MAKING THINGS ECONOMIC

Theory and Government in New South Wales, 1788-1863

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of
The Australian National University.

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I declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the School of History at the Australian National University, is wholly my own original work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged and has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

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Cover Picture: S.T. Gill, "Squatter of N.S. Wales Monarch of more than all he Surveys 1863", in *Dr Doyle's Sketchbook* (1862-63). State Library of New South Wales.

Abstract

This thesis is a study of the invention and consolidation of a domain of knowledge and government we today denominate as the ‘economic’ in the particular context of the British colonisation of New South Wales.

Two lines of argument are pursued. The first recovers the idea of British imperialism in New South Wales as an ‘economic’ project, in which phenomena that have been typically assumed as essential to colonial development – convict work, land settlement, wool growing, migration and their impact on Aboriginal societies – came to be classified, organised and administered as distinctly economic problems. As imperial and colonial authorities increasingly appropriated the ‘constitutive metaphors’ of Ricardian political economy in their reports, inquiries and correspondence, they re-narrated these phenomena from discrete problems of state to integrated dynamics of production, distribution and wealth-accumulation. This economic project is studied in distinction from, even as it intersected with, the paradigms of democratisation, settler colonialism and legal-positivist statism with which historians have tended to frame the colony’s political and intellectual history in the first half of the nineteenth century. Its legacies, in the identities it forged and projects it legitimated, have been as enduring as the colonial constitution but less closely assessed.

The second line of argument, arising from this reading of colonial history, revises the significance of nineteenth-century political economy as an emergent political vocabulary in a nascent Australian political culture, and in English-speaking Anglophone culture more generally. In appropriating political economy as an official discourse, imperial authorities not only helped insulate the ‘economic’ as a domain of knowledge, but consolidated a new, reductive framework for interpreting, governing and debating social interaction, regulated by the imperatives of supply and demand, profits and wages.

Together, these two lines of argument are offered as a critical exercise in recovering and recognising the historical functioning of economic language in official, public and everyday speech. They provide a fresh perspective on aspects of the colonial past, and recover legacies which continue to shape our world today.

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Abbreviations

<i>Bigge, First Report</i>	“Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry into the State of the Colony of New South Wales”, <i>British Parliamentary Papers 1822</i> , House of Commons, Vol. 20, No.348.
<i>Bigge Second Report</i>	“Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry, on the Judicial Establishments of New South Wales, and Van Diemen's Land”, <i>British Parliamentary Papers 1822</i> , House of Commons, Vol. 10, No.515.
<i>Bigge, Third Report</i>	“Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry, on the State of Agriculture and Trade in the Colony of New South Wales”, <i>British Parliamentary Papers 1822</i> , House of Commons, Vol. 10, No.607.
<i>BPP</i>	British Parliamentary Papers
<i>BPD</i>	British Parliamentary Debates
<i>BT</i>	Board of Trade, Papers, National Archives, Kew
<i>CO</i>	Colonial Office, Papers, National Archives, Kew
<i>HRNSW</i>	Historical Records of New South Wales
<i>HRA</i>	Historical Records of Australia
<i>NLA</i>	National Library of Australia
<i>V&P LANSW</i>	Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales
<i>V&P LCNSW</i>	Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council of New South Wales
<i>SANSW</i>	State Archives of New South Wales
<i>SLV</i>	State Library of Victoria
<i>SMH</i>	Sydney Morning Herald
<i>Sydney Gazette</i>	Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser
<i>WN</i>	Adam Smith, <i>An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations</i> . Edited by R.H. Campbell and A.S. Skinner (Liberty Fund: Indianapolis, 1981).

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Key Office Holders

Governors of New South Wales

Captain (Admiral) Arthur Phillip, RN	Arrived 26 January 1788
Captain John Hunter, RN	11 September 1795
Captain Philip Gidley King, RN	28 September 1800
Captain (later Vice-Admiral) William Bligh, RN	13 August 1806
Colonel (later Major-General) Lachlan Macquarie	1 January 1810
Major-General Sir Thomas Brisbane	1 December 1821
Major-General (later Sir) Ralph Darling	19 December 1825
Lieutenant-General Sir Richard Bourke	3 December 1831
Lieutenant-Colonel Sir George Gipps	24 February 1838
Sir Charles Augustus Fitz-Roy,	3 August 1846
Lieutenant-General Sir William Denison	20 January 1855- 22 January 1861

Secretary of State for War and Colonies (those in office longer than six months)

Earl Bathurst	Appointed 11 June 1812
Viscount Goderich	30 April 1827
William Huskisson	3 September 1827
Sir George Murray	30 May 1828
Viscount Goderich	22 November 1830
Hon. E.G. Stanley	3 April 1833
T. Spring Rice	5 June 1834
Duke of Wellington	17 November 1834
Earl of Aberdeen	2- December 1834
Lord Glenelg	18 April 1835
Marquess of Normanby	19 February 1839
Lord John Russell	2 September 1839
Lord Stanley	3 September 1841
W.E. Gladstone	23 December 1845
Earl Grey	6 July 1846 -21 February 1852.

Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Colonies

Sir Robert Hay	1825
Sir James Stephen	1836
Herman Merivale	1848 - 1859

New South Wales Colonial Secretary

Frederick Goulburn	1 January 1821
Alexander Macleay	8 January 1826
Edward Deas Thomson	2 January 1837 – 6 June 1855

Introduction

We are too apt in questions of polity to overdo the principle of classification; to place the different phenomena of social life in distinct categories, and, having done so, to treat them as having little and but remote connexion with the phenomena in other categories. For example, it is common to make distinction in the discourse on the management of large communities, by which we consider those acts which we call “political” in a separate class from others which we call “social”, or others again we call “commercial” ...

Australian, 1842¹

IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, THE BRITISH IMPERIAL government established a new penal colony on the far side of the world to relieve its crowded hulks and begin a new direction in empire.² Less than twenty-five years after initiating this experiment, the British Parliament ordered a committee to inquire into the functioning of the colony of New South Wales. The *Report from the Select Committee on Transportation*, tabled in the House of Commons in 1812, offered a brisk description of daily life in the community of ten thousand convicts, emancipists, civil officers, and few free settlers.³ It reported on the geographical extent of settlement around Sydney Cove and Parramatta, the number of inhabitants and livestock, forms of currency in circulation, and the extent of commercial regulation. The committee worried over the easy availability of spirits, the weakness of religious feeling, the unchecked powers of the governor, and the ‘misery and vice’ caused by a disproportion between the sexes. They considered the role of government works, private assignment, and pardoning in making convicts ‘well-behaved and industrious servants’ and eventually ‘prosperous and respectable settlers’. All these considerations were tied together in the conviction that the colony’s ‘improvement in wealth, and the means of properly employing and reforming the convicts, are essential to the progress of each other’. From this perspective, the report was a distinctly late eighteenth-century document, where the analysis of wealth, commerce, civility,

¹ *Australian*, 19 February 1842, 3.

² For debates on the primary reasons for Australia’s conquest and settlement, see: Ged Martin (ed.), *The Founding of Australia: the argument about Australia’s origins* (Sydney: Hale and Ironmonger, 1978).

³ “Report from the Select Committee on Transportation”, *BPP 1812*, ii (341), 3-14.

manners, institutions, the roles of men and women, religion and morality were assembled in a single analytic frame of a totalising ‘human science’ or ‘moral philosophy’.⁴

A quarter of a century later, the imperial government conducted another inquiry into transportation to New South Wales. This 1837 report was a very different survey. ‘For the sake of brevity and clearness’, the committee’s chairman, Sir William Molesworth, divided his *Report from the Select Committee on Transportation* into seven sections concerning the law and history of the transportation system, its tendency to prevent crime, its effect on individuals under punishment, its influence on the moral state of colonial society, its ‘economical effects’, its cost, and whether it might be susceptible of improvement.⁵ Two things are notable about this approach when compared to the earlier report. First, Molesworth’s taxonomy organised his inquiry into distinct domains of analysis rather than a general description of the colony’s moral ordering. Second, his concern for ‘economical effects’ was especially novel. By this Molesworth meant something more specific than the bonds of commerce; nor was he concerned simply with questions of efficiency or cheapness, for issues of ‘cost’ were addressed in the subsequent sixth section of his report. Such ‘effects’ involved, rather, a theoretical statement that suspended the transported felon’s legal and moral status, assessing the convict instead as a factor in a system of wealth production, accumulation, and distribution. Molesworth did not wish ‘to weigh the economical advantages of Transportation against its moral evils’, but this very act of distinguishing the ‘economical’ from the ‘moral’ was significant as it enabled him to make a series of interventions and judgments unavailable to the authors of the earlier report.

The novelty of this approach was not just in presentation, but that ‘economical effects’ inferred recourse to technical principles drawn from the new ‘science’ of Ricardian political economy.

⁴ Theodore Porter, “Genres and Objects of Social Inquiry, From the Enlightenment to 1890”, in Theodore Porter and Dorothy Ross (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Social Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 13-39. As Porter notes, while there were distinct ‘genres’ in eighteenth-century human science such as travel writings that reflected distinctive discourses, these did not map neatly onto the divisions of nineteenth-century social science.

⁵ “Report of the Select Committee on Transportation”, *BPP 1837*, xxii (669).

Proceeding with the maxim ‘with an increase of capital an increase of labour is required to render the capital productive’, Molesworth made several prescriptions including replacing convict labour with government-assisted migration to help moderate rising colonial wages, while advocating the advantage of profitable ‘free’ waged labour over unprofitable ‘slave’ convict labour. In this last move, as John Hirst noted, Molesworth, through the authority of his printed report, enduringly shaped how colonial reality was understood.⁶ In the same way, if more subtly, he also helped inscribe a new vision of dividing up and acting upon the colonial world, for Molesworth’s assessment of ‘economical effects’ was a radically new way of demarcating social space, activities, and roles. Under this classification, the colony was rendered knowable in terms of its capacity to produce and accumulate wealth. By education and intellectual association, Molesworth was more likely and capable than most of asking this kind of question in the 1830s. But his approach was also prescient, placing the colony in a matrix of relationships not available to the generation before him, but which would soon make the colony and the world in which it functioned impossible to imagine otherwise.

The contrast between these two reports goes to the heart of the transformations in ideas and practices that are the subject of this thesis. This is a study of the inventive work imperial and colonial governments were doing in the first half of the nineteenth century, bringing into focus a new domain of knowledge, governance and justification that we today denominate as ‘economic’. Two lines of argument, or objectives, are pursued in what follows. The first is to recover the idea of British imperialism in colonial New South Wales as a fundamentally ‘economic’ project.⁷ By this I do not mean that material conditions determined the shape of colonialism, or that colonialism was pursued for economic ends.⁸ Instead, by reading government reports such as that of 1812 and 1837 as an

⁶ J. B. Hirst, *Convict Society and Its Enemies: A History of Early New South Wales* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1983).

⁷ As discussed below and more fully in Chapter One, this is an idea most attributable to Brian Fitzpatrick, but my notion of it is conceptually quite different.

⁸ In this sense, my focus is distinct from recent studies that have been rediscovering the economic dimensions of the ‘British world’. See, for example: John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); and Andrew Thompson and Gary Magee, *Empire and Globalisation: Network of People, Good and Capital in the British World, c1850-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

ethnographer might, asking not only what they *describe*, but what they *do*, we find that in these authoritative moments certain phenomena typically assumed as essential to colonial Australia's 'economic development' – convict work, land settlement, wool growing, migration, and their impact on Aboriginal societies – were only coming to be classified, organised, and administered as distinctly 'economic' problems.⁹ As authorities increasingly appropriated and deployed what I shall be calling the 'constitutive metaphors' of political economy in their correspondence, commissions, and reports to frame the processes of colonisation, they were also re-narrating, generalising, and instituting these processes as dynamics of production, distribution, and wealth accumulation.

In this way, this interpretation of colonial history involves a second argument, one that revises the significance of nineteenth-century political economy as an emergent, and enduring, political language in a nascent Australian political culture, and in English-speaking Anglophone culture more generally. In moments such as Molesworth's report, with its recourse to 'principles' and 'laws', a technical and axiomatic vocabulary was naturalised into imperial and colonial political discourse. This not only insulated the 'economic' as an autonomous domain of knowledge and intervention, but consolidated a new framework for interpreting and governing social interaction, regulated by the imperatives of supply and demand, and profits and wages. With its rapacious capacity to 'colonise' new objects and problems into its ambit, this vocabulary both helped to facilitate historically unprecedented levels of wealth accumulation, but also delimit political thought, speech and institutional practice within a new, reductive theoretical mode. This thesis, then, is also a critical exercise in recovering the functioning of 'theory' in everyday official and ordinary speech. These are deep resonances of the colonial past, whose legacies continue to shape our world today.

IN HIS 1951 study of the Australian monetary system, the economic historian S.J. Butlin suggested that the study of early colonial Australia was 'peculiarly fascinating' in offering insight into the

⁹ On 'historical ethnography', see: Brian Keith Axel (ed.), *From the Margins: Historical Anthropology and Its Futures* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 14.

origins and foundations of ‘an economy built up from its earliest beginnings’.¹⁰ This thesis shares in Butlin’s fascination, but the terms of investigation are fundamentally different. Where Butlin supposed an ‘economy’ to be a natural feature of human life to be ‘built’, I am proposing that the habit of demarcating, categorising, and compartmentalising things as ‘economic’ is the consequence of a series of innovations primarily carried out by governments in the early nineteenth century, as was evident in Molesworth’s report but absent only twenty-five years earlier. How their emergence was both a product of and produced their times is the focus of this thesis.

This approach seeks to offer a new interpretation of the imperial project undertaken in colonial New South Wales. Historians have tended to frame the colonial story as a transition from penal to ‘free’ society, if riddled with contradictions of dispossession, gendered democracy and anxieties of settler colonialism. In response to this dominant political-cultural perspective, and following international trends, some scholars have recently been encouraging a re-engagement with Australia’s economic past.¹¹ This has included the call for a ‘new materialism’ in Australian historiography, applying the tools of the ‘linguistic turn’ to the old domains of labour, business and economic history, so as to ‘historicise capitalism’ and open new understandings of the power relations in ‘economic life’.¹² This thesis builds on these initiatives, but rather than refurbish economic history as a sub- or inter-disciplinary exercise, I re-examine the colony’s ‘economic history’ not as a self-evident domain of reality that historians help to recover, but as a political project – contested and constructed – which operated at the intersection of theory and government. This ‘economic project’,

¹⁰ S. J. Butlin, *Foundations of the Australian Monetary System 1788-1851* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1968 [1951]), v.

¹¹ On broader trends, see: Kenneth Lipartito, “Reassembling the Economic: New Departures in Historical Materialism”, *American Historical Review* 121, no. 1 (February 2016): 101-139. The call to revitalise Australian economic history as a domain of interdisciplinary research has been led by Simon Ville and Claire Wright, “Neither a Discipline nor a Colony: Renaissance and Re-Imagination in Economic History,” *Australian Historical Studies* 48, no. 2 (April 3, 2017): 152-68. This comes in the wake of important works in Australian economic history. See, for example: Ian W. McLean, *Why Australia Prospered: The Shifting Sources of Economic Growth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Simon Ville and Glenn Withers (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of Australia* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Michael Quinlan, *The Origins of Worker Mobilisation: Australia 1788-1850* (New York: Routledge, 2017); and A. J. Millmow, *A History of Australasian Economic Thought* (London: Routledge, 2017).

¹² Hannah Forsyth and Sophie Loy-Wilson, “Seeking a New Materialism in Australian History,” *Australian Historical Studies* 48, no. 2 (April 3, 2017): 169-88.

I argue, needs be studied distinct from, even as it intersects with the paradigms of democratisation, settler colonialism, and legal-positivist utilitarian statism with which historians have typically framed the colony's political history.¹³

My central subjects of investigation – convicts, land settlement, wool growing, and migration, and their effects on Indigenous society – are those ‘strands’ (to again quote Butlin) which economic historians have traditionally considered essential to colonial Australia's ‘economic growth’ in the period before self-government. I have focused on these, however, with the somewhat different aim of historicising and denaturalising their quality as ‘economic’ phenomena. Where two decades of Australian historiography dominated by cultural and post-structural approaches have largely taken these subjects as the ‘material’ foundations on which gendering, racialising, and other semiotic systems were erected, we also need to now take into account ways in which these phenomena were themselves first constituted as ‘economic’ problems in order to understand the novelty and character

¹³ In relation to these three existing paradigms, my project most closely intersects with the last. However, rather than characterising colonial politics in terms of an all-subsuming ‘Benthamite ideology’ or barren legal-positivism, my concern is with the way in which the language of political economy reified an instrumental relationship between government, citizens, the colonised, and their environments, geared to the ends of production and accumulation. For the development of this utilitarian-statist interpretation, see: Sol Encel, “The Concept of the State in Australian Politics,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 6, no. 1 (May 1, 1960): 62-76; Hugh V. Emy, *The Politics of Australian Democracy: An Introduction to Political Science* (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1974), 339-358; Jeffrey Archer and Graham Maddox, “The Concept of ‘Politics’ in Australia,” *Politics* 11, no. 1 (1976): 7-12; Brian Galligan, “The State in Australian Political Thought,” *Politics* 19, no. 2 (1984): 82-92; Hugh Collins, “Political Ideology in Australia: The Distinctiveness of a Benthamite Society,” *Daedalus* 114, no. 1 (January 1, 1985): 147-69; Hugh Emy, “‘A Monstrous Construction’: The State and Limited Democracy in Australia,” *Politics* 26, no. 3 (1991): 561-571; and Alastair Davidson, *The Invisible State: The Formation of the Australian State* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1991). For a critique of the liberal-statist interpretation, see: Graham Maddox, “Australian Democracy and the Compound Republic,” *Pacific Affairs* 73, no. 2 (July 1, 2000): 193-207. For the latest contributions to the democratic paradigm and a review of the literature see: Sean Scalmer, “Containing Contention: A Reinterpretation of Democratic Change and Electoral Reform in the Australian Colonies,” *Australian Historical Studies* 42, no. 3 (2011): 337-56; Terry Irving and Paul Pickering, “Debate: Terry Irving and Paul Pickering,” *Labour History Review* 79, no. 2 (January 1, 2014): 227-37; and Benjamin T. Jones, *Republicanism and Responsible Government: The Shaping of Democracy in Australia and Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2014). For the most recent interpretations from the settler colonial paradigm, see: Lisa Ford, *Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia, 1788-1836* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Lisa Ford and Tim Rowse (eds.), *Between Indigenous and Settler Governance* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012); Angela Woollacott, *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies: Self-Government and Imperial Culture* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2015); and Leigh Boucher and Lynette Russell, *Settler Colonial Governance in Nineteenth-Century Victoria* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2015). For a classic statement on settler colonialism and the ‘logic of elimination’, see: Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387-409. For a critique of its limited applicability to Australia, see: Tim Rowse, “Indigenous heterogeneity,” *Australian Historical Studies* 45, no. 3 (2014): 297-310.

of the colonial project. As I argue in Chapter One, to designate these as the ‘economic conditions’ of the colonies is not to identify or hit upon a pre-given ‘material’ existence, but to follow the ways in which British authorities and colonists themselves were only beginning to possess and apply new forms of knowledge to social phenomena. This re-naming was one of the preconditions for the politics of the time, and for the political interpretations to come during the middle years of colonisation. Thus between the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788 and the penning of William Hearn’s *Plutology* in 1863, the first ‘economic’ textbook written in colonial Australia, the fundamental processes of colonisation were shifted on to an economic terrain.

One of the key strategies of this project has been to re-examine each of these ‘strands’ as discrete administrative imperial projects, initially structured by their own imperatives and questions, and recover the processes by which they were subsumed, generalised, and enacted as ‘economic’ problems. Rather than taking ‘material reality’ to be synonymous with ‘economic activity’, I ask what governable, material realities were created in the narrating of things as ‘economic’.¹⁴ The legacies of these shifts were as dramatically transformative as the democratic constitution, as political identities were transformed into the agencies of the ‘capitalist’ and ‘labourer’, investing and accumulation were sanctioned as public goods, and production and prosperity were made the justifiable ends of political projects and argument. Even if ‘Australians’ were to become generally disdainful of ‘scientific economics’, as W.K. Hancock observed in 1930, the scientific vocabulary of political economy structured their political language and identities in more ways than they were willing to realise.¹⁵ Just as we can continue to discuss Australian politics in terms of some fundamental elements established in the early nineteenth century, so we might interrogate ‘economic’ assumptions in our political culture that have their origins in the same formative period. This argument, then, raises a set of deeper questions about the nature and history of economic language.

¹⁴ It would be entirely possible, presumably, to also write a history of the consequences of naming things as ‘material’.

¹⁵ W. K. Hancock, *Australia* (London: E. Benn, 1930), 86.

IF COLONIAL HISTORY continues to matter today because of the enduring, ‘tenacious presence’ of colonial constructions in the post-imperial present, then this thesis also seeks to understand how the vocabulary of the ‘economic’ has come to structure the language and practice of government and, in turn, everyday life.¹⁶ My investigations into colonial administration began by observing what seemed to me the sudden and striking proliferation of a distinctive, technical vocabulary in a wide range of governmental publications – committee and commission inquiries and reports, governor despatches, memorandums – which, like a seam in a piece of fabric, were giving new shape to the objectives and coherence of the official outlook on the colonial world. In seeking to organise land settlement so that ‘capital and labour ... exist in proportion to the other’, or to regulate immigration so the price of ‘labour ... [is] commensurate with the profits arising from the growth of wool’, imperial and colonial authorities were deploying a novel form of ‘boundary-speech’.¹⁷ This, as an 1847 report from a colonial select committee report on immigration put it, separated ‘the economic point of view’ from the ‘moral’ and ‘political’.¹⁸ On this ‘view’, the ‘Capitalist’ and ‘Labourer’ began to feature as subjects of government, and the ‘law of supply and demand’ was assumed to be the rational framework of social interaction. By mid-century, government documents teemed with neologisms and new compounds: the ‘land fund’, the ‘labour market’, ‘average rates of wages’, the ‘economical arrangements’ of the colony and its ‘economical progress’. There was suddenly, too, a proliferation in printed numbers, statistically illustrating, measuring and objectifying these new problems of governable knowledge. Once it appeared in government and bureaucratic documents, this vocabulary was repeated in mainstream pamphlets, books, commentaries, and emigrant guides, cascading to the popular press, where it was in turn often used to calculate rival formulations that challenged government on its own terms. In finding ever-increasing deployments of this vocabulary

¹⁶ Ann Laura Stoler, *Imperial Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).

¹⁷ Simon Schaffer and Steven Shapin, *Leviathan and Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011 [1985]), 342. Schaffer and Shapin used this term, ‘boundary-speech’, described the seventeenth-century bifurcation between ‘science’ and ‘politics’.

¹⁸ “Report from Select Committee Land Sales Act”, *V&P LCNSW 1843*, 4; “Report from Select Committee on Immigration”, *V&P LCNSW 1843*, 2; “Report from the Select Committee on Immigration”, *V&P LCNSW 1847*, 3.

and in following its structuring of colonial practices and identities, what I realised was underway in these texts was the genesis, proliferation, and naturalisation of our modern economic vocabulary.

The source of this vocabulary was British political economy.¹⁹ As a distinctive discipline investigating the ‘laws’ regulating the production and distribution of wealth, political economy had emerged around 1815.²⁰ Social historians and historians of economic thought have tended to interpret the new ‘science’ as a rationalising response to the transformations wrought by industrial capitalism, as a more or less accurate ‘observation’ of radical shifts in ‘poverty and progress’, as Martin Daunton has written.²¹ Their achievement, so this standard account goes, was to develop tools for analysing the ‘capitalist economy’ just as it emerged before them, or lay the foundations of an enduring ‘free trade’ ideology.²² However, following the Foucauldian insight that every science creates its own object, historians of economic discourse have offered a very different reading of political economy.²³ As Keith Tribe has argued, political economy marked a novel discursive formation that did not *reflect*

¹⁹ This thesis offers a decidedly British story. This is justified by my focus on the imperial governance of its colonies. Nonetheless, similar developments were occurring in other parts of Europe, notably France and Germany. On the international varieties of nineteenth-century political economy, see: Emma Rothschild, in “Political Economy”, in Gareth Stedman Jones and Gregory Claeys (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 748-779.

²⁰ The period between Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* (1776) and Ricardo’s *Principles of Political Economy* (1817) is marked by a series of attempts to narrow the scope and definition of ‘political economy’, much of it worked through the teachings of Dugald Stewart. As we will see in Chapter Two, it can be argued there is little that connects Smith’s ‘system of political œconomy’ with Ricardo’s ‘principles of political economy’. On attempts at definitions, see: Stefan Collini, Donald Winch, and John Burrow, *That Noble Science of Politics: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Intellectual History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 23-61; and Biancamaria Fontana, *Rethinking the Politics of Commercial Society: The Edinburgh Review, 1803-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 79-111.

²¹ M. J. Daunton, *Progress and Poverty: An Economic and Social History of Britain, 1700-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). The notion that ‘political economy’ ‘reflects’, ‘describes’ or ‘justifies’ pre-existing social and economic conditions, specifically the emergence of capitalist social relations, has generated all kinds of dating for the emergence of the science, stretching back as far as Tudor England. See, for example: Neal Wood, *Foundations of Political Economy: Some Early Tudor Views on State and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); and David McNally, *Political Economy and the Rise of Capitalism: A Reinterpretation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

²² For example: Anthony Howe, *Free Trade and Liberal England, 1846-1946* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

²³ ‘It should be obvious that there is nothing like an economy out there, unless and until men construct such an object’. Louis Dumont, *From Mandeville to Marx: The Genesis and Triumph of Economic Ideology* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1977), 24. See also: Keith Tribe, *Land, Labour, and Economic Discourse* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1978); Ryan Walter, *A Critical History of the Economy: On the Birth of the National and International Economies* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013); Guus Dix, “Ricardo’s Discursive Demarcations: A Foucauldian Study of the Formation of the Economy as an Object of Knowledge,” *Erasmus* 7, no. 2 (2014): 1-29; and Keith Tribe, *The Economy of the Word: Language, History, and Economics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

‘economic conditions’, or a particular kind of economic argument, but innovated the semantic tools to make it possible to think of the ‘economic’ as a distinct field of knowledge. The key innovation was David Ricardo’s theorisation of a social taxonomy of ‘economic’ interests – landlord, capitalist, labourer – whereby social agents were conceived in terms of their productive function in a self-regulating system of production, accumulation and distribution, detached from any political, moral or theological condition.²⁴ This marked a major transformation in understandings of ‘economic activity’ – *oikonomia* – from a set of practices pertaining to the wise management of the individual or royal household, into an abstracted process autonomous from politics, nature, or theology: what John Stuart Mill, writing in 1848, would call ‘the economical phenomena of society’.²⁵

The sedimentation of this Ricardian language into a widening array of imperial and colonial documents reflected an iterative process of appropriation, deployment, and enactment I am calling ‘economisation’. This term is drawn from the work of the French sociologist Michel Callon, and I am applying it to the ways a range of social phenomena were coming to be re-categorised as ‘economic’.²⁶ The most striking feature of this process was its pervasiveness, as this terminology was rapidly employed to frame an ever-widening set of governable problems, and then reappropriated by a growing array of actors and groups to make themselves visible and their claims legitimate in the light of this new governmental language. A rich, sophisticated conceptual language came to permeate

²⁴ In nominating Ricardo as the point of departure, I am acquiescing to a model developed by Tribe and Walter, and which was first set out by Polanyi and Foucault. See: Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), Chapter 10; Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Routledge, 2002 [1966]), 275-86; Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-1978* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 106-7. However, it should be noted that Ricardo’s own influence on fellow British political economists has been called into question and the influence of his contemporary, the Frenchman J.B. Say, has been given far greater prominence. Needless to say, the history of the intellectual development of political economy is a far more international phenomenon than I suggest here where I confine myself to a specifically British story. Because of my imperial focus, Ricardo’s importance – above all, his importance on English language – remains valid. For a discussion on Ricardo and Say, see Tribe, *The Economy of the Word*, 22n2, 59-66.

²⁵ John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy with some of the Applications to Social Philosophy* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1909 [1848]), xxviii, 695.

²⁶ Koray Çalışkan and Michel Callon, “Economization, Part 1: Shifting Attention from the Economy towards Processes of Economization,” *Economy and Society* 38, no. 3 (August 1, 2009): 369-98; Koray Çalışkan and Michel Callon, “Economization, Part 2: A Research Programme for the Study of Markets,” *Economy and Society* 39, no. 1 (February 1, 2010): 1-32.

colonial life. As I will elaborate below, understanding this pervasiveness has also required thinking about the relationship between ‘theory’ and ‘government’ as it emerged in the nineteenth century. The critical insight, however, was that even as this language had been invented by political economists to ‘make sense’ of the social transformations in post-Napoleonic Britain, its redeployment by officials and authorities was a ‘self-making’ exercise, enacting the conditions ‘theory’ purported to describe.²⁷ That is, as politicians, commissioners, report writers and clerks inherited and appropriated this phraseology – sometimes actively, sometimes inadvertently – to frame the colonial project, they were also reifying such axioms, principles, and laws as facts of their social world; as naturalised frameworks for situating and delimiting political interests, identity and debate, around which institutions, programs, and relations were created. Political economy, while an attempt to describe a changing world, was soon bound up with reshaping the world from which it had sprung, enacting that ceaseless, looping relationship between ‘modes of *thinking* the social world and *acting* on it’.²⁸ In this process, to name something ‘economic’ was itself a political intervention.²⁹

In this sense, this study builds on a wave of recent scholarship that has tracked the ‘invention of the economy’. To date, this literature has focused on two distinct periods and processes. One cluster has recalled this as a process of discursive demarcation, whereby the ‘political’ and ‘economic’ were invented as nominally distinct domains of knowledge in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth

²⁷ Barry Sandywell, *Reflexivity and the Crisis of Western Reason: Logological Investigations* Volume One (London: Routledge, 1996), xi.

²⁸ The phrase belongs to Alain Desrosières, “How to Make Things Which Hold Together: Social Science, Statistics and the State,” in Peter Wagner, Björn Wittrock, and Richard Whitley (eds.), *Discourses on Society: The Shaping of the Social Science Disciplines* (Dordrecht: Springer, 1990), 195. The idea of ‘looping’ is drawn from Ian Hacking, “The Looping Effects of Human Kinds”, in Dan Sperber, David Premack, and Ann James Premack, *Causal Cognition: A Multidisciplinary Debate* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 351-394. Anthony Giddens has similarly described this process as the ‘double hermeneutic’, whereby the ‘second order’ concepts developed by sociological observers to describe pre-existing, meaning-laden realities can become ‘first-order’ concepts by being appropriated within social life itself. Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of a Theory of Structuration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), xxxiii, 284.

²⁹ None of this is to impute the ‘false’ assumptions and abstractions introduced by political economy, of which its leading practitioners themselves were aware from the outset: ‘No one ever dreamt of contending that the actual state of mankind in any civilized country precisely resembles those given circumstances which the science, as we have defined it, takes for it postulates’. Herman Merivale in *Edinburgh Review* 66, no. 133, Oct 1837, 82.

century.³⁰ A second cluster has given ‘the economy’ a much briefer lifespan.³¹ This scholarship dates its ‘invention’ from around the 1930s, with techniques of national income accounting that reified ‘the economy’ as a bounded, socio-technical object that could be measured by statisticians and experts and engineered by economists and governments.³²

This thesis is situated between these two bodies of scholarship. Where this literature has tended to focus on the initial invention or genealogy of economic discourse or ‘the economy’, my focus is with the consolidation and ongoing functioning of this theoretical language as an official and public vocabulary. There remains a crucial nineteenth-century story to be told as to how this language became an engrained, tacit feature of modern thought and practice. The institutionalisation of economics in university departments, its professionalisation as a form of expertise, and the twentieth-century invention of ‘the economy’ as a governable object, makes little sense without understanding the prior history of why economic-talk first came to function in political discourse: how certain social phenomena were cordoned off as ‘economic’ and with what authority. Just as historians have

³⁰ Sociologists and anthropologists have been sensitive to this process of demarcation much longer than historians. For a variety of approaches, see: Ellen Meiksins Wood, “The Separation of the Economic and the Political in Capitalism”, *New Left Review* 1/27 (May-June 1981); Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*, 34; Pierre Bourdieu, *Social Structures of the Economy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 1-7. Included in this ‘cluster’ are also the texts in n19, n21 and n22 above, and n32 below.

³¹ A key tactic of this second cluster of scholarship is to highlight (sometimes using Google ngrams) that ‘the economy’ as a specific noun with a definite article only begins to appear in written texts sometime in the 1930s. This can be mapped quite clearly for ‘the American economy’ but as Quinn Slobodian has shown, ‘the world economy’ has an earlier providence, from around 1870. Quinn Slobodian, “How to See the World Economy: Statistics, Maps, and Schumpeter’s Camera in the First Age of Globalization,” *Journal of Global History* 10, no. 2 (July 2015), 307-322. In this sense, the history of ‘the Australian economy’ is yet to be written.

³² See, for example: Hugo Radice, “The National Economy: A Keynesian Myth?” *Capital & Class* 22 (1984): 111-140; Susan Buck-Morss, “Envisioning Capital: Political Economy on Display,” *Critical Inquiry* 21, no. 2 (1995): 434-467; Timothy Mitchell, “Fixing the Economy,” *Cultural Studies* 12, no. 1 (1998): 82-101; Adam Tooze, “Imagining National Economies,” in Geoffrey Cubitt (ed.), *Imagining Nations* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 212-228; Adam Tooze, *Statistics and the German State: The Making of Modern Economic Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Alain Desrosières, “Managing the Economy: The State, The Market, and Statistics,” in Theodore Porter and Dorothy Ross (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Science*, vol. 7: *Modern Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 553-564; Daniel Breslau, “Economics Invents the Economy: Mathematics, Statistics, and Models in the Work of Irving Fisher and Wesley Mitchell,” *Theory and Society* 32, no. 3 (June 2003): 379-411; Margaret Schabas, “Constructing ‘The Economy,’” *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 39, no. 3 (Jan. 2009): 3-19; Daniel Hirschman, “Inventing the Economy: Or, How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the GDP” (PhD Thesis, University of Michigan, 2015); James R. Martin, “Experts of the World Economy: European Stabilization and the Reshaping of International Order, 1916-51” (Ph.D. Thesis, Harvard University, 2016); and Timothy E. Shenk, “Inventing the American Economy” (Ph.D. Thesis, Columbia University, 2016).

recognised objects are ‘commodified’ or ‘capitalised’, so we can trace a historical process in which quite disparate phenomena come to be classified as ‘economic’.³³

In this way, I make two correctives, or contributions, to this literature. First, I argue that we need to maintain focus on the functioning of texts in context to understand the invention and consolidation of the economic. Where numerous studies in the first cluster have told expansive socio-intellectual stories whereby the ‘economic’ was constructed out of the scientific revolution or the artistry of bookkeeping, I have followed Tribe and Ryan Walter’s disciplined focus on the semantic innovations of Ricardian political economy as my starting point. As I argue below, it is only in the textual evidence of metaphor, writing and speech that we identify the emergence of new concepts.³⁴ Second, while the second cluster’s collective unravelling of the way ‘the economy’ is made natural has performed an import act of critique, their focus on the objectified, quantifiable entity overlooks the historical neutralisation of economic speech itself. What seems in most need of historical critique in the present climate, is not economists’ depoliticising exercises of quantification, but the ways pervasive economic categories rivet the possibilities of political thought and action. In this way, this thesis seeks not to recover an intellectual object created by theorists or experts, but retraces the tying of the Gordian knot – as Bruno Latour likes to say – amongst government, knowledge and social science as

³³ On processes of commodification, see: Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). On capitalisation, see: Jonathan Levy, “Capital as Process and the History of Capitalism”, *Business History Review* 91, no. 3 (Autumn 2017): 483-510.

³⁴ On the separation of the natural from the social, see: Margaret Schabas, *The Natural Origins of Economics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). See also: Germano Maifreda, *From Oikonomia to Political Economy: Constructing Economic Knowledge from the Renaissance to the Scientific Revolution* (London: Routledge, 2016). Interestingly, Schabas’ scholarship was preceded by an earlier body of literature, focusing on a later period, which made the opposite argument that ‘economic knowledge’ was predicated on an attempt to duplicate the natural sciences. See: Philip Mirowski, *More Heat than Light: Economics as Social Physics: Physics as Nature’s Economics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Mary S. Morgan, *The History of Econometric Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and E. Roy Weintraub, *Stabilizing Dynamics: Constructing Economic Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). On merchants and discreteness, see: Till Düppe, *The Making of the Economy: A Phenomenology of Economic Science* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011). On generic differentiation, see: Mary Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). For the role of universities in consolidating economic knowledge, see: Alon Kadish and Keith Tribe (eds.), *The Market for Political Economy: The Advent of Economics in British University Culture, 1850-1905* (London: Routledge, 1993).

it was first laced together in the early nineteenth century.³⁵ To weave these elements together is to recount the tightening of a distinctive paradigm of political thinking and practice, the vast institutional assemblages and material prosperity it enabled, but also the near-invisible structures, ensconced in metaphor, that has held its speakers ‘captive’ ever since.³⁶

Colonial history is an apt site for telling this story. A number of scholars who have been historicising ‘the economy’ have already shown this discourse had unique colonial manifestations.³⁷ In British India, economic knowledge was utilised as a technology of subjection that attempted to convert peasant farming into marketable practices, and later gave form to ‘India’ as a knowable entity.³⁸ The career of economic discourse in settler colonies such as New South Wales offers a different perspective on these processes, not only as a technique for dominating the colonised, but because the scope of what could be made ‘economic’ was considerably widened by the novel complexities of settler society. Far away from the metropolitan problems of Poor Laws and Corn Laws that had first stimulated political economic inquiry, the management of convicts, land settlement, wool growing and migration were similarly relocated onto an economic calculus by colonial authorities. In this way, colonial history offers scope to study not only how this vocabulary spread to the farthest reaches of the imperial frontier, but how it brought new problems and activities into its remit. To paraphrase the insights of James Vernon and Alison Bashford and Joyce Chaplin, it

³⁵ Bruno Latour in *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 3-5.

³⁶ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*. Translated by G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974), §115: ‘A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat us it to us inexorably’. The link between language, pictures, and a captivity to ‘discourse’ has prompted my focus on metaphor in historical texts, discussed below.

³⁷ As we shall see Chapter Four, Karl Marx was in fact among the first to make critical comment on the connection between political economy and colonies, as demonstrated in his discussion of Edward Gibbon Wakefield and Western Australia. See: Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Volume One (London: Penguin, 1990), 932.

³⁸ U. Kalpagam, *Rule by Numbers: Governmentality in Colonial India* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014); Manu Goswami, *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Bhaskar Mukhopadhyay, “Taking Callon to Calcutta: Did Economist-Administrators Make Market in the Colony?” *Economy and Society* 43, no. 2 (April 3, 2014): 183-210. See also: Timothy Mitchell, *Rules of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics and Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002)

was not that British imperialism made the modern world, but engagement with ‘world’ made British forms of knowledge enduring.³⁹

THE APPROACH developed to address these two interlinked objectives is reflected in my title. ‘Making’ is now a well-worn verb in Anglophone historiography, but remains important in reminding us of the active processes by which the social world is produced. ‘Things’ may seem maddeningly vague, but is intended to capture the breadth of problems, relations and objects being ‘remade’ in New South Wales. This list included the nature of the imperial project itself, down to specific identities, programs, policies, arguments and debates, whose integration and interaction are what gave the economic its sense of autonomy, permanency and necessity. ‘Things’ is also a gesture towards J.L. Austin’s notion of doing *things* with words, that naming and classifying are performative world-creating processes, and to Foucault’s sense of way the world is ordered through the active classification of *things*.⁴⁰ To make something economic – convicts, land, wool, or migration – was to interpret and govern it as bounded and regulated by these processes and to these ends.

Making things economic in colonial New South Wales was an interactive, iterative process between ‘theory’ and ‘government’.⁴¹ By ‘theory’ – as the term was used by historical contemporaries – I mean the emergence of ‘social science’⁴² in the early nineteenth century, arising out of the various

³⁹ James Vernon, *Distant Strangers: How Britain Became Modern* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014); Alison Bashford and Joyce E. Chaplin, *The New Worlds of Thomas Robert Malthus: Rereading the Principle of Population* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016). On Australia as ‘born modern’, see: Nicholas Brown, “Born Modern: Antipodean Variations on a Theme,” *The Historical Journal* 48, no. 4 (2005): 1139-54; and Jan Kociumbas, *The Oxford History of Australia: 1770-1860, Possessions* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1992).

⁴⁰ J.L. Austin, *How to do things with words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); Foucault, *The Order of Things*.

⁴¹ The distinctly modern connection between these processes has been explored in a number of contexts. See: Mary O. Furner and Barry Supple (eds.), *The State and Economic Knowledge: The American and British Experiences* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1990); Michael J. Lacey and Mary O. Furner (eds.), *The State and Social Investigation in Britain and the United States* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1993); Dierich Rueschmeyer and Theda Skopal (eds.), *States, Social Knowledge, and the Origins of Modern Social Policies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); and Sheila Jasanoff (ed.), *States of Knowledge: the co-production of science and social order* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

⁴² Cheryl Welch has noted that before the late nineteenth century, intellectuals in Britain and France did not conceive of multiple disciplines within the social sciences, but a singular, totalising project. In Britain, as noted above, this took the dominant form of political economy. See: Cheryl Welch, “Social Science from the French Revolution to Positivism”, in Porter and Ross (eds.), *Cambridge History of Social Sciences*, 171-199.

genres of eighteenth-century moral philosophy and natural jurisprudence.⁴³ Modelling the language of the natural sciences, and energised by the *aporias* opened up by the French Revolution, these new intellectual projects invented novel ‘systems’ in search of the ‘laws’ or ‘principles’ that supposedly regulated social interaction.⁴⁴ In early nineteenth century Britain, under the influence of James Mill and Ricardo, then especially J.R. McCulloch and Nassau Senior, social science took the form of political economy, with its focus on the ‘the Nature, the Production, and the Distribution of Wealth’.⁴⁵ By ‘government’, I mean not a monolithic entity, nor the modern party, cabinets and ministerial politics coalescing at this time, but a new kind of authoritative capacity in the forms of printed reports, commissions of inquiry, select committees, data collection and official statistics published in blue books and almanacs. These new techniques of government arose as Parliament wrest power from the Crown, and the Pitt administration sought to present government as rational, responsible, and accountable in the face of ongoing charges of ‘Old Corruption’.⁴⁶ By the early Victorian era, such processes of constituting knowledge were well established and had correlates in the settler colonies. This thesis charts the unfolding of their relationship: political economy sought prestige and facility, and government by inquiry required frames of understanding to produce governable ‘knowledge’. Political economy drew its authority from government, and government its categories and interpretative frameworks from political economy. Together, theory and government made theoretical abstractions in to empirical realities.

See also: Lawrence Goldman, “Victorian Social Science: From Singular to Plural”, in M.J. Daunt (ed.), *The Organisation of Knowledge in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 87-114.

⁴³ For an overview of this distinctly eighteenth-century enterprise, ‘human science’ or the ‘science of man’, see: Christopher Fox, Roy Porter, and Robert Wolker (eds.), *Inventing Human Science: Eighteenth-century Domains* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); and Alexander Cook, Ned Curthoys, and Shino Konishi (eds.), *Representing Humanity in the Age of Enlightenment* (London: Pickering & Chatto Publishers, 2013).

⁴⁴ On the appropriation of scientific terms into economic discourse, see: Mirowski, *More Heat than Light*. On the crucial post-revolutionary context, see: Peter Wagner, “Certainty and Order, Liberty and Contingency: The Birth of Social Science as Empirical Political Philosophy”, in Johan Heilbron, Lars Magnusson, and Bjorn Wittrock (eds.), *The Rise of Social Sciences and the Formation of Modernity: Conceptual Change in Context, 1750-1850* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996), 241-263.

⁴⁵ Nassau Senior, *An Outline of the Science of Political Economy* (New York: Augustus Kelly, 1951 [1836]), 1.

⁴⁶ The historiography dealing with the report and its contexts is outlined in detail in Chapter Two.

Throughout this thesis, the relationship between theory and government registers two distinct but concurrent and overlapping processes. The first is the specific forums of economic ‘making’. The focus of this study is with neither high-level theorising, the machinations of policy debate, nor street-level politicking, but a bureaucratic middle-world that was opening up in the early nineteenth century.⁴⁷ Historians have become increasingly sensitive to the significance of this development for empire, re-characterising nineteenth-century imperialism as an exercise in information gathering and knowledge-making.⁴⁸ New South Wales was, in many ways, a product of these processes. While under the thumb of a proconsul governor, the colony was also constantly monitored by parliamentary committees on matters of finance, transportation, accounts, Aborigines, and land disposal, subject to J.T. Bigge’s Commission of Inquiry (1819-22) and the scrutiny of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commission from 1840. It was also the precocious subject of reflection by penologists, colonial reformers, and humanitarian moralisers, who sought to impress their ideas and fantasies on these inquiries at every opportunity. Colonists were exposed to the official discourse of reports, which were often republished as pamphlets or reprinted in newspapers, as were the official despatches between the Colonial Office and governors.⁴⁹ Inevitably, the colony developed its own bureaucratic systems to deal with its unique problems. In the absence of fully-elected self-governing institutions before 1856, from around 1830 the colonial Legislative Council fostered a self-governing culture by proxy,

⁴⁷ The historiography of this ‘nineteenth century revolution in government’ is now immense, however the significance of committee and commission of inquiry to this process has been largely overlooked. For a review of the literature, see: Simon Devereaux. “The Historiography of the English State during ‘the Long Eighteenth Century’: Part I – Decentralized Perspectives”. *History Compass* 7, no. 3 (May 1, 2009): 742-64.

⁴⁸ The classic study of imperialism as a knowledge-making enterprise is Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge And Kegan Paul, 1978). More recently, see: Zoë Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections, 1815-45: Patronage, The Information Revolution and Imperial Government* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005); Edward Beasley, *Empire as the Triumph of Theory: Imperialism, Information, and the Colonial Society of 1868* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005); George R. Trumbull, *An Empire of Facts: Colonial Power, Cultural Knowledge, and Islam in Algeria, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); and Tony Ballantyne, “Colonial Knowledge”, in S. E. Stockwell, (ed.), *The British Empire: Themes and Perspectives* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 117-218.

⁴⁹ ‘Private’ or secretive correspondence between colonial governors and London officials were banned in 1835 by the Colonial Office permanent under-secretary, James Stephen. Zoë Laidlaw argues this ban made governing sensitive issues in the colonies more difficult, but it also reconstituted the public quality of governor’s despatches and correspondence and its capacity to project colonial ‘common sense’. Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections*, 120-1.

staging incessant local select committees that inquired into many aspects of colonial life, which were again printed and published for popular consumption.⁵⁰

It was in these forums that the language of political economy was amplified as an official language of government. This did not go unopposed. The men of ‘system’ that Edmund Burke had touted as destroying France were now seen by some elites in Britain and her colonies as threatening to wreck Britain and empire, too, igniting a debate over whether ‘theory’ or ‘experience’ was the basis of good government.⁵¹ In one sense, then, the deployment of political economy by ‘government’ could reflect the jostling of ideas against prevailing orthodoxies, but it also increasingly operated as an informal technology of governance. Through appropriation and repetition, this vocabulary was repeated by ministers, bureaucrats, clerks, and eventually even those opposed to the ‘doctrines’ of political economy, in commissions, reports, and memorandums – each moments of authoritative publication. So while Edward Gibbon Wakefield’s theories of systematic colonisation, for example, are crucial to this context, I am less interested in the influence of individual thinkers or the triumphs of ‘ideas’ than with the spread of an economic, calculative framework.⁵² Leading proponents of ‘theory’ were often themselves politicians – including Ricardo, Francis Horner, the Lord Lauderdale and Robert Torrens in Britain, and W.C. Wentworth and Robert Lowe in the colony (and Lowe, later in Britain) – and embodied that distinctive nineteenth-century role of ‘public moralist’ identified by Stefan Collini. But my interest is less concerned with compiling an intellectual history of those figures as they reshaped the colonial world than with a historical sociology of the pre-conditions for the

⁵⁰ On the administrative novelty of New South Wales in British imperial history and the innovations in the development of the colony’s public service, see: Arthur McMartin, *Public Servants and Patronage: The Foundation and Rise of the New South Wales Public Service, 1786-1859* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1983); and Brian Fletcher, “Administrative Reform in New South Wales Under Governor Darling”, *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 38, no. 3 (September 1979): 246-262. The only study of the committees is the recent article by Kerry Mills, “Lawmakers, Select Committees and the Birth of Democracy in New South Wales, 1843-1855,” *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 14 (2012): 131-154.

⁵¹ This conflict is discussed in Chapter Two. For a recent, concise statement of this unique aspect of Victorian British political culture, see: Angus Hawkins, *Victorian Political Culture: ‘Habits of Heart and Mind’* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 5-6.

⁵² As discussed in Chapter Four, several major interpretations have in fact demoted Wakefield’s ‘influence’ on imperial policy. My intention is not to defend the importance of Wakefield’s ‘ideas’ but instead to stress the importance of his way of speaking.

emergence of this new, soon dominant rationality.⁵³ The report rather than the author is often the lead protagonist of this story.

The second process registered by ‘theory’ and ‘government’ is an iterative process of the appropriation and enactment of theoretical precepts in governmental decision, and in turn, public debate. While my focus has not been directly with processes of imperial policy-making, much of my discussion does centre on the ways the political readjustments of post-Napoleonic imperialism were reframed in terms of political economy. We repeatedly find mundane aspects of colonial administration involving a dramatic realignment upon an economic axis. This was not simply a process of imposing economic terms on colonial problems. Rather, this language was internalised and reconfigured by colonists to construct new political and social identities – such as the ‘working class’ – and to argue and justify their own ends. Debate did not represent resistance to processes of economisation, but reflected its increasing stability and permanency. In William Connolly’s terms, the ‘economic’ domain became essential because it was ‘essentially contested’.⁵⁴ In this sense, theory and government refers to the solidifying, creative process whereby theoretical propositions were made into empirical statements, so that things came to ‘exist by the way of theory’.⁵⁵

IN TESTING the idea of New South Wales as an ‘economic project’, this thesis is in conversation with a rich vein of scholarship stretching across generations. The idea originated with Brian Fitzpatrick’s study of the ‘economic utilisation of the colonies to meet of the needs of the imperial country’, with his focus on colonial tariffs, legislation, and policy that serviced British needs as it underwent industrial transformation.⁵⁶ Fitzpatrick’s interpretation has been echoed in accounts of

⁵³ Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850-1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

⁵⁴ William Connolly, *The Terms of Political Discourse* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).

⁵⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, “Social Space and Symbolic Power,” *Sociological Theory* 7, no. 1 (1989): 14-25; Pierre Bourdieu, “The Scholastic Point of View,” *Cultural Anthropology* 5, no. 4 (November 1, 1990): 380-91; Pierre Bourdieu, *On the State: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1989-1992* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), 30.

⁵⁶ Brian Fitzpatrick, *British Imperialism and Australia, 1783-1833: An Economic History of Australasia* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1939); Brian Fitzpatrick, *The British Empire in Australia: An Economic History, 1834-1939*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1941).

Australian ‘settler capitalism’.⁵⁷ Later, Craufurd Goodwin’s *Economic Inquiry in Australia* demonstrated the extent to which colonial intellectual life was widely engaged with economic arguments drawn from British and French political economy.⁵⁸ Finally, there is an expansive literature by historians of economic thought who studied nineteenth century British Empire as an exercise in ‘free trade imperialism’. They have argued that British statesmen were not opposed to empire after the American Revolution but ‘turned to the new science of political economy’, as Bernard Semmel wrote, to accelerate industrial capitalism by reorganising empire towards the twin pillars of colonisation and free trade.⁵⁹

While these interpretations have assisted in developing my story of economisation, they have also helped clarify what this study is *not* about. Unlike Fitzpatrick, my starting point has not been to account for the given ‘economic’ pressures in Britain that shaped nineteenth-century imperialism, but

⁵⁷ See, for example, Phillip McMichael, *Settlers and the Agrarian Question* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 1: ‘...the development of colonial Australia was also the process of development of the world-capitalist economy’. See also: Donald Denoon, *Settler Capitalism: The Dynamics of Dependent Development in the Southern Hemisphere* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); and Peter Beilharz and Lloyd Cox, “Review Essay: Settler Capitalism Revisited”, *Thesis Eleven* 88, no. 1 (February 1, 2007): 112-24.

⁵⁸ Craufurd D. W. Goodwin, *Economic Enquiry in Australia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1966); Craufurd D. W. Goodwin, *The Image of Australia; British Perception of the Australian Economy from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1974). For a much narrower focus on the development of a distinctive Australian economics, which only gives fleeting attention to the early nineteenth century, see: Peter D. Groenewegen and Bruce J. McFarlane, *A History of Australian Economic Thought* (London: Routledge, 1990). Goodwin’s study was a watershed, dispelling John La Nauze’s earlier dismissal that colonial Australia was almost entirely bereft of economic reflection until the time of William Hearn. J.A. La Nauze, *Political Economy in Australia: Historical Studies* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1949), 9.

⁵⁹ The seminal piece was John Gallagher and Roland Robinson, “Free Trade Imperialism”, *The Economic History Review* 6, no. 1 (1953): 1-15. For a collection of the most important articles written in their wake, see: A. G. L. Shaw (ed.), *Great Britain and the Colonies, 1815-1865* (London: Methuen, 1970). The major book length studies are Donald Winch, *Classical Political Economy and Colonies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965); Bernard Semmel, *The Rise of Free Trade Imperialism: Classical Political Economy, the Empire of Free Trade and Imperialism, 1750-1850* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970); and Roland Robinson and John Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians: the Official Mind of Imperialism* (London: Macmillan, 1981). Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill’s ‘economic’ thinking about colonies was largely overlooked by this literature (excepting Winch’s book), but this has been rectified by Philip Schofield, *Utility and Democracy: The Political Thought of Jeremy Bentham* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), Chapter Eight; and Duncan Bell, “John Stuart Mill on Colonies,” *Political Theory* 38, no. 1 (February 1, 2010): 34-64. The older literature provided a platform for a more recent reinterpretation of nineteenth-century ‘liberal’ imperial thought, but political economy has played a less significant role in these accounts. See: Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); and Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

to ask how theory rendered such problems as ‘economic’. Unlike Goodwin, who anthologised ‘economic discussion wherever it could be found’, my approach begins by recognising that different colonial archives have different epistemological capacities and authority. Finally, unlike Semmel, I am not accounting for politicians’ ‘uses’ of economic science to create policy, nor of the connections between reformers, philosophical radicals, utilitarians, and parliamentarians. As Donald Winch noted, tracing intellectual ‘influence’ on policy is always difficult to prove.⁶⁰ My focus is instead on the more or less conscious, expert and sophisticated ways theoretical categories structured how authorities ‘saw’ and ‘acted’ in relation to the colony.

Ultimately, the distinctiveness of this project is in its re-reading of a familiar archive of theoretical tracts, governmental documents and public ephemera, by emphasising the world-creating metaphors, narratives and performativity of these texts.⁶¹ First, understanding how ‘theory’ operated as a mode of ‘seeing’ the social world has meant focusing on the semantic devices that facilitate cognition: that is, metaphor.⁶² I have approached Ricardian political economy not as a set of arguments or doctrines, but as innovating a set of ‘constitutive metaphors’ that gave a new ‘grasp’ or understanding to the concepts of ‘wealth’ and ‘community’. As I argue in Chapter Two, Ricardian political economy recast wealth from a finite entity that circulates through the body politic to an entity that ‘progresses’ by accumulating over time and community from a hierarchical, patriarchal household, to a dynamic, wealth-producing entity regulated by the ‘distribution’, ‘proportion’, or ‘ratio’ of its productive agents. While scholars have come to recognise that economics is replete with metaphor, a focus on these two *constitutive* metaphors exposes the deep, almost unconscious imagery

⁶⁰ Winch, *Classical Political Economy and Colonies*, 4; Donald Winch, *Riches and Poverty: An Intellectual History of Political Economy in Britain, 1750-1834* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 199.

⁶¹ This ‘literary’ reading of economic texts and their manifestation in government documents has been informed by my readings of the ‘new economic criticism’, which applied the techniques of literary theory to economics, and vice-versa. For an overview, see: Martha Woodmansee and Mark Osteen, (eds.), *The New Economic Criticism: Studies at the Intersection of Literature and Economics* (London: Routledge, 1999).

⁶² George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). See also: Douglas Hofstadter and E. Sander, *Surfaces and Essences: Analogy as the Fuel and Fire of Thinking*, (New York: Basic Books, 2014). As Donald Schön wrote many years ago, it is not that metaphors prompt us to think, but cognition is metaphorical, the engine of our ‘process of thought’. *The Invention and Evolution of Ideas* (London: Social Science Paperbacks, 1967), 37.

which underpins the capacity to ‘think’ economically.⁶³ This focus has two advantages for this study. It has enabled me to explore how activities come to be described as ‘economic’. In this way, the reassessment of land settlement, wool growing, and migration from modalities of household administration to economic phenomena depended on how authorities conceptualised the ‘community’ that they were governing. This, in turn, has sensitised my reading to the deployment of these metaphors in governmental texts as structuring new objects of knowledge. Following James C. Scott, scholars have become accustomed to the idea that states ‘see’ and arrange populations by using various bureaucratic technologies.⁶⁴ However, ‘seeing’ in fact begins with the cognitive structuring of metaphors which can be readily found shaping the narratives of government documents and administrative practices.

Second, where metaphors enable one to ‘grasp’ a concept, narration facilitates ‘grasping together’ problems or practices, giving them a *particular kind* of coherence.⁶⁵ Since the pioneering work of Deirdre McCloskey, scholars have been sensitive to the ‘rhetoric of economics’ whereby every economic text is, to some extent, ‘an essay in persuasion’.⁶⁶ Here, I have been less interested in the stories told by political economists, than in the ‘economic narratives’ disseminated by imperial

⁶³ My account of ‘constitutive metaphors’ in political economy follow on from Arjo Klammer and Thomas C. Leonard, “So What’s an Economic Metaphor,” in Philip Mirowski (ed.), *Natural Images in Economic Thought: Markets Read in Tooth and Claw* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 20-51. Klammer and Leonard attribute the term to Richard Boyd, “Metaphor and Theory Change: What is Metaphor For?” in Andrew Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979): 356-408. Klammer and Leonard liken this process to ‘the famous gestalt figures – Wittgenstein’s duck-rabbit and the vase versus two faces in profile – what we see depends on what we already know’. For a consideration of the constitutive metaphors underpinning neoclassical economics, where the Social is framed in terms of the Natural with the Natural, in turn, framed by an analogy with nineteenth-century physics, see: Philip Mirowski, *More Heat than Light: Economics as Social Physics: Physics as Nature’s Economics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). For an example of how linguistic scholars have approached economic metaphors generally, see: Rafael Alejo, “Where does the money go? An analysis of the container metaphor in economics: The market and the economy”, *Journal of Pragmatics* 42, no. 4 (April 2010): 1137-1150.

⁶⁴ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

⁶⁵ Paul Ricœur, *Time and Narrative. Volume 1*. Translated by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), x, 41, 66-68.

⁶⁶ Deirdre N. McCloskey, *The Rhetoric of Economics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); Arjo Klammer and Robert M. Solow, *The Consequences of Economic Rhetoric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Deirdre N. McCloskey, *If You’re So Smart: The Narrative of Economic Expertise* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Deirdre N. McCloskey, *Knowledge and Persuasion in Economics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

and colonial bureaucrats, commissioners, and committee reports. In attempting to give a sense of these ‘narratives’, one of the strategies throughout this study has been to relay extended passages from reports, much as they would have been read by contemporaries. These narratives were not only textual, but increasingly made up numerically in tables, figures and graphs, which sought to ‘objectify’ and ‘hold together’ the reality of economic phenomena.⁶⁷

My reading of the narrative-making capacity of the imperial and colonial archive has depended on a specific, sociological understanding of state agents – select committee authors, commissioners, governors, bureaucrats and clerks – as possessing what Bourdieu calls ‘delegated authority’ acquired by the social fact of speaking with the recognised authority of the state.⁶⁸ Governor’s despatches were expressions of ‘common sense’, the staging of select committees involved the social construction of public problems, and bureaucratic forms and pamphlets canonised social categories and frameworks of social interaction.⁶⁹ With their ability to ‘impose officially’, these ‘authorised speakers’ narrated an economic domain into existence which, while always contestable, quickly became hegemonic.⁷⁰

Finally, these theoretical narratives of government were simultaneously ‘performative’, making the colonial world tangible and objectified, thereby necessitating and justifying new governable identities, institutions and technologies. On the one hand, it was these narratives which legitimated the invention of a whole series of experiments in public debt, pricing systems, pastoral credit, population redistribution and interventions against Indigenous peoples. On the other hand, crucially, the narratives constructed in government reports and commissions did not impose a singular ‘vision’ but contestable frameworks for interpreting and debating social interaction, which could be

⁶⁷ Alain Desrosières, *The Politics of Large Numbers: A History of Statistical Reasoning* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 9-12.

⁶⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), 116.

⁶⁹ On despatches as expressions of colonial ‘common sense’, see: Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 1-5. On this sociological function of state commissions, see: Frank Burton and Pat Carlen, *Official Discourse: On Discourse Analysis, Government Publications, Ideology and the State* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979); Adam Ashforth, “Reckoning Schemes of Legitimation: On Commissions of Inquiry as Power/Knowledge Forms,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 3, no. 1 (March 1, 1990): 1-22; and Bourdieu, *On the State*, 11.

⁷⁰ Bourdieu, *On the State*, 11.

re-appropriated to argue and justify alternative ends. As colonists came to recognise themselves in these reports, so they embodied these identities and interests – what we have come to call ‘economic interests’ – and forged rival political economies to challenge the stories told by government and elites. I have traced these re-appropriations through newspapers, books, pamphlets, emigrant guides, travel writings, and petitions. In each instance, it is the ‘public’ quality of such documents that has interested me, the building of a commonly shared world. The economic domain constituted through these process ought not to be thought of as a ‘structure’ that constrained agents, but a field of relations which was always in negotiation.⁷¹

THE ARGUMENT of this thesis unfolds over seven thematically organised chapters designed to tell colonial history as a performance of the tripartite Ricardian economic community of land, capital, and labour. Chapters One and Two examine a collection of well-known texts to stress a sequence of conceptual breaks that help to historicise the ‘economic’. Surveying two centuries of ostensibly ‘economic’ histories written in European Australia, Chapter One asks a series of questions about the stability of economic knowledge, historical causation and historiographical practice relating to colonial Australia. This exercise is carried out in two stages. The first part analyses four texts from the first half of the nineteenth century to examine their shifting idioms and illustrate the emergence of the ‘economic’ as a domain of analysis. In the second section, I re-read some major texts in Australian economic historiography, from Timothy Coghlan through to Ian McLean, to trace how twentieth- and twenty-first century historians have inherited this analytic. These works are read as stages in a process that reified the ‘economic’ as a field of historical knowledge. My purpose here is to break the dualism between subject (‘the economy’) and interpretation (‘economic history’), and clear the way to ask how economic categories and narratives used by historians were themselves implicated in the very processes they attempt to explain. The ‘economic’ is shown to be an historical artefact in need of explanation.

⁷¹ On the importance of thinking in terms of a ‘relational sociology’, see: Mustafa Emirbayer, “Manifesto for a Relational Sociology,” *American Journal of Sociology* 103, no. 2 (September 1997): 281-317.

This task of explanation begins in Chapter Two, where I examine the invention of the ‘economic’ category, trace out the emergent governmental practices that helped consolidate economic knowledge, and connect these processes to the colonial project in New South Wales. As in Chapter One, the focus is with a well-established archive. Following Tribe and Walter, and by focusing on metaphors, this emphasis enables me to highlight a series of breaks in ‘the history of economic thought’ that suggest when a discrete, economic domain of knowledge came into view. This chapter also introduces three crucial themes that underpin the analytical project of this thesis. First, examining eighteenth-century writings on agriculture, trade, and population establishes the intellectual and administrative context which corresponds to the governance of land settlement, wool growing and migration in early New South Wales. Second, an analysis of the Four Stage Theory in Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* traces the origins of the binaries of civilised/savage, and commercial-man/domestic-woman, which were inherited into Ricardian political economy. These binaries have crucial roles to play in later chapters, shaping the settler interventions against Aboriginal peoples and gendering the ‘economic’ sphere. Finally, the chapter introduces two crucial contexts for the dissemination and consolidation of economic discourse in empire: the emergence of the government report as a technique of authority, and the circumstances facing post-Napoleonic War Britain. In this sense, this chapter introduces the nineteenth-century relationship between ‘theory’ and ‘government’.

The remainder of the thesis engages a broader governmental and public archive to examine how this vocabulary ‘played out’ in New South Wales, exploring the active, overlaying, internally restive but ultimately constitutive processes of ‘economisation’. Chapter Three begins by noting the bureaucratic conditions under which New South Wales was established. Two bureaucratic problems were pre-eminent in the colony: the convict, who had to be disciplined, managed, reformed and put to work, and the Aborigine, who while occupying no central place in the original designs for the colony, was soon deemed by local authorities in need of protection and civilisation. It was in this context that the metaphors of political economy began to operate as useful technologies for colonial governance. In managing the cost of convict workers, authorities recalibrated the idea of discrete convict ‘services’ into a homogenised category of ‘labour’ that could be measured, managed, and

administered. Ultimately, this contributed to a process that normalised wage labour as the capacity of the ‘free’ man. Meanwhile, as the precepts of Scottish Enlightenment stadial theory were applied to ‘savage’ Aboriginal peoples to justify various interventions against them, the ‘Aborigine’ was constituted as the muse of economical ‘progress’. Programs initiated to affect the ‘civilisation’ of Aboriginal people in the first half of the nineteenth century, I argue, reflected colonists’ own firming belief in the idea that capital accumulation designated national progress.

Chapters Four, Five, and Six develop the core of my argument. Each of these chapters is concerned with a fundamental transition from ‘non-economic’ to ‘economic’ governance and the public debates and identities these transitions facilitated. Chapter Four charts the reconstitution of land settlement from a process of founding the morally-ordered community as expressed in practices of land granting, to a site on which dynamic economic relations and processes could be projected. This survey introduces the construction of rival political economies and interests, as land usage was highly contested, and the constitution of the ‘capitalist’ as a figure of management and self-identification. The capitalist woolgrower is then the subject of Chapter Five, in which I explore the shifting frames in which colonial pastoralism was conceived as an imperial project. This process began with the terms adopted by the Board of Trade to re-regulate trade policy after the Napoleonic Wars, which reclassified commerce from a tactic of military security to optimising ‘industry’ in which wealth-producing interests were centrally realigned. Similarly, Chapter Six charts a transition in governmental attitudes to migration as ‘population’ was reassessed from a resource of national strength to a dynamic governed by laws of supply and demand. Following the discussion of convicts in Chapter Three, I argue that this new theoretical perspective had enduring implications for the idea and government of ‘labour’. The movement of masses of free people in programs of assisted migration engendered new techniques of bureaucratic management, whose statistical analyses of wage rates and labour demand transfigured employment relations from regulating parochial familial relations into a homogenised, commodified form. This was expressed most explicitly in the formations of a new governable concept, the ‘labour market’.

The significance of enumeration in creating ‘economic narratives’ is further developed in Chapter Seven. This chapter ties together the processes discussed in previous chapters by exploring how governmental counting constituted New South Wales as a singular, integrated, economic entity. The focus here is on the shifting relationship between authority, numerical representation, and economic knowledge as it developed in techniques of colonial accounting, culminating in the establishment of the *Statistical Register* in 1857. By intersecting colonial history with the history of statistics, I explore the creation of a new, totalising concept: the ‘economical progress’ of New South Wales. By mid-century, this was becoming a major subject of political dispute, of which two alternative approaches – Free Trade and Protection – advanced rival claims to predominance. The emergence of this contest marks one endpoint of this study, reflecting a moment when ‘economical phenomena’ had been so reified and consolidated that they became the naturalised target of political contestation.

The constitution of New South Wales as an enumerable economic project raises a set of final questions about how colonisation was fed back into ‘theory’ in Britain. I conclude this chapter by examining the ways the colony began to serve as ‘evidence’ in works of mid-century British political economy – as proof of ‘principles’ – bringing full circle the looping sequence between theory and government, thinking and acting. William Hearn’s *Plutology* (1863) was one such example, a text which marks the institutionalisation of economic knowledge in nascent Australian universities. This text is of added significance, for it shifted focus from an analysis of economic classes as in the tradition of Ricardo, Mill, and Marx to the utility maximisation of individuals. It was, then, an early movement in the so-called marginal revolution, and the shift from classical to neoclassical economics. This theoretical development purified the economic as a way of knowing, but also introduced different metaphors, marking the beginnings of a new relationship between theory and government, so bringing the present study to a close.

My focus on ‘theory’ and ‘government’ inevitably obscures a number of themes commonly associated with this period of colonial history. Most significantly, the 1850s gold rush is treated only in passing in Chapter Four, where I conceive gold licences as part of a more general re-constitution

of ‘land’ as an economic resource. My approach also defies some established conventions in the intellectual history of political economy and in imperial historiography. While British historians have shown the crucial role of Anglican evangelicalism in disseminating political economic ideas in Britain, where the Church continued to maintain an authority almost equal to the state, this has seemed to me less important in the colonial context and I have contained my analysis of ‘authorised speakers’ to state actors.⁷² Even as we are now rediscovering the extent to which the British Empire was a Protestant empire, religious authority never attained the same status in the colony. Authority was invested in the governor before Bourke’s 1836 Church Act granted all denominations formal equality that demoted the privileges of the Anglican Church. To be sure, Australian clergy did propagate their own kind of political economy – ‘*Multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it*’, as J.D. Lang wrote – but this was not the main context in which political economy was established as the rational framework of official discourse.⁷³ Similarly, I have also mostly excluded an analysis of colonial equivalents of the British Romantic critique of political economy. Sydney was not without its critics of the ‘worship of mammon’. My focus, rather, has been with the growing pervasiveness of ‘economic’ language. If such omissions seem like oversights, I hope that they will be considered as necessary to do full justice to a major and under-appreciated change in the intellectual world of New South Wales and imperial Britain over a crucial period of seventy years.

AS THE EPIGRAPH at the beginning of this Introduction indicates, contemporaries were acutely aware of the intellectual world being erected around them. It was discussed as readily in Sydney’s newspapers as in European salons and British coffee houses, political clubs, and corresponding societies. For some colonists, this new ‘principle of classification’ that fenced off the ‘political’ from the ‘social’ and the ‘commercial’, by which the *Australian* meant the ‘sphere of action’ that harnessed

⁷² Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1785-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986); Anthony Michael C. Waterman, *Revolution, Economics, and Religion: Christian Political Economy, 1798-1833* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁷³ The theme of colonial Anglican social theory has been well documented in: Michael Gladwin, *Anglican Clergy in Australia, 1788-1850: Building a British World* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015), 129-52.

‘the resources of colonial wealth’, was a cause of claustrophobia. For others, it was immensely enabling. For all, it was highly novel. The aim of this thesis is to recover this novelty, and the consequences of such theoretical imagining. Rediscovering this ‘newness’ is not simply a case of correcting slippery anachronisms, but an effort to disabuse ourselves from what Roberto Unger calls ‘necessitarian thinking’, of which economic discourse has established an unrivalled claim.⁷⁴ History as it is conducted here is a critical engagement, an exercise in ‘unforgetting’.

⁷⁴ Roberto Mangabeira Unger, *False Necessity: Anti-Necessitarian Social Theory in the Service of Radical Democracy* (London: Verso, 2001).

(1)

Between History and Historiography: The ‘economic’ in Australian historical thought

The history of Australia is largely economic history.¹

D.B. Copland

RECENT EFFORTS BY SCHOLARS TO HISTORICISE THE ECONOMY HAVE, broadly speaking, sought to correct two tendencies they consider as characterising mainstream histories of economic thought. The first is to insist that the ‘economic’ or ‘the economy’ are not natural or self-evident domains of human existence, which exist regardless of whether they are written about or reflected upon, but the consequence of specific intellectual projects whose invention can be empirically demonstrated. The second, as a corollary, is that the history of economic thought, or ‘economic science’, should not then be read as increasingly accurate attempts at capturing or explaining a pre-given referent, but as actively constituting its subject matter.² This thesis begins with

¹ *Argus*, 10 January 1931, 6.

² These two ‘erroneous tendencies’ have been usefully identified as ‘naturalism’ and ‘processionalism’ respectively. See: Emma Rothschild, *Economic Sentiments: Adam Smith, Condorcet, and the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 40-1; Margaret Schabas, *The Natural Origins of Economics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 9; and Ryan Walter, *A Critical History of the Economy: On the Birth of the National and International Economies* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 2. Although he did not use these terms, Keith Tribe first alerted us to these tendencies most forcefully in *Land, Labour, and Economic Discourse* (London; Boston: Routledge & K. Paul, 1978), 5-23. On the ‘processionalist’ view, Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* (1776) is typically treated a watershed in the history of economic thought. An entire sub-field has attempted to map the road to Smith’s triumph. See, for example: Ronald L. Meek, *Precursors of Adam Smith* (London: Dent, 1973); Barry Gordon, *Economic Analysis before Adam Smith: Hesiod to Lessius* (London: Macmillan, 1975); T. W. Hutchison, *Before Adam Smith: The Emergence of Political Economy, 1662-1776* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1988); and Pierre Force, *Self-Interest before Adam Smith: A Genealogy of Economic Science*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003). As with writing the history of any science, this produces a double history where one is a sanctioned history of the contributions to the progress of the science, and the other, a peripheral history of that which has been discarded. This is to say nothing of Smith’s disputable contributions to ‘economic’ knowledge. For a critique: Tribe, *Land, Labour, and Economic Discourse*, 20-21.

a commitment to this agenda. The task of this chapter is to set out the context for this inquiry by first engaging with Australian economic historiography and the ways in which registers of the ‘economic’ have generated distinct political contestation over how ‘Australia’ should be understood, past and present. Through a critical reading of historiography, I demonstrate that the ‘economic’ is a category in need of its own history in the Australian context.

Economic and labour history have long been strengths of Australian historiography. As Copland’s epigraph suggests, since the early twentieth century economic matters have been seen as the essential processes of the European Australian story. This chapter seeks to destabilise this perspective in two steps. First, it argues that early nineteenth-century writings on ostensibly economic matters such as land, population, trade, and agriculture were not initially conceived as distinctly ‘economic’ problems by colonial authors, who made no analytic distinction between ‘state’ and ‘economy’ as separate fields of knowledge. Only by the mid nineteenth century had this distinction appeared in Australian writing. The second steps is to note how by the early twentieth century, the bifurcation (or tension) between ‘state’ and ‘economy’ had become essential to the writing of Australian history, establishing the necessary analytic divisions for writing Australian economic history, but also generating enduring conflicts over what the ‘economic’ encompassed.

This chapter is divided into two sections, analysing a series of texts to assess their shifting treatment of the ‘economic’ as an analytic device. The first section analyses four texts from the first half of the nineteenth century which historians have retrospectively designated as economic writings, concerned with ostensibly self-evident economic phenomena such as land, labour, wool growing, trade, commerce, money, agriculture, and migration. These texts are David Dickenson Mann’s 1811 *Present Picture of New South Wales*, William Charles Wentworth’s 1819 *A Statistical, Historical and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales*, John Dunmore Lang’s 1834, 1837, and 1852 editions of *A Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales*, and Charles St. Julian and Edward Silvester’s 1853 *The Productions, Industry and Resources of New South Wales*. In these four texts we can trace the terms in which an economic domain emerged by mid-century and the purposes

it served. As such, these texts are read as literary artefacts, concerned not with what realities they ‘reflect’, but the knowledge that they ‘constitute’.

In the second section, I re-read some major texts in Australian economic historiography, beginning with Timothy Coghlan’s writings through to Ian McLean’s recent *Why Australian Prospered*, tracing the ways twentieth- and twenty-first-century historians inherited this analytic perspective. The major ‘schools’ of Australian economic historiography are well known, stretching from Shann’s and Fitzpatrick’s literary narratives, the maturing, post-war focus on quantification and growth, heterodox Marxist and feminist approaches, and more recent interest in institutions and international comparison.³ These works are read not as attempts to more or less accurately characterise the ‘Australian economy’, but stages in a process that reified the ‘economic’ as a field of historical knowledge and as constituting a distinctive synthesis of Australian political economy. My purpose is to break out of the circular relationship between subject (‘the economy’) and interpretation (‘economic history’), and to instead show the ‘economic’ as an historical and historiographical artefact itself in need of explanation.

This chapter serves two further objectives. First, by highlighting key debates among economic historians, I offer a description of some major historical events in the colonial period which will provide a context for my account of convict work, land settlement, wool growing, migration, and statistics in later chapters. Second, the chapter will establish the position of my own approach in relation to this literature. There has been a preoccupation in the field with evaluating the terms in which the ‘economic’ and the ‘state’ are to be seen as analytically and ontologically distinct, even as it has been continuously debated how this relationship should be understood.⁴ My approach is to see

³ As recently mapped out by Christopher Lloyd, “Analytical frameworks of Australia’s economic history”, in Simon Ville and Glenn Withers, (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of Australia* (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 52-69.

⁴ In some respects, the relationship between state and economy has been described as exceptional in the Australian case. Concepts such as ‘state socialism’, ‘colonial governmentalism’ or ‘colonial socialism’ attempt to account for a situation where the state was responsible for all economic development in the new society. For a discussion, see: Sol Encel, *Equality and Authority in Australia: A Study of Class, Status and Power in Australia* (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1970), 62.

the ‘economic’ as a discursive practice, co-produced by intersecting processes of theory and government.

Writing the ‘economic’ into nineteenth-century Australian history

As will be elaborated upon in the next chapter, Ricardian political economy demarcated an autonomous economic domain of inquiry by introducing a novel conception of ‘community’ as a wealth-accumulating entity regulated by the distribution of landlords, capitalists and labourers, and conceived as analytically distinct from the realm of politics, morality, or nature. Only under this ‘discursive formation’ did categories such as land, labour, capital, exchange, and money become ‘economic’ categories, and agriculture, trade and production come to be conceived as economic phenomena. Using this Ricardian formulation as a model, this section re-reads the texts by Mann, Wentworth, Lang, and St. Julian and Silvester to historicise the emergence of the ‘economic’ as a domain of knowledge in the colonial context. My focus is with each authors’ shifting treatment of community and wealth: Mann’s idea of the colony as a hierarchical household governed by the munificent governor; Wentworth’s construction of colonies as polities whose wealth is guaranteed by free constitutions; Lang’s understanding of empire as optimally distributing capital and labour between metropole and colonies; and St. Julian and Silvester narrower focus on colonial ‘industry’ as a self-regulating dynamic of production and accumulation. Each of these progressively track the possibility of ‘things’ being classified as ‘economic’ in Australian colonial thought.

Mann’s The Present Picture of New South Wales (1811)

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, New South Wales had been established as a literary topic by explorers, metropolitan savants, pamphleteers, and early participants in the colonial project. These constitutive works included accounts of voyages and settlement by the former Governor Phillip, officer Watkin Tench, and navigator John Turnall, as well as descriptions of the colony by Governor

Hunter and Lieutenant-Governor David Collins.⁵ These works, styled as ‘accounts’ or ‘narratives’, were descriptive, usually organised by a chronology or presented as a diary, but nonetheless reflected the extent to which New South Wales was inscribed in a range of metropolitan as well as colonial discussions. If the genre had little explicit interest in theoretical questions, it was still infused with contemporary assumptions. Observations of Indigenous peoples, for example, were clearly influenced by Scottish Enlightenment stadial theory and accounts of human development.⁶ Such works were concerned with ‘economic’ matters only insofar as ‘economy’ was understood as prudent management of the individual or communal household. Collins, for example, used the term the most of these texts under discussion, deploying ‘economy’ in six instances to refer to the discipline of an individual settler or convict in organising their private affairs.⁷

D. D. Mann’s *The Present Picture of New South Wales* represents a break with these earlier works and the emergence of a new genre of Australian colonial writing. It spanned a longer period than earlier texts and was organised not just as a journal, but combined commentary and advocacy to boost immigration, anticipating a genre that characterised popular imperial writings for the next half century.⁸ While historians have dismissed Mann’s book as simply rehearsing arguments made in an earlier pamphlet by John Hunter to clear the former governor’s name over expenses, its breadth of discussion and reflection offers one of the earliest attempts at conceptualising the colonial experience

⁵ Arthur Phillip, *The Voyage of Governor Phillip to Botany Bay : With an Account of the Establishment of the Colonies of Port Jackson & Norfolk Island, Compiled from Authentic Papers Which Have Been Obtained from the Several Departments*. (London: Printed for John Stockdale, 1789); Watkin Tench, *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany-Bay: With an Account of New South Wales, Its Productions, Inhabitants, &c.* (London: Printed for J. Debrett, 1789); John Turnbull, *A Voyage Round the World in the Years 1800, 1801, 1802, 1803, and 1804: In Which the Author Visited the Principal Islands in the Pacific Ocean, and the English Settlements of Port Jackson and Norfolk Island* (London: Printed for Richard Phillips by T. Gillet, 1805); Watkin Tench, *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson: In New South Wales, Including an Accurate Description of the Situation of the Colony; of the Natives; and of Its Natural Productions: Taken on the Spot* (London: Sold by G Nicol; and J. Sewell, 1793); John Hunter, *An Historical Journal of the Transactions at Port Jackson, and Norfolk Island* (London: Printed for John Stockdale, 1793); David Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales: With Remarks on the Dispositions, Customs, Manners, &c. of the Native Inhabitants of That Country* (London: Printed for T. Cadell Jun. and W. Davies, 1798).

⁶ This will be discussed in more depth in Chapter Three of this thesis.

⁷ See: Collins, *Account*, Chapters 3, 10, 14, and 30.

⁸ On the history of this ‘booster’ literature, see: Robert Grant, *Representations of British Emigration, Colonisation, and Settlement: Imagining Empire, 1800-1860* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

in argumentative form, making it a useful starting point for this analysis.⁹ Written by an ex-convict-turned-clerk who was deeply enmeshed in system of patronage within the colony, *The Present Picture of New South Wales* was published while the author was in London giving evidence at the court martial of one of his mentors, Colonel George Johnston. Mann dedicated his book to Hunter, whose ‘liberal and enlightened measures’ had ‘consolidated the happiness, and increased the security of the colony’.¹⁰ This focus on Hunter, celebrating his personal achievements and then offering advice to future governments, underpins the discursive unity of Mann’s analysis. Hunter is positioned as a figure of paternal munificence and security through which all questions of prosperity and communal well-being are regulated. In this regard, Mann is not analysing a self-regulating community of wealth production and distribution, but the happiness and security of the colony as made intelligible in relation to the governor’s authority.

