relegation from the planes of philosophical discourse.

This point can be further clarified by reference to the intellectual debates that erupted in the eighteenth-century around the idea of the picturesque. The two most celebrated disputes both involved Uvedale Price. Price’s first altercation was with the so-called landscape ‘improvers’, Humphrey Repton and ‘Capability’ Brown. Price, somewhat perversely, attacked Repton and Brown for the artificiality of the gardens they produced.26 The landscaping effects they espoused, such as clumps of trees and belts of shrubbery, were so mechanically employed according to Price as to mock the natural world they sought to imitate. Price argued that a garden could not be produced according to a formula but had to be grown, nurtured, and

26 Uvedale Price, An Essay on the Picturesque As Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful; and, on the use of Studying Pictures for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape
allowed to develop its own shape and texture over time. If a garden was permitted to evolve along these lines it would become picturesque because its features would betray a certain arbitrary quality that was characteristic of the hand of Nature. For Price, roughness, diversity and sudden change became the touchstones of the picturesque. For him the picturesque was a kind of controlled heterodoxy.

Price’s theory of the picturesque, however, came under attack on another front. Richard Payne Knight, Price’s good friend and neighbour, criticised Price for his assumption that the recognition of the picturesque was an uncomplicated reaction to the arrangement of natural objects. In other words, he criticised Price for suggesting that the picturesque existed objectively, outside of the viewer’s understanding and experience. Knight, drawing on and reacting against Archibald Alison’s theory of the association of ideas, argued that the picturesque was dependent on the imaginative associations of the viewer. A scene was picturesque, according to Knight, only insofar as it corresponded to a viewer’s knowledge of landscape art. This represented a significant shift away from the traditional Burkean definitions of aesthetic sensation in terms of eternal human instincts. The Price-Knight debate also re-enacts the circular argument about the source of aesthetic pleasure that lies at the heart of the picturesque. Is such pleasure a response that is inherent or is it cultivated through experience?

In these debates, particularly the Price-Knight debate, the picturesque acted as an important philosophical fulcrum for profound questions


27 The substance of these objections appeared in Richard Payne Knight, The Landscape, a Didactic Poem in Three Books. Addressed to Uvedale Price, Esq. (London, 1794). Price meets Knight’s objections in a rhetorical tract published several year later as A Dialogue on the Distinct Characters of the Picturesque and the Beautiful, in Answer to the Objectives of Mr. Knight (London, 1801). For further discussions, see Hipple 247-77, and on the Price-Knight controversy 228-33.

about the nature of perception and experience, and it is on the basis of this intellectual ascendency that the picturesque has been viewed as a significant moment in the history of ideas. By the early nineteenth century, however, the force had gone out of the picturesque as a topic for scholarly debate. As Sidney Robinson notes, there was a general 'decline in the intellectual energy of the Picturesque since the eighteenth-century'.

The very word was already being seen as having a certain shallowness in intellectual circles. Even in his 1805 edition of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth was distancing himself from the picturesque as an appropriate manner with which to engage with nature. There was, he felt, a certain arrogance ('presumption') in the picturesque approach to the world, which concerned itself with 'comparison of scene with scene' and was 'bent overmuch on superficial things', and thus failed to comprehend 'the moods/ Of Nature, and the spirit of the place.'

In part the term 'picturesque' suffered from over-definition. The profusion of debate left the term exhausted of meaning and the semantic waters were so muddled that it was difficult to give the term any precise and non-contentious operation. Ruskin, who struggled with this problem, declared the picturesque to be 'one of the most obscure [subjects] of all that may legitimately be submitted to human reason; and the idea is itself so varied in the minds of different men, according to their subjects of study, that no definition can be expected to embrace more than a certain number of its infinitely multiplied forms.' Ruskin negotiates his way through

this field of uncertainty by distinguishing two 'schools' of the
picturesque. On the one hand he sees a retention of the 'true or
noble picturesque' in the work of Turner, 'the Turnerian
picturesque', as he calls it. On the other hand Ruskin sees a decayed
and debased popular alternative school. This he terms 'the low
school of surface picturesque; that which fills ordinary drawing books
and scrap books, and employs, perhaps, the most popular living
landscape painters of France, England, and Germany.' The
vulgarity of this form of picturesque, Ruskin explains, lies in its
willingness to draw upon 'sources of pleasure inconsistent with the
perfect nature of the thing to be studied.'

The first point then is that the picturesque did not die or disappear in
the early part of the nineteenth century. Rather, it retained a
transmuted aesthetic presence, at least according to Ruskin, in the
painting of an artist like Turner. More importantly, and I would
suggest more compellingly, the picturesque remained operative at a
practical, popular and commercial level castigated by Ruskin as the
realm of the vulgar and as being characterised by shallowness
('surface') and ignoble forms of pleasure. However, the philosophical
meanderings of Price and Knight tend to obscure the fact that the
picturesque had, after all, originated as a practically oriented
movement. Notwithstanding their subsequent criticism, the
landscape techniques of Brown and Repton had been enormously
popular. Brown and Repton provided the picturesque as a product
and this was their unforgiveable sin in the opinion of gentleman
scholars such as Price and Knight, and of subsequent arbiters of high
taste, such as Ruskin and Hussey. This squeamishness in the face of
the commercial application of the picturesque is retained even in
some recent accounts. Robinson, for instance, laments that 'by
becoming a style that could be appropriated for social enjoyment, [the

Smith, Victorian Photography, Painting and Photography: The Enigma of Visibility in
Ruskin, Morris, and the Pre-Raphaelites (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 18-
52.
32 'Of the Turnerian Picturesque', Modern Painters IV, Works VI 15-16.
picturesque] quickly left behind its more demanding aspects.\textsuperscript{34} In his indignation, Robinson implies that for a ‘demanding’ philosophical idea to ‘be appropriated for social enjoyment’ (like Ruskin’s fear of ‘inconsistent’ pleasures) is a cruel fate.

- III -

Underlying Robinson’s disappointment is a view of the picturesque as a pure Idea, which reluctantly succumbs to the corrupt systematising influence of, to borrow Adorno and Horkheimer’s classic denunciatory term, the culture industry.\textsuperscript{35} It is a familiar lament but should be treated with scepticism. In trying to situate the \textit{Atlas}, it is useful to recast the debate outside of these pejorative hierarchies which attempt to define the ‘real’ picturesque by comparing it to its corrupt derivatives. After all, it is worth considering who was appropriating what from whom. Brown and Repton were quite happily transforming the gardens of well-to-do English landowners and becoming wealthy in the process. They had no pretensions to philosophical grandeur, they were gardeners. From the vantage point of Burkean aesthetics they are subjected to protracted ridicule by Uvedale Price, whose major objection seems to be the fact that they are successful and hence that the styles they practised were prevalent. Of course, in the process of criticising Brown and Repton, Price makes important refinements to Burke’s theory of the Sublime and the Beautiful and provoked a second debate with Knight over the origins of aesthetic sensation. In the mean time, however, land-owners presumably still required their gardens to be tended and for this they required plans and quotes not philosophical treatises.\textsuperscript{36} When eventually the intellectual wrangling about the picturesque reached a dead-end and the advent of

\textsuperscript{34} Robinson 148.
romanticism rendered such debates passé, the demand for gardeners stubbornly remained. To characterise the events in this way is not meant to trivialise the importance of the philosophical debates that transpired but rather to emphasise the intellectual biases that have characterised so many commentaries concerning the picturesque.

Gardening, furthermore, was not the only commercial field in which the picturesque continued to play an important conceptual role. In a recent essay, Ann Bermingham has argued that the conceptual apparatus provided by the picturesque was profoundly enabling from the point of view of the emerging mass industry of women’s fashion. For Bermingham, ‘the Picturesque was an aesthetic uniquely constituted to serve the nascent mass-marketing needs of a developing commercial culture; one in which appearances were construed as essence and commodities were sold under the signs of art and nature.’ In her analysis the picturesque, by virtue of the way it ‘encouraged the middle classes to aestheticise their lives,’ emerged as an important component in the modern aesthetics of consumerism. Here the picturesque is important not for its philosophical propositions but for the way that it provides a do-it-yourself aestheticism to the industries of conspicuous consumption.

The effects of the picturesque sensibility can also be traced in the emergence of the tourism industry. The word ‘tourist’ first appeared in English in 1800, shortly followed by ‘tourism’ in 1811. The

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36 ‘Repton, without any propensity for philosophizing, and with a great concern for directing the creative work of others . . . prescribes taste in directions more concrete than those to which Price and Knight care to bind themselves.’ Hipple 226.
38 Bermingham, ‘Ready-to-Wear Femininity’ 81.
addition of ‘ist’ and ‘ism’ to the old word ‘tour’ signal the beginning of the change from elite practice to mass phenomenon. Other significant dates were the publication of John Murray’s *Red Book* in 1836, which pioneered the use of the ‘star’ rating system for sights and accommodation, and Thomas Cook’s first organised tour in 1841. In a powerful essay first published in 1958, Hans Magnus Enzensberger traces the origins of tourism to ‘a very specific historical configuration’ which included the far-reaching effects of the romantic movement and the triumph of the ‘bourgeois revolution.’\(^{41}\) Like Bermingham, he is concerned to situate his analysis within an upwardly mobile middle class. He explains that tourism emerged as a way of satisfying the need of the bourgeoisie to escape the industrial world of their (our) own creation: ‘The victory of the bourgeois revolution implanted in each individual a sensation of freedom that had to clash with the very society that produced it.’\(^{42}\) Failing to find freedom within the society that had promised it, the bourgeoisie must search outside of itself. The specific path of this search, argues Enzensberger, is guided by the imagery developed in English, French and German romanticism:

Their imagination both conserved and betrayed the [bourgeois] revolution. They transfigured freedom and removed it into a realm of the imagination, until it coagulated into a distant image of a nature far from all civilization, into a folkloric and monumental image of history. This pristine landscape and untouched history have remained models of tourism. Tourism is thus nothing other than the attempt to realize the dream that Romanticism projected onto the distant and far away. To the degree that bourgeois society closed itself, the bourgeois tried to escape from it – as tourist.\(^ {43}\)

Tourism, according to Enzensberger, is the enactment of a romantic escape fantasy that is provoked by the contradiction between the middle-class promise of freedom and the drudgery of industrial life.

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\(^{42}\) Enzensberger 124.

\(^{43}\) Enzensberger 125.
But as he notes, capitalism is well constituted to take advantage of (capitalise on) such demands and so tourism evolved as simply another industry.\textsuperscript{44}

Enzensberger's account offers provocative insights into the origins of the touristic urge, but is less useful in explaining the way in which capitalist societies satisfied this urge. In other words, Enzensberger offers a demand-side theory of tourism, and it remains to provide a supply-side theory. Although the bourgeois population developed a romantic and ultimately rather simplistic desire to escape to 'the distant and far away', the touristic product needed to be more sophisticated in the way it capitalised on this impulse. It was not enough to offer one-way tickets to Brazil or central Asia, logistical problems needed to be addressed and means of travel developed that were comfortable, affordable, and relatively quick. Industrialisation and the improvements in transportation and communication addressed these practical difficulties, however, at a more fundamental level, it was necessary to provide tourists with 'things to do and see', and it is here that the nascent tourist industry had recourse to the pre-romantic, or as some have suggested, proto-romantic ideology of the picturesque. It was the picturesque tour, as popularised by William Gilpin, that provided the conceptual machinery for tourism. It provided tourists with a specific purpose, a rationale, a plan of action, a reward system, and most important of all, it provided them with a language to order and convey their experience. The strictures of working life provoked fantasies of escape and abandonment but once off the boat in the bustling environment of a 'foreign' city, the urgent need was for order and

\textsuperscript{44} 'Once a conquest of the working class, in the shape of paid days' off, holidays, weekends, and so on, leisure has been transformed into an industry, into a victory of neocapitalism and an extension of bourgeois hegemony to the whole of space.' Henri Lefebvre, \textit{The Production of Space} (London UK & Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1991) 383-84. Indeed the United Nations has declared leisure to be a 'basic human right': 'Modern tourism was born out of the application of social policies which led to industrial workers obtaining annual paid holidays, and at the same time found its expression through the recognition of the basic human right to rest and leisure.' United Nations Declaration on Tourism, 1980, cited in Alexander Wilson, \textit{The Culture of Nature: North American Landscape from Disney to Exxon-Valdez} (London UK & Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1992) 19.
control. Therefore, although the tourist’s urge to escape may have been romantically inspired, the practicalities involved in satisfying this urge were delivered according to the principles of the picturesque.

For the popular picturesque, then, the key figure is not Price or Knight, but William Gilpin. Gilpin’s thoughts on the picturesque emerge through a series of published tours – to the Wye valley, to the Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, to the Scottish Highlands, and elsewhere – which appeared between 1782 and 1809. In Gilpin’s usage ‘picturesque beauty’ was generally conceived of as a sub-category to Burke’s idea of the Beautiful. However, Gilpin was less concerned with the intellectual rigour of his theorising than with the practical application of his principles. His explication of the picturesque does not constitute a unified theory. It is instead an amalgam of working principles, general concepts, rules of thumb and helpful advice. His writings are more like hand-books than philosophical tracts and seem to shed most light on the ongoing influence of the picturesque on nineteenth-century bourgeois tastes.

Rather than working from first principles, Gilpin prefers to make his way through the drawing of distinctions. One distinction he makes, for instance, is between the ‘purely picturesque’ which is drawn from the ‘roughness of nature’, and the ‘embellished scene’ of a garden that has been altered in accordance with the requirements of propriety and the demands of convenience. What Gilpin implies with this distinction is that the picturesque was not something that could be created but must be sought. Hence, picturesque travel (unlike picturesque landscaping) became a form of quest: the

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45 William Gilpin, *Observations on the mountains and lakes of Cumberland and Westmorland* (London: R. Blamire, 1786 [Richmond, Surrey: Richmond Publishing Co., 1973]), xiv-xv. Gilpin goes on to explain that the garden, though not purely picturesque, was nevertheless, ‘the connecting thread between the regularity of the house, and the freedom of the natural scene’ (xiv). Latter-day picturesque theorist Sidney Robinson echoes these sentiments by suggesting that the picturesque functions as an intermediary term, between the beautiful and the sublime, estate culture and bourgeois culture, and at a more fundamental level between ‘system’ and ‘abandon’. Robinson 119-25.
picturesque was out there somewhere and it could be found with a little bit of luck and persistence and, most importantly, the right training. This training consisted in the development of the 'picturesque eye'. Gilpin contrasts the picturesque eye with the 'eye of truth,' contending that while the eye of truth became distracted with the tedious imperfections of the world, the picturesque eye searched for the true beauty of nature as it was fleetingly revealed in scenes of certain privileged regions.46

Once such beauty is found, suggests Gilpin, it was to be savoured and captured. This could be effected either pictorially, through a sketch or watercolour, or through writing by what Gilpin termed 'picturesque description':

It is the aim of picturesque description to bring the images of nature, as forcibly, and as closely to the eye, as it can; and this must often be done by high colouring; which this species of composition demands. By high-colouring is not meant a string of rapturous epithets . . . but an attempt to analize (sic) the views of nature – to open their several parts, in order to shew the effect of a whole – to mark their tints, and varied lights – and to express all this detail in terms as appropriate, and yet as vivid, as possible.47 (original emphasis)

This is an important description of the process of picturesque description. Firstly, it emphasises the transportability of visual ('picturesque') information into the domain of words. Gilpin expresses a faith in the rhetorical ability of words to convey 'images of nature . . . to the eye.' Moreover, the conveyance of sight through words is accomplished via a process of analysis, of separating the views of nature into 'parts' while all the time remaining overdetermined by a pre-existing conception of the 'whole'. Gilpin's picturesque avoids the whole subjectivism debate between Price and Knight by relying on a conception of ideal forms. This approach also avoids the circularity that plagues Price and Knight when they argue

46 Gilpin, Mountains and Lakes xxix.
47 Gilpin, Mountains and Lakes xix.
over whether it is nature that inspires pictures (Price) or pictures which determine our view of nature (Knight). For Gilpin the matter is simple: the picturesque is an ideal that is manifested in nature. These manifestations, however, are rare and fleeting and must be vigorously pursued in order to be enjoyed. The thrill contained in Gilpin’s brand of travel lies in the quest for an elusive visual commodity that he calls the picturesque.

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, saw a spate of publications in the mould of Gilpin which described the picturesque beauty of Britain and parts of continental Europe. Places became ‘sights’ and landscape ‘scenery’ according to their compliance with the conventions of the picturesque. In setting up the rubric of picturesque travel Gilpin not only provides the tourist with a purpose (to discover picturesque sights) but with a language to organise and articulate the experience, the language of picturesque description. In the writings of Gilpin it is possible to trace the emergence of a broadly accessible descriptive discourse that gave linguistic operation to the picturesque sensibility. It was also a kind of language that met with the demands of an expanding world, giving a ready means of translating the foreign into the aesthetic. The picturesque became mobilised at a time when increasing mobility demanded ways of coming to terms with unfamiliar vistas and new experiences. Malcolm Andrews has argued that the languages and practices of the picturesque ‘formed a subtle psychological protection to the tourist freshly exposed to daunting and often disorienting landscapes.’ The advantage of the discourse of the picturesque over competing descriptive discourses is that it was essentially accessible to anyone. It required no detailed knowledge of the history of a region, or any understanding of scientific classificatory principles, only a familiarity with the language

* For example, the travelogues of the Reverend Thomas Frognall Dibdin: A Bibliographical Antiquarian and Picturesque Tour in France and Germany (London, 1821) and A Bibliographical Antiquarian and Picturesque Tour in the Northern Counties of England and in Scotland (London, 1838).
of the picturesque. As Bermingham implied, the picturesque is mass-market-friendly in the way that it encourages the participation of its customers.

- IV -

The examples provided by landscape gardening, women’s fashion, and tourism suggest the conceptual flexibility of the picturesque sensibility. Yet this flexibility has also led, according to Stephen Copley and Peter Garside, to 'conflicts between the status of the Picturesque as a theoretical category and its manifestations as a popular fashion.'\textsuperscript{50} These conflicts find expression in the critical work of people such as Hussey, Hipple, Robinson, and Bermingham, and although the argument over who owns, owned or should own the picturesque seems at times a little misguided, it does highlight the manner in which the picturesque operated in different ways according to its location. For the purposes of this study these conflicts also suggest ways in which the history of the picturesque can be recast to more appropriately account for the appearance of published picturesque compendia in the years surrounding the Australian centenary.

Viewing the picturesque as a sensibility rather than an idea, one might begin to note several continuities in the picturesque that continue through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. Firstly, despite a good deal of semantic confusion, the picturesque remained centred around the scopic faculty. In all its manifestations, the picturesque sensibility is continually and centrally concerned with seeing. Secondly, the picturesque sensibility is one that retains a separation from the world that it describes. The picturesque viewer was in sociological terms an outsider and not an insider. This was

\textsuperscript{49} Andrews 67.
\textsuperscript{50} Copley and Garside 1.
Wordsworth’s great disappointment with the picturesque. Finally, the characteristic gesture of the picturesque was to make aesthetic judgments. Difference was thus rendered in the normative field of the aesthetic.

In all these continuities in the picturesque sensibility one might see the force of Heidegger’s observation that ‘the fundamental event of the modern age is the conquest of the world as picture.’51 There have always been pictures, argues Heidegger, but the conceptualisation of the world as a picture, as something outside of the self that is susceptible to observable knowledge, was a decisive shift in western thinking. One might consider the development of the theory of the picturesque at the close of the eighteenth century as a condensation in the realm of the aesthetic of this fundamental conceptual shift. Picturesque landscaping led to the apprehension of the garden-as-painting, while the deployment of picturesque standards in travel led to a conception of the world-as-gallery.

However, while the picturesque sensibility retained certain continuities, the format of picturesque publications underwent a specific historical change in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In this early generation of picturesque travel books, the term picturesque appears in titles as a description of the approach used by the traveller in presenting his or her material. Hence, William Beckford’s Descriptive account of the island of Jamaica (London, 1790), was an account ‘chiefly considered in a picturesque point of view’. Similarly, the picturesque is a statement of methodology in Thomas and William Daniell’s A Picturesque Voyage to India by the Way of China (London, 1810), E.E. Vidal’s Picturesque illustrations of Buenos Ayres (London, 1820), and James Fergusson’s Picturesque illustrations of architecture in Hindostan (London, 1848). In books such as these, the picturesque is considered as a means of approach,

an application of the ‘picturesque eye’. The picturesque in these early books is a description of a form of engagement this ‘eye’ has with a particular place, typically taking the form of a narrated journey or a series of ‘views’.

At a certain point in the nineteenth century, however, a change takes place in the usage of the picturesque that signals a decisive expansion in its orientation. The shift is quite clearly discernible in the lists of published books during this century. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, around say 1870 (it is impossible to be too precise), the terms which had habitually followed the word ‘picturesque’ in the titles of picturesque publications ceased to appear. Instead ‘picturesque’ became a marker of place in its own right.52 No longer explicitly mediated through the terminology of visual representation (view, scene, illustration) or of quest (travel, voyage, journey), the term ‘picturesque’ attaches itself directly to the region it now characterises. While in the century between 1770 and 1870 the picturesque had been understood as a mode of experience undertaken, often in the form of a quest, as a way of deriving aesthetic pleasure from the environment, in the century which succeeds 1870, the picturesque became a way of defining cities, nations, and regions.53 In other words, the picturesque lost its sight-specificity, and became integrated with the entire geographic and cultural space under observation. Major publishing houses, such as Cassell, Dent, Longman and Routledge issued picturesque books on countries all over the world. Examples from the quarter century either side of 1900 include those titles already associated with the Atlas, such as Picturesque America (1872-74), Picturesque Europe (1876-79), Picturesque Canada (1882-84) and Cassell’s Picturesque

52 This shift is clearly visible in the 229 titles listed in the National Union Catalog beginning with the word ‘Picturesque’. While there are instances of titles after 1870 which retain terms such as ‘views’ and ‘scenery’ in their titles, there are no works dating from prior to 1870 that directly apply the term picturesque to a region.

Australasia (1887-89). Yet there are a host of further publications that proliferate within this generic framework, including Picturesque Palestine, Sinai and Egypt (1880-84), Picturesque New Guinea (1887), Picturesque Burma (1897), Picturesque India (1898), and Picturesque Hongkong (1925).

Interestingly, the reconfiguration of the picturesque is foreshadowed within the genesis of picturesque theory. While the more thoroughgoing intellectual theories of Price and Knight had given way in terms of applicability to the approach of Gilpin, the late-century reconfiguration of the picturesque reached back to the principles of these earlier theorists. Variety and change, fundamental to Price, became central to the neo-picturesque. ‘Every effort,’ wrote E.E. Morris, editor of Cassell’s Picturesque Australasia, ‘has been used to introduce the greatest possible variety.’ A place, be it Australasia or India, was valued for its diversity, its sudden variation, and its quaint roughness. The new generation of picturesque books employed a form of controlled heterodoxy that Uvedale Price had seen as definitive of the picturesque. This reconfiguration also points to the issues of power that underlie the picturesque. Latter-day picturesque theorist, Sidney Robinson, has suggested that the picturesque concern for roughness, for the abdication of control, is in fact a way of flaunting the strength of one’s hegemony. In other words, to allow disorder within an ordered system, is an expression of confidence by the systematising power. For Price, allowing his estate walls to crack and crumble is a sign not of his poverty and powerlessness but a backhanded display of his wealth and power. His wealth is such that

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he does not need to maintain standards of productive efficiency on his estates. His assertion of the superiority of old, ramshackle gardens over the new ones churned out by Brown and Repton, is at base, a rather transparent assertion of the superiority of old money over new. The ostentatious spectacle of decay contained in Price’s idea of the picturesque garden signifies not abandon but control. In short, at the level of sign, controlled heterodoxy signifies control not heterodoxy.

In the late nineteenth century, virtually anywhere and any thing could be ‘picturesque’. It was no longer a privileged appellation reserved for particular sights but a more general label of approval that seeped through the designated environment, brightening all it touched. In New York in 1891, a book was published with the title *Picturesque Iron and Copper Mining of Northern Michigan* and another entitled *Picturesque Cuba and our Navy* (ie. the navy of the United States). Clearly, the transfiguration of the picturesque was not simply an issue of semantics, but a process that was charged with the social and political dynamics of the period. Underlying the reconfiguration of the picturesque, may well be changes occurring in the texture and tenor of imperialism in the latter half of the century. Late century imperialism, or what is often termed ‘New’, ‘High’ or ‘Popular’ imperialism, was a period where competitive nationalism in Europe marked a more possessory phase of imperialist practice. Events such as Disraeli’s 1875 decision to purchase a controlling interest in the Suez Canal (opened in 1869), the 1876 proclamation of Victoria as the Empress of India, and the Congress of Berlin in 1878 ushered in a new period characterised by

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57 *Picturesque Iron and Copper Mining of Northern Michigan* (Chicago: Belford, Middlebrook, 1898); *Picturesque Cuba and our Navy* (New York: A. Wittemann, 1891).  
peace in continental Europe and intense imperial competition in Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

Under this New Imperial paradigm, the reconfiguration of the picturesque can be seen as moving beyond experience to acquisition. In this new generation of picturesque publications, the picturesque came to be a symbol for variety, plenitude, and superabundance. The picturesque does not occur, as it had earlier in the century, in a rare or fleeting way, but in a manner which is pervasive, extending through a range of environments and objects and practices. Picturesque publications now overflowed with a wealth of natural wonders, cultural successes, and historical achievements. The picturesque, in short, superimposed on its earlier scopic phase an energetic new cornucopic phase. Picturesque publications became textual and pictorial catalogues of these national and imperial cornucopia. Moreover, the new generation of picturesque works were less concerned with the journey into pre-modernity. Indeed, modernity and its signs (railways, bustling cities, ports, telegraphic systems) became part of the picturesque fabric. As William Cullen Bryant pointed out in his preface to Picturesque America, the 'plan of the work' would not be solely 'centred on the natural beauties of our country,' but would also include 'the various aspects imposed on it by civilization.' It was in this new phase of the picturesque – conceptually diverse and avowedly modern – that the Picturesque Atlas of Australasia emerged.

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59 It is of course true that there is an acquisitive urge in the very idea of the tour. When Gilpin toured the Lakes, it was not in a spirit of mutual exchange, but in search of an aesthetic commodity. As de Certeau points out, the tour has long been a central legitimating ritual in territorial acquisition, an assertion of travelling rights. Michel de Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life [trans. Steven Rendall] (Berkley: University of California Press, 1984) 124-25. Such urges, moreover, clearly had a particularly strong resonance in the colonial context as the works of Robert Dixon, Paul Carter and Simon Ryan have emphasised.

Chapter 3
History's Telescope

No one would have prophesied in James Cook's early youth that he was destined to fill so prominent a place in the list of the world's great men. The son of a poor serving man, apprenticed to a draper after receiving the scantiest rudiments of an education, he found his mind so decisively inclined toward the sea that he found himself apprenticed to a Newcastle coalship and sailed in that trade for two or three years. There he proved himself trustworthy and cheerful, but in that gross trade there was little chance of distinguishing himself, and he did not rise above the crowd. When his apprenticeship was over, he spent some years as a common sailor in the same line of vessels, and it was not till he was about seventeen-and-twenty that he became a mate.

In 1755 a war broke out between England and France, and to man His Majesty's ships the press-gang set freely to work and the Newcastle sailors, being smart seamen and regularly trading with London, became the natural prey of this terrible institution. Young Cook had no particular tie to bind him to the coal trade and he thought it wiser to go and enlist willingly, than be hauled on board a man-of-war against...
If you study the picture closely you can see him (fig. 1). The image sits delicately inside its circular frame. Standing expressionless in the stern of his longboat, hands clasped calmly behind his back is the small but unmistakable visage of Captain James Cook. Behind him the outlines of the white ensign loosely unfurled. In front of Cook, the rowing sailors stare pensively over their shoulders. In the bow of the boat like a figurehead, arms outstretched proffering trinkets ('some nails, beads, etc.'), stands 'Tupia', Cook's Tahitian interpreter.1

If you follow the axis of the boat backward you see the sturdy outlines of the Endeavour rising benevolently over Cook, serenely anchored in Botany Bay; follow the axis forward and you find the central characters in the picture's title: 'Natives Opposing Captain Cook's Landing' (7). Two Aboriginal men occupy the foreground in the lower third of the picture, the nearest of which brandishing a spear at the approaching boat. Poised within the woomera, the spear echoes the angles of the dormant oars. The image is completely still. The bay, the sky, the lank flags, the oars and the people. Stillness charges the picture. All the energy is potential.

Read against the grain the image is strikingly subversive, an instant rejoinder to claims of an empty land or a people too primitive to understand the idea of ownership, too nomadic to be concerned about their location, and a contradiction of assertions, like that made in the Preface to the Atlas, that in 'this island continent . . . no military frontiers have been established' and 'within its own borders, the history of the country has been peace' (iv). The raised arm of resistance, placed firmly at the centre of this engraved porthole,

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renders the icon double-edged.² But the *Atlas*, naturally, was not interested in double-edged icons, or reading against the grain. It provides a textual gloss on the apparent dilemma of the non-peaceful first contact in a history that was supposed to be without war:

‘Unhappy denizens of the forest! The strife you challenge is an unequal one. Spears are no match for muskets, and your shields are no defence. While you have slumbered, civilisation in the West has advanced with giant strides; science has altered the face of nature; and the hour has now struck when your solitude is to be disturbed by those whose contact will make of you and yours but a memory of the past!’

The exclamatory punctuation of the written text shouts down the opposition of the ‘natives’ in the illustration. The image, reconstructed by the artist William Macleod from the diaries of Cook’s voyage (or from its subsequent mediations), is again reconstructed in the written text.³ In case there should be any misunderstanding, the raised arm of aboriginal resistance does not represent the assertion of prior ownership but the futility of the benighted races, an absurd gesture in the face of a civilisation that ‘has advanced with giant strides.’⁴


⁴ The displaced militarism of Australia’s ‘peace’ soaked history finds a powerful outlet in the cult of the explorer. In his centennial work, *The History of Australian Exploration from 1788 to 1888* (Sydney: Turner & Henderson, 1888), Ernest Favenc wrote that exploration in Australia had dramatised ‘the spectacle of one man pitted against the whole force of nature – not the equal struggle of two human antagonists, but the old fable of the subtle dwarf and the self-confident giant.’ Here, the David and Goliath struggle that indigenous Australians had waged against their invaders is re-cast with the colonising nation as the underdog against ‘the whole force of nature.’
But the diagonal of this circular image does not end at the shore of Botany Bay. Running perpendicular to the cluster of pruned twigs on which the image rests, it continues its trajectory from the Endeavour, through the longboat, along the path taken by Cook’s gaze, and of his soldiers, his crew, and Tupia also, across the still water and through the resisting Aboriginal men. If you then allow this diagonal to burst through the thin circle of its frame and travel for a short distance across the empty white space of the page, it will, miraculously, strike a second illustration. Here one finds another circle, another rocky promontory, another still bay. Perched on this promontory is a large up-tilted telescope. Beneath the telescope a figure cranes his head to stare upward into the magic tube. Around him lie the markers of his trade; charts, sextant, spirit level. He is, as the title rather redundantly states, ‘The Astronomer.’ Brushing aside the overhanging fronds, the diagonal continues to drop down and across before puncturing the perfect circle of night sky, and sending its inexorable ray through the lensed cylinder of the telescope and onto the retina of the eponymous figure.

While this figure is clearly intended to allude to the astronomical purposes of Cook’s first voyage of discovery in the Pacific, the positioning and subjects of these two images which open the Cook chapter in the Atlas seems to imply a more general relationship of historical vision. Indeed, all three volumes of the Picturesque Atlas begin with circular images. The second volume opens with a pleasant image of wheat being harvested ‘Near the You Yangs’ (fig. 2). The sheafs of harvested wheat are neatly tied, while vestigial forest frames the plentiful fields. Bordering, and almost overpowering this circular image is a bouquet of imported flora: wheat, thistles, blackberries and daisies. The domestication of the landscape is complete and the harvest has begun. The final volume, returns to the themes of the opening image with remarkable precision. Again,

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5 There is some use of circular frames in Picturesque America, for example, ‘The White Mountains’, vol. 1, 150, but the usage seems both less prevalent and the material less heroicised than in the Atlas.
it is an image of Cook, this time of 'Shakespeare Head, Mercury Bay' (531) in New Zealand, reflecting the contents of the third volume. Endeavour, longboat, tranquil bay, rocky headland are all once more depicted. And the theme, once again, is astronomy. Mercury Bay received its name from the fact of it being chosen as the site where Cook's astronomer, Mr. Charles Green, would view the transit of Mercury in November of 1769.6 The circular shape of these 'opening shots' appeals to the unity of perspective that is so distinctively that of the telescope, drawing the disparate rays into its cylindrical tunnel. Of course, the other distinctive feature of the telescope is the manner in which it appears to bring the distant near. Through history's telescope the mist on the temporal horizon condenses magically into the drama of past events. Perched on the headland of the centenary, the *Picturesque Atlas* peers backward, focussing its lens on the moments it finds important.

-TOWN0S0FVICTORIA-

This chapter explores the *Atlas* in terms of the problematics of its history. How does one begin histories of Australia? What kind of narrative might a century of European occupation yield? And importantly for an illustrated book, how does one represent this

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history graphically? As a publication that was based on the celebration of an historical moment, the *Atlas* is inescapably bound up in these kinds of decisions. Indeed, one of the distinctive values of the *Atlas* is the way in which it self-consciously sets about making history. But this is also the problem with the *Atlas*, because the history it puts forward is the history of what Greg Dening calls ‘political parable’ where ‘to be a cliche is a virtue’, a history ‘directed at evoking mythical metonymies, likenesses that are seen immediately to be true and are sustaining not because they are new, but because they are old.’ The history in the *Atlas* is more often than not a history of affirmation, of populist slogans and mantras, although it does not pay to be too reductive. Historical narratives, even simplistic ones, cannot afford to alienate their constituents by being too trite or inconsequential. No one likes to be defined by a story that is of no consequence. Indeed, this was the dilemma for the historical writers employed for the *Atlas*, writers like Alexander Sutherland, George Barton, James Smith and William Traill. For them, it was a question of how to best manage the historical agenda. What was needed was a history that was readable and arresting but one that was, at the same time, socially affirming and in tune with the celebratory notes of the centenary. The result is a historical sensibility in the *Atlas* that is, by turns, confident and hesitant, repressive and righteous.

This hesitant quality can be seen in the very way in which Alexander Sutherland, the author of the opening chapters, seeks to begin the historical narrative. In fact, the narrative begins three times, with three separate beginning chapters. It is a bit like tuning a piano;

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7 Here I agree with Greg Dening, who has written that ‘when I make History, I like to make History of people making History, because that is where they reveal themselves.’ *The Death of William Gooch: a History’s Anthropology* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1995) 158.


9 Alexander Sutherland was headmaster of Carlton College and co-authored with his brother George the school book, *History of Australia from 1606 to 1876* (Melbourne: George Robertson, 1877) and *Victoria and its Metropolis: Past and Present*, 2 vols. (Melbourne: McCarron, Bird, 1888).
hearing the same note each time but in a slightly different tone.\(^{10}\)

The first beginning takes place in the nebulous cloud of discounted discoveries, ‘blind, stumbling discoveries’ (3), by Dutch and Portuguese navigators. Here, the note sounded is exotic but muffled. The spectacular near miss of Torres, who miraculously sailed between New Guinea and Cape York in 1606 oblivious to the vastness of either land mass; the inadvertent and ill-fated journey of the ‘Duyfhen’ into the Gulf of Carpenteria; the series of northwest coastings and wrecks by Batavia-bound Dutch ships in the early 1600s; the more determined efforts of Abel Tasman in 1642 and his discovery of Tasmania and New Zealand; all these are painted as the picturesque preamble to the singular truth of British discovery.

According to the *Atlas*, it was only the British adventurer and pirate William Dampier who ‘openly published any authentic information as to Australia’ (4). The openness and authenticity of knowledge were determined by reference to British interests. And while the Dutch had sketched out three of Australia’s four sides, their efforts are dismissed as interesting but ultimately insignificant brushes with the Australian coastline.

The honour of founding personage passes instead to Cook. It is on him that the historical telescope of the *Atlas* fixes most sharply. His noble countenance stares out of the finely textured engraving in the frontispiece, ‘the finest engraving of Captain Cook in existence’ (fig. 3).\(^{11}\) He provides the second beginning in the *Atlas*, and stands as the undoubted hero of the birth of its ‘Australasia’. His is a note of triumph and nobility. His much-vaunted bravery and ultimate sacrifice make him an ideal metonym for an heroic national identity.\(^{12}\) The ‘Captain Cook’ chapter neatly enfolds several

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\(^{10}\) This quality of hesitancy in relation to the origins of Euro-Australian society is explored in a collection of essays and readings edited by Gillian Whitlock & Gail Reekie, *Uncertain Beginnings: Debates in Australian Studies* (St. Lucia: Queensland University Press, 1993).

\(^{11}\) *Daily Telegraph* 14 August 1886: 9. The report notes that ‘the engraving itself was executed on steel-plate in New York, and cost £100.’

\(^{12}\) For a useful recent discussion of the place of Cook in Australian (both indigenous and non-indigenous) social memory, see Chris Healy, *From the Ruins of Colonialism: History as Social Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 16-72.
representational layers in the Atlas. His story, like the nation he is now claimed to have founded, is one of spectacular success from humble beginnings: ‘No one would have prophesied in James Cook’s early youth, that he was destined to fill so prominent a place in the list of the world’s great men’ (7). Sutherland was praised by the Daily Telegraph for ‘the most admirable ingenuity displayed in wrapping up so many important circumstances in a single chapter.’13 ‘To us,’ continued the Telegraph, ‘the landing of the circumnavigator and his party on the shores of Botany Bay, often as we have read of it, and stale as it may seem, is ever a pleasant yarn.’14 It was ‘an account so light and flowing that no one would say that it was really overburdened with solid fact.’15 This is the poetics of populist history; to tell the good story, the one that is recognisable as one’s own, the one that speaks warmly to the idea one has of oneself. A story which says, this is your story. It was a matter of some disappointment then, that Captain Cook was not the founder of the colony, merely its finder.16

Thus it is that the Atlas reluctantly but necessarily falls to its third beginning, the British colonisation of the Australian continent with the arrival of the First Fleet in January of 1788. It is, of course, the anniversary of this event that provides the occasion for the

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16 This thwarted desire to elevate Cook, with his noble causes of nation and science, to the position of national founder is a persistent one according to a recent review, ‘Strange Seas of Thought’, by Paul Carter: ‘The confusion of Cook with Australian destiny, still an article of faith in our nationalist historiography, makes it impossible to criticise one without bringing into question the other.’ The Australian’s Review of Books June 1998: 20.
publication of the *Atlas*. It was to this centenary that the *Atlas* had
hitched its promotional wagon. Ordinarily, one might have thought
that some pride of place would have been accorded to the leader of
that first expedition. However, although a portrait of ‘Captain
Arthur Phillip’ (16) is duly included amongst the *Atlas*’s gallery of
notable figures, and while his accomplishments are duly
acknowledged, there seems little effort to elevate Phillip to the
position of founding patriarch.17

Quite clearly, the presence of 756 convicted criminals in Phillip’s
original group of 1017 presented certain problems for an historical
consciousness fixated with origins, at a public moment geared
towards celebration, and in a society that viewed criminality as an
hereditary illness. The ‘stain’ of convictism tended to render any
attempt to talk about the moment of first settlement abortive, where
the greatness of the founding occasion was undercut immediately by
the shame of its carcereal purpose.18 This quandary was not lost to
the writers of the *Atlas*. They were acutely aware of this problem at
the heart of the history of the European in Australia. ‘The early
history of colonisation in Australia,’ noted Frank Donohue, has ‘been
blackened by a record of tyranny on the one hand and criminality on
the other, over which it is best that we should draw a veil of discreet
silence, and pass on to a more inviting chapter in our national story’
(771). The urge to chapterise is strong in the *Atlas*. Chapterisation of
experience is a way of attempting to sever the connectedness of the
present to the past, it is to make the past Other. This process of
historical separation is both necessary and fraught.19 Often it is only
through separating the past out as a ‘past’, that one can begin to sense
an understanding of it. Yet historical separation also externalises
history, and to this extent, defers responsibility for its consequences.

17 Ron Dunphy suggests that Cook not Phillip was the icon of the centenary. *Australians 1888*
24, marginal notes.
18 A good summary of the issue of convict origins can be found in ‘The Convict Origins
This is a dynamic within the *Atlas* which will be revisited in the final section of this chapter.

The more particular problem in this instance is that the historical 'chapter' in question is the opening chapter. The desire to 'draw a veil of discreet silence' over unsavoury events is inconsistent with a nationalist ideology and with a broader paradigm of knowledge that is founded on a doctrine of origins. To find the origin of things, the moment in which the present was ultimately sourced was a guiding principle of human sciences in the nineteenth century. Australia itself had a value from this point of view. In his Preface, Andrew Garran speaks of the value of Australia as a living laboratory of the past, a place where 'types found elsewhere only in the form of fossils – can still be studied in a living state' (iii). Opportunities abounded for geologists, botanists, zoologists, and ethnographers. ‘For the student of comparative grammar,’ continues Garran, ‘there is a variety of undeveloped dialects principally worth studying in order to determine what branch of the human family the Australian

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19 As Barthes has written: ‘History is hysterical: it is constituted only if we consider it, only if we look at it – and in order to look at it, we must be excluded from it.’ *Camera Lucida* [trans. Richard Howard] (London: Fontana, 1984 [1980]) 65.