Mann’s book is divided into four chapters, beginning with a narrative description of the colony before moving to analytical commentary, designed to advise future governors. The early years, Mann recalled, were encumbered by ‘numberless obstructions’, including ‘disputes with the natives’, occasional food shortages, remoteness from Europe and disorder among the convicts. The ‘welfare’ of the population was only secured under Hunter’s administration, which Mann indexes by the considerable rise in livestock and cultivated acreage between 1795 and 1800. That ‘the state of the settlement was abundantly more prosperous’ during this period was entirely attributable to the ‘humanity and condescension’, and the ‘cheerful vivacity and private worth’ of Governor Hunter.¹¹

Mann envisaged the colony might eventually ‘be made [among] the seats of new empires’.¹² To assist in that progress, he offered advice he thought essential to the ‘political philosopher’

⁹ For a discussion on the background of the text, see: Brian Fletcher, “Introduction”, in D.D. Mann, *The Present Picture of New South Wales* (Sydney: John Ferguson, 1979). Little is known about Mann. He had been transported on a commuted death sentence in 1798, and worked mostly as a clerk before and after his absolute pardon in 1802. He returned to England in 1809 where he wrote and published his book. See: Vivienne Parsons, ‘Mann, David Dickenson (1775-1811)’ in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 2, (Carlton: Melbourne University Press), 1967. The pamphlet in question was: John Hunter, *Governor Hunter's remarks on the causes of the colonial expense of the establishment of New South Wales &c: hints for the reduction of such expense and for reforming the prevailing abuses* (London: Printed for S. Gosnell, 1802).

¹⁰ D.D. Mann, *The Present Picture of New South Wales* (London: John Booth, 1811), iv.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹² D.D. Mann, *The Present Picture of New South Wales*, 36.

regarding the management of agriculture, prices of provisions and rations, trade and manufacture, population, natives, climate, natural history, religion, morals, amusements, military force, and buildings. These topics did not constitute an integrated domain of activity, however, but itemised objects for the governor's attention or the philosopher's rumination. Mann presumed no system of production, nor any preference for the accumulation of wealth, despite the widespread reputation of Smith's *Wealth of Nations* by this time. Under agriculture, Mann simply enumerated the extent of land cultivated and livestock owned, while under trade and manufactures he described the goods produced in the colony with a statement on their quality. As such, Mann analysed New South Wales in terms akin to the seventeenth-century political arithmetician by disaggregating, enumerating, and assessing the colony's 'strength' in order to advise the munificent governor.

Mann's final chapter offered 'Hints for the Improvement of the Colony'. The measure of this 'improvement' was political autonomy by way of fiscal independence from Britain and overall colonial self-sufficiency. Colonial agriculture was at the foundation of this analysis. Considering the 'nature and fertility of the soil', but also taking into account the struggle to raise consistently sufficient crops by 1810, Mann speculated that an 'unnatural check' had impeded 'the ordinary course of proceedings'. Again, he identified such a 'check' not according to any systematic principles, but with reference to corruptions of household organisation and governance. These corruptions included the kinds of work in which convicts had been employed, the excessive number of dependent orphan children, the cost of dependent settlements like Norfolk Island, the monopoly of trade by officers, and the officers quitting public service to become private dealers. Moreover, Mann did not conceive that removing these checks would enact 'improvement', but that a judicious and wise leader must orchestrate such an outcome. Agriculture would flourish not in response to an 'invisible hand' but patriarchal wisdom:

To facilitate the rise of New South Wales to a state of consequence and independence, its interests must be entrusted to a governor who has no private or mercenary views, and will seek after nothing but the welfare of the colony; who will thoroughly support the trust and honour reposed in him, as the

representative of our most gracious Sovereign; who will not treat, nor suffer others to treat, the officers serving under him with indignity; who will not study the rapid rise of one man, and the sudden downfall of another, but will administer, and cause justice to be administered impartially to all descriptions of persons, and only shew his favour to those whose conduct is such as to merit his distinguished notice. Under such a man, the industrious settlers should receive the most liberal encouragement to induce them to pay every attention to the cultivation of their lands and to the rearing of stock.¹³

Mann's text is best recognised as an example of 'political œconomy', an eighteenth-century genre of governmental counsel that treated trade, agriculture, and population as objects for wise administration by a statesman or sovereign.¹⁴ In this way, Mann advised keeping the government store open for grain trade rather than seek seasonal tenders. This was not to theorise enhancing production and accumulation, but for the practical problems of security against floods, enabling better distribution to regions with shortages, and to provide a 'very desirable *depot* and place of *rendezvous*' during time of war in the south seas or in India.¹⁵

Some of Mann's advice does appear to reflect modern economic calculation. For example, he suggested government farming should be wound back and international trade encouraged by curtailing the privileges of the East India Company. Trading restrictions not only deterred foreign ships that had once 'supplied the colony with articles of almost every description', but diluted the energies of the settler who 'calculates' there is no 'vent' for 'his time and toil' and therefore has no 'stimulus to labour'.¹⁶ But while these themes reflect concepts of enhancing productivity and incentive, what is primarily being assessed is not the colony's capacity to accumulate wealth but the governor's tasks in ensuring welfare and security. Although trade is clearly important central to these improvements, it is treated in a passage that also discusses building a post office, better clothing of convicts, appointing gentleman of 'small fortunes' as justices of the peace to assist the governor, an

¹³ Mann, *Present Picture*, 75.

¹⁴ This concept is elaborated in Chapter Two.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 76.

increase in clergymen, and alterations to the judicial code.¹⁷ For Mann, these constitute measures that the wise governor must consider in just household administration.

Wentworth's Statistical, Historical, and Political Description of New South Wales (1819)

Similar themes are developed in Wentworth's *Statistical, Historical and Political Description*. Published five years after Mann's, Wentworth's was the first book by a 'native-born', European Australian, and a text with a firm place in the colonial literary canon.¹⁸ Wentworth's intellectual debts clearly lay with Adam Smith. He explicitly identified his study as one of 'political economy', although admitted to having 'developed no new principle'.¹⁹ We need, however, to be cautious in recognising what Wentworth meant by 'political economy', which was much closer to Smith's 'science of the legislator' than Ricardo's analysis of 'laws' which 'regulate' the 'distribution' of wealth among landlords, capitalists and labourers.

As will be elaborated upon in Chapter Two, Smith's major analytical achievement in *The Wealth of Nations* was to separate analyses of state 'strength' from analyses of state 'wealth'.²⁰ These had hitherto been analytically inseparable, treated as a problem of 'security' and assessed through the figure of a sovereign ruler, just as Mann treated Governor Hunter. Where Mann had assumed independence and security to be the proper objects of analysis, Wentworth, by applying Smith's 'system of natural liberty' to colonial circumstances, had in view a distinct analysis of the 'progress' of colonial wealth, untethered from questions of security. Yet this analysis was appended to a broader constitutional argument. For Wentworth, as for Smith, the arrangement of free constitutions underpinned wealth accumulation. Even as wealth and strength were analytically separated, wealth was not assessed as having its own dynamics or 'laws', but as ultimately regulated by the constitution

¹⁷ Ibid., 83-97.

¹⁸ Wentworth's text has been described as the foundation of Australian historiography, where 'Australia' became a topic of historical reflection. See: Mark Hutchinson, "W. C. Wentworth and the sources of Australian historiography", *JRAHS* 77, no. 4 (April 1992): 63-85.

¹⁹ W. C. Wentworth, *A Statistical, Historical, and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales and Its Dependent Settlements in Van Diemen's Land* (Adelaide: Griffin Press, 1978 [1819]).

²⁰ This was a crucial insight of Walter in *A Critical History of the Economy*, 67-77.

of the polity. It is an analysis not of the relation between economic agents, but of the advantages of liberating the activities of citizens.

The first thing to note about Wentworth's book is the title. Wentworth referred to his work as a 'statistical description', but it is mostly bereft of 'statistics' as we understand the term today as involving numerical tables, graphs, and charts.²¹ The English words 'statistics' and 'statistical' are derived from an eighteenth-century German neologism, *statistik*. This term originally expressed, a synthetic, comprehensive exposition of a 'state' (state-istics), that described its climate, natural resources, population, laws, customs, and political system. German 'statistics' did not originally have any necessary relation to the numerical presentation of information, distinguishing it from English 'political arithmetic', nor did it represent a distinct branch of knowledge. Rather, it offered a totalising account under the most general classificatory framework.²² The word 'statistic' was imported into English by John Sinclair for his monumental twenty-one volume *A Statistical Account of Scotland* (1791-99), which compiled a huge dossier from standard questionnaires distributed to parish clergymen. Wentworth's was only one example of an attempt to emulate Sinclair. Others included George Barnes' 1811 *A Statistical Account of Ireland* and Robert Gourlay's 1820 *Statistical Account of Upper Canada*. Such works did not assess a differentiated 'economy' but the overall state of a country. The 'principles' Wentworth examined were not economic laws to promote economic colonisation as Edward Gibbon Wakefield later popularised, but constitutional maxims that 'shall eventually occasion an alteration of polity'.²³

²¹ Includes a table of wages paid for various tasks (106-7), general statement of land in cultivation (158), year-on-year profit for sheep farming (412-414), fees and duties in various offices (440-450).

²² Theodore M. Porter, *The Rise of Statistical Thinking, 1820-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 19-21; Alain Desrosières, *The Politics of Large Numbers: A History of Statistical Reasoning* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 19-21; Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 308. As we shall see in the following chapter and again in Chapter Seven, only in the 1820s with J.R. McCulloch's new taxonomy of knowledge were 'politics', 'political economy', and 'statistics' definitively teased apart from each other.

²³ Emphasis mine. Wentworth, *Statistical*, vii. The different sections of his work are titled: Part I – Statistical Account of the Settlements in New Holland and Statistical Account of the Settlements in Van Diemen's Land, Part II – Operation of the existing System of Government in the Colony for the last fifteen Years, Part III – Various Alterations Suggested in The Present Policy of the Colony, and Part IV – Various Changes proposed in the System of Government.

By framing the colonial experience in terms of Smith's 'system of natural liberty', Wentworth posited liberal constitutional arrangements as necessary to 'progress towards prosperity and independence'. For Wentworth, the colony exemplified the havoc wreaked when governments were not organised to enable citizens 'to use freely the natural productions of their country.'²⁴ Wentworth assumed that the causes that retard 'progress and prosperity' were 'the same as have been attended with similar effects in all ages.' Meanwhile, 'Decadence, poverty, wretchedness, and vice' were the hallmarks of 'bad governments', just as 'prosperity, wealth, happiness and virtue have been of good ones'. Rome, Persia, and Greece all enjoyed the latter before suffering the former. In contrast, it was to her 'superior polity alone' that Britain possessed 'a dominion, unparalleled in the history of the world.'²⁵ The same causes that 'engulf vast empires', Wentworth contended, 'impede the progress of smaller communities, whether they be kingdoms, states, or colonies.'²⁶ Polity and wealth are inseparable in this frame of analysis.

Accordingly, it is New South Wales' status as the only colony of 'Englishmen' without a 'free government' that explains why it has 'not realised ... its capabilities'.²⁷ Rule by governors only 'engender tyranny'.²⁸ This was clearly evident under a governor like the disposed Bligh.²⁹ But it is also the case under Macquarie, who despite his 'prudence and discretion', could not 'completely benefit the colony' because the imperial state committed 'terrible excesses' preventing measures of 'the highest urgency ... to the welfare of the colony'. Here, Wentworth was referring specifically to London's refusal to allow the building of a distillery to encourage surplus grain production.³⁰ Where Mann saw a sovereign orchestrating communal prosperity, Wentworth saw prosperity only guaranteed by constitutional forms that would foster entrepreneurial enterprise.

²⁴ Ibid., 251.

²⁵ Ibid., 237; 159, 161.

²⁶ Ibid., 164.

²⁷ Ibid., 164.

²⁸ Ibid., 173.

²⁹ Ibid., 170.

³⁰ Wentworth, *Statistical*, 176-77: 'Among these [injuries] the failure of Governor Macquarie's attempt to procure the sanction of his majesty's ministers for the erection of distilleries, is perhaps the mostly justly to be deplored'.

It might be argued that the differences between Mann and Wentworth ‘reflected’ their differing political programs and allegiances. But our emphasis here is simply to recover the semantic and rhetorical tools at hand to each author, rather than their ‘ideological’ position. In both cases, neither language allowed for an ‘economic’ analysis to be advanced. The major portion of Wentworth’s analysis was a critique of the failure of the colony to develop its agriculture. This diagnosis was mapped neatly on to Smith’s theory of a hierarchy of capital employments. This theory ranked the four stages of production by the amount of labour each employed, and, accordingly, the respective contribution to a nation’s annual produce, with raw material extraction (especially agriculture) the most important, followed by manufacture, transportation, and retailing. Countries that could direct the most labour into agriculture, said Smith, would advance in wealth most rapidly. There was thus a ‘natural’ path to capital employment and wealth accumulation. The progress of American colonies were for Smith the archetype, where most labour was directed to agriculture while leaving manufactures undeveloped.³¹ Wentworth feared New South Wales was drifting from this path. Ever since the colony experienced a bumper crop in 1804, exceeding the grain required for local consumption, the colony had ‘continued stationary’ as the ‘natural and inevitable result of a want of market’ for its agricultural productions.³² With no profitable outlet for surplus grain production, colonists had prematurely sought other fields of employment, including rearing cattle, shop keeping, and whaling.³³ The most disastrous pursuit was the ‘unnatural’ establishment of manufactories in Sydney, particularly cloth and hats.³⁴ Here, Wentworth explicitly echoed Smith: ‘I say unnatural because in the common course of things, the origin of such establishments ought to be coeval only with an entire occupation of the soil and a redundancy of population’. Wentworth pointed to the West Indies, Canada, and above all the United States as places where ‘manufactures have been altogether

³¹ WN, II.v.1-37 (I, 360-75).

³² Wentworth, *Statistical*, n177, 179.

³³ Ibid., 180-4.

³⁴ Wentworth, *Statistical*, 190, 382.

neglected' and agriculture promoted in every possible manner', as exemplifying the 'system which ought have been pursued' in a 'new' country like New South Wales.³⁵

All this was recited to mobilise Wentworth's broader constitutional argument. The only 'remedy for the disease of the colony', he argued, was to promote the growth of exportable, agricultural commodities.³⁶ Wentworth did note there were a number of avenues to pursue, including growing tobacco, grape vines, or olive oil, as well as abolishing the privileges of the East India Company.³⁷ But he was most fixated on distilleries as a remedy to agricultural stagnation as it enabled him to illustrate his central argument that commerce and agricultural well-being were ultimately expressions of constitutional arrangements.³⁸ While the colonists themselves had identified a ready solution to create an immediate if somewhat 'artificial' market for their grain in the distillery, by rejecting Macquarie's proposals, the tyrannous excess of the imperial government had stunted colonial development.³⁹ The point was not that colonists lacked incentive to increase agricultural output, but that such incentives were absent because the local government had been disabled from acting in its own best interest.

Wentworth reinforced this constitutional claim by also denying that geographical conditions or climate could be blamed for stagnating agriculture. 'No soil is so barren, no climate so forbidding, as not to present facilities more or less favourable for the absorption of capital, and the extension of industry,' he postulated. 'It is to the impolicy of the government, and not to the sterility of the country, that this retrogradation [sic] is to be attributed.' Only 'a local legislature, properly constituted' can 'inspire into capitalists that confidence which is essential to the free unimpeded extension of industry,

³⁵ Ibid., 190-1.

³⁶ Ibid., 192-3.

³⁷ Ibid., 299-320.

³⁸ Ibid., 255.

³⁹ There is a long history of such proposals. See: Memorial Fitzmaurice to King, Enclosure, King to Sullivan August 14 1804, *HRA* 1:5, 128; King to Camden, 15 March, 1806, *HRA* 1:5, 642; Bligh to Windham, 31 October 1807, *HRA* 1:6, 160; *Report from the Select Committee on Transportation*, *BPP* 1812 ii (341), 5-6. For the protracted debate between Macquarie and Liverpool, and then Macquarie and Bathurst, see: Macquarie to Liverpool, 17 November 1812, *HRA* 1:7, 593; Macquarie to Bathurst, 28 June 1813, *HRA* 1:7, 773; Macquarie to Bathurst, 7 August 1813, *HRA* 1:8, 58; Macquarie to Bathurst, 27 August 1813, *HRA* 1:8, 80; Macquarie to Bathurst, 28 April 1814, *HRA* 1:8, 151; Macquarie to Bathurst, 7 Oct, 1814, *HRA* 1:8, 308-9. The suggestion for a distillery appears to have been made to Macquarie in Plummer to Macquarie, 4 May 1809 (written from Westminster), *HRA* 1:7, 201-2.

or ... provide an instant relief for those growing wants which spring out of the progress of advancement.’⁴⁰

While the ‘industry’ of man required a ‘directing intelligence’, Wentworth identified this not with the munificent governor, as Mann did, but the genius of free constitutions.⁴¹ The constitutional changes Wentworth proposed included representative institutions by a property franchise, reforming courts, protecting the ‘rights’ of emancipated convicts, a colonial secretary, and trial by jury. The extension of agricultural production and markets, he argued, depended on establishing these free institutions. In *Descriptions*, wealth and constitutional freedom were interdependent. Increased agricultural production would support an enlarged population, and an enlarged population was necessary for the functioning of free institutions, so free institutions would encourage increased agricultural production, further enlarging population. Ultimately, wealth was not understood as the result of self-regulating dynamics of production, but determined by the constitutional organisation of the polity.

Lang’s An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales (1834)

A distinctive ‘economic analysis’ began to emerge in the Reverend John Dunmore Lang’s similarly-titled work, published fifteen years after Wentworth and running to further editions in 1837, 1852, and 1875.⁴² Lang said his book had three purposes. The first was to provide a history of the colony and the working of the penal system. The second was ‘to exhibit a faithful representation of the present state of the colony’. The third and final purpose was to promote emigration.⁴³ In the context of the argument being developed in this chapter, Lang’s book is important because it introduced two

⁴⁰ Wentworth, *Statistical*, 334.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 380-81.

⁴² Lang was a Scottish Presbyterian clergyman, who arrived in Sydney in 1823, and later worked as a journalist and colonial politician who campaigned endlessly for colonial education and immigration. He was one of the most prolific authors of the colonial period and gained notoriety for, amongst other things, his republican and separatist views. Influenced by the Scottish minister and political economist Thomas Chalmers, Lang was one of the earliest popularisers of ‘principles’ of political economy in the colony through his pamphlets and mechanics’ institute lectures. See: Mark McKenna, *The Captive Republic: A History of Republicanism in Australia 1788-1996* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 47-53.

⁴³ John Dunmore Lang, *An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales*, Vol. 1, (London: Cochrane and McCrone, 1834), vii.

key themes that would become of enduring interest to economic historians. The first was a chronological narrative of the colony's passage from 'penal' to 'free' society, which would be employed by writers and historians hereafter. The second was a conception of New South Wales as a repository for excess British capital and labour, articulating a relationship of distributing wealth between metropole and colonies. This crucial theme reflected Edward Gibbon Wakefield's theory of 'systematic colonisation' and developed a distinctly 'economic' account of colonial development.

Lang was clearly conversant with Wakefield's theory and quoted at length from Wakefield's major work, *England and America*, published a year prior.⁴⁴ Wakefield had first publicised this theory in his 1829 *Letter from Sydney*. It involved selling colonial Crown lands at an unspecified minimum upset price, with the proceeds then used to fund government-assisted migration of unemployed British labourers to colonies. This scheme promised to regulate in 'exact proportion' labourers and land under cultivation, with a high upset price enabling only capitalised settlers to own property, shaping a class hierarchy and concentrating settlement into 'civilised' agricultural communities. Colonies would serve as sites to invest idle British capital and relieve redundant British labour. Such a scheme was roughly instituted in New South Wales with the so-called 1831 Ripon Regulations, which abolished the old system of land grants and placed all land at compulsory sale within the Nineteen Counties.⁴⁵

In 1833, Lang provided his own exegesis of a self-regulating program to sell colonial Crown lands to fund emigration in a pamphlet which he republished as the final chapter of *Account*.⁴⁶ Like Wakefield, Lang conceived of metropolitan and colonial populations as primarily constituted by 'labourers' and 'capitalists', connected by a dynamic of wealth production and distribution. Assisted migration, for Lang, could regulate this dynamic, following laws at once economic and theological:

⁴⁴ Ibid., Vol. I, 294-7.

⁴⁵ This subject will be further elaborated upon in Chapter Four of this thesis.

⁴⁶ John Dunmore Lang, *Emigration: considered chiefly in reference to the practicability... of settling throughout the territory of New South Wales, a numerous, industrious and virtuous agricultural population* (Sydney: Printed by E.S. Hall, 1833).

Without pretending therefore to be anything like a superior discernment of political economy, I hold that the most important and fundamental axioms of that science are to be found in the outset of the book of Genesis – in that passage where this injunction is divinely given to our first parent: “*Multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it*”. This injunction, when translated into the language of political economy, reads as follows, “Let there be no artificial check to the increase of population. Let marriage be encouraged by all means; and when the population in one country becomes excessive, let a portion of inhabitants of that country emigrate to the waste and uninhabited lands in other parts of the world”.

Based on ‘these divinely-derived axioms of political economy’, Lang argued a scheme of government-assisted migration which would create an immense saving on the poor rates and relieve unemployed workers in Britain, while providing ‘an extensive immigration of an industrious and agricultural population [which] would prove incalculably beneficial to the colony at large’.⁴⁷ Acknowledging the ‘differences of opinion’ surrounding the 1831 regulation for auctioning Crown lands, Lang endorsed it as an ‘investment of capital on the part of the colony, on which a high interest is to be expected, and on which a high interest would infallibly realised’.⁴⁸

Like Wakefield’s, the distinctive ‘economic’ character of Lang’s analysis was its self-regulating quality. A wise statesman was not required to give unity to the problems of a ‘redundant population’ and ‘waste’ territory; they were treated as factors in a theoretical problem of pan-imperial wealth production, distribution accumulation. ‘Enterprise’ was not dependent on constitutional arrangements as the ‘directing intelligence’, but on redistributing the existing productive factors of population and territory into a more efficient formation. Lang’s chapter on emigration also obliged him to provide a mirroring chapter on the ‘advantages which New South Wales holds forth to various classes of emigrants of moderate capital’. Here, he posited the moneyed emigrant as an investor of capital and the colony rendered ‘a highly eligible field for the employment of capital, and for ... profitable investment to almost any amount’.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Ibid., 412.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 414, 416.

⁴⁹ Lang, *Emigration*, 194.

The conception of a self-regulating, ‘economic’ sphere of production and distribution only extended to Lang’s discussion of emigration. In other sections, Lang reverted to using metaphors of the ‘physical health’ of the ‘body politic’, where, like Wentworth, colonial wealth was assessed as an expression of political institutions. Macquarie, for example, was treated with disdain for having discouraged emigrants and forestalling the conversion of the ‘prison population into an agricultural population’, while his ‘lavish expenditure’ on public works ‘overspread the whole surface of the body politic, in a moral and spiritual sense, *with wounds, and bruises and putrefying sores*’.⁵⁰ When interpreting the downturn of 1827 that followed the ‘sheep and cattle mania’ with the establishment of the Australian Agricultural Company, Lang did not use the same deductive arguments about capital and labour as he did assisted migration, but portrayed the ‘body politic’ as passing ‘through a crisis of violent and unnatural excitement, which, according to the well-known maxim of Hippocrates, the father of medicine, must necessarily be followed by a corresponding crisis of unnatural depression’.⁵¹ These were not ‘economic’ assessments of the accumulation and distribution of wealth, but corruptions in the political system.

In later editions of the work, Lang included new chapters which isolated the problems of ‘production’ as a distinct topic of enquiry. In his 1837 edition, Lang inserted a chapter on the ‘View of amount and distribution of colonial population, of produce and trade, and of the revenue and expenditure of New South Wales’.⁵² In his third edition published in 1852, the analysis was narrowed further, with chapters on the ‘Natural Productions of New South Wales’ and ‘Agricultural Productions of New South Wales’.⁵³ While these chapters did not share the same deductive, self-regulating logic as his analysis of emigration, they did nonetheless register the impact of a new kind

⁵⁰ Ibid., 140.

⁵¹ Ibid., 199.

⁵² John Dunmore Lang, *An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales: Both as a Penal Settlement and as a British Colony*, Vol. 1. Second Edition. (London: A.J. Valpy, 1837), Chapter 10.

⁵³ John Dunmore Lang, *An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales: Including a visit to the gold regions and descriptions of the mines* Vol. 2. Third Edition. (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1852), Chapters Two and Three.

of analytic taxonomy about production as a self-contained problem, tied to neither state security, nor political or constitutional forms.

The shift was also registered in Lang's account of the 1841-43 slump, or what colonists called a 'commercial embarrassment'. This was now purged of the theological and medical metaphors used to interpret the 1827 slump in the 1834 edition, but treated as a result of speculation generated by 'extensive emigration', an 'extraordinary influx of British capital', and the formation of 'two Mammoth Banks' and other lending companies. A 'gross delusion' had captured 'the whole of the community', mistaking credit for 'real and permanent wealth', or the idea wealth 'could be greatly increased by any other means than by patient and persevering industry and economy'.⁵⁴ Commercial embarrassment was no longer treated as a moral phenomenon or political corruption, but a dislocation in the self-regulating relationship between capital, investment and labour in the delineated spheres of 'production' and 'industry'.

St. Julian & Silvester, The Productions, Industry and Resources of NSW (1853)

Charles St. Julian and Edward Silvester's *The Productions, Industry and Resources of New South Wales* extended Lang's delineated treatment of the colony as a wealth-producing community.⁵⁵ Two aspects are distinctive about this work compared to the three earlier texts, and it is suggestive of the change that sees a stable economic analysis coming into view. First, the specific focus of the work is on the 'industry' of the colony, organised around the different sectors of colonial production. Second, these sectors are treated as self-regulating, wealth-producing dynamics, which can be analytically

⁵⁴ Lang, *Account*, Vol. 2 (1852), 307-8. Lang, ironically, had been among the early authors to endorse this 'influx of British capital'. In his 1834 edition, he exhorted to British capitalists that: '...the mere lending of money, either on property or on bills, would afford a highly profitable return to an able and judicious capitalist, and be attended with comparatively no risk ... In short, there is a wide opening for an additional banking establishment in the colony, or for individual capitalist to form private establishments on their own account; and if such establishments were conducted on liberal principles, and were under the management of men of experience and ability, they could not fail to be equally beneficial to the colony to the private speculators'. *Account*, Vol. 2 (1834), 194, 196-7.

⁵⁵ Charles St. Julian and Edward Silvester, *The Productions, Industry, and Resources of New South Wales* (Sydney: J. Moore, 1853).

divorced from questions of politics or national security and do not require recourse to theology or an intervening sovereign for explanation. The book is thus organised:

- I. Aboriginal Inhabitants – Wild Animals – Indigenous vegetable Productions – Bushcraft.
- II. Whales and Whaling – Seals – the Dugong
- III. Mines and Mining Operations
- IV. Agriculture – Horticulture – the Vine and its products
- V. Pastoral Pursuits
- VI. Commerce and Manufactures
- VII. Present State and Future Prospects of the Colony

In their introduction, the authors expressed their intention to avoid ‘scientific terms and phrases’ so a picture of the colony as a ‘field of enterprise’ could be seen and ‘understood by all’. This reflected the mid-Victorian trope to ‘diffuse knowledge’ to a mass, ‘ordinary’ readership. Yet even in the absence of explicit theoretical statements, we can discern a shift in idiom from the previous texts. The authors begin by locating New South Wales in a system of global production and expansion. Not unlike Cobden’s cosmopolitan free trade, the responsibility of each ‘nation’, they posited, was to adapt their ‘natural facilities to human art’ and ‘produce every production that can be derived from it’ for the use of ‘civilised man every where’.⁵⁶ This global exchange is envisaged at once pacific, profitable, and ordained by Providence. The corollary of this imagined ‘spirit of industry taking possession of the world’ was to frame social relations internal to the colony as series of industrial relationships. This was made explicit only towards the very end of the book in a discussion on the dynamics of colonial population:

⁵⁶ St. Julian and Silvester, *The Productions, Industry, and Resources of New South Wales*, 1-7.

It is to be observed that in a new country like New South Wales, where extreme prosperity and consequent extreme individual wealth prevails, the accumulating amount of labour is by no means equal to the accumulating amount of consumption. Consequently up to a limit which it would be idle for us to calculate here, industrial pursuits will, under a healthy state of things, increase in the profit they afford in proportion to the increase of population. This is in accordance with the natural rule of supply and demand, because in this country the individual consumption and individual acquisition of wealth is greater than the individual amount of labour introduced at the ordinary price of such labour, and consequently the demand for such labour is greater than the supply.⁵⁷

The words ‘economic’, ‘economical’, or ‘political economy’ do not appear in the text. Nonetheless, formulations such as this passage indicate a clear shift in the author’s concerns and the organising framework of their inquiry. Here, the ‘country’ is constituted as a series of advantageous ratios that determine the increase in profits of ‘industrial pursuits’ as the population increases. Ratios of capital and labour, production and consumption, consumption and acquisition, and wages and profits are collectively regulated by the ‘natural rule of supply and demand’. The kind of social dynamics that Lang, following Wakefield’s example, identified regulating the migration of labour and capital throughout empire was extended as a general framework for analysing all sectors of colonial production. The social relations under analysis are no longer those of subjects in a hierarchical household led by a munificent governor, or citizens of a freely constituted polity, but economic agents in a self-regulating system of wealth production, distribution, and accumulation.

The survey of the colony’s resources was informed by this general framework. The text began with a treatment of Indigenous peoples living by ‘bushcraft’, who are identified at ‘lower in the scale of humanity than, perhaps, any other race of men on earth’. The industry of ‘Aboriginal inhabitants’ serves a distinct function in this analysis, distinguishing the productive and ‘civilised’ organisation of settler industry in contrast to primitive industry of the ‘savage’. This binary drew on distinctions made in eighteenth-century Scottish stadial theory, and the four stage theory of material development

⁵⁷ Ibid., 261.

that progressed upwards from hunter/gatherer, to nomadic pastoralism, agriculture, and then commerce, mapping a progression from ‘barbarism’ to ‘civilisation’. As will become apparent in chapters that follow, this teleology was crucial to the functioning of economic knowledge throughout this period which in the colonial context, as St. Julian and Silvester’s book reflects, constituted ‘the Aborigine’ as an anchoring baseline in the trajectory of steady, civilised, economic progress.

The book examined the diversification of colonial industry by the mid-nineteenth century. While these chapters were responding to ‘material’ changes, they were also cognising and organising that ‘reality’ in a novel form, treating each sector as a closed, self-supporting system, assessed according to its capacity to accumulate wealth. For example, the chapter on mining clearly reflects the contemporary importance of the ‘gold rush’. But the analysis is not of the licences and constitutional freedoms with which some commentators were concerned, but with the labour and capital absorbed by mining practices. The authors conclude the colony was fortunate that gold was only ‘discovered’ mid-century, otherwise the lure of immense returns on investment in mining would have left much of the country undeveloped.⁵⁸ Investment and return also regulate the analysis of agriculture. While Wentworth had presupposed agriculture to be the basis of colonial development, St. Julian and Silvester determined agriculture had been eclipsed without controversy because of the ‘greater profit and consequently greater attraction to capitalists of other avocations – pastoral and commercial’.⁵⁹ By now wool growing had ‘secured the permanent accumulation of great national wealth’. Again, pastoralism is construed as an investment of ‘capital, labour and enterprise’ and assessed in relation to a series of ratios which indicated the ‘importance’ of pastoralism to the ‘community’.⁶⁰ For example, they deduced the growing proportion of livestock to population was thirty-seven sheep to every adult, and export value per head was £6 per person.

Analysing pastoralism did present a unique set of challenges, however. If stadial theory helped to determine the savagery of Aboriginal industry, then on this reading, sheep farming also

⁵⁸ St. Julian and Silvester, *The Productions, Industry, and Resources of New South Wales*, 124-29.

⁵⁹ St. Julian and Silvester, *The Productions, Industry, and Resources of New South Wales*, 165.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 221-2.

occupied an uneasy place in settler self-understandings. While wool evidently yielded great profit, pastoral life also risked a dangerous regression into pre-commercial barbarism. Stadial theory was not an explicit 'economic' account of progress, but identified progressing modes of subsistence with evolving property, legal, political, and moral institutions. The pastoral stage involved neither the private property of agriculture nor the contractual bonds of commerce, but was essentially nomadic and 'uncivilised'. By the 1830s some colonial elites were levelling this critique at colonial wool growing, especially the emerging squatting system.⁶¹ In promoting the 'economic' benefits of colonial pastoralism, St. Julian and Silvester were obliged to reconcile this critique. They acknowledged pastoralism risked impeding the colony's 'social progress', but argued it had avoided 'sinking to the level of nomadic races which exist in most other pastoral counties' because colonial pastoralism was, in fact, a form of 'commerce'. In New South Wales, there had never been an 'absolute necessity for resorting to this pursuit ... pastoral pursuits were not resorted to as a means of subsistence, but to furnish trade'. It had been 'called forth' by the 'increasing want of an article in England' and the colony's 'indefinite' ability to supply it. 'In this colony, therefore, for the first time almost in the history of the world, pasturage and commerce have gone on together hand in hand; one has been the useful handmaiden to the other, and both have been active agents in the march of civilisation'.⁶²

In this text, St. Julian and Silvester were working with a specific form of analysis of colonial 'industry' that understood 'industry' as being conducted within a self-regulating domain of production, distribution, and accumulation. However, as their treatment of pastoralism indicated, this economic reading of colonial industry required innovative frames of reference. While committed to stadial theory as a teleological justification of colonial existence, St. Julian and Silvester altered the meanings of sheep farming to redefine it within the ambit of a 'commerce' that went on between buyers and sellers, and could be explicated in ratios and calculations of trade, production, consumption, and population growth.

⁶¹ This will be elaborated upon further in Chapter.

⁶² St. Julian and Silvester, *The Productions, Industry, and Resources of New South Wales*, 208-9, 210, 226.

The hallmark of the discursive shift from the three earlier texts was St. Julian and Silvester's treatment of politics. While government regulation in the form of licences and leases for squatters, for example, was frequently discussed throughout the work, it did not raise questions about security, liberty, or independence as it had for earlier writers: 'We might have taken in many other subjects, such as its Governmental Constitution,' but this would 'lead us too far a-field' and distract from the 'original designs of these papers – the physical capabilities of the colony, under the influences of the industrial operations of man'.⁶³ Under examination was not the wealth and progress of a polity, but the progress of 'industry' expressed in terms of distribution and accumulation, and thus a new sphere of analysis had emerged.

Australian historiography as economic knowledge

With the emergence and consolidation of a stable 'economic' domain of analysis by the mid-nineteenth century, we are now in a position to trace the inheritance of this category into twentieth-century Australian historiography. The point to emphasise here is how successive generations of historians have contested defining what this category, or what 'economic history', ought to encompass. A series of historiographical perspectives includes the initial bifurcation of 'economy' from the 'state' in early economic historiography, the development of mainstream economic history with its shifting focus on 'development', 'growth', and 'prosperity', and finally, heterodox Marxist and feminist approaches to economic history as a form of social critique. These shifting perspectives indicate the inherently *political* nature of classifying things or histories as 'economic'. To reiterate, the focus here is not with the professional and institutional context of a developing Australian economic historiography, but the discursive manoeuvres that made the 'economic' intelligible and contested in that literature.⁶⁴ Reading Australian economic historiography in this way, as constituting

⁶³ Ibid., 277.

⁶⁴ This focus on professional and institutional context is addressed in more recent work, such as Claire Wright, "Occupying the interdisciplinary space: A visualisation of Australia's economic history field, 1950-1991" (PhD Thesis, University of Wollongong, 2017).

its own subject matter, opens up a historical question about the invention and performative process of naming things as economic, a question which will occupy the remainder of this thesis.

Early developments: economic history as national storytelling and policy pedagogy

Even as history and economics became institutionalised in Australian universities in the late nineteenth century, the conjunction between the two disciplines was not immediately apparent. Writing in the first edition of the journal of the newly formed Australian Economic Association, *The Australian Economist* in 1888, Professor Walter Scott thought New South Wales had little to offer economic history. Scott was an earnest advocate of political economy at the University of Sydney and founding member of the Association. But ‘economic development’ meant for Scott what it did for his contemporary Arnold Toynbee: the passage from feudalism to an age of ‘economic individualism’ and social order ushered in by the ‘industrial revolution’. New South Wales had little part in the narrative of ‘industrial crises and struggles for national existence’. ‘Happy is the nation that has no economic history!’ Scott concluded. The ‘colonies could acclimatise the result of European civilisation without painful experience.’⁶⁵

In this dismissive context, Timothy Coghlan is generally taken to be an important forerunner in establishing an Australian economic history. Coghlan was perhaps the most renowned of a line of government statisticians who in the second half of the nineteenth century made themselves essential to colonial government by crafting the ‘expertise’ of nascent colonial bureaucracies.⁶⁶ The title of Coghlan’s official yearbook for the colony, *The Wealth and Progress of New South Wales*, captured

⁶⁵ Walter Scott, “The Cash-Nexus,” *The Australian Economist: The Journal of the Australian Economic Association* 1, no. 1 (March, 1888), 2-6.

⁶⁶ Peter D. Groenewegen and Bruce J. McFarlane, *A History of Australian Economic Thought* (London: Routledge, 1990), 92-117. Coghlan has been reappraised in a number of contexts in recent years, including as a pioneer of national income accounts, as a mediator between London finance and the Commonwealth Government and as a public intellectual on labour. Respectively, see: Bryan Haig, “Sir Timothy Coghlan and the development of national accounts,” *History of Political Economy* 38, no. 2 (2006): 339-375; Andrew Dilley, “T. A. Coghlan, London Opinion and the Politics of Anglo- Australian Finance, 1905-09,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 41, no. 1 (2013): 37-58; and Ben Maddison, “The Day of the Just Reasoner: T.A. Coghlan and the Labour Public Sphere in Late Nineteenth Century Australia,” *Labour History* 77 (November 1999): 11-26.

the impression he thought governmental numbers depicted. As will be discussed in Chapter Seven, in contrast to the use of this term in Wentworth's and Lang's texts, Coghlan as official 'statistician' came to be the chief agent in sanitising, consolidating, and mapping 'economic' knowledge of the colony through the state's directed use of official numbers.

Coghlan's most significant contribution to an emerging Australian economic historiography was his four-volume masterpiece, *Labour and Industry in Australia from the First Settlement in 1788 to the Establishment of the Commonwealth in 1901*. Coghlan did not style his work as 'economic history', but he did write freely of the 'economic conditions of the colony' which he distinguished from questions of its 'political freedom'. *Labour and Industry* was written in Britain where he was New South Wales Agent-General, and reflected fifty years of research and publications covering the period from settlement to the Great Strikes.⁶⁷ The result was a dense anthology of movements in prices, wages, and regulations that lacked an overarching argument, but which gave these phenomena a coherent historical narrative and identity as the colonies' distinctive 'economic conditions'. As official statistician, Coghlan used his own official records but, to the chagrin of later scholars, eschewed footnotes or sources. His account would nevertheless prove an invaluable basis for historical national income estimates developed by Noel Butlin half a century later. As William Coleman recently noted, 'posterity has ultimately granted [Coghlan] his famous claim to use his own name as the authority for the statistics he cites'.⁶⁸ He thus sits at an important junction in my argument here, both partaking in inventing economic knowledge with his official numbers and later being posthumously integrated into historiography as fathering an economic perspective on the Australian past.

If Coghlan gave the study of the colony's 'economic conditions' an historical identity and content, the following generation of scholars trained in specialised university departments in London and Australia gave economic history its form and character. A 'foundational' text was R.C. Mills'

⁶⁷ T.A. Coghlan, *Labour and Industry in Australia: From the First Settlement in 1788 to the establishment of the Commonwealth in 1901*, Vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1918), v, 291.

⁶⁸ William Coleman, "The historiography of Australian Economic History", Ville and Withers, *The Cambridge Economic History of Australia*, 12.

1915 *The Colonization of Australia*, which drew on his doctoral thesis completed at the London School of Economics on the application of Edward Gibbon Wakefield's theory of 'systematic colonisation' to the Australian colonies. Mills identified that Wakefield's theory had both a 'political side' and an 'economic side'. Indeed, Wakefield wrote as both an imperial theorist and political economist. By taking Wakefield's theory as his motif of colonial history, Mills transposed this normative binary as reflecting the distinctive processes of Australian history.⁶⁹ The 'political side' of Wakefield's theory, said Mills, reflected the transition from a penal to free society by ensuring free immigrants out-numbered convicts, readying the colony for self-government. The 'economic side' related to the transfer of capital and labour to land-abundant colony, initiating its 'new career as a prosperous and attractive colony'.⁷⁰ Thus, while Mills' ostensible subject was the attempt by 'systematic colonisers' to influence Parliament and Colonial Office in designing policy, his analysis spontaneously appropriated Wakefield's theory as a model for explaining colonisation as a process of transferring capital and labour from metropole to colonies.⁷¹

Mills' attention to Wakefield and the 'economic side' of colonisation was amplified over the next two decades. In Stephen Roberts' 1924 *The History of Land Settlement in Australia* and Robert Madgwick's 1937 *Immigration into Eastern Australia 1788-1851*, Wakefield again played a central role 'influencing' the design of British land and migration policies in the Australian colonies.⁷² Neither Roberts nor Madgwick offered glowing assessments. Roberts bemoaned land policy as a complex, torturous labyrinth, while Madgwick concluded that Australian colonial development had been hampered due to its use as a receptacle for emptying Britain's prison hulks and then poorhouses.

⁶⁹ 'To the Wakefield theory there was an important political as well as a social and economic side'. R.C. Mills, *The Colonization of Australia (1829-42): the Wakefield Experiment in Empire Building* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1915), 125. See also: viii, 125, 220, 238, 264, 268, 320-1, 324, 326.

⁷⁰ Mills, *The Colonization of Australia*, 322.

⁷¹ Mills thought that Wakefield's system could be differentiated 'in two ways, either as a scientific theory, rounded and complete ... or as a series of practical rules for colonization to be applied with discretion according to the exigencies of time and place'. In the former sense, Mills concluded Wakefield's doctrines of sufficient price and concentration had not been especially successful, but in the latter sense, Wakefield had been proven crucially important. Mills, *The Colonization of Australia*, 327-337.

⁷² Stephen H. Roberts, *History of Australian Land Settlement, 1788-1920* (London: F. Cass, 1969 [1924]); R.B. Madgwick, *Immigration into Eastern Australia, 1788-1851* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1969 [1937]).

Both perspectives would later be heavily revised, but their immediate significance was to abstract land settlement and migration as distinctive economic processes contributing to the material ‘development’ of the colonies, not unlike St. Julian and Silvester’s treatment of ‘industries’. Self-consciously empiricist in approach, these works again eschewed any formal definition of their work as ‘economic history’. But together with Roberts’ 1935 *The Squatting Age in Australia 1835-1847*, land, wool growing, and migration were established as the major themes in a synthesis of an Australian economic history. These took the Wakefieldian transfer of capital and labour to the land-abundant colony as the normative, underlying logic of their interpretation.⁷³

The normative distinction between the political and economic ‘sides’ of colonial history introduced by Mills was soon consolidated by a pair of more expansive works that definitively and contrastingly took the ‘economic’ as the appropriate mode for national storytelling. On the one hand, Edward Shann’s path-breaking 1930 *An Economic History of Australia* launched a classical liberal critique of Australian governmental interference that had inhibited national enterprise. On the other, Brian Fitzpatrick’s 1939 *British Imperialism in Australia, 1788-1833* and its 1941 sequel, *The British Empire in Australia, 1834-39* forged a Marxian account of Australian settlement as a projection of expanding imperial capitalism which had subjected Australia to a lasting dependence on British markets and investment.⁷⁴ Contrasting in their politics yet complementary as scholarship, both authors argued that economic activity might be optimised or corrupted by outside influences, but this depended on how one idealised the relationship between state and economy. For Shann, in a classic liberal tradition, the ‘economic’ was the sphere of free individual enterprise, delineated in sharp distinction from political decision-making. For Fitzpatrick, the economy was more deliberately shaped by state action wherein legislation, policies, and regulation enabled and adjusted rates of investment and accumulation. At the heart of both accounts was a critical reflection on legislative

⁷³ Stephen H. Roberts, *The Squatting Age in Australia, 1835-1847* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1964 [1935]).

⁷⁴ E. O. G. Shann, *An Economic History of Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930); Brian Fitzpatrick, *British Imperialism and Australia, 1783-1833: An Economic History of Australasia* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1939); Brian Fitzpatrick, *The British Empire in Australia: An Economic History, 1834-1939*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1941).

interference. One of these was to liberate individual enterprise, while the other identified a nascent ‘radical nationalism’ with which to liberate national destiny from imperial exploitation.

Shann’s study doubled as a parable for contemporary policy-makers.⁷⁵ Modern Australia was created by the genius of enterprising individuals, he argued, especially the ‘great sheep men’ of the frontier era. National progress was thwarted when their endeavours were curbed by the governors or the colonial legislatures. It was in this sense that Douglas Copland’s celebratory review of Shann’s book in January 1931 noted that that government activity was crucial in explaining the ‘conditions of economic development in Australia’, but added that ‘extravagance’ had also curtailed individual initiative, the authentic locus of ‘economic activity’. Shann’s book, suggested Copland, ought to prompt serious reflection on the detriments of loan expenditure, tariff control, wage fixing, and assisted migration, all of which were immediate issues as the Depression descended on Australia in the early 1930s.⁷⁶

Fitzpatrick told a very different story. He recalled an initial imperial plan for the colony to be ‘not a prison merely, but a community of peasant proprietors, a breed of men that enclosure and game laws were driving out of the home economy’.⁷⁷ Early colonial history was defined by a betrayal of that vision, first by the military and then by London politicians who repurposed the colony for the needs of Britain’s expanding industrial markets. ‘English capital was the motive power for what took place’, colonial history amounting to a series of ‘scenes of British private capital investment’.⁷⁸ In their different ways, both Shann and Fitzpatrick emphasised the intervention of politics as a corruption of the distinctive economic mission of the colony.

From these competing visions, A.G.L. Shaw’s 1944 *The Economic Development of Australia* distilled what he thought would be a briefer and more accessible synthesis. Running to seven editions over the next thirty-six years, Shaw’s narrative helped canonise an account of ‘economic

⁷⁵ See Shann, *An Economic History*, Preface. Shann was active in liberal, free trade politics. From 1930 he occupied an advisory role to the Bank of New South Wales and later featured prominently at the 1832 Ottawa Conference and the 1933 World Economic Conference in London.

⁷⁶ *Argus*, 10 January 1931, 6.

⁷⁷ Fitzpatrick, *British Imperialism and Australia*, 13-15.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, xiii.

development', or what Fitzpatrick had called 'Australian economic evolution'.⁷⁹ Economics as national storytelling now settled into a familiar pattern. The first of three parts of Shaw's book was organised thus:

- 1) Background
- 2) Beginnings
- 3) Development
- 4) Transition
- 5) Systematic Colonisation
- 6) Squatting
- 7) The Outer Settlements

With this arrangement, Shaw entrenched a logical flow and periodisation of events and themes of the pre-gold era that have endured as historiographical common sense.⁸⁰ As his title reflected, the trajectory of 'development' was affirmed as the central motif of colonial history. But 'development' towards what? Ultimately, for Shaw, it was the emergence of a profitable export commodity in wool and accompanying market system. In this sense, there was a logical continuity with the model set out by St. Julian and Silvester a century before, and inherited from Smith's Scottish Enlightenment. The putative teleology of 'development' echoed the transition from savagery to civilisation, in which the practices of Aboriginal Australians, invisible in Shaw's account, served as a blank slate starting-point from which to map the development of an economy. Only now, for Shaw, the definition of this 'development' was narrowed from a complex set of legal, political, and property institutions, to the success of 'policies' of land settlement and migration that could be measured by a set of metrics, a

⁷⁹ A.G.L. Shaw, *The Economic Development of Australia* (London: Longmans, Green, 1944).

⁸⁰ For example, these same basic 'economic' themes and periodisations structured the early chapters of the recent *Cambridge History of Australia* (2013). The same general narrative, for example, was reproduced in the *Cambridge History of Australia*, as seen in Grace Karskens, "The early colonial presence, 1788-1822", and Lisa Ford and David Roberts, "Expansion, 1820-1850", in Stuart Macintyre and Alison Bashford (eds.), *Cambridge History of Australia*, Vol. 1 (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

process of quantification also underway in Coghlan's *The Wealth and Progress of New South Wales*. Where St. Julian and Silvester justified pastoral expansion as 'progress' against persistent moral concerns, Shaw's account quarantined 'development' as a self-regulating sphere of exchange, production, and accumulation.

A maturing discipline: histories of 'growth'

To read between the editions of Shaw's textbooks is to chart the shifting assumptions about the story 'Australian economic history' ought to tell. The 'maturing' sub-discipline reflected both Australian economists' own sense of importance to the national interest and their confidence in the growing 'Australian economy'. In the preface to its fifth edition in 1964, Shaw reflected that when he first wrote *Economic Development* twenty years earlier, most 'public men and economists ... still remembering the Great Depression, were primarily concerned with the problem of unemployment. Today we take full employment for granted and we are more concerned with the problems of economic growth'. In this context, said Shaw, his economic history of Australia had been tailored 'to meet an interest now centred on economic growth rather than economic policy'.⁸¹

At the forefront of this shift in focus to 'growth' was Noel Butlin's quantitative studies on national income and public and private investment. Butlin transformed the field, introducing 'method' into a sub-discipline that had hitherto been characterised by literary storytelling. His interest in quantitative aggregates of capital formation and accumulation was piqued when he was given the opportunity to sift through Coghlan's immense papers, untouched for decades, discovering the statistician's handwritten national income estimates for 1886-89.⁸² In an emerging intellectual context being defined by the American economist Simon Kuznet's ground-breaking work on national income accounting, this excursion launched Butlin's career-long interest in calculating gross domestic product estimates from the beginnings of white settlement, and assessing public and private capital

⁸¹ A.G.L. Shaw, *Economic Development in Australia*. Fifth Edition. (Croydon: Longmans 1964), Preface.

⁸² Coleman, "Historiography", 17.

formation by quarrying official statistics and extensive business archival material.⁸³ Under this rubric, the historical ‘economy’ took on a completely new form as a bounded, measurable entity with dynamics reducible to calculation, modelling, and equations.

Despite Butlin’s penchant for calculation, Australian economic history never experienced the turn to hard cliometrics as in the United States. ‘Economic history’, rather, tended to remain a branch of history rather than economics. But if not a work of mathematised ‘applied economics’, individuals and events nevertheless fell from view in Butlin’s studies as quantification, modelling and a deep self-consciousness for ‘method’ came into focus. This shift of focus further reified the normative distinction between state and economy. As one of Butlin’s contemporaries later recalled, despite his attention to public capital formation, ‘you were never aware of the state’.⁸⁴ Public and private capital formation neatly dovetailed into each other as co-drivers of ‘growth’. It was not that Butlin thought the state unimportant to economic growth, as his interest in public investment was underscored by a certain sympathy for a mixed economy. It was more that he sought to present the relationship with greater precision, presenting his findings in clean numerical tables estimating annual output and capital formation that captured patterns of growth. This emphasis on illustrating national growth and suppressing interpretation of other motivating factors was at least partly motivated by Butlin’s rejection of Fitzpatrick’s account of Australian history as an appendage to British capitalism. Butlin was asserting a different kind of ‘nationalism’, demonstrating the rich, internal dynamics of the colonial economy, emphasising the role of government, construction, and manufacturing, and the significance of the Australian economy at large. ‘Australian economic history,’ he wrote, ‘was not a footnote to the Industrial Revolution’.⁸⁵

If Butlin reflected historians’ transitioning concern from ‘economic policy’ to ‘economic growth’, he also reflected a fundamental reconfiguration of the historiographical work the ‘economic’

⁸³ The classic work was Noel Butlin, *Investment in Australian Economic Development, 1861-1900* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1964). For the significance of this ‘school’, see: C. B. Schedvin, “Midas and the Merino: A Perspective on Australian Economic Historiography,” *The Economic History Review* 32, no. 4 (1979): 542-56.

⁸⁴ Max Hartwell, quoted in Coleman, “Historiography”, 19.

⁸⁵ Noel Butlin, quoted in Coleman, “Historiography”, 26.

could be made to do. Rather than using it as a device for pedagogical national storytelling, the ‘economic’ now obtained a heuristic status, mapping the topography of Australian history with greater or lesser accuracy. Butlin was deeply self-conscious of his methods, offering pages of commentary on ‘Classification and Concepts’, ‘Sources of Data’ and ‘Procedure and Quality of Estimates’ in his early research. He was aware that some of the distinctions drawn, including what counted as ‘private’ or ‘public’ investment, were often ‘plainly arbitrary’, and was explicit about modelling inputs and extrapolating outputs.⁸⁶ He had a keen sense he was weaving together a kind of fiction, but one with a supposedly objective, scientific quality.

Butlin founded no school of economic history, but his attentiveness to quantification on the one hand and growth models on the other were clearly reflected in the shape of economic historiography after 1960. Shaw’s literary-style textbook was now rivalled by new general economic histories that placed the quantitative modelling of growth at their core. W.G. Sinclair’s 1976 *The Process of Economic Development in Australia*, which claimed to be ‘the first economic history of the entire white period’, was exemplary.⁸⁷ In an intellectual climate shaped by W.W. Rostow’s 1960 *The Stages of Economic Growth*, Sinclair read European Australian history as a remarkable story of ‘economic growth’, without judging ‘whether growth is to be deplored, applauded or neither’.⁸⁸ Sinclair thus posited his as a study of ‘growth’, a self-evident phenomenon that he thought required value-free explanation. He developed a basic historical model that placed nineteenth century Australia in ‘the world circuit of economic development’, where old countries were experiencing excessive labour and capital but scarce land for further investment, with new countries experiencing the inverse situation.⁸⁹ The efficient transfer of these factors was the key story to Australian economic growth. Sinclair thus appropriated the Wakefieldian analysis of colonies as a purely interpretative framework.

⁸⁶ See for example, the extended commentary offered in Noel Butlin, *Public Capital Formation in Australia, Estimates 1860-1900* (Canberra: ANU, 1953), 19-41, 42-76, 77-91, and *Private Capital Formation in Australia, Estimates 1861-1900* (Canberra: ANU, 1955), 24-41, 42-106.

⁸⁷ W. A. Sinclair, *The Process of Economic Development in Australia* (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1976), v; See also: R. V. Jackson, *Australian Economic Development in the Nineteenth Century* (Canberra: ANU Press, 1977).

⁸⁸ Sinclair, *Process of Economic Development*, v.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

Unlike Mills, who had some historical sensitivity to the contingency of Wakefieldian thinking, Sinclair assumed the model to have pure analytic necessity. What had been a creative reimagining of colonies by Wakefield, was now taken to be normative ‘model’ explaining the material conditions underlying colonial economic ‘growth’. Historians thus began to treat Wakefield as a kind of ‘colleague’, a primitive interlocutor in explaining colonial development, forgetting he was largely responsible for inventing the very problematic they were seeking to understand, and the terms of reference with which they framed the problem.⁹⁰ A feedback loop was beginning to operate between theories developed in the nineteenth century to enact a novel ‘economic’ relationship between colonies and metropole, and the twentieth-century appropriation of that theory to reassess the same phenomenon with historical ‘objectivity’.⁹¹

While quantitative analysis was one aspect of this ‘maturing’ field of Australian economic history, another was more focused studies on aspects of the colonial economy. These assessed the contributions of specific institutions and industries to ‘growth’. Butlin’s elder brother, Sydney, pioneered this kind of study in his 1953 *Foundations of the Australian Monetary System, 1788-1851*. This work traced the development of currency and banking in the early colonies from the First Fleet, which carried no money, through the complex early history of ad hoc systems of credit, imported and invented coins, the standardisation of sterling throughout empire in 1825, and the formation of financial, banking, and lending systems. For S.J. Butlin, the establishment of a ‘market economy’ was now positioned as the inevitable passage of colonial history. Australian history, he said, exemplified ‘the general theory of economic development’ which ‘presupposes a fully developed economy, of a capitalist type’.⁹²

⁹⁰ This blurring of Wakefield as a historical figure generating historical change, and of providing a theory to understand historical change, is reflected in the analysis of Lloyd, “Analytical frameworks”, 63-64. Bourdieu notes this scholarly practice of treating past theorists as ‘colleagues’ is exemplified in the way political philosophers write about seventeenth-century theorists of the ‘state’. See: Pierre Bourdieu, *On the State: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1989-1992* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), 30.

⁹¹ This is clearly reflected in recent treatments of Wakefield by some leading historians, who have demoted him in significance as merely ‘riding the wave of public opinion, not creating it’. James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 146-7. See Chapter Four.

⁹² Butlin, *Foundations of the Australian Monetary System*, v, 1.

This same teleology wherein the ‘conditions’ facilitate the ‘economic growth’ of a market economy was reflected in Bede Nain’s and Graham Abbott’s 1969 collection, *Economic Growth of Australia, 1788-1821*. The book was partly a response to Geoffrey Blainey’s *The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance Shaped Australia’s History*, published three years before, which had popularised the idea that the colony was established to serve broader imperial and commercial strategies, with convicts providing merely the means and not the ends of settlement.⁹³ With their aim to formalise ‘growth’ as the pre-eminent subject of colonial history, Nairn and Abbott reinforced the convict origins as the focal point of British settlement. But they also did more than this, and constructed a ‘canon’ of Australian economic historiography. The problem of ‘growth’, they said, could be found in the earliest colonial writings, placing their own work in a continuum reaching back to William Wentworth in 1819:

The neglect of the analysis of the economic growth of New South Wales made by W.C. Wentworth in his *Statistical, Historical and Political Description of New South Wales*, first published in 1819, seems to be inexplicable in view of his attempt to apply the tenets of classical political economy to problems of the development of early New South Wales. Wentworth was the first Australian economic historian. Admittedly his aim was to propound the need for certain political reforms and he directed his analysis to that end; but in spite of the deficiencies arising from his purpose, Wentworth pinpoints the forces that created a diversified economy.⁹⁴

The reasons Wentworth failed to treat ‘economic growth’ satisfactorily should be clear from the discussion above, not least because Wentworth was *not* applying such tenets in his study, and indeed,

⁹³ Geoffrey Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance Shaped Australia’s History* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1966).

⁹⁴ Nain and Abbott, *Economic Growth*, 4. Others historians contributed to this redressing of Wentworth as an economist and economic historian. See, for example: Craufurd D. W. Goodwin, *Economic Enquiry in Australia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1966), 300-303; Groenewegen and McFarlane, *A History of Australian Economic Thought*, 13-15; and Peter Groenewegen, “William Charles Wentworth (1790-1872)” in J. E. King (ed.), *Biographical Dictionary of Australian and New Zealand Economists*, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2007), 300.

was something we do not really find until Lang's work in 1834. What is important to note here is the political effort of Nairn and Abbott to impose neoclassical economic categories as the normative structures of Australian history by identifying unlikely prophets of growth in colonial literature.

Nairn and Abbott's collection prefigured a number of full-length studies of institutions that had facilitated the growth of market society in the colony. Brian Fletcher's *Landed Enterprise and Penal Society, 1788-1821* argued the failures of government farming, the difficulties of raising a surplus crop prior to 1810 and the British government's general lack of interest in wool prior to 1815 had all but retarded capitalist enterprise before Macquarie's departure. Following S.J. Butlin's critique of Fitzpatrick, he argued there was no plan to settle convicts as peasant proprietors but instead that emancipist grants reflected pragmatic attempts to induce ex-convicts to stay in the colony.⁹⁵ David Hainsworth's *The Sydney Traders* showed the New South Wales Officer Corps, sent to guard the convicts and once thought to be aggrandising monopolists who dominated land, labour, and currency, were of little significance to the colony's commercial development after the initial years of settlement. Rather, 'growth' was driven by emancipists-cum-entrepreneurs such as Simeon Lord.⁹⁶ Hainsworth drew attention to the importance of Sydney as the colony's economic centre, where around thirty per cent of the colonial population consistently resided. This is a point reinforced by histories of colonial manufacturing and whaling, the latter of which remained a more significant

⁹⁵ Brian H. Fletcher, *Landed Enterprise and Penal Society: A History of Farming and Grazing in New South Wales before 1821* (Sydney University Press Sydney, 1976). Fitzpatrick's interpretation of a plan for a peasant community has had enduring historiographical fascination. Fitzpatrick's thesis was contested by Syd Butlin and especially Fletcher's specialist study. Butlin argued governors' instructions indicted nothing more than 'spur-of-the-moment thinking as to how to dispose of convicts who were freed, not a design for an economic system'. *Foundations of the Australian Monetary System*, 3. Fletcher developed this at greater length in *Landed*, 14-22. On the other hand, in his recent general history, Alan Atkinson revived Fitzpatrick's argument, demonstrating such ideas were at least in wide discussion in the circles kept by Lord Sydney, the designer of the Botany Bay project, and purported in the strategies of some of the early governors, especially Hunter. See: *Europeans in Australia. Volume One: Beginnings* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997), xviii, 66-68, Chapter 11. See also: Lynne McLoughlin, "Landed Peasantry or Landed Gentry: A geography of land grants", in Graeme Aplin (ed), *A Difficult Infant: Sydney Before Macquarie* (Sydney: New South Wales University Press, 1988), 120-147. Grace Karskens has most recently endorsed the 'agrarian vision' interpretation: Grace Karskens, *The Colony: A History of Early Sydney* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2009), 64-6.

⁹⁶ D.R. Hainsworth, *The Sydney Traders: Simon Lord and his Contemporaries, 1788-1832* (Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1972); Simon Ville, "Colonial enterprise", in *The Cambridge Economic History of Australia*, 202-221.

export than wool into the 1830s.⁹⁷ By narrowing to such specific domains, Fletcher and Hainsworth gently reminded readers of the importance of government policy in shaping economic history, but nevertheless affirmed the growth of capitalist enterprise as the normative trajectory of colonial history.

Studying ‘growth’ ultimately meant a renewed focus on pastoralism. Historians now sought a more precise picture than Shann’s celebration of individual enterprise, seeking to pinpoint the wool industry’s ‘take-off’ moment by examining export statistics, land grants and investment. Scholars variously dated this moment at 1815, 1821, and the later 1820s. Abbott, in the first book-length study since Roberts, preferred the middle option, when the commissariat no longer represented the most efficient market for exchange and leading capitalists looked to foreign trade for higher returns. Considering easy land, convict labour and English demand, wool, said Abbott, was the obvious answer.⁹⁸ Each of these accounts emphasised the contingency of wool, but all were also partaking in normalising the teleology of a developing market society as the basic logic of colonial history. In ways not dissimilar to Shann, the profit motive was the motor of history. There was, of course, a critical challenge to this view.

Heterodox economics: economic history as social critique

In contrast to economic histories that placed ‘development’, ‘growth’, and the motive of profit at its centre in ways that deliberately insulated ‘economic’ processes from political ones, a rival heterodox economic historiography challenging these propositions developed after 1970. This had two major forms: a revitalised Marxist political economy, and a feminist critique of mainstream economic

⁹⁷ As with all ‘urban’ areas, Sydney’s population was scaled on a number of metrics, including the population of the City of Sydney, the suburbs of Sydney and the Police District of Sydney, each being progressively larger in size. See: G. J. R. Linge, *Industrial Awakening: A Geography of Australian Manufacturing 1788 to 1890* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1979), 71. New South Wales’ urbanisation again fits global, nineteenth-century trajectories but its own pattern was distinct, developing much earlier than other ‘new’ countries and not reliant on industrial growth. It can partly be explained by the high labour productivity of rural activity as the colony employed remarkably fewer rural workers than other Western countries, as well as a high dependent population that congregated in towns and cities away from remote sheep stations, centralised bureaucratic activity in Sydney, and high immigration rates.

⁹⁸ Graham J. Abbott, *The Pastoral Age: A Re-Examination* (South Melbourne: Macmillan of Australia, 1971), 8-13.

history. There was, of course, much crossover between the two. Both engaged economic history as a form of social critique, offering alternative perspectives on the relationship between state and economy. By focusing more intensely on the actions and interventions of the state in shaping economic life, these heterodox approaches sought to identify both the structural inequities within and power dynamics enacted through the regulation of economic life. Nonetheless, ‘economy’ and ‘politics’ were reaffirmed as distinct, normative domains of inquiry, knowledge, and practice, even if they were now shown to be intimately entangled.

A new form of Marxist economic historiography followed the reception of New Left historiography in Australia. Originally championed in 1970 by Humphrey McQueen’s *A New Britannia* and followed by the collection of readings and essays published by Frank Stilwell, K.D. Buckley, and E.L. Wheelwright, this approach, they said, had four characteristics.⁹⁹ First, integrating political, social and cultural influences into understanding economic behaviour. Secondly, self-consciously recognising ideology shaped economic analysis. Thirdly, registering the power interests in property and institutions that generate class conflict and, finally, incorporating the state as an influential force in ordering economic systems. Government was not external to economic systems, they said, but part of it.¹⁰⁰ By this they meant not that economic systems are an enactment of the state, but that the economic system encompasses or enfolds the state. From this perspective, economic history was not a story of inevitable growth but of conflict for economic power that produced oppression and inequity. The practice of mainstream economic historiography, framed by trajectories of progress, development, and growth, was criticised for normalising the commodity-form and market relations, and obscuring the contingency of colonial capitalism.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Humphrey McQueen, *A New Britannia: An Argument Concerning the Social Origins of Australian Radicalism and Nationalism* (Ringwood: Penguin Books, 1970); E. L. Wheelwright and K. D. Buckley, (eds.), *Essays in the Political Economy of Australian Capitalism*, Five Volumes (Sydney: Australia and New Zealand Books, 1975); E. L. Wheelwright and Frank J. B. Stilwell, (eds.), *Readings in Political Economy*, Two Volumes (Sydney: Australia and N.Z. Book Co., 1976).

¹⁰⁰ Wheelwright and Buckley, *Essays*, 1-11.

¹⁰¹ Ben Maddison, “Commodification and the Construction of Mainstream Economic Historiography”, *Australian Journal of Political Economy* 58, (2006): 114-137.

These neo-Marxist approaches were foremost concerned with the development of capitalist relations.¹⁰² Unlike S.J. Butlin's study, this focus involved not the inevitable unfolding of classical theory, but the decisive intervention of the imperial and colonial state establishing asymmetrical economic relations. In this sense, and echoing the earlier dispute between Fitzpatrick and Noel Butlin, Australian capitalism was identified as having been shaped by both external imperial and global, and internal local and colonial forces. Those that emphasised the former were concerned with modelling a distinctive brand of 'settler capitalism' based on resource extraction and dispossession.¹⁰³ Settlement was fundamentally the project of a metropolitan society undergoing capitalist transformation. In Phillip McMichael's 1984 *Settlers and the Agrarian Question*, which relentlessly applied Wallenstein's world-system theory to colonial conditions, New South Wales was 'an ingredient in the emerging world-capitalist order', with the 'immanence of capitalist social relations within the original colonial military-bureaucratic state'.¹⁰⁴ Those emphasising internal processes as, such as Andrew Wells' 1987 *Constructing Capitalism*, argued the formation of capitalist relations in Australia did not follow the paradigmatic shift from feudalism to capitalism, but an uneven and gradual 'commodification of social relations', which was in essence a political process enacted by political-legal interventions of the colonial state.¹⁰⁵ On one hand, McMichael's approach produced a crude economic determinism.¹⁰⁶ Colonial pastoralism had no internal trigger but was beckoned by the needs of the global textile industry. Colonial conflict over landed property were expressions of pre-political economic interests. Wells, on the other hand, was more sensitive to the contingency and malleability of the colonial 'economic system' in which economic classes and interests were

¹⁰² On this theme, see also: K. D. Buckley and E. L. Wheelwright, *No Paradise for Workers: Capitalism and the Common People in Australia, 1788-1914* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1988); A similar project had already been undertaken in sociology. See: R. W. Connell and T. H. Irving, *Class Structure in Australian History: Documents, Narrative and Argument* (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1980).

¹⁰³ Donald Denoon, *Settler Capitalism: The Dynamics of Dependent Development in the Southern Hemisphere* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); Peter Beilharz and Lloyd Cox, "Review Essay: Settler Capitalism Revisited," *Thesis Eleven* 88, no. 1 (February 1, 2007): 112-24.

¹⁰⁴ Philip McMichael, *Settlers and the Agrarian Question: Foundations of Capitalism in Colonial Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 1, 35-6

¹⁰⁵ Andrew Wells, *Constructing Capitalism: An Economic History of Eastern Australia, 1788-1901* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1989), 26.

¹⁰⁶ For a useful critique, see: Alastair Davidson, "Book Review", *Thesis Eleven* 18-19, no. 1 (1987): 202-03.

institutionally constructed, noting that ‘capitalism in Australia was the product of conscious human activity’. Nonetheless, political processes and the ‘economic system’ remained essentially and ontologically distinct and together with the inverse situation represented by McMichael, one had to work upon the other.

A different kind of heterodox approach also developed in the 1970s and 1980s as feminist scholars launched a critique of mainstream economic historiography. Again, this meant developing an alternative perspective on the relationship between state and economy. Feminist historians recast the role of women in colonial economic history. Recalling the colony was characterised by marked gender imbalances, women had unique opportunities available to them and were important economic actors as convicts, in commercial life, and in their own private transactions within a delineated ‘female economy’.¹⁰⁷ A more penetrating critique targeted the masculine-normative categories of economic analysis. Katrina Alford’s 1984 book, pointedly entitled *Production or Reproduction?*, challenged the terms in which economic contribution ought to be measured.¹⁰⁸ Desley Deacon and Alford’s separate studies of the colonial census interrogated the shifting classification of women’s work by colonial statisticians. Timothy Coghlan was a common target as representative of that colonial statistical work which normalised gendered social divisions by legitimising certain forms of work as ‘economic’, while defining domestic work as ‘non-economic’, and ultimately constituting women as ‘dependent’.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, Alford demonstrated how twentieth-century historians utilising these sources inherited a gender-blind account of the economy.¹¹⁰ State-constructed economic

¹⁰⁷ 160,000 convicts were transported to Australia between 1788 and 1868. 85,000 were sent to New South Wales until 1840, eighty-five per cent of which were men. For an overview of this recasting, see: Meredith and Oxley, “The convict economy”, 97-121; Monica Perrott, *A Tolerable Good Success: Economic Opportunities for Women in New South Wales, 1788-1830* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1983); and Paula J. Byrne, “A Colonial Female Economy: Sydney, Australia,” *Social History* 24, no. 3 (1999): 287-293.

¹⁰⁸ Katrina Alford, *Production or Reproduction? An Economic History of Women in Australia, 1788-1850* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1984).

¹⁰⁹ Jill Matthews, “Deconstructing the Masculine Universe: The Case of Women’s Work”, in Women and Labour Publications Collective, (ed.), *All Her Labours* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1984), 11-23; Paula J. Byrne, “Economy and Free Women in Colonial New South Wales,” *Australian Feminist Studies* 11, no. 23 (April 1, 1996): 89-97.

¹¹⁰ Desley Deacon, “Political Arithmetic: The Nineteenth-Century Australian Census and the Construction of the Dependent Woman,” *Signs* 11, no. 1 (October 1, 1985): 27-47; Katrina Alford, “Colonial Women’s Employment as Seen by Nineteenth-Century Statisticians and Twentieth-Century Economic Historians,” *Labour History*, no. 51 (1986): 1-10.

knowledge, feminists argued, imposed social divisions between not only capital and labour, but men and women, determining social identities, opportunities and legal rights. Like neo-Marxists, feminists were sensitive to the role of state actors constituting economic inequities, but shifted focus from 'intervention' to techniques of knowledge creation. These insights anticipate my own discussion in Chapter Seven, which considers the ways the categories and counting of statisticians helped to reify a world of 'economic phenomena'.

Expanding the economy and the economic history of 'prosperity'

The 'new social history' associated with New Left historiography and the feminist critique of masculine-normative economic categories helped invigorate an expanded view of what might be encompassed in the domain of 'economic history'. By the later twentieth century, 'economic history' could be used in a number of integral ways to develop perspectives on the colonial period. The most marked shift involved attempts to write an economic interpretation of pre-contact history and integrate Indigenous peoples into the settler economy.¹¹¹ Previously, it had been symptomatic of the themes of progress, development, and growth that unified economic historiography to assign Aboriginal peoples little role in Australian economic history. Retaining the logic of the colonisers' perception that Australian history began with the planting of 'settlement' by way of agriculture, property rights, and permanent buildings, Aboriginal society was perceived by economic historians as but only the tragic background to European development.¹¹² While anthropologists and archaeologists had long inquired into the structure of the 'Aboriginal economy' and trade, only in the 1980s did historians, too, begin to recover the importance of Aboriginal peoples to the development of the colonial economy, especially as pastoral workers but also domestic servants, trackers, guides,

¹¹¹ Geoffrey Blainey, *Triumph of the Nomads: A History of Ancient Australia* (London: Macmillan, 1976); Noel Butlin, *Economics and the Dreamtime: A Hypothetical History* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

¹¹² Boyd Hunter, "The Aboriginal Legacy", in Ville and Withers, *The Cambridge Economic History of Australia*, 73-96. 'The technical knowledge of the existing inhabitants was much more primitive than that of the Europeans and the existing social order was not transformed'. Sinclair, *The Process of Economic Development in Australia*, 1.

and in the Native Police.¹¹³ More recently, economic historians have drawn lessons from anthropology by postulating that Indigenous land management techniques cultivated grassy plains that would prove suitable to sheep farming.¹¹⁴ The general trajectory here was to extend the meanings of economic activity to envelop Indigenous practices within the settler economy. However, others have also begun to explore the ways Aboriginal communities adapted, resisted, or survived the ‘logic’ of settler capitalism, framing multiple or competing economies within Australia just as there are competing sovereignties.¹¹⁵

Combining social history with quantitative methods, historians also sought to restore other actors to colonial economic history, in particular the convict and assisted migrant. For a long time, historians accepted the story handed down by nineteenth-century ‘enemies’ of penal society that convicts were useless and unprofitable.¹¹⁶ Drawing on large data sets remaining from meticulous convict administration, the collaborative 1988 study *Convict Workers* ‘rediscovered’ convicts were able workers and colony-builders, being predominantly male, young, literate, rurally skilled, adapted to migration, and relatively better fed than their counterpart class in Britain.¹¹⁷ Similarly, since Madgwick’s 1937 study, assisted migrants had been characterised as Britain’s unwanted, destitute poor, or simply the dregs that did not go to America.¹¹⁸ Again, closer inspection of administrative

¹¹³ Ian Keen, *Aboriginal Economy and Society: Australia at the Threshold of Colonisation* (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2004); John Mulvaney “Difficult to found an opinion: 1788 Aboriginal population estimate,” in G. Briscoe and L. Smith (eds.), *The Aboriginal Population Revisited: 70 000 Years to the Present* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2002), 1-8; Judy Campbell, *Invisible Invaders: Smallpox and Other Diseases in Aboriginal Australia 1780-1880* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002). For early nineteenth century New South Wales, see: Richard Broome, “Aboriginal Workers on South Eastern Frontiers,” *Australian Historical Studies* 26, 103 (October 1, 1994): 202-20.

¹¹⁴ What Rhys Jones dubbed ‘fire stick farming’. See: Rhys Jones, “Fire Stick Farming”, *Australian Natural History* 16 (1969): 224-229; Bill Gammage, *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2011); Bruce Pascoe, *Dark Emu: Black Seeds, Agriculture or Accident?* (Broome: Magabala Books, 2014); and Ian W. McLean, *Why Australia Prospered: The Shifting Sources of Economic Growth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 38.

¹¹⁵ Hannah Forsyth and Alvin Gavranoic, “The Logic of Survival: towards and Indigenous-centred history of capitalism in Wilcannia”, *Settler Colonial Studies* (2017) DOI: [10.1080/2201473X.2017.1363967](https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2017.1363967)

¹¹⁶ This will be elaborated upon in Chapter Three. On the construction of this ‘story’, see: Hirst, *Freedom on the Fatal Shore*, 186-193. For a useful overview and critique of this debate, see: Stephen Garton, “The convict origins debate: Historians and the problem of the ‘Criminal Class,” *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology* 24, no. 2 (1991): 66-82

¹¹⁷ Stephen Nicholas (ed.), *Convict Workers: Reinterpreting Australia’s Past* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

¹¹⁸ Madgwick memorably concluded North America ‘took the best emigrants’ so that ‘Australia and other distant colonies, remained to take the residue’. Madgwick, *Immigration into Eastern Australia, 1788-1851*,

records revealed a highly regulated system of recruitment for rural labourers governed by strict occupation, health, size of family, and age criteria. Robin Haines calculated that only a tiny fraction of migrants came from England's poorhouses, and most of these were 'well-informed, self-selecting and literate', while over half possessed agricultural skills.¹¹⁹ In contrast to the narrow determinants of economic development found in Shann, Fitzpatrick, and Butlin, the colonial 'economy' was now being richly repopulated as far as the bureaucratic archive allowed.

Studies of the wool industry similarly benefited by turning attention from the blunt assessment of export statistics to new archives. Simon Ville, for example, produced a nuanced study of the tendons, ligaments, and sinews of the wool industry by focusing on the rise of the stock and station agent, which facilitated the credit, consignment, shipping and marketing relations connecting frontier pastoralists with Sydney merchants and London auction houses. This involved thinking about the colonial economy not in structural terms of investment, exports and expansion, but institutionally-embedded networks, strategies, and social capital that define market relations.¹²⁰

More generally, economic historians have shifted their attention from the narrow determinants of growth to broader comparative studies that contextualise Australian economic experience with global trends. Within this, 'prosperity' has emerged as yet another rubric for analysis. Where the wisdom of 'policy' or the drivers of 'growth' stimulated previous generations, a new agenda has crystallised around explaining Australia's historically high incomes per capita.¹²¹ Ian

249. Noel Butlin entertained the possibility of a 'concealment of convicts under the cloak of assisted immigration. Noel Butlin, *Forming a Colonial Economy, Australia 1810-1850* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 9.

¹¹⁹ Robin F. Haines, *Emigration and the Labouring Poor: Australian Recruitment in Britain and Ireland, 1831-60* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 6; Robin Haines, "Indigent Misfits or Shrewd Operators? Government-Assisted Emigrants from the United Kingdom to Australia, 1831-1860," *Population Studies* 48, no. 2 (July 1, 1994): 223-47.

¹²⁰ Simon Ville, *The Rural Entrepreneurs: A History of the Stock and Station Agent Industry in Australia and New Zealand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); This updated Alan Barnard's pioneering study: Alan Barnard, *The Australian Wool Market, 1840-1900* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1958). See also: Simon Ville and Claire Wright, "Buzz and Pipelines: Knowledge and Decision-Making in a Global Business Services Precinct", *Journal of Urban History* (April 2018): DOI: 10.1177/0096144218765456.

¹²¹ Ian McLean and Alan Taylor, "Australian Growth: A Californian Perspective", in Dani Rodrik (ed.), *In Search of Prosperity: Analytic Narratives on Economic Growth* (Princeton University Press, 2003), 23-52; Laura Panza and Jeffrey G. Williamson, "Australian Exceptionalism? Inequality and Living Standards 1821-1871," *CEH Discussion Papers* (Centre for Economic History, Research School of Economics, Australian

McLean's 2012 *Why Australia Prospered* provided a focal point to this research. Styled as 'the first single study into the reasons for Australia's sustained prosperity', by which he meant high income per capita, McLean rejected post-war 'growth literature' that took the trinity of physical, human, and technological capital as superficial determinants of growth, preferring to look 'more deeply' at the institutional 'mechanisms of growth'. McLean identified several such mechanisms, including Australia's natural resources regulated by access and property rights, rule of law, democratic political arrangements, and its 'positive relation' to Britain. In contrast to Fitzpatrick, McLean argued the colony was not 'exploited' by empire but enjoyed privileged access to London's capital and export markets, while self-government was achieved peacefully. Aboriginal 'firestick farming', convict transportation, and the favourable terms on which crown lands were acquired enhanced opportunities inherent in the natural resources.¹²²

In focusing on these broad array of factors determining colonial development, McLean in fact echoed aspects of W.C. Wentworth's constitutional argument and Wells' constructivist account. However, where Wentworth took 'wealth' and 'polity' to be inseparable domains of analysis, McLean's analysis was, ultimately, concerned with a singular 'economic' indicator, 'living standards'. McLean also eschewed Wells' critical edge. 'Prosperity', narrowly defined, was taken as a self-evident object of economic history, obscuring the asymmetrical power relations inherent in that collective prosperity. Nonetheless, McLean also emphasised Australian 'prosperity' had never been inevitable, and, by frequently employing counter-factual hypotheses, challenged classical-liberal critics of state intervention to account for what might otherwise have advanced Australian 'prosperity'. If rich squatters had achieved freehold tenure instead of long leases in 1847, for example, Australia might have looked more like Argentina with smallholders permanently locked out.¹²³ At a moment when global economic systems were coming to appear more precarious worldwide, McLean

National University, February 2017); Laura Panza and Jeffrey G. Williamson, "Australian Squatters, Convicts, and Capitalists: Dividing Up a Fast-Growing Frontier Pie 1821-1871," *CEH Discussion Papers* (Centre for Economic History, Research School of Economics, Australian National University, April 2017).

¹²² McLean, *Why Australia Prospered*, 57-79.

¹²³ Ibid., 78. See also: Barrie Dyster, "Argentine and Australian Development Compared," *Past & Present* 84, (1979): 91-110.

wanted to remind readers of the mixture of good fortune and good management that underlay Australia's 'economic' prosperity. In this sense, he recalled some of Shann's pedagogical vigour. 'Economic conditions' and 'the economy' were reinforced as having an existence autonomous from the state, whose integrity needed to be protected by liberal institutions and practices.

Conclusion

If Copland was right in declaring Australian history largely 'economic history', it was perhaps not in the way he presumed. Few would agree today that Australian history can be reduced so narrowly, but most would also agree 'economic factors' are essential to understanding that history. The recent resurgence in economic history, new histories of capitalism, and the call for 'a new materialism' in Australian history attest to this recurring importance. As we have seen, however, the practice of writing economic history is never simply a case of reflecting upon and interpreting a pre-given reality, but is bound up with constituting its own subject matter, the 'economic'. In this way, the writing of economic history is also always a political intervention, determining some things as 'economic' while excluding others.

This chapter, by way of preparation for the analysis that follows, has attempted to demonstrate that the 'economic', as a mode of dividing the social world and action, is a category with its own history; a category to be explained rather than assumed. The historicity of the category is evident in the writing of 'Australian economic history'. Texts that have been subsequently recruited into the canon of economic Australian historiography, such as Wentworth and Lang, or which ostensibly discuss matters seemingly essential to that history, such as in Mann, can be shown to possess no concept of a discrete economic domain or phenomena. Rather, they conceptualised activities such as land settlement, sheep farming and migration as problems of state administration, constitutionalism or polity. Only by the mid-nineteenth century, in Silvester and St Julian's text, do we find evidence of a more formalised attempt to distinguish some activities as 'economic', as opposed to 'political'. This establishes a chronology that will be examined in greater detail in coming chapters.

Even as the category became essential across the twentieth century with the consolidation of a new genre of writing, 'Australian economic history', it did not necessarily stabilise into an unproblematic, self-evident category. Rather, it has been possible to demonstrate a continuous process of contest and dispute between economic historians over what constitutes 'economic' activity. These disagreements exist as residue of the inherently historical and political character of naming things as economic. By destabilising the unity of Australian economic historiography, and highlighting the myriad ways the category has been deployed, we bring to light the 'inventedness' of economic discourse that is the subject of the remainder of this thesis.

(2)

The Constitutive Metaphors of Political Economy

We believe that by confining our own and the readers' attention to the Nature, Production and Distribution of Wealth, we shall produce a more clear, and complete, and instructive work than if we allowed ourselves to wander into the more interesting and more important, but far less definite, fields but which the comparatively narrow path of Political Economy is surrounded ... The business of a Political Economist is neither to recommend nor to dissuade, but to state general principles.

Nassau Senior, *An Outline of the Science of Political Economy*¹

THE 1836 PUBLICATION OF NASSAU SENIOR'S *OUTLINE OF THE SCIENCE OF Political Economy* was one of those remarkable nineteenth-century moments in which a new field of knowledge – a 'science', as he called it – was brought into sharp focus. Far from his object of inquiry being self-evident, Senior emphasised the struggle in creating this new domain of 'reason'. The discipline's questions had to be specific, clearing up what he thought had been the misuse of the term 'political economy', as previous authors had used it 'in a much wider sense'. Senior criticised British and continental writers who 'invaded' their analyses with discussions of the 'general legislator or the statesman'. Political economy, for Senior, might be one of the 'subservient Sciences' to the 'art of government', but it was 'essentially different in its subject, its premises, and its conclusions' to the great Science of legislation'. Where the latter was concerned with 'human Welfare', the 'subject treated by the Political Economist ... is not

¹ Nassau Senior, *An Outline of the Science of Political Economy* (New York: Augustus M. Kelly, 1836), 2-3.

Happiness, but Wealth'.²

By the time Senior wrote *Outline*, political economy in this delimited form had been in British consciousness for some two decades. Senior's was not a moment of invention, but consolidation. This chapter is concerned with both these processes: the invention and then the authorised consolidation of the economic as a domain of knowledge and activity. In Chapter One, I surveyed the historiography of Australian economic history to identify ways this thesis builds on but also challenges core assumptions in the prevailing literature. This survey demonstrated that the 'economic' had a moment of genesis sometime in the early nineteenth century, from which it acquired a distinct political potency. Here, I now dig deeper into British intellectual and governmental history to conduct three critical tasks that frame discussions in this thesis. I examine the invention of the economic category, then trace out the government practices that helped consolidate this knowledge, while concurrently connecting the implications of these processes to the colonial project in New South Wales.

The first of these tasks requires excavating the distinctive 'constitutive metaphors' in Ricardian political economy, which shaped the 'economic' as an autonomous domain of knowledge, inquiry and governance. Metaphors, we will recall from the Introduction, facilitate cognition and thus ways of 'seeing'. In this way, theoretical discourses that model the world rest upon fundamental constitutive metaphors which delimit their purview of inquiry. In the early nineteenth century, political economists rendered new imaginings of 'wealth' and 'community' that made it possible to abstract or 'grasp' the economic as a distinct, self-regulating domain of production, distribution and accumulation. The second task requires recovering the simultaneous emergence of a new kind of document that substantiated these innovations as a way of dividing up and seeing the world the government report. An account of these two processes lays the

² Ibid., 1-5. In distinguishing the subject of political economy as 'Wealth' not 'Happiness', Senior was also engaging in a debate initiated by Malthus and Ricardo over the proper ends of political economy. See: "Higher Maxims: Happiness Versus Wealth In Malthus and Ricardo", in Stefan Collini, Donald Winch, and John Burrow (eds.), *That Noble Science of Politics: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Intellectual History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 63-89. On the distinction between British political economy, with its narrow focus on wealth, and the grander, more amorphous French understanding of the discipline, see: Cheryl B. Welch, "Social science from the French Revolution to positivism", in Roy Porter, Theodore M. Porter, and Dorothy Ross (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Science: Volume 7, The Modern Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 176-78.

groundwork for understanding how aspects of the colonial project – convicts, Aboriginal peoples, land settlement, wool growing, and migration – were reclassified as ‘economic’ problems. In this way, this chapter introduces the relationship between ‘theory’ and ‘government’ which underpinned the economisation of New South Wales.

As in Chapter One, the focus here is on a particular set of sources that draw out a series of conceptual ruptures and innovations. This focus will lead into an examination of how such concepts played out in the imperial and colonial government archive. Following the earlier work of Keith Tribe, Ryan Walter, and others, the strategy here is to work through a series of genres and texts published between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries which are typically conceived as key works in ‘the history of economic thought’, and to highlight breaks in their respective forms of knowledge so as to further emphasise the conceptual novelty of Ricardian political economy.³ Where Tribe focussed on shifting ‘discourses’ and Walter on ‘forms of argument’ to highlight these ruptures, I focus on their shifting metaphors, leading into my reading of government reports in later chapters. It was not through the deployment of formal arguments that imperial authorities began speaking about the colonial world in economic terms, but their appropriation of metaphors that naturalised a distinct theoretical imagining as an empirical reality.

This chapter is divided into four sections, each assessing a different set of sources. The first deals with seventeenth- and eighteenth-century tracts that offered ‘counsel’ to statesmen on matters of population, trade and agriculture. These included writings on political arithmetic, counsel on trade and agrarian patriotism. Section Two re-examines Adam Smith’s novel treatment of ‘wealth’ in *Wealth of Nations*, and Section Three does the same for Ricardo’s treatment of ‘community’ in *Principles of Political Economy* in order to tease out the metaphorical innovations that constituted the economic domain. The final section recounts the emergence of the government report and its sociological capacity to *authorise* this economic vocabulary. As in Chapter One, while the emphasis here is with breaks in word usage and conceptual schemes across

³ Keith Tribe, *Land, Labour, and Economic Discourse* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1978); Ryan Walter, *A Critical History of the Economy: On the Birth of the National and International Economies* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013). See also: Guus Dix, “Ricardo’s Discursive Demarcations: A Foucauldian Study of the Formation of the Economy as an Object of Knowledge,” *Erasmus* 7, no. 2 (2014): 1-29.

a specifically selected archive, this survey will help highlight what was at stake in the inheritance of such schemes in New South Wales.

Through this analysis, a number of central ideas, themes, and contexts are introduced. While some of these ideas have already been indicated in the four colonial texts in Chapter One, we now locate their provenance, significance, and implications for nineteenth-century colonial government. The first are the metaphors of ‘wealth’ and ‘community’ underwriting economic knowledge. For seventeenth and eighteenth century writers on population, trade, and agriculture, ‘wealth’ had been conceptualised as a finite entity that ‘circulated’ through the body politic as a modality of state power and national security. This model rested on a more fundamental idea of the community – the body politic, nation, or commonwealth – as an enlarged royal household with the statesman or sovereign as its patriarchal head. On this view, neither wealth nor production had an autonomous dynamic, but were absorbed as problems of state ‘strength’. One of Smith’s chief achievements in *Wealth of Nations* was to separate analyses of wealth and strength, creating a conceptual link between wealth generation, progress, and civilisation. The effect of this link was to reimagine wealth as a dynamic, historical process that tended to ‘progress’ or ‘accumulate’ as a mark of national advancement. However, Smith’s analysis of wealth remained largely a problem of the household-state. It was only with Ricardo’s innovative treatment of ‘community’ as a self-regulating, wealth-producing entity constituted by the ‘distribution’ of its productive factors of landlords, capitalists, and labourers that a distinct economic domain came into view. It was in explicating the relationship between these agencies that the deductive language of supply and demand, profits and wages was formalised as a way of interpreting social interactions, by which social phenomena could be re-classified as ‘economic’.⁴

In this way, second, this survey establishes the matrix of transitions explored in the chapters that follows. Shifting the idea of community from a household to a wealth-distributing entity had profound implications for comprehending problems crucial to settling New South

⁴ To be sure, this treatment of wealth and community created a knotty tension between the aim of unlimited national wealth accumulation and the reality of a community among which limited resources in the form of rents, profits, and wages were to be distributed, a tension with which modern economics was hereafter riddled. As noted in the Introduction, however, our concern is not with the limitation of these ideas but the ways in which they were politically transformative.

Wales. The colonial processes of land settlement, wool growing, and migration, respectively involved a re-categorisation of agriculture, trade, and population from administrative modalities of state, to dynamics performing roles of 'land', 'capital', and 'labour' in a wealth-producing community.

A third set of themes are introduced in discussing Smith's version of the Four Stage Theory. Conjectural history was one of the key analogies by which Smith gave wealth an autonomous historical dynamic, distinct from problems of 'security'. At the heart of this dynamic, however, were two anthropologies of human difference. First, in the progressive account of modes of subsistence from hunter/gather, to pastoralism, to agriculture, and then commerce, stadial theory distinguished the primitive 'savage' New World peoples from the sociable, civilised, commercial Europeans. Second, this analysis of 'commercial society' was deeply gendered, assigning men and women different roles and propensities in creating a 'civilisation'. When Smith's account of wealth was inherited into the Ricardian model of the 'economic' community, so too were these assumptions about human difference. Economic knowledge therefore targeted men but not women, and naturalised a teleology from savagery to competitive market exchange. The colonial application of this schema had acute implications for the European treatment of Aboriginal peoples (Chapter Three) and the constitution of the masculine, colonial 'capitalist' and investor (Chapter Four).

Finally, this chapter establishes a number of conditions that were essential to the governmental appropriation of 'economic' knowledge in New South Wales. The first context relates to the different genres in which knowledge was produced. Three kinds of 'genres' are examined in this chapter: early modern 'counsel' in the form of written pamphlets addressed to statesmen, late-Enlightenment theoretical treatises in the form of Ricardo and J.S. Mill's *Principles*, and the commission or select committee report which proliferated from the early nineteenth century. Each genre had a different epistemological capacity. Counsel aimed to directly advise on problems of state administration, and therefore took for granted the royal household as its target of knowledge. Theoretical treatises, imitating rationalised natural scientific inquiry, proclaimed an analysis of 'principles', 'laws', or 'maxims' that purposely abstracted its subject matter from 'reality'. Under these conditions, something like a distinct economic sphere

became imaginable. However, it was only through projecting these theoretical terms in government reports, with their unique capacity to formulate public problems and impose official knowledge, that the economic was consolidated as a domain of knowledge, argument, and justification.

A second context was the ending of the Napoleonic Wars, which created circumstances to experiment with new vocabularies and also with the function of colonies. Part of the argument of this thesis is that economic knowledge was both a product of and produced its times. While Ricardo formulated his model of community in debating the prevailing Corn Laws, his general configuration proved immensely conducive to reformulating administrative problems that followed the cessation of war, including social dislocation, the resumption of trade, and colonial policy. While political economy, ‘theory’, was then initially the purview of a particular kind of politician and commentator, and faced the Burkean critique as a dangerous ‘system’, its deductive logic proved an increasingly useful technique of government to address and generalise about a whole series of domestic and colonial problems. It was in this context, in which governmental inquiry, economic imagining, and an imperialism became ‘tied by paper’, as Alan Atkinson wrote, that colonies such as New South Wales were repurposed to new economic ends.⁵

Counselling political œconomy: governing the household and circulation

When New South Wales was colonised by the British in the late eighteenth century, ideas about national wealth continued to be largely structured by semantic models inherited from antiquity. ‘Economics’ is drawn from the Greek term, *oikonomia*, which etymologically combined two elements *oikos*, referring to the household, and *nomos*, referring in the broadest sense to law, involving stewardship and commutative justice.⁶ ‘Economics’, then, designated the ‘art’ of

⁵ Alan Atkinson, *The Europeans in Australia: A History*, Vol. 1: The Beginning (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997), 27.

⁶ M. I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, Second Edition (Berkeley: University Of California Press, 1985), 17-18; Tribe, *The Economy of the Word*, 23-26. Singer notes that because it encompasses the notion of ‘stewardship’, *oikonomia* should not be read as ‘the laws of household management’ in a sense that prefigures the laws of managing a national economy. The most general translation, rather, covers the wise administration of the household and the maintenance of household objects in their rightful place. See: Kurt Singer, “Oikonomia: An Enquiry into the Beginnings of Economic Thought and Language,” *Kyklos*, 11 (1958): 29-54.

household management. The *oikos* and *polis* were clearly different places, one the association of free citizens, the other of a master, his wife, children, servants, and animals. But *oikos* was also distinguished from *chrematismos*, the sphere of money-getting but confined to domestic processes of acquiring, preserving, improving and using in the confined space of the household.⁷

Keith Tribe has traced incremental changes in the use of the word ‘economic’ that indicated ‘constant transformation’ and ‘conceptual discontinuities’ over two millennia.⁸ Nonetheless, the semantic content of ‘*œconomy*’ as a domestic and agricultural category was preserved into early modern works of moral and legal philosophy, domestic instruction, and guides to husbandry.⁹ In Francis Hutcheon’s *Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy*, for example, a section on ‘*œconomics*’ covered the proper conduct of marriage, duties of parents and children, and the relation of masters to servants. Likewise, master and servant law in Blackstone’s *Commentaries*, fell under the head of family law, what he tellingly called ‘*private, economical relations*’.¹⁰ Manuals on household management were directed at ‘economists’, just as Jane Austen could refer to one of her characters as a poor ‘economist’ in failing to manage servants.¹¹

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the patriarchal household came into wider usage as a metaphor for conceptualising the kingdom or state as an enlarged domestic commonwealth.¹² James Steuart’s 1767 *Inquiry into the Principles of Political Œconomy*, the first title in English to bear the compound ‘political *œconomy*’, reflected this logic. Steuart’s spelling

⁷ Tribe, *The Economy of the Word*, 23-25.

⁸ Ibid., 21.

⁹ The husbandry guide, emerging from the sixteenth century and involved in a recovery of ancient texts on agriculture, were especially important respect. See below, and Tribe, *Land, Labour and Economic Discourse*, Chapter Four.

¹⁰ William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England in Four Books*, Vol. 1. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1893), Chapter XIV, 421-22. Blackstone grouped ‘master and servant’, ‘husband and wife’, and ‘parent and child’ as the ‘three great relations in private life’. He summarised the first as ‘founded in convenience, whereby a man is directed to call in the assistance of another, where his own skill and labour will not be sufficient to answer the cares incumbent upon him’.

¹¹ See, for example: A gentleman of experience, *The economist: Shewing, in a variety of estimates, from fourscore pounds a year to upwards of 800l. how comfortably and genteely a family may live, with frugality, for little money. Together with the cheapest method of keeping horses and carriages* (London: J. Bell, 1774); Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park* (London: Penguin, 2003), 361.

¹² Gordon Schochert, *Patriarchalism in political thought: the authoritarian family and political speculation and attitudes, especially in the seventeenth century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1975). Scholars who have recognised this semantic context have also then called into question the usefulness of distinctions between ‘public’ and ‘private’ sphere in early modern England. See, for example: Conal Condren, *Argument and Authority: The Presupposition of Oaths and Offices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 71-80.

of ‘œconomic’ was not archaism, but indicated an inheritance of the Greek *oikonomia* that distinguished government administration as a form of house holding from practices of wealth accumulation.¹³ ‘What œconomy is in a family,’ wrote Steuart, ‘political œconomy is in a state’. It followed that ‘the whole œconomy must be directed by the head, who is both lord and steward of the whole family’.¹⁴ On the frontispiece of his work, Steuart listed the areas of practical management that his work would cover: population, agriculture, trade, industry, money, coin interest, circulation, banks, exchange, public credit and taxes. These were not understood as integrated components in an ‘economic system’, but sites for wise administration. They were unified only as problems to be considered by the statesman.¹⁵

We have already encountered a work that reflects Steuart’s household model of governance in Mann’s *Present Picture of New South Wales*, which offered advice on colonial administration for the munificent governor. In highlighting specific areas of administration or intervention, Steuart and Mann were partaking in a longer tradition of offering ‘counsel’ to a sovereign or legislator. This was a practice that had begun with Renaissance Italian humanism before migrating to Elizabethan England.¹⁶ As Walter notes, offering ‘counsel’ designated different approaches to advising wise and just government of the royal household.¹⁷ The source of such counsel ranged from the Privy Council, appointed ministers, officers, oppositional parliamentarians, or vested interests, each creating its own expertise and subject of intervention.¹⁸ In addition to the ‘household’, a second constitutive metaphor regulating discourses of counsel was a conception of ‘wealth’ as an entity that ‘circulates’ through the household, kingdom or polity, which drew on anatomical and circulatory models. So where William Petty drew an enduring analogy between ‘*the Body Natural, and the Body Politick*’, Hobbes, following

¹³ Tribe, *Land, Labour and Economic Discourse*, 81-2.

¹⁴ James Steuart, *Inquiry into the Principles of Political Oeconomy*, Vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 1992 [1767]), Book I, 1-2.

¹⁵ Tribe, *Land, Labour, and Economic Discourse*, 84-5. On the discursive role of the statesman in political œconomy, see: Walter, *A Critical History of the Economy*, 13.

¹⁶ Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought: Volume 1, The Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 213-21.

¹⁷ Walter, *A Critical History of the Economy*, 12.

¹⁸ Jacqueline Rose, “Kingship and Counsel in Early Modern England”, *The Historical Journal* 54, no. 1 (March, 2011): 47-71. For a useful overview over the ‘instability’ of this eighteenth century literature which defies easy generic classification and which simply cannot be characterised as either ‘mercantilist’ or ‘nascent political economy’, see: Julian Hoppit, “The Contexts And Contours Of British Economic Literature, 1660-1760,” *The Historical Journal* 49, no. 1 (March 2006): 79-110.

Harvey's study of blood circulation, likened the flow of money as preserving health and life of the realm of state.¹⁹ By construing the state as a household or body, and wealth as a limited, circulating entity, these authors were not envisaging distinct economic rationality, but a reason of state.

There were three main varieties to offering such counsel. As we shall see, these traditions can be tracked into the governance of early New South Wales. Population analyses focussed on the functions performed by the kingdom's constituent parts in securing the realm. Counsel on trade placed the origin of wealth in a set of advantageous foreign exchanges. The agrarian variant traced the origin to the 'gifts' of Nature.²⁰ In each variant of counsel, population, trade, and agriculture were treated as rival sources of national wealth which functioned as modalities of state power and strength.²¹ The task of counsellors was to organise these sources in the best interest of the sovereign.

Analysis of population was perhaps the earliest subgenre of political œconomy, emerging in the form of seventeenth-century 'political arithmetic'. The work of political arithmeticians such as Petty, Gregory King, John Graunt, and Charles Davenant divided population by certain groupings, identified by their contributions to state power. Petty, for example, thought seamen the most useful sector of the population for they combined the three roles of seamen, soldier, and merchant, earning three times as much as the husbandman and they could also be deployed in times of war.²² Even as political arithmetic formally fell from favour in the following century, population analysis remained an important aspect of assessing state strength.²³ David Hume thought the more people employed in manufacture, 'the more powerful is any state; since the persons engaged in that labour [rather than agriculture] may easily be converted in to the public service [i.e., the army]'.²⁴ Importantly, these analyses offered not primitive labour theories of

¹⁹ William Petty, *The Political Anatomy of Ireland* (London: Printed for D. Brown and W. Rogers, 1691), Preface.

²⁰ For a concise summary of the 'genres' of this discourse, see: Tribe, *Land, Labour and Economic Discourse*, 85.

²¹ Walter, *Critical History*, 41, 112.

²² William Petty, *Political Arithmetick* (London: Printed for Robert Clavel, 1690), 17-18.

²³ Julian Hoppit, "Political Arithmetic in Eighteenth-Century England," *The Economic History Review* 49, no. 3 (1996): 516-40.

²⁴ David Hume, "On Commerce", in Knud Haakonssen (ed.), *David Hume: Political Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 99.

value, but an account of the discrete function served by each member in the polity.²⁵ Estimations on the size and composition of population were used as a measure of national strength, which, as will be discussed in Chapter Six, made outbound emigration a cause for widespread hysteria right throughout the eighteenth century.

Gregory King's 'A Scheme of Income and Expenses for the Several Families of England, Calculated for the year 1688' was one of the most elaborate expressions of political arithmetic. King tabulated an approximation of the income and expenses for each patriarchal family unit in England, dividing them between twenty-six different 'Ranks, Degrees, Titles and Qualifications' (**figure 2.1**).²⁶ The crucial distinction for King was between those who were 'increasing the Wealth of the Kingdom' and those who were decreasing it. Social historians have tended to read King's table as an attempt to track the emergence of market society in early modern England, and historians of economic thought treat it as an anticipation of national income accounting.²⁷ But King's table is a useful reminder of the way discursive practices such as making tables help to constitute rather than reflect the social world. King was explicit about his purposes. His survey was, essentially, a stock take of the nation's military strength, an assessment of the sovereign's 'interests', which King painstakingly attempted to compare with rivals France and Holland.²⁸ This, he considered, was a 'piece of political knowledge'. As Peter Buck has written, the

²⁵ Tribe, *Land, Labour and Economic Discourse*, 90-1.

²⁶ King's table was originally published by Charles Davenant in his *An essay upon the probable methods of making a people gainers in the ballance of trade* (London: James Knapton, 1699). It differs in slight detail to the original which was part of a manuscript entitled *Natural and Political Conclusions Upon the State and Condition of England 1696*, along with a range of other tables and calculations. This manuscript was only printed in 1802 by George Chalmers as an appendix in his *Estimate of the Comparative Strength of Great Britain*. Peter Laslett has concluded the manuscript material would have been known and used by the government. The full manuscript has been reprinted in: Peter Laslett (ed.), *The Earliest Classics: John Graunt and Gregory King* (Farnborough: Gregg, 1973). For a discussion, see: Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost* (London: Methuen, 1971), 267 n27.

²⁷ See, for example: Keith Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 27, 267. For King as a forefather of national accounting: John W. Kendrick, "The Historical Development of National-Income Accounts," *History of Political Economy* 2, no. 2 (1970): 284-315.

²⁸ Gregory King, "Natural and Political Observations and Conclusions upon the State and Condition of England" (1696), 31 in Laslett, *Earliest Classics*. Likewise, in his monumental 1662 analysis of England's bills of mortality, King's contemporary, John Graunt, offered 'observations ... concerning Trade and Government, others cornering the Air, Countries, Seasons, Fruitfulness, Health, Diseases, Longevity, and the proportions between the Sex, and Ages of Mankind', as being important to the 'Art of Government'. Mastering such numbers, said Grant, would help 'to preserve the Subject in *Peace* and *Plenty*' and assist 'good, certain, and easie [sic] Government, and even to balance Parties, and factions both in *Church* and *State*'. John Graunt, "Natural and Political Observations Made Upon the Bills of Mortality" (1662), 1, 72, 74, in Laslett, *Earliest Classics*.

Scheme D. A Scheme of the Income and Expence of the severall Families of England, Calculated for the Year, 1688.

Number of Families.	RANKS, DEGREES, TITLES, and QUALIFICATIONS.	Heads per Family.	Number of Persons.	Yearly Income per Family.	Yearly Income in general.	Yearly Income per Head.	Yearly Expence per Head.	Yearly Increase per Head.	Yearly Increase in general.
				l. s.	l. s. d.	l. s. d.	l. s. d.	l. s. d.	l.
160	Temporal Lords	40	6,400	3,200	512,000	80--0	70--0	10--0	64,000
26	Spiritual Lords	20	520	1,300	33,800	65--0	45--0	20--0	10,400
800	Baronets	16	12,800	880	704,000	55--0	49--0	6--0	76,800
600	Knights	13	7,800	650	390,000	50--0	45--0	5--0	39,000
3,000	Esquires	10	30,000	450	1,200,000	45--0	41--0	4--0	120,000
12,000	Gentlemen	8	96,000	280	2,880,000	35--0	32--0	3--0	288,000
5,000	Persons in greater Offices and Places	8	40,000	240	1,200,000	30--0	26--0	4--0	160,000
5,000	Persons in lesser Offices and Places	6	30,000	120	600,000	20--0	17--0	3--0	90,000
2,000	Eminent Merchants and Traders by Sea	8	16,000	400	800,000	50--0	37--0	13--0	208,000
8,000	Lesser Merchants and Traders by Sea	6	48,000	198	1,600,000	33--0	27--0	6--0	288,000
10,000	Persons in the Law	7	70,000	154	1,540,000	22--0	18--0	4--0	280,000
2,000	Eminent Clergy-men	6	12,000	72	144,000	12--0	10--0	2--0	24,000
8,000	Lesser Clergy-men	5	40,000	50	400,000	10--0	9--4	0--16	32,000
40,000	Freeholders of the better sort	7	280,000	91	3,640,000	13--0	11--15	1--5	350,000
120,000	Freeholders of the lesser sort	5½	660,000	55	6,600,000	10--0	9--10	0--10	330,000
150,000	Farmers	5	750,000	42--10	6,375,000	8--10	8--5	0--5	187,500
15,000	Persons in Liberal Arts and Sciences	5	75,000	60	900,000	12--0	11--0	1--0	75,000
50,000	Shopkeepers and Tradesmen	4½	225,000	45	2,250,000	10--0	9--0	1--0	225,000
60,000	Artizans and Handicrafts	4	240,000	38	2,280,000	9--10	9--0	0--10	120,000
5,000	Naval Officers	4	20,000	80	400,000	20--0	18--0	2--0	40,000
4,000	Military Officers	4	16,000	60	240,000	15--0	14--0	1--0	16,000
500,586		5½	2,675,520	68--18	34,488,800	12--18	11--15--4	1--2--8	3,023,700
50,000	Common Seamen	3	150,000	20	1,000,000	7--0	7--10	0--10	75,000
364,000	Labouring People and Out Servants	3½	1,275,000	15	5,460,000	4--10	4--12	0--2	127,500
400,000	Cottagers and Paupers	3¼	1,300,000	6--10	2,000,000	2--0	2--5	0--5	325,000
35,000	Common Soldiers	2	70,000	14	490,000	7--0	7--10	0--10	35,000
849,000		3½	2,795,000	10--10	8,950,000	3--5	3--9	0--4	562,500
	Vagrants; as Gipsies, Thieves, Beggars, &c.		30,000		60,000	2--0	4--0	2--0	60,000
500,586	Increasing the Wealth of the Kingdom	5½	2,675,520	68--18	34,488,800	12--18	11--15--4	1--2--8	3,023,700
849,000	Decreasing the Wealth of the Kingdom	3½	2,825,000	10--10	9,010,000	3--3	3--7--6	0--4--6	622,500
1,349,586	Net Totals	4½	5,500,520	32--5	43,491,800	7--18	7--9--3	0--8--9	2,401,200

Figure 2.1 Gregory King, “A Scheme for the Income and Expence of the Several Families of England, Calculated for the Year, 1688”, reprinted in Charles Davenant, *An essay upon the probable methods of making a people gainers in the ballance of trade* (London: James Knapton, 1699).

deployments of number, quantification, and calculation by political arithmeticians served not to reveal social ‘laws’ as it would for nineteenth-century statisticians who did not seek causal relations between the entities they counted, but to impose order on discrete entities of the ‘body politic’ in a world of rigid social hierarchies.²⁹ Or as Petty’s most recent biographer, Ted McCormick, has written, political arithmetic is best understood not as an early economics but an ambitious art of government by demographic manipulation, exerted to conduct specific political programs, such as colonising Ireland.³⁰

The association between wealth and strength was as equally explicit in writings on trade. Counsellors on trade were by definition counsellors on strength.³¹ Arguments for a favourable

²⁹ Peter Buck, “Seventeenth-Century Political Arithmetic: Civil Strife and Vital Statistics,” *Isis* 68, no. 1 (1977): 67-84; Theodore M. Porter, *The Rise of Statistical Thinking, 1820-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 18-20.

³⁰ Ted McCormick, *William Petty And the Ambitions of Political Arithmetic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 10.

³¹ Walter, *A Critical History of the Economy*, 39. As Polanyi illustrated with typical clarity: ‘In the past the organization of trade had been military and warlike; it was adjunct of the pirate, the rover, the armed

balance of trade were designed to preserve what John Brewer memorably called the ‘fiscal-military state’ in eighteenth century Britain, ensuring the ‘state’s ability to supply its war and security needs’.³² It was in this sense Defoe claimed that ‘if any one Nation could govern Trade, that Nation would govern the World’.³³ Arguments for ‘free trade’ and ‘protection’, as we would call them today, were not ideological stances on enhancing production or national aggrandisement, but responses to specific political or military objectives. The aim was to organise trade to maintain national order, employ the poor and, above all, provide an income to pay for standing armies in a world of hostile international relations.³⁴

As was evident even in J.D. Lang’s *Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales* in Chapter One, corruptions of trade were equated with corruptions of the body politic.³⁵ Such ‘corruption’ could occur in a number of ways, including monopolies, jobbing or the perishing of the trade commodity itself. Governments were encouraged to obtain a favourable ‘balance of trade’, that is to be a greater net exporter of goods than importer, which would create a stockpile of bullion with which to pay standing armies. Adam Smith later critiqued such counsel on trade as an ‘absurd speculation’, claiming it confused hoarding money with wealth. However, unlike Smith, who was concerned with the accumulation of wealth, counsellors put a premium on

caravan, the hunter and trapper, the sword bearing merchant, the armed burgess of the towns, the adventurers and explorers, the planters and conquistadores, the man-hunters and slave-traders, the colonial armies of the chartered companies’. Only in the nineteenth century was ‘all this was forgotten. Trade was now dependent upon an international monetary system which could not function in a general war’. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2001), 15-16.

³² John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688-1783* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989). Or, as Paul Langford has written: ‘Trade with European powers was essentially a form of undeclared warfare, the object being to maximize the benefits to the home country while minimizing those to competitors’. Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 174.

³³ Daniel Defoe, *The Advantages of Peace and Commerce: With Some Remarks on the East India Company* (London: Printed for J. Brotherton and Tho. Cox, and Sold by A. Dodd, 1729), 7. See also: Walter, *A Critical History of the Economy* 50-51.

³⁴ For an outline of trade as the basis of ‘military strength, national glory and political stability’, see: Istvan Hont, “Free trade and the economic limits to politics: neo-Machiavellian political economy reconsidered”, in Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade: International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 185-266.

³⁵ Walter notes four types of anxiety about corruption expressed by counselors on trade: (1) the circulating matter itself was corrupted (2) the circulating material might fail to circulate, (3) circulating material might perish, and (4) did whether a particular trade actually increase the quantity of bullion. *Critical History*, 42.

bullion as the most reliable medium to move men and goods, and to pay armies, while not falling dependent on rival nations for grain or, as is discussed in Chapter Five specifically, wool.³⁶

This strict, militaristic management of trade had consequences for a broader ‘policing’ of the lower orders, too.³⁷ Maintaining a trade advantage over rival nations meant export prices had to be competitive. Wages were an obvious target in achieving this goal. This approach coalesced with the belief that English workers were prone to idleness and wages needed to be sufficiently low to force labourers to work a full week. Patriarchal discipline rather than incentives were assumed to underpin social order. The ‘utility of poverty’ was assumed to be the essential underpinning of creating ‘riches’. ‘Labour’, wrote Colquhoun as late as 1806, ‘can result only from a state of poverty’.³⁸ Similarly, the price of grain was ‘policed’ by Assize Courts as a matter of discipline, but also justice, tethered to the labourers’ ‘right of subsistence’ enjoyed as a member of the royal household.³⁹ As E.P. Thompson described, this ‘right’ could mobilise its own form of plebeian agencies.⁴⁰ The full array of what Smith would call the ‘mercantile policy’ was understood as offering protection from contingencies such as famine or war that would otherwise harm the kingdom.

A third variant on counselling household organisation focused on agriculture as the source of national wealth and strength. One of the fundamental tensions in early modern England

³⁶ WN, II.ii.23, III.i.1, IV.iiic.2; Tribe, *Land, Labour and Economic Discourse*, 88; Walter, *A Critical History of the Economy*, 42. For an economists’ perspective, see: Cosimo Perrotta, “Is the Mercantilist Theory of the favourable balance of trade really erroneous?” *History of Political Economy* 23, no. 2 (1991), 301-336.

³⁷ On ‘policing the poor’ see: Mitchell Dean, *The Constitution of Poverty: Toward a Genealogy of Liberal Governance* (London: Routledge, 1991); Ann Firth, “Moral Supervision and Social Order: wages and consumption”, *History of the Human Sciences* 15, no. 1 (2002): 46-7..

³⁸ Patrick Colquhoun, *A Treatise on Indigence* (London: J. Hatchard, 1806), 8; On the doctrine of the ‘utility of poverty’, see: Edgar S. Furniss, *The Position of the Laborer in a System of Nationalism: A Study in the Labor Theories of the Later English Mercantilists* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1920), 117-156; A. W. Coats, “Changing Attitudes to Labour in the Mid-Eighteenth Century,” *The Economic History Review* 11, no. 1 (August 1, 1958): 35-51.

³⁹ Karl Polanyi, “The Economy as Instituted Process,” in K. Polyani. C.M. Arensberg and H.W. Pearson (eds.) *Trade and Market in the Early Empires: Economics and History and Theory* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1957), 255; Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff, ‘Needs and Justice in *The Wealth of Nations*: An Introductory Essay’ in Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff (eds.), *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), 13-26..

⁴⁰ E. P. Thompson, “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century,” *Past & Present* 50 (February 1, 1971): 76-136; Hont and Ignatieff have warned against setting up a reductive contrast between ‘moral economy’ as vestigial, traditional moralism and political economy, an amoral, non-intrusive science. ‘To the extent that favouring an adequate subsistence for the poor can be called a moral imperative, it was one shared by paternalists and political economists alike’. ‘Needs and Justice’, 15.

was not between capital and labour, but between landed and manufacturing or merchant interest. In contrast to merchants who counselled that the sovereign's trading interests were most important to the kingdom, the claims of the landed interest as natural leaders of the nation were based on the presumed association between husbandry, patriarchal house holding and an aristocratic 'stake' in the nation's soil.⁴¹ It also arose from the related assertion that wealth circulation began with agricultural activity and procuring the 'gifts of Nature'. On this view, the 'rent' paid by a landlord's tenants functioned not as a factor of the productive process but as recognition that the initial stage of circulating national wealth began with the stewardship of nature.⁴²

While having close ties with French Physiocracy, English agrarianism had its own distinctive political significance.⁴³ The main channel by which landed interests were advocated was not counsel to statesmen, but advice manuals written by gentlemen farmers for each other. The central theme in these manuals was a doctrine of 'agricultural improvement'.⁴⁴ Initially, agricultural improvement was associated with carrying out God's will, cultivating the bountiful

⁴¹ Matthew McCormack, *The Independent Man: Citizenship and Gender Politics in Georgian England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 65. On conceptions of landed property as the basic of the relationship between government and personality, see: J.G.A. Pocock, "Authority and property: the question of liberal origins", in *Virtue, Commerce and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 51-71; James Tully, *A Discourse on Property: John Locke and His Adversaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

⁴² Tribe, *Land, Labour and Economic Discourse*, 92-3. 'Rent' was traditionally a legal concept designating relations of subordination between lord and tenant on a generational basis, a pattern that only began to shift after the 1750s (see below). In eighteenth-century farming manuals, Hale, for example, treated 'inclosure' as an opportunity to clarify and redistribute property relations among the deserving and productive, displacing the seventeenth-century concern with enclosure as purely a mode of engineering improvement. Hitt likewise advised landowners on the 'increase on rent if lands are fenced'. Thomas Hale, *A Compleat Body of Husbandry* (Dublin: Printed for L. Flin, 1757); Thomas Hitt, *A Treatise of Husbandry on the Improvement of Dry and Barren Lands* (Dublin: Printed for Richard Watts and William Whitestone, 1761).

⁴³ The novelty of the physiocrat 'system' introduced by Francois Quesnay was it departed from purely practical problems to a theoretical conception of classes of producer and consumer, which placed a necessary (but still thoroughly hierarchical) interconnection between rich farmer, peasant and manufacturer. Agriculture was assumed to be the foundation of the kingdom, the only truly productive activity. Manufacturing was useful but neutral; wealth turned on agricultural output. Quesnay's *Tableau Economique* visually represented this process, demonstrating an annual cycle of payments flowing from farmers, to landed proprietors, to manufacturers (the 'sterile class') who, in turn, return their income into purchasing manufactured and agricultural goods. While now concerned explicitly with a process of production, the *Tableau* (and Physiocracy generally) nevertheless remains founded on a conception of wealth circulating in the state, not autonomously distinct from it. It instead posits an argument for agriculture as the basis of the state. Tribe, *Economy of the Word*, 47-49.

⁴⁴ Sarah Tarlow, *The Archaeology of Improvement in Britain, 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 40. See also: Paul Slack, *The Invention of Improvement: Information and Material Progress in the Seventeenth-century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

providence of Nature, and serving aristocratic rights and duties.⁴⁵ By the mid-eighteenth century, agricultural improvement was more a political and moral doctrine, which C.A. Bayly has described as ‘agrarian patriotism’. Beginning as an oppositional language to Court politics, agrarian patriotism grew into a national, ‘moral crusade’ that united great landowners, yeoman farmers, and labourers under a single ‘dominant faith’.⁴⁶ Agrarianism was the cultural impulse that promoted programs of imperial land reform, prominently in India but also in places such as New South Wales.

From these perspectives, land retained its moral, civic, and patriotic functions into the early nineteenth century. While Arthur Young’s famous surveys of farming practice and husbandry manuals helped popularise techniques of agrarian accounting that organised farms as productive units, these were addressed to ‘gentleman farmers’ who retained distinct civic and moral obligations.⁴⁷ For William Marshall, writing his 1798 survey of southern English agriculture, the essence of agrarianism was ‘producing that most valuable order of men, any country can possess – men who occupy their own estates and who at once are best calculated to defend and cultivate their country’. As such, establishing graded ‘distinctions in society’ with land as the basis, ‘appear to be necessary to the lasting welfare of a nation’.⁴⁸

In the overall context of this thesis, it is important to note that discourses on population, trade and agriculture did not constitute a singular British imperial policy. While each of these

⁴⁵ J. Thirsk, “Plough and pen: agricultural writers in the seventeenth century”, in T. H. Aston, P. R. Coss, C. Dyer and J. Thirsk (eds.), *Social relations and ideas: essays in honour of R.H. Hilton*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 295-318; A. McRae, “Husbandry manuals and the language of agrarian improvement”, in M. Leslie and T. Raylor (eds.), *Culture and cultivation in Early Modern England: Writing and the Land* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), 35-62.

⁴⁶ C. A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780-1830* (London: Longman, 1989), 80, 121-4. For the transition from ‘improvement’ as an evangelical to scientific movement, but maintaining the nationalistic undertones, see: Sarah Wilmot, “The business of Improvement: agriculture and scientific culture in Britain, c.1770-c.1870,” *Historical Geography Research Series*, number 24. (Bristol: Historical Geography Research Group, 1990).

⁴⁷ Young is an important counterpoint to farming discourse in nineteenth century New South Wales, see chapter four. Young endorsed that a farmer keep ‘records’ rather than ‘accounts’, wishing to distinguish the activity of the agriculturalist from the merchant. Arthur Young, *The Farmer’s Kalendar, Or, A Monthly Directory for All Sorts of Country Business* (London: Printed for Robinson and Roberts, and J. Knox, 1771), Introduction. See also: Arthur Young, *Rural Economy, Or, Essays on the Practical Parts of Husbandry: Designed to Explain Several of the Most Important Methods of Conducting Farms of Various Kinds, Including Many Useful Hints to Gentlemen Farmers Relative to the Economical Management of Their Business ... to Which Is Added, The Rural Socrates, Being Memoirs of a Country Philosopher* (Dublin: Printed for J. Exshaw, 1770).

⁴⁸ William Marshall, *The Rural Economy of Southern Counties* (London: G. Nicol, 1798), 26.

discourses had particular manifestations in eighteenth-century colonial governance, including in early New South Wales, taken together, they probably prevented any coherent policy being formulated. British imperialism was initially carried out by Crown companies with quasi-sovereign capacities to obtain and grant land. In their earliest manifestations, companies framed these programs in terms of a recurrent ‘humanism’ or theological mission.⁴⁹ While Parliament did engage some colonies for specific trades, it was not informed by a general design.⁵⁰ In this sense, the notion of identifying eighteenth-century imperialism with the ‘mercantile system’ or ‘mercantile thought’ risks imposing a unity which contemporaries were themselves not aware.⁵¹ Rather, we need to locate colonies within the enduring model of household administration which rendered them, for governments, as essentially militaristic entities in a world of hostile international trade. This is what Istvan Hont called the ‘neo-Machiavellian political economy’ of the eighteenth-century, whose very existence raised anxieties about the effects of imperialism on British freeborn ‘liberties’, at home and abroad.⁵² This strategic status was reinforced after the American Revolution, and remained current into the early nineteenth century. Colonies, Henry Brougham wrote in his 1803 *An Inquiry into the Colonial Policy of the European Powers*, were established, above all, because of states’ inherent ‘desire [for] extensive power’, and based on an assessment of ‘resources’ needed to ‘facilitate its gratification’.⁵³ Once established, Brougham said, imperial powers sought to manage a hierarchy of objectives:

First to the preservations of its own dominions from the attacks of foreign powers; secondly, to the maintenance of subordination, and of the political union, against the distractions of rebellion

⁴⁹ Andrew Fitzmaurice, *Humanism and America: An Intellectual History of English Colonisation, 1500-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁵⁰ For a discussion, see: Herman Wellenreuther, “Britain’s Political and Economic Response to Emerging Colonies Economic Independence”, in Daniel Carey and Christopher J. Finlay (eds.), *The Empire of Credit: The Financial Revolution in the British Atlantic World, 1688-1815* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press), 121-140.

⁵¹ Paul Langford has estimated that prior to the acquisition of huge tracts of land in Canada at the end of the Seven Year War, no such thing as ‘colonial policy’ probably existed, neither in trade or settlement. Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 171.

⁵² Hont, “Free Trade”; On the qualification, which became more prominent after 1750, see: P. J. Marshall, “Empire and Authority in the Later Eighteenth Century”, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 15, no. 2 (1987): 105-22.

⁵³ Henry Brougham, *An Inquiry into the Colonial Policy of the European Powers*, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Printed by D. Willison for E. Balfour, 1803), 3.

or civil war; and, lastly, to the good government of the community, and the increase of its resources.

Brougham's account reflected the prevailing, eighteenth-century view of colonies, which led political economists, beginning with Adam Smith, to reject the colonial system as an expensive sinkhole of capital and labour. As we shall see in the final section of this chapter, it was also against this view of the colonial system and this list of objectives which liberal Tory ministers in the 1820s remodelled the functions of British settler colonies after the Napoleonic Wars. Ironically, however, it would be by drawing upon the language of political economists that enabled these ministers to reconfigure empire towards coherent, economic ends. To make sense of this appropriation and re-imagining, we need to first consider the conceptual innovations introduced by Smith and especially Ricardo.

Adam Smith and the 'Progress of Opulence'

Adam Smith's *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* is typically read as a rupture in the tradition of thought just outlined, as the genesis of modern economics and the first comprehensive defence of a free-market economy.⁵⁴ These readings often hinge on what has become Smith's most quoted metaphor, the 'invisible hand'. Despite its fame, the phrase appears only three times in Smith's entire *oeuvre*, and merely once in *WN*. Its meaning also remains highly disputed, interpreted variously as a common literary trope, expressing idealised ethical relations, Smith's theology, or simply a 'mildly ironic joke'.⁵⁵ Another series of metaphors are much more pervasive in *WN*, and arguably much more important, for they registered a re-conceptualisation of wealth as an entity that does not circulate but 'progresses'. In this way, as Walter argued, Smith's enduring analytical achievement was to untether questions of national 'wealth' from

⁵⁴ Donald Winch, *Riches and Poverty: An Intellectual History of Political economy in Britain, 1750-1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 18.

⁵⁵ Jerry Evensky, "Retrospectives: Ethics and the Invisible Hand," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 7, no. 2 (1993): 197-205; Emma Rothschild, "Adam Smith and the Invisible Hand," *The American Economic Review* 84, no. 2 (1994): 319-22; Gavin Kennedy, "Adam Smith and the Invisible Hand: From Metaphor to Myth," *Econ Journal Watch* 6, no. 2 (2009): 239-263; Peter Harrison, "Adam Smith and the History of the Invisible Hand," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 72, no. 1 (February 4, 2011): 29-49.

questions of national security, making wealth historically variable and susceptible to increase, rather than a constant quantity that circulated through the nation. Premised on a historical dynamic that distinguished savagery from civilisation, Smith's account of 'wealth' also introduced an anthropology of human difference into modern economic knowledge.

Before introducing these metaphors, however, it is important to recognise, as a way of highlighting the novelty of Ricardian political economy, the extent to which Smith remained within discourses of *œconomy*.⁵⁶ While Smith's analytical separation of wealth from security registered 'national wealth' as an object of inquiry with its own temporal dynamic, it did not constitute an autonomous, analysable domain of production and distribution. Part of Smith's status as a pioneering 'economic' thinker is derived from his polemical success in differentiating *WN* from earlier writings on trade by contrasting his 'system of natural liberty' from what he called the 'mercantile system'.⁵⁷ But as with his predecessors, Smith himself conceived of wealth not as a distinct 'economic' problem, but a problem of state. Even into the first decade of the nineteenth century, *WN* was readily recognised as a work on legislation and morals. It was not until its abridgement by Malthus, Ricardo, and Say, who took it as the starting point for their own speculations, that *WN* obtained its status as the 'founding text' of modern economics.⁵⁸

There are important senses in which Smith's unit of analysis remained the national household. As was noted when discussing W.C. Wentworth's *Description* in Chapter One, Smith conceived his work as a 'science of the statesman or legislator'. These figures, as they did for Steuart's *Inquiry*, gave discursive unity to *WN*.⁵⁹ The full expanse of *WN* comes into view in Book

⁵⁶ Part of the contextualist or historicist revision of Smith in recent decades has been to return him to such debates. Winch's, *Adam Smith's Politics* was perhaps the best exponent of this, but later found it necessary to add Smith was not just a participant but transformer of those debates, which is why he has been so enduring. See: Donald Winch, *Adam Smith's Politics: An Essay in Historiographic Revision* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); Donald Winch, "Adam Smith: Scottish Moral Philosopher as Political Economist," *The Historical Journal* 35, no. 1 (March 1992): 91-113.

⁵⁷ For a discussion of this term as a historical category, see: D. C. Coleman, "Mercantilism Revisited," *The Historical Journal* 23, no. 4 (1980): 773-91. For the enduring historiographical vitality of the term, see: Philip J. Stern and Carl Wennerlind (ed.), *Mercantilism Reimagined: Political Economy in Early Modern Britain and Its Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁵⁸ Knud Haakonssen and Donald Winch, "The Legacy of Adam Smith", in Knud Haakonssen (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Adam Smith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 371; Writing in 1811, Dugwald Stewart described *WN* as 'the most comprehensive and perfect work that has yet appeared, on the general principles of any branch of legislation'. See: Keith Tribe, *Genealogies of Capitalism* (London: Macmillan, 1981), 122-3.

⁵⁹ Also like Steuart, Smith retained the spelling 'political *œconomy*'. However, as Walter notes, unlike Steuart, Smith is not providing 'maxims', as are routinely supplied by counsellors on trade, but offered 'a

V, the longest of the text, which supplements Smith's celebrated 'system of natural liberty' with a series of historical examples on the forms of expenditure and taxation to aid the statesman in managing the progress of wealth.⁶⁰ Anticipating Marx, Smith feared that the division of labour, while producing immense wealth, risked 'all the nobler parts of human character' being 'obliterated and extinguished in the great body of the people'.⁶¹ The sovereign's duty remained to 'protect every member of the society from the injustice and oppression of every other member of it' by ensuring the 'exact administration of justice'.⁶²

Smith's *WN* is, then, best understood as an intervention in an eighteenth-century debate about the relation between 'riches and poverty', which had been stimulated by the emergence of competitive, commercial society. This debate centred on the status of producing and consuming luxuries, and whether this was an overall improvement or corruption of society, increasing employment but debasing morals.⁶³ Smith's intervention was to ask how it was that 'among civilised and thriving nations', despite having a more unequal distribution of property than any previous stage of society, 'even the lowest and poorest, if he is frugal and industrious, may enjoy a greater share of the necessities and conveniences of life than it is possible for any savage to

subtle historical lesson in the unforeseen effects of legislation and institutions in historical time, with no straight-forward policy implications'. Furthermore, it is not the statesman, but Smith's moral subject, 'prudent man' who employs capital. Walter, *A Critical History of the Economy*, 72, 74.

⁶⁰ This included Smith's famous support for the Navigation Acts, which he considered of 'of much more importance than opulence'. *WN*, IV.ii.30.

⁶¹ *WN*, V.i.f.51 (II, 784). For all his dislike of feudal society, and the apparent promises of commercial society, Smith does not think the latter necessarily more morally legitimate, but potentially 'less happy and agreeable'. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1982 [1759]), II.ii.3.2. On this tension, see: Robert L. Heilbroner, "The Paradox of Progress: Decline and Decay in The Wealth of Nations," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 34, no. 2 (1973): 243-62; Winch, *Riches*, 122. As Dupre and Gagnier note, 'what Menger and Jevons identified as essential human nature is precisely the human type that Smith feared market society would produce'. See: John Dupre and Regenia Gagnier, "The Ends of Economics", in Martha Woodmansee and Mark Osteen, (eds.), *The New Economic Criticism: Studies at the Intersection of Literature and Economics* (London: Routledge, 1999), 182.

⁶² *WN*, v.i.b.2; Winch, *Riches*, 97 Justice occupies a central theme throughout *WN*, though again, one must work through Book V to appreciate this. Winch, *Riches and Poverty*, 97-102.

⁶³ Winch, *Riches and Poverty*, 55-56, 66-75. The origins of the debate was Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*, which provocatively overturned established rhetoric by arguing the private vices of the rich, their avarice and consumption of luxuries, was ultimately a public benefit, by providing demand for manufactures and thus continued employment for the labouring poor. Rousseau, maintaining a classical republican critique of luxury, and emblematic of those repulsed by Mandeville, described this position as the English 'luxury paradox', an ironical celebration of the traditional source of national corruption and decay. Smith's *WN* in effect charted a path between Mandeville and Rousseau, extending the insight of Mandeville (shared by David Hume), while maintaining Rousseau's concern for the deleterious effects of commercial society. On the debate more generally, see: Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), chapter six.

acquire'.⁶⁴ For Smith, the answer lay in the distinctive and uniquely productive forms of labour in commercial societies. The wealth of nations amounted not to harnessing nature or advantageous trade arrangements, but increasing the 'annual labour' that 'supplies it with all the necessities and conveniences of life which it annually consumes'.⁶⁵

It was in this context that Smith introduced his metaphors of wealth by allegorising 'progressive', 'civilised', or 'advancing' states as those that accumulate wealth through an ever-increasing division of labour. At least three variations on this metaphor can be identified. The first derived from his phrase, 'the progress of opulence', the title of Book III of *WN*, which attempted to explain the 'naturally' optimal relationship between country and town.⁶⁶ Here, Smith was developing his argument about the hierarchy of capital employments introduced at the end of Book II.⁶⁷ For Smith, as agriculture or 'rude produce' was the most productive employment of labour, it ought to absorb the greatest portion of capital, and should 'naturally' precede the development of manufacturing, trade, and retailing, respectively. As we have seen with Wentworth's *Descriptions*, this model held that only nations fostering this 'natural course of things' realised a continual progress of wealth.⁶⁸

This dynamic related to a second metaphor, introduced in Book I, which distinguished between nations in an 'advancing, stationary, or declining condition', of which America, China, and Bengal were exemplars.⁶⁹ The distinction amongst these was defined not by the 'actual greatness of national wealth', but a nation's capacity for 'continual increase' of wealth. For Smith, progressive nations were characterised by the natural employment of capitals beginning in agriculture, the saving and reinvestment of profits that made existing industry more efficient and opened new markets, and the increasing employment of its accumulated stock. The corollary of this process was 'the liberal reward for labour', which was the 'natural symptom of increasing

⁶⁴ *WN*, Introduction, (I,10)

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ AM.C. Waterman has noted the ambiguity of the term 'natural' in *WN*, which may be both positive, as in 'necessary', and normative as in 'right'. In relation to the 'natural progress of opulence', Waterman argues Smith uses the term in the latter sense. See: A. M. C. Waterman, "Economics as Theology: Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*," *Southern Economic Journal* 68, no. 4 (2002): 907-21.

⁶⁷ *WN*, II.v (I, 360).

⁶⁸ *WN*, III.iv.19 (I, 423)

⁶⁹ *WN*, I.vii.1 (1,72); *WN*, I.viii.22-26 (1, 87-91).

national wealth'.⁷⁰ Smith, along with David Hume, was a leading critic of the 'utility of poverty' doctrine, arguing higher and not suppressed wages would induce industry among the labouring poor.⁷¹ 'The progressive state,' he summarised, 'is in reality the cheerful and the hearty state to all the different orders of the society. The stationary is dull; the declining melancholy'.⁷² Smith argued it was the favourable balance between saving and wise re-investment of capital that enabled a nation to continually to add to its wealth, regardless of the balance of trade.⁷³

These distinctions of advancing, stationary, and declining states were complimented by a third analogy deployed throughout *WN*. Smith's version of the conjectural 'four stage' history of civil society, which defined progress as a historical movement from 'savagery' to 'civilisation' through increasingly complex 'modes of subsistence'. Smith had already outlined in his version of the theory in *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, 1763. In *WN*, Smith, along with his Scottish contemporaries William Robertson, John Millar, and Adam Ferguson, was contributing to a pan-European Enlightenment effort to explain the emergence of civil society from a state of nature, which especially drew on the new anthropological studies of 'primitive' life in the Americas.⁷⁴ These natural jurists and philosophical historians built upon ancient models to construct a 'conjectural history' of development from the primitive or 'savage' hunter/gather and fishing stage, to shepherding and pastoralism, agriculture and husbandry, and climaxing with modern, civilised (European) commercial society. Each stage, it was contended, was characterised by distinctive property relations, which determined the need for increasingly more complex forms of law, justice, and civil government.⁷⁵ In *WN*, Smith emphasised each mode of subsistence by the complexity of its division of labour and capacity to accumulate wealth.

⁷⁰ *WN*, I.viii.27 (I, 91).

⁷¹ Coats, "Changing Attitudes to Labour in the Mid-Eighteenth Century."

⁷² *WN*, I.viii, 43 (I, 99).

⁷³ *WN*, IV.iii.c (I, 497); Firth, 'Moral Supervision and Social Order', 50-1; Winch, *Riches*, 78.

⁷⁴ Knud Haakonssen, *Natural Law and Moral Philosophy: From Grotius to the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Ronald L. Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), especially Chapters Four and Six.

⁷⁵ Smith's original contribution to this scheme was to insist the shepherd stage was dynamic, a decisive advancement on the hunter/gather stage. Previous contributors, who had identified the origins of civilisation with the change from nomadic to sedentary way of life, had thought little distinguished the shepherd from the hunter. Smith, rather, held that it was 'with the appropriation of hoofed mammals, not of arable land, that government, property and war, class distinctions and gender differentiations, had first appeared'. J.G. A. Pocock, J., *Barbarism and Religion, Volume II: Narratives of Government*

Indeed, Smith's entire book was defined in these conjectural terms. He began by using these distinctions to highlight the puzzle of commercial society. 'Savage nations of hunters and fishers', he noted, are employed and retain the whole produce of their labour, but they were also 'miserably poor'. On the contrary, in commercial society 'a great number of people do not labour at all, many of whom consume the produce of ten times, frequently of a hundred times more labour than the greater part of those who work', and yet here the poorest labourer is nonetheless better off than the wealthiest savage.⁷⁶ While Smith's explanation for this, as we have seen, was based on his account of the complex division of labour in commercial societies, by mapping his account of commercial society onto a Four Stage schema, he also insulated commerce from a threatening Polybian cycle of decline into corruption. In Smith's view, as opposed to Rousseau and Mandeville, for example, commerce, if secured by propitious legal and political circumstances, was historically inevitable and largely desirable, generating irreversible social change and an accumulation of wealth that was potentially limitless.⁷⁷

While all three metaphors would be inherited into classical economic thought and find popular recital in New South Wales, the analogies of the Four Stage Theory were of particular significance to the governance of the colony because of the two kinds of anthropologies of human difference upon which they were premised. In anticipation of later discussions, these can be mapped out briefly. First, the Smithian account of the 'savage' would have profound implications for the way settlers in New South Wales interacted with local inhabitants. Stadial theory was based on a universalist conception of human nature, and so while it stressed comparative difference in modes of subsistence, culture and character to highlight stages of progress, it presupposed all societies were capable of passing upward through the stages of subsistence and obtain 'civilisation'. This framework would operate on a number of levels in settler colonies. On one level, the temporal division between Indigenous peoples and European settlers illuminated to the latter the colony's potentially limitless capacity for wealth accumulation when contrasted with the savagery to be swept away. On another level, stadial theory operated to justify a whole series

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1999, 316; For the corresponding text in *WN*, see V.i.b.7-12 (II, 711-15).

⁷⁶ *WN*, Introduction, (I, 4).

⁷⁷ Winch, *Riches and Poverty*, 87-89; Hont and Igantieff, "Needs and justice", 5-6.

of interventions against Aboriginal peoples, including dispossession, but also attempts to ‘civilise’ them through various disciplinary projects. It was these kinds of projects, I argue in Chapter Three, more than theorising itself, that varlorised to Europeans the ‘natural’ inclination to accumulate wealth.

Second, the defence of commercial society offered in Smithian stadial theory also registered distinctive gendering roles, which had lasting consequences for the masculinist character of economic discourse and would be constitutive of specific social roles in colonial New South Wales. The subjects of the ‘capitalist’ and ‘investor’ in colonial land settlement and the distinctive propensities assigned to assisted-migrant men and women in establishing colonial civilisation, I argue in Chapters Four and Six, descended from Smith’s account of commercial society. Smith’s ‘sociology’, as J.G.A. Pocock’s called it, was determined by his defence of ‘commercial man’.⁷⁸ In Book V of *Wealth of Nations*, the Four Stage theory was utilised to tell a story about the progressive delegation of civic and martial duties to state functionaries and standing armies with the progress of society, enabling both a specialisation in skills and industry, and an increasing division of labour and accumulation of wealth. While ‘men’ in ‘barbarous societies’ were at once a producer, a ‘statesman, a judge and a warrior’, the increasing division of labour into different kinds of specialised skills in commercial society improved overall living standards, sociability and refinement, even if it risked destroying the ‘nobler’ parts of man.⁷⁹

Here, Smith was responding directly to critiques of commercial society in European civic-humanist discourse, which drew upon classical analogies that identified the pillars of ‘commerce’, luxury and self-interest, as the source of national corrosion and decline. For these humanists, femineity, as it had been in antiquity, was associated with luxury, excess, profligacy, and voracity. Humanist critics charged commerce as effeminising men, making them fickle, passionate, irrational, and raptured by fantasies on the stock market. In contrast, their idealised civic ‘landed patriot’ was independent, virtuous, frugal, martial, and publically-minded. The eighteenth-century defence of commerce thus involved defending commercial masculinity against this critique.

⁷⁸ J.G.A. Pocock, “The mobility of property and the rise of eighteenth-century sociology”, in *Virtue, Commerce and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 103-23.

⁷⁹ WN, V.i.a.1-20, V.i.f.50-3

Commercial polemicists, such as Smith, thus argued commerce achieved the opposite to what humanists accused, as it facilitated genteel ‘man’ as a complex sociable creature, polite and refined, rather than singularly political.⁸⁰ By making financial contracts and promises, commerce refined passion into manners and sober opinion, as to cultivate *credible* behaviour. ‘Politeness’ was the hallmark of commercial, civilised society.⁸¹ In turn, the landed patriot could be represented as an anachronistic, vulgar barbarian.⁸²

The civility of commercial man, however, also necessitated redefining the role of women. Female softness and sensibility were now celebrated as reparative virtues for the male callousness and egoism that commerce might foster.⁸³ Women were increasingly identified with the ‘moralised’ domestic sphere, providing an ethical anchor to the commercial pursuit of wealth and self-interest. Where money-making and wealth-accumulation had long been morally suspect activities, vulgarities in which noblemen did not partake, this reconfiguration of gender roles and sanitisation of the domestic sphere, stabilised the pathologies of wealth. Consequently manly, civic, and publically-minded ‘virtue’ became effeminate, private, domestic, and interpersonal.⁸⁴

These gendered constructions would have distinctive manifestations in colonial New South Wales. The ideal of the manly, independent, landed patriot was preserved by some nineteenth-century British radical thinkers who identified colonies as places to recover a lost Arcadia of virtuous agrarianism. But for the most part, colonial discourse and particularly emigrant guides as we shall see in Chapter Four was dominated not by the yeoman, but rational, urbane ‘investors’ who owned land not for civic independence but to realise a rate of return.

⁸⁰ Michèle Cohen, “‘Manners’ Make the Man: Politeness, Chivalry, and the Construction of Masculinity, 1750-1830,” *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005): 312-29.

⁸¹ The theme of eighteenth century ‘politeness’ has an extensive literature. For an overview of this topic, see: Iain Hampsher-Monk, “From Virtue to Politeness” in Martin Van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner (eds.) *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage*, Vol. 2 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 85-105.

⁸² Quentin Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 97; Hont and Ignatieff, ‘Needs and justice’, 7-8.

⁸³ Barbara Taylor, “Enlightenment and the Uses of Woman,” *History Workshop Journal* 74, no. 1 (October 1, 2012): 79-87; Sylvana Tomaselli, “The Enlightenment Debate on Women,” *History Workshop Journal* 20, no. 1 (October 1, 1985): 101-124; Sylvana Tomaselli, “Civilization, Patriotism And Enlightened Histories of Women,” in Barbara Taylor and Sarah Knott (eds.), *Women, Gender and Enlightenment* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 117-135.

⁸⁴ Dana Harrington, “Gender, Commerce, and the Transformation of Virtue in Eighteenth-century Britain,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (June 1, 2001): 33-52; Shelley Burtt, *Virtue Transformed: Political Argument in England, 1688-1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Similarly, the figure of the female assisted-migrant was recruited to help ‘civilise’ a penal colony anxious about moral degradation and sex imbalance. But in identifying the role of women specifically as household servants or civilising wives and mothers, it also consigned women to the putative non-economic domestic sphere.

Smith’s account of the ‘progress of opulence’ was some way from the modern idea of ‘economic growth’.⁸⁵ But it did formulate new historical actors who would be of enduring and specific relevance to colonial history, whose function and agencies were premised upon an article of faith of theological proportions, being that progressive nations are those that continuously accumulate wealth. Unleashing the potential of that discovery required one further innovation: that men existed in relations of competition and exchange in a domain autonomous from the state. This was the analytic achievement of David Ricardo.

David Ricardo and the Discovery of Society

Histories that fix Smith as the ‘father’ of classical economics also tend to emphasise continuities with nineteenth-century political economists such as Ricardo, Malthus, the Mills, Senior, and so on. But as Foucault, Tribe and Walter have shown, it is also possible to emphasise discontinuities.⁸⁶ While the nineteenth-century political economists inherited the metaphors of the ‘progress of wealth’ from Smith, beginning with Ricardo, there was also a fundamental break in their conception of ‘community’. This can be partly registered in Smith and Ricardo’s differing definitions of political economy. Smith, as we have seen, thought political economy a ‘science of the legislator’ which had no simple one-to-one relationship with what we would call ‘economic

⁸⁵ Not only was the abstract concept of ‘economic growth’ unavailable, but as E.A. Wrigley has shown, most likely the very notion of exponential material betterment inconceivable. For Wrigley, the ‘political economists’ (including Smith), were strongly conditioned by pre-industrial circumstances which made the notion of continuous improvement in per capita incomes on the exponential rate we understand it, impossible’. See: E. A. Wrigley, *People, Cities, and Wealth: The Transformation of Traditional Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), 35. Wrigley’s general interpretation of the industrial revolution can also be found in *Continuity, Chance and Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

⁸⁶ As so often happens, what was once a common insight has been lost by new conventions. Beatrice Webb, on the eve of a deluge of ‘histories of economic thought’ which married Smith and Ricardo into the same project, reflected in an 1886 manuscript that there had been a ‘silent revolution’ between Smith and Ricardo, with the latter’s conception of society as ‘a collection of gold-seeking animals’. Quoted in Emma Rothschild, ‘Political Economy’, in Gareth Stedman Jones, Gregory Claeys, and Cambridge University Press, eds., *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Political Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 753.

policy’.⁸⁷ Ricardo conceived of political economy in much more narrow and deductive terms as the investigation of ‘laws’ regulating rents, profits, and wages, phenomena he took to be analytically distinct from the state and legislation. The statesman was no longer necessary in giving unity to problems of land, labour, commerce, and trade. This was because the community was no longer metaphorically conceived as a unified ‘household’, but ‘proportioned’ by its productive agents in a self-regulating system of production, accumulation, and distribution.⁸⁸ It was on these grounds Polanyi attributed to Ricardo the ‘discovery of society’, the discovery of the ‘existence of a society that was not subject to the laws of the state, but, on the contrary, subjected the state to its own laws’.⁸⁹ It would be on these terms that imperial and colonial authorities re-organised the ‘community’ in colonial New South Wales.

The context in which Ricardo developed these innovations was more specific than Smith’s. This was the renewed debate over the Corn Laws in a series of pamphlets by Malthus, Ricardo, Robert Torrens, and Edward West in early 1815, timed to coincide with debates in Parliament. Emphasis need not be given to Ricardo’s apparent defence of the ideological position of ‘free trade’ for the rising merchant bourgeois, however, but the semantic innovations to which the debate gave occasion.⁹⁰

In his contribution to the pamphlet debate, *An Essay on the Influence of a low Price of Corn on the Profit of Stock*, Ricardo’s key achievement was a reformulation of the category of ‘rent’, which resulted in the construction of competing ‘economic’ agencies. These were the landlord, the capitalist, and the labourer. According to Tribe, eighteenth-century political economy did not theorise rent as a factor of production, but offered differing accounts of rent as

⁸⁷ Donald Winch, “Science and the Legislator: Adam Smith and After,” *The Economic Journal* 93, no. 371 (1983): 501-20.

⁸⁸ The economic theory of ‘equilibrium’ is attributable to Leon Walras in the middle of the nineteenth century. I use the term here descriptively, and not to impute Ricardo as an antecedent to Walras.

⁸⁹ Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 116.

⁹⁰ On these lasting ‘ideologue’ characterisations of Ricardo, formalised by the Webbs, Toynbee, Marx and especially Keynes, see Winch, *Riches and Poverty*, 6-7, 25-6, 415-17. Incidentally, Malthus has also suffered in a different way, attacked by a generation of Victorian sages – Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin and William Morris – as having ‘de-moralised’ political economy, a characterisation regurgitated by a much later generation of historians led by E.P. Thompson. For an attempt at his rescue, and reminder of theological moralism central to his system, see: Donald Winch, “Robert Malthus: Christian Moral Scientist, Arch-Demoralizer or Implicit Secular Utilitarian?,” *Utilitas* 5, no. 02 (1993): 239-253. On reading the 1815 debate for novel arguments and not ‘ideology’, see Tribe, *Land Labour and Economic Discourse*, 114, 116.

a ‘fact’ of agrarian life.⁹¹ In *WN*, for example, rent was construed both as a ‘monopoly’ price, calculated not by the condition of land ‘but what the farmer can afford to give’, as well as a ‘gift’, which fluctuated according to varying contractual agreements.⁹² Malthus had criticised this position in his contribution to the 1815 debates, redescribing rent as a residual payment the landlord accrues ‘after all the outgoings belonging to its cultivation, of whatever kind, have been paid’.⁹³ Following Malthus, whom he quoted approvingly, Ricardo offered his own analysis of rent as determined by ‘bringing successively land of a worse quality, or less favourably situated into cultivation’. The logical consequence was that ‘rent would rise on [better] land previously cultivated, and precisely in the same degree would profits fall [for the capitalist tenant-farmer]’.⁹⁴ Rent, for Ricardo, was ‘never a new creation of revenue, but always part of a revenue already created’.⁹⁵ Ricardo thus introduced a new problem into agrarian writings, being the ‘very intimate connexion’ between the payment of rents and accumulation of profits, and with it, a new kind of conflict in agrarian and productive relations.⁹⁶ Rent, profit, and wages were identified as constituting a competitive dynamic, each to be paid out of the same ‘fund’, which ultimately determined the rate of ‘profit’.⁹⁷

Ricardo was positing a ground-breaking account of discrete ‘economic’ interests. As we have seen, eighteenth-century political œconomy assumed a conflict between the ‘landed interest’ and manufacturing or ‘merchant interest’ in debating the basis of national wealth and strength.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 104-6, 118.

⁹² *WN* I.vi.8. (I, 67); *WN*, I.xi.a.5 (I, 161); Depending upon the ‘liberality or ignorance’ of the landlord and his knowledge of what his tenant can pay. *WN*, I.xi.a.1 (I, 160).

⁹³ Thomas Robert Malthus, *Inquiry into the Nature and Progress of Rent, and the Principle’s by which it is Regulated* (London: J. Murray, 1815): 2 Tribe notes that the James Anderson was the first to formulate ‘the relation between price structure and rents’ in a 1777 pamphlet, but since his commentary was made ‘on a system of circulation, and did not involve a consideration of the distribution of the product between the classes, it would not be justifiable to argue that this is an anticipation of Classical rent theory’. See Tribe, *Land, Labour and Economic Discourse*, 119-120.

⁹⁴ David Ricardo, “Essay on the Influence of a Low Price of Corn on the Profits of Stock,” in Piero Sraffa (ed.), *The Works and Correspondence of David Ricardo, Vol. 4, Pamphlets and Papers 1815-1823* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005), 14.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁹⁷ Tribe, *Land, Labour and Economic Discourse*, 122. As Walter notes, Ricardo had to bracket out other processes that might affect the rate of profits. Ricardo posits: ‘We will, however, suppose that no improvement take place in agriculture, and that capital and population advance in the proper proportion, so that the real wages of labour, continue uniformly the same; - that we may know what peculiar effects are to be ascribed to the growth of capital, the increase of population, and the extension of cultivation, to the more remote, and less fertile land’. Ricardo, “Essay”, 12; Walter, *A Critical Essay of the Economy*, 93-4.

Ricardo, however, posited an antagonism *within* the agrarian sector, one which ran counter to conventional wisdom. Where political economy generally, and ‘agrarian patriotism’ specifically, tended to represent the landlord as a figure of hierarchy and harmony in a patriarchal community, Ricardo’s analysis of rent turned this assumption on its head, constituting landlords as a parasitic class.⁹⁸ ‘The interest of the landlord is always opposed to the interest of every other class of society’.⁹⁹ This manoeuvre necessitated aligning the interests of wage-earners to capitalists wherein accumulated profits would hire more hands and ‘ameliorate the condition of the labouring class’. It thus went to the heart of Ricardo’s polemic: a free trade in corn would benefit the majority of interests in society, making food cheaper, freeing up capital, and increasing employment opportunities.¹⁰⁰ At a ‘theoretical’ level, however, Ricardo had transformed the analysis of community from one of a unified ‘household’ to a distribution of competing, productive agencies. As Tribe summarised, ‘instead of the untheorised conception of populations among whom a national product circulates, Classical Political Economy constructs a distribution as occurring between theoretically defined economic agents’. Ricardo deduced ‘specific economic “interests” for each class ... which are not derivative of the reality of landlords, farmers or wages labourers *qua* persons, but ... strictly defined by the relations of profits, rents, wages, capital and the accumulation of capital’.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Burke had recently rehearsed this idea, arguing there could never be any conflict among the orders of society, including the interests of wage-contracting parties, providing that bargain was arrived at without ‘force or fraud, collusion or combination’. Edmund Burke, *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity* (London: F. and C. Rivington, 1800 [1795]), 7. Even Smith, despite his attacks on landed privilege, thought landlords represented traditional lines of citizenship, the most secure investment of national wealth and promoted public good. Since ‘every improvement in the circumstances of society tends either directly or indirectly to raise the real rent of land’, the interests of the landlord, like that of wage-earners, ‘is strictly and inseparably connected with the general interest of the society’. *WN*, I.xi.p.8. (I, 265). On Smith’s sympathy to landowners, see Winch, *Riches and Poverty*, 183.

⁹⁹ Ricardo, “Essay”, 21. For the original discussion, see: Keith Tribe, “Ground Rent and the Formation of Classical Political Economy: A Theoretical History”. PhD Thesis. (University of Cambridge, 1976), 248.

¹⁰⁰ Walter, *A Critical History of the Economy*, 104.

¹⁰¹ Tribe, *Land, Labour and Economic Discourse*, 127. Walter writes similarly: ‘The class interests of landlords, capitalists, and workers were formed independently of moral accounts of the individual subject [*pace* Smith]; neither were they legal or political entities. These classes derived their identity and status solely from an economic process, and this represented a crucial threshold for the formation of the national economy as an object of knowledge separate from the state.’ Walter, *A Critical History of the Economy*, 96.

James Mill encouraged Ricardo to develop his pamphlet into a full study which was published in 1817 as *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*. The preface clearly rehearses this new configuration of a community:

The produce of all the earth – all that is derived from its surface by the united application of labour, machinery, and capital, is divided among three classes of the community, namely the proprietor of the land, the owner of the stock or capital necessary for its cultivation, and the labourers by whose industry it is cultivated.

But in different stages of society, the proportions of the whole produce of the earth which is allotted to each of these classes, under the names of rent, profit, and wages, will be essentially different; depending mainly on the actual fertility of the soil, on the accumulation of capital and population, and on the skill, ingenuity and instruments employed in agriculture.

To determine the laws which regulate this distribution is the principal problem in Political Economy: much as the science has been improving by the writings of Turgot, Steuart, Smith, Say Sismondi, and others, they afford very little satisfactory information regarding the natural course of rent, profit, and wages.¹⁰²

Ricardo had identified a new domain of inquiry, which he denoted towards the end of *Principles* as ‘economical science’¹⁰³. In this formation, the ‘natural course of rent, profit and wages’ was a self-regulating interrelationship determined by ‘laws’ that exist exterior and prior to the polity or state. This demarcation of the economic was achieved by Ricardo’s deployment of a novel set of constitutive metaphors of community. The metaphors ‘divided’, ‘proportion’, ‘allotted’, and ‘distribution’ reconfigured ‘community’ at a new kind of abstraction, not as an indivisible household but a dynamic relation between ‘three classes’ expressed in terms of rents, profits, and wages. While historians of economic thought tend to treat the problem of ‘value’ as central to Ricardian economics, shifting focus to his treatment of ‘community’ highlights how the economic

¹⁰² David Ricardo, *On the Principles of Political Economy* in Piero Saffra (ed.) *The Works and Correspondence of David Ricardo, Vol. 1* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2004), Preface. [Hereafter: Ricardo, *Principles*]

¹⁰³ Ibid., 398.

is distinguished as an autonomous sphere activity and agencies.¹⁰⁴ As we will see in later chapters, it was these metaphors of community that politicians, officials and clerks appropriated in their debates, correspondence and reports to frame, problematise and address issues facing Britain's post-Napoleonic empire, and to repurpose colonies such as New South Wales.

In translating 'community' this way, Ricardo was appropriating a familiar semantic resource. These cognates of 'distribution', 'proportion', 'ratio', or 'balance' had long shaped thinking about both jurisprudence and *œconomics*, especially in so far as the latter was a branch of domestic 'law', or *nomos*. They registered notions of harmony, orderliness, and universality, which reverberated with the social analysis of eighteenth-century natural law. As with the Judgement of Solomon, so with Hume's idea of good, rationalised government delivering 'the distribution of justice'.¹⁰⁵ The concept was, then, highly familiar and malleable. Likewise, Smith's analysis of the division of labour was premised on a nation's 'proportion' between productive and unproductive 'labour', although these were identified within a social hierarchy and not as 'economic' classes.¹⁰⁶ Ricardo's friend and interlocutor, Malthus, had already introduced a mathematised idea of a community's 'ratio' in his 1798 *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, when he contrasted population which 'increases in a geometrical ratio' with rates of subsistence which 'increases only in an arithmetical ratio'.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, Malthus' entire corpus was governed by a 'doctrine of proportions', a search for a golden mean between wealth and happiness.¹⁰⁸ In this sense, Ricardo's was an idiosyncratic reappropriation of a familiar term that enabled him to

¹⁰⁴ Here I follow Alasdair MacIntyre's useful suggestion that a moral philosophy 'characteristically ... presupposes a sociology'. As Ricardo himself was dealing with the most important moral questions of the day, and as economics might be considered a moral philosophy, the appropriation seems justified. Metaphors are, then, constitutive of this sociology. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 23.

¹⁰⁵ On the uses of 'distribution' and 'proportion' in the natural law tradition, see: Knud Haakonssen, *Natural Law and Moral Philosophy: From Grotius to the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹⁰⁶ WN, II.iii1-42 (I, 330-439), in which Smith compares 'the labour of a manufacturer' who adds 'to the value of the materials which he works upon', with that of the 'menial servant' and 'some of the most respectable order in society', which 'adds to the value of nothing'.

¹⁰⁷ Thomas Robert Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (London: J. Johnson, 1798). These have been described less as representing 'economic laws, but of biological necessity determining social and political arrangements'. Collini, Winch, and Burrow, *That Noble Science of Politics*, 70.

¹⁰⁸ John Pullen, "Malthus on the doctrine of proportions and the concept of the optimum", *Australian Economic Papers* 21, no. 39 (1982): 270-285.

‘get a grasp’ of community as governed by ‘laws’ (again, note the cognates to jurisprudence and justice) that regulated rents, profits, and wages.

The corollary of visualising ‘community’ as a dynamic distribution of economic agencies was the need for an axiomatic language to assess and optimise its configurations. Ricardo’s use of these metaphors operated less to ‘harmonise’ land, capital, and labour, than to make the population a deductive, calculable entity. In this crucial sense, then, Ricardian political economy did not simply constitute the ‘economic’ as a domain of inquiry, but formalised a deductive, axiomatic, and necessitarian vocabulary which would soon permeate British and colonial political discourse and enabled the reclassification of things as ‘economic’. Supply and demand, proportioning labour to capital and regulating wages by profits, were reified as ‘principles’ of social interaction. As William Thweatt’s painstaking combing has shown, Ricardo was by no means the first author to employ the couplet ‘supply and demand’, and while his chapter “On the Influence of Demand and Supply and Prices” in *Principles* shot the phrase to prominence, he in fact was seeking to diminish its significance in determining prices in the long run. Yet while Thweatt concluded it was in fact Malthus who chiefly popularised this phrase, the sociological matrix established by the Ricardian treatment of community is what gave it a new kind of necessity by which not only market prices but all human relations could be explained.¹⁰⁹ While we need to be careful not to caricature political economists as dehumanising engineers, an image which has been enduringly inherited from their Romantic critics, what we are tracking here is the emergence of a distinctive semantic innovation and novel theoretical imagining of social relations.¹¹⁰

In constructing this theoretical model, Ricardo built on Smith’s conception of progress-as-wealth accumulation. Accounting for ‘the natural advance of society’ motivated Ricardo’s entire narrative. To be sure, one of the consequences of the way Ricardo presented his arguments was

¹⁰⁹ William O. Thweatt, “Origins and the Terminology of ‘Supply and Demand’”, *Scottish Journal of Political Economy* 30, no. 3 (November 1983): 287-294. Thweatt found variations on the phrase but not the exact coupling in Stueart and Smith’s major texts, but argues the phrase came to prominence in the Bullion Debate in 1810. While Ricardo thought the supply and demand apparatus only useful in short run phenomena on market prices, whereas in the long run, exchange values were a function of the costs of production, Malthus used it for both short and long run analysis.

¹¹⁰ Winch, *Riches and Poverty*, 409-22.

an apparent pessimism about the fortunes of each class with this ‘advance’, whereby rents and profits, and profits and wages were locked into an inverse relationship with each other.¹¹¹ But this picture, for which Carlyle dubbed Ricardian political economy the ‘dismal science’, was only to postulate what *might* happen under legislation like the Corn Laws.¹¹² In reality, Ricardo and Malthus were concerned with establishing the preconditions necessary to support the ‘natural progress of society’, which errant legislation could retard but new lands and markets continually encourage. It would be the ‘economic’ potential of new colonial lands that Edward Gibbon Wakefield would seize upon. Thus, the natural ‘gravitation’ or fall in profits is ‘happily checked at repeated intervals by the improvements in machinery’ and ‘discoveries in agriculture’ which ‘enabled us to relinquish a portion of labour before required, and therefore to lower the price of the prime necessary of the labourer’.¹¹³ And while wages were therefore constantly under attack, nor did they recede to a level of bare subsistence, but to a natural price which is not ‘absolutely fixed and constant’ but regulated by ‘habits and customs of the people’.¹¹⁴ While a substantial raise in purchasing power was never obtainable in Ricardo’s model, the ‘natural advance of society’ exposed the poorest labourer to a taste for small luxuries that over time advanced his ‘natural’ living condition, raising the price of his labour and providing a ‘refuge from calamity’.¹¹⁵ As with Smith, in an advancing society, the levels of subsistence also increased. Ricardo could be remarkably optimistic, retaining the teleology of commercial prosperity wherein ‘Man from youth grows to manhood, then decays, and dies; but this is not the progress of nations ... their

¹¹¹ Ricardo argued that ‘in the natural advance of society’, there is tendency for wages to decline towards subsistence levels, as labour supply increases at a faster rate than demand. The profits of farmers and manufacturers also suffer, for the in ‘the progress of society and wealth, the additional quantity of food required is obtained by sacrifice of more and more labour’, and this must mean a decline in profit, for ‘profits must fall with a rise of wages’. Ricardo, *Principles*, 57, 71.

¹¹² Winch, *Riches and Poverty*, 368.

¹¹³ Ricardo, *Principles*, 71.