20 Foucault argues that the nineteenth century’s obsession with history, ‘its concern to historicize everything, to write a general history of everything’ was prompted by a new consciousness of the radical historicity of humankind itself, the fact of its own temporal modality. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: an Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994 [1970]), 370.

21 For an insightful analysis of this disposition, see Tom Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors: the Antiquarian Imagination in Australia* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 9: ‘To
aborigines belong, and whence and where they migrated' (iii).
Historical linguistics would answer the puzzle of the origin of the
Australian aborigines. What answer, though, might be forwarded to
account for the origin of her colonists? How does one Other one's
origin? This is the persistent dilemma of the centenary.

In these circumstances, the promoters of the Atlas were keen to
reassure its potential readers in the colonies that the history it told –
their history – was going to be one in which they could find
affirmation. Discretion is the key to feel-good history. The writers of
the Atlas knew this, and so did the reviewers of their work. ‘In the
third chapter,’ writes the Daily Telegraph in its review of the first part
of the Atlas, ‘the question of the early settlement is handled so
delicately that the pages are unstained by a single word that might
mar for one moment the pleasure of the most susceptible of
readers.’22 There is an absolutism in this reassurance, a desperate
attempt at exclusion, which points toward the depth of trauma that
was felt in relation to the convict 'stain' by a society obsessed with
lineage, breeding and origins. And yet there is also a hint of irony
which seems directed against those 'susceptible' readers who are still
unable to deal with the legacy of a convict past.

Indeed, despite the 'delicacy' of Sutherland and Barton, a story
emerges of the opening years of the colony that is shot through with
episodes that do not seem to fit easily within the narrative of social
ascent that provided the framework for centennial celebrations.
Criminality, famine, disease, insurrection, traffic in spirits,
despotism, de facto martial law, mismanagement, labour shortages,
and arrested development all emerge in one way or another in the
Atlas's histories of early settlement. ‘For more than half a century,’
writes Sutherland of the early colonies, ‘their progress had been a
slow and generally a painful one’ (35). Yet the crucial point is that

European eyes, Australia had relic forms of nature and a primitive people. It was a land of
living fossils, a continental museum where the past was made present in nature.’
progress always remains immanent in these events, because Australia in the 1880s was the living proof of this outcome.\textsuperscript{23} The illustrations, however, are less susceptible to the normativising regime of the historical narrative. Pictures stand autonomous in a way that words do not, and as such the standards of discretion were higher in the choice of illustrations for the \textit{Atlas} than they were in the letterpress.

The issue of pictorial discretion is highlighted by the absence of any pictures of convicts in the \textit{Atlas} chapters devoted to settlement in New South Wales. Indeed, there are no pictures which even hint at the presence of the convict system. A glance across the pictures of this chapter devoted to the beginnings of settlement yields no sign of the \textit{raison d'être} of that settlement.\textsuperscript{24} There is, however, evidence that at a certain stage of the planning of the \textit{Atlas} convict images were going to be included.

In Macleod’s ‘Sketch Notebook’ dating from approximately May of 1886 there is a jotted list of the proposed illustrations for the first section of the \textit{Atlas}.\textsuperscript{25} Being quite close to the point of publication, there is a high degree of correspondence between the illustrations that actually appear in the \textit{Atlas}. Included in the list, however, is the title ‘Convicts Fishing’. Certainly, there is no such picture in the

\textsuperscript{23} I am drawing here upon the idea of narrative immanence developed in the separate work of Paul Ricouer and Hayden White. Ricouer, for instance, has argued that narratives are in fact read in reverse, that is they are re-read in light of their endings in order to trace the seeds of a meaning that was immanent in the course of narrated events stretching back to the beginning. Paul Ricoeur, \textit{Time and Narrative}, 2 vols. [trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer] (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984 [1983]), vol. 1, 65-68. White makes a similar point when he asks rhetorically whether it is in fact ever possible to narrativise without also moralising. The end of a story, says White, inflects retrospectively every event within that story with the moral force of its finality. Hayden White, ‘The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality,’ \textit{The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation} (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987) 1-25.

\textsuperscript{24} The avoidance was certainly not based on an aversion to criminality \textit{per se}. In a later chapter on New Caledonia, for instance, there are illustrations of ‘A Prison Interior’, ‘Convicts Making Roads’, ‘Convicts Washing Clothes’, and ‘A Convict Prison’ (700-701). The depravities of the French criminals on Australia’s Pacific doorstep are decried extensively. The irony of this indignation might well have amused French authorities. Criminality in another is not surprisingly more palatable than the criminality in oneself.

Figure 5. Untitled vignette (19).

Atlas, and in fact a dark bracket drawn around this title in Macleod’s book indicates that its inclusion was already under question. Indeed, additional notation in the notebook appears to suggest that this picture might be replaced with another showing a ‘spray of or bundle of food – to represent food – vignettes, fish, berries’.26 In the printed version of the Atlas it is the food vignette (fig. 5) that appears and not the illustration of the convicts fishing. Such pictures provide an interesting study in metonymy and memory, where pictures of fish stand for the people who caught them and pictures of native fauna (cockatoos and black swans) take the place of pictures of native people.

There is a further metonymy involving the French navigator, La Perouse. In the Atlas there are pictures not only of La Perouse, but of his doomed ships, the relics eventually recovered and the monument erected to the man in Sydney. The elevation of La Perouse seems to be at the expense of Phillip and was consonant with the state of affairs in New South Wales at this time, where no monument to Phillip had been built.27 Nor indeed was there any concerted push to have one built to mark the passing of the hundred years since he led the First Fleet into Port Jackson. Phillip is portrayed in the Atlas, but without any signs of his actual job – the supervision of a penal settlement. His role either fades into that of Cook, where he rather awkwardly replays the drama of discovery, or

26 W. Macleod 25.
he is given a supporting role in another play based around his meeting with La Perouse: the meeting of civilised enemies in the land of savages. The effort expended in authenticating the La Perouse episode is commensurate with the effort made in silencing Phillip and the day-to-day relationships of custody, conflict and commerce in the colonies. These picturesque dramas are allowed to stand for the more pervasive forms of interpersonal contact in the colony, those based around the flows of power through the structures of incarceration and the troubled boundaries of contact with the aboriginal owners. At times, then, for all its noisy affirmations, the centenary, and the Atlas it spawned, appear to rest upon an absence, a hole at the centre of the centennial moment.28

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While the problem of how to start an Australian history was confronting to the Atlas writers, there was also a further problem of how to structure its narrative. History moves, and it moves forward. Historical subjects – people, institutions, nations – are impelled forward by the narratives of history, against a graduated calendar which measures the passing of time. ‘Progress’ writes de Certeau is the ‘motto’ of history.29 This was never more so than in the nineteenth century where, according to historians such as Peter J. Bowler and A. Dwight Culler, progress was integral to the various forms of historical explanation that emerged.30 It was not just that the past became fascinating to the Victorians, though this certainly happened, it was that the past began to speak through a diverse array of knowledges. The sciences, for instance, became historicised in

such a way that 'a particular theory of human progress soon came to depend for its conceptual foundations upon a compatible interpretation of the origin of mankind, and hence of the history of life on earth.'\(^{31}\) History was part of a grand, if at times conflicted, teleology.\(^{32}\) The metrical occasion of the Australian centenary bore the burden of this teleological drive. The *Atlas*, as a centennial publication, carries the cargo of progress in the form of its histories.

The principal theme of the history in the *Atlas*, the engine which drives all other gears and mechanisms, was the astonishing rate of progress in the Australasian colonies. In the period of economic prosperity succeeding the discovery of gold, 'progress' wrote Geoffrey Blainey, 'was an incantation more than a word.'\(^{33}\) It was the same engine which drove the ephemeral majesty of the colonial exhibitions. 'The Centennial Exhibition held in Melbourne in 1888,' wrote Frank Donohue for the *Atlas*, 'was not only a notable witness to Australian progress in the past, but a gage of prosperity in the future, and a landmark in its history from which the past as well as the years that are to come will be measured' (793).

Melbourne in particular was felt to embody this breathtaking acceleration. The people of Melbourne, according to Graeme Davison, had always been enamored with the rapidity of their city's growth, 'but in the 1880s growth became an obsession,' and by the end of this decade 'the city was intoxicated with the idea of growth for growth's sake.'\(^{34}\) Its transformation from a series of small huts on the bank of the Yarra to a bustling modern city within the ambit of living memory occasioned reveries. E.E. Morris, in his 'Editor's Note' to

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31 Bowler 192.
32 Bowler sees in nineteenth-century a continuous 'tension between the progressionist and cyclic views of development' (9).
Cassell’s *Picturesque Australasia* admits that some of his remarks had been composed whilst supervising an examination in the Wilson Hall, at Melbourne University. ‘It is difficult,’ he remarked, thinking of the young scholars before him, ‘to conceive a greater contrast to a corroboree of aborigines, such as men now living have often witnessed on this very spot.’\(^{35}\) The transformative power of civilisation suffuses the *Atlas*. ‘Not even the most sanguine of prophets,’ wrote James Smith, ‘could then have anticipated what those thirteen huts were to grow to, but there are men still living who have watched the development’ (254). This was the magic of the *Atlas* world, its rapidity of appearance, its transformation from non-being to modernity in the blink of a human life.

So given that the overriding theme of the history in the *Atlas* could not be other than success, what kind of success would such a work choose to articulate? Luke Trainor has analysed the historiography of Australia in the late nineteenth century in terms of its plots, and his research suggests that writers such as Alexander Sutherland and George Barton had three alternatives.\(^{36}\) The first was to structure the history around ‘the transition from convictism to free settlement.’\(^{37}\) Certainly there was a good deal of relief that such a journey had occurred, although unfortunately there was little pride associated with this process. A plot based around the escape from convictism faltered under the weight of its internalised burden. The convict ‘stain’ could not be escaped for the simple reason that it was bound

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up in the originary purpose of colonisation and in the ‘blood’ of so many of its colonists.

A second plot, says Trainor, was the gradual achievement of self-government within the colonies. The drawback of this plot was that it was commendable without being either remarkable or particularly exciting. The slow devolution of powers, often for quite pragmatic reasons, by an imperial centre to its colonial outposts was not the stuff to stir hearts. It lacked the martial grandeur of other British settler colonies in North America, South Africa and New Zealand. Such a difference can be seen quite clearly in the Atlas by comparing the the Australian with the New Zealand chapters. The ‘Historical Sketch of New Zealand’ is of a completely different character to those of the Australian colonies. The Maori wars lent to New Zealand history the potent singularity of battle, the purported purity of its martial ethics, its indisputable and sober logic. Without war, or at least any that were broadly recognised as such, without revolution, and with only the occasional flashpoint, the political history of the Australian colonies had a tendency to resemble administrative history, where successive administrations are assessed according to the efficiency with which they discharged the task of governing.

In light of these shortcomings, it is perhaps unsurprising that it was Trainor’s third plot, the plot of ‘gold-based economic progress,’ that he claims, ‘became central in many accounts as the century progressed.’\textsuperscript{38} The plot of Australian history configured itself around wealth. The singular Australian history that Governor Loch invoked at the Melbourne launch of the Atlas in 1887, was to be a history of material aggrandisement.\textsuperscript{39} Wealth, more than liberty or civilisation, is the triumphant hero of the history in the Atlas. ‘In Australia,’ wrote William Traill in the concluding pages of his Queensland chapter, ‘knowledge will not merely be power, but

\textsuperscript{38} Trainor 168.
\textsuperscript{39} Illustrated Australian News April 2 1887: 55.
wealth – wealth transcending the dreams of avarice’ (410). This accentuated note of triumph – the triumph of wealth – is what separates the Atlas from many prior works about Australia.

And it is wealth that ties together the success narratives in the Atlas. ‘Australia,’ announced Garran in his Preface, ‘beginning as a prison, discovered in time that it was a splendid wool farm, and, when that industry had been established on secure foundations, it made the further discovery that underneath the grass lay a magnificent gold mine . . . from that moment forth its material resources have been steadily developed’ (iv). The triumph of material resources underwrites the optimism of a narrative that is based on the prospect of unlimited growth. The success story is used as a way of talking about not only Australasia as a whole, but each colony, each city and town, each port and branch of railroad, and each industry and institution. In the logic of the Atlas, wealth also became a marker of other forms of moral and civil ascent within Australia. Playing on the quantitative certainty of money, ‘wealth’ was used to denote progress along less tangible avenues of achievement: ‘And side by side with its increase in wealth has been its advancement socially, intellectually and politically’ (iv). Traill, writing of Queensland, spoke of the ‘thousand and one industries that attest the prosperity and vitality of this favoured colony’ (410). Money leant its measurability to history, thereby helping to authenticate the cumulative premise of the centenary.

It is money that lubricates the celebratory rhetoric of the Atlas including its most prevalent slogan: ‘discovery, settlement, rise.’ Discovery is the originary moment in which what had been void is condensed onto the charts and journals of European knowledge. Settlement is the name given to the transition from mapped space to lived space.⁴⁰ The ‘rise’ is the acceleration of settlement into

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⁴⁰ Paul Carter rejects these divisions by claiming that the act of naming is the moment at which space is precipitated into history: ‘by the act of place-naming, space is transformed
civilisation. This three word plot summary is repeated like an incantation throughout the *Atlas*. It meshes usefully with the tripartite division of temporal consciousness that is so integral to the *Atlas*'s language of becoming. It concludes its descriptive chapters with sentences which use the rapidity of the progress thus far as a spring to catapult the colonies into the splendour of their futures. 'In the preceding pages we have described the country as it is,' reflect the writers in one New South Wales chapter, 'but that which is, is only the beginning of that which shall be' (148).41 James Smith concludes his chapter on Melbourne by reasoning that, 'If the Melbourne of today is a marvel compared to the Melbourne of 1836, the Melbourne of half a century hence will be a marvel compared with the Melbourne of today' (254). William Traill asks of Queensland, 'In the foregoing pages we have endeavoured to tell the history of its beginnings, but who can even barely indicate the possibilities of its future?' (410).

The *Atlas* was a work that would 'gather into one publication the record of that which has been, the picture of that which is, and the adumbration of that which is to be' (iv). In this totalising of temporal dimensions the historical story of the *Atlas* conceals the relative brevity of European occupation. Those precious hundred years were propped up on the shimmering columns of an ancient 'slumbering' past and 'the shadowed indications' of a triumphant destiny.42 It was a case of the bookends dwarfing the book, and would not have been sustainable were it not for the compensation of progress, measured to the last ounce of gold, the last block of sandstone and the last inch of railway line.

symbolically into a place, that is, space with a history.' *The Road to Botany Bay: an Essay in Spatial History* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1987) 24.

41 'Towns of New South Wales,' jointly authored for the *Atlas* by Francis Myers, F.J. Broomfield, and J.P. Dowling.

42 Confronted by a similar problem in *Picturesque Canada*, the authors chose to invest in the historicity of Quebec city: 'Our work begins with Quebec. Rightly so. Canada has not much of a past, but all that it has from Jacques Cartier's day clusters around that cannon-girt promontory; not much of a present, but in taking stock of national outfit, Quebec should count for something.' 'Quebec: Historical Review,' Monro.
When one speaks of narrative one inevitably confronts the issue of readership. The discussion thus far has proceeded on the assumption that the readership was essentially an Australian audience. And indeed it is safe to say that this was the case. It was, after all, the prospect of readerly demand in Australia that prompted the Atlas Co. to set up a factory in Sydney and it was in the Australian colonies that its extraordinary marketing effort was concentrated. What is interesting, however, is how often the prospect of an overseas audience was voiced in the publicity rhetoric of the Atlas. There was a fascination with the idea that this would not simply be a publication that would be sold in Australia, but that it was going to be ‘world-wide’ in its distribution. The Atlas, on this view, was imagined as an elaborate exercise in regional promotion.

E.E. Morris, editor of Cassell’s Picturesque Australasia, specifically addressed the issue of readership. ‘Those who have been connected with its preparation,’ wrote Miller in his ‘Editor’s Note’, ‘have striven for a double object – to make Australasia better known to those who live at a distance, and to enable each colony to know its neighbours better.’ Garran does not specifically address the issue of readership in his preface but writes instead how the Atlas ‘tells the story of the great southern land in all its different subdivisions,’ and how it would, ‘by the aid of pen and pencil, show, to all who wish to know, how Australia presents itself’ (iv). Garran’s emphasis is on the presentation of Australia, how it appears in the eyes of those who seek to see it. This viewing universe is more explicitly invoked in the publicity blurbs on the dust jackets of the Atlas parts:

The paramount object of the publishers is to carry out this most important object in a manner to secure the hearty response of the great English-speaking communities
throughout the globe; also to give the world the best delineation of the Australasian colonies, and the everyday life of their people.43

The 'English-speaking communities' whose attention was the 'paramount object' of the Atlas makers, suggest a further historical frame that was operative at the level of race. Alexander Sutherland foregrounded this aspect in his own work of centennial history, *Victoria and its Metropolis* (1888). Victoria's history was valuable as part of an articulation of the 'process by which the English-speaking race has encompassed the world'. The histories of the 'daughter-states' were thus important because they constituted 'the records of the race.'44

The paradox of the *Atlas* is that while the readership was predominantly local, the reader that is addressed in such moments is in fact an outsider. In other words, the voice which the local wished to hear was the voice that spoke outside. In interpolating an external audience, the *Atlas* in its public voice, its 'preface' voice, used this externality to establish the legitimacy of its story. It was only in telling the story to another – a significant Euro-American other – that the story of selfhood could be satisfactorily enacted. It was a story told in the belief that another was listening.

There is a further irony in the possibility that the story the *Atlas* put forward as the national story, was the story that was perhaps the least interesting to an outsider. It was certainly a story that had very little in common with the picturesque, as Anna Jameson had recognised: 'Civilization, cleanliness, and comfort are excellent things, but they are sworn enemies of the picturesque.'45 Likewise, when Twain visited Australia in 1895 he heard many stories about the triumph of civilisation and modernity in the antipodes. He saw the sprawling

44 Sutherland, *Victoria and its Metropolis* v.
45 Anna Jameson, *Diary of an Ennuyée* (London: Henry Colburn, 1826) 309. I am grateful to Judith Johnston for this remark on the picturesque.
metropolis of Melbourne and heard in detail about the efficiency of its transport systems and the grandeur of its public buildings. He experienced all the visible signs of its material progress, and he appreciated them, but he was not captivated by them. What intrigued Twain time and again on his travels was what he called Australia's 'picturesque history'. 'There it is again,' he exclaims outside of Adelaide in his disarming salesman's patois, 'picturesque history – Australia's specialty.' Picturesque history was, if Twain's tastes were anything to go on, Australia's major selling point to an overseas audience. Unfortunately, the stories that Twain wanted to hear differed from those that Australians wanted to tell. His sense of frustration on this point is present at various points in his despatches. While Twain sought the quaint and the exotic in Australia's history, the Australians he met sought to affirm a national ontology. Twain and his hosts were at odds with each other, when it came to what to make of the Australian past.

In the Atlas one finds evidence of both kinds of history, the teleological (or telescopic) history of nation and the episodic history of the picturesque. In Victoria, Governor Loch saw the Atlas as the vehicle of this first form of history, the 'one history' of the Australian people, the story as George Barton wrote, of a 'destiny had been written in unmistakable lines by the hand of nature, even at the foundation of settlement' (35). The Argus spoke more simply of the Atlas as a work that would illustrate 'picturesque episodes in the history of the country.' Others felt, in contradiction to Twain, that Australian histories were completely devoid of the picturesque. Alexander Sutherland wrote in another centennial publication, Victoria and Its Metropolis, that 'all those incidents which form the picturesque in history are absent from our story.' The tension between a singular and unified nationalist history and a multiple

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47 Argus, 31 October 1885: 12.
48 Sutherland Victoria and its Metropolis v.
and relativised picturesque history is a central dynamic in the historical composition of the *Atlas*. But what is picturesque history? If the picturesque had its origins in the visual imagination in what sense can the narratives of history find picturesque expression?

The concern with form, with the strictures of an ideal composition, seem also to place the picturesque somehow outside of history, yet in actual fact, while the picturesque may appear ahistorical or synchronic, it is a form of vision that can only happen within a very precise kind of historical consciousness. The picturesque is based on a rigidly enforced historicism, in which the capacity to view belongs to an historical Elect. History, the fact of being in time, is the exclusive property of the viewer, while those viewed stand outside of time frozen in a kind of pre-modernity. For William Gilpin, for instance, the ‘past’ that he saw with his picturesque eyes was both his and not his at the same time. It was his in the sense that he felt free to make use of it aesthetically, but not his in the sense that he in no way belonged to it nor felt any form of attachment beyond a diffused sense of nostalgia. For him, the past he saw in Britain’s picturesque margins was signed by shepherds, broken windmills, and ruined abbeys. The past was isolated from the present in the same way that picturesque landscape was isolated from the viewer. Ruins and ‘figures’ did not participate in the history that the viewer both experienced and, through the act of picturesque travel, sought to escape.

Thus, even at its inception, the picturesque was based on a relationship to the past that was characterised by detachment. The past of the picturesque was a fossilised and aesthetically accessible past of the Other. It was a past that was both a comforting reminder of pre-industrial simplicity and confirmation of the incessant passage of the viewer’s own metropolitan modernity. In Australia, as we have seen, this relationship gained a racial inflexion in the works of the early picturesque watercolourists, where aboriginal figures in
early colonial painting and illustration operated iconically to display the progression of old to new, ancient to modern. Further isolated by the axis of race, the aboriginal figure confirmed not simply a metropolitan acceleration in respect of a rural hinterland but a racial acceleration in respect of the 'dark races' which both fringed and framed the empire.

Moreover, history attained its own aesthetic autonomy inside the omnivorous late nineteenth-century version of the picturesque that I have argued was the principal enabling conceptual development for the *Atlas*. History remained bound up in the picturesque sensibility, but also gained a place in the foreground of picturesque display. Pastness was not simply a marker of historical difference but part of the picturesque tapestry of place. This is a point captured in Twain's most famous remarks made while in Australia:

Australian history is almost always picturesque; indeed, it is so curious and strange, that it is itself the chiefest novelty the country has to offer, and so it pushes the other novelties into second and third place. It does not read like real history, but like the most beautiful lies; and all of a fresh new sort, no mouldy old stale ones. It is full of surprises and adventures, and incongruities, and contradictions, and incredibilities; but they are all true, they all happened. (vol. 1, 150)

Indeed, this is part of the ideological effectiveness of the picturesque, it does not attempt to say that things have not happened, it simply asserts that they do not matter. The decimation of Tasmanian aborigines, the enslavement of Pacific islanders, the destruction of the forests of Gippsland, the cruelties of the convict system, are all discussed in the *Atlas*, but the import of such events is dissolved in a wash of aesthetic relativism and touristic quaintness. As Twain points out, picturesque history 'does not read like real history,' by which he means history that matters, history which affects the way a society conducts itself and plans for its future. A beautiful history – as opposed to a terrible history or a tempestuous history – is a history that is irrelevant, a history without lessons. Inherently scopic, the
picturesque neutralises by converting action into exhibits and events into scenes. 'To set other places up as picturesque exhibits,' claims Nicholas Thomas, 'as things to be seen rather than locations in which action occurs, effects a displacement into the domain of the aesthetic and the ornamental.' Australia is to be admired for its toy history, and it seems that the picturesque is the agent of its trivialisation.

Whether picturesque or nationalist, what the makers of the Atlas wanted above all was a history that could be seen. Vision, after all, is at the heart of every illustrated work. The act of seeing was also a major ingredient in the Victorian pursuit of knowledge. A diorama of Captain Cook's landing at Botany Bay was reportedly the most popular exhibit at the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition, and the popularity of cycloramas and panoramas in the nineteenth century in portraying everything from the Burke and Wills expedition to scenes from Uncle Tom's Cabin further attest to a desire for consuming events visually.

The Atlas publicity clearly conceives of the work as performing at two levels, in words and pictures. 'The writers have kept on their even course,' explained the Daily Telegraph, 'picking and choosing from a large mass of material as the interest of the narrative demanded, and only here and there casting the lightest possible allusions to the presence of brush and palette.' The use of pictures was also seen as a way of enfranchising the entire family unit, with pictures allowing children to participate in each monthly part: 'We

venture to say that each part of "Picturesque Australasia" will be read and read again, and that by the time the next monthly part is issued the grown up people in subscribing households will be as familiar with the letterpress as their children will be familiar with the illustrations.\textsuperscript{52}

All this poses an interesting problem for an illustrated publication: how do you draw success? How do you show \textit{winningness}? At the material level an answer was found that was simple, if unimaginative: create a pile. The centre-pieces of the Australian pavillions at international exhibitions were usually vast mounds of produced goods—mountains of wool, pyramids of gold, prisms of silver, and stacks of wheat.\textsuperscript{53} These commodity monuments were the material centre of any colonial display. But what about an illustrated publication, how was success to be conveyed visually?

One way of making history visible is to draw a picture of its events. The historical chapters have extensive recourse to these illustrated restagings. These illustrations are not, of course, real-time sketches of events unfolding, but engraved simulacra of historical events. There was a consciousness of this distinction in the \textit{Daily Telegraph's} review. In a discussion of the pictures in the first part, the reviewer points out certain inconsistencies between the picture and the story of 'Tasman's Carpenter Landing':

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{'Tasman's Carpenter Landing' (3).}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Daily Telegraph} August 14 1886: 9.
\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Daily Telegraph} August 14 1886: 9.
\textsuperscript{53} See, for instance, the illustration of such exhibits in the \textit{Australasian Sketcher} 6 November 1880: 181.
The carpenter, with his long curls and shaved chin, though he looks somewhat perplexed, bears no traces of his recent battle with the surf. We fear either that Mr. M’Leod, to whose vivid imagination we are indebted for this decidedly stylish carpenter, has flattered the original, or else the yarn itself is a little out of joint. But that is not to the point. What is more important is the very pretty, romantic and generally intelligent picture.54

As the reviewer understands, whether the picture matches the story is not the point. The point is that the story is 'very pretty', and more importantly, picturable. Moreover, the fact that such pictures were artists' impressions about what a particular historical event must have looked like carries with it a presumption that such grand events must have been in some sense watched.55 No one saw Torres seeing Cape York, yet on the first page of the Atlas there is a picture of 'Torres Sighting Cape York' (1). When the Cape York tribes drove the Dutch crew of the Duyfhen back from their shores in 1606, who was there to watch it happen from the outside? Certainly not Frederic Schell. Yet his 'The “Duyfhen” in the Gulf of Carpenteria' (2), a picture of 'awful serenity' according to one reviewer, is seen from the solid, third-person vantage of the historical observer.56 As the illustration of the 'Natives Opposing Captain Cook’s Landing' (fig. 1) showed, the stage on which these events transpire always fits neatly into the lens of history's telescope. Such pictures have a quality that is both histrionic and iconographic. They have the effect of reducing history to a select group of seminal, displayable moments.

54 Daily Telegraph August 14 1886: 9.
55 Paul Carter highlights precisely this kind of visual consciousness in the opening chapter of The Road to Botany Bay: 'In a theatre of its own design, history's drama unfolds; the historian is an impartial onlooker, simply repeating what happened' (xv).
As a result of such picturing practices, it would be difficult, for instance, to imagine the settlement of Australia without seeing a ship. In one way or another, ships find their way into many of the illustrations in the opening chapters of the Atlas. They are the sign of European arrival. In pictures such as ‘Captain Cook Proclaiming New South Wales a British Possession’ (8), ‘The First Fleet Entering Botany Bay’ (fig. 7), and ‘Captain Phillip’s First Sight of Port Jackson’ (fig. 7), they signify not only the arrival of European people, but the coming of history onto the timeless Australian shore. But as icons, the trope that underwrites such pictures is not arrival but birth, the wondrous birth of a British colony. These quaint engravings with their sailing ships, long boats, oarsmen and soldiers, union jacks and gum trees, and naked, bemused aboriginal people are the file footage of the re-birth of Britain in the antipodes.

Birth-pictures are also coupled with growth-pictures, sets of pictures which show the rapid transformation of cities over time. By producing a snapshot of a place from an earlier point in time, the Atlas conveys the idea of historical growth. ‘Sydney Cove, August 20, 1788’ (17), ‘Newcastle in 1829’ (101), and ‘Queen-street, Brisbane, in 1860’ (357) are all pictures which in displaying the past, congratulate the present on its progress. This display of growth is still more explicit in the ‘Descriptive Sketch of South Australia’ where an illustration of ‘Port Adelaide in 1840’ (442) is paired with another of ‘Port Adelaide in 1888’. 
The trope of birth is also visible in other kinds of pictures. In William Macleod’s drawing of Hargraves squatting in his top-hat sifting sand by a stream, can be seen the sublimely understated story of the birth of the gold-industry (fig. 8). An absurdly genteel Hargraves, the smallest of gestures, and yet miraculously the engine of Australia’s economic transformation comes into being. As Conor Macleod explains, ‘Edward Hargraves, the finder of payable gold in Australia, secures a well-merited niche among the history makers.’ The miracle of birth is so remarkable that it must be seen to be seen. Like baby photos, they invite from the latter-day colonist of the 1880s a feeling of parental pride – which reverses the ancestral relationship of colonist to land. The colonist is not the child of the colony, rather the colony is a child that is growing up under the admiring eyes of the colonist.

The picture of Hargraves points to a second major visual strategy by which the Atlas displays its history, which was through the use of portraits. Portraits helped to negotiate between the programmatic certainty of national birth and the colourful banality of the ‘picturesque episode’. As wealth ensured the measurability of

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history, so portraits provided to history an indisputable, unique and personalised visibility. Portraits are the most prevalent form of historical image in the *Atlas* and it is through them that the *Atlas* gains its greatest purchase in history. The earliest illustrated weekly in Australia, as Elizabeth Webby has pointed out, was *Heads of the People* published in Sydney between 1847 and 1848.58 ‘These illustrated mini-biographies,’ explains Webby, were also ‘a popular feature of many later journals,’ including the *Bulletin*, who published in its early issues a ‘portrait gallery of Australian celebrities’.59

So at the time of the publication of the *Atlas*, the ‘representative life’ was a powerful historical unit. One book, *Australian Men of Mark* (1888), put itself forward as ‘an historico-biographical record’ of the growth and progress of the Australasian colonies.60 The prominent life was the agent of history and the portrait its most potent sign.61 ‘Each memoir,’ explained the publishers, ‘is accompanied by a faithfully-executed full-paged Portrait, by well-known artists, in the best available style of lithographic art.’62 The premise of the book was that by selecting ‘representative careers from every walk of Colonial life,’ it was possible to generate ‘a thoroughly complete reproduction of our social and political conditions at this important epoch in Australian history.’63 There was a powerful belief in the ability of these lives to tell the story of the society en masse:

Treated in this way, the memoir of a prominent politician becomes a history of the national events in which he

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59 Webby, ‘Journals in the Nineteenth Century’ 63. The *Illustrated Sydney News* also included portraits as part of its regular format under such titles as ‘Our Portrait Gallery’ over its entire lifetime, from the 1850s to the 1890s.
61 ‘You can never understand a man's conduct,’ wrote one commentator in 1855, ‘or calculate his future actions half so well, unless you have that key to his character which is furnished in his countenance and aspect.’ ‘History’s Telescope,’ *The Leader: a Political and Literary Review* 4.287 (22 September 1855): 914.
62 *Men of Mark* iv.
63 *Men of Mark* iii.
took part, and of the public business of the people who confide to him the trust of their political representation.

The biography of the founder of a flourishing industry will present the record of that particular department of the industrial or trading interest.

The life-story of the successful emigrant reproduces the difficulties and hardships of early settlement, and the labours of pioneer enterprise, traced through the circumstances and period in which the subject lived.\textsuperscript{64}

It was a representative democracy of life-stories, although the suffrage was hardly universal. The book covers ‘all classes of prominent colonial men’, but necessarily excludes all those who were neither men nor ‘prominent’. Like an antipodean update of Carlyle’s ‘Great Men’, a century of history was condensed in the lives of a few.\textsuperscript{65} This prevalence of portraits in the Atlas is at odds with its generational partners in Europe and America. In the Atlas, the demands of a visible history of great men were superimposed on the concerns of the picturesque compendium.

For the purposes of the Atlas, the great men were represented by people such as Dampier, Cook, Banks, Phillip, La Perouse, the governors of the various colonies, notable members of the clergy, pioneers (William Henty, Samuel Marsden, John Macarthur) and the early explorers of the Australian continent (fig. 9). As Conor Macleod points out in her husband’s hagiography: ‘William Macleod furnished an epitome of a century of Australian history, a record in

\textsuperscript{64} Men of Mark iii.

\textsuperscript{65} ‘For, as I take it, Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, it at bottom the History of the Greatest Men who have worked here . . . the soul of the whole world’s history, it may justly be considered, were the history of these.’ Thomas Carlyle, ‘On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History,’ vol. 4 Thomas Carlyle’s Works, Standard Ed. 18 vols. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1913) 1.
portraiture and picture of the men who were the nation-builders, the eminent in widely varying ways.66 The Atlas scatters these portraits through its historical accounts, and they form an accepted pantheon of important historical figures, what Conor Macleod called 'a gallery of notables'.67 Their status as significant historical players is confirmed not only by the textual accounts of their deeds but by the pictures of their heads. At the level of icon, the nation seems to spring like Athena out of the collective heads of these great men.

Gerard Curtis has written on the increasing importance, towards the end of the nineteenth century, of frontispiece portraits in Victorian fiction. He suggests that, 'for the Victorians the “art of seeing” meant a dramatic rise in the use of frontispiece portraits – reflecting a desire to observe the ultimate voice of creation and an almost biblical belief in a connection between fiction, a nonfictive voice, and a real world.68 The facial image in a novel’s frontispiece became the icon of creation. In the Atlas, a similar process appears to be at work from the point of view of history. The creationary aura that surrounds Cook’s frontispiece portrait filters into other figures represented in the Atlas, into the reverends and rear admirals, governors and pioneers.

However, if, as John Tagg has claimed, the portrait is ‘a sign whose purpose is both the description of an individual and the inscription of social identity,’ then social identity had a relatively limited purview within the Atlas.69 The exclusively male portraits in the Atlas hardwire the template of masculine achievement into its image bank. While the faces represented are historically diverse, from William Dampier to the current Victorian Governor (and vocal

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66 C. Macleod 10.
67 C. Macleod 9.
Atlas supporter), Henry Loch, what they share is the status that is embodied in the fact of their being in a portrait. A portrait does two things. Firstly, it individuates a subject as a distinct social entity. Secondly, it renders a subject according to a code which acknowledges this subject’s place in the public order. A small profile of ‘Truganini’ (fig. 10) is, ironically, the only female portrait in the Australian chapters of the Atlas. Her inclusion is not, one suspects, an attempt at either gender or racial equity but the result of a different visual imperative. While the other portraits are included so that the colonists can look upon the face, as it were, of creation, the portrait of Truganini is reproduced as the ‘last of her race’. Not the face of creation but the face of disappearance.

These issues of presence and absence are at the heart of the Atlas’s third visual strategy for the display of history, the depiction of monuments. Collectively, the historical portraits and re-enacted scenes develop for Australian nationalist history a mnemonic system which places valued historical events under the visual badge of its relevant portrait or scene. They bond together the practices of history, memory and visuality. However, while portraits and historical re-enactments were ways of illustrating the birth of the Australian colonies, other images appear to signal a demand for more concrete traces of colonial birth; for some way of marking the authenticity of Australasia’s origins as a newly defined branch of European civilisation.

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70 Suren Lalvani has written that ‘the portrait as record registers both social situatedness and cultural intentionality which, communicated by way of the disposition and display of the represented body, always occurs within a particular ideological form.’ ‘Photography, Epistemology, and the Body,’ Cultural Studies 7(1993) 448.
This desire for material traces would appear to lie behind the numerous pictures of monuments in the *Atlas*, including statues, obelisks, marked trees, historical buildings and grave sites. This category of image is significant because the lack of human monuments had traditionally featured as a prominent entry in Australia’s catalogue of absences. Certainly, Garran attached significance to this fact: ‘Australia has no part in the early history of the human race or in the development of its civilisation; it contains no traces of ever having been the seat of empire – no ruins, no mounds to indicate that it was the dwelling-place, in the far past, of industrious and fertile populations’ (iii). The consequences of this widely held judgment were numerous and varied. In particular, the conviction that Australia lacked historical credentials was an issue in the narrativisation of the continent. Explorers and travellers, for instance, often fantasised about the resemblance of rocky outcrops to ruined castles.\(^71\) Frederick Sinnett lamented that no novelist could rely on the castles and manor houses to torment or extricate their characters in Australian novels. ‘We are quite debarred,’ he wrote, ‘from all interest to be extracted from any kind of archaeological accessories.’\(^72\) Later in the century, a spate of popular novels were produced about so-called ‘lost civilisations’ in the Australian interior.\(^73\) Such romantic projections should not be dismissed as idle meanderings of the colonial mind, but symptomatic of a firmly entrenched collective belief in the essential emptiness of Australia. It is a belief that in legal discourse was found expression in the doctrine of *terra nullius*. And as nature abhors a vacuum, the colonists of Australia felt duty-bound to fill the aching continental void with civilisation.

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\(^71\) Ryan 76-83.


What is interesting from the point of view of the *Atlas* is how it attempts to visually document this spread of civilisation and history. One method of illustration already mentioned was the re-creation of victorious historical scenes. The advantage of the historical sketch is the degree of malleability that such events can sustain. Flags flutter in just the right way to reveal the union jack, and trees part to reveal the sturdy ships that make colonisation possible and underwrite the naval supremacy of the British empire. There is plenty of scope for selectiveness. For instance, in the *Atlas*, the aborigines that are depicted opposing the landing of Cook, are not depicted in the illustration of Cook’s proclamation of British possession of New South Wales. However, the liberties which the historical sketch allowed were inevitably purchased at the cost of credibility. Not that readers would disbelieve the general truth of historical sketches, but they lacked ‘hard facts’. The evolution of illustrated newspapers created a readerly expectation that images would not simply illustrate a scene but vouchsafe its verity by displaying actual objects from an event or site. The press saga surrounding Ned Kelly, for instance, often featured illustrations of the bushranger’s armour, carefully sketched and labelled, as a way of authenticating the surreal drama of his escapades.74 Similarly, in the *Atlas* the fact of aboriginal difference was signified by the illustration of ‘relics’ and ‘artefacts’.75

A demand for ‘hard facts’ might explain the remarkable prevalence of illustrations of monuments in the *Atlas*. The historical accounts of Australasian colonies are replete with pictures of statues, grave sites, marked trees, places of first landing, clusters of relics held in museums, and so forth. Drawing on some remarks by Nietzsche, Graeme Davison suggests that ‘Monumental history – the forward-

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75 For example: ‘Relics from Cook’s Expeditions’ (13) and ‘Relics from the La Perouse Expedition’ (18).
looking outlook of the man of action – is the natural mode of historical consciousness in new lands.76 He also suggests that the quarter century before the First World War (or alternatively, the quarter century that followed the Australian centenary) was the ‘heroic age of colonial statuary’.77 Monuments provide a degree of displayed solidity in an environment that inevitably carries with it the doubts of impermanence.78 At times there is an almost relentless quality to the illustration of these monuments in the Atlas. The obelisk that marks the site of Cook’s landing at Botany Bay looks, give or take a few palm trees, identical to the one that marks the site of his death in Hawaii (fig. 11). And yet pictures of both, and many others, are reproduced. The reason for such seeming perversities is that images of monuments proclaim a simple but essential message:

these things happened;
Captain Cook died here,
Macarthur grazed his sheep here, Wentworth crossed the Blue Mountains here. The monuments erected to mark these events are used to invest the country with historical depth. They function, in effect, like ruins or fossils, as tangible reminders of what has passed.

Moreover, the monuments which litter the pages of the Atlas set up a contrast between the permanence of colonial history and the transience of aboriginal presence. In fact, the monuments

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77 Davison, ‘The Use and Abuse of Australian History,’ 58.
78 Henri Lefebvre has argued that monuments are designed to foster a certain kind of social space: ‘Monumental space offered each member of a society an image of that membership, an image of his or her social visage’ (220).
emphasise the fact that ‘primitive’ people have no history, they are pre-historic.79 In the mind of colonial Australia, according to Tom Griffiths, one of the chief sins of the Aborigines was that they ‘had failed to sign history’.80 And it was a failure to ‘sign’ in a number of senses. It was a failure to provide the continent with a legible cultural signature, no spectacular defining icons of its uniqueness that could be co-opted in the colonial acquisition of place. It was also a failure to provide signals which would adequately reference aboriginal land use practices, means of communication and social networks. All these appeared as a dreary blank: ‘Australia, though populated for centuries, was a blank in history until discovered by Europeans’ (iii). But above all it was a failure on the part of the Aboriginal people of Australia to provide architectural monuments which would serve as signs of their pastness. It was a peculiar form of regret that amongst the ongoing ruination which colonisation wrought on Australian indigenous cultures, there were no ruins to mark their passing.