¹¹⁴ Ricardo, *Principles*, 54-55. Ricardo added, ‘The friends of humanity cannot but wish that in all countries the labouring classes should have a taste for comforts and enjoyments, and that they should be stimulated by all legal means in their exertions to procure them’.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 55, 57. For example: ‘an English labourer would consider his wages under their rate’ if could eat nothing but potatoes and habitation in a mud hut’. As Walter notes, Ricardo’s treatment of luxury dissolves eighteenth-century anxieties about luxuries eroded civic virtue and state security, an anxiety that had occupied so much space by defenders of commerce like Smith, Hume and Defoe before them. Luxury acquired a ‘humanitarian’ function in Ricardo’s hands. See, Walter *A Critical History of the Economy*, 100.

natural tendency is to continue for ages to sustain undiminished their wealth and their population'.¹¹⁶

These metaphors were preserved in works that developed Ricardo's project, furthering delineating the 'economic' as a field of inquiry. Most important in this regard was Ricardo's disciple, John Ramsay McCulloch, who authored the entry on 'Political Economy' for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in 1823 and then published his own *Principles of Political Economy* in 1825. The latter helped forge the boundaries of modern knowledge by distinguishing political economy from statistics but also, most importantly, politics:

The science of Political Economy was long confounded with that of Politics; and it is undoubtedly true that they are very intimately connected, and that it is frequently impossible to treat those questions which strictly belong to the one without referring more or less to the principles and conclusions of the other. But, in their leading features, they are sufficiently distinct. The laws which regulate the production and distribution of wealth are the same in every stage of society.¹¹⁷

This framework of conceptualising the 'economic community' distinct from the political nation was retained right through the period studied in this thesis, into the last third of the nineteenth century, constantly refurbished by leading Victorian-era thinkers. Thus, twenty years later, in 1848, John Stuart Mill published his own *Principles of Political Economy*, which served as the main reference in British political economy for three decades thereafter and affirmed the basic Ricardian system. In contrast to McCulloch and Ricardo, Mill argued the 'laws' regulating production and distribution were distinct. He considered the former to belonging to 'real laws of

¹¹⁶ Ricardo, *Principles*, 177.

¹¹⁷ John Ramsay McCulloch, *Principles of Political Economy: with a sketch of the rise and progress of the science* (Edinburgh: Longman, 1825), 57. He adds later at 227: 'The inhabitants of countries which have made any considerable progress in civilisation and the arts, may be divided into the three classes of labourers, landlords, and capitalists; and whatever be the condition of any society—whether rude or refined, rich or poor—every person belonging to it, who is not a pauper, or does not subsist on the bounty of others, may be reckoned in one or other of these classes. They divide amongst them all the wealth of the community'. On the importance of McCulloch 'popularising' Ricardian economics, see: Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), Chapter Seven.

nature’ and the latter ‘depend[ed] on human will’.¹¹⁸ But this nevertheless rested on framing community as a distribution of productive factors:

The three requisites of production, as has been so often repeated, are labour, capital, and land: understanding by capital, the means and appliances which are the accumulated results of previous labour, and by land, the materials and instruments supplied by nature, whether contained in the interior of the earth, or constituting its surface. Since each of these elements of production may be separately appropriated, the industrial community may be considered as divided into landowners, capitalists and productive labourers. Each of these classes, as such, obtains a share of the produce: no other person or class obtains anything except by concession from them ... These three classes, therefore, are considered in political economy as making up the whole community.¹¹⁹

From around 1820, this Ricardian innovation enabled a whole range of ways of calculating, debating and configuring the ‘economic’ community. This began with debates internal to political economy, regarding the possibility of general gluts and extended to a more fundamental question over the proper subject matter of the discipline, whether it narrowly focused on wealth production and accumulation, or should appeal to the ‘higher maxims’ of happiness.¹²⁰ Most importantly for our purposes, this language also enabled new arguments about the relationship between metropole and colonies as one of ‘distributing’ productive factors on an imperial scale.

‘Economical’ configurations rapidly proliferated beyond formal political economy in popular writings in both Britain and colonies that reinforced the cultural significance of the new discipline. It was weaved into accounts of middle class moralism in the catechisms of Jane Marcet and Harriet Martineau, Anglican evangelicalism that took the laws of Providence as synonymous with the laws of wealth, and a ‘popular political economy’ that mobilised a campaign for free trade as a national good.¹²¹ Radicals and socialists such as Hodgskin, Gray, Thompson, and Bray

¹¹⁸ J.S. Mill, *Autobiography*, quoted in Tribe, *Economy of the Word*, 69.

¹¹⁹ J.S. Mill, *Principles of Political Economy with some of the Applications to Social Philosophy*. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1909 [1848]), 238.

¹²⁰ This is the debate Senior was seeking to close off in his 1836 *Outlines*. See n 2 of this chapter.

¹²¹ On popular political economy, see: Howe, ‘Popular Political Economy’, in David M. Craig and James Thompson, eds., *Languages of Politics in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 118-141. Marcet and Martineau also helped ‘feminise’ popular political economy which further helped establish its hegemony, for it directed the tone away from the impersonal ‘masculinity’ of neo-

developed a rival political economy that inverted the focus to the ‘rights of labour’. While we have ceased to call these ‘Ricardian socialists’, their analysis of labour was indebted to the Ricardian formation of community.¹²² For example, in *Labour Defended Against the Claims of Capital*, Hodgskin quoted liberally from Ricardo’s *Principles*, recalibrating the system of distribution to defend the labourer as the ‘real maker of the commodity’.¹²³ If Chartism marked a final essay in eighteenth-century plebeian radicalism, by the late 1840s the dynamic of capital and labour was becoming central to mainstream radical thought.¹²⁴ All these strands simultaneously found expression in the imperial and colonial world, too, in emigrant and travel guides, sermons, and the prolific colonial working class press. Political economy was becoming a cultural artefact of the British world.¹²⁵

What was entrenching these Ricardian metaphors as a way of ‘seeing’, however, was their relatively immediate appropriation as *official* discourse. The most important site was Parliament, in which political economy gained publicity, currency and contestability, and was at the centre of public life. This was partly because some of Britain’s most reputed political economists including Ricardo, but also Horner, Robert Torrens, and Lauderdale, were at his same time being elected as Members of Parliament. Ricardo represented a rotten borough from 1819 where he made considerable interventions in debates regarding currency and trade until his death

mercantilism, which in turn continued to emphasis nation, empire, ships and tariffs, to the readily relatable world of the ‘homespun’ and self-sufficient family unit. On evangelical political economy, see: Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1785-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); and Anthony Michael C. Waterman, *Revolution, Economics, and Religion: Christian Political economy, 1798-1833* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). On free the trade movement, see: Anthony Howe, *Free Trade and Liberal England, 1846-1946* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997); and Paul Pickering and Alex Tyrell, *The People’s Bread: A History of the Anti-Corn Law League* (Bloomsbury Academic Publishing, 2000).

¹²² For a more complex way of locating the thinkers once grouped as ‘Ricardian socialists’, see: Gregory Claeys, *Machinery, Money and the Millennium: From Moral Economy to Socialism, 1815-60* (Cambridge: Polity, 1987); and David Stack, *Nature and Artifice: The Life and Thought of Thomas Hodgskin (1787-1869)* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer Ltd., 1998).

¹²³ Thomas Hodgskin, *Labour Defended against the Claims of Capital, or, The Unproductiveness of Capital Proved with Reference to the Present Combinations amongst Journeymen* (London: Printed for Knight and Lacey, 1825), 5, 9. For a broader account of early radical uses of political economy, see: Noel W. Thompson, *The People’s Science: The Popular Political Economy of Exploitation and Crisis, 1816-34* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984);

¹²⁴ Gareth Stedman Jones, “Re-thinking Chartism”, in in *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 137; This economic language nevertheless continued to be intertwined with constitutional vocabulary of the freeborn Englishman: James Vernon, *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture, c. 1815-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 308-310.

¹²⁵ Donald Winch and Patrick Karl O’Brien, *The Political Economy of British Historical Experience, 1688-1914* (London: British Academy, 2002), 1-28.

in 1823. His axiomatic calculation of problems prompted Henry Brougham to describe Ricardo's speeches in the House like those of a man 'from another planet'.¹²⁶ Alien, perhaps, but as historians Gordon, Semmel, Fetter and Hilton have each shown, the language of political economy was also becoming widely reappropriated in parliamentary debate in these years, even if more doctrinal arguments were the target of great criticism.¹²⁷ After 1815, wrote Semmel, 'the halls of parliament were filled with discussions, some on a high level, concerning the nature and validity of the new political economy'.¹²⁸

What drove the proliferation of this otherworldly discourse among MPs and authorities was a simultaneous proliferation of new kinds of governmental document which diversified and amplified the voices of authority in select committee reports and commissioner enquiries tabled to Parliament, and in the outward crawl of a nascent bureaucracy. The entrenchment of economic knowledge was secured not in its capacity to 'counsel' statesmen, nor simply its growing cultural significance, but its contagious saturation, almost from the moment of invention, into a new form of *authorising* publications which had the capacity to narrate the frameworks of social interaction across the empire. We therefore conclude this chapter by recounting this marriage of 'theory' and 'government'.

The government report and the genesis of economic knowledge

Early nineteenth-century Britain has been described as marking a bureaucratic 'revolution in government' and the watershed quarter-century after Waterloo has been characterised as an 'age of commissions'. Similarly, Britain's empire was undergoing 'an information revolution' and increasingly 'tied by paper' with the proliferation of correspondence, record-keeping, and inquiries.¹²⁹ New South Wales was, then, established in an increasing flow of official publications

¹²⁶ Quoted in Collini, Winch, and Burrow, *That Noble Science of Politics*, 69

¹²⁷ Bernard Semmel, *The rise of free trade imperialism: classical political economy, the Empire of free trade and imperialism, 1750-1850* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), especially chapter six; Barry J. Gordon, *Political Economy in Parliament: 1819-1823* (London: Macmillan, 1976); Boyd Hilton, *Corn, Cash, Commerce: The Economic Policies of the Tory Governments 1815-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); Barry Gordon, *Economic Doctrine and Tory Liberalism, 1824-1830* (London: Macmillan, 1979); Frank W. Fetter, *The Economist in Parliament, 1780-1868* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1980).

¹²⁸ Semmel, *The rise of free trade imperialism*, 133.

¹²⁹ Oliver MacDonagh, *Early Victorian Government, 1830-1870* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977); Henry Parris, *Constitutional Bureaucracy: The Development of British Central Administration*

and knowledge that facilitated new modes of imperial imagination, writing, and expression, connecting ideas from metropolitan treatises, universities, philosophical circles and coffeehouses with Parliament, governmental offices, and the farthest-stationed governors and clerks on the colonial frontier. An expansion in bureaucratic personnel and paper, commissions of inquiry and select committees, data collection, statistics, and government blue books, were all redefining the nature of authority in Britain and her colonies.¹³⁰

The constitution of economic knowledge cannot be disassociated from this context of empire, government, and paper. If Ricardian political economy can be characterised as jettisoning the ‘household’ metaphor of governance to create a vision of the self-regulating, wealth-producing community, in a similar way, the rise of the government report marked a shift away from the counsellor treatises as an instrument of the royal household, to a new form of ministerial and bureaucratic statecraft. Where questions of household management were identified in the figure of the patriarchal sovereign, the bureaucratic state was increasingly designed to administer and manage ‘economical phenomena’ that it said existed independent of itself.

The proliferation of select committees, commissions of inquiry and governmental reports were the consequence of several overlapping processes. For a long time, committees and commissions had been reviled as tools of Stuart despotism but by the end of the eighteenth century, their use increased dramatically.¹³¹ Two broad processes facilitated this change. First, it

since the Eighteenth Century (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1969). For an overview of the many debates and responses to McDonagh and Parris's complimentary but divergent theses, see: Simon Devereaux, “The Historiography of the English State during ‘the Long Eighteenth Century’: Part I – Decentralized Perspectives,” *History Compass* 7, no. 3 (May 1, 2009): 742-64; For ‘age of commissions’, see: Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?: England 1783-1846* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 602-605; For an imperial information revolution, see: Zoë Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections, 1815-45: Patronage, the Information Revolution and Colonial Government* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 169-199.

¹³⁰ These developments are important precursors to those discussed in: Roy M. MacLeod (ed.), *Government and Expertise: Specialists, Administrators, and Professionals, 1860-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

¹³¹ Royal Commissions, which functioned as extensions of royal prerogative, had been a crucial part of monarchical rule in Britain since at least the Domesday Book and a chief means of exerting monarchical rule in the Tudor and Stuart periods. Following the Glorious Revolution they became associated with Stuart despotism and declined during the Hanoverian eighteenth century. In its place grew Parliament's own investigative bodies, the select committee, which were arranged and presided over by MPs. The ‘select committee’ also dated back to the late fourteenth century, usually to deal with petitions. By the sixteenth century its procedures had been firmly established and the flourished in the Stuart period to express Parliament's ‘grievances’. The committee ‘was perhaps the chief discovery of the parliamentary opposition’ in its fight against Charles I. By the eighteenth century they operated no longer as a weapon of a hostile House of Commons, but as tools of government to consider both public and private legislation, the enclosure of commons, administrative questions and disputed elections. See: Hugh

reflected a transition in which parliamentary authority was being made public, printed and accessible to an increasingly literate kingdom, in which the votes, journals, papers, speeches and debates of both houses were being published, in consequence of the increasing significance of Parliament to British life, and the technological capacities of the printing press.¹³² Select committees proved increasingly useful ways of addressing petitions and proposed bills, while the publication often in popular pamphlet form of their report added to the literature government was producing.

Second, their usage was the product of a dramatic reorganisation of public authority and administration registered in the shift from personalised kingship to impersonal statehood and the emergence of a permanent public service. This shift had two main drivers. On one hand, it was generated by Parliament's ongoing eighteenth-century battle to curb the 'influence' of the Crown.¹³³ On the other, it was part of the Tory government's attempt to purge itself of charges of 'Old Corruption' from the late eighteenth century. 'Corruption' was a long-standing oppositional trope employed by country gentlemen and radicals alike to attack the supposed political monopoly and self-aggrandisement of a parasitic elite, public expenditure on sinecures, offices and the Court clique, or expansive public borrowing for military purposes. In the context of the expensive Napoleonic Wars, charges of 'Old Corruption', as William Cobbett termed it, became a central feature of revolutionary political culture.¹³⁴

McDowall Clokie and Joseph William Robinson, *Royal Commissions of Inquiry: The Significance of Investigations in British Politics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1937) 24, 49-50.

¹³² Joanna Innes, "Legislation and public participation, 1760-1830", David Lemmings (ed.), *The British and Their Laws in the Eighteenth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), 102-120; Norman Chester, *The English Administrative System, 1780-1870* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 107-109; David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

¹³³ Parris, *Constitutional Bureaucracy*, 33-36.

¹³⁴ Philip Harling, "Rethinking 'Old Corruption'", *Past & Present*, no. 147 (1995): 127-58; Philip Harling, *The Waning of 'Old Corruption': The Politics of Economical Reform in Britain, 1779-1846* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). For the older critique of 'corruption' in eighteenth-century 'Country Ideology', see: J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), Chapters 12, 13 and 14. As Harling notes, 'economical reform', meaning prudent fiscal management and retrenchment, was only one dimension of the nineteenth century attacks on Old Corruption. It also included 1830s Whig reforms of authority vested in the Church of England, the boroughs and electoral system. Reforms of the Bank of England and the colonial system are also important contexts. On the last of these, see: Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections, 1815-45*.

The report of inquiry was utilised as a technique of government to battle both fronts. By the end of the eighteenth century, the shift of day-to-day authority from Crown to Parliament meant ministers and eventually ‘Cabinet’ became answerable to their parties and the ‘public’, rather than the King.¹³⁵ This brought with it increased business, responsibility, and above all, accountability, which demanded an unprecedented need for information, as well as clerks and inquiries to produce it, putatively governing in the ‘public’ and not the King’s interest. Related impulses stimulated the fight against ‘Old Corruption’, which meant sanitising government of placemen, Crown-appointed ministers, and retrenching or reforming offices long determined by patronage, patrimony and purchase. In their place, departments created permanent under-secretaries to serve the public dispassionately and independent of ministerial changes.¹³⁶ In this context, the report was a technique to ‘sanitise’ government.

The earliest form of regular inquiry and reporting was the publication of Treasury accounts as a demonstration of transparent public expenditure. A series of fifteen reports by Commissions for Examining the Public Account followed from 1780 to 1786, while Treasury were obliged from 1787 to present to Parliament annual accounts on duties and from 1803, on total revenues and expenditure.¹³⁷ This initial undertaking normalised parliamentary requests for information and reports as a mode of transparency and scrutiny. To be sure, the bureaucratic

¹³⁵ For a useful overview of the shifting interrelation between King, ministers, parties and the ministry, see: J.C.D. Clark, “A General Theory of Party, Opposition and Government, 1688-1832,” *The Historical Journal* 23, no. 2 (1980): 295-325; Parris, *Constitutional Bureaucracy*, 36-39; Chester, *The English Administration System*, 78, 120-22.

¹³⁶ The first permanent under-secretary was appointed at Treasury in 1805, then the Home Office in 1806, Admiralty in 1807, and the Colonial Office in 1825. These marked the beginnings of a new salaried public service, with a fixed role, office hours and holidays and, beginning with the Civil Service Compensation Bill of 1817, retirement pensions rather than life sinecures. The ‘permanent under-secretary’ was established in distinction to the ‘parliamentary under-secretary’. Ministers had always appointed secretaries to help carry out their work, some of which were functionaries of ‘patronage’. As these secretaryships were abolished and ministers became increasingly ‘politicised’, much of the administrative work diverged to new, unpaid ‘under-secretaries’, who were MPs selected or appointed to help the minister. But as these figures also became more politicised in needing to defend their minister in parliament and public, this required yet a further division of labour in the administrative process, resulting in the ‘permanent under-secretary’, distinguished from his ‘parliamentary’ counterpart. See: Archibald S. Foord, “The Waning of The Influence of the Crown,” *The English Historical Review* 62, no. 245 (1947): 484-507; Gerald E. Aylmer, “From Office-Holding to Civil Service: The Genesis of Modern Bureaucracy,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 30 (1980): 91-108; Parris, *Constitutional Bureaucracy*, 42-45; Chester, *The English Administrative System*, 77-82, 120-22, 284-95; and Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, Dangerous People*, 284-85.

¹³⁷ Harling, *The Waning of ‘Old Corruption’*, 59-62, 72-4; Chester, *The English Administrative System*, 98-105. It was followed by further reports on finance: Select Committee on Finance, 1797-1803, 36 Reports; Select Committee on Public Expenditure, 1807-1812, 11 reports; Select Committee on Finance, 1817-19, 11 reports. See Chester, *English Administrative System*, 201-202.

revolution in government, as Philip Harling has written, was not bourgeois and rationalising, but a successful attempt by elites to justify and retain their power.¹³⁸ But these processes did involve profound changes to the practices of government that marked the genesis of Victorian statecraft, which was at once ‘cheap’ but also scientific, rational and standardised.

The select committee was also an effective method for addressing the social unrest and confusion that followed the French Wars and for dealing with a massive increase in petitions. Over 500 committees sat in the first third of the nineteenth century.¹³⁹ The state emerged as one of the most prolific publishers throughout the British world, with reports often appearing as pamphlets or reprinted by the press.¹⁴⁰ Through the medium of its commission or committee reports, each using a sanctioned and official template, the state acquired an unprecedented visibility and capacity to generate, narrate, and impose legitimated social knowledge. While these reports with their sheer mass of detail were targets of satire, as with Dickens’ *Gradgrind’s* want for ‘nothing but Facts’, their power was not a monolithic coerciveness but to amplify public narratives that created frameworks for debate and interpreting social interaction. They were reincarnations of Aristotle’s god: prime movers of social facts.¹⁴¹ Scrutinised, quarried, and reworked for alternative ends by trade unions, evangelical humanitarians, and others, the reports set the terms of debate and interpretation.¹⁴² As subjects recognised themselves in the report, they affirmed the world the report putatively ‘described’. In this sense, theoretical imaginings employed by report authors were made empirical facts.

¹³⁸ For a thoroughgoing rejection of the ‘modernisation’ or ‘embourgeoisement’ model of government reform, see: Philip Harling and Peter Mandler, “From ‘Fiscal-Military’ State to Laissez-Faire State, 1760-1850,” *Journal of British Studies* 32, no. 1 (January 1993): 44-70. Harling, *The Waning of ‘Old Corruption’*, 5. Others have noted the capacity of the landed elite to reinvent themselves in the nineteenth century as a means of hold power. See, for example: P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688-1914* (London: Longman, 1993). Importantly, Harling also emphasises the success of this project, noting the critique of Old Corruption, while still to be found among some radicals by 1850, had lost its rhetorical purchase. *Waning*, 4, 28-29.

¹³⁹ “Indexes to Reports of Select Committees of House of Commons, 1801-45”, *BPP*, 1845 xlii (42); Innes, “Legislation and Public Participation”, 121-132. Gabay has traced a rising average of ten select committees per year in the period 1715-1760, sixteen per year between 1761 and 1780, and twenty-one per year between 1781 and 1800. Nadav Gabay, “The Political Origins of Social Science : The Cultural Transformation of the British Parliament and the Emergence of Scientific Policymaking, 1803-1857” (PhD Thesis, University of California, 2007).

¹⁴⁰ Oz Frankel, “Blue Books and the Victorian Reader”, *Victorian Studies* 46, no. 2 (Winter 2004): 308-18. Frankel notes that the

¹⁴¹ Bourdieu, *On the State*, 11.

¹⁴² Oz Frankel, *States of Inquiry: Social Investigations and Print Culture in Nineteenth-Century Britain and the United States* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

It has recently been argued that such publications might be understood as the origin of modern social science, anticipating its institutionalisation in universities.¹⁴³ Such reporting certainly provided platforms from which to normalise new social categories and discourses. It was with this marriage of ‘theory’ with ‘government’ that consolidated economic knowledge and economic subjectivity. While Ricardian economic discourse had initially emerged as a rhetorical strategy debating the Corn Laws, the configuration of community by its productive agencies quickly proved a compelling and contagious framework for addressing the problems facing imperial Britain after 1815. Political economy clearly had its advocates in Parliament, but for the less doctrinally-minded, it was also a convenient, calculative technology to reframe the problems posed after the war, such as resuming continental trade, pervasive unemployment, depressed corn prices and wages, restoring cash payments, and the purpose of colonies.

To be sure, these developments met considerable resistance. Edmund Burke had already lamented that the ‘age of chivalry’ had been eclipsed by an age of ‘sophists, economists and calculators’.¹⁴⁴ A new kind of conflict was emerging in Parliament between ‘theory’ and ‘experience’, which was soon reflected in broader culture as a contest between the ‘March of Intellect’ and the ‘Wisdom of Our Ancestors’.¹⁴⁵ Purveyors of ‘theory’ were accused by men of ‘experience’ as deluded by an ‘enthusiasm’ for ‘system’ which was identified as having wrecked France, in the same way religious ‘enthusiasm’ had threatened Britain in the English Civil War. As Walter has shown, political economists such as Ricardo had to develop rhetorical strategies to defend themselves against parliamentarians who saw theoretical ‘innovation’ as the enemy of stable and experienced good government. It followed, in time, that purveyors of ‘theory’ could

¹⁴³ Nadav. “The Political Origins of Social Science”.

¹⁴⁴ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003 [1790]), 65.

¹⁴⁵ Dugald Stewart introduced the distinction in his 1792 *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*: ‘The former are commonly understood as contending for experience in opposition to theory; the latter are accused of trusting to theory unsupported by experience’, quoted in Ryan Walter, “The Enthusiasm of David Ricardo,” *Modern Intellectual History*, (March 2016): DOI: 10.1017/S1479244316000044. On political and religious ‘enthusiasm’ in early modern Europe more broadly, see: Lawrence Klein and Anthony LaVopla (eds.), *Enthusiasm and Enlightenment in Europe, 1650-1850* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1998); For the broader cultural implications of the theory/experience debate in Victorian Britain, see: Asa Briggs, *The Age of Improvement, 1783-1867* (London: Routledge, 2000 [1959]), 188-195; and Alan Rauch, *Useful Knowledge: The Victorians, Morality, and the March of Intellect* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

expose ‘men of experience’ as naïve and unscientific.¹⁴⁶ As we shall see in a number of instances in the following chapters, ‘theory’ and ‘experience’ emerged as a battle over good government, played out in select committee hearing rooms and Parliament. Ostensibly, this conflict continued right throughout this period, but as the new economic vocabulary increasingly echoed through Parliament and was impressed into reports, even opponents of political economy employed its metaphors for their own rhetorical purposes. Through appropriation and repetition, this vocabulary became a technology of government. In turn it would even become part of the vernacular of debates in New South Wales.

Administrative reform, increased reporting, the post-war context and the emergence of political economy aligned to form new authorised spaces and stages in which expertise, system, and theory were projected and deployed. Colonies would be a central target of these realignments. Lord Liverpool’s ministry from 1812 to 1827 has been described as the first British government to ‘strive for a coherent theory of economic policy’ rather than having national agriculture and commerce shaped by lobbying, patronage and militaristic priorities.¹⁴⁷ In truth, it was the first ministry to have the combined intellectual resources and technical apparatus to construct such policy. One of the most important institutions in this regard, especially for colonies, was a revamped Board of Trade.

The Board exemplified these administrative and intellectual reforms. A committee of the Privy Council since the seventeenth century, the Board had traditionally comprised eight commissioners whose duties were to promote the trade of the kingdom and inspect American plantations. But after the establishment of a Secretary of State for Colonies in 1768, it was stripped of almost all its executive powers and became an advisory body. Its paid commissioners, usually MP- placemen appointed by the king, happily had little to do. The Board was, then, one of the earliest targets of purging Old Corruption, reconstituted in 1786 with unpaid ex-officio members and just two central members, a president and vice-president, also both MPs, whose roles were paid only after 1817. These two alone conducted meetings and attended to business.¹⁴⁸ The

¹⁴⁶ Ryan Walter, “The Enthusiasm of David Ricardo”.

¹⁴⁷ Hilton, *Corn, Cash, Commerce*, vii.

¹⁴⁸ Chester, *The English Administrative System, 1780-1870*, 45, 271-3, 275. The Board’s ex officio members tended to include: the Archbishop of Canterbury, First Lord of the Treasury, First Lord of the

Board's role remained obscure throughout the war years but after 1815 its advisory capacity was greatly exercised in the attempt to reduce taxes, resume trade, and revive agriculture. Throughout the period from 1818 to 1827, the Board was presided over by new kinds of politician sensitive to public scrutiny and intellectual possibility. These were Frederick Robinson, later titled Viscount Goderich and then Lord Ripon, and William Huskisson. Both would have significant impact on reforming trade generally, and repurposing colonies specifically, and play important roles in the chapters to come. After Robinson experimented with reducing tariffs on colonial wool, Huskisson introduced a system of colonial preferences that greatly stimulated colonial production, including New South Wales pastoralism (see Chapter Five). Later, as Secretary of State for Colonies, Robinson enacted his famous 'Ripon Regulations', which repurposed imperial land settlement and migration (Chapters Four and Six). Both figures were sensitive to the necessities of 'disinterested' government and possibilities of the 'new science'. Ricardo described Robinson as a 'tolerable political economist', while William Huskisson was widely regarded as a minister of great ability who had already proven his capacity as a parliamentary political economist in the 1810 Bullion Controversy.¹⁴⁹ The Board was converted into an institution of responsibility and 'expertise', and from 1834 housed the government's first statistical department.¹⁵⁰ The Board sponsored important select committees on agriculture in the early 1820s, which complemented committees on resuming of cash payments from the Bank of England in 1819, the poor in Ireland

Admiralty, Principal Secretaries of State, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Speaker of the House of Commons, and the Speaker of the House of Commons of Ireland. To these were added ten named persons and up to four further members from the Privy Council.

¹⁴⁹ John Manning Ward, *Colonial Self-Government: The British Experience, 1759-1856*, (London: Macmillan, 1976), 213; Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?*, 258 n216, 283, 377-78; but compare: Harling and Mandler, "From 'Fiscal-Military' State to Laissez-Faire State," 61-62. On Huskisson's sensitivity for public criticism and payments, see Harling, *Waning of Old Corruption*, 156-58. For the biographies of Huskisson and Robinson: C. R. Fay, *Huskisson and His Age* (London: Longmans, Green, 1951); Alexander Brady, *William Huskisson and Liberal Reform: An Essay on the Changes in Economic Policy in the Twenties of the Nineteenth Century*, Second Edition (London: Cass, 1967); Wilbur Devereux Jones, "*Prosperity*" Robinson: *The Life of Viscount Goderich, 1782-1859* (London: Macmillan, 1967). On Huskisson and the Bullion Controversy, see: Biancamaria Fontana, *Rethinking the Politics of Commercial Society: The Edinburgh Review, 1802-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 118-25.

¹⁵⁰ This would coalesce in the following decade. See: Lucy M. Brown, *The Board of Trade and the Free Trade Movement 1830-42* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958).

in 1823, Artizans and machinery in 1824, labourer's wages in 1824, combination laws in 1825, and emigration from 1826 to 1827¹⁵¹. 'Theory' entered public life.¹⁵²

The historian Boyd Hilton has overturned an older interpretation of the Board as the first ideologically-driven free traders in Parliament, showing that while reformers often appealed to Ricardian political economy for justification, it was 'pragmatically rather than theoretically motivated'.¹⁵³ Huskisson and Ricardo often clashed on the floor and unlike Cobden and Gladstone's *pax Britannia*, Huskisson's outlook remained nationalist rather than cosmopolitan.¹⁵⁴ He sought to suppress smuggling, increase warehousing for easy access to goods in time of war, and to break free from European finance and refurbish the colonial system to bolster inter-colonial trade as matter of security.¹⁵⁵ In the last sense, Huskisson can be regarded an 'imperial statesman'.¹⁵⁶ As will be elaborated throughout this thesis, however, what was important in moments such as Huskisson's reforms was not an explicit adherence to theory, as Hilton looked for, but the appropriation of metaphor to frame and explain problems and objectives. In a Parliament often hostile to 'theory', there was good reason why liberal Tories such as Huskisson and Robinson refrained from invoking liberal-Whig dogma. Nonetheless, Huskissons' repurposing of colonies into an imperial system of production, exchange and consumption, and Robinson's treatment of empire as a proportioning of land, capital and labour between metropole and colonies, turned on a particular reimagining of the colonial and imperial 'community' as a distribution of productive agencies.

This pattern was emulated by other commissions and agencies in Britain and colonies, with the creation of new institutions and appointment of political economists into positions of

¹⁵¹ For more on this last report, see Chapter Six of this thesis.

¹⁵² On agriculture: three select committees sat, the most important in 1821, its report was written by Huskisson and encouraged by Ricardo, articulating what might be called a new agricultural policy, as well as stating the Government's overall monetary, fiscal, and financial policy'. Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?*, 266. See: "Report from the Select Committee on Agricultural Distress", *BPP*, 1820 ii (255); "Report from the Select Committee on petitions of the depressed state of agriculture", *BPP* 1821 ix (668); "Report of the Select Committee petitions of the depressed state of agriculture", *BPP* 1822 v (165).

¹⁵³ Hilton, *A Bad, Mad, Dangerous People*, 274; Hilton, *Corn, Cash, Commerce*, 70, 176-82. Semmel, *The rise of free trade imperialism*, 135.

¹⁵⁴ Gordon, *Political Economy in Parliament*, 4, 83-84, 89; Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?*, 296-8.

¹⁵⁵ Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?*, 296, 298.

¹⁵⁶ Fay, *Huskisson and His Age*, 121-34; Brady, *William Huskisson and Liberal Reform*, 132-167.

expertise. For example, and most famously, the greatly-publicised Poor Law Commission reports from 1834 onwards were jointly authored by Edwin Chadwick and Nassau Senior, who appropriated the language of distribution as a ‘principle of administration’ to theorise the effects on wages and profits if able-bodied paupers were ‘rendered independent’ of relief and reinserted back into the dynamic relationship with landlords, capitalists and labourers.¹⁵⁷ Theoretical categories and arrangements constituted empirical reality. ‘It is a matter of common observation’, the Commissioners repeatedly asserted in using these terms. Colonial administration was also soon infiltrated by ‘theory’.¹⁵⁸ Trainee administrators passed through the East India Company College, where Malthus and Richard Jones were professors of political economy in the period 1805 to 1855, sending off graduates to rationalise land taxes and convert peasant agriculture into competitive, calculable market practices.¹⁵⁹ In 1840 the political economist Robert Torrens was appointed as one of three Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners, which institutionalised empire as a distribution of land, capital, and labour.¹⁶⁰ In 1848, Herman Merivale, Professor of Political Economy at Oxford, was made permanent under-secretary at the Colonial Office.

These developments in the Board’s repurposing of colonies, the formation of colonial commissions, and the appointment of political economists as officials all had implications for the governance of New South Wales. But from earliest settlement, the penal colony was also made

¹⁵⁷ Nassau Senior, *Poor Law Commissioners’ Report of 1834, made in 1834 by the Commissioners for Inquiry into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws. Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty* (London: Printed for H.M. Stationary Off. by Darling and Son, 1905), 239, 261.

¹⁵⁸ This has been discussed particularly in relation to British India. See: Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959); Burton Stein, *Thomas Munro: The Origins of the Colonial State and His Vision of Empire* (Delhi ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Martha McLaren, *British India and British Scotland, 1780-1830: Career-Building, Empire-Building, and a Scottish School of Thought on Indian Governance* (University of Arkon Press, 2001); Bart Schultz and Georgios Varouxakis, eds., *Utilitarianism and Empire* (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2005).

¹⁵⁹ Keith Tribe, “Professors Malthus and Jones: Political Economy at the East India College 1806-1858,” *The European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 2, no. 2 (September 1, 1995): 327-54. Bhaskar Mukhopadhyay has made important revisions to Stokes and follows’ work, by showing there were considerable limits to the flow of economic ideas in the face of the persisting pre-colonial hierarchical and *varna* (caste) worldviews. While rendering the colonial agricultural practices ‘governable’ to agents of the East India Company, colonial peasants, argued Mukhopadhyay, continued to valorise the activity of farming in ‘tellingly anti-economic’ ways. Bhaskar Mukhopadhyay, “Taking Callon to Calcutta: Did Economist-Administrators Make Market in the Colony?,” *Economy and Society* 43, no. 2 (April 3, 2014): 183-210. On India land reform, see also: Ranajit Guha, *A Rule of Property for Bengal: An Essay on the Idea of Permanent Settlement* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996); T. R. Travers, “‘The Real Value of the Lands’: The Nawabs, the British and the Land Tax in Eighteenth-Century Bengal,” *Modern Asian Studies* 38, no. 3 (July 2004): 517-58.

¹⁶⁰ See Chapters Four and Six for further detail.

the direct object of inquiry, which helped to destabilise 'household' conceptual schemes woven into its initial designs. The colony was a constant site of Treasury's scrutiny, as well as being subject to a long and detailed Commission of Inquiry under J.T. Bigge between 1819 and 1822 which brought the purge of Old Corruption to the farthest reaches of empire. Throughout the 1830s and 1840s, it was monitored by parliamentary select committees on finance, transportation, colonial accounts, Aborigines, and land disposal, while under constant scrutiny of the Colonial Office's review system and the 'expertise' of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commission.

The public were exposed to all of these developments. Official despatches between the Colonial Office and governors were usually reprinted in newspapers, while from 1822 colonies were required to return exhaustive statistical 'blue books' to London, summaries of which were also made in the press.¹⁶¹ Inevitably, the colony developed its own bureaucratic systems to mediate local problems. The superintendents, chief engineers and architect were joined by a Surveyor-General, an Assignment Board, a Land Board, an Immigration Agent, Commissioners of Crown Lands, and a Register-General.¹⁶² While many of these offices were at least initially positions of patronage, they all involved practices of report writing and calculation that reformulated the nature and visibility of authority in its local exercise. Finally, in the absence of fully-elected self-governing institutions until 1856, from around 1830 members of the colonial Legislative Council sought to foster a self-governing culture by proxy, staging incessant local select committees that inquired into almost every aspect of colonial life and took a wide range of witnesses and evidence.¹⁶³ The most significant was the near-annual Committees of Immigration

¹⁶¹ 'Private' or secretive correspondence between colonial governors and London officials were banned in 1835 by the Colonial Office permanent under-secretary, James Stephen. Zoe Laidlaw argues this ban made governing sensitive issues in the colonies more difficult, but it also reconstituted the public quality of governor's despatches and correspondence and its capacity to project colonial 'common sense'. Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections*, 120-1.

¹⁶² On the administrative novelty of New South Wales in British imperial history and the innovations in the development of the colony's public service, see: Arthur McMartin, *Public Servants and Patronage: The Foundation and Rise of the New South Wales Public Service, 1786-1859* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1983). See also: Brian Fletcher, "Administrative Reform in New South Wales Under Governor Darling", *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 38, no. 3 (September 1979): 246-262; McMartin, *Public Servants and Patronage*; Hilary Golder, *Politics, patronage and public works: the administration of New South Wales, 1842-1900* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005).

¹⁶³ By 1842, sixty-three committees had met, thirty-seven to discuss private bills while others came to define the issues of the day, including immigration, police and gaols, and insolvency. After the Legislative Council was enlarged in 1843, 107 committees were staged in the next four years, encompassing many aspects of colonial life. Only some of these produced reports, while most vanish at the end of the session without the publication of even witness transcripts. But they were central features

which integrated land, wool, and migration into a single report. While colonial committee reports might be utilised for partisan purposes, especially by large woolgrowers who were also the elites, collectively, these documents were exercises in narrating governable reality. Through these avenues, economic metaphor became an essential frame of colonial government and public life.

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced a number of ideas and conceptual transformations that will undergird the critical project of this thesis. In Chapter One, through a reading of Australian economic historiography, I explored the idea of the ‘economic’ as an invented, historical and political category. In this Chapter, I have examined the invention and consolidation of the ‘economic’ as a demarcated sphere of activity by focusing on shifting conceptions of ‘wealth’ and ‘community’ in eighteenth-century political œconomy, Adam Smith’s *WN*, and Ricardo’s *Principles*. These shifts have been traced by focusing on the metaphors by which these concepts were understood. Specifically, this involved a translation of wealth from an entity that ‘circulates’ to one that ‘progresses’ in the writings of Smith, and, in Ricardo, a translation of ‘community’ from being synonymous with a hierarchical household to an antagonistic ‘distribution’ of productive agents, landlords, capitalists and labourers. Together, these metaphors brought into focus a conception of the ‘economic’ as a distinct, wealth-making, self-regulating domain of production, distribution and accumulation.

Focus on these metaphors will enable us to examine how this economic language was appropriated, debated, and stabilised in government reporting in colonial New South Wales, and how colonial phenomena of convicts, Indigenous populations, land settlement, wool growing, and migration were drawn into its ambit in processes of colonial governance. To this end, I have also introduced the government report as a specific kind of nineteenth-century archive with a specific epistemological status to authorise and normalise social categories and narratives. We have also recounted the introduction of an anthropology of human difference into economic language via

of public life. In 1845, the *Sydney Morning Herald* described the committee rooms as the scenes where the ‘actual business is transacted’. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 February 1845. See: Kerry Mills, “Lawmakers, Select Committees and the Birth of Democracy in New South Wales, 1843-1855,” *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 14 (2012): 131-154.

Smith's Four Stage Theory, which distinguished 'savage' from 'civilised', but also men from women in justifying processes of wealth accumulation. These would have particularly acute manifestations in a penal colony riven by difference between settlers and Indigenous peoples, where the former were anxious to establish their 'civility'.

Initially, however, much of the old political œconomic worldview was projected onto the penal colony, where problems of land, trade and population were conceived as modalities of state power. Britain's post-American empire was characterised by a reassertion of aristocratic rule, proconsul imperialism and 'household' patriarchal autocracy. In time, these assumptions were destabilised and eclipsed as colonies were repurposed as domains for proportioning capital and labour after the Napoleonic Wars. But economisation also involved working through problems that were unique to New South Wales. Imperial government in New South Wales foremost meant dealing with the figure of the convict, while also seeking to accommodate Indigenous populations within the colonial project. It would be through these two figures – the convict and the settler's construction of the 'savage Aborigine' – which economic knowledge first appeared as essential to Australian settlement, and through which foundational narratives of economic labour and economic progress were forged. It is to these process, and to the distant penal colony, that we now turn.

(3)

Commissions, Convicts, Civilisation

But the assignment of convict labor [sic] in New South Wales, has been and still continues to be regulated upon an erroneous principle. It is looked upon rather as a “*commodity*” to be disposed of for the advantages of the colonists, than with reference to the punishment of crime, the true object to be attained.

James Macarthur, *The Present State and Future Condition of New South Wales*¹

Savages are of great use to political philosophers; their condition serves as a sort of zero in the thermometer of civilization, a point from which there is a gradual rise towards perfection. They are thus very valuable in hypothetical reasoning.

Herman Merivale, *Edinburgh Review*²

THE BOTANY BAY EXPEDITION WAS ANNOUNCED TO THE BRITISH PUBLIC IN September 1786. Eighteen months later, eleven ships carrying not quite fifteen hundred convicts, marines and officials landed in Port Jackson, disembarked and set up permanent camp. New South Wales was, then, established amidst the developing intellectual and governmental contexts outlined in the previous chapter: in between the publication of Smith and Ricardo’s innovating works and just as the royal commission, select committee, and permanent bureaucracy were emerging as indispensable instruments of authority. These contexts would profoundly shape the future of the colony.

There has been a long debate among historians over the leading reasons for establishing a penal colony in New South Wales.³ One thing among many we have learned from these debates is that the initial transportation voyage and settlement were not a hurried, muddled effort that lacked foresight, but rather meticulously planned, equipped, and conducted.⁴ The colony was a

¹ James Macarthur, *The Present State and Future Prospects of New South Wales* (London: D. Walther, 1837), 53-54.

² Herman Merivale, “Senior on Political Economy”, *Edinburgh Review* 66, no. 133 (Oct 1837), 87-88.

³ Ged Martin, *The Founding of Australia : The Argument about Australia’s Origins* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1978); Alan Frost and Mollie Gillen, “Botany Bay: An Imperial Venture of the 1780s,” *The English Historical Review* 100, no. 395 (April 1, 1985): 309–30.

⁴ Alan Frost, *The First Fleet: The Real Story* (Melbourne: Black Inc., 2012).

product of the bureaucratic organisation that had been a hallmark of Britain's eighteenth-century 'fiscal-military state'. While not yet the professional public service of nineteenth-century government, this enterprise had been characterised by expansive record-keeping, planning, and correspondence between the military, naval, trade, and administrative departments.⁵ So, while the colony's day-to-day operations were under the autocratic rule of a proconsul governor, centralised bureaucratic intervention was, from the outset, a key feature of Australian colonial governance.⁶ It was this feature that primed the colony for processes of economisation. As the colony's ever-expanding administrative structure of secretaries of state, governors, officials, clerks, and agents sought categories to frame and address the unique problems of managing a distant penal colony, the metaphors of political economy offered a ready technology of governance.

Two bureaucratic problems were preeminent in settling penal New South Wales. The first was obvious and explicit in the composition of those eleven ships: the convict, who needed to be disciplined, managed, reformed, and put to work in making the colony self-sufficient. The second was more implicit, a latent issue within the project of settlement: the Indigenous peoples of the regions claimed for empire, who while occupying no central place in initial official plans beyond 'conciliation', were soon serving as a key reference point in European calculations of stadial development that helped legitimise the colonial project. In their different ways, the convict and the 'Aborigine', as colonists homogenised Indigenous peoples, were also the original targets of economisation in New South Wales. Where problems concerning the Corn Laws, Poor Laws, trade, and wages had stimulated the conceptual innovations of political economists in Britain, by appropriating these same basic economic formulations of wealth and community to frame the problems of the imperial frontier, colonial authorities' incrementally brought the new phenomena – convicts and Aborigines – into the science's ambit. In this way, we begin to examine the making of things as 'economic' in colonial New South Wales.

⁵ On this theme, see: John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688-1783* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

⁶ On the character of post-Revolution proconsul imperialism, see: John Benyon, "Overlords of Empire? British 'Proconsular Imperialism' in Comparative Perspective", *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 19, no.2 (1991): 164-202. See also Chapter Four of this thesis.

In this chapter, I trace two processes of economisation animated by the convict and the Aborigine. First, in administering the male convict, ‘labour’ was redefined as an ‘economic’ category in colonial governance. This process involved two interlinked processes. The first was the homogenisation of once discrete ‘services’ into a single economic category of ‘labour’. And second, as a corollary, was the invention of a new normative distinction between ‘free’ and ‘unfree’ labour. Convicts first arrived in European Australia possessing a dual status of ‘unfreedom’, both as exiled felons and as labouring servants in a world of strict social hierarchies. As the colonial government became a mass employer of men and women, however, it necessarily developed new techniques to manage convict employment that destabilised this old regime of ‘service’.⁷ Local authorities deployed the Ricardian metaphors of the ‘proportioned’ wealth-producing community to organise convicts as a factor of production within the schema of land, capital, and *labour*, and to measure the cost of convict work. In doing so, the language of service, which implied degrees of unfreedom, was eclipsed by the language of a homogenising and calculable ‘labour’. However, as James Macarthur’s epigraph reflected, some officials and colonial elites were unsettled by these developments, fearing the convicts’ status as felon was lost in such assessments. To reinstate this status, opponents of the convict system drew upon anti-slavery rhetoric to introduce a second set of normative categories into the colonial lexicon, differentiating between suboptimal ‘unfree’ labour, which the convict embodied, and optimal ‘free’ labour, represented by wage-earning free migrants. These processes had enduring significance for how labour and work were to be understood and governed.

Second, through the ‘Aborigine’, the associations between civilisation, progress, and wealth accumulation as developed in the Scottish Enlightenment, where heightened, mobilised and normalised. Colonial projects to ‘civilise’ the ‘savage’ Aborigines, that is, to make them in the image of Europeans, effectively valorised Europeans’ linking of historical time with capital accumulation. Similar to Alison Bashford and Joyce Chaplin’s observations on Malthus’ uses of

⁷ My account of this ‘destabilisation’ is limited to the perspective of government in the context of empire and colonial New South Wales. As I note below, this process also had correlates in North America and Britain, and it is crucial to note the concept of ‘property in service’, and the figure of the wage-earner more generally, were topics of great dispute throughout the early modern period, especially in the natural law canon. For an overview, to which my interpretation is greatly indebted, see: Maria Luisa Pesante, “Slaves, Servants and Wage Earners: Free and Unfree Labour, from Grotius to Blackstone,” *History of European Ideas* 35, no. 3 (2009): 289–320.

indigenous peoples in the ‘New World’ to theorise the dynamics of population, in attempting to ‘civilise’ the Aborigines, it was not simply that Britons attempted to impose their modernity but that they were affirming to themselves the possibility of an imagined and economic modernity.⁸ As Merivale’s epigraph indicates, the ‘savage Aborigine’ functioned as a ‘zero point’ which made colonial ‘economic progress’ imaginable.

These processes introduced two distinct ideas, or governmental ‘narratives’, of ‘economic labour’ and ‘economic progress’ which provided a new conceptual basis for the colonial project. Themes developed in this chapter recur throughout the study. The bureaucratic experiments in managing convict workers, as well as the idea of ‘free labour’, would also frame the governance of the assisted migrants discussed in Chapter Six. Meanwhile, the narrative of ‘progress’ which was worked out inversely through governing Aborigines came to pervade all endeavours in making things economic. Indeed, ‘progress’ was the phenomenon colonial statisticians most wished to represent (see Chapter Seven).

While these narratives of labour and of progress were incubated in political economic theory, they were *authorised* in government documents. The transported convict and Indigenous peoples were the subjects of two major House of Commons select committees in the 1830s, the Select Committee on Transportation (1837-38) and the Select Committee on Aborigines (1836-37). Both these reports have received much scholarly attention in recent years, and they are re-read here as consolidating new ‘economic’ definitions of labour and progress into official discourse.⁹ This was a process of re-narration carried out over and again in a variety of

⁸ Alison Bashford and Joyce E. Chaplin, *The New Worlds of Thomas Robert Malthus: Rereading the Principle of Population* (Princeton University Press, 2016).

⁹ “Report of the Select Committee on Transportation”, *BPP 1837* xxii (669); “Report of the Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements), *BPP 1836* vii (538). The former has been assessed as projecting a moralising, anti-slavery discourse into New South Wales. See, for example: J. B. Hirst, *Convict Society and Its Enemies: A History of Early New South Wales* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1983); and Kirsten McKenzie, “Discourses of Scandal: Bourgeois Respectability and the End of Slavery and Transportation at the Cape and New South Wales,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 4, no. 3 (January 5, 2004): <https://doi.org/10.1353/cch.2004.0011>. The latter Report was the basis of new evangelical, protectionist ‘humanitarian narratives’ about British colonisation, both to ‘protect’ the Aborigines but also justify an emergent middle-class liberal universalism. See: Tony Ballantyne, “Humanitarian Narratives: Knowledge and the Politics of Mission and Empire,” *Social Sciences and Missions* 24, no. 2–3 (2011): 233–264; Elizabeth Elbourne, “The Sin of the Settler: The 1835-36 Select Committee on Aborigines and Debates over Virtue and Conquest in the Early Nineteenth-Century British White Settler Empire,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 4, no. 3 (2003): <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/50777>; Zoë Laidlaw, “‘Aunt Anna’s Report’: The Buxton Women and the Aborigines Select Committee, 1835–37,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 32, no. 2 (2004): 1–28; and Zoe Laidlaw, “Integrating Metropolitan, Colonial and Imperial Histories - The

government documents permeating the wider colonial culture, and establishing new frameworks of social identity, interaction, and debate.

Shifting my analysis to government documents and their public reception sets in motion the major theme of this thesis: the relation between theory and government. It is crucial to recall that what is meant here is not the *application* of theoretical doctrine by report writers and bureaucrats, but the iterative *deployment* of basic metaphors about wealth and community to frame governable problems. What appears, then, on one level as a history of pragmatic political adjustment and emergent interests, was also a history of the appropriation and canonisation of imaginings inherited from political economy. This chapter therefore marks an important transition in the overall argument of this thesis. Where the opening two chapters have examined a collection of texts to stress a series of conceptual breaks which helped historicise the ‘economic’, we turn now to the active and constitutive inheritance of that vocabulary in colonial New South Wales.

Convicts

The convict was the original target of bureaucratic intervention in New South Wales. Considering their status as convicted, exiled felons, historians have tended to evaluate convict transportation foremost as a legal phenomenon, examining their likeness to slaves, their rights as ‘freeborn Englishmen,’ their constitutional standing as subjects of discipline, coercion, and reform, but also as agents of resistance and protest.¹⁰ Part of the constitutional problematic of transportation was whether convicts could be made to work, as they almost immediately were, and the legality of

Aborigines Select Committee of 1835-37,” in Tracey Banivanua Mar and Julie Evans (eds.), *Writing Colonial Histories: Comparative Perspectives*, (Melbourne: University of Melbourne, 2002), 75-91.

¹⁰ For the classic debate on the ‘slave’ status of Australia convicts, see: David Neal, “Free Society, Penal Colony, Slave Society, Prison?,” *Historical Studies* 22, no. 89 (1987): 497–518; J.B. Hirst, “Or None of the above: A Reply,” *Historical Studies* 22, no. 89 (October 1, 1987): 519–24; On the legal status as convicts as ‘Englishmen’, see: D. J. Neal, *The Rule of Law in a Penal Colony: Law and Power in Early New South Wales*, (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Alan Atkinson, “The Free-Born Englishman Transported: Convict Rights as a Measure of Eighteenth-Century Empire,” *Past & Present* 144, no. 1 (August 1, 1994): 88–115; and Bruce Kercher, “Perish or Prosper: The Law and Convict Transportation in the British Empire, 1700-1850,” *Law and History Review* 21, no. 3 (October 1, 2003): 527–84; On the convict as a figure of coercion and resistance, see, for example: Alan Atkinson, “Four Patterns of Convict Protest,” *Labour History*, no. 37 (November 1, 1979): 28–51; Paula Jane Byrne, *Criminal Law and Colonial Subject: New South Wales, 1810-1830*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); and William Murray Robbins, “Management and Resistance in the Convict Work Gangs, 1788–1830,” *The Journal of Industrial Relations* 45, no. 3 (September 1, 2003): 360–77.

techniques used to coerce or induce good working habits.¹¹ Historians, however, have never doubted the actual *capacity* of convicts to ‘labour’. While convicts were for a long time assumed by historians to be poor workers, scholarship has recently recast convicts as the essential ‘economic resource’ or ‘human capital’ of colony-building, and part of a broader, early-modern transnational and coerced ‘labour force’ along with slaves, indentured servants, and ‘coolies’.¹² But as the contrast between the 1812 and 1837 select committee reports on transportation at the beginning of this thesis indicated, the notion of transported convicts constituting a homogenised ‘economic resource’ or ‘labour market’ would have been mostly foreign to authorities in the early nineteenth century.¹³ The historiographical focus on convicts’ legal status, while assuming their ‘economic’ importance to New South Wales in neoclassical terms, has, as such, obscured another process in which the convict was implicated: the fundamental re-imagining of the meaning of ‘labour’ to a community. This was a process underway in all parts of the Anglo world, in debates over slavery, pauperism, and poor laws. In the figure of the transported felon in a penal colony, this process was both precocious but also reflected its own distinct complexities.

Transportation began to colonial Australia as a substitute for the lost American colonies. It did so according to the same Transportation Acts that had been applied to Virginia and Maryland, but under very different circumstances.¹⁴ One of the central tenets of that legislation was that the ship owners, chartered by the navy to transport convicts into exile, also took a

¹¹ For a recent reconsideration of this theme, see: Lisa Ford and David Roberts, “New South Wales Penal Settlements and the Transformation of Secondary Punishment in the Nineteenth-Century British Empire,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 15, no. 3 (December 1, 2014), <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/562297>.

¹² Stephen Nicholas (ed.), *Convict Workers: Reinterpreting Australia’s Past* (Cambridge University Press, 1988). John Hirst wrote easily of the governors distributing ‘convicts as an economic resource along with land, tools and equipment from the government store’. J. B. Hirst, , *Freedom on the Fatal Shore: Australia’s First Colony* (Melbourne: Black Inc, 2008), 76. On the ‘transnational’ labour market for convicts, see: Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, “Convict Transportation from Britain and Ireland 1615–1870,” *History Compass* 8, no. 11 (November 1, 2010): 1221–42; and Christian G. De Vito and Alex Lichtenstein, “Writing a Global History of Convict Labour,” *International Review of Social History* 58, no. 2 (August 2013): 285–325.

¹³ The concept of the ‘labour market’ is treated in Chapter Six.

¹⁴ A new Transportation Act was passed in (1784) 24 Geo 3, c. 56, however in effect, it remained much the same as the Act of 1718. Kercher notes that the 1784 Act was repealed by a new act passed in 1815, 55 Geo. 3, c. 156, s 1., but that act also stated that the contractor and his assigns ‘shall have a Property in the Services of such Offender or Offenders’ for the period of transportation. See: Kercher, “Perish or Prosper.” For a recent comparative account of convict labour administration in the American and Australian colonies, see: Jennie Jeppesen, “From whips to wages: From coercive to incentive-driven labor”, in Greg Patmore and Shelton Stromquist (eds.) *Frontiers of Labor: A Comparative and Transnational Perspective* (Illinois: Illinois University Press, 2018), 87-101.

‘Property and Interest in the Service’ of the convict as indemnity. Shipmasters then sold these ‘services’ to employers in the American colonies, just as they would if transporting indentured servants.¹⁵ As such, the transported convict embodied two kinds of unfreedom, which Alan Atkinson has described as their ‘dual status ... as transported British criminals and as indentured American servants’.¹⁶ When transportation began to New South Wales, convicts arrived with the same dual status but rather than offloading convict services to private settlers, the governor retained possession of these ‘services’.

Bruce Kercher has shown that this concept presented unique challenges to the colonial government from a legal and constitutional perspective.¹⁷ Here, I argue it also presented administrative and fiscal challenges. As convicts could not be immediately distributed to free settlers, the imperial government attracted an immense new expense in victualling convicts, prompting a series of experiments to cut costs. While on one level these were pragmatic adjustments to local circumstances, the experiments also increasingly drew on new economic metaphors to visualise and arrange the convict population. The effect was to eclipse the older language of ‘services’ and homogenise convict’s capacity to labour into a singular measurable category of economic ‘labour’, which could be organised to new governmental goals: fiscal efficiency and productive output. Yet as James Macarthur’s epigraph indicates, there was also significant opposition to these processes, especially from those who did not wish convict employment to be normalised as a resource in itself. In an effort to reaffirm convicts’ debased status, opponents of the transportation system likened the convict to the slave, and, drawing on the rhetoric of the anti-slavery movement, assigned them a new kind of dual status: as a transported British criminal, and thus as an exponent of inefficient, expensive, unprofitable ‘unfree labour’, that could be contrasted with profitable ‘free labour’. The homogenisation of

¹⁵ A. Roger Ekirch, *Bound for America: The Transportation of British Convicts to the Colonies, 1718-1775* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 122-23; A.E. Smith, *Colonists in Bondage: White Servitude and Convict Labor in America, 1607-1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947), 147-51.

¹⁶ Atkinson, “The Free-born Englishman Transported”, 88-115. As Atkinson notes, this dual status ‘caused signification problems of administration. Were convicts in servitude to be treated, in the main, like other indentured servants, or were they to be subject to distinctive forms of degradation?’ Kercher added: ‘The confusion between convict transportation and indentured labor is also shown by section 5 of the 1718 Transportation Act, which provided for the transportation of unconvicted people between fifteen and twenty-one years of age who agreed to travel to America’. Kercher, “Perish or Prosper”, 531.

¹⁷ Kercher, “Perish or Prosper”.

labour was, therefore, almost instantaneously accompanied by the invention of a second set of normative economic categories, 'free' and 'unfree' labour. These two processes can be traced in turn.

From Services to Labour

The homogenisation of labour into an economic category emerged from a context in which no language had previously existed to 'think' of labour in such generalised terms. In utilising the language of 'property in services', the Transportation Acts had introduced a number of early modern English conventions into colonial administration. Prior to the nineteenth century, employment relations in England were organised around the now lost concept of 'servitude'. All labourers, from the indentured servant to the common day labourer, artificer and mechanic, were located on a spectrum of relative 'unfreedom', whereby masters acquired a property in the 'services' of their servants. According to Robert Steinfeld, as a set of legal and social practices, the normative distinction between 'unfree' and 'free labour' simply 'did not exist' in these contexts.¹⁸ To labour was to denote one's relative unfreedom. Thus, 'free labour' would have been an oxymoron to the early modern context.¹⁹ This 'unfreedom' was defined both legally, and by cultural and political norms.

The legal dimension was encoded by Master and Servant Acts, first legislated in the fourteenth century to help control the demographic crisis in the aftermath of the Black Death and

¹⁸ This has been the important insight offered especially by Robert J. Steinfeld, *The Invention of Free Labor: The Employment Relation in English and American Law and Culture, 1350-1870* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 8-9. Steinfeld overturned the common-sense assumption that 'free labour', as contemporarily understood as waged and contractual work, represents the normative condition of the employment relation. Steinfeld encourages us to think about the 'normalisation' of 'free labour' as neither a Whig story of increasing freedom nor a Marxist account of the loss of freedom by the working poor, but 'a story of one set of historical practices with one mix of kinds of freedom and unfreedom for labouring people replacing another set of historical practices with a different mix of kinds of freedom and unfreedom.' This involves reversing our normal perspective and viewing 'free wage labour ... from the perspective of indentured labour'. For a comparative story from the French perspective, see: William H. Sewell, *Work and Revolution in France: The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). Maria Luisa Pesante has recently helped greatly complicate the brief account I have given here, which by necessity of space, provides only the most general overview. Each of the features noted here, including who was a 'servant', was constantly debated by early modern natural lawyers in Britain and on the continent. Pesante, "Slaves, servants and wage earners."

¹⁹ Steinfeld, *The Invention of Free Labor* 4, 13, 40.

re-codified by the Elizabethan Statute of Artificers.²⁰ These laws, some of which were not repealed until late in the twentieth century, applied not only to those ‘in service’ living with their masters, but to all who ‘performed services for wages’.²¹ Under these laws, a master obtained a form of jurisdiction over another person, temporarily acquiring a property in the *specified* energies or services of employees. Workers violating employment agreements faced imprisonment until willing to return to their employers.²² Master and servant laws operated as an extension of the ‘household’ metaphors that governed early modern social and political life.²³ They did so in two ways. First, the household patriarch literally represented the ‘government over a household’, in which his apprentice, domestic or indentured servant, as with his wife and children, were subordinate.²⁴ Second, for those who maintained themselves and their own family, such as cottagers, day labourers, and artificers, their services were understood as a resource of the community.²⁵ The stringent regulation of employment relations constituted the basis of a mutually sustaining relationship between rich and poor, which, as noted in Chapter Two, historians have denoted as the ‘utility of poverty’ doctrine. Such regulation included poor relief, the control of wages and grain prices, restricted movement and disciplining regular work habits in the face of perceived idleness, crime, and excessive emigration.

Labouring was also ‘unfree’ in a second cultural and normative sense, which provided the bulwark to legal regulation. From the early seventeenth century, with the disappearance of the final vestiges of villeinage and ‘recovery’ of a language of ancient English constitutionalism and free-born rights, concerted efforts were made by legal theorists to clarify that it was not an

²⁰ Ibid., 23-4.

²¹ Ibid., 20. There has been some conjecture among historians as to who the ‘servant’ referred to in Master and Servant Acts, whether it referred to all forms of waged labour or specifically house servants. For example: Peter Laslett, “Market Society and Political Theory”, *The Historical Journal* 8, no. 1 (1964): 150-182; Steinfeld has argued the category ‘servant’ was highly unstable throughout this period with multiple meanings, each with a distinct legal incidents, however contemporaries also recognised these shared basic characteristics. *The Invention of Free Labor*, 17-18.

²² Ibid., 4.

²³ We will recall from Chapter Two that in Blackstone’s *Commentaries* [1763], for example, master and servant law fell under the head of family law, what he tellingly called ‘private, economical relations’. William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England in Four Books*, Vol. 1 (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1893), Chapter XIV. Blackstone demarked ‘master and servant’, ‘husband and wife’ and ‘parent and child’ as the ‘three great relations in private life’. He summarised the first as ‘founded in convenience, whereby a man is directed to call in the assistance of other, where his own skill and labour will not be sufficient to answer the cares incumbent upon him’.

²⁴ Steinfeld, *The Invention of Free Labor*, 56-9; See also: Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1977), 93-104, 109-13.

²⁵ Steinfeld, *The Invention of Free Labor*, 60.

individual's capacity to 'labour' that was bought and sold between masters and servants, but the sale of explicit services.²⁶ The famous passages on slavery, property, and civil society in Locke's *Second Treatise* exemplified the view that 'the *Labour* of his Body, and the *Work* of his Hands, we may say, are properly his ... the unquestionable Property of the Labourer' who sells 'for a certain time the service he undertakes to do in exchange for wages'. That 'sale', said Locke, effectively 'puts him into the family of his master' and 'gives the master temporary power over him'.²⁷ As James Tully and others have explained, these passages did not accord with free contractual 'capitalist' relations, as is often assumed, but mapped the dimensions of moral and political 'self-ownership', designed to establish the limits of political power by distinguishing free men from slaves.²⁸ Locke's labourer did not sell his 'Labour' or 'Hand', for these were 'properly his'. The labourer's possession of his own 'Body' distinguished the freeman from the slave. As Blackstone affirmed in the following century, unlike the slave, a 'free-born' Englishman's human capacity to 'labour' did not become the property of another, only those specific 'services' to which he agreed.²⁹ But the labourer did sell his *services* for wages, temporarily forfeiting his self-mastery; it was this reliance on another that located him on a spectrum of political unfreedom, even as he retained certain 'free-born' rights. This, then, was also true for the transported convict, whose *services* were assigned to shipmasters in America and

²⁶ Steinfeld has traced the last recorded legal dispute involving villeinage to 1618 and shown that manorial surveys of the period still occasionally mentioned 'the value of the villeins as if they were an "asset" of the manor'. *The Invention of Free Labour*, 72. On the ancient constitution and sense of English liberty, see J.G.A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957).

²⁷ John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*. Edited by Peter Laslett. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 287-288, 322.

²⁸ This capitalistic reading of Locke as a theorist of 'possessive individualism' is most readily associated with C.A. Macpherson, *Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), which has had an immense influence on early modern intellectual political and legal historiography, including Steinfeld's *The Invention of Free Labour*, 79-93. Alternatively, Locke has featured prominently in those histories of political thought regulated by questions about the original justifications of capitalism. For example, Neal Wood, *John Locke and Agrarian Capitalism* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1984). Resistance to this mode of interpreting Locke specifically and seventeenth- and eighteenth-century political thought generally has itself become legion. For an overview, see James Tully, "After the Macpherson Thesis", in *An Approach to political philosophy: Locke in Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), especially 78 n12. For the absence of an 'economic' dimension to Locke's master-servant relation, see Tully, *An Approach*, 82-85, 242-261; Keith Tribe, *Land, Labour, and Economic Discourse* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1978), 46-51.

²⁹ Blackstone, *Commentaries*, 423-5.

governors in Australia, thus retaining ‘free-born’ rights as Englishmen, even as they were charged with the dual unfreedom of exile and servitude.³⁰

It was for this reason, in defining a spectrum of unfreedom, that early moderns maintained intricate social distinctions. Domestic servants were usually single and usually indentured for a year at a time; labourers were married, waged or tasked workers; artificers hired causally and not bound by terms. Handicrafts, guilds, and the putting-out system all implied a different set of relations.³¹ These were identified as discrete personalities which could be mapped on to something like Gregory King’s ‘Scheme’, as was outlined in Chapter Two holding specific forms of moral ‘office’ that determined public rights and responsibilities.³² This view entertained no notion of an undifferentiated ‘labour power’ to be employed in routine operations.³³ Waged servants were not united by their occupation or ‘economic’ situation as a productive ‘class’, but by their lack of landed property and corporate privilege. In the latter eighteenth century, ‘servant’ was established as a more general term to refer to all who ‘serve another for wages’, but the emphasis remained on specific *services*, not the generalised human capacity to labour.³⁴

These English conventions were inherited in practices of transportation to colonial America and Australia. While convicts possessed a different legal status to indentured servants, their status as labourers was largely considered by authorities, employers and even convicts themselves as the same as other servants.³⁵ The preamble to the 1718 Transportation Act stated one of its purposes was to provide servants in the colonies. Providing shipmasters with ‘a Property Interest in the Service’ of convicts facilitated this transfer and created a market in services, but because

³⁰ It is for this reasons the category of ‘emancipist’, and all the encroachments they faced in New South Wales, was such a politically charged status in colonial New South Wales.

³¹ Steinfeld, *The Invention of Free Labour*, 19; Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost* (London: Methuen, 1971), 23-54.

³² Note that apprentices and domestic servants are invisible on King’s ‘Scheme’, subsumed within his masters’ household. On the latter notion of ‘office’, see: Conal Condren, *Argument and Authority in Early Modern England: The Presupposition of Oaths and Offices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

³³ The classic account of this formation of such ‘undifferentiated labour power’ employed in routine and piecemeal operations of the modern division of labour, is Harry Braverman’s *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (New York: Monthly Review, 1974).

³⁴ Steinfeld, 22, 81-4.

³⁵ While the theme of convict’s self-understanding is beyond my scope here, it is worth noting that Clare Anderson found in her study of convicts transported in the Indian Ocean sometimes did not perceive themselves as convicts at all but associated their experience with indenture, a status more common to their families and communities. Clare Anderson, *Subaltern Lives: Biographies of Colonialism in the Indian Ocean World, 1790-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

this went on between private individuals, it did not forge a homogenised ‘labour force’ or ‘labour market’ that government could monitor or optimise.³⁶ According to the 1718 Act, the imperial government had nothing to do with convicts once sentenced to transportation. There was no explicit requirement convicts be put to work and wealthy convicts could and did buy their own liberty from shipmasters, thus serving terms of legal exile but freed from the ignominy of servitude.³⁷

The convention of ‘property in service’ was also inherited by New South Wales, but under very different circumstances to the former American colonies. It was these circumstances that facilitated the homogenisation of services into economic ‘labour’. Rather than selling convicts’ ‘property in service’ to settlers, shipmasters were instead fully reimbursed on arrival and the governor assumed complete control of the convicts’ services. The governors, as Phillip was first instructed, put them to work ‘under such inspectors or overseers, and under such regulations as may appear to you to be necessary’.³⁸ Atkinson has shown it is possible to interpret the initial plan for New South Wales, and Phillip’s first commission, as based on a plan to emancipate convicts as soon as they arrived, establishing them as ‘peasants in their own country’.³⁹ Again, no Transportation Act stipulated that convicts had to work until 1824.⁴⁰ However, a very different pattern of governance and unique set of problems emerged. In contrast to a commonwealth of freed peasants, Phillip kept these ‘servants of the Crown’, as he dubbed

³⁶ Farley Grubb, “The Transatlantic Market for British Convict Labor,” *The Journal of Economic History* 60, no. 1 (March 2000): 94–122.

³⁷ Ekirch, *Bound for America*, 102, 119.

³⁸ Governor Phillip’s Instruction, 25 April 1787, *HRA* 1:1, 11; Atkinson, “The Free-Born Englishman Transported”, 108. Atkinson notes (n72) that the ‘earliest surviving contracts for New South Wales, dated 1789 (PRO, AO 3/291), specify assignment to the governor. Kercher has noted that Transportation Acts passed in 1815 and 1816 continued to state the shipping contractor and his assigns ‘shall have a Property in the Service of such Offender or Offenders’ for the period of transportation, by which time ‘it was perfectly clear contractors were not retaining any property in the services of the convicts they carried to Australia’. Kercher, ‘Perish or Prosper’, 568.

³⁹ Alan Atkinson, *The Europeans in Australia: A History, Volume One: The Beginning* (Melbourne ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 50–1, 58. Atkinson is here self-consciously refurbishing an old argument first put forward by Brian Fitzpatrick, *British Imperialism and Australia, 1783–1833* (London, 1839), 13–15. In support of this ‘initial plan’, Atkinson cites James Matra’s ideas for New South Wales, written in 1783: ‘Give them a few acres of ground as soon as they arrive ... with assistance they may want to till them’. In due course, ‘it is very probable they will be moral subjects of society’. *Europeans*, 68. See also, Alan Atkinson, “The First Plans for Governing New South Wales, 1786–87,” *Australian Historical Studies* 24, no. 94 (1990): 22–40. For a rebuttal of this argument, see: Brian H. Fletcher, *Landed Enterprise and Penal Society: A History of Farming and Grazing in New South Wales before 1821* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1976), 20–1.

⁴⁰ *Transportation Act* (1824) 5 Geo. 4, c 84. See: Kercher, ‘Perish or Prosper’, 569.

them, in government works ‘till the time for which their sentenced is expired’.⁴¹ This prerogative steered the long-term trajectory of penal administration.⁴²

The colonial government, inadvertently, became a mass employer of men and women. To deal with these exigencies, a chasm opened between local practice and imperial law. Convicts were mostly forced to work for the entirety of their term, either for the governor or assigned to officer-farmers and settlers, though the government always retained a ‘property in service’ of the convict. None of this was stipulated in the Transportation Acts, nor any other law, which caused much constitutional puzzlement. First for commentators such as Bentham, who attacked government overreach in its treatment of convicts, and then for employer-settlers and local justices, unsure of how the common law of ‘services’ applied to the ‘rights’ masters had over their assigned servants.⁴³

These debates reflected the extent to which the conventions of ‘service’ were received into the colony. To be sure, this language was already mixing with other emerging concepts. From the outset, the ‘labour of the convicts’ was interpreted as a ‘public stock’, as Phillip called it, following the Smithian notion that the aggregated human capacity to labour was the ‘annual fund’ of ‘national wealth’.⁴⁴ But, initially at least, at the level of everyday governance, convict work continued to be disaggregated and managed through the language of ‘service’. The assignment of convicts to officer-farmers began in the earliest years of settlement to clear what little land was granted, and by 1800, it had developed into a regulated system to help promote private farming. In the Government Orders regulating assignment, convicts were exclusively referred to as

⁴¹ Phillip, ‘Instructions for Philip Gidley King, Esq. Superintendent and Commandant of the settlement of Norfolk Island’, 12 February 1788, *HRA* 1:1, 34; Atkinson, “The Free-born Englishman”, 108-9; Atkinson, *Europeans*, 72-8.

⁴² Atkinson, *Europeans*, 77.

⁴³ In 1804-05, a ‘gentleman convict’ named John Grant challenged the governor’s power to put convicts to work, a point driven home by Jeremy Bentham, *A Plea for the Constitution Shewing the Enormities Committed to the Oppression of British Subjects, Innocent as Well as Guilty ... in and by ... the Penal Colony of New South Wales : Including an Inquiry into the Right of the Crown to Legislate without Parliament in Trinidad, and Other British Colonies* (London: Mawman and Hatchard, 1803). See: Atkinson, *The Europeans in Australia*, 51, 261-2. On technical legal grounds, it was not clear to whom the ‘property in services’ of convicts belonged, the governor or master, and what power the governor had to privately assign or recall the convict’s services, until such practices were affirmed by a new 1824 Transportation Act. The ambiguities and complexities of the issue were reflected in Chief Justice Forbes’ long memorandum to the parliamentary under-secretary for colonies, Wilmot Horton: Forbes to Horton, 6 March 1827, *HRA* 4, no.1, 695-99. For some longer term consequences, see at length: Bruce Kercher, *An Unruly Child: A History of Law in Australia* (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1995).

⁴⁴ Philip to Sydney, 15 May 1788, *HRA* 1:1, 22.

‘servants’. This term was deliberate, implying a series of obligations and rights for both the master and his assigned convict, despite as the above debate indicates, both sides claiming that these rights were not respected.⁴⁵ The regulations stipulated rations, wages for specific forms of tasks committed outside official hours, and punishment for absconding.⁴⁶ Convicts were also protected, and could be flogged only by government men on a magistrate’s sentencing.⁴⁷ The status as convict-servant enacted Old World social hierarchies, which, through moral fortitude, could be climbed. As early as 1792, Phillip reported convicts held such aspirations, for their ‘sole object in becoming settlers is that of being their own masters’, or to earn enough money ‘to return to England’.⁴⁸ This logic of gradation, from unfree convict-servant to free settler-master, was still the norm twenty years later, as reflected in the 1812 *Report from the Select Committee on Transportation*. The committee hoped putting convicts to work would cultivate ‘well-behaved and industrious servants’ and eventually ‘prosperous and respectable settlers’.⁴⁹ To become a settler emancipated a convict from the ‘dual status’ as both felon and serving another.

As the government responded to the contingent problems of managing a growing, labouring population, however, the regime of ‘property in service’ also proved increasingly inadequate. The basic problem of getting convicts to work and raise food drove the development of a series of techniques to manage not discrete services but regulate a singular mass. In addition to private assignment, authorities experimented with regulating the hours of work, rations, wages for the convict working his ‘own time’ after 3pm, and incentives of ‘task work’ and rewards such as ‘tickets of leave’.⁵⁰ But there were also the external pressures of cost. Like everything else,

⁴⁵ In contrast to standard historiographical accounts of penal brutality, historians sensitive to this context have struggled to adequately account for it. Almost a century ago, Leila Thomas conceived the convict ‘combined the functions of serf and freeman ... not a slave, not a serf, but a “labourer”’; Nichol argued that the colony was governed by an ‘ideology of paternalism’, and Hirst, famously, that the colony did not ‘become free’, but ‘its freedoms were well established from the earliest times’.⁴⁵ Considering the terms of unfree servitude described above, earliest colonists would not have readily identified with Hirst’s description, but it did point to the distinctive set of practices that accompanied a labour regime organised under the concept of ‘property in service’. Leila Thomas, *The Development of the Labor Movement in the Sydney District of New South Wales* (Canberra: Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, 1962), 9, 11; W. Nichol, “Ideology and the convict system in New South Wales, 1788–1820,” *Australian Historical Studies*, 22 no. 86 (1986): 1–20; Hirst, *Convict Society and Its Enemies*, 7.

⁴⁶ General Orders, 28 October 1800, *HRA* 1:2, 624–5; General Orders, 31 October 1800, *HRA* 1:3, 36.

⁴⁷ Government Order, 26 December 1800, *HRA* 1:3, 43.

⁴⁸ Philip to Dundas, 4 Oct 1792, *HRA* 1:1, 383.

⁴⁹ *BPP 1812*, ii (341), 12.

⁵⁰ For an overview of this labyrinth of regulations, see: F. K. Crowley, “Working Class Conditions in Australia, 1788–1851”, PhD Thesis, (University of Melbourne, 1949). Hirst, *Freedom on the Fatal Shore*,

transportation was subject to the onslaught of Tory fiscal reforms. In 1798, the mammoth Select Committee on Public Finances turned its attention to Britain's newest colony, paying meticulous attention to the 'Expense per Head' of convicts sent to New South Wales. It recommended 'the Value of Convict Labour to the Colonies' should 'counterbalance, as it did in the Case of America, the Expense of Transportation'.⁵¹ While the committee's chief concern was with 'computing' the 'Value of Labour' 'lost to the [domestic, British] Community' through transportation, and at what expense, this imperative to calculate itself introduced a new problematic into penal administration. In this process, the convict population became a measurable, calculable mass, quite distinct from any notion of 'property in service'. While this did not represent a form of 'economic' calculation, that is, as a factor in a system of production and distribution, it did increasingly suspend notions of 'service' and make the convict amenable to alternative forms of analysis.

The problem of 'cost' was passed on from Treasury to secretaries of state for colonies and on to governors. Private assignment, it was soon realised, was only effective to 'the publick benefit' so long as settlers rationed and clothed their assigned 'servants' at their own cost.⁵² Other measures centralised control of convict work. In 1795, Governor Hunter began yearly musters so that 'every man may be accounted for', a practice extended by his successor King, who sent quarterly returns to London on all matters of colonial expense, including returns of convicts in government employ based on weekly returns made by overseers at government establishments.⁵³ Wages for task work completed in a convict's own time, rations and work hours were regularly

30-1. On wage rates, see: *HRA* 1:3, 37, *HRA*, 1:5, 77. While regulations targeted male and female convicts, they were also subject to different patterns of assignment and regulation. There was also a gendering process occurring, which cannot be elaborated fully here, but anticipated processes associated with the assisted migrant. It was the male convict that was the target of this public regulation, as women were largely placed in private service or under separate forms of regulation at the 'female factory' in Parramatta. This anticipated a distinct treatment of male and female work that was to become more pronounced over the nineteenth century (see Chapter Six), structured by the visibility of men and invisibility of women to economic discourse that consigned the former to and banished the latter from the realm of 'economic activity'. On female convict work, see: Deborah Oxley, *Convict Maids: The Forced Migration of Women to Australia* (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁵¹ "Twenty-eighth Report from Select Committee on Finance" (1798), *BPP* 1810 iv, (348), 13-28.

⁵² Portland to Hunter, 31 August 1797, *HRA* 1:1, 107-8; Governor Order, 29 May 1801, *HRA* 1:3, 253.

⁵³ Government General Order, 20 September 1795, *HRA*, 1:1, 678; Hunter to Portland, 10 June 1797, *HRA* 1:2, 17; for early examples: King to Portland, 21 August 1801, *HRA* 1:3, 148-151, 21 May 1802, *HRA* 1:3, 498-50. These fell greatly in arrears under Macquarie's administration. *HRA*, 1:7, 667; *HRA* 1:8, 436.

updated and published in proclamations or the *Sydney Gazette*. This may have given convict-servants a sense of their own ‘value’, but its ultimate use was for government to discriminate between the cost of private and public assignment.⁵⁴ Again, none of this was provided for in the Transportation Acts or official instructions, but reflected responses to unique pressures faced by the colonial administration. This political adjustment invited discursive fracture. What began as a contingent problem of government expense soon involved a fundamental re-conception of labour in colonial New South Wales.

The arrival of Commissioner Bigge in 1819 focussed these processes. Bigge’s inquiry, which officially brought the Tory attack on Old Corruption to colonial shores,⁵⁵ is usually noted by historians for systematising and brutalising convict punishment, as well as initiating lasting constitutional and legal reforms, encouraging pastoralism, and condemning Macquarie’s government. Bigge was infamously instructed by Lord Bathurst to restore transportation as ‘an object of real terror’ and moral reform, which, consistent with penal theories of the day, hard labour would enforce. And yet the Commissioner repeatedly drew distinctions between convict labour as ‘most conducive to reform’ against plans for a ‘more rational and economical mode of employment’.⁵⁶ In drawing this distinction between the moral and productive capacities of convict labour – between *Punishment and Profit*, or ‘Deterrence and Economy’, as two leading historians framed it – Bigge was prising apart that dual status of the working convict, who was unfree as both a felon and servant, by abstracting his capacity to ‘labour’ as a discrete problem of governmental inquiry.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ The notion of convict ‘value’ have been discussed in relation to E.P. Thompson’s thesis on ‘clock-time’ and the advent of industrial capitalism in Byrne, *Criminal Law and Colonial Subject*, 2, 31. On convicts sense of ‘right’ that accompanied that of ‘value’ in New South Wales, see: Alan Atkinson, “Four Patterns of Convict Protest”.

⁵⁵ On Bigge in this broader context, see: Zoë Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections, 1815-45: Patronage, the Information Revolution and Colonial Government* (Manchester Manchester University Press), 46-7, 171-2.

⁵⁶ Bathurst to Bigge 6 January 1819, *HRA* 1:10, 7. These distinctions were highlighted by the way he divided his analysis, for example: ‘These observations apply to the system of government labour at Sydney, considered merely as affording employment for a large body of men; it will now be viewed in its character of discipline, and as conducive to their moral conduct, reform and security’, *First Report*, 33.

⁵⁷ John Ritchie, *Punishment and Profit: the Reports of Commissioner John Bigge on the Colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land, 1822-1823: Their Origins, Nature and Significance* (Melbourne: Heinemann, 1970); A. G. L. Shaw, *Convicts and the Colonies: A Study of Penal Transportation from Great Britain and Ireland to Australia and Other Parts of the British Empire* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1977), 249-265.

Bigge was dismayed to learn no ‘estimate ... of the value of the [convict] labour done’, and so solicited approximations from the principal superintendent, who estimated a convict worked two-thirds that of a ‘free labourer’ working for himself.⁵⁸ To better harness the convict body, Bigge recommended most be placed in the employ of settlers with farms larger than 50 acres, as well as better documentation of convicts’ skills to assign them appropriately. He also recommended abolishing wages, task work, and ‘own time’. More acutely, he urged the formation of convict ‘clearing gangs’, whose work could be ‘measured and tasked’. His case for establishing penal settlements at Moreton Bay, Port Curtis, and Port Bowen for the worst offenders was designed to enable the calculation of the ‘quantity of labour performed’ by every convict. In his appendix, Bigge provided a detailed costing of these settlements, estimating of the monetary value they would annually produce (**see figure 3.1**). While Bigge provided no final statement or projection of a rate of return on these establishments, it would have been possible to make an economic statement about them with the evidence provided.⁵⁹ These are well-known dimensions of Bigge’s report. However, in the context of the transformations being traced here, they take on a new salience. Bigge was responding to the contingencies of penal administration, but his assessments treated ‘labour’ as a singular, measurable and controllable category, which if not yet informed by political economy, would soon be rationalised by it.