Colonialism was based, according to Griffiths, on a language of succession. The writing of a new world was not to take place on a blank slate, but on a slate wiped clean. But not too clean. Indigenous

79 ‘Anthropology,’ writes Griffiths, ‘was the study of “primitive” people, people without history’ Hunters and Collectors 25.
people served, as was clear in the reveries of men like Garran and Morris, an important function in defining the modernity of the colonising population. In his meditations On Walden Pond, Thoreau was careful to note the enduring presence of ‘aboriginal’ paths, which were still discernible on snowy winter days leading to the pond. These paths were the trace of a succeeded people. In Australia, the pastness of Aboriginal people was signified through the collection of relics and by the erection of stones to the last of the tribe, practices argues Griffiths, which signify ownership or inheritance. The same mentality found expression in the formation of Australian museums, where ‘natural history’ and ethnography (prehistoric) were displayed to the exclusion of colonial history. The sign of Aboriginal pastness, in the form of the collected relic, becomes a receipt of ownership in respect of the colonial future. In the concern for monuments evinced by the Atlas can be discerned the need to signal this future to the present.

The Atlas uses these various visual strategies (re-enactments, portraits, and monuments) in combination to produce its visible, showable history. Schell’s sketch of the ‘Burial of Captain Cook’s Remains at Sea’ (fig. 13) is given a permanence by the inclusion of a second sketch of a stone obelisk marking the place ‘Where Cook Was Killed’ (fig. 13), hovering just above the principal engraving. In ‘Early Settlement’, a portrait of ‘Captain Arthur Phillip’ (16) is combined with a facsimile of Governor Hunter’s sketch of ‘Sydney Cove, August 20, 1788’ (17) and a third engraving of ‘The First

81 ‘I have been surprised to detect encircling the pond, even where a thick wood has just been cut down on the shore, a narrow shelf-like path in the steep hill-side, alternately rising and falling, approaching and receding from the water’s edge, as old probably as the race of man here, worn by the feet of aboriginal hunters, and still from time to time unwittingly trodden by the present occupiers of the land.’ Henry David Thoreau, Walden, ed. J. Lyndon Shanley (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971) 179-80.
82 Griffiths, Hunters and Collectors 111.
83 Margaret Anderson and Andrew Reeves have noted that even in the early twentieth century what was ‘almost absent from the state museums and [the] schemes for a national museum was a role for Australia’s own history.’ It was not until after the First World War that this kind of exhibit entered into Australian museums to any great extent. ‘Contested Identities: Museums and the Nation in Australia,’ Museums and the Making of “Ourselves”: The Role of Objects in
Landing Place, Botany Bay’ (16) adapted ‘from a recent sketch’ and overlaid with the image of harvested grain. Location, personality and purpose are generated by the combination of these images. A similar suite of images is found in ‘Historical Sketch of New South Wales’, to display the history of the birth of wool. Firstly, ‘Macarthur’s Homestead, Camden’ (fig. 14) with its inset merino ram, then ‘The Cow Pastures, Camden Park’ (fig. 13), and finally ‘Macarthur’s Tomb at Camden’ (fig. 13). The pictures invite a mini-pilgrimage of the eye through the sacred sites of this industry and the man who is remembered for bringing it into being. At other times these strategies work to effectively shut down possible sources of contention. ‘Historical Sketch of Victoria’, a re-enactment of ‘The Eureka Stockade, Ballarat’ (171) sketched by the American artist W.T. Smedley, depicts a dramatic battle scene of gunfire, bayonets and carnage. However, the upheaval of the event is tempered by the portrait of the ‘Hon. Peter Lalor’. The picture of revolt is drained of much of its power by the portrait of its leader as a parliamentarian.

These kinds of image clusters and success narratives make up the general bulk of history in the *Atlas*. They are marked by a sense of proliferation and repetition, which would appear to be part of their effect. They enact an history which is built around the ineluctable ascent of civilised society and the triumph of material wealth. I wish to conclude this chapter, however, by looking at a rather different brand of history in the *Atlas* from that which fills the opening chapters. The status of Queensland is quite special in the *Atlas*. It was a 'new' colony, yet its history, penned by William Traill, sprawls over fifty pages in the *Atlas*, as long as the histories of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia combined. It is not just that Traill wrote a history that was far longer than those written for the other colonies, but that he deals with issues of convictism, contact violence, financial crisis and labour disputation that are largely side-stepped in the other historical chapters. 'Historical Sketch of Queensland' is in many ways a stern and unsympathetic history but it is also a *live* history in a way that the celebratory lists and storybook pictures that are multiplied in the other chapters are not. Traill's anecdotes of 'black treachery', for instance, reveal a particular psychology of colonial violence, and its distinctive sense of righteousness. His frontier vilification strikes an awkward contrast with the genteel and sanitised accounts of Alexander Sutherland, George Barton or James Smith. Traill's history is uncauterised and upsetting, and valuable for this reason.

William Traill arrived in Queensland in 1861 at the age of eighteen.84 He had been educated for a military career, and though it was a calling which never eventuated, a certain combative demeanour was translated into the character of his journalism. The early years in

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Australia were spent working on cattle stations in Queensland until he eventually found work as a clerk in the Queensland Department of Public Lands, and in his spare time began to fulfil his true ambition of becoming a journalist. A large man, Traill was known for his boundless energy and stern demeanour, qualities he shared with William Macleod, a friend, fellow Scot and colleague at both the *Bulletin* and the *Atlas*. B.G. Andrews writes that ‘his prose exhibited the fundamental seriousness of his character and suited his imposing manner,’ and these sterner qualities are decidedly a feature of his contributions to the *Atlas.* Reading the *Atlas* in sequence, one almost suspects that Traill has written his history in opposition to the other histories in the work. Where the tone of the others is typically reflective and cheerful, Traill writes in a voice that is defiant and angry.

No where is Traill more angry than when he is talking about the ‘outrages’ of the blacks. He sees deep iniquity on the other side of the frontier. His history of Queensland is not a catalogue of achievement but a struggle for existence. It is written in a voice that is oppositional to the metropolitan voice of forgetting. Traill meticulously documents the massacres that characterised pastoral expansion in Queensland. ‘It would be an error,’ he writes to those who would suggest otherwise, ‘to imagine that these are stories of an exceptional character or their incidents only possible at a remote period’ (347). He wants the acts of bloodshed remembered, not consigned to a picturesque preamble:

> The mortality due to the treachery and hostility of the natives continues at the present day on frontier settlements. There has been no intermission. There is scarcely a station which has not its graves of murdered men. It is only the other day that within a few miles of the northern town of Cairns a solitary resident on an outlying selection was brained by the natives. (348)

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85 B.G. Andrews 299.
Confident of the injustices that precipitated these ‘reprisals’ and ‘dispersals’, Traill writes untramelled by what we might now call colonial guilt. The Great Australian Silence, already operating in the other historical chapters of the Atlas, is angrily rejected by Traill, as it was by many other Queenslanders, according to Henry Reynolds.86 Reynolds cites one Barron Valley settler’s letter to the Herberton Advertiser in 1888, which prefaces a detailed list of indigenous raids, with the words, ‘I deem it my duty to make known to intending settlers the losses, through blacks, I have suffered during the present year.’87

Accompanying Traill’s text is an extraordinary illustration, ‘Native Troopers Dispersing a Camp’ (fig. 15), by Frank Mahony. It depicts a mounted and uniformed aboriginal policeman firing at a fleeing aboriginal man. The artist draws a gleeful gleam into the eyes of the pursuer. In doing so, he is keeping close to Traill’s description of the event which described the ‘fierce delight’ (340) of the native policeman. It is a significant image because it is the only image which depicts indigenous people being attacked. Yet the picture belies the righteousness of the text. Why, if there was no injustice in doing so, were there no images of settlers shooting indigenous people? By condensing frontier hostility into ‘black on black’ violence, the Atlas tries at the level of image to put settlers outside the frame. There was

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a satisfying and convenient
elegance in this disturbing
image. A message of self-
annihilation that was so
abhorrent that it was also self-
justifying: what kind of people
could do this to themselves?

The effect of the ‘Native
Troopers Dispersing a Camp’
picture is intensified by a
second Mahony illustration
several pages later. ‘Rounding
up a Straggler on a Cattle-Run’
(fig. 16) is an uncanny double to
Mahony’s early picture. It is
isomorphic in composition, but here, instead of a deranged ‘native
trooper’, there is a genial stockman; fleeing bull has replaced fleeing
aborigine, and the stock-whip has been substituted for the carbine.
The compositional similarity of the two pictures in terms of the scale
and positioning of its participating subjects, the thematic concern
with pursuit, and the sheer proximity of the images begs them to sit
next to each other in the mind of the reader. The pairing was
fortuitous if one were interested in downplaying the impact – that is,
the visual impact – of contact violence. Pairing the images placed
dispersal into the everyday drama of life in the outback, while at the
same time positioning it in an order of violence that takes place on
the other side of the racial divide.

The Queensland chapter is significant, finally, because it brings into
relief certain contradictory impulses in the earlier historical chapters.
On the one hand there was found in these earlier chapters a repeated
interest in the moment of birth, in the nativity of colonial society.

87 Reynolds, The Other Side of the Frontier 151.
Pictures of Phillip in Sydney Cove, Hargraves discovering gold, or Macarthur’s farm at Camden are all part of the rather elaborate visual birth rites conducted in the Atlas. At the same time, however, the illustrations in the Atlas reveal an even more compulsive need to represent monuments to mark the death of the country’s great men. ‘Burke and Wills Monument’ (175), ‘Macarthur’s Tomb at Camden’ (23), and ‘Where Cook was Killed’ (10) all depict the memorials of those who have died. The extensive illustration of monuments and gravestones might appear to raise a degree of conflict between the image of birth and the image of death, but in actual fact the Atlas invokes only a particular form of death. It is not the sensational death of the illustrated paper, with its ambivalent glorification of violence and tantalising images of society on the brink. Deaths in the Atlas are not random and graphic, but solemn and purposeful. They are deaths for a reason, deaths in the cause of the greater project of Australasian civilisation. They depict, in short, a form of martyrdom, that is, death which bestows life. The death of Cook, for instance, is used to help mark the birth of a colony. Macarthur died, according to this logic, as a martyr to the wool industry. This form of mythic portrayal integrates the death of individual figures within the broader narrative of the birth of the Australasian colonies.

And it is death which is the subject of the two most stirring pictures in the Queensland chapter. On the one hand there is Mahony’s illustration of the dispersal, with its distinctive feature being that it portrays exactly the kind of random and purposeless dying that the Atlas elsewhere abhors. The savagery of the image lies not in the grotesque features which the artist has infused into this scene, but in the fact that its central protagonist is acting outside of the code of honour that governs death in the Atlas. By contrast, a second Mahony image, ‘The Death of Kennedy’ (fig. 17), remakes death in the image of this governing sensibility of purposeful dying. Here, the trope of martyrdom, which is embodied in the monument
compulsion of the Atlas, reaches its most pronounced religious and racial dimensions.\textsuperscript{88}

Kennedy’s ill-fated exploration of Cape York is used by Traill to confirm a racialist division between ‘good native’ and ‘bad native’. In the narrative, the bad natives are the merciless tribes of north Queensland that hound Kennedy (and his party) to death:

But the skulking foe had gathered courage as the prey grew feebler. Kennedy, utterly worn out, was seated on the ground. In front, on either side, and behind him the forest was filled with menace. The twigs were crackling under sneaking feet. Hideous faces protruded from behind tree trunks and fallen logs. (336-37)

The role of good native is filled by ‘Jacky Jacky’, Kennedy’s loyal off-sider. He is aware of the treachery of the bad natives and seeks valiantly to protect his master, but his vigilance is at last defeated:

“Oh, Mr. Kennedy,” cried Jacky Jacky, “don’t look so far away!” But the soul of the explorer had followed his gaze to the mysterious far away. Poor Jacky Jacky cried a good deal, and remained helplessly by his dead master till he “got well.” Then he made shift to bury the body after the best fashion he could; this done he plunged into the bush, and fled for his life. The wild blacks hung upon his tracks. (337)

\textsuperscript{88} One might compare Mahony’s dramatic image, with a more subdued treatment of the subject by George Ashton. See ‘Death of Kennedy,’ Sketch, \textit{Illustrated Australian News} 1 January 1891: 13.
This dichotomy between civilised and ‘wild blacks’ is represented iconographically in the picture with the noble Jacky Jacky on one side of the picture and the sinister face of a ‘wild black’ sketched in the darkness of the forest on the other side of the picture. Kennedy, at the centre of the picture functions as the visual axis between these two competing forms of savage Other. The cruciform pose of the ‘spear-pierced’ Edmund Kennedy signifies the self-sacrificial actions of ‘the lion-hearted explorer’ (337). His statuesque pose, with its echoes of the ecstasy of St. Theresa, underscores the common ground between the monumental images of statues and obelisks and the stage-managed grandeur of the historical re-enactment illustrations. Kennedy’s image becomes a monument, which in the words of Lefebvre, ‘transmutes the fear of the passage of time, and anxiety about death, into splendour.’ In other words, the monumental impulse is not so much aimed at marking death, as masking death under the guise of life. Death is masked with durability and the impermanence of human life with the promised permanence of social memory.

89 Lefebvre 221.
Chapter 4
Making Life

The previous chapter discussed the historical dimension of the *Atlas*. It was seen to contain a set of histories which ran through its various chapters, but more than this, it was a publication that owed its very existence to a certain kind of historical consciousness allied to the celebration of the centenary. It was a work that was 'replete with history', as one report put it. History, in the packaged intensity generated by the centenary, occasioned its birth, and histories permeated its chapters. More particularly, the *Atlas* had a self-conception that was itself historic. It was viewed by its promoters as a sign in the centennial present to those who would follow. 'In picturing their country,' W.B. Dalley announced at Pfahlert's Hotel, the makers of the *Atlas*, 'would also proclaim the stage of civilisation which they had reached. (Hear, Hear.)' Through its histories and its historical pictures the *Atlas* sought to gain purchase in the time of history.

Yet it was also noticed that the characteristic historical gesture of the *Atlas* was to use the vaunted progress of an admittedly short past as a springboard into a transcendent future of power and prosperity. The space of the centennial present seemed entirely filled by a remarkable before and a triumphant after. Despite this double deferment in terms of history, the *Atlas* was a work which went to considerable lengths to articulate its present and was recognised as such in contemporary reviews. 'The object of the publication,' reported the *Illustrated Australian News*, 'is to provide an atlas illustrating the rise and progress of Australia, showing the continent as it was in the year 1606 and its condition at the present time' (my emphasis). The *Times* in England agreed, pointing out that the *Atlas* would yield, 'not only a history of the Australasian colonies from the earliest

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90 *Illustrated Australian News* 2 April 1887: 55.
91 *Sydney Morning Herald* 24 August 1886: 5.
92 *Age* 2 April 1887: 13.
times, but also an adequate and trustworthy account of their present state in its many aspects' (my emphasis).¹

These two faces of the Atlas – the historical and the synchronic – are mirrored in the distinction between the historical and descriptive chapters. The historical chapters tell the story of how a colony came into being, recounting the events through which its existence was now justified, while the descriptive chapters take stock of the current conditions of each colony. In doing so, these chapters fulfil a role analogous to that of the audit, a tallying up of things – taking note of pleasing scenery, natural resources, factories, industries, institutions and everyday practices and in the towns and regions of the Australian colonies. The ways in which the Atlas tells its history have already been discussed, the patterns of narrative, the telescoping of key scenes, the illumination of icons through heroic portraiture. But how does the Atlas tell its present, in what manner does a synchronic and heterogeneous lifeworld enter into the order of the printed page?

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Perhaps the most distinctive of the Atlas's synchronic devices are its maps. Like the concern for history and the interest in 'great men', the maps of the Atlas are a feature which definitively separate it from its generational counterparts in America, Europe and Canada. Moreover, while the number of maps in the Atlas was not large in absolute terms, nor were they a simple gimmick. The Atlas took seriously its cartographic tasks. The 'competent staff in the 'map-room' fell under the supervision of a Mr. D. MacDonald.² The engraving of these maps was then entrusted to Arnold Dulon, who

¹ Times [London] 30 November 1887: 5.
² For mention of the maps in the Atlas, see: Bulletin 26 June 1886: 16; Daily Telegraph 21 August 1886: 9; Sydney Morning Herald 24 August 1886: 5; and the Age 2 April 1887: 13.
made use of the most recent developments in the mechanical reproduction of maps:

Space fails to describe the marvellous process by which the maps are produced. Suffice it to say that they are traced on copperplates covered with a thin preparation akin to beeswax, that each letter is stamped by hand with metallic types, and that to add to the distinctness of the various boundaries, each county or territorial division, as the case may be, is not only colored in a contrasting shade to its neighbour, but also ruled in an adverse direction by a machine that is capable of drawing 350 parallel lines to the square inch.³

Bristling with superlatives and persistent technological pride, the maps in the *Atlas* are put forward as one of its real achievements. The striking colours used in their printing stand out against the monochrome of the other pages.

Some of the maps are deployed in the cause of history. There was, for instance, a facsimile of Governor Phillip’s 1792 map of Sydney. Another map traced the paths of early navigators in the Australasian region. However, by and large the maps of the *Atlas* were aimed at

charting in its various dimensions, the ‘present state’ of the colonies. One map of New South Wales, used accumulated rainfall data to plot the average rainfall of the colony not only to the nearest ‘decimal fraction of an inch’, but also, through the use of circles which ‘increase or diminish in size proportionately to the amount of rain that has fallen’, which allowed for the graphical comparison of rainfall from centre to centre.4 Other maps showed land divisions, others topography and townships, while still others traced in detail the position of stock routes, government dams, wells and trucking stations. Particular pride was expressed in relation to a map which delineated the new and expanding pulse lines of modernity that were fingering their way across the continent: ‘the railway, post and telegraph map is a special piece of work upon which a large amount of care and labour has evidently been bestowed, seeing that five months were occupied in compilation, three in engraving, while two months more will be taken up in printing.’5

There is little doubt, then, that the Atlas was indeed genuine in relation to its mapping, employing skilled cartographic staff and expert engravers. ‘The entire publication,’ reports the Daily Telegraph, ‘will contain a series of five double paged maps, all of them clearly colored after the fashion of the best modern atlases.’6 In fact, the eventual number of maps was close to thirty, some bound, some sold separately. As the publication progressed, however, the number of maps for each colony decreased. New South Wales had five separate maps, Victoria had three, while Queensland for all its bulk in history, has all its geographical detail compressed onto just two maps. The other colonies suffered from even greater concision, being allotted a single map for each. Nevertheless, despite employing professional cartographic staff, the Atlas was not an atlas in the sense that normally attaches to that term. It was not an atlas in the manner of a work such as The New Atlas of Australia (1886),

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4 Daily Telegraph 14 August 1886: 9.
5 Sydney Morning Herald 24 August 1886: 5.
6 Daily Telegraph 14 August 1886: 9.
which contained over one hundred maps and whose descriptive text
and illustrations were definitely subordinate to the central task of
providing maps.7 What kind of atlas contains only thirty maps in
800 pages?

Like all intertextual borrowings, the term ‘atlas’ is used with a view
to its associations. The use of the word appears to derive from the
use by Mercator of the figure of Atlas supporting the earth as a
frontispiece for his cartographic collections, and the associations of
structural solidity and the noble burden of carrying the world on
one’s shoulders continued into the nineteenth century.8 It was a
word that implied grandeur: the largest page format in publishing
was known as ‘atlas’. Even meanings of the word which point more
generally to works ‘containing illustrative plates, large engravings,
etc. or the conspectus of any subject arranged in tabular form,’ draw
upon associations of size and mass. The word atlas also evokes – in a
way that ‘description’ and ‘account’ do not – both exactitude and
containment. It is a word which appeals to the notion of a set of fixed
parameters, a uniformity of practice and logic, and, perhaps most
importantly, an analogical certainty between subject and
representation. Finally, the map was also consonant with a certain
spirit of acquisitive territoriality. Reviewing a spate of atlases
released in the year of Victoria’s jubilee, the Times noted wryly that,
‘Her Majesty’s jubilee, like war, promises to be the means of teaching
us a little geography.’9

7 Robert McLean, ed., The New Atlas of Australia (Sydney: John Sands, 1886). Indeed, a
review of the New Atlas in the Times doubted the usefulness of even the considerably smaller
amount of ‘information’ that this work included, since such details ‘were accessible enough, and
fresh every year, in “Gordon and Gotch,” and other sources.’ Times [London] 5 October 1886:
10.
8 The Oxford English Dictionary cites M. Howland, who wrote: ‘We brokers are the Atlases
that bear the world upon our shoulders.’ Harper’s Magazine 598.1 (March 1883). ‘Atlas,’
The metaphoric possibilities of mapping are presently in vogue and form part of a broad attempt to spatialise knowledge.10 It would be possible, and certainly plausible, to argue that while only a small percentage of its pages are maps in the literal sense, the *Atlas* was quite clearly engaged in a continual process of mapping Australia, mapping it across history, across geography, taking bearings from its picturesque sites, triangulating by reference to key figures, or tracing the contours of colonial life through its descriptive accounts. The language of cartography, however, is not a noteworthy feature of the text of the *Atlas*. Rather, it is the presence of the maps themselves that gives to the work as a whole the status of atlas. It is not an infiltration of the language through metaphor, but a dialogic relationship between the maps and the other dimensions of representation (descriptions, illustrations). The atlas, like the exhibition, the monument, and the pantheon, is part of the figurative paraphernalia of the publication, one of the structural analogies by which it gains meaning in the world in which it emerged.

The graphical enterprise of the maps in representing the current state of the Australasian colonies was extended rhetorically into the text itself under the auspices of the narrated tour. The use of tours was hardly original to the *Atlas*, being dictated both by the traditional pattern of picturesque publications, based around the quest, and the habitual needs of the colonising sensibility to continually reacquaint itself with the territory within its purview. For de Certeau, the tour resonated with the act of conquest, an assertion of travelling rights and a legitimating ritual in territorial acquisition.11 In the early colonial period of Australia, as has been discussed, the tour took on

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the added burden of playing out the narrative of civilisation's triumph over savagery. But what of later tours in Australia?

The first point to be made is that the tour remained a continuous and pervasive feature of nineteenth-century publishing about the Australian continent. The century bore witness to a host of topographical, scenic, scientific, and picturesque tours. There were rail tours, coach tours, rural tours, urban tours, tours of the goldfields, and tours of the tropics. In 1846, the *Athenaeum* reported that, 'We have lately been overrun by works on Australia.' The constant stream of tourists and published tours by writers like Louisa Anne Meredith, George French Angas and Anthony Trollope led, by the time the *Atlas* was published, to a certain degree of standardisation in the cognitive patterns by which Australia was viewed. When called upon to discuss the marvels of Sydney Harbour, Richard Twopeny, an extensive contributor to the rival publication *Cassell's Picturesque Australasia,* remarked simply, 'If you want a description of them read Trollope's book.'

Descriptions of certain sights very quickly reached saturation point in the textual economy of travel writing. But 'sights' such as Sydney Harbour were not of importance simply to travellers. Tourist sights became integral to colonial self-recognition. Again, Twopeny provides some insightful remarks:

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12 Some idea of the range of travel writing about Australia can be gleaned from Jan Bassett's anthology, *Great Southern Landings: an Anthology of Antipodean Travel* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1995).

13 Annegret Maack, 'No Tyranny of Distance: the Reception of Publications on Australia in the *Athenaeum* 1828-1850,' *Australian Literary Studies* 17.4 (1996): 389. Maack's article is a useful survey of the reception of nineteenth-century works about Australia in the British cultural weekly, the *Athenaeum*..

14 Some notable examples include George Frank Angas, *Savage Life and Scenes in Australia and New Zealand: being an artist's impression of countries and people at the Antipodes,* 2 Vols. (London: Smith, Elder, 1847); Louisa Anne Meredith, *Notes and Sketches of New South Wales during a residence of that colony from 1839 to 1844* (London: John Murray, 1844); Anthony Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand* (Melbourne: George Robertson, 1873). For a more detailed list see Bassett.

It is a law in every Australian town that no visitor shall be allowed to rest until he has seen all its sights, done all its lions, and, above all, expressed his surprise and admiration at them. With regard to their public institutions, the colonists are like children with a new toy – delighted with it themselves, and not contented until everybody they meet has declared it to be delightful.16

It was these kinds of languages – the language of public buildings, the language of tourist ‘sights’ and civic development – that were enabled by the colonial tour of the latter part of the nineteenth-century. Much of the descriptive writing in the Atlas takes place at the interface between travel and self-articulation. Moreover, the tour sets descriptive language, literally, into motion: movement, observation, reportage. It transforms the abstract space of the map into the first-person world of the mobile observer, where the linear act of travel meets readily with the linear act of writing.17 The tour provides a poetics of direction and order in which the directions of roads and railways shadow the directions of writerly interest.

To see how closely the text follows the routes of colonial travel one need only record the itinerary of the descriptive chapters. James Smith, for instance, begins his ‘Descriptive Sketch of Tasmania’ (511-30) in Hobart. He travels by rail to New Norfolk and by steamer to the Tasman Peninsula. From here, he boards a ship to Maria Island and onward to Macquarie Harbour and its ensuing hinterland. Reaching the end of the effective travel options, Smith returns once more to Hobart where he boards a train once again, and journeys north toward Launceston and the settled districts of the north coast. William Traill’s ‘Topography of Queensland’ (367-410) begins aboard a coastal steamer sailing north from New South Wales. Traill describes the vessel’s voyage past the bluff heads of the Tweed, its entry into Moreton Bay and its passage

16 Town Life in Australia, p.5.
17 Michel de Certeau describes the process of rail travel in terms of physical separation and ocular engagement: ‘The windowpane is what allows us to see, and the rail, what allows us to move through. These are two complementary modes of separation . . . a dispossession of the hand in favour of a greater trajectory of the eye.’ The Practice of Everyday Life 112.
up the Brisbane river to the capital. The next series of descriptions involve Traill travelling by rail to Ipswich and crossing the short, steep rise of the ranges to Toowoomba. Following the rail across the Darling Downs, he journeys out through the plains country to the Warrego River before returning to the coast. From here, he steams north once again, repeating the pattern established further south, stopping at coastal ports and chugging inland by rail into pastoral and mining districts. The accounts of both Smith and Traill ostensibly describe the scenery and towns they visit, but implicitly they define the means by which these places are reached.

Railway networks, coach routes, tramlines, streets, coastal steamers, pedestrian paths – all mark the pulse lines along which the colonial lifeworld moved in the Atlas. Indeed, an important way of defining a place in the Atlas, was by reference to how you arrived there, its location within the networks of colonial movement: ‘Naracoorte is connected by rail with Kingston on the coast fifty-two miles distant’ (448), ‘Beaconsfield can be reached from Launceston either by road or river in about three hours’ (527), ‘Euroa is one of the pleasantest places on this part of the north-eastern line of railway’ (305), ‘Twenty miles beyond Blayney along the railway line is Orange’ (122), and so forth through any number of small towns in the descriptive chapters. In the cities, places were valued for their proximity to mass transit. ‘From Woolloongabba – an outlying adjunct of South Brisbane – from Breakfast Creek, and from the Exhibition Building, tram lines extend to the city and converge into Queen Street. Numerous lines of omnibuses and wagonettes run to other parts of the city and suburbs. The railways also have frequent stations at outlying suburbs, so that there is no isolation’ (379, my emphasis). Systems of transit were felt to dissolve isolation, instilling fullness, plenitude and access to the living space of colonial Australia. The text of the Atlas flows along these lines of movement, placing the reader aboard its various vehicles, visiting the corners of the colonies.
Establishing the pattern of movement in the descriptive chapters of the *Atlas*, however, does little to disclose the patterns of their vision, the kinds of seeing that are recorded in these textual tours. Here, the *Atlas* is governed by the visual system known as the picturesque. Not to the picturesque as it was traditionally defined but to the picturesque in its omnivorous late-century guise. The migrations that this discourse underwent in achieving its New Imperial spin – the addition of a cornucopic impulse to a pre-existing scopic impulse, the urge to compend and enumerate now wedded to a previous urge to seek and compose – dramatically extended the field of its operations while retaining the founding picturesque principles of visibility and controlled heterodoxy. In its new, expanded format, the picturesque functioned less like a form of quest and more, as was intimated earlier, as a kind of audit, a tally of societal property.

The expanded parameters of the picturesque meant that the *Atlas* was now concerned to portray not merely ‘picturesque portions of coast and inland scenery’, but a range of other features in the Australian colonies.\(^{18}\) As the *Age* reported, the *Atlas* would be a publication that illustrated ‘characteristic scenes from mountain, forest, city and mine; the gold of the harvest field and the mineral wealth below; educational institutions, churches, social habits, towns, townships, farms, vineyards, pastoral life, summer and winter sports, chief industries, with a glance at the underdeveloped resources of natural wealth.’\(^{19}\) City and mine join mountain and forest, and wealth joins industry and leisure in a publication that was determined to portray an Australia that combined traditional picturesque beauty with industrial modernity.

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\(^{18}\) *Illustrated Australian News* 2 April 1887: 55.

\(^{19}\) *Age* 2 April 1887: 13.
Moreover, the scenic views reproduced in the *Atlas* often carry with them the signs of a bustling, industrious, and connected (non-isolated) social world. Nearly every picture of a river contains a boat, every stretch of coastline an intrepid ship, every promontory a lighthouse capping its peak. There are no less than four lighthouses, for instance, illustrated in the 'Topography of Victoria', and the concern with light will be explored further in the next chapter. As happened in respect of its various histories, the picturesque project continually runs aground in the *Atlas*. The traditional orientation of the picturesque toward the pre-civilised, the quaint simplicity of life and nature before the onset of industrialisation, is overwhelmed by the impulse to show the very enactment of this transformation. In the *Atlas*, the nostalgic urge of the traditional picturesque is repeatedly forsaken by the persistent and overpowering urge to recognise and display colonial progress. While the picturesque sight as it was traditionally imagined – a delightfully wooded valley, a rustic house cradled in the foothill of a mountain range, a pleasant meeting of land and sea – continues to feature, the images return repeatedly to the splendour of the built and the transformed. Where once there was virgin land, now sits fertile farmland. Cities gleam with public buildings. Mines dot the countryside, producing wealth out of the ground. The streets are awash with citizens, the rails pulse with locomotion, the watercourses all dutifully plied with vessels. Both pictures and descriptions overflow with activity, with progress, with enterprise and ceaseless movement. The *Atlas* was to be ‘a panorama of Australian life’, but an animated panorama.\(^\text{20}\) The probing telescope of history is replaced by the panoramic window of nature and the industrious lifeworld of the colonies.

In exchanging the quest for the audit, the *Atlas* retains an order which is in keeping with a nationalist agenda. The purposeful unfolding of its chapters is suggestive of the purposeful unfolding of the country itself. In this, its most obvious generic borrowing comes

\(^{20}\) *Illustrated Australian News* 2 April 1887: 55.
from the tradition of the published regional compendium, which included almanacs, gazeteers, emigration handbooks, guides and practically-oriented memoirs which all functioned as concise but compendious stockpiles of information about life in the colonies. An early instance of the Australian compendium was Robert Mudie’s *The Picture of Australia*, published in 1829, which claims in its subtitle to be ‘Exhibiting New Holland, Van Diemen’s Land, and all the settlements, from the first at Sydney to the last at the Swan River.’\(^{21}\) Although Mudie’s was a comparatively early work, his choice of categories corresponds to many subsequent like-minded projects.

*The Picture of Australia* (1829) - Table of Contents

1. General Description
2. Sea, Islands, Reefs, &c
3. Climate, Soil, and Appearance of the Country
4. Native Minerals and Plants
5. Animals
6. Native Population
7. Progress of Discovery
8. Sketch of the Colonies and Settlements
9. Towns, Buildings, &c
10. Colonial Population
11. Institutions - Cultivated Produce

As with the colonial tour, the Australian compendium underwent a process of standardisation. In later compendia the order of topics changed somewhat – exploration, for instance, came to be the standard opening chapter, while descriptions of Aboriginal peoples were usually consigned to the concluding chapter or grouped in with scientific appendices at the end of books – but the essential categories remained remarkably consistent. One might find a similar set of chapters in Robert Stewart’s *Australasia* (1853), Samuel Mossman’s *Our Australian Colonies* (1862), William Wildey’s *Australasia and the Oceanic Region* (1876), Alfred Wallace’s *Australasia* (1879), and

\(^{21}\) Robert Mudie, *The Picture of Australia: Exhibiting New Holland, Van Diemen's Land, and all the Settlements from the First at Sydney to the Last at the Swan River* (London: Whittaker, Teacher, 1829).
Franklyn Mortimer’s *A Glance at Australia in 1880* (1881).

Such books seek to compend various kinds of information (scientific, industrial, geographical) within a single publication.

In her book, *Visions of the Future*, Maureen Perkins has traced the history of almanacs in Britain and Australia. Australian almanacs, suggests Perkins, in addition to their traditional calendrical and astrological roles, took on the function of providing regional information about population, transport, rainfall and local industry that was directed at recent or prospective emigrants. This latter task of providing regional information brought almanacs into competition with the more targeted genre of the emigrant handbook, and the two genres often melded together. The *Australian Handbook and Almanac*, produced by Gordon and Gotch, was one of the more successful of these hybrid informational works. A review of the sixteenth edition in 1885, praised the work for its thoroughness: 'The task of procuring and systematizing such body of information regarding a new country must have been immense.' It contained regional lists of towns detailing for each, 'its geographical situation, its distance from the chief town of the colony, its general description, its public institutions and buildings, its schools, hotels, newspapers and so forth.' This duty to provide local detail – maps, prices, rainfall data, population statistics – largely absent from its

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25 *Times* 8 August 1885: 3.

26 *Times* 8 August 1885: 3.
picturesque counterparts in Europe and America, is taken on with
gusto in the *Atlas*.

The informational dimension of the *Atlas*, which places it in the
tradition of the almanac and the emigrant handbook, might also be
viewed as part of its concern to articulate the transformations of
modernity. Although structured around a series of tours, the
descriptive chapters differ from the genre of travel in their highly
systematic approach. The contributing authors, charged with the
exhaustive task of fitting as much as possible of their respective
colonies into the allotted pages of their accounts, were not free to
create the illusion of self-impelled, whimsical rambling that was
affected by the literature of travel. The self-referential reveries of the
tavelogue are largely exchanged for detailed itemisation – in the
manner of the colonial almanac – of geographical and municipal
features. In the regional accounts, the *Atlas* becomes a kind of
civilisation tally, with each town being subjected to an enumeration
of its industries and public institutions. In the western district of
Victoria, James Smith describes Horsham as a ‘well laid out and well
built town’ which is ‘the seat of important manufacture of
agricultural implements’ (278). It has flour mills, and carriage
factories, two state schools, two ‘excellent private educational
establishments’, five churches, a government building with a clock
tower, a town hall, and a general hospital ‘with all the modern
medical and surgical appliances’ (278). Further north the somewhat
smaller town of Dimboola contains ‘three churches, a flour mill, a
foundry, several banks, a mechanics institute and a State school’
(280). The town of Hamilton, for its part, ‘contains a commodious
hospital and benevolent asylum, a town hall and the ordinary
department offices, a mechanics’ institute with upwards of two
thousand volumes; a convenient masonic hall, several fine hotels,
and many substantial stores and general places of business’ (281).
Across the Tasman, a similarly effervescent modernity bubbles through the towns and cities described in the New Zealand chapters of the *Atlas*. ‘Christchurch’, explain Henry Brett and T.W. Leys, ‘is a recognised seat of industrial activity. It possesses flour-mills, foundries, implement manufactories, boot, carpet, and carriage, brass and copper works, breweries, potteries, pickle, sauce and jam works, fell mongeries, tanneries, and biscuit factories, besides a woollen factory and glassworks . . .’ (628). Dunedin is described as ‘a future Birmingham or Sheffield, rivalling old-world prototypes, arising on a site where forty years ago stood the primeval forest’ (651). The production of things was the means by which the production of self was articulated. In the ceaseless making of things, a self-reliant and fully operational colonial society signed its name and marked its passage out of savagery into civilised modernity.

At times these regional and urban audits are displaced by the even greater abstraction of quantities; enumeration in the most literal sense, a turning of things into numbers. A language of numbers was often the primary way by which certain industries entered into the text of the *Atlas*. In the goldfields of Victoria, the statistics of extraction, yield ratios, capital influx and ore tonnage, become the very language of the place itself. There were, for instance, ‘twenty-seven quartz mines in and around Sandhurst, with a paid-up capital of four hundred and thirty-seven thousand six hundred and thirty-one pounds, [which] have returned three million one hundred and thirty-one thousand three hundred and fifty-five pounds to the shareholders, and the value of their property at the time this calculation was made, namely, on the 31st December, 1885, was estimated at two millions sterling’ (290). ‘Such figures,’ concluded James Smith, ‘may be left to speak for themselves’ (290). Indeed, the goldfields were these numbers, they were defined by them, and that was how such a place was to be understood. The progress of the Australian colonies could, in the quantifiable certainty that this language promises, be precisely calibrated.
Travel thus gives way to enumeration. The chapters not only move dutifully along the transportation networks of their colonies but carry the cargo of their urgent existence. The descriptive chapters bulge, in the best traditions of the almanac, with the repetitive listing of facts and figures for townships across each colony. Of course, it is equally possible that some of these chapters were written with a greater reliance on almanacs and gazeteers than on actual first-hand travel. This, however, would merely highlight the importance of these informational lists, the expectation that they could and should stand for the places they enumerate. These municipal and commercial checklists are important to the scheme of the Atlas not simply in their function as informational repositories, but for the broader suggestion of plenitude that is brought about by the process of listing itself.

Checklists, by their nature, are taxonomical. They both enumerate and delimit the set of available categories of description. In the Atlas the taxonomy of regional institutions and industries was important for what it implied about the social space of colonisation. A taxonomy, suggests Foucault, 'implies a certain continuum of things (a non-discontinuity, a plenitude of being) and a certain power of the imagination that renders apparent what is not, but makes possible, by this very fact, the revelation of that continuity.'27 By regulating the categories of enumeration (places of business, places of worship, places of entertainment, places of governance, etc.) the descriptive chapters of the Atlas repudiate any suggestion of absence or isolation. 'Even in this remote town,' writes James Smith of Wycheproof in Victoria, 'there are two places of worship, the branches of three banks, four or five hotels' (292). The lists were the symbolic and institutional evidence of a lifeworld that had all its bases covered and all its cupboards full.

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27 Foucault, The Order of Things 72.
Moving from the towns into the cities, the categories of information become less quantitative. The relentless adducement of facts and figures is supplanted by an attempt to situate the cities as metropolitan centres. The images are dominated by places of commerce, public buildings, and leisure grounds. 'Melbourne,' wrote James Smith, 'realises all the ideas associated with a great metropolis' (254). Yet Smith too reverts to the check-list as a way of establishing Melbourne's metropolitan status:

It is already a city of public palaces, magnificent warehouses, splendid shops and private mansions. It has all the institutions of charity, of commerce, of education and of art. Everything that the old world delights in the new world has imported, and the young city prides itself in being abreast of the old cities in everything that characterises the civilisation of our epoch. (254)

A city must possess the latest urban accoutrements, and when it came to public institutions, Melbourne could (and did) boast of having the full gamut. Houses of Parliament, Universities, Law Courts, Churches, Botanical Gardens, Museums, Zoological Parks, Art Galleries, Exhibition Buildings, Acclimatisation Society Gardens and Observatories provided the institutional certainty of metropolitan life. All these institutions – which are repeatedly illustrated in the Atlas – shared the burden of making society both solid and visible.28

Exhibitions, in particular, were the archetypal institution of public visibility. As Paul Greenhalgh has noted, 'They were the largest gatherings of people - war and peace - of all time.' From the time of the Great Exhibition in London's Crystal Palace in 1851, these exhibitions were a more or less permanent feature of the public face

28 Tony Bennett prefers to view such institutions as 'technolog[ies] of behaviour management', which functioned to construct a certain kind of bourgeois public sphere based around transparency and order. Importantly for Bennett, this process was symbiotic with the creation of a new kind of public subject which internalised these principle and became self-surveilling and self-regulating (101). See also, Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, The Politics and Poetics of Transgression (London: Methuen, 1986), which is a subaltern study of how the bourgeois subject is defined by its difference from the 'low other', and a bourgeois public sphere which relies for its identity on the existence of an 'outside' world of poverty, filth and disorder.
of imperial nations till the Second World War.\textsuperscript{29} The exhibitions were a number of things at once. They were trade fairs, designed to promote commerce between nations. They were national gestures, staged to display the possessions and produce of a nation to its citizens and to its rival nations. They were even conceived of as institutions of public education, in which the common folk were given the chance to see the glorious munificence of the nation and empire, and marvel at the progress made by science and technology. The variety of the exhibition simulated the abandon of the carnival, but of course, there was no real abandonment. The whole show was over-determined and meticulously controlled. It was, in fact, not a carnival but a zoo.\textsuperscript{30}

But institutions on their own could not give to the Australian city the quality of spontaneous industry which is evoked under that much favoured term of the day, 'bustle'. To find bustle the artists of the Atlas travelled to the city's ports. In 'Port Melbourne' (fig. 2), the ship-lined quay stretches ahead, marked on either side by the overlaid crosses of the receding masts, and down its centre by the tangle of rail lines that transport cargo on and off the

\textsuperscript{29} A comprehensive historical account of these exhibitions can be found in Paul Greenhalgh, \textit{Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939} (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988). Other interesting treatments of exhibitions include Ghassan Hage, 'Republicanism, Multiculturalism, Zoology,' \textit{Communal/Plural} 2 (1993) 113-137; Raymond Corbey, 'Ethnographic Showcases, 1870-1930,' \textit{Cultural Anthropology} 3.8 (1993) 338-69; and Benedict Burton, 'International Exhibitions and National Identity,' \textit{Anthropology Today} 7.3 (June 1991) 5-9.

\textsuperscript{30} For an elaboration of such distinctions, see Foucault's short but compelling essay, 'Of Other Spaces', \textit{diacritics} 16 (Spring 1986) 22-27. See especially the distinction between museums and festivals in terms of their relationship to time (26).
ships. In ‘Shipping, Circular Quay’ (fig. 3) drawn from a rise opposite the wharf, ‘another day of strong-pulsed life and bustling activity’ (65) finds depiction. A teeming chaos of horse and cart, ramps, sections of pipe, planks and crates enacts a scene of vigorous activity and commercial vitality. The powers of steam and sail and beast are concentrated in these port scenes. It was a kind of image that was not found in E.C. Booth’s *Australia*, which refracted its urban sketches through pastoral themes. Nicholas Chevalier’s ‘Melbourne from the Yarra’ is typical for the way that the city of Melbourne only appears in the hazy background of an idyllic scene that dominates the image.\(^{31}\)

In the pictures of the *Atlas*, there is a love of the city itself, its vibrancy. These illustrations are the visual enactment of the world turning over, ‘full of stir and movement’ (210), of productive activity, and the integration of colonial Australia in the great maritime-based resource network of the British Empire.

The continuous bustle of the *Atlas* is expressed in the romance of steam. In Chevalier’s picture of Melbourne for *Australia* a train pictured in the middle distance is discernible but innocuous, its steam little more than a series of cotton puffs floating placidly into the soft atmospherics of the distant city. In the *Atlas* by contrast, plumes of steam and smoke boldly mark the engraved sky of the

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\(^{31}\) E.C. Booth, *Australia*, 2 vols. (London: Virtue, 1873-76), vol. 1, facing 81. Skinner Prout, the other major artist (along with Chevalier) for *Australia*, was particularly fond of the venerable device of using aboriginal figures in the foreground (‘Port Jackson, New South Wales,’ vol. 1,
illustrations, giving direction and texture to the upper-space of pictures. In the Atlas steam is the signature of self-impelled movement. Steam is a sign of life. The trail of steam injects motion into the static vehicles of the pictures. In Frederick Schell’s ‘Railway Bridge Over the Murray’ (fig. 4), a train surges across the iron lattice expanse of the bridge. At the same time, by some quirk of fate, a riverboat is steaming down the Murray crossing underneath the bridge at the precise moment that the train is thundering its way overhead. The arteries of civilisation beat simultaneously in this picture and the plumes of steam that belch from the respective stacks, are the smudged reminder of their self-sustaining passage.

The pas de deux of train and ship was not a visual trope that was unique to the Atlas. Schell had used similar illustrations in his previous engagement with Picturesque Canada, and like images are also found in Picturesque America. Indeed, in the 1888 reissue of Picturesque America, a vignette of a river steamer passing beneath a train on an iron bridge is used as a cover illustration for one of its eight volumes. In the Atlas, though, the passion for steam reaches new heights. Certainly, it was a period in which steam was making decisive changes to transportation in Australia. The 1880s were,
according to Geoffrey Blainey, the period of Australia’s ‘first wild boom in railways’ and the railways were becoming entwined with the very idea of progress.34 These evocations are condensed in the vaporous emissions of the *Atlas* pictures. Another Schell illustration, ‘Sydney Harbour from Shark Point’ (fig. 5), sprays nine separate plumes skyward in expanding and intermingling clouds. The steam from ships on the harbour blends with the emissions from coastal industries in a symphony of vapour.

Bustle and movement are the defining elements in the life of the *Atlas* city.35 Yet these are qualities which inhere not only in the ports, but on the streets of the city and at the feet of civic architecture. In Sydney, the towering secular and religious edifices of ‘The Town Hall and St. Andrew’s Cathedral’ (fig. 6) are skirted by a dense fringe of public bustle. Children walking with their mothers, couples chatting beneath parasols, and the busy to-and-fro of carriages all provide a clearly articulated rationale for the buildings which rise behind them. The well-dressed citizens who circulate freely through

34 Geoffrey Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance Shaped Australia’s History* (Melbourne and Sydney: MacMillan, 1975 [1966]) 158. ‘In the minds of many Australians,’ wrote Blainey, ‘the railway was the sacred and only symbol of progress’ (165).

35 Returning to Melbourne in 1888 after more than thirty years, William Westgarth was struck by the ‘noise of ceaseless business’ that now flows through the city. *Personal Recollections of Early Melbourne and Victoria* (Melbourne and Sydney: George Robertson, 1888), p.156.
the foreplanes of the picture act as a counterpoint to the geometric patterns of city buildings in the *Atlas* and as the goal of its public ontology.

Such illustrations become important to the scheme of the *Atlas* because, in fact, the everyday activities of life are largely missing from the written text. With their range of figures and bustling crowds, it is the illustrations of the *Atlas* that populate a largely unpeopled prose. The story of the 'People of Australasia' is told, in the main, by reference to its leaders and to its institutions. It is not a story about 'life' in the Australian colonies, but 'the conditions of life' (463). People living lives is an implied narrative in the *Atlas*. It is a world populated by implication. The descriptions of industries imply that people work; the descriptions of schools and churches, that children study and people worship. The regional audits are a way of implying the existence of people without describing them. In the mallee country north of Adelaide, 'the population is scanty, but the entire region is well supplied with the adjuncts of civilisation as schools, churches, and assembly-rooms' (455). The institutions of this society are the apotheosis of its people. 'Every little township has its post-office, machinist's shop, public-house, and store, and in the larger there are banks, telegraph stations, and other public buildings' (455). Living is thus metonymic in the *Atlas*, and the presence of 'civilisation' is signed by its 'adjuncts'.

It is only through the anonymous figures in the illustrations that the lives of people enter the pages of the *Atlas* and become in some limited way, individuated. Of course, the *Atlas* is utterly selective in
the persons it chooses to fill its illustrations. Nevertheless, despite a certain sameness in these illustrated persons the *Atlas* is reliant upon their innocuous and continuous presence. All through the written text, the experience of living – for those outside of the historical pantheon – is collectivised and invisible. Ordinary people do not act in the *Atlas* except in these pictures. The prose describes institutions, industries, towns, past-times and practices in great detail. In this just-add-people world of social machinery, it is the pictures which enact the drama of bourgeois living.

The concern for industry and bustle resonates more broadly with the making of things in the *Atlas*, with manufacture and the step-wise process of industrial creation. There is, beyond many other things in the *Atlas*, a deep reverence for production, for the miraculous beauty and transformative power of the process. Certainly, it is a concern one can also discover in the illustrated newspaper of the period, which often depicted factories and mills. In 1864, for instance, the *Illustrated Sydney News* ran a ‘Colonial Industries’ series of illustrated stories about industrial facilities in New South Wales, and similar pictures can be found throughout the Melbourne-based *Illustrated Australian News* from the 1860s to the 1890s. Occasional factory illustrations appear in *Picturesque America* and *Picturesque Canada*, but once again the *Atlas* stands out as the work which most thoroughly embraces the broadened parameters of the new picturesque.

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36 For the most part, those figures depicted in the cities crowding the streets or participating in urban rituals are simply bourgeois mannequins. The lives of indigenous people, to the extent they registered at all, are registered in the languages of the other; of science, as in the Reverend Lorimer Fison’s ‘The Australian Aborigines’ (707-714), or racial abjection, as in William Trail’s propagandist account of the ‘savagery’ of Aboriginal people in his Queensland chapters.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the depiction of the mining industry. Here traditional considerations of the picturesque are swept aside by the rude awe of the industrial sublime. In 'Burra Burra Mine in 1875' (455), a deep chasm is depicted, rivalling in grandeur any natural gorge. 'Ballarat from Black Hill' (267 and fig. 8), 'The Port Phillip Co’s. Mining Plant' (272), and 'Stawell' (275) are illustrations not of picturesque beauty, of rolling hills, or even pleasant towns, but of towering metal frameworks and belching steam, hillsides torn to pieces and huge pyramids of rubble. 'At Kangaroo Flat,' explains one writer, 'a mining city comes in view that proclaims the nature of its predominating industry from afar off; for some of the loftiest eminences serve as pedestals for towering chimney-stacks and lofty poppet-heads, while jets of steam and huge accumulations of tailing are the outward and visible signs of the ransacking process which is going on two thousand feet below the surface of the earth' (290). The Atlas, at such moments, is an articulation of capital in all its extractive wonder. As elsewhere in the Atlas, the mining industry begins as a
picturesque story and ends with the triumph of industrialised process. The ‘early digger, who had only to equip himself with a pick and shovel, a tin pan, and a cradle’ (741), had been subsumed by ‘science, skill, capital, machinery, and organisation’ (748).

On his tour of 1884-85, the scientist J.A. Froude noted a particular colonial fascination for the operation of machinery. He describes how at Eaglehawk he had been taken on his second tour of crushing mills: ‘They were identical with those we had seen already – the same row of cylinders thumping down upon the stone, the same roar of machinery, and the same results; but the good people were proud of them and we could not be impatient after the trouble they had taken to please us.’ Mining is read as the sign of a submerged humanity: ‘the tall chimney stacks, with their long pennons of smoke, and the whirring of wheels in the poppet-heads, indicate that human beings are hard at work far below the surface’ (289). The mechanised mining site succeeded in enacting the ideal of an industrious but invisible workforce.

The fetish of production is most clearly visible in a special category of image that recurs throughout the Atlas. Here the phases of an industry are represented in a series of sketches which show the ordered pathway of production. Multiple pictures are cascaded down a page so as to depict an entire manufacturing process from raw materials to finished product. In ‘Mort’s Cheese Farm, Bodalla’ (141) we see the cattle grazing pleasantly in pasture, we see the milk being squeezed from the udders, we see a well-dressed couple ‘Breaking up the Curd’, and finally we see the ‘Cheese Room’ and the precious discs of cheese being placed on the keeping shelves. At ‘Fallon’s Vineyard, Albury’ (147), the process drops diagonally across the page from top left to bottom right. In the first image, ‘The Vineyard’, the grapes are being picked from the long rows of vines; in the second,

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38 J.A. Froude, Oceana, or , England and Her Colonies, New ed. (London: Longman, Green, 1886) 118.
‘Crushing’ the buckets of grapes are being hand-wrung through rollers into barrels; in the third, ‘Pressing’, stout, smock-wearing men are heaving on the levers of the press as the pure grape juice emits from a pipe at the bottom of the machine.

The final image, ‘Cellars’, stamped like a seal across the others, shows the gloomy outlines of the barrels being inspected by candlelight. Similar picture-stories are told in ‘Harvesting, South Australia’ (427), ‘The Sugar Industry, Richmond River’ (116), ‘Lucerne Harvest’ (102), ‘Sugar Industry, Near Mackay’ (102), and ‘Coal-Mine, Wallsend, NSW’ (747). Often the string of pictures is tied together with an appropriate icon from the industry being depicted. In ‘Fallon’s Vineyard, Albury’, a grape vine wends its way through the sequence of images, curling tendrils and pendant bunches of grapes drooping across the geometric shapes of the diagrams. In ‘Sugar Industry, Near Mackay’, a long stalk of sugar cane runs down one side of the sequence binding the three separate images to its singular length.

In these illustrated flow diagrams used to reveal the intricacies of the sugar industry, the manufacture of cheese, the production of wine, and the harvesting of wheat, it is significant that all the industries that are depicted are essentially primary industries. In Victoria, as Graeme Davison has detailed, protectionist policies allowed the growth of a diverse range of industries based around import substitution, but on the whole the colonial economies were based
The overwhelming majority of its material and machinery including paper, ink and presses, being imported. There is therefore a kind of irony in the Australian colonial fascination with production. It was as though the reverence for process was taking the place of a real export-oriented manufacturing industry, a cartoon compensation for this industrial lack. Interestingly, these process-illustrations are all produced by Australian-based artists – Frank Mahony, William Macleod, Albert Fullwood, and Julian Ashton – and not by the Americans brought over by the Atlas proprietors, who tended to sketch more traditionally ‘picturesque’ subjects. Also, as the Americans were brought in at a later stage, it indicates that the works were sketched in the early phase of image accumulation.

The activity of the nation coming into being is presaged in the activity of the verbs captioning these pictures—'reaping', 'cutting', 'crushing', 'carrying'—the present tense signs of productive achievement. And again, permeating these illustrations can be seen the trope of birth. 'It is good,' says Barthes, 'to be able to show we can produce things from their very nonexistence and thus to credit man with an extraordinary creative power.' Barthes goes on to argue that, as a sign, the process of giving birth has been particularly resonant in the industrial age, and the evidence in the Atlas (corroborated in the illustrated newspapers) is that this excitement with human creationary power seems to be heightened in situations of colonial self-representation. In other words, the fascination with bringing products into being has a resonance in a place which itself has been brought into being, produced through the miraculous process of colonisation.

When Frank Donohue, for instance, speaks of the birth of the wool industry, his story of this industry is echoed diagrammatically by a series of pictures depicting the production of wool itself ('Wool Drying', 'Sheep Shearing', 'Wool Loading', 'Wool Pressing' 751-753). These noun-verb captions, stranded in the present continuous tense, sign the continuity of production, the ceaseless coming into being of colonial produce that echoes the relentless birth of the European colonies in Australasia.

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A narrative of social birth and an ontology of the public sphere is thus conducted metonymically through the colonial industries. Yet production was not the only mirror in which colonial Australia of the Atlas saw the bold outlines of its own reflection. It saw itself just

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41 The replication of British town-names was one way in which the colonial project acknowledged the process of its own birth. It was a practice which 'may serve to exemplify the tendency of the Anglo-Saxon race to remember and reproduce in the work of colonization the familiar names of places and persons in the old country.' Times [London] 8 August 1885: 3.
as clearly in the expansionary progress of scientific enterprise. Take the example of geology. It is significant that the only complete map of Australia in the *Atlas* is the ‘Geological Map of Australia’ (fig. 1), compiled by C.S. Wilkinson. ‘Australia,’ wrote C.S. Wilkinson in the ‘Geological Formation’ section of the *Atlas*, ‘once small islands, but now a vast continental area may ... be looked upon as foreshadowing the growth of the future nation into which, from small isolated settlements, the present disunited colonial elements are gradually being welded’ (736). In the geological phenomena of the continent, Wilkinson saw the layerings of nation already present. Australia the nation was immanent within Australia the geological land-mass.

Like the heroic geology of Strzelecki’s *Physical description of New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land* (1845), there was an epic and ancient quality to historical geology that was attractive to a colonial culture. The primeval story of continental rock compensated at some level for the brief history of European settlement. Yet the *Atlas* was ever-ready to promote more pragmatic opportunities from such pursuits. ‘The geology of Australia,’ explains Wilkinson, ‘teaches a lesson not only of high scientific interest, but of great commercial significance, namely: – that the formations afford evidence of an enormous area of soils adapted for agricultural and pastoral purposes, and also of the rocks that indicate rich mineral resources’ (736). Clearly geology, and its affinity with minerals and resources, was integral to the language of wealth that was at the heart of late nineteenth-century Australian historiography, yet through these gifts it intimated more tantalising promises, such as that divined by Wilkinson as the ‘assurance of the future occupation of Australia by a vast industrial population’ (736). Geological science sought and found a lithic sanction of occupation, a testimony in stone of colonial Australia’s right to be.

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In other areas of descriptive science represented in the *Atlas*, there is a concern to emphasise the diversity and plenitude of species and types available in Australia. In ‘The Flora of Australasia’, Australia’s pre-eminent botanist, Baron von Mueller, pronounced Australian flora ‘in its ordinary displays, as well as in its numeric specificity’ to be ‘greater and richer than that of all Europe’ (722). Similarly, the marsupials of Australia, writes William A. Haswell in the corresponding chapter on fauna, exhibit a ‘great diversity . . . in external form and mode of life’ (723). Diversity was also evident in the variety of climatic regions made possible by the vast size of Australia, ‘a range that affords space for every climate except that of extreme cold’ (733). The logic of the picturesque demanded diversity, but diversity of a particular kind – the diversity which one possesses and controls. Heterogeneity *per se* held no attraction. The linguistic diversity of Aboriginal people, for instance, went unvalued by the *Atlas*. ‘Of the languages spoken by these tribes there is but little to be said,’ wrote the Rev. Lorimer Fison, adding that, ‘there is no doubt that they are all variations of one stock’ and ‘all appear to have a common grammatical structure’ (708). Because it was a diversity that lay outside of its purview and its capacity to display, diverse aboriginal languages were not part of the celebration of variety found elsewhere in the *Atlas*.

For the *Atlas*, the valued qualities of controlled diversity, scientific progress, commercial opportunity and visual pleasure grew happily together in the botanic garden. ‘All the great cities,’ explains James Smith in the ‘Melbourne’ chapter, ‘by an instinct as artistic as it is wise, have made excellent provision for botanic gardens’ (252). The advantage of botanic gardens and the reason why James Smith devotes such a significant amount of pagespace to their description is that they serve so many purposes. Speaking of Melbourne’s Gardens, he points out that ‘whether regarded in their utilitarian, aesthetic, or recreative aspects – these gardens may be regarded as one of the
soundest and most remunerative investments of public money which have been made by the Government of Victoria' (252). In terms of the aesthetics of the gardens, they are motivated by picturesque imperatives of visibility and controlled diversity. 'From the summit of the hill,' writes Smith, 'a tolerably comprehensive view is obtained of this picturesque demesne' (251). And while it is possible to see much of the gardens from its summit, for Smith, 'the great charm of the gardens is their apparently endless extent, and next to that the variety of views and vistas they present owing to the irregularities and undulation of the surface' (251). In the Botanic Gardens of Melbourne, says Smith, 'there is no sense of "circumscription or confine", no sameness, no repetitions of a prospect, or disappointments upon reaching an eminence' (251).

But the purely aesthetic was rarely an end in itself in the Atlas. The botanic gardens created a space for public leisure that was underpinned by the pursuit of industrious goals. Commercial plant species were fostered and propagated, and 'the results have been sent to exhibitions in various parts of the world, and an active interchange is maintained with kindred institutions in other countries' (252). It was also a leisure space that in a sense paid for itself. 'Mr. Guilfoyle,' explains Smith of its current curator, 'has not forgotten that these gardens are intended to subserve the interests of science as well as to minister to the enjoyment of the public' (250). Like Exhibitions they were microcosmic, shrinking the 'greater part of the world' into 'characteristic specimens' (250), part of what Tony


44 For James Smith's own role with the Acclimatisation Society, see Stuart 53-54.
Bennett calls the 'exhibitionary complex'. And like so many other institutions favoured with illustration in the *Atlas*, such as museums, galleries, observatories, the botanic gardens were a shrine to the act of seeing, to the acquisition of knowledge through sight. Moreover, in combining the compositional refinement of the eighteenth-century estate with a nineteenth-century love of public knowledge, the botanic gardens of the 1880s echo the informational turn of the neo-picturesque.

The colonial lifeworld of the *Atlas* also, increasingly, saw its image in the networks of communication being constructed across the continent. The society that the *Atlas* addressed was a society in love with its infrastructure. Between 1870 and 1872 the overland telegraph was constructed from Darwin to Adelaide. This ariadne spine allowed for the first time, direct communication between the cities of Australia and Europe. 'The telegraph line,' wrote Henry Burgess in his South Australian chapters, 'keeps an open thoroughfare right through the heart of the continent, and the stations are the nuclei of civilisation' (463). On 2 July, 1872, the first cablegram from England to Melbourne was sent. The minute pulses of electricity that flowed down these wires now connected the colonies, one to another, across Australia and across much of the world. Frank Donohue's account of the 'Railway, Postal and Telegraph Systems' (763-770) tells a story of the ever-increasing efficiency of these systems and the concomitant binding of the colonies ever more tightly together. He enthusiastically reels off the miles of railway line and telegraph cables that have been laid, the efficiency of the steam service to Australasian ports, the number of post offices, and the regulation of colonial mail. He speaks of 'systems', 'connections', 'branches' and 'extensions'. In all directions, it seemed, networks of communication were extending.46

45 Bennett 59-77.

46 'In Melbourne public men patted themselves on the back for their great good fortune in being singled out by divine providence to take a place in the van of humanity's glorious march into the future. The railway, the steamboat, the electric telegraph, the overseas cables, the
This enthusiasm for networks of communication is exemplified by James Smith’s account of the Melbourne Telephone Exchange located in Wills Street. The exchange, says Smith, ‘may be likened to the cerebellum of the social and commercial system of the busy city; with its afferent and efferent nerves ramifying in all directions, and incessantly receiving and transmitting messages from and to every portion of the vital organism’ (230). A sketch by W.T. Smedley (fig. 12) illustrates what Smith describes as ‘an airy and spacious chamber’ in which ‘ten or a dozen young girls are stationed at the apparatus, which is in communication with a thousand private telephones in Melbourne and its suburbs’ (230). Doctors talk to patients, and ‘watchmen’ talk to the police and fire brigade. The exchange is operational around the clock. The spacious hall of the exchange, serviced by the ‘quick ears and nimble fingers of the attendants’ (230) maintains a continuously ordered system for the city to speak to itself. James Smith, whose entries for the Atlas show a fondness for anatomical metaphors, fancied that Melbourne ‘with railways extending to every portion of the colony and all centring in itself, . . . must ever be the heart of a great country, receiving the life of the community and radiating it again through all the various arteries of traffic’ (254).
In the anatomy of the colonial lifeworld presented in the *Atlas*, if the telephone exchange was its nerve centre, and the railway network its arteries, then the observatory was its eyes. Observatories were important institutions in the late nineteenth century. They were part of the panoply of institutional armour which a civilised city must don before it faced the world. In 1869, the Victorian government spent £10,000 on a new reflector telescope for its observatory. The Great Melbourne Telescope was ‘the world’s largest working equatorial telescope’, and to the gold-rich colony of Victoria, as the bloated Burke and Wills expedition had already shown, size clearly mattered.\(^47\) Unfortunately, while the new telescope took magnificent photographs of the moon, a catalogue of technical failures meant that it was unable to perform the task for which it was purchased, the observation and photographic documentation of nebulae. A member of a visiting British delegation remarked in 1882 that ‘so far as definition is concerned this telescope is a failure, and surpassed by many instruments so much smaller that the comparison is simply absurd.’\(^48\) By the time Robert Ellery, government astronomer of Victoria, published his *Observations of the Southern Nebulae* made with the Great Melbourne Telescope in 1885, ‘it was so completely out of date that it attracted no interest internationally.’\(^49\) In 1904, the telescope-maker George Richtey, described the Great Melbourne Telescope as ‘one of the greatest

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\(^47\) Haynes et al. 96.
\(^48\) Cuthbert Peek, cited in Haynes et al. 107.
\(^49\) Haynes et al. 108.
calamities in the history of instrumental astronomy.50

These bleak assessments did not dim the enthusiasm of the *Atlas* for presenting the Australasian colonies as front-line astronomical centres. The new equipment ensured Melbourne’s participation in the collective advancement of scientific knowledge. When J.A. Froude visited the Melbourne Observatory in 1885 he reflected on how the people of Melbourne were ‘not going to be left behind in any department or thing, and have spared neither thought nor money.’51 The Great Telescope was Melbourne’s *entrée* into the shared spectacle of the cosmos revealing itself to western science. ‘The work of the observatory,’ explained the NSW government astronomer H.C. Russell in the *Atlas*, ‘has been chiefly astronomical, and several volumes of star observations, many extra-meridional observations, and a volume of work done by the great reflector have been published; this last records the work done upon southern Nebulae’ (735).52 The moon was photographed and ‘regular photographs of the sun are taken with the photo-heliograph’ (735). These records of celestial activity – of sun and moon, stars and nebulae – were part of the colonial dance of scientific maturity. The observatories in Australian cities affirmed an ability to see in the face of a disconcerting failure to be seen by others in the international system.
Like other scientific disciplines summarised in the *Atlas* such as botany, zoology, geology, and ethnography, astronomy is both an attempt at displaced self-description and an elaborate, ongoing ritual of self-enactment. The heavens were the field of projection in which the colonial self could be articulated on equal terms with other Western selves, a cosmological Other which through the practices of observation provided reference points to the position of Australian society.

There is another map in the *Atlas* that bears mentioning. It is a colour map of the 'Solar System' (730) by H.C. Russell. The map contains the standard information about the planets, their sizes, names, and orbits, as well as brief discussions of asteroids, comets and the composition of the sun. In the context of the *Atlas*, Russell's map provides a kind of cosmological address: Australia, the World, the Solar System, and so forth. It locates Australia within the 'big picture', a location in the larger scheme which must at times have been difficult to pinpoint in the day-to-day relations that the colonies had with Britain and other nations. Indeed Russell, the first Australian-born government astronomer, locked Australian observatories into one of the century's most extraordinary attempts to expand and document the visual kingdom, the French-led 'Carte du Ciel' (Map of the Sky) project. As Australia's representative at the Paris Astrographic Congress of 1887, Russell agreed to Australian participation in a global project that planned to photograph and chart the entire celestial sky. It involved eighteen observatories across the world and entailed the development of nearly 90,000 photographic plates. As a project, it captured the imagination of the Australian scientific community, and provides a celestial echo to the compendious aims of the *Atlas*. Unfortunately, the 'Carte du Ciel' project gradually ground to a halt with the eventual realisation that while the task was possible, the time and resources required to complete it far outweighed its use.
Observatories also performed other social roles under the guise of science. Their astronomical observations were, as James Smith explained, the basis of the regulation of time: 'The true time is likewise indicated daily at noon by means of signals, and is despatched from the Observatory by telegraph to all parts of Victoria' (250). They were also meteorological centres, imbibing a wealth of telegraphed data from which to compile daily weather reports. ‘Self-registering meteorological and magnetical instruments are constantly at work in the observatory and regular observations are taken at a great number of carefully selected stations and the results tabulated and published’ (735). Through networks of information, automated instrumentation, and ceaseless daily ‘work’ the observatory relentlessly produced its reports. William Traill wrote of Queensland that ‘by 1885 the colony had been traversed by a cobweb of wires aggregating in length seven thousand five hundred and thirty-three miles’ (366). The cycle of knowledge production is ongoing and ever-present: observation, compilation, tabulation, publication. The functions of the observatory – astronomy, time, and weather – all help to assert the totalising power of information. This totalising power was emphasised by the way in which the various colonial observatories worked together to produce combined data: ‘A daily weather chart is also published, which combines the telegrams from all the colonies – telegrams which the several colonies interchange for public information’ (735). As with the geological formation of the continent, the writers of the Atlas saw the glow of federation in these automated filaments of knowledge.

53 For a wonderful discussion of Australian societies’ relationships with time, see Graeme Davison’s The Unforgiving Minute: How Australia Learned to Tell the Time (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1993). In particular, see 33-41 and 60-71 for discussions of the increasing regulation and institutionalisation of time in Australia.
54 The various colonial observatories ‘doubled as meteorological stations, this latter function being the public justification, and often superseding, their astronomical purpose.’ Haynes 32.
55 Froude described how in the Melbourne observatory, ‘every vacant space, in the passages, against the walls of the rooms, under the roof, or under the sky, there was something strange, of which we had to ask an explanation. Gravefaced clocks were turning barrels everywhere, round which paper was rolled, and all the properties of the atmosphere – motion, temperature, density, electricity, &c. – were authentically and deliberately writing down on these rolls in what degree they were present’ (93).
These informational networks and institutions fulfilled broader symbolic obligations. In William Traill’s description of Brisbane’s Windmill Hill, he begins by describing how, during the convict period, the hill had been the location of a punitive tread-mill. A second anecdote involves one of Traill’s favourite tropes, the violence of aboriginal people to one another. ‘Here, too,’ he explains, ‘almost where the Observatory stands, once emerged from the forest behind, a mob of yelling savages dragging one of their own race whom they had just captured’ (377, my emphasis). Traill goes on to describe with considerable relish this incident of indigenous ‘savagery’. Each of these incidents is placed by Traill in the shadow, as it were, of the observatory that was now cresting this hill. It was the symbolic role of the observatory as a place of scientific vision and reasoned knowledge, to mark Queensland’s dual transition from darkness to light, overcoming the dark stain of convictism, but also the dark barbarism of the aboriginal inhabitants.

In similar fashion, the telegraphic system was seen within the Atlas as a life-line of knowledge and information in a land that was felt to be inherently devoid of such things. The overland link between Darwin and Adelaide, in particular, played a crucial symbolic role, as Henry Burgess records: ‘The telegraph line keeps an open thoroughfare right through the heart of the continent, and the stations are the nuclei of civilisation’ (463). The overland telegraph needed to be defended
against primitive forces that sought its removal. 'The telegraph stations were constructed and armed for defence,' according to Burgess, 'some tribes of the blacks being both fierce and treacherous.' Like Traill, Burgess has recent evidence of the ever-presence of this danger. 'In 1874,' writes Burgess, 'the Barrow's Creek station was attacked by the aborigines, and three men were speared' (463). It is not said how many aborigines died in this particular incident, or any other, nor does Albert Fullwood's illustration of an 'Inland Telegraph Station' (464), with its white picket fence and broad verandahs bear much resemblance to a fortress. The inconspicuous droop of telegraph wire is all that distinguishes the telegraph station from a pastoral station. Nevertheless, that this link was forged right through the 'heart of the continent', across the vast desert of non-knowledge with its 'fierce and treacherous' hordes, seems to have been important to the colonial imagination of Burgess. Feelings of colonial alienation were condensed into the drama of maintaining and defending the flow of information across the continent.

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56 For an account of the maintenance of the overland telegraph, including the Barrow Creek killings, see Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance* 137-40.
The account of Sydney harbour at night is one of the most arresting descriptive passages in the *Atlas*. The description is related from the point of view of a ship entering the harbour from the ocean. It seems an odd decision to choose to depict this event in the hours of darkness, but what it permits is the rendering of the city in terms of its illumination. The account begins by describing the 'first indication of a faintly luminous haze' which has appeared on the recently darkened horizon.

That is the Sydney light, or rather the reflection of the flash thrown up on the sky, for the tower and lantern are still below the horizon. On every reappearance this pale blue light becomes a little brighter, and presently a movement like a very

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1 From the 'Sydney' chapter of the *Atlas*, by Andrew Garran, Francis Myers and F.J. Broomfield.
rapid play of faint aurora rays is noticeable. Then a spark, like the nucleus of a comet, seems kindled just beneath the luminous beam – a spark that glows for a moment and then expires, and is again enkindled, and now a little brighter. A little brighter with every minute, a little larger with every quarter of an hour, till two hours before the Heads are reached it has grown to be a flash of intense brilliancy, and its long rays sweep the horizon, dividing the darkness with lines of living fire. (63)

This passage is important because light is important in the *Atlas*. Lighthouses, in particular, are a recurring image in the descriptive chapters. Scarcely a coastline is depicted without a lighthouse capping one of its promontories. In the ‘Topography of Victoria’ chapter there are no less than four lighthouses depicted. They bring to the coastline of Australia not only illumination, but the sensation of its being safely overlooked.

But this description begins from the sea. In other words, the point of view is such that it answers the call of these lighthouse pictures. The thin beam of light sent into the night-sky is registered in the words of this text. The writer enjoys the game of call and answer that the ship plays with the lighthouse in the two hours that elapse between first sight and arrival. Nor, the reader is reminded, is he alone: ‘All eyes are scanning the coast-line, which stands out clearly at each successive flash’ (63). The fact of night, of non-light, makes possible this episodic illumination. Night pares the visual world down into the discrete elements of what is and what is not illuminated. A beam of light in darkness carries with it, like a picture frame, the capacity of visual concentration.

However, while the casting of light into darkness is the enabling visual trope of the description, it is not an account which is content merely to differentiate light from dark. In this passage, light does not

2 ‘Gabo Island Lighthouse’ (181), ‘Wilson’s Promontory’ (183), ‘Cape Otway’ (185), and ‘Cape Nelson’ (187).
constitute a simple possession, but a complex evolving presence that grows and moves and transmutes. Sailing through the Heads and past the occasional lights of the North and Middle Harbours, the ship finds its way into incandescence of the inner harbour: 'At this point the signs of a great city burst into view' (64). Sydney signifies its metropolitan splendour through its light.

All ahead is light and life; lights twinkling through the trees of the shore on either hand; lights moving rapidly over the surface of the water between all the dark points ahead; lights beyond the red spark which caps the round tower of Fort Denison; and lines of lights where the streets of the city climb and extend along the ridges of the hills. (64)

Light is the sign of a great city. A city's lights are the luminous extension of bustle through the full twenty-four hours of the day, 'for this harbour' we are reminded, 'is alive and active by night as well as day with colliers, ferry-boats, coasters and fishing craft' (64). Like steam, light is an insignia of progress, a sign of what Blainey calls the 'pistons of prosperity'. Steam and light render energy in a visual form, but the distinguishing quality of light is that it reveals itself while it reveals its favoured objects:

The Circular Quay is brilliant with the electric beam, which, piercing through the rigging and reflected from the sides of the vessels that crowd the wharves, gives to the water-surface a steely blue, showing up with strong lights and shades the outlines of giant ships and ocean steamers lying round the wharf, and the shadowy masses of the great wool stores behind. (64)

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3 'At Tamworth in New South Wales in November 1888 a huge crowd gave three hearty cheers when the Mayoress turned on the electric lights in the main street of town. The inhabitants of Tamworth had been aglow with enthusiasm all day, because their town had now been placed in the front rank of populated centres in Australia, having outstripped all competitors in the race for colonial progress.' Manning Clark, A History of Australia, vol. 5 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1981) 29.

All the markers of industrial modernity, all the accoutrements of a thriving maritime city, are revealed here floating in a virtual sea of light. The harbour is a light-field of reflected surfaces and shadowed contours. It is a light that is plastic and fluid, flowing, drooping and splashing through the descriptions of the harbour and the city. Between Lavender Bay and Circular Quay, 'the lights multiply and thicken – white lights from overhanging windows, red lights and green lights from piers and ships, reproducing themselves as luminous columns in the depths' (64). In the dynamic mirror of the harbour's surface the activity of light becomes still more frenzied, the beams 'entwine, intermingle, become convoluted – bent and broken in a maze of colour like the transformation scene of a pantomime' (64).

Light is a marker and a metaphor of sight. Where light flows, seeing is never far behind. The description of light-play in Sydney harbour is a way of externalising the play of the eyes. The concern with light and its characteristic icon the lighthouse thus ties in more generally
with the interest the *Atlas* takes in vision. The art theorist Michael Carter has written that to be picturesque was to possess the quality of 'to-be-looked-at-ness,' and the world of the *Atlas* was permeated with this quality.\(^5\) It was a world which demanded to be seen. The search for the picturesque was thus a two-sided quest. It was both a treasure hunt, and a mission of liberation in which the hidden secrets of Nature's beauty demanded release. The picturesque text was as an enactment of this double quest.

At a broader level, the visual concerns in the *Atlas* might be seen within the context of certain trademark visual practices of the nineteenth century mentioned in the previous chapter, such as exhibitions, museums and libraries. Moreover, observatories, botanical gardens, dioramas and other visual technologies worked in various ways to generate knowledges that were based on the quality of being seen.\(^6\) Furthermore, photography, the decisive visual innovation to emerge from the first half of the century, made sight recordable. With photography it became possible to make a document out of the act of seeing. It was seen in the previous chapter, for instance, that when the Victorian Government purchased its Great Telescope, the project which soon consumed the majority of its resources was the 'Carte du Ciel', an immense

\(^5\) Michael Carter, *Framing Art: Introducing Theory and the Visual Image* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1990) 150. 'To-be-looked-at-ness' was also a term that Laura Mulvey used in her influential essay, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' to describe in Lacanian terms the visual quality of female bodies in narrative films as a focus of the male gaze. *Visual and Other Pleasures* (London: MacMillan, 1989) 19. This voyeuristic dimension of seeing is not inconsistent with the picturesque sensibility and the erotics of seeing in the *Atlas* are explored in the following chapter.

\(^6\) Several recent books have engaged to varying degrees with the visual culture of the nineteenth century. Jonathan Crary's *Techniques of the Observer: on Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass: M.I.T. Press, 1990) approaches the issue through the development of optical theory and optical instruments that he argues signalled a change in the concern of vision from the physics of seeing to the biomechanics of seeing. Drawing on Foucault, he attempts to show how this physiological interest became translated as a kind of 'ocular discipline'. Martin Jay's *Downcast Eyes: the denigration of vision in twentieth-century French thought* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1993) is a wide-ranging analysis of visuality
photographic 'map of the sky'. Those who made decisions about funding clearly found an attraction in the photograph, in the production of material records of the visual activities of the observatory.

There were other grand photographic projects in late nineteenth-century Australia. In 1874, German-born gold-magnate, Bernard Otto Holtermann employed the eminent photographer Henry Beaufoy Merlin and his protege Charles Bayliss to produce the world's largest photograph. To do this Merlin and Bayliss had to first build the world's largest camera and a 73-foot tower was duly built on top of a building overlooking Sydney Harbour. Perched on top of this tower was the 'camera', which consisted of a darkened room with a movable one hundred inch lens. This camera produced a negative measuring 5' 3" x 3'. A series of photographs were taken which eventually yielded a panorama measuring some 33 feet in length. The photograph was an international hit, with Holtermann exhibiting the pictures throughout Europe and America, including at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition of 1876, the Exposition Universelle in Paris in the same year, and the Sydney International Exhibition of 1882.

If one were to cast these various visual projects, practices and institutions into a narrative, one might summarise its plot in terms of an expanding visual kingdom, the story of a world that was progressively yielding itself to the techniques of sight. The trend toward illustrated publications in the nineteenth century is a further indication of this visual impulse. Indeed, there is a certain visual

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that, while conducted through the filter of French critical thinking, usefully revisits the visual practices and theories of the nineteenth century.


hunger transmitted through the illustrations of the *Atlas*. While the discourse of the picturesque has always been concerned with seeing, in the *Atlas* and its American cousins, the traditional picturesque concern with 'views' and 'scenes' is taken one step further, such that many of the pictures not only show views, but show people viewing views. The observing figure is a frequent component of many of the *Atlas* illustrations. We look, as it were, over their shoulders. We observe their observation. If a monument is depicted, as in 'La Perouse Monument at Botany Bay' (18) or 'Marked Tree' (27), then more often than not, people are also depicted either reading inscriptions or simply admiring the edifice before them. Likewise in the portrayal of natural scenes, it is habitual for the picture to contain onlookers. In 'Govett's Leap' (fig. 3), a man cranes forward, hands on hips and stares into the abyss. In 'Mount Abrupt' (192), a very similar man rocks back, hands on hips, and gazes up at the sharp outlines of this striking feature. Two tiny figures stand dwarfed in 'Fitzroy Falls, Moss Vale' (133), looking outward and upward as the water crashes down the sheer face of the cliff. At 'Lake George' (fig. 4) a mother and son look down from a neighbouring hill, the son pointing to a distant ship steaming along the lake's shore.
Ridge, the point of which forms a small harbour. Near the sea, by the side of the road, a travelling party's efforts are passed, a piece of tin. The peaceful village snugly in a valley on the right, and miles from Sydney, is the coast's chief beauty, its treasure, in blue. The principal product is mutton very large yields are obtained.

Partly such figures help to provide a sense of scale, to use the human body in the capacity of yard-stick. The use of small figures to intensify the feeling of awe generated by mountains, chasms and waterfalls has traditionally been considered as an evocation of the sublime. Yet these figures also serve to sign the act of seeing. It is significant in this regard that these figures are often pictured from behind, as if to share with the external viewer the pleasure of the sight. The line of the figure's gaze gives literal enactment to the picturesque quality of 'to-be-looked-at-ness'. Sometimes in the Atlas it is this very act of looking that becomes the subject of the picture. In '25-Ton Gun at Middle Head' (fig. 5) a helmeted soldier stares out along the line of fire with his binoculars, waiting for the shot to strike the ocean. It is not an illustration of a canon, but of the act of monitoring the firing of the cannon. The central element of the

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10 See, for instance, Andrews 42-44.
illustration is not the gun but the binoculars. The canon has been fired, but the staring continues.