If Bigge did not possess a vocabulary to conceptualise convict management as an economic problem, the governor sent to implement his recommendations, Thomas Brisbane, certainly did. Within months of arriving, Brisbane had established clearing gangs to be hired to settlers while overseers kept weekly returns on land cleared. This data was designed to account for money owed to government, but unlike earlier returns detailing the number of convicts employed to account for commissariat expenses, they also provided a precise account of work conducted (**figure 3.2**). The measurement of labour had, of course, long been established on American slave plantations, but here was a state recording the productive output of its own

⁵⁸ John Ritchie, *The Evidence to the Bigge Reports: New South Wales under Governor Macquarie*, Vol. 1 (Melbourne: Heinemann, 1970), 22; Bigge, *First Report*, 68.

⁵⁹ On Bigge’s recommendations, *First Report*, 155-175.

ESTIMATE of the Produce of the Labour of Three Thousand Convicts, at Port
Bowen, after the first year of the Establishment*.

	£.	s.	d.
The labour of 700 convicts employed in cutting wood, calculating that 30 men are able to cut 30 logs, each containing 30 superficial feet of timber, of various kinds, in one week (the task that is assigned to that number of convicts at Port Hunter), will produce 36,400 logs, containing 1,092,000 superficial feet, in a year, which, valued at 3d. per foot, give	13,650	—	—
The labour of 100 sawyers employed in sawing, at the rate of 600 feet of hard and common wood for each pair of sawyers per week, will produce 1,560,000 feet of sawn timber in a year, which, valued at 3d. per foot, will give	19,500	—	—
The labour of 1,000 men employed in the cultivation of maize, at the rate of 120 bushels per man per annum, valuing the maize at 3s. 6d. per bushel, will give	21,000	—	—
	£.	54,150	—

300 convicts employed in taking care of cattle and stock; bullock-drivers, carters, hospital and commissariat attendants.

25 clerks in the several offices of the commandant, commissariat, hospital, superintendent of convicts, chief constable, and magistrates; all serving without pay or additional ration.

875 convicts employed in collecting, preparing and reducing bark, and in cultivating and dressing flax and tobacco; the returns of which cannot at present be ascertained.

* The labour of the convicts will be required, during the first year of the establishment, to prepare materials, and to assist in the construction of the buildings.

Figure 3.1 “Estimate of Produce of the Labour of Three Thousand Convicts, at Port Bowen, after the first year of the Establishment”, Appendix 6, *Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry into the State of the Colony of New South Wales*, BPP 1823 xx (539), 179.

population, quantifying the productions of its ‘labour’ stock.⁶⁰ The weekly returns were collated into quarterly assessments that further reified the body of convicts as a quantifiable resource.⁶¹ With these measures, Brisbane announced to Lord Bathurst, ‘a general System of Political Economy [had] now for the first time [been] introduced into this interesting settlement, which I hope will provide the foundation of its future prosperity and grandeur’.⁶²

⁶⁰ Advertised in *Sydney Gazette*, 22 March 1822, 2. Instructions outlined in, Enclosures, Brisbane to Bathurst, 23 July 1824, *HRA* 1:11, 323-327. For example, see: SANSW: Colonial Secretary, Special Bundles 1794-1825, NRS 898, “Returns on land cleared” [4/7014]. For correspondence following Bigge’s recommendations, see: Bathurst to Brisbane, 9 September 1822, *HRA* 1:10, 784-790; Brisbane to Bathurst, 1 April 1823, *HRA* 1:11, 74-83; Brisbane to Bathurst, 14 May 1825, *HRA* 1:11, 571-588.

⁶¹ For example: Brisbane to Bathurst, 23 July 1824, *HRA* 1:11, 323-4.

⁶² Brisbane to Bathurst, 30 August 1822, *HRA* 1:10, 724. For advertisement, see: *Sydney Gazette*, 22 March 1822, 2.

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*Estimate of Labour performed by the clearing parties
actualled from Her Majesty's Stores at Parramatta as
per Certificate.*

<i>Proprietors</i>	<i>Acres planted</i>	<i>Acres bunded</i>	<i>Acres stumped</i>	<i>Acres burnt off</i>	<i>Acres cleared</i>	<i>Acres thick timber</i>
<i>D. Wentworth Esq^r</i>	100	30	"	25	30	"
<i>Lieutenant Lawton</i>	4.15	"	"	118½	"	"
<i>Colonel Estlin</i>	"	"	"	"	193½	"
<i>D. O. C. J. Walker</i>	"	"	40	"	"	"
<i>Rev. L. Maudslayi</i>	"	"	"	"	177½	33½
<i>M^r. Harris Esq^r</i>	"	"	"	"	8	"
<i>M^r. M^r. Campbell</i>	240	30	"	70	44	"
<i>M^r. R. Crawford</i>	200	40	30	70	"	"
<i>M^r. Geo. A. Cus</i>	86	"	"	13	20	"
<i>M^r. Geo. Hall</i>	120	"	"	"	30	"
<i>M^r. M^r. Maudslayi</i>	70	"	"	19	18½	"
<i>M^r. S. J. Palmer</i>	100	"	"	35	42½	"
<i>M^r. J. Badgley</i>	90	"	"	117	5	5
<i>M^r. W. Mayley</i>	36	"	24	"	102½	"
<i>M^r. B. Lathbridge</i>	120	"	"	33	"	"
<i>M^r. M. West</i>	300	"	"	"	"	"

Parramatta 24th Sept. 1823
Alvanor Fife
Secy

Figure 3.2 SANSW: Colonial Secretary's Office, NRS 898, Returns on land cleared, [4/7014], "Estimate of Labour performed by the clearing parties victualled from Her Majesty's Stores, Parramatta, 24 Sept. 1823".

Brisbane's most significant intervention in realising convicts as a body of economic 'labour', however, was his proposed reforms to the land regulations, which would require settlers to maintain one convict for every 100 acres granted.⁶³ Not only would convicts increasingly be exempted from government expense as settlement spread, argued Brisbane, they would be systematically deployed in proportion to agricultural cultivation. This plan was underpinned by the governor's conviction that 'the capital of any country can only increase in proportion to the number of productive Labourers' it employs.⁶⁴ By introducing the political economic metaphor of 'proportioning' land to labour, Brisbane relocated the question of convict service onto a distinct

⁶³ Brisbane to Bathurst, 10 April 1822, *HRA* 1:10, 630-2.

⁶⁴ Brisbane to Bathurst, 29 November 1823, *HRA* 1:11, 181.

economic calculus. The decisiveness of this shift was reflected in Bathurst's response. While the Secretary of State agreed with the broad principles, he disliked the proposal, identifying it as a prohibitive 'tax', especially on settlers with land grants of inferior quality or location. Bathurst thought there was no 'necessity for coupling' the size of a land grant with the employment of convicts, and, as a means of raising revenue, thought it more equitable charging quit rents graded to the quality of land they occupied. This would save burdening settlers with unwanted convicts, said Bathurst, and encourage enterprise so that 'in proportion as the means of a Proprietor are increased [sic], his employment of Convicts will encrease also'.⁶⁵ Brisbane was thus overruled.⁶⁶ What was significant about their disagreement, however, is that in making transportation efficient, authorities had realigned the convict into a system of production and distribution with settlers. How that 'system' might be optimised was debatable, Bathurst targeted rents, while Brisbane, the extension of settlement. But what was being established was a distinct economic framework to assess the function of convicts in a community constituted by land, capital, and labour.

Convict work was increasingly governed in these terms. In July 1825, Brisbane wrote to his engineers and superintendents to canvass how convicts 'might be so distributed as to cause no expense for their maintenance', thereby achieving 'that important principle of Political Economy which is completely accomplished in every other country'.⁶⁷ While the ultimate result of this exercise was breaking up the convict settlement at Bathurst, deemed by authorities as 'unproductive', it also offered scope for officials to re-narrate the significance and success of their employment of convict workers in their respective projects. For example, in his reply to the circular, the chief engineer in Sydney, Major Ovens estimated that the average amount of daily or weekly output of convicts' 'value' in the various employments in the engineer's department was two-thirds of what a 'free man' in Sydney might produce, based on their inferior rations. Rated against other expenses, Ovens calculated that 'the productive labour of the Prisoners ... is

⁶⁵ Bathurst to Brisbane, 30 May 1823, *HRA* 1:11, 83-84. See also the critique of Jacob Viner, a settler, Enclosure, Bathurst to Brisbane, 3 March 1823, *HRA* 1:11, 53-54, who thought such a measure would 'clog with unnecessary and superfluous expense' the best lands 'nature' had 'fitted' for grazing, forcing the settler into agricultural production, for which the colony was 'already occasionally glutted' of agriculture, diverting funds 'which would be otherwise appropriated to the increase of this Staple export'.

⁶⁶ In response to Bathurst, Brisbane had insisted on his plan, likening convicts sitting in Sydney's barracks to the 'Monasteries of Spain': 'They contain a population of consumers who reproduce nothing.; For the final word on the matter, Bathurst to Brisbane, 17 August 1824, *HRA* 1:11, 348-49.

⁶⁷ Circular, Colonial Secretary's Office, 13 September 1824, NRS 897, 4/3512, 372-3.

not only sufficient to support the Capital advanced for their Lodging, Food, Religious Instruction, and Medical attendance, but likewise to afford an overplus [sic] to the Crown'.⁶⁸ The method was rudimentary but reflected an increasingly willingness to calculate convict 'labour' in relation to a rate of return.

Other assessments reflected similar reckonings. In 1823, anticipating that the removal of 'the worst Class of Convicts' to the new penal settlements at Port Macquarie and Morton Bay would 'infallibly diminish the annual proportion of convicts' available for private assignment, Lord Bathurst requested the 'precise nature of the demand for labour, as well as Mechanics and Agriculturalists', to appropriately 'encourage an Emigration of free labour proportioned to the precise necessity of the case'.⁶⁹ The list compiled by the colonial secretary the following year appears to be the first attempt at calculating 'labour demand' in colonial history and initiated a practice of requesting convicts with certain skills.⁷⁰ These requests were, in turn, facilitated by a series of bureaucratic reforms implemented by Governor Darling. In 1826, the new governor established an Assignment Board to which settlers now applied for convict servants. An impersonal application form replaced the original practice of requesting convicts by name, erecting a formal partition between participants in the once highly familiar world of employment.⁷¹ By the time assignment ended in 1838, the regulations spread eight pages in the *Government Gazette* with forms A to F to be used at various stages of application.⁷² As John Hirst has shown, these techniques of administration quite literally homogenised convict services into a 'labour supply' that could be measured, managed, and distributed. Such records enabled

⁶⁸ Ibid., 650-1. The 'classification' of different trades included: Carpenter's Gang; Blacksmith's Gang; Bricklayer's Gang; Saywers' Gang; Brickmakers' Gang; Plaisterers' [sic] Gang; Quarrymen; Wheelwrights' Gang; Shoemakers' Gang; Tailors' Gang; Dockyard; Stone-cutters and Setters; Brass founders' Gang.

⁶⁹ Bathurst to Brisbane, 30 May 1823, *HRA* 1:11, 86.

⁷⁰ Brisbane to Bathurst, 29 October 1824, *HRA* 1:11, 387-388; Darling to Hay, 9 May 1826, *HRA* 1:12, 294; 26 July 1826, *HRA* 1:12, 450; 1 September 1826, *HRA* 1:12, 515-16; Dawson and Barnard to Horton, 13 February and 23 January 1827, CO 201/185. Shaw, *Convicts and Colonies*, 254.

⁷¹ *Government Gazette*, 27 March 1826; *HRA* 1:13, 140, 672; For its continuance under Bourke, see: Roger Therry, *Reminiscences of Thirty Years' Residence in New South Wales and Victoria; with a Supplementary Chapter on Transportation and the Ticket-of-Leave System* (London: Sampson Low, 1863), 134.

⁷² *Government Gazette*, 2 May, 13 May 1835.

authorities to precisely calculate supply and demand, to recall convicts and redispense them elsewhere.⁷³

The constant push from London and from Treasury to manage costs reinforced a singular, quantifiable category: 'labour'. In late 1827, Darling was requested by the Colonial Office to 'establish a rule for estimating the value of work here'. He appointed a board to calculate both the average cost of all 'labour', which was rated at 1s. 3d. per day, so as to provide better estimates of future public works.⁷⁴ The following year, based on this report and the colony's annual revenues and expenditure figures, Treasury officials ordered that, in contrast to earlier claims by Ovens, all public works be carried out by private contract, ridding all remaining convicts from the imperial purse.⁷⁵ But like Ovens' report, though with a different calculation and conclusion, the once discrete identities and status encompassed under 'property in service', were now reduced to a single calculation: the cost, value, and output of 'labour'.

Normative distinctions: 'free' and 'unfree' labour

The consequence of this repeated quantifying of convict work was to untether 'labour' from its status of normative unfreedom. This complicated the convict's dual status as unfree felon and servant. While his criminality was never in question, through an avalanche of enumeration, his

⁷³ See, for example: Enclosures, Darling to Goderich, 31 December 1827, *HRA* 1:13, 672-76. Hirst, *Freedom on the Fatal Shaw*, 83. Enumeration also changed policies. For example, on receiving these statistics, Bathurst advocated abolishing credits to which settlers were previously entitled for having maintained convicts to the value of one-fifth of what government saved: 'It now appears that a total change has taken place in the circumstances of the Colony, and that, instead of a great number of Convicts being thrown on the hands of Government, the supply falls infinitely short of the demand for their services. It is owing to this deficiency that such a competition exists among the Settlers to obtain them, and that it is no longer necessary to hold out any Premium to ensure their being taken off the hands of the Colonial Government. You will, therefore, consider yourself authorised to suspend the operation of this part of your Instructions, until such time as the demand for Convict Labour by the Settler shall diminish, either by the increased supply of Prisoners, or by the introduction of free labourers into the Colony, to which the present scarcity of Convicts may give rise'. Bathurst to Darling, 2 April 1827, *HRA* 1:13, 210.

⁷⁴ This 'board' consisted of William John Dumaesq and William Lithgow, the Civil Engineer and Auditor respectively. See: Darling to Bathurst, 14 March 1827, *HRA* 1:13, 162-164; Enclosures, Darling to Bathurst, 31 December 1828, *HRA* 1:14, 571-74.

⁷⁵ Huskisson to Darling, 1 May 1828, *HRA* 1:14, 172; Maddox to Hill, 4 November 1827, *HRA* 1:14, 173-5; Darling to Murray, 17 April 1829, *HRA* 1:14, 696; Murray to Darling, 1 September 1829, *HRA* 1:15, 152; Drinkwater and Herries to Commissioners of Treasury, 30 December 1829, *HRA* 1:15, 830-1; Darling to Murray, 12 July 1830, *HRA* 1:15, 578; Hay to Darling, 14 December 1830, *HRA* 1:15, 829; Darling to Hay, 24 July 1831, *HRA* 1:16, 309. See also, advertisements: *Sydney Gazette*, 21, 23, 25 June, 1831.

status as a labourer was acquiring a degree of moral neutrality. By the early 1830s, it had been established by officials in both the colony and London that convict ‘labour’ could be analysed either as factor of production, *or* as a problem of punishment and reform. In Britain, for example, where a Commission on Colonial Revenues in 1830 focussed on the cost and distribution of convicts, arguing they were best placed in private employ, since ‘the profits of convicts so [publicly] employed, is by no means commensurate with the cost’, a House of Commons Select Committee on Secondary Punishments (1831-32) only assessed transportation as a deterrent for crime, with no reference to its costs.⁷⁶ While each committee had different terms of reference, the modes of justification they pursued addressed different subjects. Through such inquiries, the convict was re-constituted as having distinctive, but not necessarily reconciled, moral and economic dimensions.

Colonial commentators repeated these distinctions, with differing views on how the economic ought to relate to the moral. ‘The joint line of policy of the British Government, and of the colonies’, wrote John Henderson in his “Observations on the Political Economy of New South Wales”, was not only the reformation of convicts, but ‘*to render them productive*’.⁷⁷ James Macarthur, as we have seen, also saw production and reformation as distinct processes but felt the former undermined the latter. John Dunmore Lang argued that in future transportation should serve as a useful precursor to new colonising projects before free settlers arrived. Convict labour, ‘as a species of public property’, should not be put to work in England, where it would be in competition with other labourers, but on public works, such as building harbours in colonies, ‘where labour is in requisition and proportionally valuable’.⁷⁸ He would not be the last to make such a suggestion.⁷⁹

As Macarthur’s reflections indicated, this emerging tension in convict administration introduced its own set of conceptual problems for a widening section of elites, humanitarians, and

⁷⁶ “Royal Commission to inquire into Receipt and Expenditure of Revenue of Colonies, Reports on Malta, Gibraltar and Australia,” *BPP*, 1830-31 iv (64), 71, 78; “Report from Select Committee on Secondary Punishments,” *BPP*, 1831-32 vii (547), 17.

⁷⁷ John Henderson, “Observations on the Political Economy of New South Wales”, in *Observations on the Colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land*. (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1832), 5.

⁷⁸ John Dunmore Lang, *Transportation and Colonization; or the Causes of the Comparative Failure of the Transportation System in the Australian Colonies* (London: A. J. Valpy, 1837), 28-33.

⁷⁹ For example, see: Richard West Nash, *Stray Suggestions on Colonization* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1849), 55-57.

officials. Where the convict's criminal status and his assigned servitude under a master or governor had sat comfortably together as a kind of dual unfreedom as a 'convict servant', the new economic analytic risked diluting all that was distinctive, criminal, and inferior about transported felons. It was in this context that the homogenisation of labour in New South Wales was followed by a second invention: vitally modern normative distinction between 'free' and 'unfree' labour. Drawing on the language of the anti-slavery movement, members of these elites recognised that if the convict were to be assessed as an economic entity, he, and very crucially 'he', also acquired a different kind of dual status. He was a criminal, but he could also be shown to be, along with the slave, a distinctly, suboptimal form of 'unfree' labour, working against his consent, as opposed to the 'free labour' of contracted wage-earners who were, nonetheless, still long subjected to punitive master and servant legislation.

There was, in fact, a long tradition of likening convicts to slaves. Some pre-revolutionary American polemicists and jurists subsumed them under the same category of unfreedom to help elevate the status of the free citizen in their struggles for liberty.⁸⁰ In Britain, the early anti-slavery movement had called convicts 'voluntary slaves', for in breaking the law, they were wiffully complicit in their incarceration, highlighting the illegality of enslaving Africans.⁸¹ Having successfully 'ended' slavery in 1833, abolitionists and philosophical radicals turned their attention to New South Wales to cure empire of another aberration, transportation. They extended this critique by likening not only convicts to slaves, but penal *society* to slave *society*. Convict assignment corrupted masters as much as servants, rendering the colony sordid, violent, disreputable, and unfit for self-government.⁸²

The anti-slavery movement also introduced another way of likening slaves to convicts on economic grounds. Drawing upon the frameworks of political economy, one of the chief arguments of the abolitionists was that slave labour was inherently inferior, less profitable and efficient than compared to what they began to categorise as 'free labour', which was distinguished

⁸⁰ For this trajectory, see at length, Atkinson, "The Free-born Englishman".

⁸¹ Thomas Clarkson, *An Essay on Slavery and the Commerce of Human Species* (Dublin: P. Byrne and W. Porter, 1786). For a discussion, see: Hirst, *Freedom on the Fatal Shore*, 15.

⁸² For a discussion of these colonial discourses, see: McKenzie, "Discourses of Scandal." Isobelle Barret Meyering, "Abolitionism, Settler Violence and the Case Against Flogging: A Reassessment of Sir William Molesworth's Contribution to the Transportation Debate," *History Australia* 7, no. 1 (2010), 6.01-6.18.

by contracts and wages.⁸³ While slaves and labourers had never been comparable entities in English legal thought, ‘free labour’ had also been, until now, an oxymoron, for labouring registered one’s temporary subordination to another.⁸⁴ Contracts, wages and subjection to master and servant law were expressive of that ‘unfreedom’. However, by assessing labour purely in relation to the rate of profit in a system of production, distribution, and competition, ‘free’ could be distinguished from ‘unfree’ labour, where wages denoted a form of agency in the productive process. Unlike the utility of poverty doctrine, designed to keep wages low to discipline working habits, the wage-earner described by political economists was presupposed to have incentive for working harder.⁸⁵ This new normative distinction between those who voluntarily worked for wages, and those who involuntarily worked without, dissolved the old distinctions between slaves, service and freemen and bifurcated the old continuum of unfree labour into the sharp distinction between ‘free’ and ‘unfree’.⁸⁶

The idea that convicts were a poorer kind of worker had long been present in the colony. While hesitant to call them ‘slaves’, early governors had appreciated convicts were inferior workers because they were not, said Governor King, ‘actuated by the same motives as those who

⁸³ This aspect of the anti-slavery movement has been most fully explored by Seymour Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment: Free Labor Versus Slavery in British Emancipation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). The connection between the development of the idea of ‘free labour’ and the anti-slavery movement has also been elaborated by recovering the connections between the free trade and anti-slavery movements. In distinction from a prevailing historiography, which assumed the British free trade movement eclipsed the goals of abolitionism, it has been shown the former was indebted to the rhetoric and strategies of the latter. See: Simon Morgan, “The Anti-Corn Law League and British Anti-Slavery in Transatlantic Perspective, 1838–1846,” *The Historical Journal* 52, no. 1 (2009): 87–107; Richard Huzzey, “Free Trade, Free Labour, and Slave Sugar in Victorian Britain,” *The Historical Journal* 53, no. 2 (2010): 359–379.

⁸⁴ This was also true for Adam Smith’s analysis. When contrasting between the labour of slaves and ‘freemen’, he did not use the language of ‘unfree’ and ‘free labour’, but distinguished the dearness of ‘the service of the slaves to that of freemen’. *WN*, III.ii.9 [I, 387–8]. Drescher, *Mighty Experiment*, 20–1, locates the origins of the ‘free labour ideology’ to these passages in *Wealth of Nations*. However, on the semantic evidence, it appears unlikely Smith had in mind a sharp distinction between ‘free’ and ‘unfree’ labour, but the political status of slaves and freemen.

⁸⁵ The origins of this idea can be traced back to at least Hume and Smith in the mid-eighteenth century. See Chapter Two.

⁸⁶ As noted above, in Britain these distinctions were being worked out not only in relation to slavery, but perhaps even more importantly, debates over Poor Law reform. An 1824 Select Committee on Labourers’ Wages reported: ‘There are but two motives by which men are induced to work: the one, the hope of improving the condition of themselves and their families; the other, the fear of punishment. The one is the principle of free labour, the other the principles of slave labour. The one produces industry, frugality, sobriety, family affection, and puts the labouring class in a friendly relation with the rest of the community; the other causes, as certainly, idleness, imprudence, vice, dissension, and places the master and the labourer in a perpetual state of jealousy and mistrust.’ “Report from the Select Committee on Labourers Wages.” *BPP*, 1824 vi (392), 4.

labor for their own profit'.⁸⁷ The anti-slavery critique made these connections of convictism, slavery, and inefficiency more explicit. 'Slave labour, it has almost passed into an axiom, is dearer than free,' Merivale wrote in his 1839-41 *Lectures on Colonization*.⁸⁸ Likewise, the convict 'is probably the dearest of all labour', for while the master gets it cheap, 'the state has already expended' a disproportionate outlay in maintaining the transportation system.⁸⁹ Slaves and convicts might have produced enormous wealth in colonies, but such wealth was 'artificial' and unsustainable.⁹⁰

The most influential critic of convicts as economic agents was Richard Whately, the Oxford theologian, abolitionist, and political economist, who in his *Remarks on Transportation* denied convicts could maintain the distinctive identities forged by Bigge and Brisbane. 'In all the vindications of the system of Transportation that have appeared, there is a perpetual confused intermingling of two different questions ... I mean, the question as to the benefit of Transportation as a mode of *punishment*, and as a mode of *Colonization*.' Transportation could not be both, Whately argued, for making convict labour 'profitable' required alleviating them of their situation as felons. 'It is well known that *slave labour* [by which he meant convicts: one ought to 'call things by their true names'] is the least profitable; and can seldom be made profitable at all.' The only way to make convicts profitable would be to 'make them as unlike slaves as possible', but with the result of undermining the very purpose of transportation.⁹¹

⁸⁷ King to Portland, 1 May 1802, *HRA* 1:3, 424; Atkinson, *Europeans in Australia*, Vol. 1, 110. Phillip was quite adamant his transported convicts were not slaves. See Atkinson, *Europeans*, 109-110. Bourke appears to have been the first governor to liken convicts to slaves, declaring to Stanley in 1834 that 'the condition of the Convict is that of a Slave'. Bourke to Stanley, 15 January 1834, *HRA*, 1:17, 313. Emancipists, such as Edward Eagar, were keen to disassociate convicts from slaves: 'If there be any difference [between West Indian slave and NSW convict], it is in favour of the British Prisoner, He can neither have the enmity or peculiar feelings of the negroe [sic] Slave against the White Man. The Prisoner in New South Wales knows the period will arrive when he will re-enjoy all his forfeited legal privileges ... He has imbibed with his Mothers Milk, a reverence and regard for them which clears to him through every diversified Scene of life, and in as much as they tend to ameliorate his own condition, he still regards them with a degree of Enthusiasm – not so in any point of view of the Negro Slave'. Ritchie, *Evidence to the Bigge Report*, Vol. 2, 11.

⁸⁸ Herman Merivale, *Lectures on Colonization and Colonies, Delivered Before the University of Oxford in 1839, 1840 & 1841* (London: Longman, 1861), 305.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 353.

⁹⁰ Merivale, *Lectures*, 351; This argument had already been elaborated by Edward Gibbon Wakefield, an associate of the Philosophical Radicals with whom Molesworth closely identified. Edward Gibbon Wakefield, *England and America*, Vol. 2 (London: R. Bentley, 1833), 112-118.

⁹¹ Richard Whately, *Remarks on Transportation* (London: B. Fellowes, 1834), 11, 29-30, 31. The argument was rehearsed again in Thomas M'Combie, *Essays on Colonization* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1850), 68: 'It is high time that Great Britain were made acquainted with the important truth that Colonization and Transportation cannot be joined; that it is incompatible to have prosperous and virtuous

Whately captured the paradox of treating convicts as a commodity. Macarthur, for example, had railed against his fellow settlers who did not make ‘greater exertions to supply themselves with free labour’, but depended on the ‘morally and economically’ objectionable labour of convicts.⁹² The most enduring appropriation of the language of ‘free’ and ‘unfree’ labour was Molesworth’s 1837 *Report from the Select Committee on Transportation*, which repackaged and presented Whately’s views ‘officially’. When dealing with the ‘economical effects’ of transportation, Molesworth readily admitted that, like the ‘economical history of a slave colony’, New South Wales enjoyed ‘extraordinary wealth ... occasioned by the regular and increasing supply of convict labourers’. But the question was could ‘this prosperity would continue?’ In recent years, ‘the demand for convict labour has far exceeded the supply’ and with ‘an increase of capital, an increase of labour is required to render the capital productive’. Flocks of sheep were twice the size they ought to be and many perished from want of care. If the colony was to continue to depend on British gaols for labour, ‘their prosperity had reached its climax, and must decline without such an extension of crime in this country as it must be hoped is altogether unlikely’. Molesworth, a disciple of Wakefield, instead advocated extending a program of system colonisation.⁹³

Molesworth’s report is best remembered for depicting the convict colony as salacious, corrupted, and depraved, outraging colonists when copies arrived in Sydney in 1838. But reactions to the report also reflected the way Molesworth’s economic narrative authorised a new public framing of convict transportation. While colonists were most anxious to defend the respectability of colonial society, responding to Molesworth also meant engaging his frameworks of interpretation and reconfiguring them for their own purposes. ‘Economical effects’ offered scope for rebuttal, and a number of colonists re-appropriated and inverted Molesworth’s rhetoric

colonies, and vast prisons in one and the same area’. Whately remarked elsewhere: ‘To adhere to a system which cherishes, or at least does not keep down violations of the laws here, in order that we may be enabled to keep up a supply of useful labourers for New South Wales, is the same sort of economy which Swift recommends in his “directions to the groom” for the benefit of his master’s service, viz. to “fill the horses’ rack with hay to the top, though perhaps they may not have the stomach to eat; if the hay be thrown down, there is no loss, for it will make litter, and save straw”’. *Thoughts on Secondary Punishments* (London: B. Fellowes, 1832), 93.

⁹² Macarthur, *New South Wales*, 151.

⁹³ *BPP*, 1837 xix (518), 33-35. On Wakefield’s ‘system’, see Chapter Four of this thesis.

to assert convicts as indispensable to colonial prosperity, while conveniently gliding over the distinction between ‘free’ and ‘unfree’ labour.⁹⁴ In resolutions passed in response to the report by the Legislative Council in 1838, for example, the convict was made essential to all kinds of economic calculations. The Council argued that the discontinuance of transportation would discourage land sales and curtail funds for free immigration.⁹⁵ The pamphleteer, Nathaniel Kentish, elaborated these themes in his *The Political Economy of New South Wales*, identifying transportation as one of ‘five grand divisions into which our Colonial Economy may be divided’, declaring ‘*it would be a gross breach of faith*’ to those who had purchased crown land ‘that they should be aided in its cultivation by convict labour.’⁹⁶ Likewise, the prominent lobby of Sydney, the Australian Patriotic Association, in addressing the discrete ‘economical advantages’ of transportation, insisted ‘the pastoral, the agricultural and miscellaneous capabilities of this Colony are unbounded’, and could thus continue to absorb convict labour ‘without injury to ourselves’.⁹⁷ What was being consecrated through this discussion was a matrix of arguments not only about the convict system in economic terms, but the merits of ‘free’ and ‘unfree’ labour in relation to the dynamics of production, distribution, profits, and wages. This would be of more explicit significance in shaping identities and interests the following decade.

Transportation to New South Wales ceased in 1840. John Ritchie has demonstrated the Molesworth report was perhaps far less influential in this decision than is often thought, but that it probably reflected ongoing opposition in both colonies and Britain throughout the 1830s, gradually wound down by moderates such as Russell and Howick from 1837. Moderates agreed to Molesworth committee’s merely to preoccupy and placate their Radical parliamentary critics.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Much of the colonial ‘defence’ was to insist transportation was an effective punishment and reform. For an account of these responses, see: Hirst, *Freedom on the Fatal Shore*, 186-193.

⁹⁵ Order of the Day, 17 July 1838, *V&P LCNSW 1838*, 38-40.

⁹⁶ Nathaniel Kentish, *The Political Economy of New South Wales, developed in A Series of Letters Addressed to the Colonists themselves, on the Present State and Future Prospects of this Interesting, Important and Peculiar Colony* (Sydney: A. Cohen, 1838), vi, 20: Kentish wrote the pamphlet as a response to the ‘clap-trap of false publications and inflammatory publications put forth in England respecting this Colony’.

⁹⁷ Australian Patriotic Association, *Letter from the Australian Patriotic Association to C. Buller...in support of the Petition of the Colonists of New South Wales for the continuance of Transportation, 31 May 1839* (Sydney: Daniel Lovett Welch, 1843). A petition published in the *Australian* asserted convicts so essential to commercial processes, he was ‘converted by the mere process of Transportation from a worse than uses burden, into a positive advantage’. *Australian*, 21 August 1838, 3.

⁹⁸ John Ritchie, “Towards Ending an Unclean Thing: The Molesworth Committee and the Abolition of Transportation to New South Wales, 1837–40” *Historical Studies* 17, no. 67 (October 1, 1976): 144–64.

But while Ritchie thought Molesworth's report 'relatively unimportant' in ending transportation, it was of profound significance in readjusting the rhetorical dimensions of talking about convicts specifically, and labour more generally. If this was evident in the resolutions colonists passed immediately after the Molesworth's report, it was even more apparent when the imperial government attempted to backflip on cessation in 1846. To relieve pressure on Van Diemen's Land, where the majority of convicts were sent after 1840, New South Wales was asked to now receive felons who had already served time in British penitentiaries, and would arrive as 'exiles' on a ticket-of-leave, free to work for wages but told where to work.⁹⁹ The Colonial Office banked on colonists' maintaining their sentiments after the 1838 report, but in a remarkable change of face, partly carried by the massive influx of labouring emigrants since transportation ceased, colonial attitudes had shifted.¹⁰⁰ Molesworth's conclusions were now readily accepted by a large number of colonists, who perceived the resumption of transportation risked the moral denigration that Molesworth had staged in 1837.¹⁰¹ Debate erupted over the efficacy over this exile system, which colonists largely demonised as a veiled revival of transportation. This clearly turned on questions of the moral respectability of the colony, but also now a second question, unimaginable a generation earlier, on the 'economical effects' of unfree labour.

At its core, debate surrounding the revival of transportation reflected the emergence of rival claims and rival political economies over the functioning of the convict as 'unfree labour' in a system colonial of production and distribution. While the debate would fall the way of anti-transportationists, its broader significance was to constitute and legitimate rival interests in the colony which reductively fell along the lines of wages and profits. On the one hand, support for convict transportation, which was now limited to squatters who wanted cheap shepherds for their flocks, was still interpreted as essential to colonial production. Leading pastoralists organised a Select Committee on the Renewal of Transportation in 1846, and recommended at least five thousand male convicts be sent annually, considering it the 'minimum amount with which

⁹⁹ Hirst, *Freedom on the Fatal Shore*, 197-98.

¹⁰⁰ Quoted in Shaw, *Convicts and Colonies*, 316. When advocating a similar plan to Governor Fitz-Roy a few years later, Lord Grey inverted the a distinction Bathurst had drawn almost thirty years earlier, that this would make 'the system of secondary punishment in this Country subservient to the object of increasing the supply of labour in the Colony'. Grey to Fitz-Roy, 3 September 1847, *HRA* 1:25, 738.

¹⁰¹ Hirst, *Freedom on the Fatal Shore*, 198.

Colonisation can make any sensible progression'.¹⁰² Resuming transportation would also be in the interest of 'operative classes', the report said, for as labour became cheaper, 'the consequent accumulation of profit' would eventually give rise to increased 'employment'.¹⁰³

Migrant workers, many of whom had suffered in the 'commercial embarrassment' of the early 1840s, doubted such assurances.¹⁰⁴ Instead, drawing on the rhetoric of the anti-slavery movement, they formulated their own economic calculations.¹⁰⁵ Petitioning the Legislative Council and Queen Victoria, they inverted the 1846 committee's calculative schema, claiming transportation would discourage settlers from 'investing their capital in the Colony' and be a breach of faith to 'industrious and moral emigrants'.¹⁰⁶ Letters peppered colonial newspapers reciting 'true economical principles', and arguing that the 'co-extensive' relation between capital and labour would be disturbed by the reintroduction of an unskilled, under-consuming and unwaged convict population.¹⁰⁷ The axiom that 'free labour' always proved cheaper than 'convict labour' was repeated at public meetings, in petitions, resolutions, editorials and letters to the editor. It was a 'delusion', wrote the *Herald*, to think convict labour cheap, for it 'is the most expensive that could be employed'.¹⁰⁸ Government statistics were recited to support the point. On the indicators of population and wool and tallow exports, nine years of free emigration had already outstripped what had been achieved in sixty years of transportation.¹⁰⁹ The working-class press scrutinised the 'puffed up prosperity acquire from the slave labour of British convicts', claiming

¹⁰² "Report from the Select Committee on the Renewal of Transportation", *V&P NSW 1846* (2), 433. One of the star witnesses of that committee, the entrepreneur and adventurer Ben Boyd, developed (aggressively) some of these arguments in: Ben Boyd, *A Letter on Transferring the Unemployed Labour of that Colony to NSW* (Sydney, E. Wolfe, 1847).

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 8. For working class rejections, see: *Sentinel*, 19 November 1846, 2.

¹⁰⁴ See for example, "The Petition of the Working Classes to the Legislative Council", reprinted in *V&P NSW (1843)*, 720. See also Chapter Six.

¹⁰⁵ The normalisation of these categories was reflected in Robert Welch's, *Observations on Convict and Free Labour* (London: Simonds and Ward, 1847). The essay first appeared in the *Colonial Magazine*, July 1847, and was reviewed in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 December 1847, 2. Much to the annoyance of the *Herald*, Welch was indecisive on whether transportation should be renewed or not. He outright rejected Grey's 'half-and-half' exile system, but felt convict labour had been the 'ladder' by which settlers had attained an 'unexampled prosperity'. Despite the clear moral objections, Welch argued colonists ought to be open to reviving the old assignment system when labour was in such demand, land prices so high and government-sponsored free emigrants insufficient.

¹⁰⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 February 1847, 2. *Sydney Chronicle*, 27 February 1847, 2.

¹⁰⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 Jan 1847, 2; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 April 1847, 2; *Empire*, 9 May 1851, 2.

¹⁰⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 December 1846, 2; See resolutions in letters and meetings: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 August 1846, 2; 8 January 1847, 2; 19 February 1847, 2; 18 September 1850, 2; 12 February 1852, 2.

¹⁰⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 April 1851, 2.

imported felons would deter land sales and halt free immigration.¹¹⁰ These same arguments would soon be redeployed against Chinese immigration a few years later.¹¹¹

Collectively, the debate reified ‘unfree’ and ‘free’ labour as entities to be factored into a system of production, a system which was increasingly normalised as the foundation of social interaction. By the late 1840s, the distinction between convict and free labour, and the ‘moral’ and ‘economical’ capacities of each, had become common sense. In mapping out the anti-transportation debate in an 1847 editorial, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reduced this to a debate between the ‘anti-convict party’ wishing to ‘monopolise wages’, and their ‘opponents ... wishing to monopolise profits’. It was, then, ‘a war of interests’:

Whether viewed as a question of political economy, or as one of public morals and domestic happiness, its features are so prominent and distinct as to be obvious to the most ordinary capacity. That convict labour, if *cheaper* than free labour, would unjustly compete with the industry of Australian and immigrant labourers – and if *dearer*, would be injurious, not only to free labourers, but to employers themselves – must be apparent to any man of common sense. That convicts, especially in the large numbers recommended by the Committee in Council, would, whether their labour were cheap or dear, necessarily produce an increase of crime throughout the land...must be manifest to everybody who can distinguish between good and evil.¹¹²

Here then was a distinctive way of conceptualising ‘labour’ that had not, from the perspective of ‘property in service’, been available in debate a few decades earlier. By establishing separate ‘views’ of analysis that distinguished between ‘political economy’ and ‘public morals’, the *Herald* imposed a theoretical imagining that separated the once unified entities, free and unfree,

¹¹⁰ *Sentinel*, 5 November 1845, 2; *Freeman’s Journal*, 18 September 1850, 2.

¹¹¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 April 1852, 4. Debating the efficacy of non-white migration entrenched these categories of analysis. Coolie or Chinese labour was ‘an economical, and not a moral question’. ‘The encouragement of Chinese immigration is tantamount to the discouragement of English immigration ... The cost of procuring English labour is not greater than that of importing Chinese. And the difference between the rate of wages payable to English and to Chinese workmen will be fully compensated by the superiority of English labour, and by the *natural increase of labourers* in the one case, which does not appear to the other.

¹¹² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 January 1847, 2.

economic and moral, and delimited the range of interpretations, arguments and justifications to be made about 'labour'.

Anti-transportation won its battle but the legacy ran much deeper than the residue of the 'convict stain'. The movement also re-wrote history, rendering convicts as a useless, unprofitable blemish on the colonial past. It took the 'revision' of late twentieth-century historians to 'discover' what was obvious to contemporaries: convicts were vital to the early building of the colony.¹¹³ The price of the emigrant workers' success in defeating transportation was the adoption of a new normative identity as free wage-labourers to stand in direct contrast to the 'convict slave', forgetting their common ancestry as 'servants'. This involved another kind of forgetting about something that had once been obvious, which was that wage-labour had only existed on a spectrum of unfreedom, a spectrum shared with convict and indentured servants, even as waged labourers remained regulated by master and servant laws.¹¹⁴ The anti-transportation movement was, then, part of a more general legitimization of the wage-labourer as a free man.¹¹⁵ In New South Wales that legitimization had occurred through a process of dealing with problems of administering convicts, which had resulted in constructing two government narratives. First, that the human capacity to labour as distinct from the selling of services could be quantified as a homogenous category to assess and optimise a system of production and distribution. Second, this 'system' worked best with waged 'free labour' and not bounded 'unfree labour'. In this sense, the free assisted migrant was a silhouette of the convict, cut from the same models of analysis in governing a 'labour force', but with the inverse, distinguishing attribute of a 'wage', regulated not by their moral obligations and the selling of 'services', but their nominal freedom and 'rights' in a system of production. The power of 'labour' in accounts of Australian history might be usefully informed by a sense of this lineage.

¹¹³ Nicholas (ed.), *Convict Workers*. A similar process is occurring with the 'discovery' by American historians of the importance of slaves to building American capitalism. For example: Edward Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014).

¹¹⁴ See Chapter Six of this thesis.

¹¹⁵ The irony was famously highlighted by David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975).

Civilisation

The 'Aborigine' posed a very different set of problems to colonial authorities. Historians now widely recognise that, like the convict, Aboriginal people frequently did work for settlers in a variety of capacities, and were often badly exploited.¹¹⁶ But at the level of government, the settler desire to make Indigenous people work was expressed in a series of programs designed to facilitate 'regular' working habits, wage-earning, exchange, and consumption, and functioned not simply to increase production, but valorise the settler conception of wealth-accumulation as 'progress'. Where managing convicts opened possibilities of rethinking 'labour' as a distinct economic category, attempts to govern Indigenous peoples reflected firming ideas about the connection amongst civilisation, wealth-accumulation, and historical time.

In his history of the category, the 'Australian Aborigines', Bain Attwood noted that in addition to dispossession, Indigenous peoples faced a 'second kind' of 'onslaught' following British settlement. Agents of 'European civilisation' sought to remake the 'Aborigines' in their own image, being productive, settled, domesticated, polite, and, especially for missionaries, Christian.¹¹⁷ This need to 'civilise' Aborigines was animated by assumptions about their supposed 'savagery'. These categories and were clearly drawn from the conjectural history of the Scottish Enlightenment, which framed how European explorers, sojourners, artists, savants, and now settlers were framing and comprehending contact with indigenous peoples in the Pacific.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Ann Curthoys and Clive Moore, "Working for the White People: An Historiographic Essay on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Labour", *Labour History* 69 (Nov. 1995): 1-29.

¹¹⁷ Bain Attwood, *The Making of the Aborigines* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1989), 1.

¹¹⁸ There is an extensive literature on this theme. Important studies include: Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific, 1768-1850: A Study in the History of Art and Ideas* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969); P. J. Marshall and Glyndwr Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind: British Perceptions of the World in the Age of Enlightenment* (London: Dent, 1982); and John Gascoigne, *Encountering the Pacific in the Age of Enlightenment* (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2014). In recent years, there has been a sustained critique, led by Bronwen Douglas in a number of important works, that has revised what she interprets as an enduring tendency in 'encounter' and 'voyage of discovery' historiography to treat indigenous peoples as static, inert subjects who were 'seen' by Europeans through the prism of Enlightenment discourses of difference, such as the Scottish Four Stage Theory. Approaches such as Smith, Marshall and Williams and Gascoigne, argues Douglas, overlook the 'imprint' or 'countersigns' of indigenous 'agency' always present in European representations, which could reinforce, temper, alter or break down European discourse. This is an important corrective, but it does not challenge the fact that savage/civilised, however tempered by Indigenous imprints, was the organising binary for most accounts of Indigenous peoples in Australia. Moreover, where Douglas wants to argue such 'imprints' were partly responsible for a transition in knowledge from stadial theory to the constitution of 'race' as biological 'fact', like Buchan I wish to show the enduring importance of the savage/civilised distinction from the point of government. Bronwen Douglas and Chris Ballard (eds.), *Foreign Bodies: Oceania and the Science of Race 1750-1940* (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2008); Bronwen

Historians have become highly sensitive to the legal, political, humanitarian, and religious projects this language sanctioned.¹¹⁹ It constituted what Europeans ‘saw’ when arriving in New Holland, and as Bruce Buchan has examined, ‘why’ they reacted towards Aborigines as they did.¹²⁰

Even before Europeans arrival in 1788, the ‘savagery’ of the inhabitants of New South Wales, and the possibility of their civilisation, were relayed to imperial authorities, and in turn, the British reading public.¹²¹ In his journals, James Cook had claimed the Australian Aborigines subsisted ‘wholly [sic] by fishing and hunting, but most by the former, for we never saw one Inch of Cultivated land in the whole Country’.¹²² In Adam Smith’s schema, the absence of agriculture was a sure sign of an uncivilised people. The binary between Indigenous savagery and European civilisation developed once permanent settlement was made. Idleness was a chief indicator of this savagery.¹²³ The perceptive officer, Watkin Tench, while observing a ‘sharpness of intellect, which bespeaks genius,’ was quick to add that these ‘savages hate toil, and place happiness in inaction’, reminding his readers that ‘neither the arts of civilised life can be practiced, or the advantages of it felt, without the application of labour’.¹²⁴ Likewise, the official accounts of

Douglas, *Science, Voyages, and Encounters in Oceania, 1511-1850* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

¹¹⁹ For an overview, see: Bruce A. Buchan, *The Empire of Political Thought: Indigenous Australians and the Language of Colonial Government* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008); The theme of ‘settler sovereignty’ and its relation to concepts of stadial theory has also been explored in: Lisa Ford, *Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia, 1788-1836* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

¹²⁰ Bruce Buchan, “Subjecting the Natives: Aborigines, Property and Possession Under Early Colonial Rule,” *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 45, no. 2 (2001): 143–62.

¹²¹ Consequently, when the Botany Bay project was announced in 1786, the immediate concern of the London press was the consequences for the existing inhabitants and some suggestion the government ought to civilise them. William Eden, for example, postulated in his *History of New Holland* (1787) that the penal settlement would introduce to ‘the rude inhabitants of New Wales [sic] a picture of society ... more perfect than any subsisting among them’ (even if ‘its features may be harsh to the ideas of an European’), which in itself was ‘an act suitable to the beneficence of a civilised power’. William Eden, *The New History of New Holland* (London: John Stockdale, 1787); For discussion in the London press, see: Alan Atkinson, “The Ethics of Conquest, 1786”, *Aboriginal History*, 6:1/2 (1982): 82-92.

¹²² J.C. Beaglehole, *The Journals of Capitan James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), 396.

¹²³ For a useful overview, see: Shino Konishi, “Idle men: the eighteenth-century roots of the Indigenous indolence myth”, in Frances Peters-Little, Ann Curthoys, and John Docker (eds.), *Passionate Histories: Myth, Memory and Indigenous Australia*. (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2010), 99-122; See also: Pauline Turner Strong, “Fathoming the Primitive: Australian Aborigines in Four Explorers’ Journals, 1697-1845,” *Ethnohistory* 33, no. 2 (1986): 175–94.

¹²⁴ Watkin Tench, “A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson”, in *Sydney’s First Four Years* (Sydney: Library of Australian History, 1979 [1793]), 281. David Collins, in his celebrated *Account*,

government-sponsored explorers had constituted the entire continent through word and cartography in terms of European conceptions of time and space.¹²⁵ All Australia was as Major Mitchell saw the Hunter Valley in 1831, ‘new and nameless’, the ‘beginnings of civilised life’ where man might ‘extend his domination over the last holds of barbarism’.¹²⁶ Sturt confirmed this trajectory a few years later: ‘the lowing of herds has succeeded the wild whoop of the savage; and the stillness of the once desert shore is now broken by the ... busy hum of commerce’.¹²⁷

While the language of Scottish conjectural history was central to constructing the ‘Aborigine’, it was also simultaneously structuring European settlers’ sense of historical time and ideas about production and wealth accumulation. Stadial theory thus shaped the colonising process more generally as it helped ‘overcome the apparent absence of history in the primordial wilderness’.¹²⁸ While new societies such as New South Wales were understood as transplantations of the civilised world, they also had to attain their own state of ‘civilisation’, a process posing particular challenges for a penal colony. In this way, the ‘governmental objectives’ and programs identified by Attwood, Buchan, and others to ‘civilise’ Aborigines in New South Wales – in the form of schools, land grants to farm, reserves, missions and forms of rationed or waged employment –

reported ‘they never make provision for the morrow’ but ‘observed a great degree of indolence in their dispositions’. David Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, Vol. 1 (Sydney: AH & AW Reed, 1975 [1798]), 499. The first two governors, Phillip and Hunter, both expressed in their private accounts it was the task of Europeans to ‘teach the shivering savage how to clothe his body ... and to put into the hands of men, ready to perish for one half of the year with hunger, the means of procuring constant and abundant provision’; to show them the way to ‘comfort and happiness’. See: Arthur Phillip, *The Voyage of Governor Phillip to Botany Bay...compiled from Authentic Papers* (London: Printed for John Stockdale, 1789), 141; John Hunter, *Historical Journal of the Transactions at Port Jackson and Norfolk Island* (London: Printed for John Stockdale, 1793), 140.

¹²⁵ On this theme, see: Simon Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye: How Explorers Saw Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹²⁶ T.L. Mitchell, *Three Expeditions into the interior of Eastern Australia*. Vol. 1 (London: T. & W. Boone, 1849), 37.

¹²⁷ Charles Sturt, *Two expeditions into the interior of southern Australia, during the years 1828, 1829, 1830, and 1831*. Vol. 1 (Adelaide: Public Library of South Australia, 1969 [1833]), xv.

¹²⁸ Quoted in: Stuart Macintyre, “Australia and Empire”, in Robin Winks (ed.) *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume V: Historiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 165. Robert Dixon has provided the most far-reaching account of the uses of stadial theory as a pervasive cultural framework in colonial art and poetry, finding ‘a massive impact of Scottish social thought on colonial culture’. Ferguson’s *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* was brought out in the First Fleet and Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* appeared in every library catalogue of the period. See: Robert Dixon, *The Course of Empire: neo-classical culture in New South Wales, 1788-1860* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press). For other accounts of the Scottish tradition in the colony, but without emphasis on framing settler-Indigenous relations, see: Gregory Melleuish, “The Scottish Enlightenment Tradition in Colonial New South Wales,” *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 75, no. 2 (1989): 122–31; and Lenore Coltheart and Peter Bridges, “The Elephant’s Bed? Scottish Enlightenment Ideas and the Foundations of New South Wales,” *Journal of Australian Studies* 25, no. 68 (2001): 19–33.

were not simply attempts to impose European values upon Indigenous peoples, or establish legal sovereignty, but exercises in rationalising the civilising process of settlement and justifying the logic of wealth-accumulation, redeeming the ‘wild lands’ from barbarism.

In this sense, while Aborigines posed a tangible problem and target of intervention for humanitarians, missionaries, and legislators, they also represented a more abstracted problem of what Herman Merivale called ‘hypothetical reasoning’. Smith outlined as a central ‘hypothesis’ that the progress of nations was constituted by their capacity to accumulate wealth over time by extending the division of labour and employment of capital in increasingly complex modes of subsistence from hunting and gathering, then pastoralism and agriculture and, ultimately, commerce. For Merivale, as for other political economists, the ‘savage’ served as a ‘zero’ in this ‘thermometer of civilisation’. In New South Wales, the Aborigines, whom the explorer Sturt described as ‘a people, at present, at the very bottom of the scale of humanity’, seemingly confronted settlers with the reality of such a scale.¹²⁹ The ‘at present’ in Sturt’s analysis was crucial, for it registered the possibility that Aborigines could yet be ‘civilised’ in the image of settlers. In seeking to assist in these stages of civilisation, colonial authorities were also reinforcing ideas of wealth accumulation as the motor of, in Ricardo’s terms, the ‘natural advance of society’.¹³⁰

Settler engagement with Aboriginal peoples reinforced the putative ‘naturalness’ of European commercial progress in two ways. The first related to the changing kinds of ‘civilising’ projects colonists enacted; that is, how colonists expected Aborigines to demonstrate as their relative ‘civilisation’. Early programs aimed at instilling simple, regular work habits and an ability to cultivate land. By mid-century, the Aboriginal people’s attainment of ‘civilisation’ was premised on exhibiting complex habits of exchange, wage earning, and patterns of consumption. These

¹²⁹ Sturt, *Two expeditions*, 107.

¹³⁰ The conceptual history of ‘progress’ as structuring the experience of European modernity, as inherited from the Scottish Enlightenment, has been masterfully mapped out by Reinhart Koselleck, to which my thinking in this chapter is indebted. See: Reinhart Koselleck, “‘Progress’ and ‘Decline’: An Appendix to the History of Two Concepts”, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (Stanford University Press, 2002), 218-235; Reinhart Koselleck, ‘The Historical-Political Semantics of Asymmetric Counterconcepts’, in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (London: MIT Press, 1985), 159-197. See also, Peter Vogt, “The Conceptual History of Barbarism: What Can We Learn from Koselleck and Pocock,” in Mari Boletsi and Christian Moser Christian (eds.), *Barbarism Revisited: New Perspectives on an Old Concept* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2015), 125-138.

shifting expectations tracked colonists' own confidence and certainty about colonial 'civilisation'. The second related to colonial authorities' unwavering commitment to these processes of civilisation, even when these projects were repeatedly judged a failure. Attempts to civilise Aborigines were accompanied by increasing concerns that such methods were not working and that Aboriginal people were in an emerging and increasingly pervasive formulation 'dying out'. While this became one of the impetuses for mid-Victorian humanitarian and missionary intervention to 'protect' Aborigines, it also motivated governments to initiate ever-more complex programs for 'civilising' Aborigines. This, I argue, represented as much a settler commitment to the 'hypothesis' of commercial progress, as it did a misplaced commitment to the welfare of Indigenous peoples.

These processes took time to formalise. The term 'savage' was barely used in official correspondence between governors and London for the first twenty years of settlement.¹³¹ As Phillip's initial instructions made clear, interaction and even exchange were expected from the outset. The same instructions were given to Governors Hunter, Bligh, Macquarie and Brisbane.¹³² Phillip always referred to the 'natives' and not 'savages' in his correspondence.¹³³ Hunter used 'savage' on occasion to refer to those living in the Blue Mountains, but King did not, even when reporting murders committed by Aborigines in July 1805.¹³⁴ King's 1802 proclamation, which appears to be the first of its kind, forbade settlers from committing 'wanton Cruelty towards the Natives'.¹³⁵ 'Savage' was used more frequently in the *Sydney Gazette*, particularly reporting

¹³¹ See likewise, D.D. Mann, *The Present Picture of New South Wales* (London: John Booth, 1814), 46, 48: He described them as a 'filthy, disagreeable race of people...their attachment to savage life unconquerable', concluding 'the proximity of a civilised colony has not tended in the least to polish the native rudeness and barbarism'.

¹³² Governor Phillip's Second Commission, *HRA* 1:1, 13-14; Governor Hunter's Instructions, 23 June 1794, *HRA* 1:1, 522-23; Governor Bligh's Instruction, 25 May 1805, *HRA* 1:6, 10; Governor Macquarie's Instructions, 9 May 1809, *HRA* 1:7, 192. Instructions to Sir Thomas Brisbane, 5 February 1821, *HRA* 1:10, 598. Governor King was appointed on a dormant commission in 1798 in the event of Hunter's death or absence and his predecessor's instructions appeared to have rolled over to King. *HRA*, 1:2, 605.

¹³³ Phillip to Sydney, 15 May 1788, *HRA* 1:1, 24-32, and, 13 February 1790, *HRA* 1:1, 158-161. As Buchan notes, the use of the generic term 'native' was nonetheless politically significant, for it indicated the British did not consider the Aboriginal peoples in Australia 'constituted distinct political entities, as the Iroquois or other Treater partners did in Canada'. In time, the use of the term 'Aborigines' was used to denote a ubiquitously subjected people that did not recognise political rights for treaties or that war could be declared against. Buchan, "Subjecting the Natives", 150-151.

¹³⁴ Hunter to Portland, 15 February 1798, *HRA* 1:2, 130; King to Camden, 20 July 1805, 497.

¹³⁵ Proclamation, 30 June 1802, *HRA*, 1:3, 592-93.

attacks and ‘outrages’ on the Hawkesbury.¹³⁶ But the savage/civilised binary played no major critical or self-constitutive function in official discourse for some two decades in New South Wales.¹³⁷ The small penal settlement was itself not yet ‘civilised’.

Macquarie’s administration marked a considerable break in both positive and punitive engagement with the Aborigines, but also in the terms in which this relationship was framed. Macquarie’s indebtedness to Scottish Enlightenment neoclassicism has been noted in his public works and architecture, but he also fixed colonial governance in terms of Scottish conjectural history.¹³⁸ In 1814, on the advice of William Shelly, a former Methodist missionary who argued that ‘human nature’ was essentially the ‘same in every Clime’, Macquarie announced he would initiate ‘an Experiment towards the Civilisation of these Natives’ by establishing a ‘Natives Institution’ at Parramatta, a school to teach Aboriginal children reading, writing, religious education, agriculture, and mechanical arts.¹³⁹ He also set aside land for Indigenous peoples to encourage settlement and cultivation, and initiated an annual feast at Parramatta to conciliate settler-Indigenous relations by issuing food, pipes, tobacco, and blankets, and to parade the progress of the Institution’s pupils. Macquarie believed that Aboriginal people had ‘Scarcely Emerged from the remotest State of rude and Uncivilised Nature’, but that if ‘Cultivated and Encouraged’, they might unlearn their ‘Unsettled Habits, but progressively [become] Useful to the Country According to their Capabilities either as Labourers in Agricultural Employ or among the lower Class of Mechanics’.¹⁴⁰ The kind of ‘civilisation’ offered to Aborigines, then, was within a strict scheme of European social hierarchy, which, as we have seen, regulated the world of convicts, too. Aborigines, argued Henry Reynolds, realised these offers for what they were and

¹³⁶ This was the colony’s only newspaper and doubled as the government mouthpiece until Wentworth launched the *Australian* in 1824.

¹³⁷ *Sydney Gazette*, 2 October 1803, 1; 10 June 1804, 2; 17 June 1804, 2; 24 June 1804, 2; 29 July 1804, 3; 2 December 1804, 2; 8 December 1805, 1;

¹³⁸ Coltheart and Bridges, “The Elephant’s Bed?”

¹³⁹ Macquarie to Bathurst, 8 October 1814, *HRA* 1:8, 367-70; Shelly to Macquarie, Enclosures, *ibid.*, 370-72.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 368. He announced the plan in a Government Order, explaining: ‘With a View, therefore, to effect the Civilisation of the Aborigines of New South Wales, and to render their Habits more domesticated and industrious, His Excellency the Governor, as well from Motives of Humanity as of that Policy which affords a reasonable Hope of producing such an improvement in their Condition as may eventually contribute to render them not only more happy in themselves, but also in some Degree useful to the Community, has determined to institute a School for the Education of the Native Children of both Sexes, and to assign a Portion of land for the Occupancy and Cultivation of adult Natives’. *Sydney Gazette*, 10 December 1814, 1.

rejected them, so the persistence of these offers suggests more about settler society than Aboriginal peoples.¹⁴¹

After hostilities along the Hawkesbury in 1815 and 1816, Macquarie instructed military retaliations, killing fourteen Aborigines and outlawing ten, but also issued a proclamation affirming his commitment to ‘civilise the Aborigines of this Country so as to make them useful to themselves and the Community’.¹⁴² Steadily, ‘civilisation’ was defined more strictly in terms of regularised, industrious, productive habits. More elaborate schemes were proposed. For example, in 1819, colonial clergyman Robert Cartwright penned a Bentham-like fantasy of having tribes ‘sit down together’ in adjoining land allotments or ‘one general Square’, which in time would encompass a ‘Village’ of workshops, lumber yard, warehouses, cottages, and schools where they would learn manufacturing and wool spinning, overseen by a superintendent and chaplain. This would be of sufficient distance from white settlements until ‘the work of Civilisation is so far advanced as to be proof against the evil practices of our depraved Countrymen’.¹⁴³ For Macquarie and Cartwright alike, Aborigines’ civilisation was to be imposed and controlled, just as British authorities dealt with the excesses of early industrial society within the ragged school, the workhouse, and penitentiary.¹⁴⁴

Civilising Aborigines occupied no great place in Commissioner Bigge’s reports as he restricted his observations to their possible involvement in agriculture, given that they were ‘not incapable of labour’. However, he noted only ‘a very few’ had settled on the lands apportioned by Macquarie, for they preferred to ‘wander’.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, by the mid-1820s ‘civilisation’ was becoming a key referent in colonial governance. As missionary influence increased, Darling,

¹⁴¹ Henry Reynolds, “Aborigines and European Social Hierarchy,” *Aboriginal History* 7, no.1/2 (1983): 124-133.

¹⁴² On killings and outlaw: Macquarie to Bathurst, 8 June 1816, *HRA* 1:9, 139-40; *Sydney Gazette*, 1 July 1816, 1; *Sydney Gazette*, 1 November 1816, 1. For the proclamation: Enclosure, Macquarie to Bathurst, 8 June 1816, *HRA* 1:9, 141-45; *Sydney Gazette*, 4 May 1816, 1.

¹⁴³ Enclosures, Macquarie to Bathurst, 24 February 1820, *HRA* 1:10, 262-272.

¹⁴⁴ Reynolds, “Aborigines and European Social Hierarchies”, 126; Anne O’Brien, “Creating the Aboriginal Pauper: Missionary Ideas in Early 19th Century Australia”, *Social Science and Missions* 21 (2008): 6-30.

¹⁴⁵ Bigge, *Third Report*, 83. He asked Magistrate Archibald Bell if he had ‘found it practical in any shape to civilise them by Labour or by moderate restraint’, to which Bell replied: ‘it is practical to civilise them, but not to bring them to habits of industry.’ Bigge pressed whether ‘they had shown themselves capable of performing any European labour?’ Bell could only reply he had seen them hold the plough for some amusement. Ritchie, *Evidence to the Bigge Reports*, Vol. 1, 173.

arriving in 1825, became the first governor explicitly instructed to take measures ‘necessary for [Aborigines] conversion to the Christian faith and for their advancement in Civilisation’.¹⁴⁶ This tethering of civilisation to Christianity added another dimension to intervention and judgement.¹⁴⁷ The colony’s new Archdeacon, Thomas Hobbes Scott (who had worked with Bigge), was sent to the colony in 1824 as part of a more general program to affix Anglican authority throughout empire, appointed Richard Sadleir, a former naval officer, on a five-month inquiry of Aboriginal-settler relations.¹⁴⁸ In his report, Sadleir proposed creating a network of ‘major’ and ‘minor’ ‘establishments’, remote from the white population, which would ‘unite Farming occupations with Instruction’ to teach Aborigines ‘the nature of that Labor by feeling the benefits of enjoying and living on the Produce’.¹⁴⁹ The cost of such a program, as well as pastoral expansion, another element of the interdependence between developing European identities and ideas of managing Aborigines, discouraged Scott from acting on these plan.¹⁵⁰

Even if not acted upon, Sadleir’s proposals were significant in two respects. First, new practices of reporting on Aborigines revealed attempts at an authorised comprehension of the Aboriginal ‘condition’. Second, the reports reflected early signs of settler commitment to inevitable trajectory of progress, even in the face of ‘dying out’. In advising Scott, Sadleir concluded that ‘As our Interests advance, their Misery and extinction are most positive, and that unless some immediate steps be taken to relieve them, that extinction will take place in the course of the next 30 years’.¹⁵¹ But in offering a detailed ten-point proposal for their ‘civilisation’, Sadleir both held out ‘hope’ this could be achieved, while reinforcing a universalising, basic logic of

¹⁴⁶ Instruction to Governor Darling, 17 July 1825, *HRA* 1:12, 125.

¹⁴⁷ For nineteenth-century debates over the relationship between commerce and Christianity, and whether one ought to precede the other, see: Brian Stanley, “‘Commerce and Christianity’: Providence Theory, the Missionary Movement, and the Imperialism of Free Trade, 1842–1860,” *The Historical Journal* 26, no. 1 (1983): 71–94; and Andrew Porter, “‘Commerce and Christianity’: The Rise and Fall of a Nineteenth-Century Missionary Slogan” *The Historical Journal* 2,8 no. 3 (September 1985): 597–621. For an Australian perspective, see: Jean Woolmington, “The Civilisation/Christianisation Debate And The Australian Aborigines,” *Aboriginal History* 10, no. 1/2 (1986): 90–98.

¹⁴⁸ Enclosures, Darling to Bathurst, 22 December 1826, *HRA* 1:12, 795-797. The Colonial Office was deterred by the costs anticipated by Scott, and instructed to confine proceedings to obtaining numbers and information. See: Goderich to Darling, 6 July 1827, *HRA* 1:13, 433-34. On Sadleir’s commission, Enclosures, Darling to Huskisson, 27 March 1828, *HRA* 1:14, 63-64.

¹⁴⁹ Enclosures, Darling to Huskisson, 27 March 1828, *HRA* 1:14, 59-60.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 60-62. See also Chapter Five of this thesis for further detail on this management of Aborigines.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 59.

production and wealth-accumulation on which all peoples could be mapped, and on which all existence seemingly depended.

Such reporting expanded greatly in the 1830s. In 1834 Governor Bourke abolished Macquarie's annual Parramatta feast as it had become a spectacle for elites rather than tribal conciliation, but continued the distribution of blankets from inland stations to maintain 'influence' over Aborigines and keep them away from towns.¹⁵² Through such programs, the settler state developed techniques to count the Aboriginal population and visualise and monitor the passage from 'savagery' to 'civilisation'. The Colonial Storekeeper would issue blankets to magistrates, Crown Land Commissioners, missionaries, and authorised settlers, who in turn had to provide an annual return on printed forms to provide a quantitative guide for future blanket distribution and costs. The forms detailed not only the adult male Aborigines in their district, but their age, number of wives and children, tribe, and 'Place or District of Usual Resort'.¹⁵³ As Tim Rowse notes, this provided the first 'statistical archive' of Aboriginal populations, which could be used to analyse population dynamics. In 1837, the missionary L.E. Threlkeld did just this, mapping a declining ratio of female to males, which partly reinforced Sadleir's bleak outlook, but also reinforced the need for greater interventions.¹⁵⁴

These attempts to enumerate Aboriginal populations anticipated one of the recommendations of the famous 1836-37 House of Commons Select Committee on Aborigines in British Settlements. The committee was chaired by Thomas Fowell Buxton, prominent in British evangelical politics, and who had taken over as leader of the abolition movement after Wilberforce's death. The significance of this report is that it reflected the increasing commitment of imperial authorities to a 'hypothesis' of wealth and civilised progress, and the extent to which this structured governmental reasoning. While the report was saturated with acerbic criticism of

¹⁵² Bob Reece, 'Feasts and Blankets: the history of some early attempts to establish relations with the Aborigines of New South Wales, 1814-46', *Archaeology and Physical Anthropology in Oceania*, 2, no. 3 (October 1967), 190-206, especially 196-97.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 197-98. As Reece notes, a main problem with the system was the multiple names used by Aboriginal people, including the English name(s) assigned to them. See: SANSW: Colonial Secretary's Special Bundles, NRS 906, Aboriginal Returns, [4/10799.3].

¹⁵⁴ Tim Rowse, "The early efforts at Indigenous enumeration in New South Wales", MS paper (2017); Threlkeld's report was tabled to the Legislative Council. See: "An Abstract from the Official General Return of the Black Natives, taken at the Annual Distribution of the Government Donation of Blankets to each Tribe, within the four Divisions of the Colony, for the years 1835, 1836, 1837", *V&P 1832-37*, 638.

settlers' unchristian ruin of indigenous peoples around empire, it was equally convinced that empire was an agent of civilisation, and that indigenous civilisation remained possible, if not inevitable.

On the one hand, Buxton's report affirmed what many colonists already feared they knew. Twenty years of attempting to 'civilise' natives in British colonies had only ended in 'calamities' as native property was usurped, their numbers diminished, their characters were debased by European vices and diseases, and the spread of civilisation was impeded.¹⁵⁵ In his evidence to the committee, Sydney's Bishop Broughton all but abandoned faith in the stadial model. Australian Aborigines, the Bishop said, were destined not for civilisation but 'extinction'.¹⁵⁶ And yet, on the other hand, despite such evidence, Buxton showed renewed commitment to Merivale's 'hypothetical reasoning'. It was 'apt', Buxton wrote in his report, 'to class them [all Aborigines] under the sweeping term of savages', and from here consider the possible roads to their civilisation. After cataloguing a list of 'evils' resulting from the 'intercourse between civilised and barbarous nations', the committee remained confident 'the effects of a fair dealing and of Christian instruction' offered 'proof that every tribe of mankind' could be 'led forward to religion and civilisation'.¹⁵⁷ While 'Civilisation' for Buxton primarily meant Christianity, he saw this process having fundamental commercial dimensions.¹⁵⁸ 'Savages are dangerous neighbours and unprofitable customers, and if they remain as degraded denizens of our colonies, they become a burthen [sic] upon the state'.¹⁵⁹ In this sense, colonial prosperity depended on eventually integrating Aborigines within the frameworks of commerce. In the Australian case, Buxton's first course of action was to establish a system of 'Protectorates' that would stabilise Aboriginal decline. Protectorates would act as magistrates to prosecute crimes committed against Aborigines,

¹⁵⁵ *BPP 1836*, vii (425), 3.

¹⁵⁶ Evidence of Bishop Broughton, 3 August 1835, *BPP 1836*, vii (425), 18. Broughton thought Aborigines in Sydney 'completely changed', despairing: 'It is an awful, it is even an appalling condition, that, after an intercourse of nearly half a century with a Christian people, these hapless human beings continue to this day in their original benighted and degraded state'. *Ibid.*, 14-15.

¹⁵⁷ *BPP 1836*, vii (425), 59.

¹⁵⁸ As the colonial Reverend David Mackenzie reflected: 'It is a humiliating fact that Great Britain, the most civilised, the most enlightened, the most evangelical nations in the world should, notwithstanding this pre-eminence, establish her colonies in the destruction of the native inhabitants, who are swept away before the march of civilisation'. *The Emigrant's Guide; Or Ten Years' Practical Experience in Australia* (London: W.S. Orr & Co, 1845), 22.

¹⁵⁹ *BPP 1836*, vii (425), 59, 102, 105.

learn their language, facilitate education and religious improvement, arrange suitable employment or maintain land for hunting, so long as they were disinclined to agriculture and submit periodical reports and ‘accurate statistical information’.¹⁶⁰

Buxton’s report reverberated around the British world, igniting both humanitarian and anti-humanitarian sentiment in colonies.¹⁶¹ The Colonial Office was obliged to act and in early 1838 appointed a Chief Protector and four assistants, stationed in the Port Phillip District. These officers were instructed to ‘attach’ themselves to tribes in the districts to which they were appointed, carrying out Buxton’s recommendations to ‘induce’ them ‘to assume more settled habits of life’.¹⁶² Similar duties were invested with the Commissioners of Crown Lands, who had been established a few years before to deal with squatters.¹⁶³ This ‘humanitarian’ policy immediately created political and financing problems. Justifying the provision of funding and land to such projects was increasingly complicated, as land become tied up in complex tenure systems for pastoralism and frontier violence increased. Moreover, the best means of civilising Aborigines remained opaque, as there was little previous ‘success’ for guidance. Should Aborigines be assimilated or separated from settlers? Should protectors stay stationary or move among tribes? How much support and independence should be given to missions, who were continuously advocating new plans?¹⁶⁴

In response to these questions, the Secretary of State Lord John Russell solicited a further series of reports to shape fledging policy. By this point, a different picture of the civilising mission emerged, one which reflected the colony’s own increasing commercial prosperity. Where earlier proposals sought to impose discipline, industry and order, the reports obtained from J.H. Wedge, a surveyor in Port Phillip, and Captain George Grey, an explorer and future South Australian governor established a more complex image of Indigenous civility, premised on wage-earning and consumption.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 126-28.

¹⁶¹ Alan Lester, “British Settler Discourse and the Circuits of Empire,” *Historical Workshop Journal* 54 (2002), 24-48.

¹⁶² Glenelg to Gipps, 31 January 1838, *HRA* 1:19, 252-255.

¹⁶³ Gipps to Glenelg, 6 April 1839, 90-1. See Chapter Five of this thesis for a further discussion of these Commissioners.

¹⁶⁴ For example, Enclosures, Glenelg to Gipps, 10 November 1838, *HRA* 1:19, 659-667.

Wedge's main proposal was that for every native 'reclaimed and domesticated' as certified by a magistrate, settlers might be granted land in remuneration. This would discourage settlers from driving natives from their runs, and induce conciliation and friendship. He also recommended stations should be formed where Aboriginal populations could obtain food, blankets, and tomahawks, although this would 'depend as far as practicable on their bringing some commodity of their own produce in exchange'. Baskets made by women, for example, would 'afford them constant employment for which a market might be found in the Colonies, and they [baskets] might even be sent to England'. Indeed, in a revealing contrast the overt masculine gendering of the convict labourer, 'reformation' among adults was more likely to begin with women, Wedge said, as they had better work habits and were responsible for finding 'the greater portion of the food for the men'.¹⁶⁵

Grey, who had spent time exploring in Western Australia, reported Aborigines were 'as apt and intelligent as any other race of men', but were bound to a 'savage state' by their code of laws and 'barbarous customs'. He speculated that Christianity alone could not civilise savages living under such laws and advised Aborigines be brought within the ambit of English law, recognised as British subjects and given the right to give testimony in colonial courts. Grey's central proposal echoed Wedge's scheme for renumeration settlers who 'reclaims one of the Aborigines'. Not only would such effort 'add another labourer to those who are already in the Colony', but would render 'one, who was before a useless and dangerous being, a serviceable member of the community'. This transformation would commence the 'civilisation of the aborigines' on a 'great scale' and in ways 'not confined to a single Institution'. Land grants and money payments were to be awarded to Aborigines continuously employed for three years.¹⁶⁶

In a memorandum responding to Grey's report, Governor Gipps corrected that Aborigines were already British subjects as confirmed by the Supreme Court a few years earlier, but agreed

¹⁶⁵ Enclosure, Lord John Russell to Gipps, 24 January 1840, *HRA* 1:20, 487-489. Wedge pressed his plan further following spate of 'fatal collisions' between Aborigines and stock-keepers months later (they were 'much more frequent than is known to the Government'). See: Enclosures, Lord John Russell, to Gipps, 1 September 1840, *HRA* 1:20, 786-787. In a dispatch reporting further murders, Gipps' responded these events 'shew that we have already, in our dealings with the Natives, advanced far beyond the point at which anything contained in Mr. Wedge's suggestions could be of use to us'. Gipps to Russell, 19 July 1841, *HRA* 1:21, 438-49. See also: Gipps to Russell, 26 September 1841, *HRA* 1:21, 523.

¹⁶⁶ Enclosures, Lord John Russell to Gipps, 8 October 1840, *HRA* 1:21, 33-40.

with his interventions.¹⁶⁷ ‘Next to the diffusion of Christian Instruction, the use of money, or to speak more correctly the enjoyments which the use of money commands, are the most effectual of all means that can be resorted to in advancing civilisation,’ he wrote to Russell Gipps, who also had ‘seriously contemplated’ offering ‘rewards’ to settlers for employing Aborigines. ‘It is by the employment of the Aborigines as Labourers for Wages, and the Education of their children in Establishments conducted either by Missionaries or official Protectors, that I consider the civilisation of the Aborigines of this Continent must be worked out.’¹⁶⁸ Unlike others, Gipps thought proximity to white men would help accelerate ‘civilisation’.

These commentaries mark a shift in governmental thinking about the ‘civilising’ process. Shelly, Macquarie, Cartwright, and Sadleir had proposed civilisation within regularised confines, in terms of disciplining industry and order. Wedge, Grey, and Gipps were now thinking about ways to facilitate more complex, spontaneous commercial relations that were not imposed institutionally, but regularised through exchange, wages, spending, and consumption. There was a finer degree of complexity and sophistication in what counted for being ‘civilised’. The reasons for these developments were multifaceted, including settlers’ own increasing engagements and employment of Aboriginal people, and the distasteful sight of Aborigines drunk and begging on Sydney’s outskirts.¹⁶⁹ But it also tracked colonial authorities’ conception of colonial civilisation that was increasingly prosperous, complex, and progressing.

As with the earlier reports, implementing such schemes eluded authorities, if largely because Indigenous peoples refused their approaches. But again, the significance of such reportage was to reify the ‘Aborigine’ as a subject capable of improvement, valorising the trajectory of progress more generally. Russell sought yet more reports to map this process, and requested annual returns from missions and government officers on the numbers, residence, social

¹⁶⁷ This had been confirmed in the case, *R v Murrell* (1836). See Ford, *Settler Sovereignty*. Gipps also noted that the colonial government had already passed legislation enabling Aborigine testimonies, but had been disallowed by the Colonial Office. See also: Glenelg to Bourke, 26 July 1837, *HRA* 1:19, 48-49, where Glenelg asserted Australian Aborigines were not regarded as ‘Aliens with whom a War can exist, and against whom H.M.’s Troops may exercise a belligerent right’ but they fell under the protection from ‘the Sovereignty of which has been assumed over the whole of their Ancient Possessions’.

¹⁶⁸ Gipps to Russell, 7 April 1841, *HRA* 1:21, 312-15.

¹⁶⁹ On the former, see: Richard Broome, “Aboriginal Workers on South-eastern Frontiers,” *Australian Historical Studies* 26, no. 103 (October 1, 1994): 202–20. On the latter, see: Penelope Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers: Indigenous Peoples and Settlers in 19th-Century Pacific Rim Cities* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010).

condition, schooling, and overall ‘state and prospects of the Aboriginal Races’.¹⁷⁰ While the missions had tabled reports to the Legislative Council since the early 1830s, Russell’s instructions signalled an altogether new kind of government narrative-making exercise that provided a year-on-year assessment. Aborigine existence, from the perspective of the settler state, would now be mapped onto a scale of regular, incremental, linear development. Missions, the protectors in Port Phillip and Crown Land Commissioners, were all required to provide reports every January, with the commissioners given specific instructions to produce a standardised report.¹⁷¹ The reports varied in detail. Not all gave an annual census on district populations, as John Lambie did for the Manero District, but certainly all were searching for a pattern of improving behaviour that included employment arrangements, exchanges, forms of payment, and consumption, as well as movements, hostilities, and general interaction with white settlers. All Commissioners referred to their previous year’s report as a benchmark so that ‘knowledge’ of local Aboriginal populations was accumulative and progressive.¹⁷²

At the same time that report writing increased, local authorities were developing their own methods to investigate the ‘condition of the Aborigines’. Here, the colonial select committee as an investigative and narrative-making device began to be fully exercised. With the cessation of transportation in 1840 and on the encouragement of Gipps, colonial authorities looked more seriously at Aborigines as a labour source for the expanding pastoral industry.¹⁷³ The 1841 Select Committee on Immigration resolved that Aborigines could yet ‘be made subservient to a purpose of utility’, but it would require having them ‘work regularly at fixed wages’, and ‘forfeit’ wages

¹⁷⁰ Russell to Gipps, 25 August 1840, *HRA* 1:20, 774-75.

¹⁷¹ Returns were to be made under five heads: 1 – The condition of the Natives; 2 – Their Numbers; 3 – Residence of any particular place; 4 – The social condition of the natives; and 5 – The present state and prospects of the Natives. Only the reports of Edgar Beckman, Commission in the Lachlan District, strictly adhered to this template.

¹⁷² See: Annual Reports for 1841, Enclosed, Gipps to Stanley, 11 March 1842, *HRA* 1:21, 733-746; Annual Reports for 1842, Enclosed Gipps to Stanley, 1 April 1843, *HRA* 1:22, 644-654; Annual Reports for 1843, Enclosed Gipps to Stanley, 21 March 1844, *HRA* 1:23, 484-497; Annual Reports for 1844, Gipps to Stanley, 23 February 1845, *HRA* 1:24, 257-273; Annual Reports for 1846, Enclosed, Fitz-Roy to Earl Grey, 17 May 1847, *HRA* 1:25, 558-572.

¹⁷³ Gipps told the Legislative Council, having just reappointed an immigration committee for another year: ‘In a Country where Labour is so much in demand, it must appear strange to all who have their eyes directed on us, that we should neglect the nearest sources from which it is to be obtained – I mean the real Children of the Soil, the Aboriginal Inhabitants of the Country. Though by nature wild, and with difficulty induced to submit to the restraints which are imposed on ordinary Labourers, abundant proof exists that they may be made to do so. I have seen some Establishments myself, and am informed of others in which they have been, and still are, profitably employed. “Governor’s Annual Address”, *V&P NSWLC 1841*, 2.

for ‘irregularity and neglect’. Hitherto, Aborigines had been taught ‘*no sufficient motive*’ to resist returning to their ‘countrymen’. Learning the advantages and responsibilities of earning ‘regular wages’ might evince this, if settlers cooperated to not employ or pay ‘native blacks’ who quit another without warning. This discipline would put them on equal footing ‘with well conducted European servants’.¹⁷⁴ The committee came to these conclusions by distributing a questionnaire among twenty-two eminent settlers on their employment of Aborigines. The questions were:¹⁷⁵

- 1) Have you been in the habit of employing any of the Native Blacks upon your Establishment?
- 2) If such be the case, please state what numbers you have generally had so engaged; whether they have continued in constant employ; what has been the nature of their occupation; and how have you been satisfied with their assiduity?
- 3) Have they been accustomed to receive wages, or other remuneration for their labour; and if so, of what kind, and to what amount?
- 4) From your experience of their disposition and capacity, what opinion have you been led to form of their usefulness; and also as to the possibility of attaching them regularly to the Establishment of settlers, in the capacity of hired servants – whether as shepherds or farm labourers?
- 5) Can you offer any suggestion as to the means by which they may be more readily induced to engage in the above, or in any other useful occupations?
- 6) Please state the amount of labour which you have any of them to accomplish, by the day, week, or month; what you consider their average services as compared with those of Europeans; and in what manner they may be most readily induced to exert themselves?
- 7) What do you consider to be the prevailing character and disposition as Labourers; and what are their numbers, so far as you can form an estimate, in your immediate neighbourhood; describing the limits to which your calculation exists?

Even as modern ‘race science’ was being developed by some local and metropolitan savants in this period, colonial authorities constructed Aborigines as increasingly complex moral, and indeed, economic agents. The questionnaire, more than the Crown Land Commissioner reports,

¹⁷⁴ “Report from the Committee on Immigration”, *V&P NSWLC 1841*, 5-6.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 35.

enabled authorities and settlers to conceive of the Aborigine in a grid of complex social relations. Whereas Cartwright had understood the Aborigines as ‘materials ... to work upon’ through brute discipline, authorities now calculated ‘civilisation’ by multiple indices.¹⁷⁶ Question six, for example, offered scope to quantify the ‘gap’ between savage and civilised. Respondents to the circular variously estimated an Aborigine conducted one-half, one-third, or one-quarter the work a Europeans might, just as superintendents had earlier estimated convict work for Commissioner Bigge and Governor Brisbane.¹⁷⁷ Questionnaires were again utilised for committees in 1845 into the ‘Condition of the Aborigines’ and in 1849 to consider continuing the Port Phillip Protectorate. These also located the Aborigines in complex relations, so that however wretched, the possibility of civilisation was always open.

The last of these committees in 1849 found the Protectorate had ‘totally failed in its object’, and the project of Aboriginal civilisation was again on the cusp of disintegrating. Some evidence indicated protection had proven ‘useless’ in effecting civilisation, while one witness accused protectors of restraining children from attending school. While the report doubted prospects of ‘hope’ for the adult population, the ‘education of the children’ remained a practical avenue for ‘success’. Now, the ‘total separation of the parents from the children’ also appeared essential to ‘any plan’ of education and civilisation, removing them from the influence of old ‘habits’.¹⁷⁸

Such ideas echoed postulations from London a year earlier by a new Secretary of State, the Third Earl Grey, who had recommitted government to these binaries. Surveying the Crown Land Commissioner reports of 1847, Grey again regretted ‘effectual improvement in the conditions of the natives’ had not been made. But, as he told Governor Fitz-Roy, it remained of the ‘highest importance that we should not suffer ourselves to be discouraged by the failure of experiments hitherto tried, but should pursue with unabated zeal the execution of those measures which appear to promise the best’. As a fresh pair of eyes to the ‘problem’, Grey proposed familiar

¹⁷⁶ Cartwright to Macquarie, 6 December 1819, *HRA* 1:10, 264; Russell to Gipps, 25 August 1840, *HRA* 1:20, 774.

¹⁷⁷ See circular letter responses: Evidence Graham Hunter; Evidence, G.B. Boulton; Evidence William Roadknight; Evidence T.A. Murray; Evidence George Shelly.

¹⁷⁸ “Report from the Select Committee on the Aborigines and Protectorate”, *V&P LCNSW 1849*, II, 1.

solutions, including access to pastoral land to hunt on, small tracts to be settled on, and more schooling and more reports.¹⁷⁹ Learning ‘the arts of Industry’ and ‘mechanical employments’, he assured, would offer ‘inducement to remain, as they advance in life, in a state of Civilisation, and would tend to destroy that desire to return to a wild and roving life, which has generally influenced those whose education has not partaken of an industrial character, and who have consequently had no bond in common with Civilised Society’.¹⁸⁰ Clearly, a pattern in settler thought and policy was emerging.

The Aborigine was, of course, not the only civilising problem in colonial New South Wales. As was keenly remarked in the 1837 Buxton report and repeated in the colony, part of the problem of civilising Aborigines was due to ‘intercourse with men little more advanced in the stage of civilisation than themselves’.¹⁸¹ For colonial clergy and respectable liberals, colonial life was hemmed by threats of moral degradation and societal regression on many sides. They blamed the degeneracy of a convict population, the lack of religious instruction, the heathenism of pastoral life, the alcoholism and sexual depravity of Sydney, the shortage of women, and the excess of Irish Catholics.¹⁸² The Four Stage theory was keenly used by self-ascribed colonial ‘Whigs’ to critique the emergent pastoral industry as regressive and squatters as ‘barbaric’. These were concrete moral concerns. While the ‘savage’ Aborigine was of genuine concern, this figure also always operated, and was repeatedly renewed, as a mode of ‘hypothetical reasoning’ that justified broader assumptions about expansion, production and accumulation. Had the French beaten Phillip to Sydney Cove after all, colonists might have better known their Montaigne: ‘Each man calls barbarism whatever is not his own practice’.

Conclusion

Nineteenth-century economisation, the process of naming and making things ‘economic’, occurred between the poles of ‘hypothetical reasoning’ and ‘experience’, and involved the

¹⁷⁹ The proposal was acquiesced by the colonial Executive Council: Fitz-Roy to Grey, 11 October 1848, *HRA* 1:26, 632-33.

¹⁸⁰ Grey to Fitz-Roy, 11 February 1848, *HRA* 1:26, 227-28.

¹⁸¹ *Morning Chronicle*, 17 December 1845, 2.

¹⁸² On this theme, see: Penny Russell, *Savage or Civilised?: Manners in Colonial Australia* (Sydney: New South, 2010).

complex interplay between new theoretical ways of seeing, expertise, official reports and governmental and bureaucratic innovation and action. This Chapter has explored how these connections began to develop in colonial New South Wales, and to what effect. In particular, I have emphasised the bureaucratic conditions under which New South Wales was established and highlighted two critical contexts in which the metaphors of political economy began to operate as useful technologies for colonial governance: the convict and the 'Aborigine'. In managing the cost of convict workers, authorities recalibrated the idea of discrete convict 'services' into a homogenised category of 'labour' that could be measured, managed, and administered. Ultimately, this contributed to a process that normalised wage labour as the capacity of the 'free man'. Meanwhile, as the precepts of Scottish Enlightenment stadial theory were applied to 'savage' Aboriginal peoples to justify various interventions against them, the 'Aborigine' was constituted as the muse of economical 'progress'. Programs initiated to effect the 'civilisation' of Aboriginal people in the first half of the nineteenth century reflected colonists' own firming belief in the idea that capital accumulation designated collective 'progress'.

In this way, new ideas of community and wealth began to structure a mode of economic governance in the colony. These ideas would become entrenched with experience, familiarity, and performance in the first half of the nineteenth century. We will return to the theme of wealth accumulation-as-progress later in the thesis. Over the next three chapters we turn to examining the economisation of land settlement, wool, and migration, as a means to illustrate the governmental 'performance' of the Ricardian economic community of land, capital, and labour in the colony.

(4)

Economic Narratives of Land Settlement

It is proposed ... that the supply of Labourers be exactly proportioned to the demand for labour at each Settlement; so that no Capitalist shall ever want Labourers, and no Labourer shall ever want employment.

Edward Gibbon Wakefield, *Outline*¹

OUT OF SIGHT AND OUT OF MIND, COLONIAL NEW SOUTH WALES OCCUPIED little of the British Parliament's attention in the early nineteenth century.² When the faraway colony was mentioned in either House, it was often only as a rhetorical prop. In May 1827, moving resolutions to retain the old Corn Laws, the ultra-Tory Lord Redesdale addressed his peers about the high rents recently advertised for estates in the penal colony, some at £700 per annum. Invoking all the old assumptions that land was the 'original source' and 'strength' of the 'common-wealth', Redesdale was out to embarrass the political economists, questioning: 'How came it that those lands yielded such a rent?' It was, Redesdale continued, the improvements and division of lands 'into pasturage and tillage', as described in that advertisement, 'that created the rent'.

And by whom was this improvement originally made, but by the landlord? It was he who built the barns, and prepared the lands for the subsequent cultivation of the farm. Yet, our political economists, not only Mr. M'Culloch but Mr. Ricardo, had taken it into their heads, that land was a machine: when it was in reality no more so than the oak tree from which the machine was afterwards formed.³

¹ E.G. Wakefield, *Sketch of a proposal for colonizing Australasia* (London: J. Dove, 1830), 4.

² Grace Karskens notes: 'In 1827 it was said that most Europeans, "if asked to describe Australia", would "think only of ropes, gibbets, arson, burglary, kangaroos, George Barrington and Governor Macquarie"'. *The Colony: A History of Early Sydney* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2009), 10.

³ *BPD* (HL), 15 May 1827, Vol. 17, 794.

Redesdale's speech was another skirmish in the conflicts between 'experience' and 'theory' characterising parliamentary debates in these years. While his choice of metaphors of the 'oak' and 'machine' were designed to slander political economy as devoid of the sense and feeling romantics and some Tories considered essential to good government, it did capture a contrast in competing ideas about land that had emerged in the early nineteenth-century British world. Was land an ostensibly moral and patriotic phenomenon in a stable, hierarchical society, or a factor in a system of production, distribution, and wealth accumulation?⁴

Redesdale would have been dismayed to learn this tension was, in fact, as active in colonial New South Wales as debates over British Corn Laws. New South Wales was settled, in part, on the assumption that landed property was the foundation of the moral 'common-wealth', granted to peasant emancipists and virtuous settlers alike. But by the 1820s, following Commissioner Bigge's reports, local authorities were experimenting with making land more like a machine, allocated to enhance productivity and reduce the costs of transportation. The conflict between oak and machine would also be resolved sooner in the colony than Britain. While 'theory' only triumphed in Britain with the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, by 1831, a year after Redesdale died, the 'Ripon Regulations' had abolished grants in New South Wales, put all land to market, and reframed colonial land settlement in economic, 'mechanical' terms.

This chapter charts the transition from landed oak to machine, and the transformation of colonial lands into a calculable site for configuring productive relations.⁵ This survey introduces Edward Gibbon Wakefield's theory of systematic colonisation into our story, a theory which, as the epigraph to this chapter suggests, treated colonial lands with no greater significance than as a mechanism by which capital and labour could be 'exactly proportioned' in colonies. Wakefield has recently re-emerged as a subject of historiographical contention. Engaging this debate, I

⁴ It is important not to draw distinctions between 'oak' and 'machine' too sharply. Scholars have long ceased taking this antagonism between 'organic' Tory Romantics and 'mechanistic' political economists at face value as it was a dichotomy polemically introduced by the Romantics, and instead have shown the deep commonalities between both groups. See: Philip Connell, *Romanticism, Economics and the Question of "Culture"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Donald Winch, *Riches and Poverty: An Intellectual History of Political economy in Britain, 1750-1834*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Chapters 12 and 13.

⁵ My focus on 'land settlement' is limited to uses and debates of rural land, for agricultural and pastoral purposes. The alienation of 'town lots' in Sydney, and elsewhere, which occurred at an even more rapid rate than in the countryside, raises its own set of problems and complexities that are beyond my scope here.

argue his theory was significant not for its originality but rigorous deployment of Ricardian logic. Couched in those crucial metaphors of the self-regulating, ‘proportioned’ community, Wakefield’s theory re-imagined the relationship between metropole and colonies as balancing the excesses of land, labour, and capital across empire, and redefined the internal relations of colonial communities as between ‘capitalists’ and ‘labourers’. This logic proved irresistible to Whig administrators seeking to repurpose the penal colony as a solution to the lingering problems of ‘idle’ capital and ‘redundant’ agricultural labourers in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars.⁶ By adopting Wakefieldian terms, the Ripon Regulations transformed the conceptual grid of colonial land settlement from organising an agrarian moral community to a mechanism regulating economic relations. In this transition we have the performance of the first component of the Ricardian community in New South Wales: ‘land’.

What was instituted through the Ripon Regulations was not simply adjustments to imperial ‘policy’, but an official vocabulary demarcating an ‘economic’ framework for interpreting social interaction. This vocabulary was reflected in two debates generated by the Regulations. The first, how to apply land revenues, whether to migration or public works, while the second asked at what price, or with what mechanism, should Crown land be alienated? While these are well known disputes in the broader ‘land question’ in Australian colonial historiography, little attention has been given to the novel terms in which they were conducted. In this chapter, attention to these debates will highlight three points. First, the increasing pervasiveness of an economic vocabulary in colonial discourse enabled an active and iterative critique of imperial policy, which different colonial interests –Whigs, radicals, squatters, or liberals –appropriated to formulate rival political economies and justify their own ends. Second, it highlights the role of select committees as authoritative forums of semantic dissemination and appropriation. Third, focus on debates helps demonstrates that the narratives and counter-narratives constructed in colonial select committees were not simply descriptive or rhetorical, but made the world tangible. These debates over the

⁶ As was noted in the Introduction and Chapter Two, these problems that suddenly emerged after the Napoleonic Wars must not be treated as self-evident problems, but framed by a particular theoretical imagining that drew up the frameworks of political economy.

forms of public debt and pricing systems legitimised new kinds of social agency, in particular, the wealth-accumulating ‘capitalist’.

Land, of course, was subject to ongoing disputes throughout the nineteenth-century British world, as the traditional moorings of aristocratic landed privilege were challenged by programs for enlarged enfranchisement, individualised property rights, colonial land grabs, indigenous dispossession, and radical redistribution.⁷ While the two debates discussed here were only a narrow aspect of these broader controversies, focusing on them helps to historicise what is often taken for granted in accounts of Australian land settlement: how, and with what consequences, did the productive organisation of colonial land become the pre-eminent problem of European settlement?⁸ To be sure, there remained clear oppositional voices to this process, including an agrarian individualism that envisioned colonial lands as an Arcadia for the ‘small man’. But despite colonial historians’ long interest in this oppositional language, it was fringe to the mainstream.⁹ The impulse of land settlement, expressed downward from government

⁷ For an overview in the British context, see: Matthew Cragoe and Paul Readman, *The Land Question in Britain, 1705-1950* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). See also: J. Stuart Anderson, *Lawyers and the Making of English Land Law, 1832-1940* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); John C. Weaver, *The Great Land Rush and the Making of the Modern World, 1650-1900* (Montreal: McGill-Queens Press, 2003); John Clarke, *Land, Power and Economics on the Frontier of Upper Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s Press, 2001); Reeve Huston, *Land and Freedom: Rural Society, Popular Protest, and Party Politics in Antebellum New York* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); A.R. Buck, John McLaren, and Nancy E. Wright (eds.), *Land and Freedom: Law, Property Rights and the British Diaspora* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001); and John McLaren, A. R. Buck, and Nancy E. Wright (eds.), *Despotic Dominion: Property Rights in British Settler Societies* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005).

⁸ For example, compare the framing questions of two authoritative accounts, written 50 years apart: Brian Fitzpatrick, *The British Empire in Australia: An Economic History, 1834-49*, (Carlton, 1949), p. 32, thought the underlying and ongoing question of colonisation was: ‘What is the best economical or social use to which the land of the Australian eastern colonies can be put?’; Philip McMichael, *Settlers and the Agrarian Question: Foundations of Capitalism in Colonial Australia* (Cambridge, 1984), p. xii, asks, ‘How was the land to be productively organised, and therefore what was to be the general social organisation of the colonies?’ The likeness was identified by Edward Cavanagh, though only to repeat the formulation and not interrogate it: Edward Cavanagh, “‘Not Celebrated for Its Agriculture’: Emigrant Guides and Land Settlement in New South Wales, 1831-65,” *Australian Studies* 3 (June 16, 2011). Historians of Australian property law have been more sensitive to these transformations, noting that shifts in property law reflected transformations in the ‘social significance’ of land. See, at length, Andrew Richard Buck, *The Making of Australian Property Law* (Annandale: Federation Press, 2006). See also: Bruce Kercher, *An Unruly Child: A History of Law in Australia* (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1995).

⁹ The classic study of this theme is: Coral Lansbury, *Arcady in Australia; the Evocation of Australia in Nineteenth-Century English Literature* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1970). For a balanced discussion, see: M. Williams, “Smaller and More is Better: Australian Rural Settlement, 1788-1914”, in J.M. Powell and M. Williams (eds.), *Australian Space, Australian Time: Geographical Perspectives* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1975), 61-103. For a critique of the importance of the yeoman ideal to colonial political thought, see: D. W. A. Baker, “The Origins of Robertson’s Land Acts,” *Australian Historical Studies* 8, no. 30 (1958): 166-182. Likewise, and with great attention to the contrast with the United States, Richard Waterhouse has recently scanned colonial land discourse to conclude ‘no clear and consistent notion of a society inhabited and perhaps dominated by a study and independent

regulations to emigrant guides, constituted the settler not as a ‘yeoman’ but a ‘small-capitalist’ and ‘investor’, making economic agency central to colonial governance.

This chapter has five sections. First, I examine residual household conceptions of land settlement into the 1820s, then I go on to reappraise the significance of the Wakefieldian vocabulary to the imperial imagination. The third section deals with debates over appropriating revenues, and the fourth continues with pricing. In both debates, my focus is on how official discourse shaped public discussion and the techniques of government in the public debt and price mechanisms that it produced. The final section traces this vocabulary through a different source, emigrant guides, which depicted the settler as a masculine ‘capitalist’, legitimising investment as a civic good, delimiting economic activity to the world of acquisitive *men*, and permeating the terms in which colonial government was understood.

Nineteenth-century British Imperialism and the problems of land settlement

The naming and making of things ‘economic’ makes little sense without considering the transformation of land.¹⁰ It seems intuitive to locate the emergence of economic knowledge with industrialisation, while other historians have associated it with merchants and accounting (Duppe), generic differentiation (Poovey) and natural science (Schabas).¹¹ But as an epistemological and governmental concept, economic knowledge could be neither stable nor enduring until it effectively colonised conceptions of land. For Englishmen of all stripes, owning land had long denoted a ‘stake’ in the nation, providing ‘independence’ to either engage in politics (civic humanists) or marking the limits of government intervention (natural jurists).

yeoman farmers was articulated in Australia between 1860 and 1960’. “The Yeoman Ideal and Australian Experience, 1860-1960”, in Kate Darian-Smith (ed.), *Exploring the British World: Identity, Cultural Production, Institutions* (Melbourne: RMIT Publishing, 2004), 440-459.

¹⁰ This follows Polanyi’s argument nineteenth-century ‘market society’ could only be established with the ‘fictitious’ commodification of land, money, and labour – ‘fictitious’ because these entities cannot really be produced, bought, and sold like other commodities. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), 71-80.

¹¹ Till Dppe, *The Making of the Economy: A Phenomenology of Economic Science* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011); Mary Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Margaret Schabas, *The Natural Origins of Economics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Maxine Berg, *The Machinery Question and the Making of Political Economy, 1815-1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

Property was a judicial term long before it was an economic one.¹² Even as eighteenth-century commercial society developed distinct legal and social patterns, the vestiges of landed property were insulated in the form of primogeniture, equity of redemption, and insolvency laws.¹³ Eighteenth-century movements in ‘agrarian patriotism’ and ‘agricultural improvement’ reaffirmed rather than undermined this political conception of land. The novelty of Ricardo’s treatment of landlords as a parasitic class ‘opposed to the interests of every other class of the community’ needs to be understood in this context.¹⁴

Colonies would prove harbingers for rethinking the social functions of land, but for a long time they were preserves of landed oak and common-wealth. Since the beginning of the seventeenth century, the disposal of land in British colonies had been left to the discretion of land companies or individuals granted royal charters and proprietary rights. For settlers and patrons of British colonial projects alike, the reconstitution of local forms of English government such as unpaid gentleman Justices of the Peace and juries of male freeholders were taken for granted, requiring the transfer of the obligations, rights, and vestiges of English landed society. While the New World offered greater potential for upward social mobility, colonies, especially the plantations, were also founded on versions of strict tenure feudalism, characterised by client aristocracy and royal patronage.¹⁵

¹² J.G.A. Pocock, “Authority and property: The question of liberal origins”, in *Virtue, Commerce and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 56.

¹³ David Lieberman, “Property, commerce, and the common law. Attitudes to legal change in the eighteenth-century”, in John Brewer and Susan Staves (eds.) *Early Modern Conceptions of Property* (London: Routledge, 1995), 144-161; Paul Langford, *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman 1689-1798* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

¹⁴ David Ricardo, “Essay on the Influence of a Low Price of Corn on the Profits of Stock,” in Piero Sraffa (ed.), *The Works and Correspondence of David Ricardo, Vol. 4, Pamphlets and Papers 1815-1823* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005), 21.

¹⁵ Michael Caton, “Property and propriety: Land tenure and slave property in the creation of a British West Indian plantocracy, 1612, 1740”, in John Brewer and Susan Staves (eds.), *Early Modern Conceptions of Property* (London: Routledge, 1995), 500. Cain and Hopkins have argued that from 1688 to around 1850, the figure of the landed ‘gentlemanly capitalist’ – a ‘formidable mix of the venerable and the new’ – was the model of imperial expansion, both as a technique to imprint landed institutions on colonies, affirming them as vassals of the Crown, and as the cultural aspiration of colonial elites, especially on plantations. Cain and Hopkins developed this model of landed ‘gentlemanly capitalism’ to contrast with the emergence of a different kind of gentlemanly capitalism located in the financial and banking world of the City of London, which facilitated imperial expansion from 1850-1914. The transition date, 1850, is a convenient shorthand, for as the authors note, the figure of the landed gentleman was already become increasingly anachronistic in the colonies after 1815 and especially by 1830. P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688-1914* (London: Longman, 1993), 53-104.

Imperial Britain's acquisition of vast tracts of land in Canada following the Seven Years War (1756-63) begged new questions of how to allocate these territories. Colonial land policy was appended to the emerging English ideology of agricultural improvement. In an effort to curtail 'granting excessive quantities of land to particular persons who have never cultivated or settled it', from 1763 governors in Crown colonies were instructed to grant 'with the advice and consent of our council' quantities of land 'in proportion to their [beneficiaries'] ability to cultivate'. Here, 'proportion' was a purely a descriptive term, positing no theoretical relation between settlers' capital and productive output.¹⁶ By the eve of the American Revolution, the imperial government was experimenting with sales to raise revenues in the proconsul colonies.¹⁷ Following the loss of the American colonies, however, land granting was reinstated in British North America to reward Crown loyalists and reassert aristocratic empire and colonial patronage after a period of great imperial instability.¹⁸

Settlement in New South Wales both reflected and was anomalous to these developments. The early governors' commissions included instructions on judiciously granting land, again with reference to fair parcelling and locating settlers in groups to provide mutual assistance.¹⁹ Unlike their American predecessors, however, early governors granted land by prerogative with no recourse to an executive council (there wasn't one until 1823).²⁰ Another anomaly were the

¹⁶ Leonard Woods Labaree (eds.) *Royal Instructions to British Colonial Governors 1670-1776*, Vol. 2 (New York: Octagon Books, 1967), 528-532. Each man was entitled to one hundred acres with an extra fifty acres per dependent or family member, with discretionary grants of up to 1000 acres for 'diligent' settlers, adjudicated by a settlers' 'ability' to meet specified acreage-per grant 'improvements' within the first three years

¹⁷ Ibid., 533-337; For authorities, such as Lord Shelbourne, disposal of lands could be linked to repaying war debts by applying the quit-rents as a source of revenue, a plan ahead of its time but partially realised with temporary disposal by sale from 1773. See: R. G. Riddell, "A Study in the Land Policy of the Colonial Office, 1763-1855," *Canadian Historical Review* 18, no. 4 (December 1, 1937): 385-40. For another perspective on early attempts at sale in Crown colonies, see: D. H. Murdoch, "Land Policy in the Eighteenth-Century British Empire: The Sale of Crown Lands in the Ceded Islands, 1763-1783," *The Historical Journal* 27, no. 3 (1984): 549-74.

¹⁸ According to Weaver, 'cronyism and muddle' flourished in imperial land policy between 1780 and 1830. *The Great Land Rush*, 26. The reassertion of an aristocratic empire after the American Revolution can be understood in two contrasting ways. On the one hand, it was motivated by a more general aristocratic resurgence to re-establish order and further the 'moral crusade' of British agrarian patriotism after American Independence. On the other, it might be read as a retreat of aristocratic families to the imperial margins in response to the Whig middle-class upsurge at home. Compare Bayly, *Imperial Meridian*, 80-1 with Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, Dangerous People? England 1783-1846* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 137-8, 241.

¹⁹ K.W. Robinson, 'Land', in G.J. Abbott and N.B. Nairn, *Economic Growth in Australia, 1788-1821* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1969), 92.

²⁰ Colonial jurists seeking connections to common law soon became acutely aware, the penal colony did not fit with any of the three colonial typologies set out in Blackstone's *Commentaries*, established neither

instructions, up until Darling, to grant land to emancipated convicts.²¹ As noted in Chapter One, this practice has created a good deal of debate among historians deciphering the aims of early settlement: whether emancipist grants were designed to settle a virtuous peasantry and stabilise cultivation, or a pragmatic afterthought to keep emancipists from returning to Britain. Nonetheless, these conditions – prerogative rule and emancipist grants – constituted the governor as a patriarchal figure over the colonial ‘household’.²²

‘Strict’, ‘rigid’ and ‘proper œconomy’ pervaded early governors correspondence accounting for their conduct, including the distribution of livestock, stores, clothing, rations, and employment of convicts on public farms. The initial challenges in achieving regular harvests were framed not as a problem of efficiently allocating resources, but just, household administration.²³ The Commissary, ‘on whose conduct the whole of the public economy in this colony must necessarily depend’, described Governor King, was a site of the governors’ constant scrutiny, which he attempted to protect from ‘monopolies and scandalous practices’.²⁴ These were not fears of commercial inequity, however, but to recall a key ‘œconomic’ metaphor from Chapter Two,

by royal charter, the grant of property to private individuals, or as a provincial establishment underpinned by commissions and instructions issued by the Crown to a governor who was supported by an assembly with the power to make local ordinances. Only in 1823, when the Executive Council was established, did New South Wales begin to look like the third. Blackstone *Commentaries*, Vol. 1, (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1893) 108. Alastair Davidson, *The Invisible State: The Formation of the Australian State* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 135.

²¹ Hunter’s 1794, instructions for example, gave the right to make large grants ‘to any peculiarly meritorious settler or well deserving emancipist convict’. *HRA* 1:1, 520.

²² Mark Francis has explored the persistence of some of these ideas beyond 1820. See: *Governors and Settlers: Images of Authority in the British Colonies, 1820-60* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992).

²³ For examples of this language, see: Phillip to Grenville, 20 June 1790, *HRA* 1:1, 184; Ross to Phillip, 11 February 1791, *HRA* 1:1, 238; Hunter to King, 1 November 1798, *HRA* 1:2, 235; Portland to Hunter, 3 December 1798, *HRA* 1:2, 240. Governor King was particularly inclined to write this way when framing the problems of grain shortages in the early 1800s, to comprehend the interrelation between importing grain, rations and deploying convicts for land clearing and cultivation. See: King to Portland, 26 May 1801, *HRA* 1:3, 94; King to Portland, 8 July 1801, *HRA* 1:3, 117-18; King to Portland, 21 August 1801, *HRA* 1:3, 121; King to Portland, 21 August 1801, *HRA* 1:3, 149; King to Portland, 1 May 1802, *HRA* 1:3, 400-01; King to Hobart, 1 March 1804, *HRA* 1:4, 520. ‘Duty and œconomy’ were the ‘motives’ by which King was ‘guided’. See: King to Hobart, 9 May 1803, *HRA* 1:4, 113.

²⁴ King to Portland, 28 September 1800, 1:2, 611, 669. See also: King to the Secretaries of the Treasury, 28 September 1800, *HRA* 1:2, 675. As such, Commissariat ‘policy’ was seen as crucial to facilitating the ‘welfare’ of the colony. When Macquarie arrived in 1809, he was advised by a correspondent, the merchant and lawyer T.W. Plummer, that earlier ‘accidents’ of scarcity were a consequence of the of ‘the mistaken economy which has frequently prevailed on the part of the Colonial Government in not laying in a fresh stock of Grain in the public Stores till the old one was completely exhausted, and generally waiting till the Harvest in order to procure it at a cheaper rate’. See: Plummer to Macquarie, 4 May 1809, *HRA* 1:7, 200.

were to ensure the ‘circulation’ of resources through the household and protect against ‘corruption’.

Governor proclamations published in the *Sydney Gazette* recorded instructions on the type and timing of crops to plant, ordering ‘the utmost care and economy’ in their granted possessions.²⁵ The governor also controlled commercial policy, and as in England, fixed wages and instructed magistrates to set the weight and price of bread.²⁶ In this context, land grants to convicts were less an anomaly than a variation on the governor’s management of household resources in the circumstances of a penal colony. There were clear limits to these prerogatives, as Governor Bligh’s disposal clearly indicated, reflecting colonists’ constitutional sensitivities to unchecked executive power.²⁷ But even as social divisions between those of convict and non-convict origin emerged after this period, governors were generally recognised as figure of personnel munificence, protection and security.²⁸

This was the situation Bigge encountered in 1819. As with his treatment of convicts in Chapter Three, Bigge’s recommendations for land settlement were ambiguous, invoking both an extension of aristocratic and hierarchical order, but also a rationalisation to optimise productive relations. Both need to be treated briefly, for each had consequences for colonial life.

On the one hand, Bigge, along with the Secretary of State for Colonies who commissioned him, Lord Bathurst, have been characterised by historians as ‘architects’ of a conservative vision for colonial society, founded on twin pillars of the Church of England and landed gentry.²⁹ In one sense, Bigge’s recommendations were clearly designed to these ends. In 1826, on Bigge’s

²⁵ Government and General Order, 29 September 1795, *HRA* 1:1, 678. See also King’s response to the floods on the Hawkesbury in 1801: King to Portland, 8 July 1801, *HRA* 1:3, 117-18.

²⁶ See Chapter Six of this thesis for further discussion on this subject.

²⁷ Grace Karskens and Richard Waterhouse, “‘Too Sacred to Be Taken Away’: Property, Liberty, Tyranny and the ‘Rum Rebellion’”, *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 12 (2010): 1-22; Alan Atkinson, “The Little Revolution in New South Wales, 1808,” *The International History Review* 12, no. 1 (February 1, 1990): 65-75; Alan Atkinson, “Jeremy Bentham and the Rum Rebellion,” *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 64, (1978): 1-13.

²⁸ See especially the discussion in Andrew Lattas, “The New Panopticon: Newspaper discourse and the rationalization of society and culture in New South Wales, 1803-1830”, PhD Thesis (University of Adelaide, 1985), 357-358.

²⁹ Michael Roe, *Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia, 1835-1851* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1965), chapter one. Speaking about colonies, Gladstone, wrote A.G.L. Shaw, was ‘not unique in the belief he expressed in 1835 that “an established church and aristocracy” were “the twin pillars of society”, which without them would lack “strength and cohesion”’. A. G. L. Shaw, “British Attitudes to the Colonies, ca. 1820-1850,” *Journal of British Studies* 9, no. 1 (November 1, 1969): 71-95.

recommendation, Governor Darling established ‘clergy reserves’ for the Anglican churches and schools, based on the system created in Upper Canada in 1791 and consistent with a ‘militant imperial Anglicanism’ that followed American independence.³⁰ Large grants were offered to attract ‘respectable’ settlers with capital, partly to encourage pastoralism, but also to forge the basic unit of agrarian life: the landed estate. As such, Darling’s 1826 instructions also confined settlement within a proclaimed ‘Limits of Location’ (later established as the ‘Nineteen Counties’), which were to be divided into counties, hundreds and parishes, creating a patchwork of Anglican rural communities throughout the colony.³¹ Even as he denied the colony free institutions, Bigge was shifting public munificence from the governor to the large grantee, under whose tutelage assigned convicts would be reformed.³²

Despite these initiatives, identifying a cohesive landed ‘gentry’ in colonial Australia has proven a difficult task for historians. This challenge is partly due to the absence of genuine aristocratic migrants, but also because the term was so malleable in a penal colony populated by ambitious officers and emancipists, making it a status to be claimed rather than recognised.³³ Jealous aspirants could point to an ‘ancient nobility’ who enjoyed patronage, grants and were tied socially or through marriage, but because most people in the colony were closely associated with

³⁰ These Anglican ‘clergy reserves’ had a fraught history in the colony and were abolished with the 1831 Regulations. See: Kelvin Grose, “What Happened to the Clergy Reserves of New South Wales”, *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 72, Part 2 (1986): 92-103. In Upper Canada, clergy reserves had originally been designed to help provide stability to loyalist settlers and keep in check the French-Catholic interest. See: Alan Wilson, *The Clergy Reserves of Upper Canada* (Toronto: Canadian Historical Association, 1969). More generally, ‘militant imperial Anglicanism’ had involved creating new bishoprics and supplying clergy to bolstering ‘the conservative and aristocratic colonial order which emerged in the wake of the American Revolution.’ Michael Gladwin, *Anglican Clergy in Australia, 1788-1850: Building a British World* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015), 6.

³¹ The dividing of the colony into ‘Counties, Hundreds and Parishes’ was first instructed to Brisbane: Bathurst to Brisbane, 1 January 1825, 434. It was then made part of Darling’s official commission: Instructions to Governor Darling, *HRA* 1:12, 115. For a descriptions of these Limits, which existed inside the Nineteenth Counties, see, *Sydney Gazette*, 6 September 1826. The extension to The Nineteen Counties were proclaimed in October 1829, see: *Sydney Gazette*, 17 October 1829.

³² Bigge, *Second Report*, 44.

³³ G. C. Bolton, “The Idea of a Colonial Gentry,” *Historical Studies* 13, no. 51 (October 1, 1968): 307-28; Penny Russell, *A Wish of Distinction: Colonial Gentility and Femininity* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1994); J. B. Hirst, *Sense & Nonsense in Australian History* (Melbourne: Black Inc. Agenda, 2006), 153-58; J. B. Hirst, *The Strange Birth of Colonial Democracy: New South Wales 1848-1884* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1988), 105-118. Russell has suggested historians have dithered on whether the colonial gentry were ‘slavish adherents to British standards’ or ‘a comprehensive redefinition of those standards to suit the needs of the colonial situation.’ See: Penny Russell, “Gentry”, in Graeme Davison, John Hirst, and Stuart Macintyre (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Australian History* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1998), 279.

moneymaking, certification of one's gentility in contrast to such practices were ambiguous.³⁴ The increase in large grants did nevertheless foster a 'landed ideology' and colonial Whiggism, characterised by paternalism, constitutionalism, and nativity, of which James Macarthur, William Wentworth, and Edward Deas Thomson would emerge as leading exponents.³⁵

With a quarter of the land held by ex-convicts, Bigge declared a community where property could be 'derived through the several gradations of crime, conviction, service, emancipation and grant' not ready for free institutions such as trials by jury. He doubted emancipist grants had instilled 'those feelings that are invariably generated by the possession of property'.³⁶ Colonial elites spent the next thirty years attempting to purify the land of this stain.³⁷ They sought to limit the rights of emancipists and projected a myth about their own civilising agency in the colony. Readily drawing on Edmund Burke, this self-styled 'gentry' abhorred 'abstract' principles, appealing instead appealed to what J.G.A. Pocock has called Burke's 'political economy', arguing nobility, ecclesiastical order, chivalry, and manners underlay civilised commerce.³⁸ In the primordial Australian wilderness, James Macarthur foresaw the 'charms of civilisation' following the establishment of regular, landed 'order'.³⁹ Or as the president of the newly-formed Agricultural Society of Australia, Sir John Jamison envisaged in an 1826 address, the

³⁴ On social ties, Roe, *Quest for Authority*, 36-8. On the 'ancient nobility', see: James Mudie, *The Felonry of New South Wales* (Melbourne: Lansdowne Press, 1965 [1837]).

³⁵ Macarthur was the son of the great merino pioneer John Macarthur. Edward Deas Thomson was Colony Secretary from 1837 to 1856. Alan Atkinson, "Time, Place and Paternalism: Early Conservative Thinking in New South Wales," *Australian Historical Studies* 23, no. 90 (April 1, 1988): 1-18; "Towards Independence: Recipes for self-government in colonial New South Wales" in Penny Russell and Richard White (eds.), *Pastiche I. Reflections on Nineteenth-century Australia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 85-102. On the identity of colonial Australian Whiggism, see: George H. Nadel, "Mid-Nineteenth Century Political Thought in Australia, 1820-1840," (M.A. Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1950), Chapter One.

³⁶ Bigge, *Third Report*, 35; *First Report*, 153. Fletcher's likewise summarised, 'Nowhere else did a prison sentence form for so many people the gateway to a career on the land.' *Landed Enterprise and Penal Society: A History of Farming and Grazing in New South Wales before 1821* (Sydney University Press Sydney, 1976), 88.

³⁷ There was also a sense, however, that the soil had been tainted. An 1836 Petition from leading colonists on the issue of 'free institutions', noted that 'from the facility of acquiring wealth in New South Wales by dishonest and disreputable practices, the possession of property affords but slight proof of good character; a state of things which your Petitions are of opinion most necessarily prevail, so long as transportation is continued...' Petition, Enclosure A2, in Bourke to Glenelg, *HRA* 1:18,397.

³⁸ For an example of abhorrence to 'principles', see Macarthur's speech, *The Australian*, 1 March 1842, 3. On Burke's 'political economy', see: Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Yale University Press, 2003 [1790]), 67-68. J.G.A. Pocock, "The political economy of Burke's analysis of the French Revolution", *Virtue, Commerce and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), 193-214; Winch, *Riches and Poverty*, 130-1.

³⁹ James MacArthur *New South Wales, Its Present State and Future Prospects*. (London: D. Walther, 1837), 11, 186.

‘encouragement of a tenantry ... would prove profitable to proprietors, and morally beneficial to the industrious cultivators who resided under the watchful protection of their landlords discretion’.⁴⁰

Yet even as settlers established tenanted estates, especially on the Hawkesbury River, dreams of agrarian gentility were never fully realised.⁴¹ Gentlemanly status was porous and landed institutions unstable. Governor Bourke’s 1836 Church Acts, which gave equal state funding to all denominations, instituted religious pluralism rather than Anglican privilege.⁴² Nor did large landowners inherit associated obligations. There were no poor laws in Australia, and paid police magistrates increasingly replaced the role of voluntary JPs, as police districts proved a more useful administrative unit than the parish or county.⁴³ While some elites argued for the need to retain a ‘natural aristocracy’ during the constitutional debates in the 1850s, secular bureaucratic administration was eclipsing the landed, parochial and ecclesiastical.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ John Jamison, *The Third Anniversary Address to the Agricultural Society of New South Wales by the President* (Sydney: John Cubitt, 1826), 5.

⁴¹ For firsthand accounts of tenant farmers settled on these estates, see the testimonials provided in Caroline Chisholm’s evidence to the Select Committee on Immigration, *LCNSW V&P 1845*, 27-31. Consider, too, Alexander Harris’ account on an unnamed settler’s farm from 1847: ‘Like almost all the old settlers he had a great many farms, as well as cattle and sheep stations, in various parts of the colony, hundreds of miles apart from each other; he also, as usual, had at the home farm his smithy, flour-mill, tailors’, shoemakers’, harness-makers’ and carpenters’ shop, tannery, cloth-factory, tobacco sheds; beside stables, dairy, barn, wool-sheds, brick-kilns, saw-pits, &c. &c. and all the necessary tradesmen for these various occupations. Probably on his establishments there were altogether nearly or quite 200 men; some free, some bond’. Alexander Harris, *Settlers and Convicts: Or, Recollections of Sixteen Years’ Labour in the Australian Backwoods* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1964 [1847]), 133. See also: D. N. Jeans, *An Historical Geography of New South Wales to 1901* (Sydney: Reed Education, 1972), 108. J. B. Hirst, *Freedom on the Fatal Shore: Australia’s First Colony* (Melbourne: Black Inc, 2008), 278.

⁴² The Colonial Office did originally assume a Commission of the Peace ‘should issue, as in England, for each particularly County’. See Stephen to Horton, 27 March 1825, *HRA* 4:1, 603. However, counties and parishes were only survived in the land survey as a means of describing allotments in deeds and for much of the century also as statistical areas for collecting population and agricultural data. D.N. Jeans, ‘Territorial Divisions and the Locations of Towns in New South Wales, 1826-1842,’ *Australian Geographer* 10, no. 4 (1967): 243-55; Gladwin, *Anglican Clergy in Australia, 1788-1850*, 10, 16.

⁴³ This institution of stipend magistrates and a professional police force was seen in Britain as an affront to English liberty and impartiality. See: David Philips and Robert D. Storch, *Policing Provincial England, 1829-1856: The Politics of Reform*. (London: Leicester University Press, 1999). It caused far less contestation in the colony than Britain, and was even welcomed: *Sydney Herald*, 28 September 1837, 2. For a reflection on the unique and mixed (paid and unpaid) nature of the magistracy in the colony, see: Gipps to Russell, 14 September 1841, *HRA* 1:21, 508-9. On Australia and the poor laws, see: Brian Dickey, ‘Why Were There No Poor Laws in Australia?’ *Journal of Policy History* 4, no. 2 (1992): 111-33.

⁴⁴ This general transition has best been mapped at a local level in Alan Atkinson, *Camden: farm and village life in early New South Wales* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1988). The concept of ‘natural aristocracy’ is taken from Burke’s essay *An Appeal from the New Whigs to the Old Whigs*. For its use in constitutional debates, see: John Nodes Dickinson, *A Letter to The Honorable the Speaker of the Legislative Council on the Formation of a Second Chamber in the Legislature of New South Wales* (Sydney: W.R. Piddington, 1852); Alfred Stephen, *Thoughts on the Constitution of a Second Legislative*

Paradoxically, this transition was already evident in Bigge's report, which while reflecting assumptions about landed oak, simultaneously experimented with land as an object of rationalisation. Governor Macquarie had complained as early as 1816 that many supposed 'Gentleman Settlers' arrived only with 'fictitious capital', and in 1821, while Bigge was visiting, sought to regulate grants 'in proportion to the amount of Capital actually brought out by the Free Settlers into the Colony for the express purpose of Stocking and improving their Farms'. Settlers would need to provide an affidavit declaring their worth.⁴⁵ Bigge developed this into a quasi-science, recommending a scale for acres granted in proportion to capital invested, beginning a long chain of attempts by authorities to redistribute the 'settler' according to their capital. Bigge also recommended putting some land to sale, scaling quit-rents on granted land according to the quality of soil, systematic registration of deeds and titles, and a massive 'survey and valuation' of the colony.⁴⁶ Colonial officials became entangled in a web of memorandums discussing how to prioritise these recommendations, continuously debating whether land should be sold or granted, and how to fix quit-rents on different qualities of land.⁴⁷ In feeling their way through

Chamber for New South Wales: In a Letter to the Attorney General (Sydney: F.M. Stokes, 1853). The term was soon reappropriated by colonial radicals. See: Gregory Melleuish, "Daniel Deniehy, Bede Dalley and the Ideal of the Natural Aristocrat in Colonial New South Wales," *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 33, no. 1 (April 1, 1987): 45-59. For an overview of the constitutional debates: Ged Martin, *Bunyip Aristocracy: The New South Wales Constitution Debate of 1853 and Hereditary Institutions in the British Colonies* (Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986).

⁴⁵ Macquarie to Bathurst, 31 March 1817, *HRA* 1:9, 238; Macquarie to Bathurst, 16 May 1818, *HRA* 1:9, 797; Macquarie to Bathurst, 28 November 1821, *HRA* 1:10, 568-69. On fictitious capitals, see also Brisbane to Under-Secretary Horton, 24 March 1825, *HRA* 1:11, 554.

⁴⁶ Bigge, *Third Report*, 48, 91. Wentworth had previously endorsed sale by auction at a minimum upset price of 5s., and Macquarie between 7s. and 10s. Stephen H. Roberts, *History of Australian Land Settlement, 1788-1920* (London: F. Cass, 1969), 37.

⁴⁷ Bigge found quit-rents had not been collected on land and allotments since 1809. *Third Report*, 38. At the Colonial Office, Horton and Hay also advocated quit-rents as a form of revenue in the 1820s, see John Ritchie *Punishment and Profit: the Reports of Commissioner John Bigge on the Colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, 1822-1823; Their Origins, Nature and Significance* (Melbourne: Heinemann, 1970), 251. For discussion of early quit-rent policy, see Bathurst to Macquarie, 3 February 1814, *HRA* 1:8, 136. Proposal to have land classed into three grades for quit-rents, rather than two as suggested by Bigge: Brisbane to Bathurst, 10 April 1823, *HRA* 1:10, 630; Land to be graded into two classes for quit rents Bathurst to Brisbane, 31 May 1823, *HRA* 1:11, 87. See Oxley's memorandum on difficulties of valuing quit-rents, *HRA* 1:12, 379-389. Land to be sold: Brisbane to Bathurst, 24 July 1824, *HRA* 1:11, 330; New regulations for land purchase and grants: Bathurst to Brisbane, 1 January 1825, *HRA* 1:11, 440-454; Long response to new land regulations, including multiple letters from Oxley and the Land Board objecting to difficulties in valuation of land and ratio of capital to land grant: Darling to Bathurst, 22 July 1826, *HRA* 1:12, 374-424; New regulations to promote purchase: Bathurst to Darling, 26 August 1826, *HRA* 1:12, 503; Government Order, Regulations for Granting and Sale of Land, in Darling to Bathurst, 5 September 1826, *HRA* 1:12, 536; Suspension of memorandums: Darling to Bathurst, 14 February 1827, *HRA* 1:13, 111; Equality of conditions for purchasers and grantees: Bathurst to Darling, 2 April 1827, *HRA* 1:13, 219-226; Proposals for general valuation of land, with a long account

these problems, the governors, surveyor-general, and various clerks were inadvertently playing with a different conception of 'land', not as endowing moral and patriotic substance, but as a site of productive calculation.

By the mid-1820s, then, there were clear tensions in governmental ideas about the function of lands. Following Bigge, Darling established new grant regulations in 1826 which reflected these ambiguities. The regulations stipulated what counted as 'capital' (point 1); the improvements grantees needed to make in their first seven years of settlement to retain their grants (point 8); and specified the acres granted for capital possessed (point 10). But they also specified, first and foremost, that 'the Governor shall be satisfied of the character and respectability of the Applicant'. In fact, the latter qualification was increasingly enforced as the decade went on. This practice meant screening for 'respectable' applicants with not only requisite capital, but farming experience and no intentions to speculate in 'trade'. Darling established a Land Board in 1826 to scrutinise applications and affidavits, warning prospective settlers '*means and pursuits will be strictly investigated*'.⁴⁸ The Board targeted absenteeism and those 'engaged in Business or Trade', especially merchants and shopkeepers.⁴⁹ The governor's zeal for 'bona fide settlers' was checked by London: Goderich thought absentee landlords acceptable if 'Capitalists of the highest respectability', while Murray was receptive to merchants who 'may have considerable Capital at their disposal'.⁵⁰ The ideal 'settler' remained a contested subject of government.

In applying for land, whether their first or subsequent grant, prospective settlers were required to submit a memorial attesting to their character and intentions, as well as their capital

of problems associated with granting land according to both soil quality and settlers' capital Darling to Huskisson, 2 August 1828, *HRA* 1:14, 284.

⁴⁸ Darling to Hay, 16 December 1826, *HRA* 1:12, 767. Darling was particularly suspicious as 'of the Class of "Shop Keepers"': 'many of whom have lately come out, and think they have a right to Land in proportion to the amount of their Investments. In most cases, the Goods are not their own, but have been supplied on Commission. Mr. Weller *told me* he had been bred to *Business*, and had no knowledge of Agriculture ... Too many of this Class come out; there was a batch of four of them not long since from *Cheapside*, vouching for each other's property, and evidently not one of the whole number knowing a potato from a Turnip'.

⁴⁹ Against absenteeism, see: Darling to Hay, 14 May 1827, *HRA* 1:13, 306. On inappropriate settlers, see: Darling to Hay, 25 December 1826, *HRA* 1:12, 799; Land Board to Darling, 20 March 1826, *HRA* 1:12; 414; Darling to Under-Secretary Hay, 10 August 1827, *HRA* 1:13, 531. We find numerous examples of applicants being turned down on such grounds. In his denial of one applicant, for example, Darling cited: 'I could wish that such people as Hyam and his partner would confine themselves to their own proper calling, and defer becoming landed Proprietors until they have done making shoes and selling stockings'. See, Darling to Under Secretary Twiss, 1 March 1829, *HRA* 1:14, 677

⁵⁰ Hay to Darling, 6 July 1827, *HRA* 1:13, 434; Murray to Darling, 31 May 1828, *HRA* 1:14, 215.

and assets. Recommendations from patrons were looked upon favourably. These applications also reflected the tensions of 1820s settlement, as applicants appealed to both patronage and profits, oak and machine. Thomas Harington, for example, boasted his father was a member of the Supreme Court in Calcutta and his £6,500, none of which was ‘contingent on Credit’, far exceeded the amounts stipulated by the regulations. Harington declared he would help ‘create and uphold an Opulent Gentry’ in the colony, which he assumed concurred with the government’s ‘wise’ policy.⁵¹ Most applicants were not so presumptive, but insisted on their services to empire, attaching testimonials endorsing ‘character and respectability’, one even from Princess Sophia Matilda.⁵² In seeking an additional grant, Thomas Potter McQueen reported he had ‘placed 25 families’ on his ‘Estate’ and planned to send for more ‘labouring poor’.⁵³ But memorials also included accounts of available capital and assets, listing money, stock, equipment and improvements made on existing grants. While these included no statement of projected returns on investment, this process of self-declaration began realigning the settler not as a gentry but ‘capitalist’.

Women were originally excluded from grants. Macquarie, without giving explanation, thought it ‘bad practice’ until Bathurst affirmed women should not be prejudiced, so long as they ‘possess sufficient funds’.⁵⁴ Another maligned group were the locally born colonists. It took several years for James Macarthur and his brother William to secure additional grants, pleading it was ‘always ... their earnest endeavour ... to promote the general, as well as Agricultural advancement of their Native Land’ and ‘the Mother Country’.⁵⁵ Applicants recognised the governor’s discretion was the ruling principle of settlement, with the result that Darling was increasingly accused of favouritism. In 1829, the Secretary of State for Colonies, George Murray, defended his governor, reminding ‘territorial gifts’ were ‘a matter of pure indulgence ... incapable of being tried by broad principles like those of legal and constitutional right.’⁵⁶ Even as land was

⁵¹ T.C. Harlington to Bathurst, 30 December 1823, *HRA* 1:11, 231-233.

⁵² W. Hamilton to Bathurst, 9 April 1825, *HRA* 1:11, 640; H.C Antil to Bathurst, 20 September 1825, *HRA* 1:12, 228; M. Phillips, 4 January 1827, *HRA* 1:13, 132-33; J. Hooke, 16 July 1827, *HRA* 1:13, 456. Enclosure, Stanley to Darling, 30 November 1827, 1:13, 627-30.

⁵³ McQueen to Hay, 19 December 1826, *HRA* 1:12, 795.

⁵⁴ Enclosures, Bathurst to Darling, 28 June 1826, *HRA* 1:12, 361.

⁵⁵ Enclosures, Darling to Bathurst, 4 January 1827, *HRA* 1:13, 8-14.

⁵⁶ Murray to Darling, 6 November 1829, *HRA* 1:15, 244.

presenting new problems of calculation by 1830, then, authorities continued to conceive it fundamentally as an ‘oak’ of order, commonwealth and regularity. This situation was soon redirected in Britain.

E.G. Wakefield and the metaphors of ‘systematic colonisation’

Land settlement in New South Wales was decisively realigned with the so-called ‘Ripon Regulations’, established in the first half of 1831. The orchestrator of these reforms was Viscount Goderich, who was made Lord Ripon in 1833. Like William Huskisson, whom he preceded as president of the Board of Trade, Goderich was a liberal Tory with a sympathy for ‘theory’, but tactfully sensitive to those parliamentarians hostile to it. Goderich, for example, had been the first peer to respond to Lord Redesdale’s Corn Law speech in May 1827, and while declaring himself a ‘friend to free trade’, insisted he would ‘not combat this [Redesdale’s] proposition on theory, lest he might be considered a political economists’.⁵⁷ Similarly, Goderich again abstained from invoking theory a few later when, now as Secretary of State for Colonies in Grey’s new Whig ministry, he outlined the new land regulations for New South Wales. The new policy abolished grants for a system of sale by auction at a minimum upset price of 5s., the proceeds of which would fund the emigration of poor British labourers to work in the colony. As historians have long recognised, the Ripon Regulations clearly echoed the theories of colonisation outlined by Edward Gibbon Wakefield a few years earlier.⁵⁸ But without Goderich making explicit mention of this ‘theory’, again, perhaps, tactfully, historians have hesitated assigning Wakefield great significance in shaping imperial policy, beyond providing the Colonial Office a ‘convenient use of a distinctive phraseology’.⁵⁹ But it was precisely authorities’ adaptation of Wakefield’s

⁵⁷ Goderich was also quick to assert he ‘had never subscribed to all the doctrines of Mr. M’Culloch, nor any other teacher of that school...he might, perhaps, occasionally puzzle himself with the essays of the political economists, which he believed, likewise puzzled their authors; but he was not, therefore, wedded to their opinions’. *BPD* (HL), 15 May 1827, Vol.17, 805-8.

⁵⁸ For the classic statement that links theory and policy, see: R. C. Mills, *The Colonization of Australia (1829-42): The Wakefield Experiment in Empire Building* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1915), 167.

⁵⁹ June Philipp, “Wakefieldian Influence and New South Wales 1830-1832,” *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand* 9, no. 34 (May 1, 1960): 173-80. Philipp made the opposite case a decade later in: *A Great View of Things: Edward Gibbon Wakefield* (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1971); Peter Burroughs reviewed the earlier debate in his *Britain and Australia, 1831-1855: a study in imperial relations and crown lands administration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 47-9. On the one hand, Burroughs was highly sympathetic to Philipp’s original interpretation, noting the regulations also represented, rather, another attempt at practical problems the Colonial Office had faced single Bigge’s report, harnessing

‘distinctive phraseology’ – a Ricardian concern for ‘proportioning’ land, capital, and labour throughout empire – that would be of enduring significance. To be sure, Goderich was responding to immediate problems affecting both domestic unemployment and imperial land settlement, and in a sense was only continuing experiments that had begun in the 1820s. However, in drawing upon the Wakefieldian vocabulary in his 1831 regulations, Goderich canonised these terms as an official language, reconstituting ‘land’ as a calculable machine and reimagined the colonial community as configured by ‘capitalists’ and ‘labourers’. This framework would enduringly shape colonists’ own self-understandings, interests, and identities.

Wakefield’s ideas on colonisation first appeared anonymously in the *Morning Chronicle* in 1829 as a series of fictional letters from a ‘Colonist’ and were published later that year in *A Letter from Sydney*. Having never visited Australia, he gained knowledge of empire through reading. His other interest was political economy. While impeccably Ricardian in his reasoning, Wakefield’s ‘theory’ began by inverting orthodox British political economy, which associated colonies with the discredited ‘mercantile system’. Rather, Wakefield advocated the usefulness of colonies in an era of rapid capital accumulation and population growth. Rejecting Say’s ‘Law of Markets’, which was taken for granted by the Ricardians, and instead following Malthus’ supposition that there were limits to capital employment and thus the possibility of ‘general gluts’, Wakefield posited land-abundant colonies as a receptacle for excess British capital and

recent experience from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, where sale by auction had been introduced in 1827. But on the other, Burroughs also thought 'stylistic and linguistic affinity' did no justice to the Colonial Office's commitment to some of Wakefield's principles. This, however, seems to dismiss precisely what is significant and innovative about Wakefield. Debate over Wakefield's significance more generally has resurfaced in recent years. James Belich suspected Wakefield's ideas on colonisation 'were partly derived from various American attempts at organised settlement in the 1780s, such as that of the Ohio Associates'. By promoting these ideas in 1829, when emigration to colonies had already begun, Wakefield, argued Belich, was merely 'riding the wave of public opinion, not creating it. Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 146-7. As Wakefield's plan was not 'successfully' introduced anywhere in the settler world, John Weaver thought it was not worth discussing at length at all in his survey of colonial land grabs. Weaver, *Great Land Rush*, 23-24, 214, 381n86. My reading of Wakefield is closer to Tony Ballantyne, who in response to these recent interpretations, has argued that to assess Wakefield's importance by the extent his schemes were doctrinally implemented, or to dismiss them as publicising common sentiment, marks a 'fundamental misreading of the significance of his work'. Tony Ballantyne, "They Theory and Practice of Empire-Building: Edward Gibbon Wakefield and 'systematic colonization'", in Robert Aldrich and Kirsten McKenzie (eds.), *The Routledge History of Western Empires* (London: Routledge, 2013), 89-101. See also: D.N. Jeans, "The Impress of Central Authority", in Powell and Williams, *Australian Space, Australian Time*, 10.

population, which would otherwise stagnate and decay British profits.⁶⁰ Wakefield outlined his plan as a ‘self-regulating action’, whereby the concentrated sale of colonial lands at an unspecified ‘sufficient price’ (rather than granted away for nothing) would give the land value, attract British capital, and create a fund to support the emigration of the industrious poor who would work the land, further stimulating value.⁶¹ Slow upward social mobility was the ultimate aim, in a potentially limitless cycle Wakefield described as ‘restriction, anticipation and free migration’.⁶²

There remained a conservative or ‘moral’ dimension to Wakefield’s scheme, traces of oak in his machine. Concentration would curtail the ‘barbaric’ meandering of settlers as he thought was happening in America, and transplant the structure of English agrarian society. He later described his theory as a revival of the ‘lost art of colonization’.⁶³ Here, Wakefield was engaging a long-standing debate on the impacts of territorial imperialism on English liberties at home, an early variation on the ‘liberal’ theory of empire.⁶⁴ Making colonies self-regulating would curb the corrupting effects of empire, limiting the opportunities for militaristic adventurism or the overseas self-aggrandisement of Britain’s ruling classes. Yet in presupposing the tripartite Ricardian sociology of landowner, capitalist and labourer, Wakefield also projected something

⁶⁰ Donald Winch has noted that ‘it would have been possible to construct a case for colonization on Ricardian lines. Take Ricardo’s line: “if with ever accumulation of capital we could tack a piece of fertile land to our Island, profits would never fall.” Colonies thus become a place where the return of British capital and labour in agriculture is higher than at home. Wakefield choose not to follow this line because he wished to undermine the foundation of the Ricardian attitude to capital accumulation.’ *Classical Political Economy and Colonies* (Cambridge University Press, 1966), 77. See also the discussion in Chapter Seven.

⁶¹ Edward Gibbon Wakefield, *England and America: A Comparison of the Social and Political State of Both Nations*. Vol. II. (London: R. Bentley, 1833), 193.

⁶² Edward Gibbon Wakefield, *Letter from Sydney* (London: Longmans, 1929 [1829]), 80-2. No ‘labourer would be able to procure land until he had worked for money’, but once he was a ‘land-owner, would, by purchasing land, provide a fund for bringing fresh labour to the colony’. Wakefield, *England and America*, II, 192.

⁶³ Edward Gibbon Wakefield, *A View of the Art of Colonization, in letters between a statesman and a colonist* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914 [1949]).

⁶⁴ On this debate, see: Miles Taylor, “Imperium et Libertas? Rethinking the Radical Critique of Imperialism during the Nineteenth Century,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 19, no. 1 (January 1, 1991): 1-23. Although she does not discuss him, in this sense Wakefield fits with the intellectual tradition identified by Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). Duncan Bell has recognised the influence of Wakefield on J.S. Mill’s ideas about colonisation, whom Pitt does discuss at length, but concluded Wakefield’s ‘conception of colonisation was ultimately more conservative than Mill. He wanted to transpose hierarchical British social relations on to the colonies, recasting the new societies in the image of the old’. Duncan Bell, “John Stuart Mill on Colonies,” *Political Theory* 38, no. 1 (February 1, 2010): 34-64.

thoroughly modern. Karl Marx later thought Wakefield had confessed the inner workings of capitalist production.⁶⁵

Several historians have recently emphasised that Wakefield's views were not novel but reflected a range of emerging ideas about empire, emigration and population.⁶⁶ But Wakefield's chief talents were synthesis and self-promotion. He received support from Bentham, whom he admired, and J.S. Mill, as well as parliamentary support of Philosophical Radicals, including Molesworth, that later culminated in projects in South Australia, parts of Canada and New Zealand. There were also detractors. Malthusians doubted the long-term efficacy of using emigration to offset population increase, while the prominent political economist J.R. McCulloch feared imposing an artificial price on land would oblige 'colonists to employ their capital less advantageously than they otherwise might do'.⁶⁷ More generally, John Crawford, writing in the *Westminster Review*, dismissed the plan as sophistry:

The new hypothesis has as usual produced the necessity of inventing a new language, and the initiated have frequent recourse to such phrases as the following; - 'In order to promote the greatest prosperity to all classes, land, labour and capital, ought to be combined in proper proportion;' - 'cutting up capital and labour in to small unproductive proportion;' - 'the evils of a superabundance of land;' - 'arrangements for preserving constancy and combination of labour;' - 'productiveness of industry arising from a due proportion amongst the elements of wealth;' - 'establishing the desires and powers of society.' To the moderately considerate and acute, such

⁶⁵ Marx thought it 'the great merit of E.G. Wakefield to have discovered, not something new *about* colonies, but, *in* the colonies, the truth about capitalist relations in the mother country ... He has discovered that capital is not a thing, but a social relation between persons which is mediated through things'. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 1 (London: Penguin, 1990), 932. Others have noted he anticipated Lenin's claim imperialism was the highest form of capitalist expansion On Wakefield-Lenin, H.O. Pappe, "Wakefield and Marx," *Economic History Review* 4, no. 1 (1951): 91. For the most recent reappraisal of the Wakefield-Marx connection, see: Gabriel Piterberg and Lorenzo Veracini, "Wakefield, Marx, and the World Turned inside out," *Journal of Global History* 10, no.3 (2015): 457-478.

⁶⁶ Robert Grant has argued Wakefield's theory was a 'a careful decoction of exiting ideas, practices and proposals tailed in earlier nineteenth-century British writings on the Cape, Australia, Canada and America': "Edward Gibbon Wakefield, England and 'ignorant, Dirty, Unsocial ... Restless, More than Half-Savage' America," *Comparative American Studies An International Journal* 1, no. 4 (2003): 471-487.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Winch, *Colonies*, 125-6. See also: R. N. Ghosh, "Malthus on Emigration and Colonization: Letters to Wilmot-Horton," *Economica* 30, no. 117 (1963): 45-62; Bernard Semmel, *The rise of free trade imperialism: classical political economy, the Empire of free trade and imperialism, 1750-1850* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 115-17.

expressions will appear little better than so many incarnations of exploded fallacies and antiquated wrongs.⁶⁸

Yet Crawford's critique was prescient. It was precisely Wakefield's 'invented' language that was of enduring significance, equipping authorities with a vocabulary that organised colonies as economic entities. The Ricardian economic metaphors of 'distribution' and 'proportion', which Crawford eagerly satirised, underpinned Wakefield's entire system. It did so in two senses. First, it reimagined the relationship between metropole and colonies as a singular wealth-generating community to be optimally configured by treating the abundance of colonial land as sites of investable 'relief' for excessive metropolitan capital and labour. The 'miserable labouring classes of Britain' could be redistributed to fill 'the vacuum' of employment in colonies and absorb capital that was 'employed with little or no profit' in Britain.⁶⁹ Second, the language of 'proportion' reframed colonies' internal relations as communities constituted by 'capitalists' and 'labourers'. Critiquing Smith's idea that 'new countries' were prosperous because of their abundant land, Wakefield argued colonial prosperity was a function of the relative proportioning of capital to labour that went out to new territories together over time. To harness the available land, colonies would 'advance' only so long as this 'ratio' was maintained. To 'miss this ratio either way', Wakefield wrote in 1837, was to fall into one of two 'evils', either an under-peopled country with a scratched surface and scattered population, or an over-peopled country with depressed wages, reduced prices, and insufficient crop to 'feed the people'.⁷⁰ The 'main object' of this balancing and calculating, Wakefield explained in his earliest writings, was 'the greatest division of labour; the greatest production; the utmost excess of production over consumption; the greatest accumulation of wealth – in other words, the utmost prosperity of the colony – the greatest progress of colonization'.⁷¹

While there is no clear evidence the Colonial Office were in conversation with Wakefield, there is every indication he had the attention of Lord Howick, Goderich's parliamentary under-

⁶⁸ *Westminster Review*, Oct 1834, No XLII, 443-444.

⁶⁹ Wakefield, *Letter from Sydney*, 82. 86.

⁷⁰ "New Theory of Colonization", *Edinburgh Review*, July 1840, Vol. 71, 292. Extracts of this article were republished in *SMH*, 20 March 1843, 2.

⁷¹ Wakefield, *Sketch of a proposal for colonizing Australia*, 21.

secretary for colonies.⁷² From late 1830, Wakefield developed his ideas in a series of “Letters on Colonies” in the *Spectator*, which he addressed to Howick, whom Goderich had just instructed to review colonial land and emigration policy. It was Howick who then drafted Goderich’s famous despatches of January and February 1831, which outlined the new land regulations.⁷³ It is worth recalling these at length, noting the semantic changes in reframing the aims of colonial settlement.

The despatches began by outlining the deficiencies of the existing grants system. Agriculture lagged, large tracts were falling to speculators, quit-rents produced no revenue, and Darling was constantly charged with favouritism. The present regulations only attracted ‘Persons of more or less capital’ to the colony, which extended cultivation but with no ‘demand for their produce’. High grain prices, demand for labour, and want of consumers all indicated there were too many growers spread too thinly. Moreover, Goderich went on:

In ... considering Emigration as a means of relieving the Mother Country, it is quite clear that no such relief can possibly be afforded by the mere removal of Capitalists ... it is the emigration of the unemployed British Labourers, which would be of real and essential service [to Britain] ... It also appears that this would be the most useful class of Emigrants ... as regards the colony, [judging] from the extreme difficulty which is now complained of in obtaining Labourers, and the competition for the services of Convicts ... [The aim is to] encourage the formation of a class of labourers for hire ... [thereby] enabling the Agriculturalist to apply the great principle of the division of labour, [so] his produce will be increased and afforded at a more reasonable rate.⁷⁴

Land auctions were to be the mechanism by which these interlinked goals were achieved. ‘I rather look to it [land] as a resource, which will hereafter become available for the purpose of maintaining free labourers,’ Goderich later wrote to Darling.⁷⁵ Or as Howick put it in a letter to Treasury, which would be oft-reproduced by colonists: ‘The funds derived from this source should be looked upon, not as forming a part of the income of the colony and available for the

⁷² Lord Howick was Henry Grey, son of the reforming Prime Minister Charles Grey, 2nd Earl Grey (1830-34). Henry assumed the title 3rd Earl Grey in 1845 and was himself Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, 1846 to 1852.

⁷³ Burroughs, *Britain and Australia, 1831-1855*, 39, 44-46.

⁷⁴ Goderich to Darling, 9 January 1831, *HRA* 1:16, 20-21.

⁷⁵ Goderich to Darling, 23 January 1831, *HRA* 1:16, 36.

purpose of meeting its annual expense, but as capital which should not be permanently sunk, but invested to produce a profitable return'.⁷⁶ Where Darling and Murray had framed land settlement as a problem of sovereign discretion only a year earlier, imperial authorities now interpreted colonial land as a site to configure 'ratios' of capital and labour.

As an imperial 'policy', these despatches signified a tentative, and in some respects, unsuccessful experiment in readjusting colonial waste land to problems of regional distress in England that followed the Napoleonic Wars. Systematic emigration did not begin immediately (see Chapter Six) and concentrated settlement by auction was almost immediately stymied by pastoralists moving their flocks and 'squatting' on lands well beyond the Nineteen Counties (see Chapter Five). Yet these despatches reflected more than policy, but the emergence of a new governable language, looping a theoretical imagining into an empirical, governable reality.

The consolidation of this language was not achieved through Goderich's despatches alone, but the contagious repetition of such terms in further communications, inquiries and reports. The most significant was the 1836 *Report from the Select Committee on Disposal of Colonial Waste Lands*. The report included almost one hundred pages of testimonial evidence from Wakefield and the political economist Robert Torrens, in which Wakefield managed to reduce his theory into the simple maxim that 'just' colonisation was best regulated when 'land was disposed of in proportion to the number of people brought out to the colony'.⁷⁷ Drawing on these figures of speech, the committee's final report instigated a new narrative of the history and purposes of colonial land settlement. Without reference to the aims of commonwealth, oak and order that had concerned Redesdale and early governors, the report now denominated that settlement prior 1831 had been 'fluctuating and various', and 'productive of little advantage to the State, and often injurious to the Colonists themselves'. The irrational alienation of 'vast tracts of waste land' had only interrupted 'the progress of cultivation and improvement'. Against this, the report recommended 'Lord Ripon's Regulations' be 'affirmed by an Act of Legislature, in order to give this Principle a character of permanency and stability'. Such legislation would be

⁷⁶ Lord Howick to J. Stewart, 16 July 1831, "Royal Instructions to Governors of New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land and W. Australia for disposing of Crown Lands," *BPP 1831*, xix (328), 15.

⁷⁷ Evidence, Edward Gibbon Wakefield 22 June 1836, *BPP 1836*, xi (512), 44.

passed with the 1842 *Land Sales Act*, but the ‘permanency and stability’ of this formulation was consolidated by the report itself: ‘the net proceeds of Land Sales in those Colonies ... should be employed as an Emigration Fund; each colony being furnished with emigrant labour in exact proportion to the amount of its own Land Sales’. Facilitating the transfer of ‘superabundant supply’ of English labour to colonial lands, would ‘enhance, incalculably, the prosperity of the Untied Empire’.⁷⁸

The same formulations were rehearsed in an appendix to Lord Durham’s 1839 *Report on the Affairs of British North America* on Canadian land policy, which was likely written by Wakefield who had accompanied Durham on his inquiry to the Canadas. In 1840, following another recommendation of the 1836 report, Parliament established the indicatively-named Colonial Land and Emigration Commission, – one its three commissioners being Torrens – to institutionalise ‘theory’ into bureaucratic practice.⁷⁹ In this way, the ‘principles’ conjoining land, capital, and labour came to saturate every imperial thought about land settlement, both at the Colonial Office, and increasingly in the colony.

Debating Proportion I: Towards a Public Debt

At this point we reach a crucial juncture not only in the economisation of colonial land, but the historical consolidation of the economic category more generally. In Chapter Two it was argued that nineteenth-century government commissions, inquiries, and correspondence possessed distinctive capacities to construct public problems, canonise social categories and enact metaphors as ‘official’ frameworks of government. It was through these mediums, I argued that the language of political economy consolidated governable realities in Britain after 1820. In Chapter Three, with particular reference to Molesworth’s 1838 transportation report, I began to demonstrate how this process ‘played out’ in New South Wales, not through the singular narrative the report imposed, but because colonists recognised themselves in the report and appropriated

⁷⁸ *BPP 1836*, xi (512), 502-3. In his evidence to this committee, Wakefield reduced his theory into a simple maxim: ‘just’ colonization was best regulated when ‘land was disposed of in proportion to the number of people brought out to the colony’. Evidence, Edward Gibbon Wakefield, 22 June 1836, *BPP 1836* xi (512), 44.

⁷⁹ The Colonial Land and Emigration Commission is discussed in greater length in Chapter Six.

its frames of reference to justify their own ends. This relates to what Quentin Skinner has termed ‘the phenomenon of rhetorical redescription’, whereby political agents are largely constrained (unless they turn to violence) to legitimate their actions or arguments by utilising the dominant moral and political languages that structure a political discourse within a community.⁸⁰ As the metaphors of political economy increasingly structured imperial discourse, were colonists required to appropriate these metaphors for their own ends. In this way, they partook in consolidating the ‘economic’ as a domain of argument and justification.

Colonial land settlement offers further scope to study the dynamics of ‘rhetorical description’. The Ripon Regulations generated two major controversies among colonists in New South Wales. The first fixed on how land revenues should be best appropriated, whether exclusively on emigration, as the regulations stipulated, or for other purposes such as building roads and bridges. The second controversy, which erupted after the passing of the 1842 Land Sales Act, debated at what price, if any, colonial land should be sold. While there were residual traces of landed ‘oak’ in some contributions to these debates, colonists of different persuasions all increasingly justified their own visions for land settlement by appropriating the language of the 1831 despatches and 1836 *Report* and construct rival configurations of the economic community. The next two sections of this chapter explore these debates, mapping the enlarging dimensions of an emergent colonial economic discourse and examining how these narratives constituted new material realities: first in the formation of a public debt, and second, in price mechanisms – sale, leases and licences – that reappraised social relations as economic relations.

The Ripon Regulations excited controversy in the colony from the moment their details were leaked to the colonial press, two months before the official announcement of the policy in July 1831. At public meetings and in petitions, landed elites protested that land ought to be ‘given according to the settler’s rank in life’.⁸¹ Colonial reactions to the regulations intensified as

⁸⁰ Skinner also writes of ‘rhetorical manipulation’ and ‘rhetorical strategies’. See: Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics. Volume One: Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 149-151, 178-9.

⁸¹ The leak appeared in the *Sydney Monitor*, 11 June 1831, 2. These regulations were made public in the *Sydney Herald* July 1831, 2, and regulations were published in the *Sydney Herald*, 2 August 1831, 1, *Sydney Monitor*, 6 August 1831, 3, and *Sydney Herald*, 8 August 1831, 1, which included examples of the form to be used by settlers when applying to government for a portion of land to be surveyed and put up for auction. The regulations involved a protracted process that began with selecting a section of land, informing surveyor-general’s office who would in turn eventually plot the selected block, which could

government began to accumulate a new source of revenue through the land sales, raising a novel set of questions over who ought to control this public money, the Colonial Office or the local legislature. Australian historians have long recognised that debate over controlling this ‘land fund’, as colonists called it, was a pivotal constitutional dispute between colonists and the imperial government in the years before self-government.⁸² Less attention has been paid to the related but distinct debate *within* the colony over how revenues ought to be spent. There were two lines of argument, in which all revenue should be committed to funding the immigration of British labourers, or all land revenues should be committed to funding local public works. There was also a third and middle option of raising a public debt on the security of land that would guarantee regular funds for immigration, deferring the ‘export’ of capital to Britain. Crucially, all three positions claimed to optimise the proportioning of capital to labour, restoring the original Wakefieldian formulation of ‘land’ as site of economic calculation. In this way, these debates also began to fashion a set of distinctive ‘economic’ interests in the colony, linked to the calculus of profits and wages. While not as clearly defined as the schisms over pricing land in the 1840s, landowners and pastoralists tended to promote committing land revenue to immigration as a means of regulating wages, while those sympathetic to emancipists and poorer immigrants sought investment in public works for their employment.

The first line of argument, that revenues should be dedicated to importing British labourers, was to maintain the orthodox Wakefieldian position. Prominent landed and pastoral colonists, including Wentworth, were alarmed by the Colonial Office’s instruction to Governor Bourke in 1834 to appropriate some of the new land revenue to pay for policing, gaols, and convict establishments. At first, the Legislative Council attacked this on purely constitutional grounds as a ‘misappropriation’ of funds which Goderich had specifically designated for immigration,

take three months to three years, before it was then publically advertised for and subsequently put to auction. As such, the original applicant who had wanted to purchase the plot faced a long lead time in finalising their purchase, and was in no ways guaranteed of success. For initial attacks by colonists, see: *Sydney Gazette*, 26 November 1831, 2.

⁸² For the development of the constitutional disputes over land revenue, see: Circular Dispatch, 3 March 1832, CO 324/105; Bourke to Stanley, 3 July 1834, *HRA* 1:17, 475; Gipps to Stanley, enclosure 4, 30 September 1844, *HRA* 1:23, 820-829; A. C. V. Melbourne, *Early Constitutional Development in Australia: New South Wales 1788-1856* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1963 [1934]), 177-187.

smacking of imperial overreach.⁸³ Colonists shifted their critique onto a more distinctive economic terrain following the publication of the 1836 House of Commons *Report*, which equipped them with a new set of arguments to attack misappropriation. ‘Immigration should be continued, yearly, to the extent of the whole Revenue arising from the Sale of Crown Lands’, recommended the 1837 Select Committee on Immigration, echoing the Commons *Report*, ‘otherwise the Colony will retrograde rather than advance in prosperity’.⁸⁴ With the cessation of transportation in 1840, pastoralist interest in immigration intensified. An 1840 committee recommended maximising immigration so as to ‘rectify this disproportion’ between labour from capital, which seemingly loomed with the end of convict arrivals.⁸⁵

In this context, the ‘Land Fund’ was objectified as a measure of rationalised settlement, which, as the 1842 Committee on Immigration envisaged, had an elegant, self-sufficiency, ‘upon the productiveness of the Land Fund depends the continuance of Immigration, and the continuance of Immigration is indispensable for the welfare of the Colony’. This forward-moving motion could be depicted graphically, as in a table drawn up by the Audit Office (**figure 4.1**), giving the land fund a self-determining dynamic so there appeared, as one newspaper interpreted, a ‘natural and necessary connexion between the sale of Waste Lands’ and ‘immediate Immigration’.⁸⁶ On this view, land and labour were conceived as regulated by laws transcending governmental design. Any interference with this motion, wrote the *Herald* in 1842, such as expending land revenues on surveys, police or public works, was ‘objectionable on two distinct grounds’: on ‘principles of constitutional balance’, and ‘principles of political economy’.⁸⁷ In such instances, the ‘economic’ was incrementally reified as a distinctive domain of argument and justification. Goderich’s regulations, Howick’s letter to Treasury, Wakefield’s 1836 *Edinburgh*

⁸³ Spring-Rice to Bourke, 15 November 1834, *HRA*, 1:17, 577. For development of opposition to appropriation for police and goals: Bourke to Glenelg, 12 August 1835, *HRA* 1:18, 71; 18 September 1835, *HRA* 1:18, 104. For protest meetings against appropriation of land revenue for police and goals: *Australian*, 28 August 1834; 29 August 1834 July 3 and 7, 1835.

⁸⁴ “Report from the Committee on Immigration”, *V&P LCNSW 1838*, 1, 3.

⁸⁵ “Report from the Committee on Immigration”, *V&P LCNSW 1840*, 1.

⁸⁶ *Colonist*, 16 May 1840, 2; See also: *Colonial Gazette*, 6 January 1841, and reprinted by *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 June 1841, 2, which argued the land fund should be fixed to emigration ‘in order to preserve agreement between quantities so intimately related to each other’.

⁸⁷ *Sydney Herald*, 21 July 1842, 2. The editorial continued: ‘The received doctrine of modern colonization is, that land and labour are *capital* and general revenue part of its profits’, to be reinvested for productive means and not sunk in expenses (the article continued by reciting Howick’s 1831 letter to Treasury).

YEAR.	PROCEEDS OF THE SALE OF		Number of Immigrants brought to the Colony at the Public Expense.				CHARGES ON THE FUND ARISING FROM THE SALE OF CROWN LANDS.						REMARKS.										
	LAND, INCLUDING TOWN AND SUBURBAN ALLOTMENTS.	Adults.			Total No. of Immigrants.	Immigration, including Quarantine.	Department of Survey.	One-third of the Expense of the Treasury and Audit Office.	Aborigines, including one-half of the Expense of the Border Police.	TOTAL CHARGES.													
		Male.	Female.	Children.																			
											£	s.		d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1832	12509	13	10	137	441	204	782	5293	4	11½	11755	9	0½	1451	1	8	1138	2	2½	19637	17	10½	The charges for Immigration include the sum of £10,840, paid as Out-fits, and for Passages to 60 Clergymen and 26 Teachers, who are not included in the number of other Immigrants. The Total number of 51,736 is exclusive of the Immigrants for whom Bounties were refused. Of the Total charges the sum of £48,760 was paid for in Land and Immigration Debentures, the redemption of which is still to be provided for. The charges for Immigration and Survey alone exceed the Total Proceeds of the Land Fund during the period specified, by £39,747 13s. 1½d. The payments by the Colonial Agent General, from 1st January to 30th June, 1842, have not been notified.
1833	24956	1	1	180	507	344	1031	10759	8	8½	12562	4	2½	1340	9	7	773	19	9	25436	2	3	
1834	41844	9	1	30	519	93	642	7902	4	5½	12400	0	9½	1474	5	8	942	0	9	22718	11	7½	
1835	80784	14	6	53	524	122	699	11437	14	10½	11218	16	10	1591	12	3	1325	17	9½	25574	1	9	
1836	126458	16	0	63	564	116	743	11894	11	11½	14003	7	10½	1768	16	0	1416	8	7½	29083	4	5½	
1837	120187	12	5	664	811	885	2360	59070	6	9½	17350	2	9½	1659	4	11½	2884	11	11½	80964	6	5½	
1838	116324	18	11	1692	1673	2750	6115	147613	12	11	20096	1	8	1770	11	5	4786	1	7	174266	7	7	
1839	152962	16	4	2862	2779	2698	8339	155576	15	1½	19112	4	0½	2140	14	8	10712	18	11	187542	12	9	
1840	316626	7	5	2548	2761	1366	6675	111694	3	8½	22197	9	9	2465	9	7	14626	4	10½	150983	7	11½	
1841	90387	16	10	7124	7692	4180	18996	322226	16	10½	27407	17	2	2470	14	6	18950	11	7½	371056	0	2½	
1842	7540	10	9	2068	2180	1106	5354	107772	17	0	10985	18	9	1195	4	9	5540	3	10	125494	4	4	
Totals.	1090583	17	2	17421	20451	13864	51736	951241	17	4½	179089	12	10½	19328	5	0½	63097	2	0	1212756	17	3½	

Audit Office, Sydney,
New South Wales,
7th September, 1842,
WM. LITHGOW,
Auditor-General.

Figure 4.1 RETURN of REVENUE arising from the Sale of Crown Lands, and the amount paid for Immigration, and for other service chargeable thereon, for the period from 1st January 1832 to 30th June 1842, specifying the number of Immigrants brought out at the public expense during the same period. "Report from the Select Committee on Immigration", V&P NSW 1842, 355.

Review piece, and the 1836 *Report* on waste lands were all reprinted in colonial select committees, petitions and the press to espouse the necessity of honouring such 'economic' principles.⁸⁸

Responding to this orthodox position propagated by pastoralist elites, a second line of argument took a different view, positing that committing land revenue to immigration in fact short-circuited the prosperity it was supposed to stimulate. 'The self-supporting system of Mr. Wakefield, however genius', wrote William Bland, a prominent emancipist doctor, only 'exported [capital] from that part of the Empire where it is the most wanted, to that where it most abounds'. Capital was 'exhausted in the mere supply of labour', with nothing left to support it.⁸⁹ Rather, Bland argued, the 'Land-Fund' should be invested not in immigration but public works, keeping

⁸⁸ For example: *Emigration to New South Wales: The Petition of Merchants, Shop Owners, Bankers and Traders of the City of London and other interested in the prosperity of the Colonies of Australia* (London, 1840); *Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser*, 9 November 1838, 2; *Colonist*, 24 November 1838, 2; *Colonist*, 18 December 1839, 2; *Sydney Herald*, 25 May 1840, 2; *Sydney Herald*, 27 July 1841, 2; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 September 1842, 2; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 September 1842, 4 (Quoting *Colonial Gazette*, April, No II).

⁸⁹ Australian Patriotic Association, *Letter from the Australian Patriotic Association, to C. Buller, Jun. Esq. M.P., In Reply to His Communication of July and August 1840*. (Sydney: James Tegg, 1841). The same argument had earlier been articulated earlier in Thomas Bannister, *A Letter on Colonial Labour, and on the Sale of Lands in Austral-Asia Addressed to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State of the Colonies* (Hobart Town: N. Olding, 1833), 15. However it only gained purchase around the depression years.

capital in the colony to employ immigrants as they arrived. Meanwhile, the cost of evacuating the unemployed English poor should be entirely funded by the parent state, he added. In this way, the ‘Land-Fund’ was imagined as stimulating not a two-way dynamic between land and labour, but operating all three components of production.⁹⁰ This view gained currency in the context of the 1841-3 ‘commercial embarrassment’, which colonists interpreted primarily as a problem of ‘monetary confusion’ and capital shortage.⁹¹ ‘It has been forgotten that capital and labour, as elements of colonisation should exist in proportion to each other,’ the Whig T.A. Murray wrote in his 1843 *Report from the Select Committee on the Land Sales Act*. ‘It was a fatal mistake to send the one *out* of the country, in order to bring the other *in*’.⁹² While there was, then, a clear divergence on how land revenues should be spent, significantly, both arguments turned on the language of ratio, proportions, and distribution.