In the cities of the *Atlas*, the natural features are used as a vantage point for the admiration of the built features. ‘Anyone desirous of obtaining a comprehensive view of the city of Brisbane would naturally climb the ascent leading to Windmill Hill,’ remarks William Traill in the ‘Topography of Queensland’ chapter (376). In ‘Perth’ (facing, 467), the view from Mt. Eliza takes in the broad sweep of Mount’s Bay and looks out over the roof-tops of the city toward the Darling Scarp. This image, and those like it, is interesting because it reminds us that urban sites in Australia were, in a way, built to be seen. This form of vision draws on sentiments of parental pride. The colonist reading the *Atlas* looks down from King’s Park to Perth and contemplates what a marvellous city grows below. Other pictures – ‘Adelaide from the Torrens’ (facing 439), ‘Melbourne from the Yarra’ (facing 215) – show the city from the vantage of its waterways. In the *Atlas* the city was a place in which to see and be seen. What are all these pictures showing if not the simple pleasure of sight, the simple, yet utterly necessary act of seeing a place? The pleasure of seeing is one of the more constant messages in the illustrations of the *Atlas*.

Yet the logic of the picturesque is not governed simply by the smooth expansion of the visible kingdom. Integral to the picturesque tour was the idea that what was seen had been rigorously pursued. The picturesque sensibility disdained easy seeing, preferring the prize of a sight that was revealed in spite of itself. Topography is not permitted to yield itself too readily, and was expected to provide resistance as well as access. Part of the playful pleasure in the Sydney Harbour word-sketch derives from the way in which the splashes of light constrained what could be seen. Similarly, one of the problems for picturesque sensibility in Australia was that the country was often
too open. In crossing the Dividing Range it seemed to stretch out in yawning expanses, and in seeing everything it was felt one saw nothing. Even when there is nothing to see, as in ‘Nothing in Sight’ (58), this very fact is deemed worthy of illustration. In the bare salt plain, the figure stares earnestly into his binoculars. Describing the topography of western New South Wales, the Atlas quotes Henry Kendall who writes of, ‘Burning wastelands, glancing upward with a weird and vacant stare,/ Where the languid heavens quiver o’er red depths of stirless air’ (58). The outback was a place of desolate hypervisibility where empty sky met empty land: ‘These sultry dales are only the skirts or the outposts of the great inner land of wildness, vastness, and awe-inspiring solitude’ (58). The expanding kingdom of the visible seems to flex under the weight of this openness. The remainder of this chapter outlines examples of how the Atlas sought to restore the sense of enclosure that was essential to an aesthetics of the picturesque, while at the same time pursuing the imperatives of illumination that are at the heart of its operation.

Figure 6. ‘Nothing in Sight’ (58).

One response to the challenge of undue visibility was to seek to see beneath the surface of things. Confounded by a surfeit of seeing on the continental surface, the *Atlas* travelled underground. After all it was from beneath the earth that the Australian colonies were extracting their wealth, as Garran with a certain amount of affected naivety pointed out in his Preface: 'Australia, beginning as a prison, discovered in time that it was a splendid wool farm, and, when that industry had been established on secure foundations, it made a further discovery that underneath the grass lay a magnificent gold mine' (iv). So the *Atlas* combines its desire to articulate the expansion across the surface of the continent with a desire to articulate the extraction of wealth from beneath this surface.

Certainly mining, as was seen in the previous chapter, was integral to the idea of wealth extraction, but other miracles were also occurring in underground Australia. For instance, while the river near Dubbo remained dry for long periods of the year, 'The surface river is but the visible drainage channel; the permanent waters lie below, saved from pollution and heat by the easily pierced coating of overlying earth' (125). Still more startling was the discovery of artesian water, buried deep beneath the parched interior of the continent. In his *History of Australian Exploration* (1888), Ernest Favenc pondered the extent of the artesian basin which preliminary drilling had found to exist in disparate parts of the Australian interior: 'Of the magnitude of our great subterranean reservoir who shall tell? What craft will ever float on its dark surface, under the domes of pendant stalactites, rippling for the first time the ice-cold waters, and disturbing the eyeless fish in their shadowy haunts?'

Favenc romantically evokes subterranean Australia as the life-giving secret world that lies

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beneath the barren surface of the continent. For Favenc, as it was for the Atlas, the prospect of inland underground water was confirmation of the essential and boundless benevolence of subterranean Australia. Not only did the earth yield mineral wealth, but water, the very thing which it had been thought that the outback lacked.

The sea, likewise, promised to deliver to the surface its submerged treasures. In the Atlas this process of extraction is enacted diagrammatically in illustrations such as 'Pearl Fishery, Torres Strait' (facing, 399). Julian Ashton’s cunning cross-sectional sketch of pearling in the Torres Strait fades neatly between the luggers sitting on the placid waters above, and the suited divers collecting pearls from the ocean floor. Dividing this dual image is a third phase of the pearling process, the laborious splitting of shells, which ensures that the extraction of wealth is dignified by the exertion of effort, even if it is the effort of others.13 A similar technique is used in Ashton’s illustration of ‘The Portland Cray-Fishery’ (265), in which the framed

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13 Henry Reynolds has written of the participation of Aborigines (and Torres Strait Islanders, indigenous people from New Guinea, Malays, and Pacific Islanders) in the maritime industries of the Australian coast. ‘Sealers, pearlers and whalers,’ writes Reynolds, ‘relied heavily on Aboriginal labour for the profitability, and even the survival, of their industries’ (The Other Side of the Frontier 144.). Coastal interaction was indeed another ‘frontier’ according to
image of work on the ‘Fisherman’s Jetty’ bisects two further images of the boat ‘Out at Sea’ and the crayfish climbing obligingly into a pot.\textsuperscript{14} Boat and pot are linked by the faintest of threads, the shadow of a line plays out of the bottom corner of the boat image and falls down a column of shaded ocean behind the frame of the fisherman on the jetty, and down another shaded column into the top corner of the cray-pot image.

This probing beneath the surface of things, this downward glance of the picturesque eye, finds its most sustained expression in the description of the Jenolan Caves. Francis Myers, author of the Jenolan chapter, writes that the caves are ‘one of the great sights of New South Wales’ (149), and certainly the attention the caves receive within the \textit{Atlas} is singular. While other geographical features are subsumed within the general descriptive sketches, the Jenolan Caves are discussed in a separate, discrete chapter. It is the only chapter in the \textit{Atlas} devoted solely to a single geographical feature. Clearly, the caves were felt by the editors to possess some distinctive quality which would justify this protracted treatment.

\begin{figure}[h]
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\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{‘The Grand Arch, Eastern Entrance’ (149).}
\end{figure}

Reynolds, and one with its own particular patterns of cross-cultural encounters. By the 1880s, however, the use of diving suits was eroding the traditional reliance on indigenous divers. See also Henry Reynolds, ‘The Aborigines,’ \textit{Australasian Australia}, 1888 123-24.

\textsuperscript{14} The layout of this image bears a close resemblance in several ways to ‘In Quest of Bait’, \textit{Picturesque Canada}, vol. 2, div. 4.
Caves invited romantic association and one might find in the description of the Jenolan Caves the evidence of this habit of thinking. Myers jokes about entering ‘the realm of the gnomes’ (150), and describes the descent into the caves as ‘stern and wild’ with the sound of whispering trees adding ‘a sentiment of weirdness to the rugged grandeur of the mountain landscape’ (149). Myers, however, also pays due attention to the scientific importance of caves, noting that the Jenolan Caves ‘are not only remarkable for natural beauty, but are highly interesting to the geologist for their fossil remains’ (149), and fleshing out his account with geological jargon: ‘The limestone is of palæozoic siluro-Devonian age, and the erosion of the present valleys took place chiefly during the pliocene tertiary epoch’ (149). Caves in the latter part of the nineteenth century had taken on powerful scientific resonances through their importance in archaeology and palaeontology. ‘The exploration of caves is rapidly becoming an important field of enquiry,’ wrote W. Boyd Dawkins in his 1874 book, Cave Hunting.15 It was cave exploration, explained Dawkins, that was resulting in significant reinterpretations of the human condition: ‘the momentous discovery of human relics along with the extinct animals in caves and river deposits has revolutionised the current ideas as to the antiquity and condition of man.’16

These scientific discoveries, however, served rather to enhance the romantic possibilities of caves than to dispel them. H. Rider Haggard, for instance, made skilful use of caves in his African adventure novels, in which subterranean labyrinths in hidden mountains held

16 Dawkins vii.
the secrets of ancient civilisations.\textsuperscript{17} In Australia, these imaginings were echoed in the so-called ‘Lemurian’ novels of the 1890s which often found cave-based lost cities in the Australian desert. In these romantic visions, the cave is a site of emotional projection and ideological resolution.\textsuperscript{18} The problems of the surface world find their secret, hidden answers in the underworld of caves. If it is lost, these novels suggest, look in a cave. Ernest Favenc’s \textit{The Secret of the Australian Desert} (1895) finds the lost members of Leichardt’s journey in the clutches of a lost civilisation called the ‘Warlattas’. For the romantic adventure-writer the cave-world was a place which was, by definition, unseen and thus allowed the plausible suspension of disbelief. There was also, as Robert Dixon and John Docker have noted, a certain psycho-sexual energy in caves that found an enduring novelistic template in Rider Haggard’s \textit{She}.\textsuperscript{19} The heavy metaphoric reliance on penetration and the plundering of hidden treasures helped to sexualise the cave journeys in these adventure narratives. Evolutionary fervour, racial anxiety, imperial ambition, and sexual fantasy are all co-tenants in the romance of the cave in the late nineteenth century.

The wash of this romanticism is evident in the Jenolan chapter of the \textit{Atlas}. In the choice of names given to the various formations within the cave system, one can trace the prevailing patterns of association in the colonial imagination. Amongst the most salient of

\textsuperscript{17} See, for instance, the description of the discovery of ‘Solomon’s Treasure Chamber’ in H. Rider Haggard, \textit{King Solomon’s Mines}, ed. Dennis Butts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989 [1885]) 262-80.

\textsuperscript{18} See Robert Dixon’s analysis of these novels in \textit{Writing the Colonial Adventure} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), especially chapter 4, ‘Imperial Romance: \textit{King Solomon’s Mines} and Australian Romance’. Also, see John Docker’s discussion of these novels in \textit{The Nervous Nineties: Australian Cultural Life in the 1890s} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) 199-232.

associations is that of treasure, which suggest the particularities of the Australian experience in relation to its mineral industries. The names of formations in 'Weyer's Cave, Virginia', a corresponding cave chapter from *Picturesque America*, have a more earthy tenor – 'Lady Washington's Bedchamber', 'Solomon's Meat-House' – than those of Jenolan. At Jenolan, the crystalline beauty of the limestone caves had specific materialist evocations. Inside the 'Imperial Cave' is the 'Jewel Casket', and beyond this 'a succession of treasure stores, of palaces, of fairy playgrounds, of most beautiful and sacred grottoes, of triumphs and trophies of fairy work, hung upon the walls or buried in little chambers of the rocks' (151). Elsewhere, Myers describes the splendour of 'Crystal Rock', 'Confectioner's Shop', 'Queen's Jewels', and the magnificent 'Gem of the West' of which he writes: 'There was never a chandelier in any palace of the world to compare with it, never ornament or treasure manufactured by man's hand that would not seem insignificant when placed beside it' (152). The glittering of cave-formations found an easy correlation with the glittering of gems and jewels and buried treasure, and more to the point, with the very real mineral wealth that was being extracted from subterranean Australia.

But where the cave-romance of novels was based around the idea of darkness, of secret discovery and hidden treasure – the impulse in

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20 *Picturesque America*, vol. 1, 212-19.
Myers' Jenolan chapter is toward illumination and exposition, the flow of light into darkness. His narrative is less concerned with delection than with display, with the careful enumeration of wonders that reveal themselves to the eyes of the cave tourist. The triumph of Jenolan was the triumph of Nature being seen in spite of herself (‘treasures which a jealous Nature rarely yields to mortal eyes’, 152), and the triumph of vision over the obstacles that have been laid before it. While Myers flirts with the romantic associations of caves, speaking of the ‘oppressive burden of memories gathered by a single visit (156), the account is principally structured around the picturesque concerns of access, diversity and illumination.

In this context it is insightful to survey the history of the Jenolan Caves as a tourist sight. Although the caves were known to Europeans by at least the 1840s, and a ‘Caves Reserve’ established in 1866, it was not until the improvements of 1879-1880 – including the completion of the ‘Zig-Zag’ road and the construction of permanent accommodation – that large-scale public exploration of the caves became practicable, ushering in the modern era of cave-tourism in New South Wales. The completion of these works meant that the Jenolan Caves became accessible to the broader public for the first time in the 1880s.21 1880 was also the year in which Lieut.-Colonel Cracknell, Superintendent of Telegraphs, lugged six 96 lb iron-zinc cells, together with fifteen hundred-weight of nitric and sulfuric acids into the newly named (after his wife) ‘Cave Margherita’, a recently discovered cave within the Jenolan network. For the first time ever, the stark rays of electric light touched the walls of the Jenolan Caves. The Colonel was eager to capture the moment of this newly found visibility: ‘A photographic apparatus was then placed in position, the

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plates were exposed, and in 15 minutes the first negatives were produced, and said to be all that could be desired.\textsuperscript{22} It was an important moment in the visual history of the caves, simultaneously colonised by electric light and photography. ‘Possibly,’ writes Havard, ‘this was the first use of electricity for lighting any cave in the world.’\textsuperscript{23} By 1884, permanent electric lighting had been installed in sections of the Caves, which gave to these parts an ‘added charm’ (156) according to Myers’ account in the Atlas.

Such incidents in the history of Jenolan provide evidence of the drive towards its progressive liberation from darkness. The caves were divided between the ‘day’ caves which could be seen without additional lighting and the ‘night’ caves that required artificial illumination. An article in the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} described the difference between the two as ‘the difference between the costly pearls of the regal diadem and the rough exterior of the shells which first embraced them.’\textsuperscript{24} Cave tourists who explored the night caves were ‘provided with a candle fitted to a holder, the handle of which is like the barrel of a carriage lamp, and immediately underneath the flame is a saucer-shaped guard with the edge turned inwards, as to catch the drips of the sperm.’\textsuperscript{25} In addition to these candles and for the spectacular illumination of certain formations, ‘the night caves are illuminated by the magnesium light, which is rich in chemical rays and burns with great brilliancy.’\textsuperscript{26} But the real promise of cave illumination lay in the use of electricity, ‘which will neither affect

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} S. Cook 100. Samuel Cook published a series of dispatches in the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} detailing the wonders of this seemingly endless system of caves that sat virtually on (or rather nestled beneath) Sydney’s doorstep. Cook makes various comparisons between the Jenolan caves and those in Britain, New Zealand and America, but insists that ‘well-travelled men admit that they are unrivalled in any other part of the world’ (Preface). The \textit{Herald} reports were reprinted in book form in 1889, and illustrated with twenty-four photographs ‘by Messrs. Kelly and Jones of Sydney’ which were selected from ‘their beautiful and extensive series of cave pictures.’
\item \textsuperscript{23} Havard 53.
\item \textsuperscript{24} ‘The Jenolan Caves,’ \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} 11 August 1886: 4.
\item \textsuperscript{25} ‘The Jenolan Caves’: 4
\item \textsuperscript{26} ‘The Jenolan Caves’: 4
\end{itemize}
 Electricity reduced reliance on candles and magnesium which were already beginning to stain and disfigure the cave interiors. And while the visible kingdom was extending its way into the nooks and crannies of the Jenolan system, telegraphic communication was bringing it within the fold of the audible kingdom: 'Until a short time ago,' wrote Samuel Cook, 'the Caves were completely cut off from rapid communication with the outer world, but now they are in telephonic communication with the telegraph system of the colony.'

The progressive domestication and control of the darkness in the Jenolan Caves were part and parcel of the pragmatics of picturesque tourism. However, the bringing of picturesque order to the caves of Jenolan had the effect of limiting the romantic attempt to situate the caves as endlessly expansive and hidden sources of wonder. The romantic cave was curtailed by the picturesque determination to render these wonders as consumable sights. This impulse can be seen in the way the caves were architecturally subdivided into 'galleries', 'chambers', 'cathedrals', 'studios', and 'exhibition halls' that display their wares to the torch-bearing onlookers. It was the intrepid Colonel Cracknell who proposed the stage-by-stage light system for the caves: 'when one section has been thoroughly explored the lamps therein will be cut off and those in the next section brought into operation, and so on until the whole of the interior has been examined.'

The illustrations in the Atlas preserve the episodic quality of the cave tour. Vast dark chambers are illuminated by the lamps of the marvelling visitors and the intricacies of the formations pointed out out

27 'The Jenolan Caves': 4
28 S. Cook 190.
29 S. Cook 100.
by the gesturing arms of guides. It is this display-compulsion that underwrites the accompanying images in the Jenolan chapter. The joy of cave-tourism is the joy of discovery, the pleasure of revelation. Guided cave-tours were structured – like no other tour could be – on the control of light, where the pure selectiveness of the lantern beam allowed absolute control over what was seen. In the cave-tour, both the expansion of the visible kingdom and the promulgation of endlessly interesting diversity are always just around the corner. Behind the current layer is another even more special than the last: this is the promise of the picturesque. The guided cave-tour, like the night-time passage into Sydney Harbour, heightened this sensation of progressive revelation.

In the corresponding Jenolan chapter written by Arthur Jose for the rival publication, Cassell’s Picturesque Australasia, the interest in light is even more obsessive. In the finale to this chapter, the crowd of which Jose is a part is plunged into darkness before an underground lake:

"Dowse the glims!" is again the command. We sit waiting in the dark, fanned by a cold wind. Then the strong light shines out over the water: in the clear depths we see every ledge of rock, every drop hanging from the jagged roof, mirrored without a flaw . . . We have left the gleam and glitter far
above, and know at least for a moment what manner of place is the "deep of the earth."\textsuperscript{30}

This remarkable concluding paragraph from Jose's account of the Jenolan Caves finds all the mimetic optimism of the picturesque sensibility miraculously confirmed. In the flash of the magnesium ribbon nature stands flawlessly revealed – not on the page or the canvas – but in a pool, in the mirrored surface of itself.\textsuperscript{31} In the 'deep of the earth' nature looks into its own mirror, vouchsafing its perfection through a kind of auto-mimesis. The whole process finds its human apotheosis in the light show of the cave tour, etched like a photograph in its moment of illumination.

An important final ingredient in the kind of seeing that takes place in Myers' Jenolan chapter in the Atlas is the quality of inheritance. Here again one needs to distinguish the picturesque cave from the romantic cave. In the romantic cave one sees by stealth in order to plunder its secrets. In the picturesque cave, however, one sees without blushing for the simple reason that the treasures on display are the rightful property of the seer: 'so long has Nature been labouring in preparing this place for our delight' (152). This rhetoric of inheritance in the descriptions of Jenolan is precisely that found in the discussions of the mining industry. As with the caves at Jenolan, there was a repeatedly expressed astonishment that such things had been present but unknown for millennia. 'It was on the west bank of the Yarrowee [running through Ballarat] that mining enterprise first pierced the basaltic rock to discover the existence of river-beds submerged in far distant ages, and as rich in golden sands as the


\textsuperscript{31} W.J.T. Mitchell has written of the discursive prevalence of lake reflections in his essay on landscape in pointing out the peculiar attraction of reflections in lakes for those who seek to describe natural landscapes either in words or pictures. 'The reflection,' suggests Mitchell,
Pactolus of antiquity' (265). Out of the rich ore of subterranean Australia, the mining industry extracted knowledge – hidden, forgotten, buried knowledge – along with minerals. ‘For countless ages,’ writes Frank Donohue, ‘Nature had secretly stored up, in an island continent, the very existence of which was unknown to any of the great nations of antiquity, mineral treasures, equalling, in magnitude and value, anything that even the glowing imagination of an Oriental story-teller had ventured to conceive’ (739).

Material wealth held the promise of greater things for Donohue, who believed that in time the discovery of gold in Australia would be viewed as ‘one of the great turning-points in the progress of the human race’ (739). The magic of this industry was that it emerged from the ground itself; it was Nature’s gift to those with the cunning to find its whereabouts. Likewise, this tourist ‘wonderland’ at Jenolan had been the product of countless thousands of years, and Nature had chosen this unique colonial moment to yield its treasures. ‘Those marvellous earth forces,’ wrote Myers, ‘how masterfully, yet how imperceptibly they toil’ (152). The very splendour of the caves became the justification of the visual inheritance that could now be claimed. That such wonders could have been denied their consummation in sight and knowledge for so long added a greater sense of urgency to their continued revelation. The parallel, moreover, between the visual treasures of the Jenolan Caves and the material treasures of Australian mines promoted a shared sense of inheritance in each. For both, one felt the wonder of the powers of nature, and solemnly marvelled at the inexorable accretion of wealth that took place beneath the surface of the colonial world.

‘exhibits Nature representing itself to itself, displaying an identity of the Real and the Imaginary that certifies the reality of our own images’ (15).
The principle of illumination that so powerfully determines the representation of caves also informs another prevalent category of natural image in the *Atlas*, the forest interior. In the *Atlas*, the description of forests is most pronounced in the Victorian chapters, and in particular, in the descriptions of 'that romantic and mountainous south-eastern corner of the colony known as Gippsland' (294). While forests are mentioned in passing in the other chapters, as features of the landscape or items in the audit of resources, it is only in the Victorian chapters that the description, in a sense, goes inside the forest. Within an easy train ride of Melbourne, these forests were regarded by the aesthetically-minded traveller 'as its garden and its playground' (298) The 1880s were a decisive period in the history of the mountain forests of Victoria. 'From the 1820s to the 1880s,' writes Graeme Davison, 'the forests were the forgotten frontier of Australian history.'\textsuperscript{32} It was not until the 1880s that 'the main assault on the forests started.'\textsuperscript{33} Tom Griffiths' insightful history of the Ash Range forests notes that the 1880s signalled the beginning of the log-tram era that would effect lasting and large-scale changes to the character of the dense mountain timber country of Victoria. 'From the 1880s,' writes Griffiths, 'a particular system of getting timber and milling developed in the Ash Range that involved the establishment of isolated and temporary sawmill settlements deep in the bush, linked to civilisation and the Victorian railway system by long narrow tramways.'\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{32} 'The Social Map', *Australians 1888*, p.112.
\textsuperscript{33} Davison et al., *Australians 1888*, 113.
\textsuperscript{34} Tom Griffiths, *Secrets of the Forest: Discovering History in Melbourne's Ash Range* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1992) 27.
The imaginative impact of forests, however, preceded their increased economic importance during the tramway era. In the paintings of Nicholas Chevalier, Eugene von Guérard and W.C. Piguenit, the forest helps to evoke an Australian version of the nineteenth-century cult of Nature. Their paintings participate in a kind of moody romanticism that sees the forest in terms of its primeval associations. ‘His great expanses of virgin forest,’ writes Bernard Smith of von Guérard, ‘amply convey the depressing effect so frequently mentioned by travellers and settlers.’

There was a sombre weight in the forests of these pictures, a morose and monumental quality in the trees, a ‘geographical grandiosity’ according to Smith that is ‘characteristic of late romanticism.’

The forest also seemed to promise a new kind of space to the Australian colonist, according to Paul Carter. ‘It was not the trees themselves that excited the settler’s interest,’ writes Carter, ‘but the spatial fantasies they harboured, their possibilities of darkness and light, height and depth.’

The tantalising quality of forests that grew out of their resistance to sight and knowledge, gave rise to both romantic and picturesque responses.

Marcus Clarke, who shared with these painters their late romantic sensibility was also its most articulate exponent. He saw in the paintings of

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35 Bernard Smith, *Australian Painting, 1788-1970* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1971 [1962]) 59. Piguenit, according to Smith, was ‘the last of the colonial painters who occupied themselves with painting Australian landscape in its primeval condition, and an element of desolation and melancholy invests most of his paintings’ (60).

Buvelot and Chevalier, and (somewhat perversely) in the poetry of Adam Lindsay Gordon, a landscape that was both melancholic and uncanny. ³⁸ For the romantic, the issue of landscape was one of mood. 'What,' asks Clarke, 'is the dominant note of Australian scenery?'³⁹ And his famous answer – 'Weird Melancholy':

The Australian mountain forests are funereal, secret, stern. Their solitude is desolation. They seem to stifle, in their black gorges, a story of sullen despair. No tender sentiment is nourished in their shade... All is fear-inspiring and gloomy. No bright fancies are linked with the memories of the mountains.⁴⁰

This romantic grandeur is replicated in the descriptions of the Atlas. As with caves, one of the favoured metaphors for forest descriptions was that of the cathedral. The want of built ancientness was projected into the primeval grandeur of natural wonders:

Here are the solemn cloisters of the immemorial woods, with loftier columns in their leafy aisles than any grey old minster in the mother country could present, and with over-arching vaults of tracery more exquisite in pattern and more intricate in detail than Gothic sculptor in his happiest inspirations could devise. (295)

In the Atlas, the detailed description of the natural world took the place of the lost diversity of an historically-saturated Europe: 'Upon the diversified landscape scenery of all these regions time may be

³⁸ Clarke's thoughts on the Australian forest are contained in his preface to the 1876 edition of Adam Lindsay Gordon's *Sea Spray and Smoke Drift* (Melbourne: Clarkson, Massina & Co., 1876) and reproduced in Michael Wilding's *The Portable Marcus Clarke* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1976). S.R. Simmons, however, pointed out in his *Marcus Clarke and the Writing of Long Odds* (privately printed) that many of the remarks that appear in the Gordon preface were used by Clarke in the previous year in his descriptions of photographic reproductions of paintings by Buvelot ('Water Pool at Coleraine') and Chevalier ('The Buffalo Ranges') exhibited at the Melbourne Art Gallery in 1875. See, Brian Elliot, *Marcus Clarke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), note K, 257. Elliot points out that, 'the utilization of the passages was not incongruous, since Clarke had Gordon's poetry in mind when he wrote them' (257).
³⁹ Wilding 645.
⁴⁰ Wilding 646.
expected to bestow the consecration and the charm which that of older countries derives from history, poetry and legend' (312). In a similar vein, W. Waite writes in *Cassell's Picturesque Australasia* of the Victorian hill-side retreat of Fernshaw, that while 'Melbourne is "marvellous" as the fifty years' work of man; Fernshaw is even more marvellous as the immemorial handiwork of nature.'

These comparisons, however, between the virgin solitudes of Australia and the social diversity of Melbourne and Europe also served to sanction the transformative project which colonial Victoria undertook in the forests of Gippsland. The fanciful comparison between forest and cathedral is made in order to emphasise the antiquity of the former over the latter. The deep antiquity of the forest then becomes the basis of its present and insistent value. Like caves, the forests were imagined as the work of the slow but inexorable hand of nature who had spent millennia preparing them for this precise, all-important colonial instant:

In solitude and seclusion, where, during ages upon ages, Nature could have had no human witness of her works, how actively, patiently, tenderly and lovingly she has laboured – nothing neglected, nothing overlooked. Not a stone upon which she has not laid a velvet covering of greenest moss; not a dead giant of the forest whose recumbent ruin she has not beautified with an embroidery of young and delicate foliage; not a fern-tree stem which does not blossom with minute mimic fronds – infinitely small copies of the magnificent original; not an inch of ground which does not manifest the affluence and the amazing diversity of her creative power. (295)

The romanticism of the *Atlas* has Marcus Clarke's love of association but with none of his deference. While Clarke imagined a 'lonely horseman' whose practical sensibilities were overcome when riding through the forest – 'the trim utilitarian civilisation which bred him shrinks into insignificance beside the contemptuous grandeur of the forest' – in the *Atlas*, 'trim utilitarian civilisation' is not so easily
daunted. It describes the ‘evidences of the conflict which has been going on ever since the dawn of creation – man wrestling successfully with the forces of nature, subjugating them to his imperious needs, and making the earth smile with fruitfulness and rejoice with plenty’ (294). Moreover, the ontological certainty that the forest has been brought into being for the particular pleasure of the present is one of the myths – the myth of colonial inheritance – that allowed for its removal. The ‘amazing diversity’ that was so crucial to picturesque logic did not prevent its systematic destruction, and the detail of the description for all its reverence, is also an inventory of future exploitative potential.

Allied to the myth of inheritance is the myth of inexhaustibility. Near Drouin, the Atlas marvels how, ‘although its sawmills are rarely idle the supplies upon which they operate do not seem to have materially lessened the density of the thickets from which they have been derived’ (296). In the Western Australian chapters of the Atlas, a similar faith in the ‘endless forests of the south-west’ (488) was expressed. ‘In the extreme south and on the Darling Ranges,’ wrote Sir T. Cockburn-Campbell, ‘an almost inexhaustible supply of timber, principally jarrah and karri, presents a considerable source of wealth’ (488). Yet despite such claims, the visible signs of destruction were elsewhere entirely obvious. Sprinkled through the literature of the period are numerous images of the extent of ringbarking in the Victorian forests.42 Mile upon mile of denuded trees created a sobering image of the transformative potential of the civilising hand. Indeed, in the same chapter of the Atlas which attests to there being

41 Wilding 646.
42 Extensive tracts of ring-barked trees are a frequent image in the literature of the late nineteenth century. For instance, in E.W. Hornung’s story ‘Le Premier Pas’ in Stephen Knight, ed. Dead Witness: Best Australian Mystery Stories (Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, 1989) 108, and in Ernest Favenc’s story ‘A Lucky Meeting’, Tales of the Austral Tropics (London: Osgood, McLvaine, 1894) 108. The sight also impressed D.H. Lawrence, who records the image in Kangaroo (London: Martin Secker, 1923): ‘It was so phantom-like, so ghostly, with its tall pale trees and many dead trees, like corpses, partly charred by bush-fires’ (9).
no noticeable impact of logging, there are several images of ringbarked forests. On the approach to Broadford, 'the railway passes through the skeletons of myriads of ring-barked trees bleaching in the sun, and imparting a weird and spectral aspect to the landscape' (299). Again, on the rail journey out of Broadford a similar scene prevails: 'a grim array of dead timber, fantastic in appearance as some of the forests in Doré's pictures, confronts the traveller on either hand' (299). As the train approaches Marysville, the effect of twilight prompts further fanciful associations and aesthetic flights:

As the ground rises, the trees gain in altitude, and where they have been ringed, nothing can be more weird and fantastic than the shapes they assume and the images they suggest. The gaunt white skeletons resemble withered witches of gigantic stature stretching forth their long and skinny arms in menace or in supplication, in deprecation or despair, and the interlacing branches convey the idea of bony fingers clasped in anguish or entreaty. (300)

In the 'or' of this passage ('menace or supplication', 'deprecation or despair', 'anguish or entreaty') lies the border between triumph and regret. The description of ring-barked trees marks the axis of colonial ambivalence at the changes being wrought at such remarkable speed. The skeletal evidence of the process finds expression in the ambivalent projections of the gothic imagination. The 'weirdness' of the Australian bush, and its cathedralesque stature are perversely combined in the image of its disappearance.

The accounts in the Atlas can be compared with those of the British scientist J.A. Froude, who travelled through the mountain forests east of Melbourne in 1885. He too found religious resonance in the experience: 'One drives as through the aisles of an immeasurable cathedral, the boughs joining overhead to form the roof, supported on the grey columns which rise one behind the other all around.'

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43 Froude 126.
However, in his account he expressed dismay at the extent to which ‘they are being rapidly destroyed’.\textsuperscript{44}

A notch is cut a yard above the ground, the bark is stripped off, the circulation of the sap arrested, the tree dies, the leaves at the top wither, the branches stand for a few years bare and ghostlike, and then it rots and falls. Sometimes a forest is wilfully fired; one sees hundreds of trunks, even when there is still life left, scorched and blackened on one side.\textsuperscript{45}

For Froude, ‘the genius of destruction was in the air’.\textsuperscript{46} There was no gothic splendour in the sight of ring-barked trees. The clinical tone with which he describes the removal of forests conveys the efficiency with which the task of deforestation was being pursued.

While the text of the Atlas records the visual indications of the disappearing forests, it also takes note of its audible signs. Near the Trentham Falls, the sound of running water is drowned out by the sounds of the timber industry:

Everywhere in this thickly wooded region are to be heard the resonant cracking of bullock-whips, . . . the ring of the axes through the echoing forest, the crack of felled trees, the clinking of crow-bars, the note of the solemn bullock-bell – as though from some far distant convent in the hills – the whirr of the circular or the steady rasping of the vertical saw, and the laborious panting of the engine which gives power to the machinery. (284-85)

Around the mountain goldfields of Walhalla, writes Griffiths, ‘woodcutting was often known as “that other gold mine”’, and as with the mining industry, the logging industry was being revolutionised by the mechanisation of its key processes.\textsuperscript{47}

Nevertheless, in the marriage of sounds – the organic ‘rasp’ of the

\textsuperscript{44} Froude 126.
\textsuperscript{45} Froude 126.
\textsuperscript{46} Froude 126.
\textsuperscript{47} The Secrets of the Forest, p.31.
saw and 'pant' of the engine with the heaving of the bullocks – or the chiming of the 'clinking' crowbars with 'the note of the solemn bullock-bell', the noise of the timber industry becomes, according to the Atlas, 'not altogether unpicturesque'. Indeed far from being unpicturesque, the process of logging is freely illustrated in the Atlas. With the timber industry, no line of discretion lies between words and pictures.

The changes being wrought in the Gippsland forests prompted reveries about the broader narratives of the colonial project. The story of colonial progress was writ large in eastern Victoria, and through a short train journey from Melbourne, the citizens of the metropolis could read its progress at their leisure:

Treading the silent and leafy wilderness, the philosopher or the poet travels back in imagination and bridges centuries with a flash of thought. What a span across the ages is here suggested between the surrounding signs of the advancing civilisation of to-day and those dim and distant periods when strange monsters – winged serpents and armoured lizards – lived in the darkling forest tarns and cut the air with scaly plumes! (295)

In this collapse of the stupendous past of geological time into the remarkable now of the colonial moment, the myth of inheritance presents itself, rich with promise. The miraculous availability of nature's wonders lies tantalisingly within the grasp of the colonial imagination.

In the geological time that the Atlas so often reverts to when describing Australia's past, aboriginal habitation registers as the merest of temporal hiccups: 'Coming down to within a
comparatively recent date – only a few years ago – the shy native had here his home, and now he has disappeared, leaving no evidence of his sojourn in this forest solitude' (295). Indeed, the Kurnai tribes of Gippsland had not disappeared, despite having endured some of the darkest chapters of frontier violence. The Warrigal Creek massacre of 1843, according to Don Watson, 'may have been the biggest single massacre on the Australian frontier.'49 'Far from being inevitable,' says Watson, 'the destruction of Kurnai society was gratuitous and grotesque.'50 And while their social structures had been savaged by colonial expansion, the much claimed 'disappearance' of the Kurnai was proving more elusive than was hoped. Survivors had been gathered at two missions in Gippsland, Ramahyuck near Lake Wellington, and Lake Tyers. Despite a high death rate amongst older Aborigines, an increasing birth rate meant that in 1882 the population had increased significantly since the previous year.51

Indeed, the Victorian government was prompted to act legislatively to deal with the growing problem of 'half-castes', passing the Aborigines Protection Act 1886, which attempted to assimilate this group with the general population by hiring individuals out for work on stations.52

In northern Queensland, the constraints that aboriginal Australians presented to forest access were more pressing than they were in Victoria. Nor was the time of transformation so dilated that comfortable assertions of its pastness could be claimed. Contact violence flowed raw and unchecked through the words of Traill and the pictures of Mahony in the Queensland chapters of the Atlas.

50 Watson 183.
52 For the effect of this and other statutes on the Kurnai people of the Gippsland region, see Pepper 190-97. Reproductions of the various Aboriginal Acts of the nineteenth century are reproduced as appendices to Pepper's book.
Julian Ashton remembered many years after the event the experience of being sent by his editor to obtain a sketch of the waterfalls on the Barron River in North Queensland for the *Atlas*:

I was sent to the Barron Falls near Cairns, Queensland. Cairns at that time was just a straggling settlement with a couple of roads and no roads to speak of. I had to secure the services of a guide for the falls which were some miles through the bush from Cairns. My guide rode ahead of me with his rifle laid across his saddle and warned me to keep close behind him as the blacks were treacherous. He seemed to think nothing of shooting them at sight, and told blood-curdling stories of his exploits in this direction.53

In the context of Ashton’s recollections it becomes more difficult to separate the representations of violence that one finds in the words of Traill or the pictures of Mahony, from the actual continuation of violence that could affect the very collection of material for the production of the *Atlas*. Ashton, by his own account, was dependent on the instruments of physical force, and particularly an armed guide, to execute his sketches of scenic beauty in northern Queensland. Thus, while in the *Atlas*, ‘the problem of the blacks’ is an issue entirely distinct from the enjoyment of the wonders of Nature, at times the one was entirely implicated in the other. In other words, the bitter struggle for land possession can be seen as embedded even in the serene illustrations of scenic views.

The situation in Queensland differed from that in much of the rest of settled Australia. The ‘frontier’ as Henry Reynolds has vividly revealed, was very much still open in North Queensland in the 1880s.54 But the current violence in Queensland was already being perceived by contemporaries as the next instalment in a pattern of

53 J. Ashton 41.
54 Reynolds cites an incident from the year prior to the publication of the *Atlas*: ‘A humane police officer found in 1885 that the people of the Cooktown area strongly opposed his plans to ameliorate the conditions of local blacks. Their creed was “exterminate the natives”.’ *Frontier: Aborigines, Settlers and Land* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987) 56.
conflict that had accompanied each expansionary phase of colonial settlement, and as such the activities taking place in the northern forests had specific resonance in the towns and cities of the south and the remnants of the bush that surrounded them.

As with the pictures of caves, size and displayed obscurity are the key features of forest scenes in the picturesque works. These factors are once again used to accentuate or articulate the conditions of colonialism. In ‘A Gully in the Blue Mountains’ (fig. 12) the three central figures – two men and a woman – are dwarfed by the size of the trees and rocks in the forest. One of the men carries a rifle. The forest, as the Kennedy narrative made clear, was a place of danger, could be a place where ‘every bush and every rock, every creek and every scrub seemed peopled with demons’ (336). But through pictures such as this, the Atlas tames the wilderness. It peoples the darkest reaches of the primeval Australian landscape with civilised European visitors. The rifle and the dress, particularly as a pair, are integral to the iconic value of the image, invoking by turns vulnerability and violent protection.55 The image

Figure 12. 'A Gully in the Blue Mountains' (facing, 39).

55 The ‘lost white woman’ like the lost white child, was both a persistent trope in the colonial imagination, and intimately associated with the processes of disposition. For discussions of the prevalence of this narrative in Australia see Robert Dixon, Writing the Colonial Adventure and Kay Schaffer, In the wake of first contact: the Eliza Fraser stories (Oxford: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Annette Kolodny discusses this imaginative obsession in the
encodes the assertion of travelling rights over the land. In Victoria, at least, this professed disappearance of the aborigines was metonymic to the taming of the forests. As Edward Curr noted in 1883: 'scarce one [aborigine] remains. His cooey is heard no more in these parts, whilst the old forest itself is fast being converted by steam saw mills into railway sleepers. In our go ahead days people are jubilant about such things, and I suppose I ought to be too.'

- IV -

The romantic associations of the forest in the Atlas harbour a good deal of this anxiety of disappearance. The thinning of the forests and the 'disappearance' of the Kurnai seem to register themselves in the elegiac quality of the language of romantic reverie. However, as with the description of the Jenolan Caves, the romantic mask was not the only visage available to the Atlas. The Atlas - celebratory, picturesque, progress-hungry - had no desire to wallow for too long in the gloom of romantic melancholy, and the passages are typically leavened by the picturesque language of illumination. The picturesque provided a different dynamics of the forest than that called forth by the language of romanticism. Much has been made of Clarke's characterisation of Australian scenery in terms of weird melancholy, but more important than the particular qualities he discerns is the frame of reference from which he is working. In the language of romance, landscape is defined by its mood, what Clarke calls its 'note'. In the language of the picturesque, however, landscape is defined by its visual qualities, its capacity to be viewed aesthetically. So, while tone and mood were the central landscape

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56 Edward Curr, Recollections of Squatting in Victoria (Melbourne, 1883) 179; cited in Reynolds, Frontier, 125.
issues for Marcus Clarke and the romantics, for the picturesque sensibility the question becomes one of vision.

In its concern for vision rather than tone or mood, the *Atlas* was consonant with changes in approach taking place in Australian landscape painting. The important *Atlas* artist Julian Ashton was, according to Bernard Smith, one of a group of artists 'influenced by Buvelot' who had 'helped to continue the plein-air methods which he had introduced.'\(^{57}\) Bernard Smith posits Louis Buvelot as a transitional figure who marked a change from the reverence of primeval sublimity in Australian landscape to an interest in landscapes which feature the transformative effects of European occupation.\(^{58}\) The shift away from primeval landscape paintings and toward a kind of painting that viewed landscape-in-transformation, can also be seen as a return to the kind of representational concerns that occupied the early topographical artists.

Equally as significant is the way in which this kind of landscape painting, through the theoretical lens of French impressionism and Whistler, began to take a new interest in the process of seeing.\(^{59}\) The decisive innovation of McCubbin, for instance, in his painting 'Lost' (1886), was the bold streaks of oil that scar its foreground and veil the lost child.\(^{60}\) McCubbin affects the sensation of interiority by multiplying the planes of representation. In this technique of simulated immersion, foliage and tree trunks crowd the foreplane of the image. Although, as Leigh Astbury has shown, the depiction of

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\(^{57}\) B. Smith, *Australian Painting*, 64.

\(^{58}\) Take, for instance, Bernard Smith's analysis of *Summer Evening, Near Templestowe* (1866), which, 'with its flocks and herds, fields and cottages' held 'none of the forbidding antipodean melancholy that haunted the vision of earlier colonial artists and writers.' *Australian Painting*, 63.

\(^{59}\) A useful discussion of impressionism in Australia can be found in Humphrey McQueen's biography *Tom Roberts* (Sydney: MacMillan, 1996) 261-90.

lost children was an established colonial genre, it is McCubbin whose clutter of foreground saplings renders this lost-ness as a scopic event. The scene dissolves in a series of tangled verticals which create a sensation of infinite depth. His later triptych, 'The Pioneer' (1904) blatantly welds colonial progress with the thinning of the forest and the consequent expansion of the visible kingdom. In its three sequential panels, the forest moves from being the opaque fabric of the pioneering moment to the arboreal frame that holds the rural town as its consummation.

For the colonist of the nineteenth century, to enter an Australian forest was to experience the limits of visual knowledge. It was not simply the density of the trees but their relentless similarity that confounded those that saw them. Touring Tasmania in the early 1850s, Louisa Anne Meredith, wrote that 'all forests here, and all parts of them, are to me so exactly alike, that the power of knowing which is the right way to turn round one of many thousand similar trees seems, to my unpractised comprehension, to border on the miraculous.' In 1881, the eminent floral artist, Marianne North also experienced the visual disorientation of the Tasmanian forests: 'It was a most difficult thing to get accurate truth about those trees, or to see those which people talked of; they always melted away as soon as we came near them.'

In a forest, as the saying goes, you can't see the wood for the trees. Images of forests engage quite specifically with the issues of visuality that concern the picturesque sensibility. The forest is distinct from the more typical picturesque compositions of hills, lakes and seascapes. Forests present difficulties to those who seek to see them.

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61 Astbury 158-75.
Unlike typical picturesque sights, a forest has an inside. But in order to see the inside of a forest you must enter and contend with the visual obstruction of its component elements. Gilpin enjoyed forests but preferred, when seeking the picturesque, to look at them from an adjoining hill-side than to stand inside them. The denser the forest, the more need it had for the ‘vista’ that would allow it to be fully seen. ‘A winding road through a wood, has undoubtedly more beauty than a vista,’ writes Gilpin, ‘and in a smaller scene we always wish to find it . . . but through a vast forest the vista is in better taste.’

Contrary to other kinds of picturesque sights, the forest needed strong midday sunlight to bring its effects most pleasingly to the eye. Of one forest vista, Gilpin insists that ‘to see it in perfection, a strong sun-shine is necessary,’ and adds that a ‘meridian sun . . . has a better effect on the woods of the forest, than on any other species of landscape.’

One of the recurring sources of wonder in the forest descriptions of the Atlas is the fact that, like the caves of Jenolan, such beauty could have existed for so long in the absence of human (that is, European) sight. In the thick forests near Mount Macedon, we are told of ‘fern-tree gullies, where the sunlight never glances on the ice-cold water that flows darkling below; and mysterious recesses of the forest almost untrodden by the foot of man’ (284). Again, in Gippsland the account mentions certain forest brooks that ‘the sunshine cannot reach . . . nor the starlight quiver on their dimpled faces’ (295). The romantic obsession with solitude is recast in the visual terminology of the picturesque: ‘In solitude and seclusion, where, Nature could have had no human witness to her works, how actively, patiently,
tenderly and lovingly she has laboured – nothing neglected, nothing overlooked’ (my emphasis, 295). From a boat on a quiet arm of Lake Tyers it is possible to visit an ‘inlet framed in foliage and falling back to a natural amphitheatre, around which rise tier on tier of stately trees calmly contemplating their replications in the unruffled mirror at their feet’ (196). The intervention of the Atlas observer breaks the closed loop of nature’s self-reflection. Seeing is construed in this language as a gift that is long overdue. The fact that the scenery was itself so difficult to see – so hidden – gave to its viewing the delicious pleasure of first sight, yet reciprocally, there was also a gratification taken from the knowledge that such perfection, for so long invisible, was at last being accorded the privilege of observation.

However, in order to see forest scenery, as Gilpin explained, it was necessary to have a means of visual access, a ‘vista’. Fortuitously for the Victorian writers of the Atlas, these necessary vistas, these tunnels of visual access, were being carved into their city’s neighbouring forest as part of the colony’s construction of railways. The forest rail-lines bring the tourist into the forest like never before. ‘Just beyond Bloomfield a fine vista opens out where a long straight avenue has been cut through the forest, and at the extremity of this far-stretching perspective a wooded range stretches across and closes in the narrow opening’ (296). And the construction of railways did not just cut through the forest but, in its passage over the mountainous terrain, through the ground itself. ‘From Trentham to Bullarto the railway passes through a forest in which the undergrowth is so thick as to resemble a jungle; but where cuttings have been made, a rich chocolate soil is disclosed lying on the surface from two to four feet deep’ (285). The loamy strata of the cuttings revealed to the writers of the Atlas the wealth that lay pregnant within the soil. ‘The railway cuttings show a great depth of splendid chocolate soil, and the exuberance of vegetation bespeaks the richness
of the nutriment upon which it draws its support' (296). Here, once again, the earth 'bespeaks . . . richness'.

Thus, for all the romantic associations that the Atlas writers find in their descriptions of forests and caves, they pursue a policy which is thoroughly picturesque: to document and affirm the expanding kingdom of the visible. The message of these descriptions is that the darkest corners of Australasia were seeable. This message, as will be explored in the next chapter, found a degree of technological confirmation in the form of recent photographic innovations. In the mid-1880s, dry-plate photography was liberating cameras to roam unfettered through the more inaccessible regions of the continent. Armed with this new mobile equipment, the Victorian photographer Nicholas Caire abandoned his profitable portrait business in Melbourne and embarked on a photographic tour of the colony in order to record sights and regions that would have been unthinkable with the earlier wet-plate cameras. He photographed coastal caves and, in conjunction with the Alpine Club, the rugged mountains of the Dividing Range. Likewise, Caire's friend and rival, J.W. Lindt, left the city to create a photographic holiday resort in the ranges east of Melbourne. He cleared a space in the dense mountain forest at Blacks' Spur for his hotel cum studio, and constructed a network of tracks and tree-houses from which to observe and photograph the forest scenery.

The Atlas, in its descriptions of caves and forests, mimicked the visual projects of photographers like Caire and Lindt, and both the publication and the roaming photographers speak more broadly of a particular kind of visual hunger which I have linked with the picturesque sensibility which was in turn inflected with the desires of

67 Cato 78-79.
a colonial society. The *Atlas* reveals an inclination toward visually documenting the hidden corners of the country and to read this revelation in terms of a certain form of inheritance and with the belief that the expansion of civilised life is measured by its ability to be seen. The resistance that the *Atlas* craves to its visual devices is largely rhetorical. Difficulty in seeing – in darkened caves or dense forests – is simply a way of emphasising the tenacity of the visual urge. In *Cassell's Picturesque Australasia*, an image from a chapter about continental exploration is captioned 'Impenetrable Jungle' when in fact it embodies penetrability in decisive ways: in the location of this image in a chapter about exploration, in the clearly drawn path complete with carriage that disappears into the rainforest, and ultimately in the fact of illustration itself. Indeed, that an object is illustrated at all is confirmation of its visual susceptibility. The real dark regions of the *Atlas* and its centennial cousins are not those which are *shown to be dark*. Displayed darkness is simply an extension of visibility. The black holes, the aporia, the submerged histories; these all lie outside the frame of the illustrations and the boundaries of the narrative, beyond the kingdom of the visible.

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68 Cato 73.
Chapter 6
Photographic Friction

Early in March 1886, Albert Henry Fullwood left Sydney by boat for Newcastle 'on a lengthy sketching tour in connection with "Picturesque Australia".'¹ Fullwood was pleased he would not need the 'tropical outfit' that had encumbered him on his 'northern tour'. He had determined to travel light on this tour, even choosing to leave his sketching umbrella at home. Speed of movement was to be the essence of this trip, and he confessed to a certain spirit of competition that was driving him to cover the territory as quickly as he could: 'I wish to get through as soon as possible to show the Americans attached to the business I am engaged in that an Englishman can also get over the ground — I was informed before starting that one of our artists was covering 2000 miles per week which I need hardly say was slightly overdrawn ...'² He needed to gather material in Newcastle but opted to push through in the interests of getting straight into the regions, and to sketch Newcastle, as he put it, 'when I had returned and had my folios full.'

Fullwood sketched a good deal of the towns in New England (Maitland, Paterson, Singleton, Tamworth) and a number of the prominent natural or industrial features in the region. The journey, however, was not without incident. 'While in Armidale,' he writes, 'I was very sick on account of a severe cold and so contented myself with interviewing a photographer and buying a lot of photos which the rotter didn't send me for weeks after.'³ Indisposed as he was, Fullwood felt justified in resorting to photographs as a source. However, once back in Newcastle to gather the views he had passed

¹ "Sketching Tour Through New England, NS Wales, Australia," by A.H. Fullwood, Sydney', Albert Henry Fullwood Papers: 1887-1930, MS 8022, National Library of Australia. The description of the sketching tour is taken from a lengthy illustrated letter to Walter S. Fullwood, which has subsequently been glued into an album.
³ Fullwood 9.
up at the outset, Fullwood decided once again that it would be useful to employ a photographer to assist him:

The next day I [have?] a look around and then went to the photographer and booked him on the scene — he took a photo and I took (sketched) the leading features — as you know a photo is misleading as regards the heights of various objects as the eye sees them. By this means I saved myself about 2 days and [now have?] the sketch here as it would take me that amount of time to do it even rough — as there is such an amount of architecture in the street that I couldn’t indicate very well — (good excuse aint it).  

The division of labour is important here, but so are the ‘excuses’ that Fullwood offers for his use of photographs, but most significant of all is the fact that he felt compelled to make such excuses. What lies behind his embarrassment? Why does he feel he needs to justify his use of photographic sources through sickness or architectural abundance?

Fullwood’s embarrassment in his private letter might be better understood in the light of the public pronouncements of his employers. A promotional article in the Daily Telegraph attempted to distance the Atlas from the use of photography by claiming that it ‘has been the slightest possible assistance’ in the production of illustrations in the Atlas. Perhaps the first point (if not the most startling) to make about this denial of photographic usage by the

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4 Fullwood 19-20.
Atlas, is that it was false. Fullwood need not have been so apologetic because photographs were used as sources for many of the sketches in the Atlas, and there were also numerous examples of engravings being produced directly from photographs or with only a minimal degree of retouching by the artist.\(^6\) Disclaimers of the kind provided in the Daily Telegraph article give rise by their nature to a justified suspicion. There should be little surprise when the very fact emerges that they had sought to deny. With this in mind, the task of this chapter is not to expose instances of photographic reliance in the Atlas, but to enquire into the rationale that might impel the producers of an illustrated work such as the Atlas to distance their publication from the practices of photography. It is an enquiry, more specifically, into the embarrassment of photography for the Atlas, and a consideration of the ways in which photographic practices failed to correspond with the imperatives of its picturesque vision.

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In adopting a derogatory stance toward the role of photography, the makers of the Atlas were echoing a position taken by the editor of Picturesque America, William Cullen Bryant, a decade earlier in his preface to that publication. Bryant was at pains to emphasise that ‘as for the illustrations, they were made in almost every instance, by artists sent by the publishers for the purpose.’\(^7\) For Bryant, as it was for those involved with the Atlas, the issue was clear: ‘Photographs, however accurate, lack the spirit and personal quality which the accomplished painter or draughtsman infuses into his work.’\(^8\) While photographs possessed an undoubted transcriptive power (‘accuracy,’ ‘fidelity’) they lacked the aesthetic and dynamic properties of drawn illustrations. ‘The engravings here presented,’ continued Bryant,

\(^6\) Gaskins, as was discussed in the introduction, ‘set out to show . . . that photography and painting entered into a “symbiotic” or mutually beneficial relationship soon after the introduction of the perfected daguerreotype process to Australia in 1841’ (xi).

\(^7\) Bryant, vol.1, iv.
'possess spirit, animation and beauty, which give to the work of the artist a value higher than could be derived from mere topographical accuracy.'⁹ In the hierarchy of visual media of *Picturesque America*, the fidelity of photography was clearly subordinate to the spirit of art.

In its rejection of photography, the *Atlas* echoed the complaints of its American predecessor. It was a rejection that was based in the first instance on aesthetics, that is, on the belief that photography was incapable of rendering beauty. 'Indeed, photography,' wrote one journalist in a review of the *Atlas*, 'much as it has been improved in recent years, promises in no appreciable degree to aid the artist in his portrayal of the beautiful in nature.'¹⁰ The principal critique of photography was that it lacked discernment: 'Even if the infallibility of a photograph were ensured its even-handed justice would be a disqualification as valid as its inclination to unduly magnify objects beneath its ken.'¹¹ It is important to understand the context of such a renunciation. The issue was not one of choosing between visual media on the page itself; even if the proprietors had wanted to, the use of photographs for mass production was not feasible in 1886, although it would become so shortly afterward.¹² What the article was addressing was the issue of mediation and image-source: whence and by which route should the visual world be transported onto the page? Should such an important task be entrusted to a camera or was the discerning consciousness of the artist needed in order to ensure that aesthetic standards were maintained?

Of course, such debates neither began nor ended with the *Atlas* or even its North American antecedents. The question of the aesthetic value of photography was to a large extent inherent in the invention itself, and debates over this question are as old as the first

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⁸ Bryant, vol.1, iv.
⁹ Bryant, vol.1, iv.
¹² See Appendix III.
photograph.¹ ‘Far from holding up the mirror to nature,’ wrote Lady Eastlake in 1857, ‘it holds up that which, however, beautiful, ingenious, and valuable in powers of reflection, is yet subject to certain distortions for which there is no remedy.’² And while refinements to the photographic process were made in the quarter century that intervened between Eastlake’s wide-ranging critique of photography, and the decision to produce the *Atlas*, the central ‘distortions’ which she mentions remained largely unresolved. In his 1882 book on Dante Gabriel Rosetti, William Sharp wrote of ‘an apparent contradiction’ in the nature of photographic representation, ‘namely, that nature as accurately delineated by photography is less truthful in the effect it produces than any good artistic representation – because any given natural aspect appeals not only to the sense of sight, to the mere faculties of recognition, but also, and most potently, to the imagination.’³ Sharp, like Bryant, sees art working at a level that transcends the simple capacity of photography to replicate. ‘The imagination,’ continues Sharp, ‘does not want mere imitation, it can reduplicate sufficiently itself; what it craves is a powerful impression upon which to employ itself.’⁴

Many of the acknowledged shortcomings of photography would be addressed with the invention of the dry-plate, when taking photographs would suddenly become faster, sharper and more mobile, but in Australia in the early 1880s, when the planning for the *Atlas* was taking place, the dawning of the dry-plate era was only

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¹ For the classic discussion of these tensions see Aaron Scharf, *Art and Photography* (London: Allen Lane, 1968). See also Peter Galassi, *Before Photography: Painting and the Invention of Photography* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1981). Galassi complicates the relationship of art and photography by arguing that preceding and in many ways enabling photography was the development of a new aesthetic of de-centred composition that valued fragmentary, assymetrical, and chance impressions – all things which photography then took to be its own.


⁴ Sharp 87.
barely visible. To the makers of the *Atlas* photography meant something quite different to what we understand of photography today. They were still forced to ask, as Lady Eastlake had asked more than twenty years earlier, 'how far photography is really a picturesque agent?' After all, how could a 'Picturesque Atlas' be seen to rely on a medium of dubious picturesque capacity?

So what were these distortions? Fullwood's description already provides a clue. The photographer he hired in Newcastle took general street scenes, while Fullwood concentrated on sketching the 'leading features'. By this he meant to correct the propensity of photographs to provide misleading proportions. Proportionality was a function of perspective, and while some have written of the way that photography encoded the principles of the perspective system, the nineteenth-century wet-plate photograph was often very poor at representing perspective. A limited depth of field and a long exposure time meant that it was difficult to gain a clear image through the different planes necessary for effective perspectival representation. The laws of perspective and

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5 Gael Newton notes that although dry-plate photography was developed in England as early as 1874, 'the new dry plates didn’t reach Australia until about 1879,' and that it was not until about 1885 that wet plate photography was displaced (208).

6 Eastlake 91.
common-sense dictate that the nearer an object is to the eye, the more clearly it should appear. However, in a wet-plate, while the middleground was sharp, foregrounds were often blurred and indistinct. The original proofs of the Atlas illustrations reveal the persistence of these problems. W.T. Smedley used a photograph for his illustration of 'The Melbourne Telephone Exchange' (fig. 2). While the background is largely untouched, Smedley has had to conduct a good deal of overpainting in the foreground, including repainting entirely the nearest group of operators. Their original photographic bodies no doubt lie beneath Smedley’s brushstrokes, but the camera has not caught them in the fashion that art demanded.

Architectural images were long considered particularly amenable to the photographic process. Eastlake suggested that ‘splendid architectural representations’ were among photography’s ‘most pictorial feats’.1 With buildings one gained the full benefits of photographic speed whilst avoiding most of its pitfalls in relation to animation and light. Fullwood’s anecdote suggested that by subcontracting a photographer for the streets of Newcastle he could save up to two days. But problems still presented themselves in the photography of buildings. In the proof of W.C. Fitler’s illustration of the ‘Universities of Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney’ (fig. 3), sketches and photographs are united in a single composition. While the Adelaide and Melbourne institutions are drawn, the central illustration of Sydney University is a photograph that has been glued on to the page and highlighted with distemper.2 Fitler uses the paint

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1 Eastlake 98.
2 Distemper was a kind of black and white paint: ‘Most of the illustrations [in the Atlas] have been first sketched in what is technically called “distemper.”’ Now, distemper amongst dogs is probably more familiar to the majority of our readers than distemper in art. But we assure them that the effects are widely different. An artist suffering from distemper is one of the sleekest and best-natured beings on the face of the earth. He splashes his canvas all over with grey, he rubs on thick patches of black, he dashes it here and there with bright whites, and then falling back in his chair and lighting his pipe he contemplates on the easel before him a finished drawing of marvellous effect.’ Daily Telegraph 21 August 1886: 9.
to sharpen the architectural features in the building, to embellish the skyscape and to add figures to the foreground lawns.

Fitler’s interventions were hardly unusual. Skies, like foregrounds were a continual source of frustration. As Lady Eastlake pointed out: ‘The impatience of light to meet light is . . . so great, that the moment required to trace the forms of the sky . . . is too short for the landscape, and the moment more required for the landscape too long for the sky. If the sky be given, therefore, the landscape remains black and underdone; if the landscape be rendered, the impatient action of the light has burnt out all cloud-form in one blaze of white.’³ To overcome this problem photographically, combination printing was used, where two shots were taken with differing exposures and then superimposed. However, the problem was solved more readily by the artist simply sketching in clouds and an appropriately ‘tinted’ sky. This results in a certain similarity in the skyscapes of engraved books, but it does redress the equally misleading proliferation of washed out photographic skies which would dissolve disconcertingly into the white-space of the page.

Aside from the issue of the sky, architectural photographs had to contend with the vexed issue of movement. Not that buildings typically moved – stability indeed was their great photographic virtue.

³ Eastlake 94.
- but unfortunately they were often surrounded by people, and people did move. The alternative to a tangle of smudged trajectories wormed across the foreground of a photograph was the equally unsatisfactory option of having pictures of public buildings completely emptied of their public. This not only deprived such buildings of the very publicness from which they drew their stature, but removed the most convenient measure of their monumentality: the relatively standardised height of the human body. So the transition from architectural photograph to architectural illustration included the tactical reintroduction of the crowd, grouped happily in family units and donned in the accoutrements of the public sphere. The embarrassment of photography for the *Atlas* was that it was unavoidably static, when this was to be a work which showcased colonial dynamism. The artist was therefore essential to the visual articulation of bustling civic modernity in the *Atlas*.

Indeed, for the capture of immediate action, the late nineteenth century had faith in the flurry of pencil across paper. At this moment the sketch, for all its human approximation, retained a comparative advantage over its would-be technological successor in key areas. An artist with sketch-pad and pencil could record places and events which no wet-plate photographer could hope to capture in the five second exposure of their cameras. The front page picture of a train crash in the *Australasian Sketcher* on January 17 1880 is a typical newspaper disaster story (fig. 4), but it is also an example of the epistemological legitimacy of the sketch in the illustrated press of this time.\(^{23}\) Tangled wreckage, hysterical victims, stunned on-lookers, frantic railway guards, and the dark plume of smoke still streaming from the locomotive produce an image that is defined by implied movement, an ‘action shot’. It is just the kind of image, which in 1880 was all but impossible for a camera to record. The caption,

\(^{23}\) For a detailed content analysis of the illustrations in Australian illustrated newspapers of this period, see Dowling.
which claims that the scene was ‘sketched a few seconds after the collision’, reinforces the idea that sketching was the mode of immediacy. The world was patently moving, but photography could not see it. Thus, the on-site sketch was more credible in such instances than a photograph that must of necessity exclude all motion. Animation was as crucial to the Atlas as it was to the illustrated press and ‘for the phantasy of human life, with its rush and its passion,’ wrote the Daily Telegraph of the Atlas illustrations, ‘nothing is better than a rude lump of charcoal.’

Photographs were also found wanting in the task of portraiture. Major Lockyer was not one of the more notable figures in the historical gallery of the Atlas. In 1826, under orders from Governor Darling, Major Lockyer sailed with a small detachment of soldiers and convicts to occupy the strategic south-western harbour of King George’s Sound. Although supplanted in importance by the Swan River settlement led by Stirling three years later, Lockyer’s venture was significant to the Atlas, whose historical preoccupations inclined it toward points of origin. Lockyer also had the good fortune to produce diligent progeny. In 1937 Dr. Lockyer Potter of Collins St in Melbourne wrote to the Principal Librarian of the State Library of New South Wales, W.H. Ifould, pointing out certain discrepancies in

25 ‘Lockyer had established a garrison along the important shipping route between Europe and Sydney and the soldiers’ duties hardly went beyond showing the Union Jack to visiting ships.’
the engraving of Major Lockyer that appeared in the *Atlas*.\textsuperscript{26} Dr. Potter had recently acquired a copy of a photograph (fig. 5) of the Major from the officer's son, 'the late Sir Nicholas Lockyer.' It was the only photograph, explained Potter, that the son had of his father and it showed him wearing a military uniform (of the Sydney Volunteer Rifle Corps) which decisively dated the photograph to the year no earlier than 1854. 'Therefore,' reasoned Potter, 'he must have been at least in his 71st year.' The photograph confirms this fact, depicting an elderly man, hunched and puffy-jowled in his military attire. The engraving by contrast depicts a mature but much younger man, with shoulders squared and eyes freshly sharpened (fig. 6). 'I am inclined to think,' concluded Potter, 'that the publishers of the Picturesque Atlas wanted a portrait of Major Lockyer as he appeared in 1826-27.'

Ifould wrote back promptly to Dr. Potter: 'Many thanks for the photograph and for your careful explanatory letter which we will keep in our Mitchell Library Section and index for information concerning the portraits of Major Lockyer.' Potter's hypothesis was warmly endorsed by Ifould who wrote that 'the explanation you give is quite correct and consistent with our records concerning other portraits in the Pictorial Atlas (sic).'</p>


\textsuperscript{26} 'Correspondence between Dr. Lockyer Potter and Principal Librarian of NSW', Mitchell Library MS AL7/4,5.
pointed out that he ‘knew William Macleod well’ and had ‘got him to tell me how he made up his drawing for reproduction of portraits in this work.’ Macleod, desirous of capturing the Major in his stout and martial prime, slimmed down and straightened up the septuagenarian portrayed in the photograph. The engraved portrait was not tethered to an instant in time like the photograph, and Macleod was able to provide a visage that was in accordance with the historic actions of the man.

The flexibility of sketching proved as useful in the illustration of scenic wonders, as it did in portraits. When Julian Ashton travelled from Cairns in the company of his armed guard it was to sketch the renowned Barron Falls. Unfortunately for Ashton, when he arrived at the falls he discovered that owing to ‘a very dry season of about ten months’ they were almost devoid of water, with only ‘a mere trickle of water running from them.’

This was not all. The forest in the tropical ranges was so dense that ‘it was almost impossible, on account of the undergrowth, to obtain any view of the height of the falls.’ The conditions would have made it impossible for the photographer, but not for a seasoned sketch-artist like Ashton. ‘I had to depend a great deal,’ he confessed with a hint of pride, ‘upon my imagination with regard to the height and the volume of water’ (fig. 7).

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27 J. Ashton 41.
28 J. Ashton 41.
Fullwood encountered similar difficulties when he set out to sketch the Dangar and Wallumbi waterfalls of New England. Like Ashton he ‘didn’t see them because of the dryness of the place.’ Unlike Ashton, he did not even bother travelling to the falls, deciding instead to draw them ‘from photos’. In reproducing the falls he also ‘enlarged them just a trifle,’ or as he puts it in his letter: ‘enlarged on my imagination.’ The imaginative faculty, as both Ashton and Fullwood point out, was important in the attainment of picturesque illustrations. Also, as with buildings, a sense of proportion was often missing from scenic photographs. Once again, the main problems were with the sky and the foreground and it fell to the artist to remedy this shortcoming. ‘I have given the height,’ explained Fullwood, ‘by showing clouds and figures,’ and adds by way of apology to his relative that ‘this subject is engraved and when you see it you will have a better idea.’ The devices available to the artist ensured the completed engraving would carry the appropriate visual dimensions.

There were changes made to photographs in the *Atlas*, however, that go beyond embellishment of scale or the correction of perceived distortions. The attraction of forests to the *Atlas* has already been discussed. Forests were visually challenging to the logic of the

29 Fullwood 9.
picturesque because of the resistance they provided to the depth of scenic composition. Carl Schwarzburger’s engraving ‘Fern-Tree Gully’ (fig. 9), responds in an interesting manner to the scopic resistance of the forest.\(^30\) This particular engraving is based, like several other nature illustrations in the *Atlas*, on an unacknowledged photograph by Nicholas Caire (fig. 8).\(^31\) The top half of the photograph is an accurate translation of Caire’s photograph


\(^{31}\) Newton 65-66.
known popularly as 'Fairy Scene, Fernshaw', into the lined medium of the engraving. However, as you approach the centre of the image the engraving gradually abandons Caire's photograph as its point of reference and becomes instead a stylised extension of the interlacing fern-trees. It ceases to transcribe and begins to proliferate according to the elegant logic of the fern ('minute mimic fronds – infinitely small copies of the magnificent original', 295). This departure is the first stage in Schwarzburger's comprehensive re-making of the image. In Caire's photograph, a tiny, all-but-invisible figure peeks out from between the fronds of the enormous fern-trees, arms crossed, staring at the camera. In Schwarzburger's illustration, this figure has disappeared and just below him (or where he had been), indeed where there had been nothing but a profuse and impenetrable explosion of ferns – a dark space has opened up; a tunnel into the opaque heart of nature. And into this tunnel, his bags packed resolutely on his shoulders, marches a solitary swagman. Instead of the leisurely return-gaze of Caire's photograph, we see only the intrepid back of this walker.

The fact that Schwarzburger swaps one figure for another is, of course, intriguing. A swagman plodding doggedly onward, oblivious to the eyes that follow him, is undoubtedly more picturesque than construction of the landscape itself, the architecture of the landscape. By digging this remarkable tunnel into the essential flatness of
Caire’s fern-clad hillside, Schwarzburger invests the scene with a fictional and limitless depth: gloomy, intriguing but conveniently accessible. Gaskins points to the ideological labour being performed by this ‘hard-working itinerant swag-man “on the wallaby track” making his way along the fern-tree valley on his way to his next job.’ Yet this solitary figure is also labouring along another front. He is marching steadfastly into the darkness, this new space of access carved like a log tramway into the stubborn flatness and organic density of Caire’s photograph.

In all of these instances the embarrassment of photography for the Atlas was that it was half right. The precision with which a photograph could record in the short seconds of its exposure every flute on each column of a building or trace every frond in a fern-tree gully was difficult to ignore, for financial reasons if for no other. On the other hand, photography could not – without assistance – provide the kind of visual messages that the Atlas sought to send through its illustrations. The Atlas wanted a dynamic image-world that was infused with the bustle of civic modernity and yet photography was confined to recording static objects. The Atlas wanted heroism and valour etched into the portraits of its historical pantheon, but the photograph was confined to the vicissitudes of the instant in which it was taken. When the Atlas looked at its forests it did not want to be confronted with an opaque and depthless tangle, but a landscape that offered a pathway into its hidden heart.

Photography embodied both the possibilities and limitations of visual knowledge in ways that did not always accord with the aims of the Atlas. The commissioned artists thus played an essential negotiating role between the visual capacities of photography and the visual imperatives of the Atlas.

Having purchased a photograph, Atlas artists like Fullwood or Smedley felt free to draw on it as much or as little as suited the

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32 Gaskins, vol. 1, 270.
purpose of their desired illustration. This issue was highlighted by
the signatures on the engraved pictures. While the artist typically
signed the work, and occasionally the engraver as well, the
photographer in the overwhelming majority of cases was not
acknowledged. With *Cassell’s Picturesque Australasia*, a smaller
artistic staff seems to have increased the reliance on photographs as
sources. The Cassell’s publication also appears more ready to
acknowledge photographs as sources for its engravings, although not,
as a rule, in either the signatures or the captions. Instead, a general
acknowledgment is made in the fine print at the beginning of each
volume: ‘We are indebted to the following photographers for the
assistance our artists have derived from their photographs in
preparing illustration on the pages mentioned below.’

Like the makers of the *Atlas*, the makers of *Picturesque Australasia* viewed
photographs as an aid (‘assistance’) to the preparation of an
illustration. A photograph was instructive not prescriptive. There
was a gap – sometimes narrow, sometimes wide, but always present –
between the photograph and the final synthesised and signed
‘illustration.’

William Gaskins, who has written in detail on the relationship of
painting and photography in nineteenth-century Australia, explains
this issue in terms of ‘aesthetic ownership.’ He argues that by
drawing on photographs without acknowledging them, such artists
‘gained an advantage from a clandestine relationship with
photography.’ Gaskins provides repeated instances of this covert
photographic reliance. Schell’s ‘The Valley of the Grose’ (54), for
instance, was based on a photograph by Joseph Bischoff, and
Fullwood’s illustration ‘Erskine Falls, Lorne’ (259) is a virtual replica
of Nicholas Caire’s photograph, ‘Erskine Falls’. At a more pragmatic
level, the alterations made by artists to the photographs they used

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33 E.E. Morris, vol. 1, viii.
34 Gaskins, vol. 1, 260.
35 Gaskins, vol. 1, 200 and 258.
helped to circumvent the issue of copyright. The intellectual property of a photographer was protected in Victoria by the Copyright Act. The Act stipulated that for the cost of one shilling a photographic print would be stamped and numbered by the clerk in the Town Hall. A copy of the print was then pasted in the official 'Copyright Book' as a record of its registration.37

Gaskins charges of aesthetic theft should be partially qualified by the growing commodification of the 'view', the growth in what Gael Newton calls the 'views trade'.38 In a mass tourism environment increasingly structured around ideal vantage points for picture-perfect views it becomes difficult to assert who owns the copyright to these views.39 Although it was possible to copyright a photographic image, standardised views of the Blue Mountains and the Dandenongs resist such ownership, passing into the generic image bank of colonial society. More importantly, once a photograph had been translated into an engraving it lost the facticity that was the basis of its legal protection.

Debates on these issues thus continually return to the space that existed at this moment between the photographic image and the

37 Cato 95-97. Jack Cato's analysis of these 'copyright books' provides a useful cross-section of the saleable images in nineteenth-century Australia. Many of the photographs were of public figures such as governors or clergy. Also revealed, however, is the economic value of sensational or newsworthy images. In particular, photographs of ship-wrecks and train-wrecks, the 'survivors' of these wrecks, notorious criminals, as well as sporting heroes and stage actors. Moreover, 'all sorts of freaks were popular with the public: the nine-foot Chinese giant; a hairy half-animal child from Siam; and the dwarfs Tom Thumb and his wife,' p.96. Other cross-sectional surveys of photography in the nineteenth century can be found in Alan Thomas, The Expanding Eye: Photography and the Nineteenth-Century Mind (London: Croom Helsm, 1978), and Heinz K. Henisch and Bridget A. Henisch, The Photographic Experience, 1839-1914: Images and Attitudes (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994).

38 Newton 49.

39 The 1880s, moreover, marked a time when photography at last became both transportable and capable of capturing movement and shadow. 'The Dry Plate,' wrote Jack Cato, 'made the Tourist Trade the most profitable business in the world. People poured money into a country merely to see it; the commodity they paid for remained in the same place - the mountains, lakes and rivers were eternal things, always there, always a source of revenue' (64).
reproduced illustration on the pages of a printed publication. Until the late 1880s, every publisher – including the Atlas Co. – was confronted by this simple but crucial fact: in order for photography to be reproduced cheaply, it must first be subjected to the inescapably manual process of engraving. Fullwood, Schell, Fitler and Smedley could use paint-daubed photographs for their illustrations because they knew that between their proofs and the printed illustration lay an engraver’s burin (cutting tool) that would erase all boundaries between source media. Even the process used by the Atlas and the illustrated journals of the day, of photographing proofs directly onto the wooden blocks (‘xylography’) could not wrest from human hands the final and necessary translation of this new photograph into the precious topography of an engraving.

The inability to accurately and cheaply print photography divided the period into two great fields of visual consumption. On one side lay the photograph, proliferating with stark and miraculous verisimilitude in postcards, living rooms, family albums, showcases, and exhibition halls. On the other side lay the vibrant pulsing world of the illustrated periodical which consumed sketches, paintings, and photographs with indifference, but was constrained to submit all its images to the inscriptive skills of the engraver. The photographic world (cameras, lenses, chemicals) could not reach the printing world (paper, ink, press) without manual assistance. The embarrassment

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41 ‘Press photography did not grow as a trade until after the introduction of direct photomechanical reproduction in the late 1880s and 1890s.’ Newton 44.
42 It was of course possible, and some publications took this course, to simply glue photographs into books. The costs were significant, however, in terms of the individual photographs themselves, the time it took to paste them onto the desired pages, and the bulk it added to the book itself. Even when an efficient means of mechanically reproducing photographs was devised, such as with the ‘Woodburytype’, the process remained incompatible with printing. The press, ink and paper that the Woodbury process used to mechanically reproduce photographs were all different to those used in traditional printing. While the time and expense of producing individual photographs was saved by the Woodbury process (500 high quality prints per hour), the time and expense of combining the printed plates with the letterpress remained. Beaumont Newhall, The History of Photography from 1839 to the Present Day (London: Secker & Warburg, 1972) 175.
that photography caused to the *Atlas* grew in the gap that separated these two worlds.

For all the innovations in the techniques of cross-hatching, stippling, and shading; and for all the improvements that were wrought on the quality of the tools, the smoothness of the blocks, the density of the paper and the adhesiveness of the ink, a fundamental disparity remained: that between the limitless clarity of the photograph and the finite inscriptions of an engraving. Ivins explains this difference in terms of syntax. Engravings were constructed syntactically as pictorial compositions, based on judgments of what was relevant or pleasing to a particular picture. Photographs on the other hand, and direct photomechanical reproductions, were ‘pictorial statements without syntax.’ It was not so much that engraving ‘failed’ to achieve the mimetic perfection of photography – photography as Lady Eastlake so cogently pointed out, was haunted by its own failures – but that, because of this fundamental disparity, photography and engraving belonged to separate orders of visual knowledge.

- III -

Occasionally though (and in the *Atlas* it was indeed very occasionally) an illustration was explicitly captioned as being from a photograph. The rarity of photographic acknowledgment suggests that when it did take place, it was pursuant to considerations that have overridden the broader policy of suppressing the presence of photographic sources. ‘The Moon’ (fig. 10) is used as the covering

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illustration of a discussion in the *Atlas* of astronomy in Australia. It is a striking illustration, the careful lines of the engraver bringing its crater-pocked surface into sharp relief. Also striking, however, is the caption – ‘From a photograph by Mr. R.L.J. Ellery, Melbourne Observatory’ – which directly attributes the image to a photographic source. An explanation of this aberration might be found in the nature of the image. What the engraving was depicting, as much as the moon itself, was the capacity of photography to form alliances with other visual machinery (in this case the £10 000 Great Melbourne Telescope) to expand once more the boundaries of the visible kingdom. Unlike most illustrations in the *Atlas*, this illustration does not gain value from having been artistically rendered. Photography is a fact to be celebrated rather than suppressed. Here, photography is the sign of both an ability to see, and an object’s ability to be seen. While nature tried to conceal its celestial bodies at a distance, the astronomers of Melbourne bring it near and render it tangible with photography – nature’s own pencil. ‘The Moon’ is a rare example in the *Atlas* of an illustration in which the process of photography is integral to the image itself, because it formed part of the subject matter of the illustration.

Photography, in other words, is part of what was being illustrated in ‘The Moon’. By captioning the image as being from a photograph, the *Atlas* appears to recognise that in this instance the potency of the image is inescapably dependent on its source. Benjamin has argued that in becoming mechanically reproducible a photograph could not

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hold the aura that surrounded the uniquely fashioned art-object, the extrapictorial resonance which gives to a work of art the peculiar sense that it is special and made by someone who is also special. Yet in this instance, the fact of photography invests the moon picture with its own form of aura, the aura of improbable mimesis. And, in a strange way, it is an aura not unlike that of the art-object, an aura which offers mute admiration toward the transformative potential of man in science as much as in art. When wed to the discourse of science, the photograph need no longer be castigated as failed artist, but may become the hero of positivist scientific enterprise.

A desire for scientific exactitude might also be offered as a reason behind the most significant departure in the Atlas from its usual practice of not sourcing its images, that which occurred in relation to indigenous portraits. The Atlas included three captioned photographs of indigenous Australians by the eminent photographer, J.W. Lindt. These photographs were hardly new at the time of the production of the Atlas. Lindt had taken these pictures, along with other genre photographs of shearers and miners, in his Grafton studio in the early 1870s. What is significant in relation to the Atlas is not that photographs were used, which was a widespread practice, but that they were acknowledged. In an image

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47 Several recent studies take up this issue of photography in relation to the discourse of science, particularly the human sciences. Many of these studies are distinctly Foucauldian in flavour, with photography facilitating the deployment of new regimes of surveillance, knowledge, and incarceration in the disciplinary institutions of the nineteenth century. Photography, it is argued, became an instrument of knowledge (and thus of the power that inheres in knowledge) and was integrated into the broader suppression of scientifically diagnosed forms of deviancy, criminality and madness. John Tagg, for instance, argues 'that the coupling of evidence and photography in the second half of the nineteenth century was bound up with the emergence of new institutions and new practices of observation and record keeping ... so central to the restructuring of the local and national state in industrialised societies at that time.' The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories (London: MacMillan, 1988) 5. For related analyses, see Suren Lalvani, Photography, Vision and the Production of Modern Bodies (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996) and Jennifer Green-Lewis, Framing the Victorians: Photography and the Culture of Realism (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

48 'An Aboriginal Woman' (347), 'Blackfellow Mending His Net' (349), and 'Black Gin and Child' (709).

environment which so consistently camouflaged the use of photographic sources, the caption ‘from a photograph by J.W. Lindt’ sits awkwardly beneath these three illustrations. It immediately begs the question of why the photograph, so assiduously effaced from the rest of the *Atlas*, should be made visible in the case of Aboriginal people.

For William Gaskins, the Lindt images offer a rare instance in the *Atlas* of ‘aesthetic ownership’ being retained by a photographer. This may, of course, have been a function of the prestige of Lindt. The *Atlas*, wherever possible, sought to assert the supremacy of its contributors, and ‘the great Lindt’ was arguably the leading photographer in Australia at this time. Yet this would tend to explain only the choice of Lindt and not the more fundamental decision to highlight the fact of photography in this instance when so many other photographs went unacknowledged. In fact, there are reasons for suspecting that the highlighting of photography in the illustration of Aboriginal people went beyond issues of aesthetics, personal prestige or property law. In particular, like the moon photograph, there seems to have been a scientific imperative operating in the illustration of indigenous people. The mimetic aura of the scientific photograph, evoked by the captioning of Lindt, may well have been drawn upon by the editors.