A third line of argument proposed to mediate these positions by raising a public debt on the security of future land sales to fund emigration. A debt, advocates argued, would supply constant finance that intermittent land sales could not guarantee, enabling capitalists to improve existing properties with the assurance of incoming labourers without needing to constantly invest in more land.⁹³ A public debt was, of course, no new innovation of the nineteenth century. The

⁹⁰ Bland advocated a system of ‘Colonial endowments, which was equally applicable to every town that might be incorporated ... a fund which would ensure abundant employment to every immigrant that the parent could send to us.’ In effect, Britain would pay for emigration but, according to Bland, gain ‘ten times its original bulk, by the addition of a thousand tributaries, derived in its course from productive industry. *Expenditure of the Land-Fund of New South Wales in the Colony, and Principally on Public Works* (Sydney: D.L. Welch, 1842). Goodwin has described this ‘in effect a mercantilist argument, that any reduction in the domestic circulating medium was a national calamity’, however this is to misrecognise the nature of the argument Bland was launching, which was about the productively conjoining capital and labour. Goodwin, *Economic Enquiry in Australia*, 66. This is reinforced by the response Bland’s pamphlet drew from the new CLEC, which issued a statement offering a counter calculation: it was ‘utterly vain to expect capitalist’ to invest money in the ‘waste and desert lands of Australia ... unless a pledge, on which they can reply, by given’ that all proceeds of ‘land-sales will be employed in supplying population’. J.F. Eliot, Robert Torrens, E.E. Villiers, *On the Appropriation of the Proceeds of Sales of Public Waste Lands* (London: Fisher, Son and Co., 1842).

⁹¹ See J.D. Lang’s discussion in Chapter One; and Chapter Five.

⁹² “Report from Select Committee on Land Sales Act”, *V&P LCNSW 1843*, 4, emphasis original. See also: “Report from Select Committee on Immigration”, *V&P LCNSW 1843*, 5; “Report from the Select Committee on Immigration”, *V&P LCNSW 1845*, 605; *Australian*, 9 June 1948, 2.

⁹³ For official correspondence tracking these developments, see: Gipps to Glenelg, 31 October 1831, *HRA* 1:19, 638-42; Normanby to Gipps 28 May 1839, *HRA* 1:20, 176-179; Gipps to Normanby, 22 November 1839, *HRA* 1:20, 397-399; Russell to Gipps, 20 June 1840, *HRA* 1:20, 674-683; Gipps to Stanley, 31 August 1841, *HRA* 1:21, 486-87; Gipps to Stanley, 2 November 1841, *HRA* 1:21, 574-577; Gipps to Stanley, 23 December 1841, *HRA* 1:21, 605-6; Stanley to Gipps, 29 July 1842, *HRA* 1:22, 166-68; Stanley to Gipps, 17 September 1843, *HRA* 1:23, 137-148; Gipps to Stanley, 27 December 1844, *HRA* 1:24, 148-9; Fitz Roy to Grey, 30 January 1847, *HRA* 1:25, 332-36; Grey to Fitz Roy, 30 August 1847, *HRA* 1:25, 728-31; Grey to Fitz Roy, 18 December 1847, *HRA* 1:26, 104-9.

invention of the National Debt with the establishment of the Bank of England in 1694 to fund Britain's international wars that followed the Glorious Revolution, was one of the constituting institutions of the eighteenth-century 'fiscal military state'.⁹⁴ But, for some of the reasons encapsulated in the critique of speculating 'commercial man' discussed in Chapter Two, the National Debt ignited an enduring moral and political controversy. Critics argued trade in government stocks unleashed the destructive forces of patronage, passion, and fantasy that corrupted government and decayed virtue, while its defenders argued it won wars, made peace prosperous and demanded *credible* behaviour, confirming old virtues. These controversies remained current in Britain well into the nineteenth century.⁹⁵ In New South Wales, they would be largely circumvented by framing the debt as a mechanism for regulating 'proportion'.

Australian colonists had followed with interest the growth of a public debt in Upper Canada since 1822 to pay for militia and public services.⁹⁶ When first introducing plans for their own debt, Bishop Broughton, author of the 1838 *Report from the Committee on Immigration*, was careful to distinguish the function of debt in New South Wales from that precedent. While 'the establishment of a public debt appears *prima facie* objectionable', he added:

It is one thing to borrow for the military or political service of a nation, from which no direct return of wealth is to be derived; but a widely different thing to borrow for the purpose of expenditure

⁹⁴ The most comprehensive background to England's Public Debt remains: P. G. M. Dickson, *The Financial Revolution in England: A Study in the Development of Public Credit, 1688-1756* (London: Macmillan, 1967). Its intellectual and moral significance were seminally discussed in: J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975), Chapters 16 and 17. On debt and the 'fiscal-military state', see: John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688-1783*. (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989). For a broader imperial perspective, see: Daniel Carey and Christopher J. Finlay (eds.), *The Empire of Credit: The Financial Revolution in Britain, Ireland, and America, 1688-1815* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2011).

⁹⁵ Martin Daunt, *Trusting Leviathan: The Politics of Taxation in Britain, 1799-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 109-35.

⁹⁶ P. Baskerville, *Bank of Upper Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), lxvi; Michael J. Piva, "Financing the Union: The Upper Canadian Debt and Financial Administration in the Canadas, 1837-1845," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 25, no. 4 (1991): 82-98. On New South Wales' commentary on these developments, see: "Report from Committee on Immigration", *V&P LCNSW 1845*, 607; "Report from Committee on Immigration", *V&P LCNSW 1847*, II, 273. Moreover, the South Australian Act (4-5 Wm. IV, c. xci, passed on 15 August 1834), authority was given for raising £200,000 by debentures to be known as 'South Australian Colonial Revenue Securities', for the purpose of paying the expenditure incurred in founding the colony of South Australia. This appears not to have been commented upon. See *HRA* 1:18, note 189.

upon territorial improvements, wherein every pound that is expended must almost unavoidably by retuned with amenable increase.⁹⁷

From the outset, then, the colonial public debt was registered as a mechanism for wealth-accumulating ‘investment’ rather than national defence, a notion that turned on the idea that land could be mobilised as a ‘capital fund’, to use Howick’s term.⁹⁸ While the debt again found support from the same pastoralists who wished the land fund to be committed to immigration, it is important to note the idea was first proposed by the merchant Thomas Walker, actively seeking new investment opportunities in the growing colony. William Bland critiqued this proposal, too, arguing a debt would require taxes to service it and similarly siphon capital away from productive public works, just as colonial-funded migration did.⁹⁹ But it is important to note both the proposal for a debt and Bland’s critique operated within the same framework of regulating a distribution of productive agencies. Advocates for a public debt could therefore respond to Bland’s criticisms by arguing the risks of capital export was averted because the debt would be serviced by future land sales, not taxes. Like the self-regulating ‘connexion’ between land sales and migration, a similarly self-sustaining cycle could be tabulated between debt, immigration and land sales (**figure 4.2**). In this way, a public debt, an 1847 immigration committee report concluded, was ‘the only possible means by which Mr. E.G. Wakefield’s theory of colonisation could be exemplified’.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ “Report from Committee on Immigration”, *V&P LCNSW 1838*, 15. See also: “Report from the Committee on the Debenture Bill”, *V&P LCNSW 1841*, 321-363.

⁹⁸ This willingness to mobilise land as a security for public investment parallels with the 1843 Liens on Wool Act as discussed in Chapter Five which took wool, rather than landed property, to be the premier security in the colony. Both instances reflect the diminishing social and political significance of land in colonial life, which A.R. Buck has traced in his account of the novelties of Australian property law. See: Buck, *Making of Australian Property Law*.

⁹⁹ William Bland, *Objections to the Project of His Excellency Sir George Gipps, for Raising a Loan to be secured on the Ordinary Revenue of the Colony* (Sydney: James Tegg, 1842), 4. See also: *Australasian Chronicle*, 7 Dec 1841, 2; 23 December 1841, 2; *Sydney Free Press*, 4 December 1841, 2. Governor Gipps hesitated over the risks posed by ‘factitious wealth’ generated by government loans or bonds, however did later concede, with ‘greatest reluctance’, that a ‘continued supply of Immigrants is so essential to the welfare of the Colony, that every other consideration must be made to yield to the necessity of procuring them’. Gipps to Glenelg, 31 October 1838, *HRA* 1:19, 642; Gipps to Marquess of Normbandry, 22 November 1839, *HRA* 1:20, 397-99

¹⁰⁰ “Report from the Committee on Immigration”, *V&P LCNSW 1847*, 273. In the same passage, an April 1843 speech in the House of Commons by Charles Buller, the parliamentary agent for New South Wales and an associate of the Wakefieldian Colonial Reformers was quoted: ‘A debt ... contracted for such a purpose is not unproductive waste of capital, such as our national Debt, nor is it to be likened to the debts of individuals contracted for the enjoyment of the moment. It is rather to be compared to those debts

ESTIMATE for accelerating IMMIGRATION TO NEW SOUTH WALES, by raising, on the Security of the Crown Land Revenue, the Sum of Two Millions, by Loans, during the next Eight Years of £250,000 annually, payable in Twenty-five Years from the date of each Loan, shewing the number of Immigrants who might thereby be introduced, as well as the Annual Charge for Interest and for providing a Sinking Fund to extinguish the Loans in the period specified.

Year.	Amount of Loans.	Number of Immigrants for introducing whom, the Loans would be adequate at £20 for each.	CHARGES.		Total Annual Charge for Interest and Sinking Fund.	Remarks.
			Interest at 5 per cent.	To provide a Sinking Fund, at 1 per cent. on the amount, the Loans to accumulate at 10 per cent.		
	£.		£.	£.	£.	
1840	250,000	12,500	12,500	2,500	15,000	
1841	250,000	12,500	25,000	5,000	30,000	
1842	250,000	12,500	37,500	7,500	45,000	
1843	250,000	12,500	50,000	10,000	60,000	
1844	250,000	12,500	62,500	12,500	75,000	
1845	250,000	12,500	75,000	15,000	90,000	
1846	250,000	12,500	87,500	17,500	105,000	
1847	250,000	12,500	100,000	20,000	120,000	
1848	.....	.....	100,000	20,000	120,000	
1849	.....	.....	100,000	20,000	120,000	
1850	.....	.....	100,000	20,000	120,000	
1851	.....	.....	100,000	20,000	120,000	
1852	.....	.....	100,000	20,000	120,000	
1853	.....	.....	100,000	20,000	120,000	
1854	.....	.....	100,000	20,000	120,000	
1855	.....	.....	100,000	20,000	120,000	
1856	.....	.....	100,000	20,000	120,000	
1857	.....	.....	100,000	20,000	120,000	
1858	.....	.....	100,000	20,000	120,000	
1859	.....	.....	100,000	20,000	120,000	
1860	.....	.....	100,000	20,000	120,000	
1861	.....	.....	100,000	20,000	120,000	
1862	.....	.....	100,000	20,000	120,000	
1863	.....	.....	100,000	20,000	120,000	
1864	.....	.....	100,000	20,000	120,000	
1865	.....	.....	87,500	17,500	105,000	1st Instalment, extinguished Dec. 31
1866	.....	.....	75,000	15,000	90,000	2nd Do. Do.
1867	.....	.....	62,500	12,500	75,000	3rd Do. Do.
1868	.....	.....	50,000	10,000	60,000	4th Do. Do.
1869	.....	.....	37,500	7,500	45,000	5th Do. Do.
1870	.....	.....	25,000	5,000	30,000	6th Do. Do.
1871	.....	.....	12,500	2,500	15,000	7th Do. Do.
Totals.	2,000,000	100,000	2,500,000	500,000	3,000,000	8th Do. Do.

Figure 4.2 “Estimates for accelerating Immigration to New South Wales, by raising on the Security of the Crown Land Revenue, the Sum of Two Millions ...”, Appendix I in “Report from the Committee on Immigration”, V&P LCNSW 1838, 33.

The language of ‘proportion’ was, then, employed to relocate the public debt from a political or moral conundrum, which threatened virtue and national cohesion, onto an economic calculus of investment and return. This was to tame the threats of an unknowable speculative future that critics of public debts had once argued risked political stability, to a scalable matrix on which colonial prosperity would be guaranteed. In the colonial context, the debt was almost instantly validated, a process which had taken over a century in Britain.

which wise landlords often deliberately contract, for the purpose of giving an additional value to their estates, or to the loans by which half the enterprises of trade are undertaken, and which are to be regarded as resources of future wealth, not embarrassment’.

Two kinds of debts had been originally proposed in 1838. These were debentures sold locally, and a much more expansive ‘loan’ raised from investors in Britain. The former was established as early as 1841, but the later did not begin until 1855, the final year the imperial government controlled colonial land revenues. In the intervening fourteen years, the debate over allocating land revenues as it played out in colonial immigration committees had normalised the debt as a practice of colonial statecraft. Borrowings expanded rapidly after self-government, funding not only immigration, but public works, especially railways.¹⁰¹ Leveraging debt and the language of ‘investment’ became a mainstay of colonial government.¹⁰²

Debating Proportion II: Prices, Leases, Licences

In the 1840s, the Ripon Regulations ignited a second debate, this time over the pricing of land. Again, this debate stemmed from imperial experimentation. As we have seen, Wakefield never specified at what ‘sufficient price’ lands should be sold. In New South Wales, the price had initially been set at 5s. per acre, but as population and land sales swelled during the 1830s, the Colonial Office was eager to raise the upset price of land ‘to give full effect to [Lord Ripon’s] principle’.¹⁰³ Governor Bourke had already unsuccessfully opposed raising the price from 5s. to 12s. per acre in the mid-1830s, arguing that competition not government ‘meddling’ motivated ‘an active and Commercial People’.¹⁰⁴ Imperial authorities clearly disagreed. In 1839, Gipps was instructed to increase the upset price to 12s. per acre and the following year, on the advice of the newly-established CLEC, Secretary of State Lord John Russell proposed to abolish auctions and fix the price at £1 per acre for all but the oldest districts. A fixed price, Russell enthused, was the

¹⁰¹ “Papers and correspondence between the Bank of New South Wales and Colonial Secretary relative to the development of this machinery are located in ‘Loan Fund - Debentures’, *V&P LCNSW 1856-7*, II, 1505.

¹⁰² P.N. Lamb, “Early Overseas Borrowing by the New South Wales Government,” *Business and Archives History* 4, no. 1 (1964): 44-62.

¹⁰³ Glenelg to Gipps, 9 August 1838, *HRA*, 1:19, 537.

¹⁰⁴ Glenelg to Bourke, 15 February 1837, *HRA* 1:18, 681; Bourke to Glenelg, 6 September 1837, *HRA* 1:19, 77. In this dispatch, Bourke also expressed concerns raising the price would altogether deter ‘Persons possessed of small capital’ from coming to the colony, as few had the means to purchase land at a greater rate than 5s. per acre. He also thought a lower upset price was the ‘safest check’ to extensive squatting: ‘The extent of their [squatters] purchases at the Government Sales corresponds with the prevalence of the latter motive, and it is easy to see that its influence must be weakened in proportion to the augmentation of the upset price’.

most ‘profitable’ and ‘safest’ mode for capitalists wishing to ‘invest in Land’.¹⁰⁵ This was based on estimations calculated by the CLEC of the public revenue, number of emigrants and rates of wages that different prices on land might realise. The Commissioners concluded a fixed £1 per acre would raise requisite funds to ‘serve due proportion between labour and Capital’ and achieve an ‘accumulating ratio of prosperity’.¹⁰⁶ To this, Gipps responded in memorandum with his own calculations. Gipps’ questioned the supposed ‘definable ration between Land and Labour’ assumed by the CLEC, and instead illustrated a series of scenarios of the ‘men’ per acre needed for different uses of land, whether agriculture or pastoralism, arguing a ‘sufficient price’ really depended on an infinite number of variables:

By introducing different elements into the calculation, such as the probability of either the agriculturists or Shepherds having children as well as wives, and by affording a greater or less degree the assistance of Carpenters, Blacksmiths, etc., any sum whatsoever might just as well be called the sufficient price, as either 4d. or 20s. The only sufficient price of any commodity formerly used to be considered that which it would sell for when judiciously brought to market; and any attempt to control by laws or regulations the value of things in the market was but lately considered contrary to the clearest principles of political economy.¹⁰⁷

Gipps’ plea was partially met in the subsequent *Land Sales Act* of 1842, which maintained competitive auctions, but did nonetheless raise the minimum upset price to £1 per acre. More acutely, the chain of correspondence amongst Russell, the CLEC, and Gipps, which was

¹⁰⁵ Russell to Gipps, 31 May 1840, *HRA* 1:20, 641-8.

¹⁰⁶ For the CLEC’s calculations and estimates, see: Enclosures, Russell to Gipps, 20 June 1840, 1:20, 674-83, especially “Report of Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners to James Stephen”, 26 February 1840, where the CLEC operated with these kinds of deduction: “The expenditure of an Emigration fund of £20,000 conveys to the Colony 1,000 Adult Emigrants of the labour-class, and each adult of the labouring class, males and females both included, has obtained, upon the average in Money and rations wages to the amount of about £50 per annum. The Wages of the adult labourers, conveyed by an Emigration fund of £20,000, may be taken at £50,000 per annum. But the rate of profit in the Colony is at least 20 per cent, and therefore the Capitalists, who advance £50,000 per annum in wages, must obtain in return a reproduction of the amount of £60,000 per Annum. It follows that withdrawing the single sum of £20,000 from the Emigration fund for the expenses of the Civil Government must occasion a diminution in the gross produce of the labour and Capital of the Colony to the amount of £60,000 per Annum.”

¹⁰⁷ Gipps to Russell, 19 December 1840, *HRA* 1:21, 131-2. Reprinted in the *Sydney Herald*, 19 May 1842, 4. Gipps later told Stanley: ‘I have never been a blind follower of what is called the Theory of Systematic Colonization’, 17 January 1844, *HRA* 1:23, 337.

published in colonial newspapers, affirmed the framework for interpreting landed settlement as a problem of configuring relations between capital and labour. As with the earlier debate, this again offered considerable scope for colonists to propose alternative mechanisms to justify their own landed visions, which now fell along more discernible lines of Whig, radical, squatters, and liberals. These views were reflected in four colonial select committees that responded to the 1842 Land Sales Act, being T.A. Murray's 1843 *Report from the Land Sales Act*, Charles Cowper's 1844 *Report from the Select Committee on Crown Land Grievances*, and Robert Lowe's two reports, the 1847 *Report from the Select Committee on the Minimum Upset Price of Land* and the 1849 *Report from the Select Committee on Crown Lands*. Where each report outlined a case for how the price of land ought to be determined, they were also developing rival political economies in response to the official framework, consolidating 'land' as an economic resource regulated by the ratios of capital and labour.

Murray's 1843 report was foremost a defence of land settlement as a foundational 'oak'. He wanted to halt nomadic pastoralism and return to a system of grants on merit and patronage. 'Men never apply themselves to the arts of settled industry' without 'permanent occupation' and 'actual property in the soil'. Sales figures, he argued, showed the high upset price was driving men to squat rather than purchase. In this, Murray retained an idea of gentlemanly or yeoman landed ideals. Colonisation should be measured not by 'profits upon investments', a consideration best left to 'speculating capitalists', for the 'great object' of 'men emigrating to a new country, is to procure some portion of this earth as their own'; to not 'make fortunes', but 'ensure independence and comfort for their families'.¹⁰⁸ Echoing Redesdale, Burkean Whigs such as Murray and Macarthur dramatised the ways in which the colony was being sacrificed to Wakefield's 'hypothetical' and 'heartless utilitarian theory'.¹⁰⁹ Yet they also reinforced their critiques with their own calculations. Murray proposed an alternative 'remission' scheme, where land would be granted to patriarchal settlers in 'proportion to the cost' of bringing out additional emigrants. He envisaged the transplantation of entire communities, 'country gentleman with his family and connexions', establishing 'Colonies within the Colony'. This would resolve a key

¹⁰⁸ "Report from Select Committee on Land Sales Act", *V&P LCNSW 1843*, 4.

¹⁰⁹ For example, Macarthur's speech, 24 April 1844, *SMH*, 1 May 1844, 4.

error in ‘Wakefield’s system’, the influx of ‘labour without capital’.¹¹⁰ Murray’s aim for colonisation – ‘perhaps not wealth’, but ‘comfortable homes and easy independence’ – turned on its own configuration of ‘occupancy, capital and labour’.

Governor Gipps’ detested Murray’s idea of a remission system of settlement. To make the ‘Crown Lands the Medium of introducing Emigrants, *without reference to sale*’, as Murray proposed, was ‘almost equivalent’ to returning to ‘a system of Barter ... a renunciation of the universal medium of Civilised Life, Money’.¹¹¹ Remission nevertheless gained considerable interest among some colonial elites, as it could be repackaged as a like-for-like alternative to Wakefield’s scheme. Echoing McCulloch’s critique of Wakefield’s imposition of artificial prices, colonial Whigs argued remission would keep capital in the colony where it was needed. Immigration committees in 1843 and 1845 both recommended such a program in terms more deductive than Murray. To remit land ‘in proportion to the number of persons introduced by him [the settler-migrant]’ argued the 1845 report, would affect the ‘combined introduction’ of labour and capital, instantaneously realising ‘the elements of prosperity’.¹¹² By the late 1840s, such a ‘scheme’, which was never implemented, could be reduced to a simple formula. The scheme’s ‘unrestrained action’, wrote John Thomson in his *Direct Remission Advocated*, echoing Wakefield, would ‘produce a constant equilibrium ... providing for the exchange of waste lands for population ... a *bridge*, connecting the over-peopled countries with the unpeopled wastes’.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Thomas Mitchell, the surveyor general, had suggested the idea of returning to ‘free grants’ to Murray, would ‘restor[e] the equilibrium between capital and labour’ in the colony. See: Evidence, Sir Thomas Livingston Mitchell, 28 August 1843, in Report from Select Committee on Land Sales Act”, *V&P NSW 1843*, 6. This kind of system had been suggested to Dr. Fowles as early as 1837, who had written to Lord Glenelg with observations on colonial land policy after touring New South Wales that year. See: Fowles to Glenelg, 6 August 1837, Enclosed, Glenelg to Bourke, 12 August 1837, *HRA* 1:19, 66-67.

¹¹¹ Gipps to Stanley, *HRA* 17 January 1844, *HRA* 1:23, 344, 345. Here, Gipps appears to be ostensibly echoing Adam Smith’s historical sociology of the invention of money. ‘It was in this manner that money has become in all civilised nations the universal instrument of commerce, by the intervention of which goods of all kinds are bought and sold, or exchanged for one another’. *WN*, Liv.11. In 1838, following to a similar proposal by an 1838 immigration committee, he had responded in like terms: ‘And here it may not be improper for me to remark that the Colony is at present far more in want of laborers than of Capitalists. In fact Capital is I believe flowing into the Country faster than, for want of laborers, it can long continue to be advantageously employed, though this is a point on which much difference of opinion may exist.’¹¹¹ Gipps to Glenelg, 2 June 1838, *HRA* 1:19, 431.

¹¹² “Report from the Committee on Immigration”, *V&P LCNSW 1843*, 7-8. See also: “Report from the Committee on Immigration”, *V&P LCNSW 1845*, 9.

¹¹³ John Thompson, *Direct Remission Advocated: Being A Consideration of the Connexion between Waste Lands of Colonies and Emigration* (Sydney: Kemp and Fairfax, 1848), 4.

Colonial radicals offered an alternative account of land settlement that inverted Murray's arguments. Radicals, like Whigs, retained a concept of land ownership as constitutive of the moral self. While there were multiple strands of colonial radicalism, as outlined Chapter Six, most favoured a return to a scheme of free grants. Unlike British radicals who scorned 'the impolitic and unjust regulations founded on Mr. Wakefield's theory' that deprived labourers from occupying land, local radicals, like Whigs, responded to government by formulating rival economic calculations.¹¹⁴ In a 1843 pamphlet, for example, John Black argued pricing land had gambled away the colony's 'capital' into 'property of little intrinsic value', leaving it in the uncultivated possession of 'land sharks'. Authorities would do better, Black argued, to give 20-acre grants to new immigrants, thereby directly applying 'industry' to land and ensuring 'the return of prosperity'. 'In a new country, in contradiction to received theory ... Labour is the true capital', he wrote. Similarly, in 1844 the working-class *Guardian* ran a campaign for 'a small allotment system', whereby farms and assistance would be given to Sydney's poor, claiming free grants would stem the outflow of capital to Britain in overpriced sales. This would improve 'the physical condition of the humbler classes' as well as exercise 'beneficial economic influences ... on the growing wealth and resources of the colony'.¹¹⁵ Such redistribution of land had, of course, been part of British radical's programs since the 1790s. Now, in New South Wales, it was premised not only on questions of justice, as it had been for Paine or the Chartists, but a parallel argument about optimising production and distribution.¹¹⁶

The 1844 Select Committee on Crown Land Grievances consisted of a different body of councillors to Murray's committee, largely representing the interests of the newly-formed

¹¹⁴ John Sidney, *Sidney's Australian Handbook: How to Settle and Succeed in Australia* (London: Pelham Richardson, 1848), 4. See also: J.C. Byrne, *Twelve Years' Wandering in the British colonies from 1835 to 1847* (London: Richard Bentley, 1848), 183.

¹¹⁵ *Guardian*, 27 July 1844, 153; *Guardian*, 3 August 1844, 161; *Guardian*, 10 August 1844, 169; See also: *Star and Working Man's Guardian*, Saturday 11 May 1844, 1. For a more elaborate version of this plan, see W.A. Duncan's plan for agricultural communes outlined in: *Self-Supporting Agricultural Working Unions for the Working Classes* (Sydney: W.A. Duncan, 1844). Duncan's plan imagined his scheme would convert 'idlers into producers'. The benefactor was colonial society at large, which 'would be like a regimental depot, which receives the recruit and turns out the well-drilled soldier'. This benefits, Duncan argued, where distinctly economic: 'The master might reserve to himself a large amount of profit than he now derives. The servant, now become master, would earn more than his previous salary, and our exports of wool would become considerably increased'.

¹¹⁶ As is discussed in Chapter Six, such arguments coincide with a more general shift in which the vocabularies of political economy increasingly came to structure mainstream radicalism in the British world.

Pastoral Association. The Association and committee had been assembled to combat not only the high minimum upset price, but a full suite of ‘squatting regulations’, including compulsory purchase, which Gipps planned to introduce that year. Cowper’s report argued for a ‘complete change’ in land administration, recommending the Land Sales Act be repealed. ‘The delusive theory of colonization sanctioned by the Act of Parliament, cannot be sustained’. Any price on land above 5s. per acre was ‘utterly unsaleable [sic], unless in times of unsound speculation’. Like Gipps, Cowper claimed the Wakefieldian calculations required recalibration in a vast, pastoral colony: ‘A rule which might work advantageously where profit is to be derived from expending much labour and little capital on a small portion of land, could not be applied to a Colony like this, where profit to any extent can only be derived from the expenditure of much capital and little labour, over large portions of land’.¹¹⁷

The squatters’ reconfiguration of the economic community was elaborated in Gideon Scott Lang’s masterfully deductive 1845 work *Land and Labour in Australia*, probably the most complete work of political economy written in the colony in the first half of the nineteenth century. Lang’s ‘principal aim’ was ‘to discover in what proportions *Capital, Capitalists, Labour*, and *Livestock* must be combined to cause the Colony to yield the highest amount of benefit to the Mother Country’.¹¹⁸ For Lang, optimising the ‘benefit’ to England involved not simply exporting as many unemployed British labourers to the colony as land sales would afford, but first calculating the highest possible ‘surplus profits’ pastoralists could generate, which would determine the labourers the colony could support.¹¹⁹ As such, every incentive should be made to introduce ‘capitalists’ to work up the colony’s livestock, meaning any price on land was a ‘most impolitic means of extending the Colony’.¹²⁰ Lang’s central maxim was to allow ‘the supply of capital to regulate the supply of labour’. He illustrated the point by exhibiting a series of hypothetical simulations of the ‘surplus profit’ a squatter could expect from different amount of

¹¹⁷ “Report from the Select Committee on the Crown Land Grievances”, *V&P LCNSW 1844*, 1.

¹¹⁸ Gideon Scott Lang, *Land and Labour in Australia: The Past, Present and Future Connection and Management* (Melbourne: Printed at the Gazette Office, 1845), 3. Clearly aware of his divergence from orthodox political economy, Lang appreciated his formulation of ‘proportions’ idiosyncratic, adding: ‘In ordinary cases, *Capital* and *Labour* only would be in question; *Capitalists*, as will be afterwards seen, must be included, on account of the circumstances of the Colony as a penal settlement, while the necessity of adding *Live Stock* arises from the nature of the Country’.

¹¹⁹ Lang, *Land and Labour in Australia*, 100.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 11, 64.

capital invested, and the corresponding growth of flocks and demand for labour. Initially, argued Lang, ‘*no more* labor should be imported than can be employed by sheep or cattle’.¹²¹ Only once ‘the land is fully occupied’ by livestock would concentration follow and new avenues of capital employment open.¹²² For Lang, the squatter’s rate of profit regulated all colonial life. Rather than pricing land, he proposed eight year leases to allow squatters to fill their land with livestock, and build up their demand for labour.¹²³ This argument had purchase. The following year, the imperial government passed legislation making available squatting leases on terms even more generous than Lang had proposed.¹²⁴ Squatters thus inverted the officialised language the Ripon Regulations introduced fifteen years earlier to establish the new mechanism of a lease in regulating land, capital, and labour.¹²⁵

The two reports by Robert Lowe in 1847 and 1849 were the most sustained efforts to attack the Land Sales Act on its own terms. Lowe was keenly aware of the colony’s place in a shrinking world, where ‘steam and railway communication are gradually drawing mankind together’. Australian land prices were higher than anywhere else in empire. It was, therefore, ‘impossible to regard this as an isolated question’. The upset price made Australia uncompetitive:

Land in New South Wales remains unpurchased, not because the capital cannot be found, but because every one considers land, at the Government price, an unprofitable investment ... It is thus that the outraged laws of political economy have avenged themselves, and the greediness of the Government in demanding more for its lands than they are worth, have resulted in depreciating all land, alienated or not, far below its natural base... capitalists will not invest their money in these lands. All the arguments of the Colonial Office cannot persuade capitalists to do so, and thus *proves*, but does not *assume*, the conclusion that the high price is detrimental to the Colony.¹²⁶

¹²¹ Ibid., 169.

¹²² This inverted Wentworth’s and Adam Smith’s argument about the hierarchy of capital employments in a new country, by positing pastoralism rather than agriculture as the most productive employment. See Chapter One.

¹²³ Ibid., 155.

¹²⁴ By an Order in Council, in 1847 the imperial government established a squatting system more generous than Lang had envisaged, giving squatters fourteen year leases, at £10 for 4,000 sheep, with preemptive right but no compulsion to purchase portions of that lease.

¹²⁵ See Chapter Five for more detail on this development.

¹²⁶ “Report from the Select Committee on Crown Lands”, *V&P LCNSW 1849*, II, 549-550.

For Lowe, the Land Sales Act cannibalised the very ‘principles’ on which it was founded. Like those who advocated expending the Land Fund on immigration a decade earlier, he opened his 1847 report with a table that drew a simple correlation between the increased upset price and decline in land sales, which was keenly reprinted in the press.¹²⁷ The problem was compounded, said Lowe, because imperial authorities deluded themselves that squatting leases and the high upset price were mutually sustainable.¹²⁸ Lowe insisted such arrangements only served squatters. The high price locked purchasers out of the market and entrenched squatters on the land with long leases that could not be broken up. This set off a chain reaction of interlinked phenomena, ‘the destruction of the Land Fund, the suppression of immigration, the locking-up of land, [and] the prohibition of agriculture’.¹²⁹ Lowe’s reports were the foundations of an orthodox, liberal approach to colonial land settlement, which held land should not be determined by an upset price nor favourable leases to a select few, but by free access and market prices. This amounted to more than a *laissez-faire* belief in the ‘free trade’ of land, however, but a commitment to the idea land was what Lowe called ‘a great instrument’ of colonisation: a mechanism that regulated capital to labour in the pursuit of ‘prosperity’.¹³⁰

Finally, as with everything else in colonial history, gold and self-government in the 1850s raised new questions about land settlement. However, in the context of the transformations being traced here, these two events ultimately marked moments that consolidated economic discourse as a rational framework of political debate.

The official response to the gold discoveries was not a recognition of instantaneous national wealth, but a pervasive fear for public disorder.¹³¹ While this concern was led by

¹²⁷ *SMH*, 14 October 1847, 2.

¹²⁸ For example, Gipps to Stanley, 17 January 1844, *HRA* 1:23, 340-1: ‘The high price of land and the Squatting System seem to me naturally to go together, the one supports the other, and either would be indefensible without the other. Together they form (as far as I can judge) the best system on which the Domain of the Crown can, under existing circumstances, be administered; Sheep increase with great rapidity, and consequently new lands are occupied to a vast extent every year. If it be once admitted that the price of the Fee simple of these Lands is to be fixed with reference only to the profit which they yield to the owners of the Sheep, the price must, and especially as we recede from the Sea coast, rapidly decline, until it become less per acre than the smallest Coin in use in the Country’. See also, Grey to Fitz Roy, 29 November 1846, *HRA* 1:25, 275.

¹²⁹ “Report from the Select Committee on the Minimum Upset Price of Land”, *V&P LCNSW 1847*, II, 518. For Earl Grey’s comments, see: Grey to Fitz Roy, 11 August 1848, *HRA* 1:26, 541-544.

¹³⁰ “Report from Select Committee on Crown Lands”, *V&P LCNSW 1849*, II, 553.

¹³¹ On the fears excited by gold, see: David Goodman, *Goldseeking: Victoria and California in the 1850s* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 64-103.

pastoralists anxious about the defection of shepherds to goldfields, even the radical-liberal *Empire* speculated the ‘absorption of labour in one pursuit’ would end in ‘commercial disaster and social degradation’.¹³² On such grounds, Governor Fitz-Roy had contemplated banning the diggings outright, however with neither the troops nor stomach for ‘bloodshed’, as he told Grey, he proclaimed instead that all gold ‘belong[ed] to the Crown’ and required miners be ‘duly authorised’ by a government-issued licence.¹³³ The licence was not simply a revenue raising device, however. As the Chief Gold Commissioner Thomas Hardy wrote in 1851, it was designed to ‘remind’ unsuccessful miners that they might be ‘better employed in their past avocations’, thus regulating the flight of labour away from capital, and protecting what Hardy called the ‘broader interests of the community’.¹³⁴ Predictably, miners protested the monthly 30s. fee as an unfair ‘tax’ on their labour and not their produce, arguing royalties should only be paid on gold extracted.¹³⁵ Two select committees considered their petitions, careful to define the license as not an unproductive ‘tax’ but a ‘rent’ for the ‘privilege’ of using public lands. This was to re-orientate the licence from a question of ‘justice’, as miners claimed, folding them back into a dynamic of rents, profits and wages. Calculating this ‘privilege’ was nonetheless contested, depending on how the richness of fields, cost of policing and requisite governmental revenue were valued. The 1853 committee recommended monthly licences be reduced to 10s., but rejected the goldfields be ‘thrown open to the competition of the world without free restriction’.¹³⁶ The licence, then, was not simply an object of constitutional dispute, nor a statement of an emergent ‘laissez-faire’ liberalism, as David Goodman argued.¹³⁷ Rather, it embodied an assessment of land as projecting interlinked economic agencies.

These assumptions were reflected in debates over the 1861 Land Acts, *the first major legislation passed by the new colonial parliament*. The premier John Robertson, who designed and piloted the legislation, sought to dissolve the squatters’ monopoly of waste lands and increase

¹³² *Empire*, 29 October 1851, 4.

¹³³ Fitz-Roy to Grey, 31 May 1851, in *BPP 1852* xxxiv (1430, 1508), 4.

¹³⁴ Hardy to Colonial Secretary, 18 June 1851, in *BPP 1852* xxxiv (1430, 1508), 44-5. For original issuing of gold licences, see: *Government Gazette*, 22 May 1851, 832.

¹³⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 December 1851, 2.

¹³⁶ “Reports from the Select Committee on the Gold Fields Management Bill”, *V&PNSW 1853*, II, 427.

These recommendations were instituted in *Gold Fields Act 1853*, 17 Vic No. 23.

¹³⁷ Goodman, *Goldseeking*, 26-35.

public access, creating ‘a fair field for each employment [of capital]’ and enabling individuals to ‘employ themselves in accumulating wealth’ as they please.¹³⁸ But while debates over these bills were ostensibly drawn between squatters and the rest, in reality they centred on a series of technical questions that hypothesised how various mechanisms such as free selection before survey, deferred payments, and a fixed price per acre would affect the rates of purchase and cultivation.¹³⁹ Historians have long been assessed this legislation for its political success in transforming patterns of colonial land ownership.¹⁴⁰ In the context this thesis, however, the significance of the Land Acts was to consolidate land as a site of economic calculation, as had been initiated by Goderich via Wakefield some thirty years prior. This was important not just for the mechanisms of prices, debts, and leases it necessitated, but the governable subject it legitimated.

Settlers of small, moderate, and large capital

If the Ripon Regulations instituted a framework for debating and configuring the colony as a wealth-producing community, they also authorised new normative figures of that community, the ‘capitalist’, and the ‘labourer’. These figures have permeated this chapter, in reports, memorandums, and pamphlets. We can conclude by examining the formation of the ‘capitalist’ in greater detail, a governmental subject to be embodied, equipped, and managed. The ‘labourer’ will be dealt with in Chapter Six.

The relationship between ‘capitalists’ and ‘labourers’ was only one way colonists imagined their community in the first half of the nineteenth century. Until at least 1840, most antipodeans would have readily identified with Reverend W.A. Pridden’s typology of the ‘strange elements of which society in Australia is composed’, comprising the convict, emancipist and ‘men

¹³⁸ This was carried in two acts, the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1861 (NSW) 25 Vic No. 1 and the Crown Lands Occupation Act of 1861 (NSW) 25 Vic No. 2. The former opened all land for sale in 320-acre blocks at £1 per acre on deferred payment, anywhere in the colony. The latter repealed the Order in Council of 1847 and created new terms for pastoral leasing.

¹³⁹ Selection before survey would initially save on costly surveying but potentially shred pastoral runs. Others feared deferred payments would create a relation of ‘debtor and creditor between the people and the State’, which might create a large electoral interest of debtors. For the debates in the Legislative Assembly, see: *SMH*, 12 October 1860, 3; 31 January 1861, 5; 8 March 1861, 3; 2 October 1861, 2.

¹⁴⁰ For example: Bill Gammage, “Who gained, and who was meant to gain, from land selection in New South Wales?” *Australian Historical Studies* 24, no.94 (April 1990): 104-22.

who have settled as free persons'. These were not just legal distinctions but identities from which 'miserable dissensions, jealousies, and heartburning, have frequently arisen'.¹⁴¹ More broadly, as James Belich has illustrated, nineteenth-century settler colonies were populated by a number of idealised figures such as the 'settler', the 'pioneer', the 'colonist', and the 'emigrant', each with different connotations of class, respectability, and wealth. The 'capitalist' did not neatly map onto any of these colonial typologies. He was of a different order, one more heavily theorised with clearly defined propensities and social role.

The appearance of the 'capitalist' in colonial discourse is best understood as a governmental solution to the problems faced by authorities in New South Wales during the 1820s in their search for an appropriate vocabulary to describe the ideal 'settler'. While settlers in British colonies had long been granted land 'in proportion to their ability to cultivate it', by the third decade of the nineteenth century, authorities were finding they required a more specific means of identifying 'ability', especially as free settlers arrived with 'fictitious capitals'. We noted earlier Macquarie's, Bigge's, and Darling's attempts to screen settlers by requiring affidavits and memorials that would determine 'a grant of land in proportion to the Capital I intend to employ in Agricultural pursuits'.¹⁴² While applications for land grants were always overlaid with scrutiny of one's respectability, the effect of these requirements was to make 'ability to cultivate' synonymous with 'capital', so that in signing the application form, the settler was made synonymous with their capital.¹⁴³

Associating the settler with his capital did not necessarily make him an economic

¹⁴¹ Rev. Pridden, *Australia, its history and present condition: containing an account both of the bush and of the colonies, with the respective inhabitants* (London: J. Hughes, 1851), 309. Idiosyncratically, although to great excitement, James Mudie famously drew distinction between 'two castes' in New South Wales, the free emigrants settlers and what he termed the 'felonry' of New South Wales, which subsumed 'convicts', 'ticket-of-leave men' and 'emancipists', who could be further subdivided into 'conditionally pardoned convicts', 'fully pardoned convicts' and 'expirees'. The typology was set up for Mudie's own critique of penal society (he was a witness to Molesworth's 1837-38 inquiry), but his book also suggests the novelty of social classifications colonists were applying to themselves. Mudie, *The Felonry of New South Wales*. Michael Conner has argued the antagonistic social groupings, 'emancipist' and 'exclusives', long assumed by historians to have organised colonial life up until the ending of transportation, was not itself current in the colony until at least 1827. The former, 'emancipists', he argued, were a much more fractured groups than the historiography has usually presented. See: "The Politics of Grievance: society and political controversies in New South Wales 1819-1827." (PhD Thesis, University of Tasmania, 2002).

¹⁴² Form of Application for Land by Free Settlers From England, in Darling to Bathurst, 22 July 1826, *HRA* 1:12, 395.

¹⁴³ Bigge, *Third Report*, 48; Land Board to Darling, 20 March 1826, *HRA* 1:12, 413.

‘capitalist’, however. This linking of a farmer’s *persona* with his ‘capital’ can be traced back at least to Arthur Young’s late-eighteenth-century agricultural treatises on efficient and improving farming practice.¹⁴⁴ Young had hypothesised the best means of ‘disposing’ different quantities of ‘capital’ which would determine the acreage a farmer could optimally cultivate.¹⁴⁵ But as Tribe observed, ‘capital’ for Young included not only tools and seed, but cash advanced for the first year, that is, his cash or ‘working capital’, including his labour costs before the sale of the first harvest. ‘Profit’, accounted after a number of years of outgoings and expenses, was associated with the revenue of the farmer, not a return on the ‘capital’ invested.¹⁴⁶ Agriculture might be quantifiable and calculable, but Young’s analysis targeted the activity of an individual farmer as a patriotic actor enacting ‘agricultural improvement’, and not his relations in a system of production and distribution.

These distinctions are important for identifying what authorities meant by the ‘settler of moderate capital’ as they searched for a language to describe the idealised landed figure in the 1820s. Both Bathurst and Governor Brisbane, for example, complained of the ‘great frauds’ settlers cooked up with local merchants or shopkeepers to obtain an ‘extent of land agreeable to Capital’.¹⁴⁷ The governable subjects developed by colonial bureaucrats in the 1820s of settlers ‘of respectable condition in Life’ intending to stay ‘permanently on their land’, ‘Free Settlers of Moderate Capital’, or ‘classes of industrious and respectable Settlers’ were designated a respectable and patriotic kind of settler, whose function was to achieve regular honest settlement, as much to advance production and accumulation.¹⁴⁸

Goderich’s use of the term ‘capitalist’ in his 1831 despatches needs to be contextualised against this background. The term ‘capitalist’, a man of money, was a neologism of the French Revolution; *capitaliste*, a term of reproach. It first extended into English to denote as specific

¹⁴⁴ C.A. Bayly took Young to be emblematic of so-called ‘agrarian patriotism’ that characterised his imperial meridian from between 1780 and 1830. C. A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780-1830* (London: Longman, 1989), 121-126.

¹⁴⁵ For example: Arthur Young, *The Farmer’s Guide in Hiring and Stocking Farms* (London: Printed for W. Strahan, 1770); *Annals of Agriculture*, 33 vols. (Bury: St. Edmund’s, 1792).

¹⁴⁶ Tribe, *Land Labour and Economic Discourse*, 73-8.

¹⁴⁷ Brisbane to Under-Secretary Horton, 24 March 1825, *HRA* 1:11, 554.

¹⁴⁸ Land Board to Darling, 20 March 1826, *HRA* 1:12, 413

kind of person, a banker or moneylender for example, a man of capital.¹⁴⁹ Thus, while we can find occasional reference to the ‘capitalist’ in official correspondence in the 1820s, and more regularly in colonial newspapers, this designated highly specific social statuses and not an abstracted ‘economic’ agent. One of the achievements of British and French political economy was to take this term, ‘capitalist’, already loaded with social meaning, and reformulate it into a theorised entity that generalised social relations premised on production, accumulation and exchange. It was in this guise Wakefield used the term and so in drawing from Wakefield’s vocabulary, Howick and Goderich were inserting into official discourse a theoretical category as if it were an empirical one, loaded with new, systematic economic meaning.¹⁵⁰

One source through which to trace the normalisation of this figure is in emigrant guides, which were usually published in London for a British audience. Recently, historians have been re-reading emigrant guides to re-construct how Britons saw their empire.¹⁵¹ Here, I emphasise the original social function of these guides, aimed at prospective migrants who through the act of reading, cultivated the identified and norms of a ‘capitalist’.

In early emigrant guides to North America, the term appeared only occasionally. Birkbeck thought the capitalist synonymous with a ‘shop-keeper’; Fearon with money-lenders or entrepreneurs, but distinct from merchants.¹⁵² Robert Gourlay’s *Statistical Account of Upper Canada*, which anticipated many of Wakefield’s arguments, used the term only once.¹⁵³ In his

¹⁴⁹ William Godwin appears to have been the first writer in English to use the term. In the second edition of his *Political Justice*, he referred to the ‘capitalist’ as ‘an idle and useless monopoliser’. He had used the term ‘middle man’ in the first edition. Compare: William Godwin *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on Morals and Happiness*, Vol. 2. (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, 1798), 892; and, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on Morals and Happiness*. First American and Second London Edition. Vol II, (Philadelphia: Bioren and Madan, 1796), 399.

¹⁵⁰ This is an instance of the process Anthony Giddens describes as a *double hermeneutic*: where every day lay terms are taken and reformulated into a theoretical category by social sciences, and then returned to everyday talk (often by the state), with a new, constitutive frame of meaning. Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge; Polity Press, 2013 [1984]), 284.

¹⁵¹ Especially, Robert Grant, *Representations of British Emigration, Colonisation, and Settlement: Imagining Empire, 1800-1860* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

¹⁵² Morris Birkbeck, *Notes on a journey in America from the coast of Virginia to the Territory of Illinois* (London: Ridgway, 1818), 135; Henry Fearon, *Sketches of America; a narrative of a journey of five thousand miles through the eastern and western states of America* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1819), 89, 246, 282, 442. Other popular texts which did not use the term, included: John Bradbury, *Travels in the Interior Of America* (London: Sherwood, Neely and Jones, 1817); Frances Wright, *Views of society and manners in America* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown 1821).

¹⁵³ Robert Gourlay, *Statistical Account of Upper Canada* (London: Simpkin & Marshall, 1822), 393.

account of Cape Colony, Thompson referred to colonial ‘Capitalists’ as a ‘respectable body’, but only in relation to banking.¹⁵⁴ There are few similar texts for New South Wales before 1830, the most prominent being James Atkinson’s *An Account of the State of Grazing and Agriculture in New South Wales*. Reflecting Darling’s regulations, Atkinson referred not to capitalists but distinguished between hapless ‘first settlers’ and ‘the better sort of Settlers – men who have either come from England with sufficient capital for their establishment, or have acquired it by patient industry and economy within the Colony.’¹⁵⁵

There was a sudden shift in the use of the term after the Ripon Regulations. In 1832, the Colonial Office requested a temporary Emigration Commission to produce an emigrant guide sketching the new land and emigration policy. Absorbing the language from Goderich’s despatches, it normalised the categories of ‘theory’ as constitutive of colonial society. ‘In England capital is a mere drug – the lender can scarcely find a borrower, the borrower can scarcely repay the lender; in New South Wales capital is the one needful thing – it would bring a goodly interest to the lender, and would make the fortune for the borrower.’ It continued:

Let the capitalist wend his way thither, and his one talent will soon gain ten, and his ten twenty. Let the labourer go thither, and if he can do nothing in the world but dig, he will be welcome to his three-and-twenty shillings a week, and may feast on fat beef and mutton at a penny or two-pence per pound.¹⁵⁶

These categories were soon emulated in popular guides. ‘All who leave their native country with the view of settling in this territory,’ informed Rev. Henry Carmichael’s 1834 guide, ‘may be arranged under the heads of Capitalists and Labourers’. Carmichael elaborated:

The Capitalists may be divided into larger and small; constituting the landholders, merchants, farmers, and small dealers of the territory; the Labourers into skilled and unskilled; the skilled into

¹⁵⁴ George Thompson, *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa: comprising a view of the present state of the Cape colony* (London: Henry Colburn, 1827), 402-3.

¹⁵⁵ James Atkinson, *An Account of the State of Grazing and Agriculture in New South Wales* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1975 [1826]), 34, 103.

¹⁵⁶ T. Frederick Elliott, *The Emigrant’s Guide to New South Wales, Van Diemen’s Land, Lower Canada, Upper Canada and New Brunswick* (London: W. Pearson, 1832), 11.

professional men and mechanics; the unskilled into agricultural labourers and domestics: so that the distribution of Emigrants, according to this analysis, will be into – landholders, merchants, farmers, and small-dealers; professional men, mechanics and agricultural labourers, and domestics.¹⁵⁷

As emigrant guides proliferated after 1830, almost all used a variation on Carmichael's taxonomy. This included quite specific demarcations of the amount of 'capital' that constituted the 'small' or 'large capitalist'. The latter could typically 'command' somewhere between £500 and £2000, and guides often offered advice on the amount of capital required to commence various enterprises, especially sheep farming.¹⁵⁸ In outlining the propensities of the idealised capitalist-emigrant, such texts can be understood as hybrids of Young's husbandry manuals and self-help tracts associated with Samuel Smiles' Victorian liberalism.

Duncan Mackellar's 1839 guide was exemplary. Addressing emigrants with 'capital not exceeding £3000 or £4000', he advised the 'capitalist' to take 'his money in good negotiable bills, which can be easily disposed of, sometimes at par or at a small premium'. Mackellar drew up a table detailing the 'RETURN, showing the probable Result at the Expiration of Eight Years, from a Capital invested in Land, Cattle, etc.', explicating the activities of the emigrant farmer as foremost seeking a rate of return on investment. These tables were similar to those produced in Arthur Young's *Annals of Agriculture* (**figure 4.3**), but with a crucial difference. Where 'capital' for Young meant 'working capital', McKellar's accounting first set out a 'SCHEDULE showing the Distribution of a Capital of £3500 in the purchase of land, agricultural implements &c. Cattle, Horses, and Sheep in New South Wales', before detailing a hypothetical account of the income from market sales after expenses, labour costs and rented lands. Only then was profit given, as a factor of his capital invested. This was an important innovation on the way landed proprietors had

¹⁵⁷ Rev. Henry Carmichael, *Hints Relating to Emigrants and Emigration, embracing observations and facts intended to display the real advantages of New South Wales* (London: D. Walther, 1834), 13.

¹⁵⁸ John Sidney, divided into his account into advice for 'The Labourer', 'The Two Hundred Pound Man', 'Five Thousand Pound Man', and 'The Great Capitalist', commanding £10,000: *Sidney's Australian Handbook*, 43-51; Wilcocks advised 'a small capital will enable a man to embark in sheep farming – £500 or less will suffice': James B. Wilcocks, *Emigration, Its Necessity and Advantages* (Exeter: Featherstone, 1840), 14; Gideon Scott Lang gives very precise terms: 'There are two classes into which the Capitalist may be divided, first those with a small capital, say £1500 or £2000,' and 'second those with large sums, from £5000 upward.' *Land and Labour in Australia*, 12.

been conceived in the 1820s, relocating the emigrant farmer into a distinct economic system as a ‘capitalist’ seeking a rate of return on investment (**figure 4.4**).

Similar tables appeared in other guides. An early example appeared in Wentworth’s 1819 *Descriptions*, although it did not reference the ‘capitalist’. A number of later guides repurposed a table originally published in Charles Sturt’s *Two Expeditions* of 1833, which detailed expenditure and income of breeding ewes over a five year period.¹⁵⁹ Samuel Butler’s 1839 guide accompanied a table with a narrative of the emigrant’s new life as an investor. After describing the limited opportunities of ‘a respectable family living in England on £200 to £250 a-year’, whose ‘capital is comparatively dead to the nation’, Butler compared that the ‘very same family immigrating to such a colony as New South Wales’ will be able to purchase a farm with a house on it, in moderate distance to Sydney. ‘Two thousand pounds of their capital invested, at ten per cent interest, will afford them a yearly return equal to their whole income in England, while the remainder, if invested judiciously in cattle or in sheep-farming, will in all likelihood yield them from twenty to fifty per cent interest’. Not only will the circumstances of this emigrant be ‘materially changed of the better’ but others will benefit, too. His family will now ‘be much better customers’ than when in England, buying more extensive manufactures, stimulating employment and merchant trade. Before long, he would be ‘receiving visits of business from the shipmasters that frequent the port of Sydney, offering to carry home their wool or other colonial produce to London’. As a colonial investor, he lived ‘much more usefully to the British nation, as well as to himself, to his family, and to his society’.¹⁶⁰ However, guides also warned of the anxieties emigrating capitalists faced. These troubles included not only the drain of the ship journey and sense of self-imposed ‘exile’, but the ‘imaginary cause of distress’, as one author described it, the tension between hope and ‘severe disappointment and suffering’ that is the burden of everyman who makes himself a ‘speculator.’¹⁶¹ In clear contradistinction to the

¹⁵⁹ W. C. Wentworth, *A Statistical, Historical, and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales and Its Dependent Settlements in Van Diemen’s Land* (Adelaide: Griffin Press, 1978 [1819]), 412-14; Charles Sturt, *Two Expeditions into the interior of Southern Australia*, Vol. One, (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1833), 192-4; Samuel Butler, *The Hand-book for Australian Emigrants* (Glasgow: W.R. M’Phun, 1839), 100-101; Wilcocks, *Emigration*, 13-14.

¹⁶⁰ Butler, *Hand-book*, 101-5.

¹⁶¹ Charles John Baker, *Sydney and Melbourne: with remarks on the present state and future prospects of New South Wales* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1845), 174-178.

AGRICULTURE. 235 ON THE PROFIT OF A FARM.

By the Editor.

BEING lately on a visit to my friend Mr. Ruggles, at Clare, and discoursing with him on the profit of husbandry upon good land, he recurred to his farming books, in which he keeps a regular account of the expence and receipt of his farm. The profit seemed to me to be so great, and at the same time so clearly ascertained, as to leave no doubt upon the mind: I was induced to request his permission to look over the book for the purpose of ascertaining it, annually, as the whole was entered during four years, in one general running account.

His period commenced at Michaelmas 1783, and he entered the farm at Lady-Day, 1784, paying the preceding tenant for what was done between those dates. The farm consists of 146½ acres, exclusive of hedges, ditches, ponds, &c. that is, where the plough and the scythe go. Two acres of it are wood, and 20½ grafts.

The live and dead stock of the farm, taken by appraisement, March 27th, 1784; also manuring, feed, and tillage, paid the outgoing tenant to Lady-Day, 1784, valued by Mr. John Harrison, for Mr. Brice and Mr. Ruggles	£.	s.	d.
	289	4	0
	R 2		Labour,

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15 acres of wheat, at 4 qrs. 40s.	£.	s.	d.
10 ditto 20 qrs.	120	0	0
Sold 12			
8, at 40s.	16	0	0
12 acres of oats, at 4 qrs. 48			
Used 18			
30, at 20s.	30	0	0
20 acres of hay	40	0	0
Hogs	15	0	0
18 Scotch beasts, the price of which 75l. 10s. reckoned among the expences	84	10	0
	660	6	0
	£. 2763	19	9

Expences during the same period	£.	s.	d.
Stock reckoned at	646	18	7
But at present the live & dead stock, feed, tillage, manure, &c. in the land are no more by estimate, than	248	14	6
	398	4	1
The difference of which is to be added to the expences	2040	0	11½
	R 3		Four

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Labour, rent, rates, taxes, &c. &c. the second half year, to Michaelmas, 1784	£.	s.	d.
	357	14	7
Total first stock of the farm, or capital employed	646	18	7
Interest of which, at 5 per cent.	32	6	0
Total expences of all sorts, from Michaelmas, 1784, to Dec. 31, 1787	1544	18	10½
Three years interest of capital	96	18	0
	1641	16	10½
Total receipts to Dec. 31, 1787	2103	13	9½
Products of the year 1787, by estimate in hand.			
19 acres of beans, at 5½ quarters an acre, 104½			
Sold 10			
94½ qrs. at 28s. *	131	12	0
4 acres of pease, 17 qrs. 1 bushel			
Sold 21 9 0			
	3	15	0
	17	14	0
42 acres of barley.			
24 at 5½ qrs. 132			
11 at 3½ 38½			
7 at 5 35			
205½ at 20s. —	205	10	0

* Since this paper was drawn up, I am informed by Mr. R. that these beans will be above 6 qrs. from the product threshed. 15 acres

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Four years profit	£.	s.	d.
	723	18	10
Or per annum, interest of capital paid	180	19	8
Per annum, interest included	£. 205	4	2

The estimate is laid low not only from the appearance of the crops while on the ground, and relative to the former products of the same land, but also as ascertained by the portions already threshed. Nor have the crops this year been greater than in former years, except in beans.

£.646 capital, yielding the interest of £.205, is in the proportion of 31 per cent.

In arranging the crops, Mr. Ruggles manages so as to have on an average, 20 acres of beans or pease; 20 of wheat; 40 of barley; 15 of oats; 10 of turnips; and 15 of fallow; but with such variations as the size of fields will occasion: Rejecting any extraordinary crops, some of which he has had even in the four first years of his business, the annual account may be calculated thus:

Expences.	£.	s.	d.
Rent, tithe, and rates	168	0	0
Labour,	140	0	0
Wear and tear,	30	0	0
Team,			

Figure 4.3 Arthur Young, Arthur Young, *Annals of Agriculture*. Vol. 9 (Bury: St. Edmund's, 1788), 235-38.

**SCHEDULE SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF A CAPITAL OF £3500
IN THE PURCHASE OF LAND, AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS, &c.,
CATTLE, HORSES, AND SHEEP, IN NEW SOUTH WALES.**

LAND, FENCING, &c.	
Bought two sections land, 1280 acres, at 5s. per acre,*	£320
Fencing in a wheat paddock, of 60 acres 4-rail fence, 400 rods, at 3s. per rod,	60
Ditto, bullock paddock, 100 acres 3-rail fence, 520 rods, at 2s. 6d. per rod,	65
One stock-yard and calf-pen, £15; one slab-hut for dairy, £10; one hut for servants, £10,	35
One slab-house for overseer, £20,	20
	£500
AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS, &c. &c.	
2 Ploughs, at £4 each, £8; 2 pair harrows, at £3 each, £6; bullock yokes, chains, and bows, £3,	£19
6 spades, 30s.; 6 axes, 30s.; steel-yards, £30s.; 2 cross cut saws, 40s.; 2 steel-mills, £8; flour sieves, 50s.,	17
Wheat riddles and sieves, corn measures, &c. £3; 2 tarpaulins, 50s.; one large boiler for sheep washing and dairy, 60s.,	10
2 new drays, £32; a set of tubs for sheep-washing and dairy, £3; 60 milk coolers, £12; 4 milk peggins, 20s.,	48
1 harness tub, £2; 2 churns, £4; carpenters' tools, £5; nails, &c. £3; cooking utensils for overseer and men, £4,	18
	112
CATTLE PURCHASED.	
100 cows, 4 years old, with 100 calves, at £5 each, £500; two bulls, at £15 each, £30,	£530
16 oxen, 4 years old, to kill and break in, first year, at £8 each, 128	
19 oxen, 3 years old, to kill and break in, second year, at £6 each,	114
20 steers, 2 years old, to kill and break in, third year, at £4 each,	80
8 working oxen, at £10 each,	80
	932
HORSES PURCHASED.	
2 saddle horses, at £40 each, £80; 6 mares and foals (and in foal again), at £40 each, £240,	£320
2 saddles and bridles,	10
	330
SHEEP PURCHASED.	
1200 ewes, 3 year old, with 1030 lambs, at 2s. each, £1500; 30 rams, at 60s. each, £90,	£1590
200 hurdles, at 2s. each, £20; one hut at sheep station, £10; steel mill, £4; cooking utensils, £2,	36
	£1626
Capital invested in land, cattle, horses, and sheep,	£3500

A supply of flour for the first year must be purchased, which will be ultimately paid from the produce of the farm, as will appear from the following Return.

* It is reported that Government has raised the price of land in the colony to 12s. per acre.

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RETURN, showing the probable Result at the Expiration of Eight Years, from a Capital invested in LAND, CATTLE, &c., according to the preceding Schedule, and in Connexion with the following SHEEP ESTABLISHMENT.

FIRST YEAR, from January to July, ploughed and put in 30 acres of wheat, and, in January following, reaped 20 bushels per acre, 600 bushels, at 8s. per bushel,	£240
Dairy produce from 100 cows, at 20 lb. butter each, 2000 lb. at 1s. per lb.	100
Carriage of first year's wool to market, 6726 lb., at 1d. per lb.	28
Killed eight oxen for rations to six farm-servants, five shepherds, and overseer, at £8 each,	64
	£432
EXPENSES, First Year, viz. 1 ploughman, at £30; 1 stockman, at £30; 4 farm-servants, at £25 each, £100,	100
Rations to 6 farm-servants, at £12 each, £72; rations to overseer, £32; half ton of salt, £2,	106
Rent of 6 sections land, £6; blacksmith's account, £10; seed wheat, 30 bushels, at 10s., £15,	31
	297
	£135
SECOND YEAR, ploughed and put in forty acres of wheat, and, in January following, reaped 20 bushels per acre, 800 bushels, at 8s. per bushel,	£320
Dairy produce from 88 cows, at 20 lb. butter each, 1760 lb., at 1s. per lb.	88
Carriage of second year's wool to market, 9612 lb., at 1d. per lb.	40
Killed 11 oxen for rations to 8 farm-servants, 8 shepherds, and overseer, at £8 each,	88
	£536
EXPENSES, Second Year, viz. 1 ploughman, at £30; 2 stockmen, at £30 each, £60; 5 farm-servants, at £25 each, £125, £215	215
Rations to 8 farm-servants, at £12 each, £96; rations to overseer £32; half ton salt, £2,	130
One new dray, £16; chains and blacksmith's account, £12; 1 tarpaulin, £2; seed wheat, 40 bushels, at 10s. per bushel, £20,	50
Rent of 6 sections of land, £6; licence for heifer station, £10; 1 hut and stock-yard for ditto, £15; a steel-mill, £4,	35
	430
	106
Carry forward,	£241

* RATIONS TO SERVANTS WEEKLY.	
8 lb. beef, at 2½d. per lb.	2 0
1 peck wheat,	0 6
1 lb. sugar, at 3½d. per lb.	0 6
4 lb. tea, at 2s. per lb.	0 8
Fifty-two weeks, at 4 7d. £11 19 4	
OVERSEER'S RATION WEEKLY.	
10 lb. beef, at 2½d. per lb.	2 4
4 bushel wheat, at 8s. per bush.	4 0
4 lb. sugar, at 3½d. per lb.	1 2
1 lb. tea, at 2s. per lb.	1 0
Fifty-two weeks, at	9 6
	£24 14 0
Five gallons rum, at 12s.	3 0 0
Five gallons brandy, at 18s.	4 10 0
Yearly ration,	£32 4 0

† Oxen are worked in yokes, with chains to connect them when drawing.
‡ When the increase of the cattle are ready for weaning, a heifer station is established at a considerable distance from the home station, at which a stock-yard is erected, and for which a stockman and but-keeper are engaged, the one at £30, and the other at £25 per annum.

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	Brought forward,	£241
THIRD YEAR, ploughed and put in fifty acres of wheat, and in January following reaped 20 bushels per acre, 1000 bushels, at 8s. per bushel,		£400
Dairy produce from 88 cows, at 20 lb. butter each, 1760 lb. at 1s. per lb.	88	
Carriage of third year's wool to market, 13,550 lb. at 1d. per lb.	57	
Killed 12 oxen for rations to 9 farm-servants, 9 shepherds, and overseer, at £8 each,	96	
	£641	
EXPENSES, Third Year, viz. 1 ploughman, at £30; 2 stockmen at £30 each, £60; 6 farm-servants, at £25 each, £150, £240		
Rations to 9 farm-servants, at £12 each, £108; rations to overseer, £32; one ton salt, £4,	144	
1 new dray, £16; chains and blacksmith's account, £15; seed wheat, 50 bushels, at 10s. per bushel, £25,	56	
Rent of 6 sections land, £6; licence for heifer station, £10; 1 bull, £15,	31	
	471	170
FOURTH YEAR, ploughed and put in fifty acres wheat, and in January following reaped 20 bushels per acre; 1000 bushels at 8s. per bushel,		£400
Dairy produce from 128 cows at 20 lb. butter each, 2560 lb. at 1s. per lb. £128; carriage of fourth year's wool to market 16,221 lb., at 1d. per lb. £68,	196	
Killed 15 oxen for rations to 9 farm-servants, 12 shepherds, and overseer, at £8 each,	120	
Sold 27 oxen, 1st increase, now 4 year old, at £8 each,	216	
	£932	
EXPENSES, Fourth Year, viz. 1 ploughman at £30; 2 stockmen at £30 each, £60; 6 farm-servants at £25 each, £150, £240		
Rations to 9 farm-servants at £12 each, £108; rations to overseer, £32; one ton of salt, £4,	144	
One new dray, £16; chains, and blacksmith's account, £15; one tarpaulin, £2; seed wheat 50 bushels at 10s., £25,	56	
Rent of 10 sections land, £10; licence for heifer station, £10; spades and axes, £2; one bull, £15,	37	
	479	453
FIFTH YEAR, ploughed and put in sixty acres wheat, and in January following reaped 20 bushels per acre; 1200 bushels at 8s. per bushel,		£480
Dairy produce from 164 cows at 20 lb. butter each, 3280 lb. at 1s. per lb., £164; carriage of fifth year's wool to market, 18,471 lb. at 1d. per lb., £77,	241	
Killed 17 oxen for rations to 11 farm-servants, 13 shepherds, and overseer, at £8 each, £136; sold 19 oxen 2d increase, at £8 each, £152,	288	
	£1009	
EXPENSES, Fifth Year, viz. 1 ploughman at £30; 2 stockmen at £30 each, £60; 8 farm-servants at £25 each, £200, £240		
Rations to 11 farm-servants at £12 each, £132; rations to overseer, £32; one ton salt, £4,	168	
One new dray, £16; chains, and blacksmith's account, £15; one tarpaulin, £2; seed wheat, 60 bushels at 10s., £30,	63	
Rent of 10 sections land, £10; licence for heifer station, £10; one bull, £15,	35	
	556	453
	Carry forward,	£1317

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Brought forward,		4131
SIXTH YEAR, ploughed and put in sixty acres wheat, and in January following reaped 20 bushels per acre, 1200 bushels at 8s. per bushel,		£480
Dairy produce from 202 cows, at 20 lb. butter each, 4040 lb. at 1s. per lb., £202; carriage of sixth year's wool, 21,147 lb. at 1d. per lb., £86,	290	
Killed 20 oxen for rations to 12 farm-servants, 16 shepherds, and overseer, at £8 each, £160; sold 16 oxen, 3d increase, at £8 each, £128,	288	
	£1058	
EXPENSES, Sixth Year, viz. 1 ploughman at £30; 2 stockmen at £30 each, £60; 9 farm-servants at £25 each, £225, £180		
Rations to 12 farm-servants at £12 each, £144; rations to overseer, £32; one ton salt, £4,	130	
One new dray, £16; chains, and blacksmith's account, £15; 1 tarpaulin, £2; 1 plough, £4,	37	
Rent of 10 sections land, £10; licence for heifer station, £10; seed wheat, 60 bushels at 10s. £30; two bulls, £30,	80	
	612	
	446	
SEVENTH YEAR, ploughed and put in sixty acres wheat, and in January following, reaped 20 bushels per acre, 1200 bushels at 8s. £480		
Dairy produce from 256 cows, at 20 lb. butter each, 5120 lb. at 1s. per lb., £256; carriage of seventh year's wool, 24,498 lb. at 1d. per lb. £102,	358	
Killed 21 oxen for rations to 12 farm-servants, 19 shepherds, and overseer, at £8 each, £168; sold 35 oxen, 4th increase, at £8, £280,	448	
	£1286	
EXPENSES, Seventh Year, viz. 1 ploughman at £30; 2 stockmen at £30 each, £60; 9 farm-servants at £25 each, £225, £180		
Rations to 12 farm-servants at £12 each, £144; rations to overseer, £32; 1 ton salt, £4,	180	
One new dray, £16; chains, and blacksmith's account, £15; 1 tarpaulin, £2; 2 bulls, £30,	63	
Rent of 10 sections land, £10; licence for heifer station, £10; seed wheat, 60 bushels at 10s., £30,	50	
	608	
	678	
EIGHTH YEAR, ploughed and put in sixty acres wheat, and in January following reaped 20 bushels per acre, 1200 bushels at 8s. £480		
Dairy produce for 326 cows, at 20 lb. butter each, 6520 lb. at 1s. per lb. £326; carriage of eighth year's wool to market, 20,260 lb. at 1d. per lb. £118,	444	
Killed 22 oxen for rations to 12 farm-servants, 20 shepherds, and overseer, at £8 each, £176; sold 52 oxen, 5th increase, at £8 each, £416,	592	
	£1516	
EXPENSES, Eighth Year, viz. 1 ploughman at £30; 2 stockmen at £30 each, £60; 9 farm-servants, at £25 each, £225, £180		
Rations to 12 servants at £12 each, £144; rations to overseer, £32; 1 ton salt, £4,	180	
One new dray, £16; chains, and blacksmith's account, £15, 1 tarpaulin, £2; seed wheat, 60 bushels at 10s., £30,	63	
Rent of 10 sections land, £10; licence for heifer station, £10, 20	20	
	578	
	938	
Net proceeds of Farm Produce and Cattle sold during eight years,	£3379	

Figure 4.4 “Schedule showing the Distribution of a Capital of £3,500 in the Purchase of Land, Agricultural Implements, &c., Cattle, Horses, and Sheep, in New South Wales”, in Duncan Mackellar, *The Australian Emigrant's Guide* (Edinburgh: John Fletcher, 1839), 9-12.

Australia-as-Arcadia literature, Alick Osborne cautioned the ‘small capitalist’ who fell dependent on credit from the ‘shop-keeper or usurer’, could ‘say farewell to all the fairy visions of rural felicity and ease.’¹⁶²

There are a number of processes going on in these emigrant guides, which bring into focus the transformation of land under review in this chapter. Economic narratives of land settlement, such as those in despatches, reports and emigrant guides, constituted the settler as a ‘capitalist’ or ‘investor’. This marked a revolution in politically sanctioned behaviour. Throughout the eighteenth century, speculation, whether in government bonds or otherwise, had been considered by some polemicists as tantamount to corruption. In the words of Bolingbroke, ‘jobbing be to that of trade, what the spirit of faction is to liberty’.¹⁶³ Even into the 1820s, the colonial state had sought to protect against purely commercial uses of land, attempting to reserve it for *bona fide* settlers.¹⁶⁴ But as land was increasingly reconstituted as a mechanism of economic organisation, so was the investor a legitimated actor. By the mid-1830s, Governor Bourke acknowledged that even as ‘bona fide Settlers’ complained of ‘Land Sharks’ and ‘Land Jobbers’, he was satisfied that ‘whatever opinion may be formed of their proceedings, their existence is a pregnant proof of the vigorous spirit of competition prevalent at the Government Sales’.¹⁶⁵

In these ways, emigrant guides can be read as a variation on the ‘investor manuals’ proliferating in England and France in the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁶⁶ These guides, with tables outlining return on investment and narratives of economic interconnectedness, operated as social and technical devices that reconstituted investing as politically legitimate and socially desirable. They equipped settlers with norms, skills, rules, and calculative devices to engage in speculation in land or sheep farming. Emigrant guides were read in conjunction with a whole range of

¹⁶² Alick Osborne, *Notes on the present state and prospects of society in New South Wales* (London: J. Cross, 1833), 15.

¹⁶³ Quoted in Pocock, “The political economy of Burke’s analysis of the French Revolution”, 200.

¹⁶⁴ In the early colony, the great majority of land title consisted of little more than the governor’s permission, written in the form of a ‘letter of occupation’, which immediately became commercially valuable and tradable. Trade of these titles, which often had imprecise boundaries, flourished, especially in Sydney. See: Alan Atkinson, “Taking Possession: Sydney’s First Householders”, in Graeme Aplin (ed.) *A Difficult Infant: Sydney Before Macquarie* (Sydney: New South Wales University Press, 1988), 79.

¹⁶⁵ Bourke to Glenelg, 6 September 1837, *HRA* 1:19, 77.

¹⁶⁶ Alex Preda, “The Rise of the Popular Investor: Financial Knowledge and Investing in England and France, 1840-1880,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (March 1, 2001): 205-32; Karin Knorr Cetina and Alex Preda (eds.), *The Sociology of Financial Markets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

seemingly benign textual innovations backed by state authority. From 1831, the *Government Gazette* was filled with advertisements for plots of land for sale.¹⁶⁷ These were underpinned by the records of the surveyors department, including ledger books recording applications for purchase and the cadastral maps used to publicise auctions (**figure 4.5**).¹⁶⁸ Innovations in land registration and conveyance of title secured and simplified the transfer of land titles, culminating in the *Real Property Act* of 1862, which introduced the ‘Torrens System’.¹⁶⁹ As John Weaver has written, this innovative combination of legal and cadastral technologies facilitated the conversion of ‘frontiers into assets’.¹⁷⁰ In turn, licencing auctioneers to conduct legitimate sales facilitated the extension of sale throughout the counties.¹⁷¹ While derided by some moralists as fostering a culture of ‘land gambling’ that ‘poisoned the political mind as well as the social’, state-sanctioned auctions were big business (as opposed to illegal ‘night’ auctions) that fuelled competition between auctioneers and heightened competition between investors. By the 1850s, land sale advertisements were accompanied by weekly ‘Property Circulars’ in weekend newspapers, representing a new target of intervention, the ‘Land Market’.¹⁷² Through these literary

¹⁶⁷ These were brief but seemingly endless, typically reading: “DURHAM, 740, Seven hundred and forty acres, more or less, parish unnamed, at *Upper Paterson*; bounded on the south by Charles Boyell’s additional grant; on the east by Allyn River; on the north and west by section lines. *Applied for by George Townsend*. Price 5s. per acre”. See, *Government Gazette*, Jan 13 1836, Issue 204, 15.

¹⁶⁸ These maps and charts produced by the surveyors office corresponded to the content of 13 books, to which the entirety of the activity of land disposal in the colony could be reduced. The most important were the ‘Half Monthly Returns on Applications’, which tabulated the entire process of grants and sales, including the name of the original applicant, the date of application, description of title, decision on application or the date it would be advertised for auction, the minimum upset price per acre, and who was the final purchaser and at what price. The entire process hinged on a middle column of these pages, the “Surveyor General’s Report”, which determined whether the proposed lot was objectionable for any reason such as conflicts with existing plots. The majority of the reports in this column read with chilling brevity: ‘vacant and unobjectionable’. See: SANSW: Surveyor-General; NRS 13932, Rules and Regulations of Surveyor General’s Department [5-2700]; SANSW: Surveyor-General; NRS 13796, Half monthly returns of applications received to purchase particular portions of Crown land [7/1202]. The technology of mapping as an agent of colonization has now been much commented upon. See, for example: Simon Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye: How Explorers Saw Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹⁶⁹ Robert Crundwell, Hilary Golder, and Robert Wood, *From Parchments to Passwords: A History of the Land Titles Office of New South Wales* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1995).

¹⁷⁰ Weaver has described as similar processes as such: ‘An astonishing conceptual revolution worked out in both old- and new-world settings, the most tangible and non-moveable property conceivable was organised into interests and condensed into paper assets that, in good market conditions, could be cycled quickly from person to person, person to corporation so on... the representation of land on documents participated in a metaphysical revolution by which words and numbers could stand in for something larger and concrete... the formation of frontiers into assets’. Weaver, *The Great Land Rush*, 92-93.

¹⁷¹ Seven auctioneers in Sydney had become fifty-four by 1840, when they were required to pay £10 fee to practice. See: “Report from the Select Committee on the Auctioneer’s Licencing Bill”, *V&P LCNSW*, 704-718.

¹⁷² In contrast to the dour advertisements in the *Government Gazette*, advertisements in commercial newspapers by private auctioneers could read: ‘This unique property is beyond all others highly eligible

Figure 4.5 Plan of a portion of the Goodridge - Leigh Estate: divided into allotments and farms adjoining the town of Broulee / to be sold by auction by Messrs Hebblewhite & Tickery, 1840. Courtesy NLA.

representations, emigrant guides, the surveyor-general's records, maps, advertisements, and auctioneer reports, a 'demand' for land was constructed in partnership between state and non-

to the small capitalist, either as safe, lucrative, and immediately returning Investment, as a desirable and respectable private residence; or as a situation for business commanding one of the most public and Improving thoroughfares'. *Australian*, 11 Feb 1847 (ad). The first 'Property Circular' was by the auctioneers Burgis and Bowles, published in *Empire* from late 1856, which did little more than describe the sales of the previous week. Within a few years this had been eclipsed by circulars by the auctioneers R.P. Richardson and Thomas Mort, which the *Herald* published side by side from mid-1859. Competition between the circulars spurred innovation, and within months both had become longer and more flamboyant as a means of livening their subject matter. The circulars would speak of the land market being 'dull' or 'alive', or conversationally talk of a 'regression on the land market', the 'apathy which has characterised the land market', 'a crisis in the land market', 'forestalling the land market', 'movements of the land market', the conditions which would 'test the land market'. *SMH*, 27 Jan 1859, 10. See: *SMH*, 18 Oct 1854, 8; *SMH*, 14 April 1860, 2. (in Mort & Co Circular); *SMH*, 3 January 1860 (Richardson and Wench); *SMH*, 7 Jan 1858, 5; *SMH*, 22 Jan 1844, 2; *Empire*, 29 Sept 1855, 5.

state actors. Collectively, these ephemeral artefacts were the kinds of ‘genres’ Mary Poovey described as mediating the emergence of the ‘credit economy’. Indeed, all these devices were the flip side of an emergent system of colonial borrowing and pastoral credit.¹⁷³ The central motivation of all these processes was mobilising the investing ‘capitalist’.

In another fashion, by targeting men with money and family dependents, emigrant guides helped to cultivate the capitalist as a distinctly ‘masculine’ figure that was acquisitive, domestic, sober, and rational, if tempered with those anxieties noted by Osborne.¹⁷⁴ Such narratives affirmed the Ricardian economic community was a community of ‘men’. Again, this gendered subject was a product of eighteenth-century debates over the legitimacy of ‘commercial society’. In Chapter Two, we saw that debate centred on two competing masculinities. One was looking backwards at the landowning, independent, rugged, and virtuous citizen. This conception of the landowner persisted into the nineteenth century with radicals who painted colonies as a lost Arcadia, and likely lived on in Australia’s frontier myths of the Bushman¹⁷⁵. In response, defenders of commerce styled ‘commercial man’ as sober, polite, and of rational ‘opinion’, re-casting the virtuous landowner as an anachronistic barbarian.¹⁷⁶ Commercial man was also contrasted with the sensuality of the reparative ‘woman’, whose domestic influence softened the callous egoism commercial transaction might engender, reinforcing his politeness and refinement that was essential to commercial transaction.¹⁷⁷ The colonial ‘capitalist’ and ‘investor’ can be understood as descendent of this latter masculine ideal. Emigrant guides, often written by evangelical reformers that identified economic law with the laws of Providence, confirmed this domestic and rational, middle class ‘man’ as the idealised figure of colonisation. In this way, even as we are learning that Sydney’s commercial scene was populated with women, it was this ‘masculine’ ideal

¹⁷³ Mary Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain* (University of Chicago Press, 2008). See Chapter Five of this thesis for more on this emergent system.

¹⁷⁴ For an exploration of these attributes in the colonial context, especially the anxieties, see: Karen Downing, *Restless Men: Masculinity and Robinson Crusoe, 1788-1840* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

¹⁷⁵ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1966).

¹⁷⁶ On the eighteenth-century story, see: J.G.A. Pocock, ‘The mobility of property and the rise of eighteenth-century sociology’, *Virtue, Commerce and History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 103-123.

¹⁷⁷ John Tosh, *A Man’s Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

that shaped the public ritual of the respectable, daytime auctions, confirmed in the handshakes between gentlemen and their promises to repay debts (**figure 4.6**). Along with the tethering of manhood to paid work that or erased women from contributing to business, these instances re-rendered the ‘economic’ as a distinctly masculine space.¹⁷⁸

Finally, as Carmichael’s guide indicated, the ‘capitalist’ was not a homogenous figure, but could be ‘large’, ‘moderate’, or ‘small’. Indeed, it was the ‘small capitalist’, rather than the mythologised yeoman, that occupied official discourse as the idealised figure of social mobility. He was a mark of aspiration for labourers, and himself an aspirant to become a large capitalist. The small capitalist thus served as the target of a range of government interventions, such as Grey’s plan to convert deposits in the Savings Bank into credits to buy land.¹⁷⁹ During the depression, the Select Committee on Monetary Confusion in 1843 identified the ‘small capitalist’ as the source of recovery, possessing small but ‘idle, uninvested capital in the Colony’ which could refinance the illiquid colony.¹⁸⁰ By the 1850s, newspapers called upon the CLEC to ‘send out small capitalists’, or what witnesses to the 1843 committee called the ‘middle class of the community’, so as to ‘regulate the proportion between capital and labour’ and ‘keep a constant supply of the latter without impairing its remuneration and without resorting to the miserable expedient of stopping emigration altogether’.¹⁸¹ The celebrated small property-owning, respectable wage-earner was beginning to emerge in the colonial imaginary.

After self-government and male enfranchisement, small capitalists were targeted for a widening set of projects in colony-building.¹⁸² ‘Debentures for the working classes’ were issued

¹⁷⁸ These characteristics were clearly carried from Britain. See, for example: John Tosh “Masculinities in an Industrialising Society”, *Journal of British Studies* 44 (April 2005): 330-342. For the ‘rediscovery’ of women in Sydney’s commercial scene, see: Catherine Bishop, *Minding Her Own Business* (Sydney: New South Publishing, 2015).

¹⁷⁹ Grey to Fitz-Roy, 29 July 1847, *HRA* 1:25, 689-90; Fitz-Roy to Grey, 28 December 1848, *HRA* 1:26, 779-80.

¹⁸⁰ “Report from the Select Committee on Monetary Confusion”, *V&P LCNSW 1843*: G. Miller in evidence, 20 September 1843, 17, 18; W.C. Botts, in evidence, 20 September 1843, 19, 20; T.W. Smart, in evidence, 23 September 1843, 49; W.H. Hart, in evidence, 12 September 1843, 4; James Mitchell, in evidence, 22 September 1843, 36; F. Kemble, in evidence, 20 September 1843, 14. Charles Roemer, a former bank chairman, endorsed only discipline in his response: ‘people must form more correct judgments, as to the profitable nature of their pursuits, and make their arrangements accordingly.’ In evidence, 22 September, 1843, 40.

¹⁸¹ *SMH*, 1 December 1848, 2.