50 Cato 70-75.
of the *Atlas* in order to constitute Aboriginality as an 'object-sphere' of the science of anthropology.\(^{51}\)

Certainly, photography played an important role in the anthropology of this period.\(^{52}\) Indeed, the anthropological enthusiasm for photography was particularly marked in Australia. It seemed the cost and practical difficulty of reproducing photographs for publication in books was justified in the case of ethnographic studies by the scientific exactitude which photographic images were believed to yield. An important landmark in Australian published photography was Charles Woolley’s photographic series depicting the Tasmanian Aborigines incarcerated at Oyster Cove Aboriginal Station south of Hobart.\(^{53}\) These Aboriginal people were the survivors of those exiled under the stewardship of George Augustus Robinson in the 1830s and eventually repatriated to Oyster Cove in 1847. Woolley’s photographs were exhibited in Melbourne in 1866-67 and again at the Victorian Intercolonial Exhibition of 1875. The macabre fascination of their imminent ‘extinction’ (a term long since repudiated by the Aboriginal people of Tasmania) made the photographs internationally famous. Roslyn Poignant has noted that Woolley’s photographs ‘are found in almost every collection of anthropological

51 ‘Object-sphere’ is the term used by Heidegger to designate the positive field by which science draws its conclusions. A scientific discipline, for Heidegger, comes into being through the pursuit of its objects; they provide the discipline with the means to make the positive assertions it needs in order to constitute itself. As he puts it: ‘Modern science simultaneously establishes itself and differentiates itself in its projections of specific object-spheres.’ ‘The Age of the World Picture’, in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* [trans. William Lovitt] (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1977) 127.


53 For a discussion of these pictures, see Vivienne Rae-Ellis, ‘The Representation of Trucanini,’ Edwards 230-33. The idea of photographing the Tasmanian Aborigines had been proposed by Woolley’s friend and photographic client, the author, Louisa Anne Meredith. Such a set of photographs, suggested Meredith, would make a fascinating inclusion in Tasmania’s entry at the Melbourne Intercolonial Exhibition of 1866-67. Louisa Anne Meredith, indeed, reflected upon these photographs at a later point in her life: ‘Their countenances, as shewn by the excellent photographs of the last four, made at my suggestion for the Melbourne Exhibition many years ago, bore a curiously close resemblance to pug-dogs, and they possessed all the animal instinct and adroitness for self-preservation and concealment.’ Louisa Anne Meredith, *Bush Friends in Tasmania. Native flowers, fruits and insects drawn from Nature with prose descriptions and illustrations in verse* (London: Macmillan, 1891) 53.
They continued to be exhibited throughout the nineteenth century, including the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in London in 1886 and the Centennial International Exhibition in Melbourne in 1888. At the London Exhibition of 1886, the photographs were complemented and in a sense contradicted by living examples from the mainland. Two aboriginal boys, Willie King and Willie Lane (‘The Two Willies’, as they came to be known) were sent from the Gippsland Mission at Ramahyuck to the exhibition in London in 1886.

Lindt’s Aboriginal photographs were equally famous. They were sold as postcards and collected by Lindt into a series called the Album of Australian Aboriginals, which he presented to museum collections throughout Australia. The government of New South Wales bought copies of the album in order to present them to scientific institutions in Britain. Like Woolley, Lindt sought to promote his photographs at international exhibitions and was awarded a gold medal at the Philadelphia International Exhibition of 1876. Lindt also took a number of outdoor photographs of Aboriginal people in the vicinity of the Clarence and Richmond Rivers, but the photographs which won him fame were those he took in his studio at Grafton.

Inevitably, when viewed today, the photographs carry the burden of the history that has followed them. Sadness seems somehow written in the faces of his subjects, and the props that Lindt used as

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54 Roslyn Poignant, ‘Surveying the Field of View: the Making of the RAI Photographic Collection,’ Edwards 45.
57 Jones 4-6.
58 Indigenous photographer Brenda L. Croft has recently written that colonial photographs of aboriginal people are 'documents which project inextricable links to the past and present,' 'Laying Ghosts to Rest', Portraits of Oceania'[based on the exhibition curated by Judy Annear for the Art Gallery of New South Wales] (Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1997) 14. 'Indigenous photographers,' continues Croft, 'work to overcome memories of generations and centuries of indelible mistreatment, and the mistrust and hatred held by Indigenous people, and people of colour, towards that most abusive of colonial weapons – a camera' (14).
compositional aids add an element of the grotesque to the underlying poignancy of the people he photographs. The images appear emblematic of a certain photographic violence, which in turn resonates with the broader violence in the relations between colonising and indigenous Australians. For Roslyn Poignant, Lindt's photographs embody the displacement of Aboriginal people from subject to object, from land-owners to scientific specimens. 'Their removal from the bush to the constructed studio set . . . dressed with authentic local plants, parallels,' she argues, 'their actual displacement as the land's owners.' The conditions under which the photograph was taken speak more strongly to a contemporary viewer than the compositional and associative messages that Lindt as an amateur yet erstwhile ethnographic photographer sought to deliver. 'With their weapons laid aside and their wildness neutralized by the studio ambience, they have been transformed,' according to Poignant, 'into specimens – like the plants around them.'

Yet there remain shortcomings with the 'specimen thesis', with the attempt in other words to explain the acknowledgment of Lindt's photographs in the Atlas as part of the mimetic aura of the scientific photograph. If photography was important in establishing the validity of the specimen, then one might also expect to see photographic acknowledgment in other specimens represented in the Atlas. One would expect, for instance, to find photography acknowledged in the many images of native flora and fauna which are reproduced. Yet this is not the case. In fact, the Atlas specifically commissioned artists such as Louis Belton and Marian Rowan Ellis to produce illustrations of flowers and plants. Indeed even

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59 David MacDougall has written of Indian anthropometric photographs, that 'One has a sense of bereftness, of shells from which the living core has been removed.' 'Photo Heirarchicus: Signs and Mirrors in Indian Photography,' Visual Anthropology 5.2 (1992) 107.
60 Poignant 54.
61 Poignant 54.
62 Daily Telegraph 21 August 1886: 9: 'Mr. Bilton [sic] supplies the pages with Australian flora'; and Margaret Hazzard, Australia's Brilliant Daughter: Ellis Rowan (Richmond, Victoria: Greenhouse Publications, 1984): 'Ellis, who was well known by this time for her meticulous
William Macleod, not noted for the delicacy of his drawing, was able to ‘contribute a waratah to an article on Australian flora.’ Birds, flowers, kangaroos are all sketched, or at least there is no acknowledgment of photography in these images. If photography was an important sign in establishing the scientific validity of a specimen, one would expect to see captions acknowledging the use of photography in these illustrations. So although indigenous Australians were constructed as specimens, they were specimens of a distinct type with a unique affinity to the photograph. Other specimens were comfortably incorporated within the artworld of sketching.

Susan Sontag has noted that a key element of photography that differentiates it from both earlier forms such as the sketch or the painting and more modern forms such as film and video, is the bond that exists between a photograph and a precise instant in time. Photographs, in other words, radically rupture time. Expanding on this point she notes that photography appeared at a time, ‘when the human landscape started to undergo a vertiginous rate of change.’ As this change caused disappearance, photography provided the

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work, was invited to help’ (46). Although Ellis did a range of illustration her specialty was flowers. Hazzard also points out that Ellis Rowan’s husband, Frederic Rowan was on the board of the Atlas. Indeed, there is a letter composed by Baron von Mueller on behalf of the Picturesque Atlas Publishing Co. signalling the production of a ‘handsome drawing-room book’ comprised of 48 plates of the floral life of Australasia executed from drawings by Ellis Rowan. The book, however, seems never to have eventuated. Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, Transcript of a prospectus issued by the Picturesque Atlas Publishing Co.,’ n.d., MS422, Von Mueller Collection, National Library of Australia.

63 C. Macleod 12.
64 ‘The Flora of Australasia’ (715-722); ‘The Fauna of Australasia’ (723-730).
solace of possession at the level of image: 'A photograph is both a pseudo-presence and a token of absence. Like a wood fire in a room, photographs – especially those of people, of distant landscapes and faraway cities, of the vanished past – are incitements to reverie.'

This description is useful in placing the photographs of Lindt in the context of a commemorative centennial publication such as the *Atlas*. A picture like ‘Black Gin and Child’ (fig. 11) is, as Sontag suggests, ‘both a pseudo-presence and a token of absence’, and it contains what Barthes insists is the unique property of every photograph, ‘the always stupefying evidence of *this is how it was*, giving us, by a precious miracle, a reality from which we are sheltered.’ In this case the difference is that pastness is the very quality which the image is seeking to display. It is not a ‘reality’ from which the audience sought shelter, but a state-of-affairs which it was determined to have inscribed.

Sontag does not specifically address the issue of ethnophotography, but she does discuss a series of photographic projects from the late nineteenth century in cities such as London and Paris in which a concerted effort was undertaken to photographically document the disappearing face of the old city. In using the photograph as a form of salvage, these projects served to emphasise the way in which photographs denoted disappearance. The temporal violence that was the inextricable affect of photography was bonded to other forms of disappearance, lending to them the air of inevitability. The disappearance of old buildings, like the disappearance of ‘ancient’ peoples was poignant but nevertheless unavoidable, tied with the relentless march of time itself. Disappearance becomes an integral part of what Ross Gibson has called ‘the latent narrativity of the photographic image,’ its need to be situated in a story. At the level

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66 Sontag 16.
68 Sontag 16.
of image, Lindt’s illustrations in the *Atlas* resonate with or call into mind this extinction narrative. By deviating against its more typical practices and explicitly deploying photographs in the depiction of indigenous people, the *Atlas* draws attention to the Aborigine as a special category of portrait. The distinction is emphasised by the invisibility of photography in non-indigenous portraits. While private portraits were entrusted to the photograph, and albums stored the ephemera of the family moment, the public portrait demanded paint, stone or bronze: the media of permanence.70

- IV -

Looking at the photographs of Lindt that are used in the *Atlas* it is quite clear that they are not being used to effect an impression of chance or randomness. There is nothing of the sensation, generated for instance by the Moon picture, of an image miraculously snatched out of obscurity. In fact, few illustrations in the *Atlas* are as painstakingly contrived as Lindt’s photographs. In common with Lindt’s other photographs, even his later work with a dry-plate camera, ‘Black Gin and Child’ (fig. 11) is almost hyper-composed. The image is arranged in the triangular convention of a Madonna painting. The woman is wearing a modest white robe and to either side she is bounded by a tall stand of maize and a neat bark shack, all of which had been assembled by Lindt in his studio in front of a painted background of rolling hills. The whole scene rings with conflicting echoes of the nativity and the Garden. The tidy plenitude of the setting contrasts with the forlorn face of the woman at the centre of the photograph. A whole connotative field (sacrifice, divine ordination, earthly paradise secured) is generated under the cover of what is ostensibly a ‘mechanically’ attained image. In fact, it

70 Ruskin has observed of engraving that, ‘it is essentially the cutting into a solid substance for the sake of making your ideas as permanent as possible, graven with an iron pen in the Rock for ever. *Permanence*, you observe, is the object, not multiplicability’ (original emphasis). ‘Ariadne Florentina: Six Lectures on Wood and Metal Engraving,’ *Works*, vol. 22, 320.
is as though the explicit photographic origin of this image enhances the scope for its compositional manipulation. Despite the improbable histrionics of the pose, the explicit photographic origin impregnates the image with an aura of ‘reality.’

The attraction of Lindt’s studio photographs is that they are fully coded. They combine a painter’s control over detail with the indexical certainty of a photograph. Indeed, contemporaries of Lindt recognised his peculiar skill in combining the two opposing paradigms of art and science. The *Australian Town and Country Journal* praised Lindt’s photographs for being ‘the first successful attempt at representing the native blacks truthfully as well as artistically,’ and the *Sydney Morning Herald* wrote of them that they were ‘not the production of an ordinary photographer but the conception of an artist.’

Lindt himself promoted his ability to conjoin the differing demands of art and science. For a mount designed for the Centennial Exhibition of 1888, he printed a motto which read: ‘On chemistry and optics all does not depend, Art must with these in triple union blend.’ The genius of Lindt was in the way that he merged the aura of art with the aura of science. Photography carried with it the positivist truth of science (‘chemistry and optics’), but Lindt’s compositional deftness allowed his photographs to evoke in the same moment the transcendental truth of Art.

Ironically, the position of photography in the *Atlas* was cast into relief by a landmark publication released by Lindt in 1887, mid-way through the publishing period of the *Atlas*. The dry-plate as mentioned in the previous chapter had caused Nicholas Caire to forsake his Melbourne portrait studio and travel into rural Victoria on ‘a professional tour in search of the picturesque.’ In 1885 J.W.

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72 Jones 10.
73 Newton 65-67.
Lindt also put his portrait business on hold, departing Melbourne for New Guinea with 400 dry plates on an expedition headed by Sir Peter Scratchley, the newly appointed Special Commissioner of New Guinea. Lindt, like Caire, jettisoned his successful portrait business in Melbourne to explore the versatility of this new photographic process. The advent of the dry-plate made 'field work' a photographic possibility for the proliferating band of ethnographers and anthropologists in the Australasian region. Certainly, the discourse of ethnography and the technology of the dry-plate formed a fruitful partnership in the regional political adventures of the Australian colonies in the 1880s. As Robert Holden has suggested, there eventuated a virtual 'colonisation through photography', in both Australia and the South Pacific at this time.

Two lavish productions from the year 1885, *The History of Fiji*, by the Reverend Arthur John Webb and the *Narrative of the expedition of the Australian Squadron to the South-East Coast of New Guinea*, featured ethnographic studies of South Pacific peoples. Expeditions by European powers to the island of New Guinea were not altogether a rare occurrence in the nineteenth century. In fact, the western half of the island had been 'claimed' numerous times in the course of the nineteenth century. As Ernest Scott remarked: 'The ceremony of taking possession had been performed so often . . . that it must have seemed like an entertainment got up for the amusement of the natives.' The Dutch controlled the western half of the island, while the Germans had in the early 1880s formed trading posts on the northern coast of the eastern half. It was not until 1884 that the remaining south-eastern portion was, after the abortive efforts of the Queensland government, officially claimed by Great Britain. The

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74 Newton 59.
75 Holden 24.
77 William Traill described the annexation for the *Atlas* in his 'Historical Sketch of Queensland.' 'Mr McIlwraith delighted the Queenslanders and astonished the political coteries of Europe by quietly instructing Mr. Henry Majoribanks Chester, police magistrate at Thursday Island, to cross Torres Straits, and on behalf of Her Majesty's Government in Queensland to hoist the
On his return, Lindt published his photographs as a series of albums to wide acclaim. In 1887, he travelled to London and arranged for the photographs to be 'autotyped' as part of a publication to be called *Picturesque New Guinea.* Thus, at the same time as his Clarence River studio wet-plates from the early 1870s were appearing as engravings in the *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia,* J.W. Lindt published his brand new field-work dry-plates as autotypes in *Picturesque New Guinea.* Directly contemporaneous with the avowedly anti-photographic *Atlas,* Lindt produced a publication that celebrated the picturesque possibilities of direct photographic illustration in books. Lindt's book is now acknowledged as a seminal work both in Australian photography and in the publication of photomechanical reproduction of photographs for publication. Jack Cato claims that 'at its date of publication *Picturesque New Guinea* was the best illustrated travel book ever produced, and it brought Lindt world applause.'

While in many ways profoundly antithetical, *Picturesque New Guinea* and the *Atlas* help to illuminate a common position in relation to the use of photography. Each reveals in differing ways the negotiations that take place between the competing claims of science (photography, ethnography) and art (engraving, the picturesque). For Lindt's work, the picturesque swells to include a form of ethnographic photography that was at the same time the work of an 'artist.' In the *Atlas,* while photography is publicly disparaged and

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80 Cato 73.
81 The judges at the Centennial Exhibition in Melbourne found the 'ethnological illustrations of New Guinea' to be 'interesting from a theoretical point of view,' because it had 'often been a matter of discussion how far, or whether at all, photography may be considered as a fine art.' In
secretly used, the pressure to legitimate anthropological images in scientific terms made it possible and perhaps preferable to acknowledge certain aboriginal images as deriving from photographs. The common nexus in each instance is that which connects photography, anthropology, and art that takes place under the broad auspices of the picturesque.

In his introduction to *Picturesque New Guinea* Lindt enthused about the capacity of his autotyped photographs to put the viewer ‘face to face with the countries described and their inhabitants, far more vividly than . . . works illustrated by wood engravings, where, for truth, the reader depends firstly on the individual conception of the artist, and secondly on the skill of the engraver.’ The *Atlas*, taking an opposing tack, argued that it was the imaginative capacity of the artist and the skill of the engraver that would bring the world most immediately to the viewer. The two positions are the opposite faces of the photographic faultline. In the face of its diminishing informational importance, painting came to be defined increasingly in purely aesthetic terms. Engraving too, according to Emma Chambers, sought sanctuary inside the aesthetic castle. Commentaries about engraving in the nineteenth century show a shift, according to Chambers, between an initial attempt to establish ‘a distinct identity and visual language for the medium’ and a later effort which ‘argued for its increased status in the hierarchies of the

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awarding Lindt a gold medal the judges were left in no doubt as to the answer of this question: ‘By the works of Mr. Lindt this question is decided in a way that is a triumph for his profession.’ *Official Record*, 1890, cited in Jones 13.

82 Lindt, note 1, viii.
83 Impressionism, for instance, was seen by Aaron Scharf as a kind of answer to the visual challenge which photography created for painting, with the celebration of subjectivised ‘impressions’ and the abstraction of form and colour in paint re-asserting the primacy of human-centred seeing. More recently, Lindsay Smith has put forward the argument that like Impressionism, Pre-Raphaelite painting ‘stands in a crucial theoretical relationship to photography of the nineteenth century.’ It was not a case of imitation, according to Smith, but took the form of a reaction against ‘the disruption caused by discourses of photography in the dichotomies of physical and metaphysical, empirical and transcendental.’ Lindsay Smith, *Victorian Photography, Painting and Poetry: the Enigma of Visibility in Ruskin, Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 103. See also Greene-Lewis.
nineteenth-century art world.\footnote{Emma Chambers, 'From Chemical Process to the Aesthetics of Omission: Etching and the languages of art criticism in nineteenth-century Britain,' \textit{Art History} 20.4 (December 1997): 556.} Drawing on the artistic credentials of engraving, the Atlas sought to define itself in terms of Art and, with the exceptions noted, in opposition to photography.

The final embarrassment of photography might therefore be described as the embarrassment of the short-cut. The pride of art was not simply the pride of genius or imagination, but the pride of human effort and labour. While the descriptive chapters of the Atlas reverenced the machine, the promotional rhetoric associated with the publication sought instead to emphasise the skill of the human labour that was expended in its making. The origins of this contradictory impulse can in part be traced to the method of manufacture in the Atlas illustrations. As long as the human hand remained a part of the practical reproduction of images on a printed page, the quality of this mediation remained variable. In order to claim excellence in an illustrated publication, it was therefore necessary to prove artistic excellence at every stage, from the original sketch to the printing of the image onto the page. The aestheticism of the Atlas, more fully explored in the next chapter, can be seen as a response to the embarrassing ease by which photography might render its subjects.

Even in the illustrated press, the 'art-ness' of the process was emphasised. In illustrated periodicals such as the Australasian Sketcher, the very title and subtitle (‘With Pen and Pencil’) suggest a kind of willed artisanry, an effect that is emphasised by a range of typographic and iconic devices in the masthead. The decorative fonts, mock-embroidery, simulated parchment scrolls, paint palettes and elaborate feather quills are all emblems of an art-and-craft world which the illustrated newspaper was trying to evoke. These figurative devices, which will be further explored in the concluding chapter, are evidence of the submerged effect of photography. They
are the indicators of a thwarted technology, of technological friction, a technology that existed but was in crucial ways impracticable. It was a friction which produced in the 1880s a work that was emphatic in its adherence to the gestures of human artistic endeavour. Like the Australasian Sketcher, the Atlas was committed to this willed artisanry in its style of illustration. In Garran’s ‘Editorial Postscript’, the elaborate illuminated capital rehearses the various icons of the Atlas’s representational fabric (fig. 13). The backbone of the image is the letter “I”, and it is variously buttressed by paintbrushes, palette, quills and scrolls. Behind these, and behind the capital letter, is a porthole framing a dramatic coastline. In front of the letter, spilling down in a paper cascade, are the rectangular sheets – of the Atlas? – which hold the world behind enmeshed in its fibres.
Chapter 7
In Conclusion: Pagespace

Turn to virtually any page of the *Atlas* and three distinct elements will be visible. The first is text, the sequential arrangement of letters which make their way down the page in two columns. The second is the image (often more than one) placed in a variety of positions in relation to (within, outside, across) the columns of text. The third element is simply white-space, the neutral white of the paper itself. Text, image and white-space are the three domains which make up the 800 odd pages of the *Atlas*. Although some full-page plates are included, the overwhelming majority of illustrations are 'interspersed' in the text, sprinkled amidst the lines of words, and it is this pervasive interspersal of images through the text of the *Atlas* that is its most distinctive visual feature. As a consequence, the images of the *Atlas* are quite literally framed by the text. The linear fill of the letterpress provides the plane of view into which the illustrations are cast. The pictures are like windows in the lettered wall of the page. In this chapter, I wish to look more closely at the pages of the *Atlas*, to consider these pages in material, spatial and aesthetic terms.

In examining these issues I hope to generate a discussion that, by going to the heart of the representational premises of the *Atlas*, will serve as a conclusion to this study. When I first began to speak in terms of 'the world of the *Atlas*' I pointed out that this was the term I would be using to describe the social universe that was generated in the act of reading, the consensual creation of 'Australasia' according to the patterns of representation that were mutually recognisable to the authors and readers of the *Atlas*. This chapter examines the ground on which this consensus takes place. The various discussions that have been pursued thus far have involved an exploration of the preoccupations that characterise the world of the *Atlas*: a concern for the aesthetics of the picturesque, a desire to make
history visible and progressive, a fetish for seeing the processes of production and the bustle of civic modernity, and the pleasure that is taken in exposing darkened regions to light. These discussions show the world of the *Atlas* to be driven by the imperatives of seeing. The argument that I put forward in this chapter is that the space in which the world of the *Atlas* appeared, in which the ‘consensus’ was formed, was also generated through the aesthetic qualities of the pages themselves; by the knitting of text and image into a single fabric, and by the optical games that are played in the illustrations.

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In his lectures on engraving at Oxford in 1872, Ruskin described to his students a Florentine tower, the ‘tower of Giotto’, which he had taken the time to sketch ‘when last in Florence.’ Of special interest to Ruskin was the bas-relief sculpture at the base of the tower, and in particular, a relief which represents ‘the art of Painting.’ ‘You have in that bas-relief,’ says Ruskin, ‘one of the foundation-stones of the most perfectly built towers in Europe; you have that stone carved by its architect’s own hand; you find, further, that this architect and sculptor was the greatest painter of his time, and the friend of the greatest poet; and you have represented by him a painter in his shop. . . as symbolic of the entire art of painting.’ Embodied in this tower, literally built into its structure, Ruskin finds one of his most cherished notions, ‘the idea of this unity of the arts.’ The tower of Giotto, said Ruskin to his students, ‘may once for all prove to you the essential unity of the arts, and show you how impossible it is to understand one without reference to another.’ In Giotto’s tower, painting, architecture, poetry, and sculpture are wrought in a single work. For Ruskin, this tower represents an ideal of aesthetic unity.

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1 Ruskin, ‘Ariadne Florentina,’ 336.
3 Ruskin, ‘Ariadne Florentina,’ 337.
no longer available in his time, in an age of increasing specialisation and the divisibility of labour.

The *Atlas* preserved this Ruskinian aestheticism in the way it sought to weave words and pictures through its pages. The successive toasts to ‘Art’ and to ‘Literature’ at Pfahlert’s Hotel made it clear that the value of the *Atlas* was in uniting within a single project excellence on each of these two fronts. Indeed, through its production processes, the *Atlas* sought a specific unification of image and text. The principle of the unity of the arts finds sustained and vigorous application in the efforts made by the makers of the *Atlas* to intersperse images and words on the pages of the publication. Certainly, the fact of this interspersal was an important part of the promotional rhetoric where attention was frequently drawn to the manner in which ‘wood engravings of the finest character’ were ‘liberally interspersed through the text.’

Combining word and image was clearly to the taste of the contemporary readership.

It must be remembered that there were considerable technical obstacles to bringing images and words together onto a printed page. In the medieval manuscript, hand-drawn illustrations sat easily on the page with hand-drawn script. The two forms of sign, linguistic and pictorial, were tangled together, or as J. Hillis Miller describes it: ‘there is an element of picture in every letter, and an element of writing in every picture.’ Likewise, in early print-making the letters and the pictures were carved from the same block of wood. In each case, pictures and letters coexisted in a uniform medium. The invention of moveable type, however, divided text from image. Linguistic text became cheaply reproducible and proliferated accordingly. The fact of its reproducibility removed any value that attached to a particular rendering of the linguistic sign. Manuscript

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4 Claims made on *Atlas* part-issue dust jackets.

5 J. Hillis Miller, *Illustration* (London: Reaktion Books, 1992) 77. A fascinating discussion of the role of marginal illustration in medieval manuscripts is found in Michael Camille’s *Image*
became type. Engraving and etching allowed images to be reproduced but only as engravings and etchings. Artistic works in paint, wash, distemper, charcoal, pencil, watercolour, and ink all remained singular and irreducible except through the impingement of wood, metal or stone, what Ruskin called 'the Art of Scratch'. The situation was exacerbated rather than mollified by the development of photography. Photography, with all its wondrous clarity and minute detail, merely served to highlight the separation of text from image.

The gulf between the infinitely reproducible word and the stubbornly singular image was a source of vexation for publishers interested in producing illustrated works. The differing demands of illustrations and type dramatically complicated the process of printing. Indeed, interspersal had been the bane of the Bulletin in 1886. In a letter to William Macleod, the editor J.F. Archibald complained bitterly about the newly acquired press that had been purchased specifically to produce high-quality interspersed pages. 'The new machine,' mourned Archibald, 'is a curse, a fraud, a delusion. It's the most costly white elephant we ever invested in. Heaven knows whether it will ever work – if it doesn’t it will be merely £1000 of unnecessary experience in which we have paid cash on the nail.' Archibald lays the blame squarely at the feet of his employer (and Atlas contributor), William Traill: 'If Traill hadn’t known such a hell of a lot about machinery and had gone like an ignorant fool, such as myself, to a first-class maker saying: 'Here’s the money. I want a good machine to print blocks and letter press together', we’d now be on relief' (my emphasis). Inside Archibald’s exasperation is the clear belief that

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6 Ruskin sums up the three 'scratchable solids' as follows: 'On tablet of stone, on tablet of wood, on tablet of steel, – the first giving the law to everything; the second true Athenian, like Athena's first statue in olive-wood, making the law legible and homely; and the third true Vulcanian, having the splendour and power of accomplished labour.' 'Ariadne Florentina,' 321.
7 A photograph of the original letter dated 15 July 1886 is reproduced in C. Macleod i-ii. For further discussion of the letter see Lawson 122-23.
high quality interspersed pages were both an essential and elusive goal of magazine publication in the mid-1880s.

Interspersal also carried with it certain limitations for publishers. While engravings on copper and steel were capable of achieving more finely detailed images, they could not be conveniently combined with the raised type of the letterpress. Thus interspersal ensured that engravings would be on wood blocks. As David Sander remarks: 'If a book has illustrations in it, if it was printed before about 1880, and if the illustrations appear on the same pages as the type, one can say with certainty that these pictures are wood engravings.' Even with wood blocks, however, to 'intersperse' images amongst text was not without difficulties. Letterpress had broad margins of error. Variations in the quality of ink, paper, press and blocks, while unlikely to be fatal to legibility, could seriously distort the character of a pictorial engraving. For images, the quality of the picture hinged absolutely on the materials. It was no use employing an engraver to make minute cross-hatchings or stipplings if, for instance, the paper was too absorbent to keep the markings distinct from one another.

One solution to the problem of the different requirements of text and image was to include illustrations as plates. In other words, to print the engravings on heavier paper and insert them into the bookshelf where required. This was the course adopted by the most prominent Australian predecessor to the Atlas, Edwin Carton Booth's Australia (1873-1876). In Australia, Booth’s text is printed on separate sheets to the engravings of pictures by Nicholas Chevalier and Skinner Prout, and the other artists drawn upon for this publication; the pages of text on light paper, the illustrated plates on heavier, higher density paper. The other alternative, and one which the Atlas elected to

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8 In the Atlas, there are a limited number of illustrations which use steel etchings rather than wood engravings. Steel engraving was used when images did not have to be interspersed with words, such as in the frontispieces for each volume or in occasional full-page plates.
pursue, was to uniformly increase the quality of materials to that necessary for finely grained image reproduction. The entirety of the *Atlas* was printed on 'heavy, toned, and highly calendered paper, manufactured expressly for this publication.' Of course, this was a much more expensive solution, but it did allow for high-resolution images to be interspersed on the page with the text. It was also necessary to alter the compound of the ink so that it would yield the sharp detail that fine engravings demanded. Specially imported 'patent stop-cylinder fine art presses' were used to ensure the smooth application of inked block onto paper.

The main difficulty with interspersed pages was combining sharp, distinct type, with tonally smooth engravings. In pre-impressionist painting, tone was the decisive determinant of artistic quality. For prominent art critic and *Atlas* contributor James Smith, 'the genius of painting was to render gradations in tone.' The pleasure of engravings was found in the way that they conveyed tone, the manner in which they moved smoothly between shades of light and dark. 'Delicacy, finish, and refinement' were for Charles Dickens 'in the very grain and nature of a delicate engraving.' Consistent with

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10 Dust-jacket, *Atlas* part-issues (1886-88); 'Calendering is the process of passing paper through rollers to give it a smooth or glassy finish.' Peter C. Marzio, *Democratic Art: Chromolithography 1840-1900, Pictures for a 19th-Century America* (Boston: David R. Godine, 1979) 78.
11 'In order to secure printing of a delicate description the machine work will be conducted slowly and a special quality of ink is to be used for the purpose.' *Illustrated Australian News* 2 April 1887: 55.
12 'The Illustrations, Letterpress, and Maps are printed upon Messrs. R. Hoe & Co.'s patent stop-cylinder fine art presses, recently imported to the colonies by the publishers, and are under the supervision of M. Emrich, late of New York.' Dust-jacket, *Atlas* part-issues (1886-1888).
13 So writes Humphrey McQueen in his recent biography, *Tom Roberts* (Sydney: MacMillan, 1996). Smith, of course, led the denunciation of the '9 x 5' exhibition that brought the impressionist style to prominence in the Australian colonies. See also the exchange of letters between James Smith and the artists involved in the exhibition reproduced in Bernard Smith, ed., *Documents on Art and Taste in Australia: the Colonial Period* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1975) 202-10.
these values, the entire image-printing process in the *Atlas* was calculated to yield smoothness of tone and softness of impression. ‘All the important progress made in the printing of pictures during the Victorian period,’ according to Geoffrey Wakeman, were aimed at attempting to ‘reproduce the tones seen in nature.’ And the Victorian period saw ‘nature’ as being composed in smooth tones, rather than sharp contrasts. Fine tonal variation was of course precisely what wet-plate photography found so elusive. ‘Her strong shadows,’ writes Eastlake, ‘swallow up all timid lights within them, as her blazing lights obliterate all half-tones across them; and thus strong contrasts are produced, which, so far from being true to Nature, it seems one of Nature’s most beautiful provisions to prevent.’ Similarly, the American photographer Peter Henry Emerson, commented on the difficulty that photography found in coping with ‘those subtleties of light and colour and atmosphere which pervade all nature, and are as important as form.’

If the *Atlas* followed Ruskin in its ideals of aesthetic unification, it certainly did not do so in its methods of production. The division of the Wynyard Square factory into its various ‘departments’, each in ‘perfect working order’, enacted the very form of industrialised alienation from the product that Ruskin abhorred. Departments, supervisors, imported machinery and specialist personnel – all signalled a bureaucratisation of Art which was anathema to Ruskin. Indeed, Ruskin had expressed particular dismay at the staggering tedium of ‘the vast industries of modern engraving.’ ‘How many men,’ he asks, ‘are night and day cutting 1050 square holes to the square inch, as the occupation of their manly life . . . And Mrs.

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16 Eastlake 90.
17 Peter Henry Emerson, ‘Naturalistic Photography 1889,’ Goldberg 192.
18 ‘Now, the Picturesque Atlas Publishing Company know that every department must be in perfect working order, that to the last detail the material with which the engraving is to be produced must be of the best, or that the work might just as well be indifferent throughout.’ *Daily Telegraph* 21 August 1886: 9.
Beecher Stowe and the North Americans fancy they have abolished slavery? The polyglot engravers (two Australians, an Italian, four Germans and six Americans) of the Atlas were not slaves, but they were engaged in work of a numbingly repetitive character. To attain the desired graduation of contrast, the engravers of the Atlas worked at a far slower rate than the average for popular illustrated publications. While the accepted rate was about one hour per square inch, the engravers of the Atlas typically took three hours, and sometimes five or six, depending on the detail, to engrave a single inch. A typical 7 x 11 inch block would take between four and six weeks to engrave. For the Atlas, aesthetic 'perfection' and the unity of the arts were prized commodities that were to be implemented through the rigorous application of the techniques of corporate manufacture.

Ironically, in searching for smoothness in tonal variation the Atlas did make use of photography, if only indirectly: 'The engraving upon wood will be performed by working on a photographed block, reduced to [from?] the size of the artist's larger and bolder drawing, and with all the coarseness and breadth of the latter toned down and softened in the smaller photographic duplicate on the wood block.' Judging from contemporary reports, the tonal effects produced through these various processes were considered impressive. 'The delicate greys of Schell's work in particular,' reports the Age, 'reproduced by the most skilful engravers in these branches who could be engaged, must be seen to be appreciated.' The Illustrated Australian News describes how 'in the electrotyping department a process is also adopted in order to produce from the flat surface of the plate high lights, greys, half tones, blacks, &c., through all the chromatic gamut between bright light and Cimmerian darkness.'

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20 Daily Telegraph 21 August 1886: 9. See discussion in chapter one of this study.
21 Daily Telegraph 21 August 1886: 9
22 Illustrated Australian News 2 April 1887: 55.
23 Age 2 April 1887: 13.
24 Illustrated Australian News 2 April 1887: 55.
The report concludes by asserting that ‘the finest and purest effects are to be striven for, and to realise what is called fine art printing.’

In ‘fine art printing’ of the kind that the Atlas was hoping to introduce to the Australian colonies for the first time, the stress was on delicacy, on shades, and on subtlety of variation. As Ruskin insisted, ‘fine engraving disdained chiaroscuro.’ It was a question of detail, but not the kind of violent, maddeningly stark detail that photography tended to produce. When criticism was levelled at the Atlas, it was on the basis of its failure to maintain the softness of tonal variation in all its pictures. The reviewer in the Age, for instance, found that while the landscapes were pleasantly smooth, the ‘portraits’ in the Atlas were ‘not devoid of a certain hardness.’ ‘Hardness’ and sharp contrasts of light and dark were to be avoided, with every effort made to pursue softness and ‘delicate greys’. In its use of wood engravings, the Atlas pursued a supple, malleable, finely grained visual medium that would fade gently between its shades of grey and snake its way through the text with a minimum of discordance. In the Atlas, moreover, the bifurcation of plate and page was subsumed in the corporatised ut pictura poesis of its factory and the interspersed image-text fabric of fine art printing.

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It should be made clear before I proceed further that the illustrations of the Atlas were not in themselves groundbreaking. They did not constitute an isolated and decisive example of aesthetic innovation. While not necessarily typical, the stylistics of the drawings were certainly not unusual in the 1880s. One sees many similarities, for instance, between the illustrations in the Atlas and those of its rival publication, Cassell’s Picturesque Australasia, and indeed, of other

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26 Age 2 April 1887: 13.
centennial works like *Victoria and its Metropolis, The New Atlas of Australasia* and the *Centennial Magazine*.\(^\text{27}\) Parallels too, can be drawn with the antecedent 'picturesque' works of America, Europe and Canada with which the *Atlas* forms a loose family.\(^\text{28}\) Or one may find resemblances in the more expensive illustrated American monthlies, such as *Harper's*, *Scribner's* or *Century Illustrated*, and also in British periodicals of this time.\(^\text{29}\) It is also possible to trace similar stylistic changes in the illustrated newspapers of Australia, to see in the pages of the *Illustrated Australian News* or the *Illustrated Sydney News* the appearance of new methods of framing the pictures or more variety in the manner in which images were engraved. Comparing the *Atlas* to all of these publications one may say that it was a work that was at the forefront of a number of design trends in illustration. In this context, the illustrations of the *Atlas* are best viewed as neither innovative nor conservative, but rather as modish.

However, the fact that the illustrations in the *Atlas* can be shown to share similarities with those in other contemporary publications should not preclude them from being valuable in trying to come to an understanding of the character of such illustrations. Indeed, the particular virtue of the illustrations of the *Atlas* lies not in the fact that they were innovative, but that they are reflexive. W.J.T. Mitchell has written of a special category of image, that he terms the 'metapicture'. Metapictures, writes Mitchell, are 'pictures about pictures – that is, pictures that refer to themselves or to other

\(^{27}\) Indeed, in *Cassell's Picturesque Australasia* the use of frames is even more innovative than in the *Atlas*.


pictures, pictures that are used to show what a picture is. The engraving techniques used in the *Atlas* give to many of the pictures precisely this self-referential quality. In other words, the illustrations of the *Atlas* talk about the condition of their illustration. It is on this basis that they become salient, not simply as examples of a 'fashion' but as elucidating certain contradictory impulses in the process of book illustration in the 1880s, contradictions which are expressive of tensions in the visual culture of this time.

These tensions were visible in the way that the images in the *Atlas* are framed. Framing is an important element in the self-reflexive dimension of the *Atlas* illustrations. While it may have been more practical to include images within the confines of the textual columns, allowing a simple substitution of an engraved block for a commensurate space of text, this was not the preferred method in the *Atlas*. Typically, in the *Atlas* an image is centred, straddling the white-space border between the columns and allowing the two columns of text to flow either side past the rectangular bulge of the illustration. William Macleod’s portrait of ‘William Dampier’ (5) sits framed inside the text in such a manner, firmly encased in text. The story of Dampier literally surrounds the picture of the man.

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Some images cut diagonally across a column, either step-wise as in ‘Seal Rock Lighthouse’ (50) or incrementally, as in ‘George Street, From the Post Office’ (78). Other illustrations employ still more complex shapes. Illustrations of flowers and trees seem particularly susceptible to irreguarly shaped frames, with tree limbs and flower stems making repeated incursions into the rectangular columns of print. In a sketch of ‘Marianthus Bignoniavens’ (fig. 2) the tendrils and flowers of the plant snake outwards in three separate directions and the text responds by ceding three corresponding sleeves from its columns. It is as if the text is struggling to contain the organic thrust of the plant’s growth. This complex interspersal, where the words are brought into an intimate and individuated visual relationship to the pictures is important to the consensus of the world of the Atlas because it draws together the visual and verbal fields of representation. It accomplished at a spatial level, a relationship that was felt intrusive if it was articulated at the level of words. In particular, there was resistance to the impression that the text had been written as a result of the pictures that were drawn. The Daily Telegraph was happy to report that there was ‘no trace of those attempts to “write up to the artist” which makes some books positively abortive and others decidedly shallow’. It was important that these two separate forms were kept distinct and maintained their

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31 Daily Telegraph 1 August 1886: 9.
autonomous spontaneity so that their accordance was seen as genuine rather than contrived. The world of the Atlas was given credibility by its co-genesis in words and pictures: 'The writers have kept on their even course, picking and choosing from a large mass of material as the interest of the narrative demanded, and only here and there casting the lightest possible allusions to the presence of brush and palette.'

However, the encasement of images inside the wall of text represents simply the first layer in the complex array of frames deployed in the Atlas. Inside the shell of the text, further frames come into effect. If an image is engraved with a predominantly dark background the illustration, in effect, frames itself. The darkness of the image, and it needs only the faintest of greys to be effective, forms a discrete frontier when it hits the white-space of the page. While this frontier affords an effective edge to an illustration, it is not uncommon for illustrations to be further framed by engraved lines of various widths which run along the four sides of an image much as a frame does in an actual picture. These frames enhance the picturely quality of the illustrations by simulating, often with a mock wood-grain, the frames of hung pictures. The engraved borders around 'Governor John Hunter' (21) and 'Batman Treating with the Blacks' (161) frame these pictures with a wooden solidity, and lend to them something of the public certainty held in the gallery painting. If, as Derrida suggests, 'framing always supports and contains that which, by itself, collapses forthwith,' then these conscious attempts at bolstering the edges of the illustrations might suggest a precarious quality in the subjects they depict. Certainly, in the case of Batman's 'treaty', this ultimately ineffectual document gains a solidity in representation that it never yielded in practice.

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33 Ruskin discusses frames in a letter to the Times concerning the Turner bequest. Ruskin favoured a plain form of framing, and saw the issue in terms of the practical issues of protection, suspension, and display. Letter, 7 July 1856, Works, vol. 13, 83-84.
However, while many of the pictures are fully framed (often with several successive forms) any discussion of frames in the *Atlas* would be misleading if it neglected to mention their most singular feature: their partiality. The frames in the *Atlas* are partial in two senses of this word. They are partial, like all frames, in the sense that they have an interest, a liking for certain results over others, an agenda. A frame is by its nature selective. Yet the frames of the *Atlas* are also partial in the simple sense of being incomplete. A significant proportion of the images in the *Atlas* are bordered by frames that are inchoate, failing in the very task a frame is by its nature expected to perform, which is to contain an image within its borders – to encompass.

How is it, then, that a frame can fail to contain its picture? At times, the gap is quite innocuous. An edge, typically the bottom edge, will be missing. In Frederic Schell’s historical sketch of *The “Duyfhen” in the Gulf of Carpenteria* (fig. 3), the darkness of the frame’s vertical edges dissolves gently into the white-space of the page.

The white of the page, meanwhile, seeps upward around the

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34 Derrida 56. For Derrida, the ‘transcendent exteriority’ of a frame (which he treats as part of a broader category of *parergon*) only ‘comes to play, abut onto, brush against, rub, press against the limit itself and intervene in the inside only to the extent that the inside is lacking’ (78-79).
dissolving edges and merges imperceptibly with the shimmering waters of the gulf which gleam beyond the reflection of the Dutch ship. That it is the bottom slat in the frame that is usually missing serves, moreover, to complicate the space of the caption. The caption, which traditionally acts as a kind of intermediary between the realm of text and the realm of image, is caught in no-man’s land.\textsuperscript{35} Does it sit in the neutral white-space of the page, in what Foucault calls ‘the calm sand of the page’, or is it in the intentional whiteness, the meaningful light-signifying white gouged out of the block by the engraver?\textsuperscript{36} If, as Michael Carter has pointed out, ‘one of the fundamental characteristics of a visual image is that it has an edge, it stops,’ then where does such an image stop?\textsuperscript{37} By removing the bottom edge of the frame, the illustrators of the \textit{Atlas} merge the white-space of the page with the ‘light’ space of the image.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure4.png}
\caption{‘Clare’ (454).}
\end{figure}


\textsuperscript{36} ‘It is there on these few millimeters of white, the calm sand of the page, that are established all the relations of designation, nomination, description, classification.’ Michel Foucault, \textit{This is Not a Pipe} [trans. James Harkness] (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982) 28.

\textsuperscript{37} M. Carter 149.
These leaky frames, which allow the text, image and white-space to interpenetrate so promiscuously, have significant spatial implications for a reader of the *Atlas*. In ‘Clare’ (fig. 4), Fullwood’s sketch of the South Australian town is bounded on three sides by a heavy wood-style frame, with only the vestiges of a bottom board visible like a burnt stump in the right hand corner. The foreground shrubbery erupts from the base of the picture, and on the left, a genteel family strolls graciously forward out of the plane of the illustration. Unlike the aboriginal clusters that march conveniently off the side of the stage in the watercolours of Joseph Lycett, this family are walking forward, as it were, out of the very page itself and upwards into the reader’s eyes. The world that subsists between viewer and figure is a shared world, the space that lies between them is consensual. If a reader were to start walking, then each might meet along this mythical path which disappears between the respective feet of viewer and figure. It is a construction of space that replicates on the page the visual relations of contemporary Victorian drama.38 Just as a nineteenth-century theatre audience learned to gaze through the missing wall of a rectangular room-like stage, the readers of the *Atlas* stared through the missing edge of the frame and let the space of their seeing flow unchecked into the space of representation.

Yet, in the *Atlas* it is not merely the front of the frame that is vulnerable. In ‘The Macquarie, at Dubbo’ (fig. 5), the bulk of the picture sits within the three sides of its frame. Unlike many pictures in the *Atlas*, however, the image does not billow out from its unbounded floor. The foreground of the picture ends obediently, just as if there were a border. Out of this unbounded foreground, however, upon the near bank of the Macquarie, a graceful river gum grows. The boughs of this tree rise up and project themselves in front of the engraved frame that provides the scene with its nominal ceiling. The frame remains clearly visible, but now seemingly

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38 ‘No one who has visited an old theatre,’ comments Michael Carter, ‘can ignore the degree to which the proscenium arches (frames) were integral to the comprehension of the spectacles that were staged in such buildings’ (164).
irrelevant behind these projecting boughs. Once beyond this ineffectual frame, the bulk of the tree disappears abruptly into the treacherous void of white-space that guards the borders of the page and, less reliably, the columns of text. One bough, undaunted by its precarious location high above the roof of the framed picture in the ambiguous white-space of the page, leans out over the river, its various branches descending back over the frame to sit once more across the delicate grey of the engraved sky.

One can place these kinds of visual devices within the context of contemporary style. Roger Butler, for instance, has suggested that the 'unusual proportions' found in some of the illustrations of the Atlas provide evidence of 'the influence of Japanese art, filtered through American graphic design.' Butler's suggestion of American

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influence finds support in a British review of the *Atlas* in the *Times*, which noted that the 'illustrations are mainly after the attractive style so familiar to us in the best American illustrated magazines.'\(^4\) Nor is this surprising considering that that the artistic editor of the *Atlas* (Schell) and two of its major artists (Smedley and Fitler) were all Americans who had worked on such magazines. The issue of Japanese influence is more complex, blending with the relationship between impressionism and Japonism in the aesthetic movements of the late nineteenth century. Elisabeth Aslin selects 'asymmetry' as the 'hallmark' of Japanese and oriental influence on European decorative tastes.\(^4\) The asymmetry of Japanese art was of a different order to the limited forms of asymmetry that were favoured as part of traditional picturesque compositional aesthetics. Asymmetry became identified with a certain daring newness that made more formal compositions appear dated.

The effects of Japonism were felt in Europe, America and Australia. 'The high tide of Japonism in Sydney and Melbourne,' writes Mary Eagle, 'was the 1880s.'\(^4\) Japanese motifs were widely adopted in the decorative arts in Australia, and in particular, she notes how the 'Illustrators working for newspapers and periodicals imitated the Japanese look of Japanese prints.'\(^4\) Japanese culture (or at least commodified versions of its motifs) was one of the ingredients of the aestheticism of this period, and the *Atlas* clearly fits within this nexus between Japanese print-making, American illustrated

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40 *Times* [London] 30 November 1887: 5.
43 Eagle 49.
However the illustrations of the Atlas part ways with the influence of Japanese prints in one important respect, that of depth. Where impressionism, including its Australian variant, tended to draw on what Eagle calls the ‘flattened perspective depth’ of Japanese art, the illustrations in the Atlas move in the opposite direction. Rather than flattening pictures out, the artists in the Atlas sought to use the asymmetries and foreground objects so characteristic of Japanese printmaking to imbue their illustrations with the quality of depth. The use of objects in the frontal plane also compressed the effects of perspective within a narrow focus. By catching the eye with obtrusive objects in the foreplane, depth was generated quickly and efficiently. The illustrations of the Atlas make a great virtue out of depth and seek in numerous ways to both thrust their foregrounds forward and telescope their backgrounds backward. In a picture of ‘Cataract Gorge’ (fig. 6) in the Tamar outside Launceston, the unframed portion of the image predominates over that which is framed. The steep slope of the gorge slips down the

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page unframed and into a foreground of parasoled pedestrians and reclining picnickers. The background, meanwhile, consisting of the opposite wall of the gorge and the river curving past the near bank is framed with a small, neat circle. The telescopic associations of the round frame invite this form of vision, asking the reader to trace the disappearing river into the distance and scan its diminishing horizon.46

Amongst the catalogue of shortcomings which beset wet-plate photography, the issue of depth was amongst the most glaring. 'The photograph seems embarrassed with the treatment of several gradations of distance,' writes Eastlake. 'The finish of background and middle distance seems not to be commensurate with that of the foreground; the details of the simplest light and shadow are absent; all is misty and bare, and distant hills look like flat, grey moors with one gloomy tint.'47 'This emptiness,' Eastlake goes on to explain, 'is connected with the rapidity of collodion, the action of which upon distance and middle ground does not keep pace with the hurry of the foreground.'48 This disappointing flatness of wet-plate photography was addressed, after a fashion, by that favourite nineteenth-century toy, the stereoscope.49 By using two photographs of the same scene taken from slightly different angles, the stereoscope was able to simulate the sensation of depth that was depressingly absent from most photographs. Such a device, however, only serves to highlight that the period suffered from a certain unsatisfied depth-hunger.

45 Eagle 45.
46 Alternatively, these flourishes might have been partially prompted by the steep costs of engraving itself. One might easily imagine that at a cost of half a guinea per square inch, devices for extending the scope of the image while minimising the extent of additional engraving would have been pursued wherever possible.
47 Eastlake 95.
48 Eastlake 95.
49 A stereoscopic camera took two pictures of the same scene from slightly different positions. The two images were then installed in a stereograph to simulate the sensation of depth. See Oliver Wendell Holmes, 'The Stereoscope and the Stereograph,' Goldberg 100-14. For a discussion of the importance of the stereograph in the nineteenth century, see Krauss and Crary.
Many of the illustrations of the *Atlas* were, like the stereoscope, calculated to generate depth. In ‘A Glimpse in the Strathbogie Ranges’ (fig. 7), the dense shrubbery of the mountains is bottle-necked by the narrowing of the frame at the centre of the image. Above, the distant tree-tops fade into the expanse of the sky, while below the ferns erupt from behind the intrusive white-space of the enforced narrowing and spill out of the foreground in all directions. The key word in the caption is of course ‘glimpse’. The vignette offered pokes teasingly through its tangle of frames. There is in these glimpsed images, a kind of eroticism of vision, a secret or surreptitious seeing. It is present in an interspersed page in a way that is not possible in the case of formally inserted plates. This is a world glimpsed in snatches and grabs, a world which peeks through the gaps in the printed text. Threading its way through the visual ambiguity of these half-frames is the forbidden pleasure of the voyeur.

In images such as those of Cataract Gorge and the Strathbogie Ranges, the process is as much about *de-framing* as it is about framing. The play between the framed and the unframed portions of the image occurs according to a kind of spatial logic in which the vertical portions of the scene are flattened and abstracted to enhance their verticality, while the horizontal portions of the scene are unframed and given the effect of extending out of the page in three dimensions
in ever increasing resolution. In these images the subject slides from the flatness of the frame into the openness of the world and, finally, into the imaginative realm of the viewer's eye. The middleground exists in a kind of intermediate world that is neither framed nor unframed but which connects the one to the other. The use of partial frames allows a play between planes of vision, and, in dissolving the line that traditionally divides them, implicates the seer into the world of the seen. The hybrid framed/unframed image offers a paradigm for the picturesque viewing process. A return journey from eye, through Nature, to picture and back again.

- III -

What is at stake in all these *Atlas* pictures is the integrity of the perspective system. Perspective, as any drawing text-book will explain, is based on an imagined pyramid, whose apex is the vanishing point, and whose edges run from this point to the four corners of the frame, and then outward toward the position of the observer. According to Panofsky, the perspective system came into being when the space of representation ceased to terminate at the plane of the picture, but projected itself outward to encompass the space of the viewing subject. At this moment, 'the picture has become a mere "slice" of reality, to the extent and in the sense that imagined space now reaches out in all directions beyond represented space' (original italics). The illustrations in the *Atlas* energise this imagined space by heightening the depth illusion created by the perspective system.

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50 I have drawn assistance in these discussions from the wide ranging and penetrating analysis of perspective in E.H. Gombrich's *Art and Illusion: a Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (London: Phaidon Press, 1995 [1959]), especially 'Ambiguities of the Third Dimension,' 204-44.

Indeed, the frame of a picture is an important aid to the generation of this depth illusion of perspective because, as Panofsky explains, it is 'precisely the finiteness of the picture which makes perceptible the infiniteness and continuity of space.'

'When enclosing pictures with perspective views,' remarks Meyer Schapiro, 'the frame sets the picture surface back into depth and helps to deepen the view.' In this situation, 'the frame belongs . . . to the space of the observer rather than of the illusory, three-dimensional world disclosed within and behind.' But Schapiro also considers the case, not uncommon in medieval times, 'in which elements of the image cross the frame.'

With such a practice, so prevalent in the Atlas, 'the frame belongs more to the virtual space of the image than to the material surface.' By making the space of the frame ambiguous, by setting it back inside the elements of the picture, the illustrations of the Atlas further implicate the space of perception within the space of representation. In the Atlas, perspectival space is projected into and out from the plane of the page.

When the descriptive chapters of the Atlas, for instance, describe the various scenic wonders of a region, it is the illustrations that provide confirmation both of their splendour and their susceptibility to the processes of vision. If the illustrated book is considered as a technology of knowing, then the Atlas marks a particularly sophisticated refinement of this technology. The visual devices in the Atlas are such that the reader is drawn inside the imaginary space of the illustration, down the precipitous Cataract Gorge, into the dense shrubbery of the Strathbogie Ranges. In terms of the agenda of national self-articulation that the work undertakes to pursue, it is the credibility of this articulation, the way in which it works to convince a reader of its legitimacy, that is of paramount importance. It may be

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52 Panofsky 61.
54 Schapiro 227.
55 Schapiro 228.
56 Schapiro 228.
overstating the case to talk in terms of a 'crisis' of representation, but
the visual culture in which the Atlas appeared was certainly under
challenge from the technologies of photographic reproduction and
the radical pressure of aesthetic modernism, and these challenges
run counter to the desire for a stable ground from which the Atlas
could tell its centennial story.

James Smith, prominent Melbourne art critic and prolific Atlas
contributor, was deeply concerned about the changes that were taking
place in the artworld of the 1880s. When an exhibition of '9 x 5
Impressions' by Tom Roberts, Charles Conder, Arthur Streeton and
others was held at Buxton's Gallery in Melbourne in 1889, he wrote a
severe, denunciatory review in his regular art column for the Argus.
The paintings were 'disconnected,' 'crude,' 'distressing,' 'incoherent,'
and 'misshapen.'\(^57\) These artists had breached the faith of their public
by presenting as art, paintings which were without order or meaning:
'Where we look for form and definition we find nothing but
confusion and an uninteresting mystery.'\(^58\)

I wish to suggest, against this backdrop, that the effect of the framing
techniques of the Atlas was not to interrogate, but rather to
strenuously reassert the primacy of the perspective system. In doing
so the world of the Atlas is allowed to emerge in the full solidity of
its three dimensions. The hybrid, partially-framed images of the
Atlas show a reality that is, to use Panofsky's terminology, doubly
'sliced'. The perspectival unity of the image is maintained with a
single vanishing point, but the frame, as it were, drops another
perpendicular. The perpendicular of the word-filled page is echoed
by the perpendicular of the incorporated frame, while the
relationship between the unbounded foreground and the frame
simulates that which exists between viewer and page.

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\(^58\) James Smith, letter, Argus 4 September 1889; in B. Smith, Documents on Art and Taste in Australia, 208.
What the illustrations of the *Atlas* bring into relief with their ingenious frames and their elaborate *trompe l'oeil* is the traditional division of planes on which classical landscape composition was based. Instead of separating foreground from middleground with trees or broken ground, the engravers radically separate the planes by imposing incongruous frames to signify the commencement of the middle distance. In the *Atlas*, the foreground is released into the space of the page where it both mingles with the text and, as it were, hovers upward toward the reader's eyes. The playful use of frames in these engravings does not subvert the space of perspective, but, by cutting across it in tactical ways, reinforces the soundness of its structure, the correctness of the proportions that position one plane of focus in relation to its others. This is the crucial fact of such pictures, that they maintain the integrity of the perspectival system which was the visual cornerstone of the world of the *Atlas*.

The engraving techniques of the *Atlas* thus supersaturate the images with depth; they are, in a sense, depth-charged. These techniques are not unique to the *Atlas* but fit neatly into the purposes which it pursues; namely, the celebration of the Australasian colonies and confirmation of their place within the visible kingdom. 'Perspective,' according to Norman Bryson, 'besides being a technique for recording a certain optical phenomenon, is also a technique for distributing information in a pattern which at once arouses our willingness to believe.'\(^{59}\) Depth in a picture is a visual trigger for this will to believe. Moreover, the *Atlas*, by inviting its readers on a journey through the windows of its illustrations, not only infuses its world with depth but by sharing its space so generously with its viewer, correspondingly deepens the dimensions of that viewing subject. 'The history of perspective,' wrote Panofsky, 'is as much

\(^{59}\) Norman Bryson, *Word and Image: French Painting of the Ancien Régime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 12. For Bryson, as for Barthes, realism was based on excess, and in the case of modern western painting this excess was the perspective system. The
about a consolidation and systematisation of the external world, as an extension of the domain of the self. In the perspectival intensity of its illustrations, the *Atlas* consolidates and systematises the 'Australasian' world, while extending in due proportion the domain of those who are called upon to view it.

The issue of perspective is further complicated by the extensive use of multiple images in the *Atlas*. A relatively common pattern, for instance, is the use of insets. In 'The First Landing Place, Botany Bay, From a Recent Sketch' (fig. 8), the conventional rectangular illustration of a sea-side farm, is overlaid with a round image of wheat sheaves in its bottom corner. The message is straightforward and familiar: the virgin bush that greeted Phillip is gone, and in its place now stand the pleasant farmhouse, Norfolk Island pines, and domesticated livestock that mark the arrival of civilisation. The sheaves of wheat in the inset are the icon of colonial consummation, the sign of a successful harvest. The seeds sown by Phillip have matured wonderfully, and the produce merely awaits consumption. A similar relationship is present between image and inset in 'Macarthur's Homestead, Camden' (ch. 3, fig. 14), where the smiling visage of a merino ram is pinned proudly to the

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60 Panofsky 67-68.


62 Fruition was an early and predictable theme in colonial literature. W.C. Wentworth, for instance, based his prize-winning poem 'Australasia' on the various dimensions of this trope: 'With cautious plough to rip the virgin earth,/ And watch her first born harvest from its birth,/ Till ting'd with summer suns the golden glade/ Delight the hind, and claim the reaper's blade.' (London: G. and W.B. Whitaker, 1823) 17.
bottom of the picture of the homestead: Macarthur’s Camden farm is the site of the birth of the Australian wool industry, the ram its virile embodiment. Urban institutions are also capable of this kind of iconic explication. In ‘The Public Library’ (231) a sketch of reading gentlemen is inset with a circular image of the impressive neoclassical columns and pediment of the building’s facade and give to this public ritual the monumental badge of Melbourne’s civic architecture.

This kind of metonymic relationship, in which the inset image provides an emblematic key to the main image, extends also to the use of frames. A portrait of ‘Sir Joseph Banks’ (11) is framed by a wreath of native plants that provide a ready sign of his botanical research on Cook’s voyages. It was an effect considered pleasing by the Daily Telegraph, which noted approvingly that Banks was ‘wreathed in a spray of wildflowers from the shores that afforded him such satisfaction.’63 The story of Banks is iconically absorbed in his portrait, and the portrait provides the human face for the story of his botanical exploits. The intercession of the floral frame further solidifies (at the level of motif) the relationship between the face and the narrative. Likewise, ‘Captain Charles Sturt’ (fig. 10) is enwreathed in a swoop of the Desert Pea that now bears his name.64

63 Daily Telegraph 14 August 1886: 9.
64 This kind of iconic dialogue was hardly a new development. A pioneer of the illustrated periodical, the Penny Magazine was published by Charles Knight under the auspices of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge between 1832 and 1846. The Penny Magazine habitually used icons and insets to embellish its engravings. A letter from the journalist and critic, Anna Jameson, records how she met with both the engraver, Harriet Clarke and the designer, William Harvey, to agree on the design of the ‘embellishments’ that would accompany her series of ‘Essays on the Lives of Remarkable Painters’; Penny Magazine 12 (January 1843)
The native plant frames Sturt inside the emblem of his desert conquests is an example of how the *Atlas* helps to give iconic effect to those relationships it develops between the narratives and the portrait illustrations.

The relation of icon to illustration, however, is not always this clear cut. In some illustrations, rather than either portion acting as the key to the other, the components are symmetrically opposed as if in dialogue. Macleod's sketch of 'The Wellington Caves' (156) consists of a picture of the cave's entrance overlaid with another of the cave's interior. In the first, the figures are tentatively entering the most innocuous of openings, in the second a lantern-bearing figure illuminates a cavern's vast interior as the observing figures stare in awe at the formations that lie hidden beneath the Australian earth.

'Kiama Blowhole' (fig. 11), predictably, throws a circular image of the seething ocean against a rectangular image of the erupting blowhole. On the one hand Ashton gives us the heaving potential of nature, and on the other its spectacular effects. The illustrations here perform the kind of animating function that was found in the

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illustrations of crowded streets or the depiction of the steam streaked modernity of ships and locomotives. Other images – such as ‘National Park’ (97) or ‘Scenes on Mount Wellington’ (515) – forsake the narrative power of the dichotomy, and aim instead at providing a sense of the collected impression through montage. Scenes from towns, or gardens, or parks will be clustered together to show a place from a variety of vantages.

However, in clustering and overlaying and insetting, the stratagems which are designed to simulate depth meet, somewhat awkwardly, with another set of devices which seek to emphasise the physical contingency of the image itself and the materiality of the surface on which it appears. This second set of devices, in other words, appears calculated to assert not the deepness of representational space, but the flatness of the representational site, to remind the viewer of the essential depthlessness of the paper sheet on which it has been printed. A relatively common device in this respect, and one that is certainly suggestive of a Japanese influence, is the use of plants to cradle images. Fullwood’s illustration of ‘A Wheat Field in the Wimmera’ (276), for instance, is tucked in amongst a stand of wheat. While most of the wheat is ‘behind’ the picture, some stalks protrude in front, while others laden with grain, droop over the top of the picture. In ‘Kempsey’ (fig. 12), a similar effect is created, this time with corn. Ashton’s sketch of the town is enveloped by the curled leaves of the cornstalk, which poke and fall around its edges.
are numerous other examples: Ashton’s ‘A Queensland Alligator’ (365) supported by the spiny fronds of a second picture, ‘Native Climbing a Palm-Tree’ (365); the tangle of flowers and plants of the ‘Manly Wild Flower Show’ (70) that provide the floral support for a secondary picture of the gentle folk attending the show; or Schell’s ‘The Gippsland Lakes’ (195), which tucks an image of a boat on Lake Wellington high up in a tree on the shore of another image of Lake King.

At one level this combination of plant and picture helps transport the process of representation into the realm of the organic. The plants embed the pictures in their delicate tangle, and the pictures become the incongruous fruit of their growth. Just as the colonies of Australasia overflow with the bounty of Nature in the form of crops and flowers, so does the Atlas overflow with the sheer abundance of its representation of these things. Commodity surplus is signalled in the excess of the images themselves. These pictures appear with the same startling fecundity as the grain in the field or the fruit in the orchard. In ‘Pye’s Orange Grove, Parramatta’ (fig. 13), the grove is loosely framed in a circle, although the opulence of the fruit trees ensures they spill out of this feeble arc in various places. If the circle were a clock-face, then at one o’clock a branch descends. The source of its descent cannot be traced, the branch is quickly consumed by the white-space of the page. Were the pyramid extended to the implied point of sight, the tree would perhaps stand next to the reader, behind even, with the branch craning overhead and drooping into
the upper field of vision. If this were all, then ‘Pye’s Orange Grove, Parramatta’ would simply be another variant, albeit a particularly canny one, of the devices of depth deployed in the *Atlas*. But dangling in this branch, like some miraculous fruit, is a second picture. It is not a picture of the grove, but of a house, presumably that of ‘Pye’, and presumably sustained by the orchard.

‘Pye’s Orange Grove, Parramatta’, like the other botanically-cradled illustrations, asserts two separate messages. One message – that implied by the curved frame which separates the foreground from the more distant planes – appears directed toward the integrity of the
perspectival system; the proportionality of a space that disappears from the viewer in planes of decreasing scale. But there is a second message – that implied by the picture that hangs with the oranges from the foreground branch – that is at variance with the message implied by the branch which supports it. While the descending branch signals the presence of the deep and encompassing pyramid of perspective, the wrinkled paper that is tucked within its leaves and amongst its oranges repudiates that depth. Although paper-thin, the picture is irrefutably solid and the shadow that underlines the sketch of Pye’s house, and the corner that is slightly peeling back (another Japonism), proclaim the physicality of the page. It is a depthless sheet with nothing behind it except its shadow, but it is firmly grounded in the fabric of representation. The sketches unite in a single image both the deepness of representational space and the solidity of the representational site.

These various devices give to the Atlas illustrations the quality of ornament, affecting a certain home-made ambience, but home-made according to the most scrupulously up-to-date professional standards. ‘Picturesque Australasia’ is a stylised scrap-book Australasia, sketched and jotted, cut and pasted, and somehow cobbled together in an unassuming and indisputably quaint manner. Of course, the humble artisanry of the style was in stark contrast with the process-fetish of the Atlas, and indeed the corporate reality of its own manufacture, but the format is consistent with the aesthetic position adopted by the Atlas in relation to photography, discussed in the previous chapter. The domesticated quality of the images is also in

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65 For further examples, see: ‘Old Government House, Parramatta’ (28), ‘National Park’ (97), and ‘Street Scene, Geelong’ (257). Precisely these kind of decorative scrolls and supportive flora were also used to frame photographic portraits in the late nineteenth century. An interesting selection of such ‘cabinet cards’ from Pennsylvania can be found in Heinz K Henisch and Bridget A. Henisch, The Photographic Experience, 1839-1914: Images and Attitudes (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994) 30-31.

66 Not all commentators found the frames of the Atlas pleasing. One critic in the Age, for instance, complained that ‘the effect of the patterned border surrounding the important steel engraving at the commencement of each part is somewhat displeasing. There is also a tendency, likewise observable in the illustrations to Harper’s Monthly and Century, to over-elaborate the picturesque features of pictures.’ Age 2 April 1887: 13.
keeping with the work's recurring voyeuristic impulse. There is a perverse, stolen pleasure in the feeling that the public sphere had succumbed in the 'glimpsed' illustrations of the *Atlas* to a private viewing.

It was a style of illustration, moreover, that is consonant with the displaced anti-industrial nostalgia that found expression in the arts-and-craft movement. Hélène Roberts has remarked that the Victorian period 'began with the grand style, monumental history paintings and neoclassicism, and ended with the arts-and-craft movement, aestheticism and art-for-art's sake . . . It began with Joshua Reynolds and ended with Aubrey Beardsley.' And it is this transformation which appears graphically arrested in the relationship between image and frame in the *Atlas*. The grandeur that is given to certain of its subjects would seem to be at odds with a framing policy that is playful and decorative. The *Atlas* shared its interest in decorative frames with the Pre-Raphaelite painters. Holman Hunt, for instance, designed a series of frames that were intended, according to Judith Bronkhurst, 'to play a crucial part in the total conception of the picture.' In *The Hireling Shepherd* (1851-2), for instance, the frame is carved with ears of wheat, while in *The Awakening Conscience* (1853-4), 'a star,' writes Bronkurst 'is strategically placed over the head of the girl to represent the revelation of Christ.' In 1889, one of Hunt's frames was displayed

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67 Citing Martin J. Wiener's argument in *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980* (Cambridge, 1981), Alan Crawford has suggested that the arts-and-craft movement may well have been a case of 'taste masquerading as social conscience' (95), a product of the pangs of middle-class guilt toward an industrialism that had, after all, been the cause of their social ascendancy. Alan Crawford, 'The Arts and Craft Movement in Context,' Wright 89-96. Gombrich uses the phrase 'the menace of the machine' in his discussion of the response of the decorative arts to industrialism in the nineteenth century. *The Sense of Order* 33.


70 Bronkhurst 233.
sans painting at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society.\textsuperscript{71} The dialogue between frame and image pursued by Hunt and the Atlas, creates an environment of heightened signification in which images are expected to transmit messages to their viewers. The frames also emphasise the ‘hand-made’ quality of the artwork.

Another illustration device in the Atlas that serves to accentuate the crafted character of the work, was the use of pictures which were deliberately left ‘unfinished’. What constituted a ‘finished’ work of art was one of the central debates in Whistler’s 1877 libel action against Ruskin’s review of his ‘Nocturne in Black and Gold’\textsuperscript{72}. While much of the publicity to the Atlas promoted the degree of finish in its illustrations, several of its pictures are deliberately ‘sketchy’ in character. In ‘Sir John Franklin’ (fig. 14), the relationship between the finished and the unfinished is integral to the image itself\textsuperscript{73}. The delicate shading of Franklin’s head, the gleam of light across his medals and epaulettes, even the dark tonal smoothness of the background – all these dissolve as the picture descends. The erosion of white-space (in fact a little grey to mark it as \textit{represented} white-space) seeps upward from the bottom of the picture. Below the elbow, only the outlines of Franklin’s arms remain, the simple lines of black upon white. By playing with what

\textsuperscript{71} Bronkhurst, note 12, 250.
\textsuperscript{73} The combination of finished and unfinished sketches was also a feature in the illustrated newspapers. See, for instance, George Ashton’s suite of images ‘The V.R.C. Grand National Meeting at Flemington’, \textit{The Illustrated Australian News} 5 August 1885: 120.
Ruskin calls 'the degree of completeness' such illustrations also have the effect of highlighting the physical contingency and materiality of visual representation. Instead of the densely engraved detail so celebrated by the *Atlas* publicists, these pictures revel in a state of hazy incompleteness, as though to emphasise the process of art coming into being. The emphasis, of course, is not on the mechanical processes by which the art was duplicated, but the purely manual process of drawing itself. The celebration of the machine in the *Atlas* did not extend into the sacred human realm of art.

But discerning the influence of the art-and-craft movement in the illustrations of the *Atlas* casts light on only one of the two tendencies in these images. The simulated wooden frames, the *faux* paper, and the use of 'unfinished' sketches all resonate with a veneration of the artisan and for the 'hand-made' art-object that characterised this movement. But the countervailing trend in the *Atlas* illustrations, the emphasis upon depth through the tactical deployment of frames, appears to move away from such concerns. What are the reasons behind the use of these two, apparently conflicting, practices? How is it that the *Atlas* can go to such efforts in some illustrations to simulate depth, to lay such elaborate seductions of perspective, only to trip them up by using other illustrations which emphasise a picture's essential lack of depth?

- IV -

The contrast between these two sets of devices lends a certain surreal quality to some of the pictures that have been discussed in this chapter. The framed picture that floats in the tree branch of 'Pye's Orange Grove' or the rivergum that prods out of the frame in 'The Macquarie, at Dubbo' disrupt conventional expectations in relation to where pictorial space begins and ends. While the pictures are

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74 Ruskin, 'Ariadne Florentina,' 309.
essentially playful, the territory in which their games takes place would become more fiercely contested in subsequent decades. In Rene Magritte’s *La condition humaine* (1933) an easel stands in front of a window. The scene outside of the window corresponds to that in the picture, but not in a way that the perspective system leads one to expect. Because the easel is slightly oblique, there ought to be a step in the fields of what the viewer would see out of the window and what the painter would paint from a position a little to one side. Instead, window and painting are exactly contiguous, interrupted only by the faint outline of the edge of the drawing, and the visible elements of the easel itself. By eliminating parallax from his picture of a picture, Magritte leaves perspective uncertain of its footing. By ingeniously introducing ‘errors’ into otherwise realist drawings, Magritte makes visible the system by which realism is affected and casts a more radical doubt on the nature of the ‘real’ itself. Much of Magritte’s work is aimed at disrupting the neutrality of representational spaces. One is never sure, in his paintings, where the grounds of representation reside. What and where is the pipe in *Ceci n’est pas une pipe*? His deceptively simple paintings upset the deeply ingrained distinctions between ideas, things, words, and pictures. Magritte also directs his surrealist attacks against the truth claims of linear perspective. A painting such as *La condition humaine*, insists that despite its mimetic charms, the perspectival system is ultimately just that, a system.

The overlaid images of the *Atlas*, where components of each picture stray nonchalantly into the space of others, share with Magritte a playful consciousness of the schemes of visual representation. Each casts a self-referential eye on the task of making pictures of the world. They are both to varying degrees metapictures within the definition put forward by W.J.T. Mitchell. Of course, it is clear that the use of

75 As Foucault argued, Magritte’s paintings tip representation from the stable platform of mimesis, into the endless sliding regression of the simulacrum, from ‘resemblance’ to ‘similitude’. Michel Foucault, *This is not a pipe* [trans. and ed., James Harkness] (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) 44.
frames in the *Atlas* is not a strategy of subversion, at least not in respect of the images themselves. The publication was, first and foremost, one that was celebratory in intent. The images are thus in a broad sense the material of celebration, and it would be perverse to imagine these images being presented in a way that undermined this goal. The difference between Magritte and the *Atlas* lies in their relation to the fabric of representation. When Magritte looked into this fabric, he found it oppressively dense and saw its encompassing weave as an attempt to fraudulently reduce an essentially irreducible world. Magritte saw a world overburdened with a representational faith that he felt it had no right to possess. His work is aimed at systematically disrupting the structures of linguistic and pictorial representation, relentlessly exposing the machinery by which the world is rendered real.

A project such as the *Atlas*, as I have argued in this chapter, hinged on the solidity of its representational system. What the illustrations in the *Atlas* — and by extension, this whole subgenre of popular aestheticist magazine drawing — attempt through their various devices, is to strengthen the very same fabric that Magritte seeks to puncture. The *Atlas*, in short, divides the world in order to rebuild it more securely. The multiple views of its subjects solidify rather than fracture. The multiple perspectives were a testament, not to visual relativism, but to the scopic susceptibility of the world it sought to display. The playful flatness of the simulated paper was not a comment on the contingency of the visual sign, but a flexing of representational muscle, a flaunting of the prowess of the sign. Where Magritte exposed a treacherous surface, the *Atlas* infused a miraculous depth, and when the illustrations appear to fray the fabric of representation, it is only so that it can be woven more tightly together.

At the heart of the idea of mimesis is the belief in the power of the mirror to reflect nature. Yet this belief entails a double commitment.
A commitment, first of all, to the ability of the reflection to stand for the real. But bound up in this first commitment are the strands of a second; a commitment, encouraged by the capacity of the real to be reflected, to the divisibility of the real, its being composed of discrete elements. This was a form of thinking that was intimately involved with the picturesque sensibility. However, where Magritte's fragments subvert these mimetic commitments by basing themselves on replication, the illustrations in the Atlas, in all their various devices, fundamentally confirm the solidity, the singularity and the mimetic susceptibility of the real. The Atlas makes this affirmation by uniting the effects of depth with the effects of materiality.

Indeed, in the Atlas, all gulfs are bridged. The gulf between word and image is sewn together by the repeated incursion of the space of one into the space of the other. The images invade the text, and the text flows merrily about the images. A state of affairs, it must always be remembered, that was actively pursued by the proprietors of the Atlas, who imported both the materials and personnel necessary to achieve such an encompassing level of 'interspersal'. The gulf between the seer and the seen is dissolved by the erupting foregrounds of its illustrations and the ambiguous white-space of the page, which together create an implied, unframed, mutual region. Here, between the picture and the eye, the readers of the Atlas share the space of their seeing with the space that is generated in the illustrations. The gulf between the flatness of the page and the roundness of the world is flirtatiously bridged by the use of secondary paper pictures which are dropped like handkerchiefs into the true, deep space of visual representation and the space, in this instance, of colonial experience. Indeed, it is this deep space, the space of the perspective system, which is the dominant thread in the fabric of the Atlas's representation. It is the pre-eminence of this space that allows the illustrations to burst through the lines of print, to assert their persistent depth in the face of the physicality of the art-and-craft flourishes, to erupt past their feeble frames, and rear off the page.
The verbal text for its part, is complicit with this space, the solidity of its lettered wall both supporting and accommodating the play of visual space. Each apparent violation only serves to reinforce the inevitability of the perspective system. Hiding at times beneath its various planes, one can be sure to find it once more elsewhere, unscathed, blessedly resilient.
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## APPENDIX 1

List of Persons Involved with the *Atlas* (‘~’ – co-authored)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashton, George Rossi.</td>
<td>artist (specialist in figures)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashton, Julian Rossi.</td>
<td>artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bacher, W.H.</td>
<td>engraver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker, Horace.</td>
<td>engraver (Head of ‘Engraving Department’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barton, George B.</td>
<td>writer, ‘Historical sketch of New South Wales’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belton, Louis.</td>
<td>artist (specialist in ‘flora’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brett, Henry.</td>
<td>writer, ~ New Zealand chapters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brockway.</td>
<td>engraver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broomfield, F.J.</td>
<td>first assistant editor and writer, ‘Explorers of New South Wales,’ ~ ‘Towns of New South Wales’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown, Reverend George.</td>
<td>writer, ‘Samoa,’ ‘The Solomon Group,’ ‘Tonga, or the Friendly Islands,’ ‘The New Britain Group’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buchner.</td>
<td>engraver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burgess, Henry T.</td>
<td>writer, South Australian chapters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cockburn-Cambell, Sir T.</td>
<td>writer, Western Australian chapters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee, Frank.</td>
<td>proprieter, Atlas Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collingridge, Arthur.</td>
<td>engraver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collingridge, George.</td>
<td>engraver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook, A.C.</td>
<td>artist (specialist in architectural sketches)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donohue, Frank J.</td>
<td>second assistant editor and writer of some Pacific chapters and the general social and commercial chapters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dulon, Arnold.</td>
<td>supervised engraving of maps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerich.</td>
<td>supervisor of the printing press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eveson.</td>
<td>supervised the electrotyping process with his ‘four stalwart sons all taught by himself’ <em>(Bulletin 26 June 1886)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farrell, John.</td>
<td>author of prefatory poem, ‘Australia’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitler, William Crothers.</td>
<td>artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geddis, J.M.</td>
<td>writer, ~ ‘Descriptive Sketch of New Zealand’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fullwood, Albert Henry.</td>
<td>artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garran, Andrew.</td>
<td>editor and writer, ~ ‘Sydney’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haswell, William A.</td>
<td>writer, ‘The Fauna of Australasia’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hayman.</td>
<td>engraver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hirschmann, W.A.</td>
<td>engraver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irwin.</td>
<td>engraver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawes, Rev W.G.</td>
<td>writer, ‘New Guinea’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lendenfelt, R. Von</td>
<td>writer, ~ ‘Topography of New South Wales’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leys, T.W.</td>
<td>writer, ~ ‘Historical Sketch of New Zealand’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lindt, John W.</td>
<td>artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahony, Frank.</td>
<td>supervised drawing of maps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDonald, D.M.</td>
<td>chairman, Atlas Company and artist specialising in portraits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLeod, William</td>
<td>proprietor, Atlas Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McNeil.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Miller. engraver

Moffett, Silas Lyon. publisher and early directory of the Atlas Company.

Mueller, Baron von. botanist and writer, ‘The Flora of Australasia’


Negri. engraver

Piguenit, William Charles. artist

Russell, H.C. writer, ‘Climate and Rainfall’

Schell, Frank H. artist

Schell, Frederic B. art editor and artist

Schwarzburger, Carl engraver

Scully, Alexander J. assisted with the drawing of maps

Semple, Andrew. writer, ~ ‘Towns of Victoria’

Sharp. engraver

Smedley, William Thomas. artist

Smith. engraver


Steele, Rev. Dr. Robert. writer, ‘The New Hebrides’

Sutherland, Alexander. writer, ‘Early Discoveries,’ ‘Captain Cook,’ ‘Early Settlement,’ ~ ‘Topography of New South Wales’

Traill, William H. writer, Queensland chapters

Wilkinson, C.S. writer, ‘Geological Formation’
The *Endeavour* in Botany Bay

'Tupia' or 'Tupaia' joined Cook in Tahiti, acting as an interpreter in Cook's Pacific voyages. The account in the *Atlas* does not mention Tupia, although he occupies a central part of this image. William Macleod the principal historical illustrator of the *Atlas*, and the artist who sketched the drawing 'Natives Opposing Captain Cook's Landing' (7), based his picture on the famous passage in Cook's journals which describes the landing at Botany Bay:

*Sunday, 29th. [April, 1770] . . . Saw as we came in on both points of the bay Several of the natives and a few huts, Men, women and children on the south shore abreast of the Ship, to which place I went in the Boats in hopes of speaking with them accompanied by Mr Banks Dr Solander and Tupia; as we approached the shore they all made off except two Men who seemd resolved to oppose our landing. As soon as I saw this I orderd the boats to lay upon their oars in order to speake to them but this was to little purpose for neither us nor Tupia could understand one word they said. We then threw them some nails beeds &c. a shore which they took up and seem'd not ill pleased in so much that I thout that they beckon'd to us to come a shore; but in this we were mistaken, for as soon as we put the boat in they again came to oppose us upon which I fired a musquet between the two which had no other effect than to make them retire back where bundles of their darts lay, and one of them took up a stone and threw at us which caused my fireing a second Musquet load with small shott, and altho some of the shott struck the man yet it had no other effect than making him lay hold of a shield or a Target to defend himself.' *The Voyage of the Endeavour, 1768-1771*, vol. 1, *The Journal of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery*, J.C. Beaglehole, ed., 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955) 305.

Joseph Banks records the encounter in similar terms:

*19 April - 21 August 1770. That they are a very pusilanimous people we had reason to suppose from every part of their conduct in every place where we were except Sting Rays [Botany] bay, and there only the instance of the two people who opposd the Landinf of our two boats full of men for near a quarter of an hour and were not to be drove away till several times wounded with small shot . . . '. *The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks, 1768-1771*, vol. 2, J.C. Beaglehole, ed., 2 vols. (Sydney: The Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales in Association with Angus and Robertson, 1962) 54.
APPENDIX 3

Photographic Processes and the Decline of Wood Engraving at the Time of the Publication of the *Atlas* (Vertical Grey Band)