¹⁸² The public loan had become a staple of colonial politics to raise funds for public works, including the railways, now secured against the colony’s general revenue. See: 17 Vic No 34 and 35, 18 Vic No. 30 and 35, 19 Vic No 38, 20 Vic No 1. These were consolidated in 1857 into 21 Vic No. 41a.

Figure 4.6 Walter G. Mason, *A sale of land by auction at Norwood, near Sydney, on the road to Parramatta* Mason (Sydney: J.R. Clarke, 1857). National Library of Australia.

at £10, promoted to ‘furnish to every man a sort of savings bank of his own’. Securities bought by the ‘working class and small capitalists’, newspapers endorsed, would encourage civic engagement, so that ‘he’ who had ‘hitherto regarded as valueless his privilege in the franchise ... will now consider it his duty to exercise it carefully for the future, and to instill the same idea into the minds of his fellow workmen’.¹⁸³ In 1857, Henry Parkes, champion of democratic working-class politics, published a pamphlet by Thomas Mort, a leading Sydney businessmen, promoting the sale of railway bonds to colonial workers. If rail ‘shares were properly distributed’, Mort argued, ‘the labouring classes should likewise have a stake and an interest in the colony’, which would ‘form one of the strongest bonds of common interest that a country could desire for its well-being’.¹⁸⁴ And so, at the time the franchise was extended to all men in New South Wales, citizenship was removed from a ‘stake’ in the land, to the speculative prosperity in government

¹⁸³ ‘Mercantile and Money Article’, *SMH*, 20 June 1857, 2; *The Shipping Gazette and Sydney General Trade List*, 22 June 1857, 151; *Empire*, June 27, 1857, 2; *Bell’s Life in Sydney*, 27 June 1857, 2.

¹⁸⁴ Thomas Mort, *The Question of the Government Guarantee Railway Shares* (Sydney: Henry Parkes, 1854), 5.

bonds. In the capitalist, what was once tantamount to corruption was now an expression of civic engagement.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined a complex set of transformations in which colonial land settlement was gradually reconstituted from a process of founding the morally-ordered community, as expressed in practices of land granting, to a site on which dynamic economic relations and processes could be projected. Here, I have traced how residue from the household conceptions of community initially shaped the governance of the colony, before being reconfigured as a ‘mechanism’ to regulate economic relations. A key figure in this transition was the colonial theorist Edward Gibbon Wakefield. Wakefield was significant not because his theory of systematic colonisation was entirely original, but because it translated the problem of settler colonies into the technical language of political economy. This translation first found official expression in Viscount Goderich’s famous 1831 despatches to Governor Darling outlining new land regulations, the importance of which was not as policy – which was largely undermined by practices of squatting – but to institute the metaphors of Ricardian political economy as the language of government, and the capitalist and labourer as constitutive subjects of empire. The 1831 despatches should not be treated as an instantaneous watershed, however. Rather, we have also begun to see here the iterative process of theory and government. The new land policy created its own problems, and as these continued to be examined and reported on by the colonial legislature in political economic terms, so it facilitated the construction of rival political economies and interests. In either authoring or responding to government reports, Whigs, squatters, radicals and liberals all appropriated the language of political economy to justify their claims. A mode of economic argumentation and justification began to emerge in the colony in debates over the configuration of land settlement.

As land was reconstituted an economic ‘machine’ so it necessitated new techniques of government, such as pricing, leases and public loans. The central object of these mechanisms was invariably to regulate the proportion or distribution of ‘capitalists’ and ‘labourers’ in the colony.

As such, these two figures were constituted as key subjects of governmental management and, in turn, individual self-cultivation. In this way, this Chapter has also examined the emergence of the ‘capitalist’ as a historical subject. As both government and moral polemicists encouraged, equipped, disciplined and instructed the capitalist as a subject of investment and wealth accumulation, so was profit-making legitimised as socially, morally and politically desirable in the nineteenth century. And in New South Wales, profit-making was geared in one direction: wool.

Economic Narratives of Wool growing

Wool made Australia a solvent nation, and, in the end, a free one.

W.K. Hancock¹

THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY AUSTRALIAN WOOLGROWER WAS ENAMoured of number. Inside the cover of his notebook dated 1850, Henry Henty, a pastoralist in the Port Phillip District, had scribbled what now, etched and faded, looks like an elaborate and illegible algorithm, occasionally punctuated with a scrawling £ symbol to pertinent effect. On closer inspection we decipher the erratic jotting of sums and equations, the expressions of a ticking, calculative mind. Among Henty's other archived possessions were printed wool broker reports, whose number and sums were much more cleanly organised, and his Lett's Diary for 1868, which included wage tables, lists of weights and measurements, an income tax table, and contacts for estate agents, merchants, and credit brokers.²

The letters of colonial pastoralists were saturated in numbers, too. In the early 1850s, William Young, on the Peel River near Tamworth, wrote to his brother still lamenting the £400 sterling he had 'lost' a decade ago, but could now also proudly boast eighty horses, 300 head of cattle, 27,000 sheep, thirty-three men, twenty-three shepherds, and eight watchmen under his employ. He complained, too, that shepherds' wages were likely to increase from £20 to '£30 or £40 a year in consequence of the goldfields'.³ Not that numbers were always a matter for gloating. 'You must not my dear sister,' William Adney wrote home to England in 1843, 'fancy that because I have a hut and servants of my own and keep two horses and have 1,300 sheep that I

¹ W.K. Hancock, *Australia* (London: Ernest Benn, 1930), 12.

² Henry Henty, 1850-52, Box 117/5 and Box 118/4, Henty Family Papers, SLV. MS 7739.

³ Young to his brother, 23 July 1852. Rawson Family Papers. NLA, MS 1759.

have begun to make my fortune. No, there is much more to be done before I can have even a chance of success'.⁴

No figure in Australian colonial historiography has been represented more richly and diversely than the woolgrower. Pastoral history was, for a long time, almost synonymous with national history and the woolgrower cast and re-cast as its stock character. There was, to be sure, no archetypal woolgrower in the colony. He was both large and small, with greater flocks and lesser ones, running sheep on his own land, 'squatting' on Crown land, and often both, regularly coming into conflict with authorities and neighbours over the precise boundaries of his 'run'.⁵ The great figure of Australian pastoralism was the squatter, occupying swathes of land beyond the settled Nineteen Counties and driving pastoral expansion into the interior from the early 1830s. The 'pastoralist' and 'squatter' were not necessarily synonymous. The former tended to have been granted large holdings in early settlement, constituting the respectable families in the settled districts. The latter might be a rugged opportunist, owning no land at all, arriving rich or with borrowed capital once the frontier had been opened. The old families detested the vulgar new, but often they were conflated, too, for as Governor Gipps noted in 1844, 'almost every body, who has any property at all, is a Squatter'.⁶

The great woolgrower could be the self-styled colonial aristocrat, commanding vast acres and a builder of stately homes, the first pick for the magistrates' bench and Legislative Council, a manorial-like patriarch in communities such as the Macarthur's Camden or Alexander Berry's Shoalhaven.⁷ But he could also be, wrote Coral Lansbury, 'the last Arcadian in sentiment and belief, driving a mob of sheep from one waterhole to the next, a man of primitive simplicity and

⁴ William Adeney to Ann Adeney, 7 September 1843, Adney Family Papers, SLV MS 9111.

⁵ On these conflicts, see: John C. Weaver, "Beyond the Fatal Shore: Pastoral Squatting and the Occupation of Australia, 1826 to 1852," *The American Historical Review* 101:4 (1996): 981-1007.

⁶ Michael Roe, *Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia, 1835-1851* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1965), 49-51; Gipps to Stanley, 3 April 1844, *HRA* 1:23, 518. Bourke had similarly informed Glenelg the previous decade: 'The unauthorised occupiers of remote Crown Lands do not wholly consist of small Flock-Owners of slender means, but of the agents and shepherds of the wealthiest Colonists, residing within the limits of location, who are continually balancing between the opposite motives presented by the cheapness of unauthorised occupation on the one hand and the desire of adding to their permanent property in land on the other'. Bourke to Glenelg, 6 September 1837, *HRA* 1:19, 78.

⁷ Alan Atkinson, *Camden* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1988); Barrie Dyster, *Master & servant: building and running the grand houses of Sydney, 1788-1850* (Kensington: New South Wales University Press, 1989).

cynical acceptance of the vicissitudes of life'.⁸ The squatters constituted a powerful interest, forming the 'Pastoral Association' in 1844, and were in conflict first with the governors and then 'the people' for access and control of land. They were not, however, as Marxist historians once wished, a quasi-feudal pastoral patriarchy in dialectical struggle with urban bourgeois liberals. The biggest woolgrowers had a hand in everything: sheep, ships, banks and merchant capital.⁹ Long after forging the 'frontier', historians have since painted the woolgrower with much variation. Once remembered romantically as legend and pioneer, he has since become a conduit for understanding colonial masculinities, technological innovation and the 'great land rush' of settler colonialism, while facing trial for the violence of dispossession and degradation of trees, soils, and rivers.¹⁰

This chapter, as the interest in Henty's notebooks suggests, contextualises the woolgrower in a different mode again, in an avalanche of number and calculation that rendered him the most bureaucratised and enumerated figure on the continent. This calculation protruded into the practice of all woolgrowers; nothing escaped counting. By the mid-1840s, every station and all its livestock, employees, buildings, and modes of branding were recorded and centralised by the Commissioners of Crown Lands. This counting signified a particular imagining of colonial pastoralism, which in the second quarter of the nineteenth century was coming to be reconceived and categorised as a distinctly 'economic' project. In the previous chapter, we noted that pastoralism was only one use of land argued for in the new economic debates over colonial land settlement. We now explore the increasing dominance of this perspective: the capitalist

⁸ Coral Lansbury, "Terra Australis Dickensia," *Modern Language Studies* 1, no. 2 (1971): 12.

⁹ Barrie Dyster, "The Discrete Interests of the Bourgeoisie before the Age of Gold" in Max Kelly (ed.) *Nineteenth-Century Sydney: Essays in Urban History* (Sydney: Sydney University Press: 1978), 1-11; C. N. Connolly, "The Middling class Victory in New South Wales, 1853-62: A Critique of the Bourgeois-pastoralist Dichotomy," *Historical Studies* 19, no. 76 (1981): 369-87.

¹⁰ On the status as 'pioneer', see: Richard Waterhouse, "Australian Legends: Representations of the Bush 1813-1913", *Australian Historical Studies*, 31:115 (2000): 201-221; John Hirst, "The Pioneer Legend", in *Sense & Nonsense in Australian History* (Melbourne: Blank Inc., 2005), 174-196. On masculinities and violence, see most recently: Angela Woollacott, "Frontier Violence and Settler Manhood," *History Australia* 6, no. 1 (January 1, 2009): 11.1-11.15; Rebecca Wood, "Frontier Violence and the Bush Legend," *History Australia* 6, no. 3 (January 1, 2009): 67.1-67.19; On technological innovation: Geoff Raby, *Making Rural Australia: An Economic History of Technical and Institutional Creativity, 1788-1860* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1995); On the broader settler context, see: John C. Weaver, *Great Land Rush and the Making of the Modern World, 1650-1900* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2003). On the environment, see: W. K. Hancock, *Discovering Monaro: A Study of Man's Impact on His Environment* (Cambridge: University Press, 1972); Eric C. Rolls, *A Million Wild Acres: 200 Years of Man and an Australian forest* (Melbourne: Nelson, 1981).

woolgrower was encouraged by officials and elites at every stage with novel institutions, instruments, and incentives. Before wool made Australia either solvent or free, the woolgrower was ‘made’ a subject of economic governance. In this way, I read colonial wool as a performance of the second factor in the Ricardian economic community, ‘capital’.

Historians have tended to describe the emergence of large-scale sheep farming in New South Wales as a moment of heroic individualism or amoral opportunism. Here, I argue pastoralism is best understood as a project in imperial and colonial state crafting, by focusing on the constitution of the pastoralist and squatter as figures to ‘perform’ in global trade through legal and financial mechanisms. This process began when the Board of Trade, in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, reclassified the woollen trade from serving distinct military to ‘economic’ objectives, thus transforming the woolgrower from a political subject in the national household to an economic agent in a system of production and distribution. This image was projected onto the colony in select committees, regulations, and governors’ correspondence.¹¹ The consequence of this projection was the phenomenon of large-scale squatting, encouraged by easy pastoral credit and free imports of colonial wool into Britain. While squatting first emerged as an aberration to the policy of Wakefieldian concentrated settlement, authorities soon sanctioned the expansion of flocks and encouraging the associated pursuit of individual ‘profit’. If authorities did not ‘make’ the squatter, they crafted him into an economic form, distinct from his American or Cape Colony namesake. By the 1840s, colonial commentators could acknowledge the ‘squatting system’ was ‘perhaps the most strange phenomenon in political economy to be found in any country’.¹² It did not follow textbook principles, but was the centrepiece of a colonial community being redefined in terms of production and accumulation. Not everyone agreed with pastoral expansion. Frontier violence caused alarm for imperial humanitarians as did the ambiguity over property rights for governors seeking to retain control of Crown land. The efforts to address these concerns with the

¹¹ In emphasising shifts in Britain’s trade policy in the 1820s to the development of colonial pastoralism, I am reviving the perspective of a much older literature: see: Brian Fitzpatrick, *British Imperialism and Australia, 1783-1833* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1939); Stephen H. Roberts, *The Squatting Age in Australia, 1835-1847* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1964), 42; E.O.G. Shann, *An Economic History of Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 120; Philip McMichael, *Settlers and the Agrarian Question: Foundations of Capitalism in Colonial Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), xi, 35-36.

¹² *Morning Chronicle*, 10 April 1844, 2.

implementation of licenses, leases, bureaucracy, and enumeration worked to consolidate the squatter into the productive agent first imagined by the Board of Trade.

As noted in Chapter One, economic historians have long attempted to explain the predominance of pastoralism in the colonial economy. Rather than assuming a trajectory of ‘development’ in the context of British industrialisation, however, the approach here is to take seriously the commentary made by St. Julian and Silvester in 1853 on the novel character of sheep farming in colonial Australia noted in Chapter One: ‘for the first time almost in history of the world’, the ‘sheep famer was engaged in a sort of mixed pursuit, half pastoral and half commercial’. This chapter seeks to recover this novelty. Doing so requires rethinking the colonial woolgrower from three, interlinked perspectives. The first as a figure of transformation, then an agent of production, and finally, a dependent of credit. I will trace these in three sections, focusing first on re-conceptions of trade by the Board of Trade in the 1820s, then the colonial adaptation of these changes with the rise of squatting, and finally, the *Liens on Wool and Stock Mortgage Act* of 1843 which formalised the woolgrower as capitalist.

The transformation of the English and colonial woolgrower

The story of Australian wool typically begins with John Macarthur, the NSW Corps officer turned pioneer pastoralist.¹³ After some early experiments cross breeding with Spanish merino by colonial officers, Macarthur visited England with samples in 1802. He received the endorsement of a number of London manufacturers, with whom he petitioned the Privy Council to encourage colonial wool production to cover shortages during the war with France. Macarthur’s effort and timing earned him a grant of 5,000 acres at Camden, just south-west of Sydney, in 1805, with another 5,000 if experiments realised expectation.¹⁴ It would be twenty years before New South Wales’ wool made a significant contribution to British imports, but by mid-century the colony supplied English manufacturers with half of its raw material. Economic historians have long tried

¹³ For a revision of the old myth, see: John Cheyne Garrahan and Les White, *Merinos, Myths and Macarthurs: Australian Graziers and Their Sheep, 1788-1900* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1985).

¹⁴ Camden to King, 31 October 1804, HRA, V, 161-2. For Blaxland, Castlereagh to King, 13 July 1805, HRA V, 490. Macarthur received this second grant 1822 on Bigge’s recommendation: Bathurst to Brisbane, 10 July 1822, HRA 1:10, 655.

to disrupt the teleological ‘romance’ of pastoral historiography by pinpointing moments and reasons for the acceleration in exports in its first thirty years.¹⁵ But the story can also be disrupted in another, perhaps more fundamental way, by recalling how Macarthur understood, or at least justified, his proposals for colonial wool. His terms of reference, we discover, were in sharp distinction from how wool growing was rationalised by government only twenty years later.

In his written proposals to the Lords of Treasury and the Privy Council, Macarthur explained it was ‘his duty’ to ‘represent’ to ministers how the climate and ‘unlimited extent of luxuriant Pastures’ in New South Wales could raise ‘millions of those valuable animals’ in a few years, with ‘little other expence [sic] than the hire of a few Shepherds’. The softness of Australian wool, Macarthur claimed, was superior to Spanish wool. He was ‘convinced of the practicability of supplying this Country with any quantity of fine Wool it may require’.¹⁶ His signature justification for Crown assistance was to assert that ‘no narrow or selfish views of monopoly influence the promoters of this undertaking, but that their principal object is to create an abundant supply of fine wool for our manufactories at a moderate rate, and to relieve this country from its present dependence on foreign nations for that valuable commodity’.¹⁷ While personal aggrandisement might have been his motivation, what is crucial to note is that Macarthur thought security the most compelling justification for his plan. The Privy Council were persuaded and recommended a large land grant for Macarthur precisely because it might help ‘sever dependence’ on France.¹⁸

Macarthur’s framing of colonial pastoralism in terms of British national security had currency among his contemporaries. When Commissioner Bigge gave his famous endorsement of colonial wool production twenty years later, he similarly enthused:

¹⁵ For an overview of approaches, see: Graham J. Abbott, *The Pastoral Age: A Re-Examination* (South Melbourne: Macmillan, 1971), 1-13; Ian W. McLean, *Why Australia Prospered: The Shifting Sources of Economic Growth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 57-79.

¹⁶ John Macarthur, *Statement of the Improvement and Progress of the Breed of Fine Woolled Sheep in New South Wales* (London, 1803).

¹⁷ “Proposal for establishing a Company to encourage the Increase of Fine Woolled Sheep in New South Wales”, 30 January 1804, *HRNSW*, v, 307-08. See also: Captain Macarthur’s Memorial, 4 May 1804, *HRNSW*, v, 370-73, which includes a request for a 10,000 acre grant.

¹⁸ Cottrell (Privy Council for Trade and Plantations) to Under Secretary Cooke, 14 July 1804, *HRNSW*, v, 400.

The success that has attended the perseverance and intelligence of Mr. J. McArthur, in the improvement of his own flocks, affords an unquestionable proof of the value of this branch of rural industry in New South Wales, both as it regards the employment of the convicts, and the saving of all expense to government in their subsistence, as well as in the production of an article of export to Great Britain, that is indispensable to the progress of her great staple manufacture; and that while it renders her independent of foreign supplies, causes no interference with the natural and most beneficial course of her own agriculture, or with the produce of her own soil.¹⁹

Bigge canvassed ‘the unquestionable proof of the value’ of colonial pastoralism in broader terms than Macarthur, however this ‘value’ was not an economic assessment, but addressed a series of discrete imperial and British domestic needs. This included managing the cost of convict imperialism, rendering Britain independent of foreign powers and enabling Britain to progress her woollen manufacturing without impinging domestic agriculture. Bigge was in the ambit of ‘agrarian patriotism’, where landed enterprise was conceived as a moral, political and militaristic endeavour. His recommendations to ‘encourage’ colonial pastoralism included the removal of the East India Company’s privileges to reduce the cost of shipping, large land grants to wealthier settlers, the distribution of convicts into the interior to work as shepherds, the formation of a joint-stock company, and exempting colonial wool from duties imposed on all imports by a recent 1819 Wool Duties Act.²⁰

Following Bigge, in 1822 a newly formed Australian Agricultural Society similarly petitioned Lord Bathurst to exempt New South Wales from wool duties. Again, echoing the themes of British agrarian patriotism, it feared ‘such a Duty would most materially cramp and frustrate all their exertions towards improvement in the infant State of the Colony’. The ‘Memorialists’ were ‘desirous to lay out their Capital’ and ‘promote an object of such National Benefit’, trusting ‘their Example’ would encourage smaller settlers, ‘find employment for the rising Generation and transported Convicts’, reduce expenses and make ‘the Colony ... a valuable

¹⁹ Bigge, *First Report*, 161. See also, Bigge, *Third Report*, 18, 153.

²⁰ 59 Geo. III. c52. Under the Act (discussed below), tariffs on imported colonial wool, which had been charged at 1d. per lb, would rise to 3d. per lb. on the 5 January 1823 and again to 6d. per lb. on 5 January 1826, along with all other imported foreign wool.

appendage to the Parent Country'.²¹ An earlier petition against the 1819 Act had argued a trade in colonial wool would, above all, create 'a nursery for British seamen', thus keeping the navy strong in times of peace.²²

The few historians who have recognised the relative archaism of Macarthur and Bigge's arguments have been quick to label them 'mercantilist'.²³ But here we get a sense of what is obscured using this term as an interpretive category. At issue for Macarthur, Bigge, and the Agricultural Society was not wool in any coherent deductive theory of trade and production, as 'mercantilism' implies, but more to achieve highly specific national, imperial, or militaristic aims. Wool growing in Australia was first conceived not as an economic activity but to a large extent, a moral, political, and militaristic one. While the immediate context of this outlook was the French Wars, what was being invoked in each case was a long existing idiom in which the woollen trade had been ultimately assessed in relation to the needs of the national 'household'. To understand the economisation of the Australia woolgrower, we need to emphasise not the foundations established by Macarthur but the distinctive break with his vocabulary. The particular character of Australian pastoralism, and distinctiveness of Australian squatting, only makes sense in light of a more general transformation of the British imperial woolgrower from a figure of security to a figure of production.

For a long time, wool functioned as a crucial political commodity in the English kingdom, connecting the poorest spinners to great landowners, and constituting its most important strategic advantage over rival nations.²⁴ Maintaining the supremacy of wool created a complex of legislation, representing not a coherent 'policy' but the incremental interplay of interest lobbying,

²¹ Agricultural Society Petition, in Brisbane to Bathurst, 7 September 1822, *HRA* 1:10, 782-3. Similar sentiment continued to be expressed by the Society's president, Sir John Jameson, at the end of the decade: Agricultural Society, *Report of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of New South Wales for 1829* (Sydney: R. Mansfield, 1829), 43.

²² "Petition of the Gentleman, Clergy, Settlers, Merchants, Land-Holders and other free inhabitants", 22 March 1819, *HRA* 1:10, 63.

²³ For Macarthur as a 'mercantilist', see: John Gascoigne, *The Enlightenment and the Origins of European Australia* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 81; For Bigge, see: Craufurd Goodwin, *The Image of Australia; British Perception of the Australian Economy from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1974), 9.

²⁴ This dated back to at least the fourteenth century, when the Crown had become dependent on taxing wool to fund the Hundred Years War, which affected both landowners and merchants and created a unified political interest in opposition to the King, beginning the transformation of Parliament from a site of justice to politics. See: John Brewer, *Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688-1783* (Harvard University Press, 1988), 4.

royal patronage and national security.²⁵ The interests of English woollen manufacturers, for example, were elevated by the Burying in Woollen Acts of 1666 to 1680 which required the dead to be buried in English woollen shrouds, to the exclusion of foreign textile.²⁶ By 1806 there were seventy Acts of Parliament in force regulating the employment, trade and manufacture of wool.²⁷ The most important and contentious of these was a complete ban on the export of British raw wool, enacted in 1660 and unmoved until 1824, including the confinement of Irish and American wool to British trade.²⁸ The ban reflected assumptions about England's superior quality wool and woollen manufacturers. While English manufacturers were able to import foreign wool freely to top up their supplies, English growers were prohibited from exporting raw material and required to supply local manufacturers only, so as to force continental rivals to purchase finished English goods. Denying rival nations raw exports while dominating the export cloth and textile market would secure a favourable 'balance of trade', that is, a positive import income and create reserves of bullion to pay for armies. In this sense, woolgrowers were not imagined in a community of economic agents, but a household of political subjects.²⁹

In this context, the English gentleman woolgrower along with his tenant farmers constituted a 'landed interest', in constant friction with the 'manufacturing' and 'merchant interest'. To recall an important distinction made in Chapter Two, this tension was animated by rival assumptions about whether trade or agriculture formed the basis of national wealth, strength, and security. These debates, conducted in pamphlets offering 'counsel' to statesmen, focused especially on the wisdom of the export ban and its defects, such as smuggled exports and the increase of Spanish raw imports during the eighteenth century.³⁰ The manufacturing interest

²⁵ Patrick O'Brien, Trevor Griffiths and Philip Hunt, "Political Components of the Industrial Revolution: Parliament and the English Cotton Textile Industry, 1660-1774," *The Economic History Review*, 44, no. 3, (August, 1991): 395-423.

²⁶ The Burying Woollen Acts (18 & 19 Cha II. c4; 30 Cha II c.3; 32 Cha. II c1)..

²⁷ "Report from the Committee the Woollen Manufacture of England", *BPP 1806* iii (268), 571-572. E. Lipson, *The History of the Woollen and Worsted Industries* (London: Black, 1921), 6.

²⁸ For an overview of the long history of this important legislation, see: Julian Hoppit, *Britain's Political Economies: Parliament and Economic Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), Chapter Seven. See also: E. Lipson, *A Short History of Wool and Its Manufacture: Mainly in England* (Melbourne: Heinemann, 1953), 101-2; Lipson, *The History of the Woollen and Worsted Industries*, 99.

²⁹ Peter Bowden, *The Wool Trade in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Macmillan, 1962), 193-214.

³⁰ Through the 1730s and 1740s, repeated calls were made to create a 'register' to track the movement of British wool. See: Joseph Gee, *Impartial Inquiry into the importance and present state of the woollen manufactories of Great Britain* (London: William Wood, 1742); John Newball, *A Scheme to prevent the Running of Wool unmanufactur'd* (Stamford: F. Howgrave, 1744).

argued for its necessity in securing an advantageous trade in woollens that simultaneously drew bullion from other nations to pay for the army and navy, employed more hands than other industries and clothed the nation. Preventing the export of wool, wrote William Webster in 1740, safeguarded Britain becoming a ‘becoming a Province to *France*’.³¹ This was this same ‘fear’ which Macarthur and Bigge played on to promote colonial wool. Landed gentlemen, the growers, argued the topic was ‘more properly the *Gentlemens* [sic] Care and Study’ because unlike the merchant, his ‘Stake is considerable in their Country’ and had the leisure time to give the matter proper ‘Speculation’. The ban, growers argued, only encouraged ‘illicit trading’ and crippled the exertions of ‘the most considerable national interest’, the ‘masters and proprietors of the foundations of all wealth of the nation [i.e., land]’.³² The landed interest claimed the ‘dispute’ had its root in ‘the selfish ungenerous spirit of commerce’; manufacturers reminded that ‘wise legislators’ took such measures to ‘prevent its disorderly subjects from destroying themselves and ruining their country’.³³

Throughout these ongoing disputes, both landowners and merchants tended to appeal to ideas of the nation as a household or an ecology, which necessarily identified the woolgrower as fulfilling distinct duties, responsibilities, or privileges in contributing to the collective wellbeing. This was consistent with the dominant political œconomic paradigm outlined in Chapter Two: ‘An experienced and truly commercial minister will know how to recover the right healthful circulation into a general nutrition of the whole,’ wrote one landed advocate for repealing the export ban, invoking the crucial ‘circulation’ metaphor discussed in Chapter Two. ‘If he considers

³¹ William Webster, *The Consequences of Trade: as to the wealth and strength of any nation; of the woollen trade in particular, By a Draper of London* (London: T. Cooper, 1740), 7, 9, 10; Webster also penned a refutation of his own arguments in, *The draper confuted, or, A candid and impartial, but full answer to The consequences of trade: humbly offer'd to the consideration of both Houses of Parliament* (London: T. Cooper, 1740).

³² John Smith, *Chonicon Rusticum-Commerciale; or, Memoirs of Wool*. Vol. 2. (London: T. Osborne, 1747), 255. See also: John Smith, *The grasiers advocate, or, Free thoughts of wool, and the woollen trade: occasioned chiefly by reading and comparing two late pieces upon the subject, viz. The consequences of trade, &c., by a Draper of London, and An impartial enquiry into the importance and present state of the woollen manufactories of Great Britain* (London: J. Roberts, 1747); Dispute could also take place over the perceived quality of wool See also, John Smith, *A Review of Manufacturers Complaints* (London: printed for Mess. Osborne; Dodsley; Millan; Millar; Shuckburgh 1753).

³³ Thomas Cheplin, *A Letter from a grower of long combing wool* (London, 1782), 3; Anon, *A Letter to the Landed Gentleman and Graziers* (Cambridge: J. Archdeacon), 31.

the community as a plant, he will know that he must not meddle with the roots.’³⁴ What is important is that both arguments for and against the export ban appealed to notions of the organic strength of the ‘whole’. So it was when a Select Committee on the Woollen Manufacture of England came to review these laws in 1806, which described the ban as ‘founded in sound policy’, a pillar of ‘our National Revenue and Strength’.³⁵ It was in this long tradition of household strength Macarthur, Bigge, and the Agricultural Society argued for policies encouraging pastoralism in New South Wales, including a relaxation of import duties.

The end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 created new problems which gave new systems of thought scope for experimentation. The terms for resuming Continental trade were an immediate problem, and would encompass not only revising the efficacy of the export ban, but the woollen trade and role of colonies more generally. These experiments included experiments in reducing tariffs, which were accompanied by decisive statements in Parliament that redefined the political meaning of production and trade. Both the tariff legislation and authorising statements need to be treated in turn, for each had long term consequences in shaping the identity of the colonial pastoralist.

With the resumption of trade, tariffs on wool went through a series of rapid re-regulation. Following a sudden influx of Saxon wool in 1816 that suppressed English prices, in 1819 English growers successfully if temporarily had a substantial duty put on imported foreign wool for the first time in three hundred years, including colonial wool, prompting petitions from New South Wales, as above.³⁶ These duties did not last. A more enduring response to resuming trade were the wide-ranging experiments orchestrated by Huskisson and Robison at the Board of Trade after

³⁴ Thomas Pownall, *Live and Let Live: A Treatise on the Hostile Relationships between the Manufacturer and Land-worker* (London: printed for J. Debrett, 1787), 10, 11.

³⁵ *BPP 1806* iii (268), 573, 575, 580: The report met to discuss petitions for and against the use of certain machinery, contrasting what it called the ‘domestic’ and ‘factory’ system of woollen production. In resolute defense of the latter, it celebrated ‘the general spirit of enterprize and industry among a free and enlightened People, left to the unrestrained exercise of their talents in the employment of a vast capital; pushing to the utmost the principle of the division of labour; calling in all the resources of scientific research and mechanical ingenuity; and finally, availing themselves of all the benefits to be derived from visiting Foreign Countries’. It was ‘right of every man to employ the Capital he inherits, or has acquired according to his own direction’. These were not ‘economic’ precepts, but the ‘privileges which the free and happy Constitution of this Country has long accustomed every Briton to consider a birthright’.

³⁶ This was at 1d. per pound imported. Prior to 1803 all imports had been free and between 1803 and 1819, the duty was trifling, between 5s. and 7s. per cwt. See: *BPP 59 Geo III c52*. Boyd Hilton, *Corn, Cash, Commerce: The Economic Policies of the Tory Governments 1815-1830*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 100-1.

1822. Revisions on wool duties was only one small component of a much larger series of experiments in freer trade. For reasons to be elaborated just below, between 1822 and 1825, the Board repealed three hundred obsolete statutes and clauses on trade, allowed foreign warehousing in Britain and significantly softened the Navigation Acts with the Reciprocity of Duties Acts, which allowed any nation to transport goods into Britain in return for the same privileges, with twenty-seven treaties established by 1844. The Board also removed restrictions on colonial trade, enabling the Canadas to trade with the United States, for example, and prohibitions on foreign goods entering colonial ports. But they also established a system of colonial preferences, most prominently for Canadian timber and wheat and West Indian sugar to the effect of pricing foreign nations out of the market.³⁷ While these colonial preferences would be eroded and then dismantled with the complete repeal of the Navigation Acts in 1849, announcing Britain's complete embrace of 'free trade', in the interim they gave a new impetus and context for colonial production, trade, and development.

It was in this context, and following on from Bigge's recommendations, that Parliament passed a *New South Wales Duty Act* in 1822, exempting colonial raw wool from the 1819 Act and freezing its import duty at 1d. per pound for the next decade. This move gave the colony a sixfold advantage over European woolgrowers.³⁸ Continued lobbying from both landowners and manufacturers saw a new Wool Duty Act in 1824, which repealed the old export ban entirely while equalising all imports at 1d. per pound, before the colonial advantage was reinstated the following July as part of reforms to consolidate customs regulations.³⁹ Importing colonial wool

³⁷ Anthony Howe, *Free Trade and Liberal England, 1846-1946* (Clarendon: Oxford University Press, 1997), 3. Hilton, *Corn, Cash and Commerce*, 191-95.

³⁸ New South Wales Duty Act, 3 Geo IV, c96. Little has been written on the Act. For an older comment, see: John La Nauze, "Australian Tariffs and Imperial Control", *The Economic Record*, 1, no. 2 (1948): 1-17; On the colonial preference system, an important but abandoned topic in need of revision: Alexander Brady, *William Huskisson and Liberal Reform: An Essay on the Changes in Economic Policy in the Twenties of the Nineteenth Century*, (London: Cass, 1967), 132-167. After their success in 1822, pastoralists in New South Wales petitioned again to now have their tariff removed altogether, but were revoked by the Board The Australian growers were told the 1d 'is merely nominal and imposed principally for the purpose of ascertaining the quantity imported'. Growers in Cape Colony also petitioned the Board, seeking terms as favourable as New South Wales. These were acquiesced. Minutes (Horton to Board of Trade), 25 November 1822, BT 5/31, 79; Minutes (Horton to Board of Trade), 2 April 1824, BT 5/32, 80; Horton to Barnard, 7 April 1824, CO 202/12.

³⁹ Lipson, *A Short History of Wool and Its Manufacture*, 30; 6 Geo. IV c.104; Brady, *William Huskisson and Liberal Reform*, 111-17.

in Britain was thus made free, establishing a marginal preference over foreign wools for the next twenty years before colonial preferences were abolished with repeal of the Navigation Acts.

These machinations in tariff policy may seem tenuous and the colony's 1d. tariff advantage over rival Spanish and German producers was trifling in the overall development of colonial pastoralism, especially when compared with the other recommendations made in the Bigge reports. To be sure, the alterations to tariffs also reflected the realities of changing trading patterns across Europe, and Britain's increasing dependence on foreign wool.⁴⁰ The removal of duties, however, marked more than a 'deregulation' of once-protected industries. They were symptoms of a fundamental re-conception of the aims and justification of production and trade. Then, as now, the duty was a signal, or incentive, for certain behaviour. When Bathurst informed Macquarie of the 1822 Colonial Duty Act, he expressed his hope that colonists would 'do justice to the encouragement so liberally extended to them', while the *Sydney Gazette*, 'amply gratified', thought the Act a 'powerful stimulant' that would 'prompt "every man to do his duty"'.⁴¹

The precise nature of this 'duty' was outlined a few years later when Huskisson came to discuss wool in his famous speech to the Commons on foreign commercial policy in March 1825. Comparing the production of wool with cotton, he likened English wool to a 'nursed and dandled ... favourite child' that had 'suffered, rather than profited, by being spoilt and petted in rearing'. In 1825, he explained, Britain's export of manufactured woollen goods, for all its protections, were only 1,765,000 lbs. greater than exports had been in 1765. He compared this with the progress of unprotected cotton:

Now, let me ask the committee, how often, in these sixty years, has the increase of consumption in cotton and silk clothing been contemplated with alarm and jealousy, by the wool-grower, and the woollen manufacturer; by the descendants of those who passed laws, (repealed only within these last ten years) compelling us to be buried in woollens? —And yet what was our consumption of cotton—that other great article of clothing? — in 1765, next to nothing; and what is it now? — greater probably than the whole amount of our woollens, to say nothing of the consumption of

⁴⁰ Lipson, *A Short History of Wool and Its Manufacture*, 30.

⁴¹ Bathurst to Macquarie, 9 September 1822, *HRA* 1:10, 793; *Sydney Gazette*, 29 November 1822, 3.

silk, which has also increased eight-fold. Can any statement show more decidedly the wonderful increase in the power of consumption by this country? Can any thing more forcibly illustrate that general position to which I have already adverted, and which cannot be too strongly impressed on those who legislate for the interests of commerce and industry —that the means which lead to increased consumption, and which are the foundation, as that consumption is the proof, of our prosperity, will be most effectually promoted by an unrestrained competition, not only between the capital and industry of different classes in the same country, but also by extending that competition, as much as possible to all other countries.⁴²

It was noted in Chapter Two that Huskisson's trade reforms were ultimately motivated by an ongoing patriotism rather than the universalist cosmopolitanism of Cobden and Gladstone's *pax-Britannica* free trade reforms after the 1840s. It is for this reason colonies retained an important, preferential status in these formulations, serving as a buffer between English production and rival international interests. However, as the passage also suggests, there was more at stake than old militaristic nationalism. In making the 'consumer' his muse, Huskisson's speech constituted a very different way of narrating wool growing. Like other liberal Tories, such as Goderich's hazy appropriation of Wakefield, Huskisson was coy about his adherence to Ricardian free trade 'theory'. In a speech the following year, against charges of being a 'metaphysician' wedded to 'abstract principles', he was adamant 'Government have pursued this course [of liberalising trade] ... not on the recommendations of visionaries and theorists, but of practical men of business'.⁴³ But his use of metaphor nonetheless registered a relocation of wool onto an economic terrain. First, the national riches or 'wealth' produced by wool was no longer conceived as circulating in the kingdom, but assessed on its own terms, akin to a child that might be stunted or healthily 'grow' or progress. Second, the woolgrower was no longer conceived as a 'root' in the ecology of the political kingdom, but existed in a competition between the 'different classes of the country', and other nations. Wool, here, was conceived not in terms of a conflict of patriotic

⁴² *BPD*, HC, 25 March 1825, § 1200-01.

⁴³ *BPD*, HC, 13 February 1826, § 771. On Huskisson's tactical rhetoric in the trade debates, see: Christopher Rowe, "William Huskisson and the Rhetoric of Free Trade", *Economic Affairs* 38, no. 2 (2018): 207-223.

claims between landed and commercial sectors of the polity, but interdependent economic agents in dynamics of competition, consumption and prosperity.

This is not to credit Huskisson's speech as the moment that transformed patterns of trade in the early nineteenth century. Clearly, a wide range of forces, not the least the dislocations of war and technical innovations, were changing production capabilities, trading patterns, and consumption habits in Europe. But Huskisson's speech gave coherence to such changes, a narrative orchestrating the *telos* of trade as a project of 'prosperity' and 'unrestrained competition'. Rather than continuing to organise and channel production, manufacturing, and trade to ends of security or political sovereignty, they were re-organised as a different kind of political project, one of competition and accumulation. This message, accompanied by the reduction of tariffs, would reverberate throughout colonies, providing the intellectual basis of squatting and expanding a colonial project of credit-based, mass production.

This economic framework was soon repeated in other spheres. The most significant was the 1828 House of Lords Select Committee on the State of the Wool Trade, which met to discuss further petitions against tariffs.⁴⁴ The committee was established following further petitioning from landowners and manufacturers, the latter seeking the reinstatement of a protective duty, the other protesting the request. As such, it again pitted manufacturing against the landed interests, however now both sides appealed not to patriotism but deductive, calculative maxims to defend their 'interest'. The former argued that if woolgrowers insisted on reducing manufacturing profits by raising the price of wool beyond 'the point which enables them to reap a fair profit', the ability for manufacturers and merchants to pay for wool diminished, injuring grower and merchant.⁴⁵ The same terms framed Lord Stanthorpe's defence of the landed interest. Even as he argued that farmers had 'cruelly suffered by experiments in Political Economy, and by systems of Free Trade', Stanthorpe appealed to a system of self-sustaining exchange to defend the growers. Manufactures' '*real interests*', he argued, could only be secured by 'promoting the prosperity of

⁴⁴ *BPP 1828*, viii (515). No official report was published. For the most extensive coverage over the hearing, see: James Bischoff, *The Wool Question Considered: Being an examination of the Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords* (London: J. Richardson, 1828).

⁴⁵ G.S. Mackenzie, *A Letter to the Store Farms of the North, on the Wool Question* (Inverness: D. Morrison & Co., 1828), 5, 6. Mackenzie added: 'We see men of eminent talent ranged on each side of this important question; and in all of them, it is certain the spirit of liberality is gaining ground rapidly.'

their customers at home [that is, rich landlords] by increasing, and not reducing the means of consumption in our own Markets'.⁴⁶ The grower, manufacturer, and merchant were no longer disputing the best means of contributing to national security, but optimising a dynamic of production, consumption, profits, and prices.

The same relationships were soon elaborated in a new type of farming tract, directed at colonial 'flock-masters'. These manuals were written not by fellow farmers representing a 'landed interest', as were the husbandry manuals discussed in Chapter Two, but by wool brokers, animal surgeons and merchants who advised growers, including 'inexperienced Settlers', on disease prevention and marketing their fleece. The latter included washing, packaging, and ensuring the 'reputation' of product so exports might 'give confidence to the buyers ... and pay for it accordingly'.⁴⁷ By the 'alterations to trade', the wool broker Thomas Southey asserted, wool had fostered 'new interests ... whereby the grower, the merchant and manufacturer and also the consumer are benefited'.⁴⁸

It was this idea of wool growing as an integrated, economic phenomenon that was, from the mid-1820s, projected into colonial New South Wales. By 1820, colonial wool was already well known to Britons. Clip was sold regularly in London and in 1822 Macarthur's merino fleece won two gold medals from the Society of Arts.⁴⁹ As Bigge's reports filtered through the House of Commons and the Board of Trade, now glossed with Huskisson's new mandate, colonial wool growing was re-narrated into a project of imperial economic production. 'The quantity of the Wool produced in those colonies will be bounded only by the profitable return they may hope to

⁴⁶ Earl Stanthorpe, *A Letter to the Owners and Occupiers of Sheep Farms* (London: James Ridgway, 1828), 19. Stanthorpe appears to follow what Semmel has described as Malthus' 'agrarian economics', that argued the wealth and luxury of an idle landed class were necessary to encouraging production, employment and exchange. See: Bernard Semmel, *The rise of free trade imperialism: classical political economy, the Empire of free trade and imperialism, 1750-1850* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 48-75.

⁴⁷ Thomas Southey, *Observations Addressed to the Wool Growers of Australia and Tasmania: Respecting Improvements in the Breed of Sheep, Preparing & Assorting Wools* (London: A. Redford and W. Roins, 1831), iii, 12. Thomas Southey, *A Treatise on Sheep: Addressed to the Flock-Masters of Australia, Tasmania, and Southern Africa* (London: Smith and Elder, 1840), v. On disease prevention, see: Ambrose Blacklock, *A Treatise on Sheep: With the Best Means for Their Improvement, General Management and the Treatment of Their Diseases* (Glasgow: W.R. M'Phun, 1838). See also: Thomas Southey, *The Rise Progress, and Present State of Colonial Wools* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1848), 3, 4; James Bischoff, *A Comprehensive History of the Woollen and Worsted Manufactures: And the Natural and Commercial History of Sheep, from the Earliest Records to the Present Period / by James Bischoff, Esq* (London: Smith, Elder, 1842).

⁴⁸ Southey, *The Rise, Progress and Present State*, 3.

⁴⁹ *The Morning Post* [London], 17 January 1820; Roberts, *The Squatting Age*, 42.

obtain’, Stewart Donaldson, a London merchant, told the 1828 select committee. ‘The land applicable to that course of husbandry is unlimited’.⁵⁰ And like a self-fulfilling prophecy, so it transpired. After Huskisson’s re-imagining of trade, colonial wool exports escalated. In 1821, the Australian colonies exported 175,400 pounds of wool; by 1826 it exceeded a million pounds and by 1831 two and a half million (**figure 5.1**).

Year	Spanish	German	NSW	Australia	Total	German wool as total % of imports	Australian wool as total % of imports	Tariff on foreign wool	Tariff on colonial wool
1816	2,958,607	3,816,655	13,611		7,516,876	50.8	0.2	7s 11d per. cwt.	
1819	5,528,966	4,489,478	74,284		16,100,973	27.9	0.5	6d.	1d.
1823	5,994,298	11,125,114	477,261		19,366,725	57.4	2.5	6d.	3d.
1824	5,020,679	15,412,275	382,907		22,572,617	68.3	1.7	3d.	1d.
1825	8,206,427	28,799,661	323,995		43,837,961	65.7	0.7	1d.	free
1826	1,619,403	10,545,232	1,106,302		15,989,112	66.0	6.9	1d.	free
1828	3,808,662	22,015,585	967,814	1,572,186	30,236,059	72.8	5.2	1d.	free
1831	3,474,823	22,436,105	1,134,134	2,493,337	31,651,999	70.9	7.9	1d.	free
1835	1,602,752	23,798,186	2,268,490	4,209,301	42,168,142	56.4	10.0	1d.	free
1840	1,266,905	21,812,099	7,000,727	9,721,243	49,393,697	44.2	19.7	1d.	free
1842	607,239	15,612,749	8,745,826	12,979,524	45,581,274	34.3	28.5	1d.	free
1845	1,074,540	18,465,131		24,151,287	75,551,950	24.4	32.0	free	
1847	424,408	12,673,814	19,825,041	26,042,071	61,795,739	20.5	42.1	free	
1848	106,638	14,428,723	22,091,481	29,939,416	69,343,477	20.8	43.2	free	
1850	440,751	9,153,583	15,580,320	38,590,413	72,674,483	12.6	53.1	free	
1854	383,150	8,216,020	14,772,132	41,000,934	81,298,793	10.1	50.4	free	
1855	68,750	6,124,765		48,783,813	97,853,739	6.3	49.9	free	

Figure 5.1: Raw wool imported into Britain, 1816-1855⁵¹

These numbers reflected the new imagining and re-organisation of colonial wool production. The most extravagant departure was the formation in 1824, on Bigge’s recommendation, of the Australian Agricultural Company, which granted a million acres between Port Stephens and the Manning River to farm fine wool sheep. Many MPs were among its first

⁵⁰ Evidence, Mr. Stuart Donaldson, 17 May 1828, *BPP 1828*, viii (515), 64. See also: Evidence Henry Hughes, 15 May 1828, *BPP 1828*, viii (515), 40: ‘That country is adequate to the growth of as much Wool of a fine description as ever will be wanted by the manufacturers of England’.

⁵¹ ‘Account of Foreign and British Sheep and Lambs Wool imported and exported, 1822-27’, *BPP 1828* xix (53); ‘Miscellaneous Subjects - Part II: Revenue, Commerce & Return’, *BPP 1846* xx (59).

shareholders.⁵² Formed at the height of a joint-stock company boom between 1823 and 1825, the AAC emerged at a moment when the character of companies was changing, taking legal shelter in the *persona* of a common seal and not the personification of the Crown, but also at a time colonial land companies ceased being quasi-sovereign entities with a capacity for conquest and granting landed title to more overt commercial entities.⁵³ Like the landed and manufacturing interest, the joint-stock company was reframed from a patriotic to economic actor. To be sure, companies did not, as Tim Alborn has written, instantaneously become mere ‘profit maximising machines’, but continued to perform important nation-building functions.⁵⁴ The AAC reflected this dual capacity. On the one hand, it employed some five hundred convicts and ran schools, jails, hospital and police in a significant colonising effort. But the company’s frame of reference had also shifted from that of earlier land companies which carried Crown prerogatives to claim territorial sovereignty.⁵⁵ ‘The essential advantage’ of the Company, Bathurst explained to Brisbane, would be ‘the immediate Introduction of a large Capital and Agricultural skill, as well as the ultimate benefit of the increase of fine wool as a valuable Commodity for Exportation’.⁵⁶

⁵² For Bigge’s recommendations, *First Report*, 160-62; *Third Report*, 17, 18, 48, 87; P. A. Pemberton, “The London Connection: The Formation and Early Years of the Australian Agricultural Company” (PhD Thesis, Australian National University, 1991); Australian Agricultural Company, *List of Proprietors* (London: C.S. Ruthven, 1828).

⁵³ For shifts in legal persona of companies, see: See Paddy Ireland, “Capitalism without the Capitalist: The Joint Stock Company Share and the Emergence of the Modern Doctrine of Separate Corporate Personality,” *The Journal of Legal History* 17, no. 1 (April 1, 1996): 41-73. Joint-stock companies could proliferated after the repeal of the Bubble Act in 1825: Ron Harris, “Political Economy, Interest Groups, Legal Institutions and the Repeal of the Bubble Act in 1825,” *Economic History Review*, 50, no. 4 (November 1997), 675-96. I thank Ed Cavanagh for the insight on the shifting nature of colonial land companies in this period. The South Australian Company was an anomaly in this respect, but even here authority devolved to a Crown-appointed governor and executive, as the Company given pre-emptive title as were other companies in eastern Australia. This situation has been best explored in the Canadian context. See, for example: Clarence Karr, *The Canada Land Company: The Early Years: An Experiment in Colonization, 1823-1843* (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1974); Robert C. Lee, *The Canada Company and the Huron Tract, 1826-1853: Personalities, Profits and Politics* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2004); Edward Cavanagh, “Companies, Private International Law, And Diplomacy In The Atlantic World: Early Modern Imperialism And Foreign Corporate Activity In European Legal And Political Thought”, PhD Thesis (University of Ottawa, 2016).

⁵⁴ Arguably, companies thus helped to propagate the illusion of ‘laissez faire’ in the nineteenth century, that is, the state intervention regressed in the face of expanding free enterprise only in outward formal institutions but not actual influence. Timothy L. Alborn, *Conceiving Companies: Joint-Stock Politics in Victorian England* (London: Routledge, 1998).

⁵⁵ Brownrigg to Grey, 4 November 1846, *HRA* 1:25, 269. On these various functions, see: Stephen H. Roberts, *History of Australian Land Settlement, 1788-1920* (London: F. Cass, 1969), 58.

⁵⁶ Bathurst to Brisbane, 13 July 1824, *HRA* 1:11, 305-06. Likewise, the Company prospectus, reflected the ACC was both a ‘commercial enterprise of ... greater national benefit’ but also ‘individual emolument’, that is, private gain. What had once been two very different ways of thinking about commerce, one patriotic the other corrupting, were united as entailing the same end, predicated on the assumption that New South Wales promised ‘ample returns for the labour and capital employed’. See: Reprinted as “Plan” in Australian Agricultural Company, *Australian Agricultural Company* (London:

The tension embodied in the AAC magnified the changing status of the individual colonial sheep farmer. As argued in the previous chapter, colonial land settlement in the 1820s aimed to preserve a hierarchical, non-economic conception of the political nation. But even as the Crown sought to maintain a sense of regular, moral landed organisation, following Bigge it was now thought that land should be granted to ‘encourage’ pastoralism. In 1821, most of the colony’s livestock remained on the Cumberland Plain, within fifty miles of Sydney. As Brian Fletcher noted, while substantial grants had been given to Macarthur and a few others, the total acreage granted in this time was small enough to indicate pastoralism had not been a Colonial Office priority.⁵⁷ This changed dramatically over the next decade. When Macquarie departed in 1821, 429,907 acres had been granted to settlers in the thirty years of European occupation. Almost half that amount was granted in 1829 alone. By then, three and a half million acres had been alienated. Nineteen grants larger than 2000 acres were made before 1821, twenty-seven were made in 1829.⁵⁸

The memorials of settlers applying for grants help illustrate this transformation. Required to demonstrate their available capital to determine the size of their grant, settlers declared their capacity to employ ‘considerable capital in Agricultural speculations’, explicitly ‘for the purpose of improving and increasing the production of fine wool in that Colony’.⁵⁹ While the hope of ‘render[ing] Great Britain independent of Foreign supply’ continued to underpin some applications, it could be now be married with taking full advantage of the ‘English Market’. And as Governor Darling, remarked in 1828, ‘the Market for Wool is unlimited’.⁶⁰

Ruthven and Whitcomb, 1826). This enabled the company manager, William Parry, claim the ACC was ‘in service of the King’ but also rather like other ‘Persons employing their Capital in New South Wales’. In New South Wales, in the activity of sheep farming, ‘national benefit’ was being subsumed into optimising economic processes. Letter No. 842, Parry to McLeay, 11 March 1833, in William Edward Parry, *In the Service of the Company: Letters of Sir Edward Parry, Commissioner to the Australian Agricultural Company*, Vol. 2 (Canberra: ANU Press, 2003), 120; Letter No. 60, Parry to McLeay, 13 April 1830, *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, 70.

⁵⁷ Brian H. Fletcher, *Landed Enterprise and Penal Society: A History of Farming and Grazing in New South Wales before 1821* (Sydney University Press Sydney, 1976), 20.

⁵⁸ “Return of Alienation of Crown Lands in New South Wales,” *BBP 1831-32* xxxii (606); Fletcher, *Landed Enterprise and Penal Society*, 232.

⁵⁹ John Cogill to Lord Bathurst, 4 July 1825, *HRA* 1:12, 15-16; Memorial of Sarah Redfern on behalf of Her Husband William Redfern, 13 January 1824, *HRA* 1:11, 203. See also, for example: Talbot to Goulburn, 14 September 1819, *HRA* 1:10, 201-2; Memorial of John Bowman, 30 January *HRA* 1:11, 459; Thomas Icely to Bathurst, 23 June 1825, *HRA* 1:12, 13; R. Scott to Brisbane, 29 August 1822, *HRA* 1:12, 167.

⁶⁰ Darling to Huskisson, 10 April 1828, *HRA* 1:13, 140.

Although these memorials did not refer directly to the liberalised tariffs, Huskisson's project clearly attracted some merchants and imperial careerists to associate with settlers and develop powerful marketing connections.⁶¹ These included the trading partners Alexander Riley, Richard Jones and William Walker, Jones' associate Walter Davidson in Canton, and the prolific Robert Campbell.⁶² They had capacity to command vast acreage, import superior Saxon merino sheep and develop contacts with London trading houses that rapidly expanded wool growing into an entrepreneurial enterprise.⁶³ These were the first manifestations of the historically hybrid pastoralist/merchant figure described by St. Julian and Silvester. The old binary between 'landed' and 'manufacturing' interests that had defined eighteenth century British wool growing were not re-established in the colony, but new identities were forged. The most significant was the squatter.

The woolgrower as an agent of production

The re-imagining of the woollen trade evoked by Huskisson and the 1828 Select Committee had unique manifestations in colonial New South Wales. With abundant land and weak governmental control beyond the inner settled regions, the imperial redefinition of wool and trade in the 1820s encouraged a new, expansive phenomenon, 'squattling'. At the same moment imperial authorities attempted to impose a policy of concentrated settlement in 1831, pastoralists were already moving flocks well beyond the proclaimed Nineteen Counties and illegally occupying vast tracts of land in the interior. Unplanned by imperial authorities, squattling is often seen by historians as an instance, typical of settler colonialism, where the imperial state had to play 'catch up' to contain uneven frontier expansion.⁶⁴ Yet while authorities appreciated squattling was probably unstoppable, we need to recognise the constitutive role state actors played shaping the particular identity of Australian squattling.⁶⁵ As Governor Gipps observed in 1840, squattling 'has not only

⁶¹ This could include connections with merchants in India. See: V. Jacob to Bathurst, 7 September 1822, *HRA* 1:11, 49-56; Memorial of John Bettington, Sons, and Co. Merchants, 27 July 1827, *HRA* 1:13, 473-4.

⁶² Jill Ker, "Merchants and Merinos." *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 46, no. 4 (1960): 206-223; Margaret Steven, *Merchant Campbell, 1769-1846: A Study of Colonial Trade* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1965).

⁶³ R. Jones to George Murray, 18 May 1829, *HRA* 1:13, 759.

⁶⁴ The phrase is from Leigh Boucher and Lynette Russell (eds.), *Settler Colonial Governance in Nineteenth Century Victoria* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2015), 20.

⁶⁵ Bourke admitted as much in 1835: 'It is not to be disguised that the Government is unable to prevent it [dispersion and squattling]. No adequate measures could be resorted to for the general and permanent

been allowed to grow up, but has been fostered, encouraged and regulated by successive Governors of this Colony, and by successive Acts of the Legislature'.⁶⁶ Even if the squatter was not the intention of policy, and even if authorities were not entirely comfortable their presence, as Gipps was not, government intervention formalised the squatter specifically, and the mass expansion of pastoralism generally, as a unique 'economic' process in colonial life.

There were, in fact, two very different kinds of 'official' response to Australian squatting, which both contributed to its authorisation as an 'economic' practice. On the one hand, imperial authorities endorsed the practice as an extension of the new logic of competition, profit and accumulation. This sanction gave immediate confidence to investors, encouraging an influx of capital that facilitated expansion. On the other hand, for some elites in the colony, including Governor Gipps, squatting presented more immediate threats as it affronted ideas of 'civilised' progress, escalated frontier violence, and undermined local authorities' control over Crown land. Historians have long realised squatting was a moral and especially legal problem in colonial discourse. The point to draw out here, however, is that attempts to rationalise these problems by both government and squatters themselves led to an equally potent economic justification of large-scale wool growing in the form of leases, bureaucracy and a depoliticising calculative discourse about wool. We can treat both these responses in turn.

Imperial authorities endorsed frontier pastoralism in New South Wales from the outset. Viscount Goderich, through whose hands those petitions for freer trade had passed at the Board of Trade, adapted the Board's new narratives of profit to the colonial context. Having delegated the new Wakefieldian land regulations months earlier, he was resolute New South Wales must not descend into a 'race of men ... wandering their cattle ... and losing, like the descendants of the Spaniards in the Pampas of South America, almost all traces of their civilisation'. And yet, he immediately added in this dispatch to Darling:

removal of intruders from waste Lands, without incurring probably a greater expense than would be sufficient to extend a large share of the control and protection of Government over the country they desire to occupy. One principal objection to dispersion thus becomes as powerful against its restraint.' Bourke to Glenelg, 10 August 1835, *HRA* 1:18, 154, 156.

⁶⁶ Gipps to Russell, 19 December 1840, *HRA* 1:21, 118.

To the increase [sic] of sheep which require a greater degree of care and protection, there is not the same objection; and, as the growth of Wool seems to be the most profitable branch of Colonial Industry, I am unwilling to direct you to raise the rent of grazing Land, by which it might be checked, though that would be the most obvious means of preventing the Evil which I apprehend.⁶⁷

Goderich wished Darling to balance the ‘Evils’ of dispersion with the potential profits of widespread grazing. This established a tension in land policy between pastoralism and agriculture, leases and freehold, squatters and landowners, which excited colonial debate for the next thirty years. It also recalibrated imperial attitudes to colonial grazing. When it had begun in the 1820s ‘squatting’, comprised mostly small graziers within the Nineteen Counties on either Crown land or their neighbours’ granted land.⁶⁸ Wealthier settlers colluded with local authorities to break up the practice with a series of trespass and impounding laws.⁶⁹ Now, Goderich was giving consent to a very different approach, where squatters would realise Australia as a site of ‘unlimited’ husbandry.

A few years later in 1834, Governor Richard Bourke, expressing doubt about the efficacy of concentrated settlement, reported ‘Flocks and Herds of the Colonists’ had ‘already’ spread ‘in great numbers in the Monaro Plains and Westward of Twofold Bay’. These flocks, Bourke said, belonged mostly to ‘settlers cultivating Land within the Limits’ of the Nineteen Counties, but also to ‘Lawyers, Merchants and Shopkeepers living in Sydney’. Bourke, like Goderich, desired no check on their advances: ‘It is not the policy, nor would it be within the power of government to prevent an occupation, which produces so profitable return’. Security, which would soon pose a major challenge, was the only caveat: ‘being unauthorized ... they cannot ... expect protection from the Government’.⁷⁰

Further encouragement came in April 1836 from Goderich’s successor, Lord Glenelg. Now it was asserted that ‘Lord Ripon’s rules’ were no strict law. Concentration was not itself ‘the

⁶⁷ Goderich to Darling, 23 March 1831, *HRA* 1:16, 116.

⁶⁸ On these initial years, see T. M. Perry, *Australia’s First Frontier: The Spread of Settlement in New South Wales 1788-1829* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1963).

⁶⁹ 9 Geo IV, no. 11 (NSW); Roe, *Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia*, 49-50. For an overview of a series of earlier ordinances that facilitated the trespassing of cattle of wealthy settlers, see: John Pickard, “Trespass, common law, government regulations, and fences in colonial New South Wales, 1788-1828,” *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 84, no. 2, (Dec 1998): 130-139.

⁷⁰ Bourke to Stanley, 4 July 1834, *HRA* 1:17, 468.

ultimate end to aim for', but only a mechanism to facilitate 'cooperation ... in the employment of Labour and Capital'. As New South Wales was seemingly 'marked out by Nature for a Pastoral country', expansive sheep farming, it seemed to Glenelg, might achieve this 'cooperation' as efficiently as concentrated agriculture. Dispersion was the necessary corollary. Responding to illegal attempts by settlers to push into the Port Phillip district, he continued:

But that principle [concentration] must also bend to a necessity of a different kind. It is wholly vain to expect that any positive Laws, especially those of a very young and thinly peopled Country, will be energetic enough to repress the spirit of adventure and speculation in which the unauthorised settlements at Port Philip and Twofold Bay have originated. The motives which are urging Mankind, especially in these days of general peace and increasing population, to break through the restraints which would forbid their settling themselves and their Families in such situations, are too strong to be encountered with effect by ordinary means. To engage in such a struggle would be wholly irrational. All that remains for the Government in such circumstances is to assume the guidance and direction of enterprises, which, tho' it cannot prevent or retard, it may yet conduct to happy results.⁷¹

These excerpts have been worth recalling at length because they mark resounding declarations, from high places, denoting the sheep farmer with distinctive qualities not present only a decade prior. In contrast to Bigge in 1822, Goderich, Bourke and Glenelg reorientated the object of colonial sheep farming from distinct imperial or domestic objectives to a generalised project in wealth accumulation. Glenelg, recognising the post-Napoleonic period of 'general peace' offered an opportunity for experimentation, based this on a rich anthropology of the farmer as individualistic and entrepreneurial. He reconfigured the relation between land, 'Mankind' and government as one of speculation, production, and accumulation, not hierarchy, order, and settlement. It would be 'irrational' to check these motives by any 'positive law'.

This shift was to imbue the 'squatter' with cultural resonances and political functions distinct from both eighteenth century sheep farmers but also his namesake in America or Cape

⁷¹ Glenelg to Bourke, 13 April 1836, *HRA* 1:18, 380.

Colony. By 1835, a travelogue could still describe the Australian ‘squatter’ (noting ‘squatter’ an American term) as ‘always of the lowest grade’, while a Select Committee on Police and Gaols the same year reported, wrongly, that the ‘nefarious practices’ connected with squatting were committed only by lowly emancipists or tickets-of-leave men, ‘screened from general observation’.⁷² But following imperial endorsement, it became commonplace among local officials and popular commentary to distinguish the American from Australian squatter. The former was of ‘mean repute’, ‘small means’ and the ‘least educated of the population’; the latter ‘include many of the most educated, the most intelligent and the wealthiest Inhabitants of the Colony’, with considerable influence inside the Legislature and out.⁷³ By the 1840s, the squatter was popularly represented as a glove-wearing, champagne swilling, cigar smoking, billiard playing ‘gentleman ... rising in the world’.⁷⁴

The Secretaries of State and Governor’s authorising statements had profound policy and legislative correlates. Most significantly, a colonial Interest Act followed in 1834, which exempted New South Wales from English usury law capped at five per cent, fixing interest rates at eight per cent only in instances where a contract did not specify otherwise. The sub-committee that reviewed the bill effused it would encourage the ‘influx of foreign capital’, ‘particularly to Grazing’.⁷⁵ English capital rushed into the colony and further mechanisms, most importantly the *Liens on Wool Act*, would follow.⁷⁶ Official endorsement, and consequent access to capital,

⁷² William Henry Breton, *Excursions in New South Wales, Western Australia, and Van Dieman's Land, during the years 1830, 1831, 1832, and 1833* (London: Richard Bentley, 1835), 388; “Report from the Select Committee on Police and Gaols”, *V&P NSWLC 1835*, 398-407; For the changing use on the term, see: C. J. King (ed.), *An Outline of Closer Settlement in New South Wales, Part 1: The Sequence of the Land Laws 1788-1956* (Sydney: Department of Agriculture, 1957), 45-46, n36.

⁷³ Stanley to Gipps, 30 January 1845, *HRA* 1:25, 218. See also: “Memorandum” in Gipps to Russell, 19 December 1840, *HRA* 1:21, 130; Gipps to Stanley, 3 April 1844, *HRA* 1:23, 511; Roger Therry, *Reminiscences of Thirty Years' Residence in New South Wales and Victoria* (London: Sampson Low, 1863), 240-1.

⁷⁴ R. G. Jameson, *New Zealand, South Australia and New South Wales: a record of recent travels in these colonies, with especial reference to emigration and the advantageous employment of labour and capital* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1842), 113-14. Even some of their employees fared well, one bullock driver, having received his yearly wages, reputedly claiming to have ‘drank champagne to get rid of it [his money] more quickly’. See: Box 2015/5, Samuel Smyth Journal, 24 July 1840 - 9 September 1840. Raleigh Family Papers, SLV. MS 12615.

⁷⁵ Evidence Thomas Walker, 6 June 1834; Evidence, William Wentworth, 6 June 1834, “Report from the Sub-Committee on the Interest Bill,” *V&P LCNSW 1834*, 190, 191.

⁷⁶ On the immediate consequences of the Interest Act, see: S. J. Butlin, *Foundations of the Australian Monetary System 1788-1851* (S.I.: Sydney University Press Sydney, 1968), 244-314; Peter Burroughs, *Britain and Australia, 1831-1855: a study in imperial relations and crown lands administration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 138 n4.

separated the New South Wales from his American or Cape Colony counterpart, propelling Australia as the great wool producer of the British world.⁷⁷

Not everyone agreed with this vision. The image of the productive woolgrower was not simply imposed top-down on the colony, but had to be negotiated in the context of what some local elites identified as the moral, violent, and legal threats posed by squatting. The apparent moral threat of pastoralism was the most immediate concern, stoking anxieties with a long history. While much celebrated in English folklore, wool growing was also long associated with social dislocation. In the Tudor period, the increasing shift from arable to pastoral land use was associated with enclosure and the depopulation of villages, prompting Thomas More to describe sheep as ‘devourers of men’.⁷⁸ The projection of the economic woolgrower into the colony in the 1830s had a relatable impact in New South Wales, if with new points of reference. As the colonial woolgrower evolved (or devolved) into the squatter, for some elites and reformers, this represented fundamental threats to the moral ordering of colonial society.

This ‘threat’ was registered in several ways. Landed colonial elites, many themselves pastoralists running sheep on granted lands inside the Nineteen Counties, found squatting abhorrent to their moral vision of the colony’s civilised development. This anxiety was based partly on an understanding of stadial theory, where pastoralism marked a regression to a lawless, pre-agricultural and nomadic stage. It was against these fears St. Julian and Silvester attempted to rationalise colonial pastoralism within the ambit of ‘commerce’. Moreover, Whiggish hopes for colonial civilisation were enmeshed with paternal assumptions about moral, agrarian settlement. Australian Whigs, ironically led by James Macarthur, heir to the Camden sheep

⁷⁷ Peter Wickens, “Pastoral proficiency in nineteenth century South Africa and Australia: A case of cultural determinism?” *South African Journal of Economic History* 2, no. 1 (1987): 32-47. Wickens offered an important revision of older interpretations that Australian and Boer squatters were differentiated ‘culturally’, one looking to industrial Britain, the other rebelliously to escape it by arguing the distinctive trajectories of wool production in each colony were shaped by commercial circumstances. By mid-century, writes Wickens, Australia consistently represented fifty per cent of British raw wool imports, Cape Colony only ten per cent, despite similar geographies and market opportunities. Along with inferior capital investment, Wickens argued, South Africa suffered comparative disadvantage in the form of early political uncertainty, export duties imposed on the Batavian Republic that retarded early growth, higher transport fees and an inferior product. He also considers that ‘in South Africa most woolgrowers were Afrikaans-speaking, while the marketing mechanism and the sources of capital were controlled by English speakers’. This last point squares most consistently with my own.

⁷⁸ Bowden, *The Wool Trade in Tudor and Stuart England*, 110. Quoted in Lipson, *The History of the Woollen and Worsted Industries*, 19.

farming estate, blamed the Wakefieldian high upset price on land for forcing men to wander ‘unrestrained over the face of the country ... denigrat[ing] into a state verging on barbarism’.⁷⁹ While some critics were themselves involved in squatting, they envisaged nomadic colonial pastoralism could only be a temporary basis to colonial prosperity.⁸⁰ ‘They will plant no breadth of land, form no enclosure, raise no buildings, make no outlay of capital’, Thomas Potter McQueen, a former British politician turned large settler, complained of squatters.⁸¹ Sheep farmers would only apply themselves to ‘settled industry’, warned Murray’s Whig 1843 Select Committee on the Land Sale Act, if they had a ‘fixed interest in the soil’.⁸²

Not only paternalistic Whigs disparaged pastoral expansion. The radical Presbyterian minister, John Dunmore Lang, likened squatters to ‘ancient patriarchs ... who live a sort of semi-barbarous life ... neither cultivating the land, nor improving the country in any way’.⁸³ Some travelogues developed this theme as a popular image of the colony, bereft of cultivated fields, farmhouses, cottages, a peasantry and ‘smiling villages’ that ‘ought to have filled up the landscape’.⁸⁴ Reformers and colonial promoters like Caroline Chisholm likewise discouraged potential migrants from pursuing pastoral work, as it was inimical to raising families.⁸⁵ While there were few echoes in New South Wales of the Romantic critique of political economy as was in Britain, this agrarian and moral critique of pastoral expansion was the colony’s own expression of resistance to the uncertain forces unleashed by economic imaginings.⁸⁶

⁷⁹ *Sydney Gazette*, 26 November 1831, 2.

⁸⁰ Roe, *Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia, 1835-185*, 74.

⁸¹ Thomas Potter McQueen, *Australia: As She Is and As She May Be* (London: J. Cross), 30; Charles Campbell’s speech in 1844, defending Gipp’s squatting regulations, insisted the colony had deluded itself that a ‘civilized community...might adopt the habits of Calmuc Tartars [and] realise large fortunes in the interior of this country’. *SMH*, 5 June 1844, 2.

⁸² “Report from the Select Committee on the Crown Land Sales Act”, *V&P LCNSW 1843*, 1: Murray added that grazing ‘is an occupation of all others, the least calculated to develop the energies of industry – the active powers of the human mind – or the real resources of a country; and that they are consequently the last of all, to which a civilized community, or a fertile soil, should be *totally abandoned*’.

⁸³ John Dunmore Lang, *Repeal or revolution, or, A glimpse of the Irish future* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1848), 8.

⁸⁴ A Gentleman [Thomas Walker], *A month in the bush of Australia; a journal of one of a party of gentlemen who recently travelled from Sydney to Port Phillip* (London: J. Cross, 1838), 29; See also: Breton, *op cite*.

⁸⁵ Chisholm ‘did not advocate or wish that every man should be a farmer’, but ‘children ought to take precedence of sheep’. Quoted in Margaret Kiddle, *Caroline Chisholm* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1957), 224.

⁸⁶ The irony being, of course, that squatters would similarly partake in an agrarian critique of the gold rushes. See: David Goodman, “Gold Fields/Golden Fields: The Language of Agrarianism and the Victorian Gold Rush,” *Australian Historical Studies* 23, no. 90 (1988): 19-41.

In contrast to his predecessor Bourke, Governor Gipps clearly internalised some of these concerns. While acknowledging this ‘system of authorised Squatting’ had increased flocks and herds ‘to a degree that is almost unprecedented’, he was also sensitive to the ‘Moral and Social evils’ it encompassed. A lack of religious instruction on frontiers, children raised in ‘untutored barbarism’ and the squalor of living ‘in Huts made of the Bark of Trees’, with no garden or ‘mark of civilization’, were all associated with squatting, threatening civilised development.⁸⁷ Gipps’ contentious 1844 ‘homestead’ regulations, which would have required squatters to purchase parts of their run outright to maintain ongoing tenure, were partly designed to arrest this regression.⁸⁸ In addition to these moral concerns, however, Gipps’ hesitations were more motivated by two tangible problems pastoralist expansion presented: violence with Aborigines and the Crown’s security of tenure over waste lands. Ironically, solutions to these problems would help absolve the moral critique of squatting and consolidate the economic legitimacy of the squatter.

In the first instance, squatting was inextricably linked with frontier violence. Those who thought squatting barbaric were soon reading reports that affirmed their suspicions. Relations between settlers and Indigenous peoples had already deteriorated by the 1820s but in 1830 Darling could still describe Aboriginal peoples killing stock as ‘unusual’.⁸⁹ It became the norm over the next decade, as did Indigenous peoples and frontiersmen killing each other. In 1838, Gipps admitted it was impossible for government to guarantee protection to proprietors, especially at the rate flocks were being driven into the interior, ‘often 50 miles in a single season’.⁹⁰ By then, the year of the Myall Creek massacre, it was also clear Indigenous peoples needed protection from settlers, as numerous government and missionary reports indicated.

It was in this context that humanitarian advocacy for the ‘protection’ of Aboriginal peoples gained traction in imperial and colonial governance. As discussed in Chapter Three, the recommendations of the 1837 Buxton report included establishing a ‘Protectorate’ in the Port Phillip District which was followed by Commissioners of Crown Lands, a form of stipendiary

⁸⁷ Gipps to Russell, 28 September 1840, *HRA* 1:20, 838; Memorandum, 19 December 1840, *HRA* 1:21, 133; Gipps to Stanley, 3 April 1844, *HRA* 1:23, 510.

⁸⁸ Gipps to Stanley, 3 April 1844, *HRA* 1:23, 511

⁸⁹ Darling to Murray, 30 October 1830, *HRA* 1:15, 770.

⁹⁰ Gipps to Glenelg, 21 July 1838, *HRA* 1:19, 509-10. Now Gipps could report ‘outrages’ were a ‘frequent occurrence beyond the boundaries of Location’. Gipps to Glenelg, 27 April 1838, *HRA* 1:19, 398.

magistrate, in the areas beyond the Nineteen Counties, known as the ‘Unsettled Districts’. This latter measure was in response to increasing ‘disagreements’ between neighbouring squatters, but also escalating ‘contests’ with the Aborigines.⁹¹ In concert with the Protectorate, from 1840 the Commissioners were required to submit annual reports on the condition of Aborigines in their districts. Along with the establishment of a Border Police in 1839, who were answerable to the Crown Land Commissioners, these reports and their efforts in enumeration and cartography, outwardly, at least, represented a rationalisation of the frontier.⁹²

Commissioners identified the squatter as agents of civilisation. As Angela Woollacott has written, the commissioners’ annual reports on Aborigines cast squatters ‘as establishing the moral order of the frontier, supposedly teaching Aborigines people the values of peaceability, respect for squatters property, and rewards of employment’, even as the reports hinted continuing violence.⁹³ Squatters who stood as witnesses or returned questionnaires to the 1840s colonial select committees on Aborigines styled themselves in a similar way. To be sure, not all squatters appreciated this ‘humanitarian’ discourse, feeling the protection of Aborigines was irreconcilable with colonial (i.e., their own) interests.⁹⁴ But the Commissioners’ reporting on Aboriginal condition and policing of frontier violence did recast the squatter from a moral aberration into a ‘gentleman ... rising in the world’, the epitome of colonial ‘progress’ and ‘prosperity’. These processes advance a theme introduced in Chapter Three, whereby governing Aborigines was

⁹¹ The office was first created in 1833 under “Crown Lands Encroachment Act”, 4 Wil IV No. 10 for preventing intrusion encroachment and trespass thereon or for such other purpose as any bailiff, but only policed beyond the settled districts after 1836. See also: Gipps to Stanley, 3 April 1844, *HRA* 1:23, 509

⁹² Of course, Commissioners’ reports could not do away with the moral critique of squatting completely. For example, in an open letter to John Robertson at the height of the land reform debates, T.E. Lance could feared the proposed laws would end in ‘a general collapse of civilisation – a total commercial smash – a cessation of the production of valuable exports – a supervening of Arabic and nomadic barbarism. Chaos come again. In a few years we should see white savages, clothed in sheepskins, straying over the land with their wretched flocks, as degenerate as themselves’. *SMH*, 21 Nov, 1860. As we have seen in the previous chapter, in many ways the gold-seeker replaced the squatter as a threat to moral landed order.

⁹³ For example, Charles Rolleston in Darling Downs reported in his 1846 report: ‘It must be left very much to the natural good feeling of the Squatters to reclaim them from their vicious courses and roving habits, and by finding them with employment on their Stations and providing them with food and Clothing, induce them gradually to acquire the habits and relish the pursuits and comforts of civilized life’. “Report from Darling Downs”, Enclosure, Fitz-Roy to Grey, 17 May 1847, *HRA* 1:25, 570. Angela Woollacott, *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies: Self-Government and Imperial Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 94, 161.

⁹⁴ Alan Lester, “Colonial Settlers and the Metropole: Racial Discourse in the Early 19th-Century Cape Colony, Australia and New Zealand,” *Landscape Research* 27, no. 1 (January 1, 2002): 39-49.

examined as settlers' attempt to valorise European wealth-accumulation. Similarly, the violence between squatters and Aborigines needed to be 'civilised'. Even as historians have recently shown that violence did not subside under protectors, the commissioners' reports served to re-narrate the frontier as rational and ordered, refracting 'knowledge' to colonial and imperial authorities that made it governable and administrable.⁹⁵ This is not to downplay the significance for humanitarian discourse, but to highlight the broader consequences of some of these immediate concerns. The moral threat of squatting became enveloped in 'civilising' the frontier.

The figure of the Aborigine also animated a second set of problems authorities faced in response to squatting. The rapid movement of squatters into 'unsettled' territories soon raised questions about the Crown's capacity to retain its rights over unsold land. This issue had already erupted in June 1835, when John Batman, a Van Diemen's Land settler, attempted to purchase 600,000 acres of land near Melbourne from the Kulin Confederacy. Bourke moved decisively, issuing a proclamation that any 'treaty, bargain, and contract with the aboriginal natives ... for the possession, title or claim to any lands ... is void and of no effect against the rights of the Crown'.⁹⁶ Glenelg approved, acknowledging that while the 'Rights' of Aboriginal peoples 'should be studiously defended', also realised that such treaties would 'subvert the foundations on which all Proprietary rights in New South Wales at present rest'.⁹⁷

These proclamations aggravated a new kind of contest in the colony. One of the chief tasks of governors in coming years was to maintain control of Crown land, enacted through a series of licences and leases squatters were required to pay. This culminated in 1844, when Gipps

⁹⁵ For the complicated reality and failures of the Commissioners in offering such 'protection', see: Lisa Ford, "Protection in New South Wales", in Lauren Benton, Adam Clulow, and Bain Attwood (eds.) *Protection and Empire: A Global History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 153-174.

⁹⁶ Bourke to Glenelg, 10 August 1835, *HRA* 1:18, 154, 811-812.

⁹⁷ Glenelg to Bourke, 13 April 1836, *HRA* 1:18, 379. This was just one key moment in what we are learning was a highly local and contingent process in which issues of sovereignty, territory and jurisdiction were worked out in European Australia, often without direction from metropolitan governance or intellectuals. On this specific issue, see: Bain Attwood, *Possession: Batman's Treaty and the Matter of History* (Carlton: Miegunyah Press, 2009), 13-101. As Attwood argues elsewhere, a combination of factors was behind this refusal to consider Aboriginal title, including the requirements of establishing penal stations, the tenor of the earliest European-Aboriginal relations, together with a combination of imperial policies and settler attitudes. Bain Attwood, "Law, History, and Power: The British Treatment of Aboriginal Rights in Land in New South Wales," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 42, no. 1 (2013), 171-92. On the issue of sovereignty, territory and jurisdiction generally, see: Lisa Ford, *Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia, 1788-1836* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

proposed his highly contentious ‘purchase’ and ‘occupation’ regulations. Squatters organised as the ‘Pastoral Association’ and retorted the improvements they made to their runs gave them the right to ‘pre-emption’ over occupied land.⁹⁸ In this sense, squatting was framed in juristic discourse. Gipps defended Crown claims with common law, as the lands were ‘held in trust by the Government for the benefit of the People of the whole British Empire’. Squatters appealed to a quasi-Grotian natural right of occupation. Ironically, these were the same arguments Crown authorities used to deny Aborigine rights to title.⁹⁹ The pro-squatter lawyer George Wyndham, for example, argued the Crown was not a ‘proprietor’ of waste land, but merely ‘the Minister of God’ to help facilitate just dispensation of land, and had no jurisdiction once it was occupied. This, again, involved a recruitment of the Aborigine to valorise the needs of Europeans. By returning to such ‘first principles’, argued Wyndham, it was consistent that should a squatter ‘present his black ally with a flock of sheep’ and he no longer burns grass but ‘husbands it’, then he, too, ‘has become an owner of property he has entered into a new relation to the Crown ... You must therefore invest this wealthy aborigine with the elective franchise’.¹⁰⁰

The squatters, of course, won their fight, securing long fourteen-year leases through an Imperial Order in Council in 1847 that would not be challenged until the 1861 Land Acts. But focusing on the dispute over control of land renders squatting a fundamentally legal problem, negotiated in constitutional and jurisprudential terms. Like those bureaucratic efforts to ‘civilise’ the violent frontier, however, attempts to resolve the dispute in fact helped to legitimate squatting as an economic practice. This was mediated in three ways.

⁹⁸ Gipps to Stanley, 18 April 1843, *HRA* 1:22, 666-67; Gipps to Stanley, 16 April 1844, 1:23, 545-59. The issue greatly intensified when a number of colonial newspapers published an extract from the London-based Colonial Land and Emigration Commission to James Stephen at the Colonial Office declared pre-emption was legitimate in certain circumstances. See: *Sydney Free Press*, 19 May 1842; *Australasian Chronicle*, 14 May 1842, 4. In 1841, Gipps had rejected La Trobe’s proposal to concede pre-emptive rights to the squatters at Port Phillip. Gipps to Russell, 24 February, 1841. See Peter Burroughs, *Britain and Australia*, 298-99.

⁹⁹ Gipps to Stanley, 18 April 1843, *HRA* 1:22, 667. See also, *A-G v Brown*, NSW Supreme Court, 1847, discussed in Andrew Richard Buck, *The Making of Australian Property Law* (Annandale, N.S.W: Federation Press, 2006), Chapter One. For squatters’ claims to occupancy rights, see Wentworth’s speech in *SMH*, 11 April 1844, and the pamphlets by lawyer George Wyndham: *The Impending Crisis... Read and Digest Blackstone* (Maitland: R. Jones, 1847), and, *A Letter to Sir John Bull upon the Disposal of Crown Lands* (Sydney: W. & F. Ford, 1847).

¹⁰⁰ Wyndham, *A Letter to Sir John Bull*, 7-8.

First, the system of instituting leases and licences developed by the Crown to retain sovereignty over waste land in fact sanctioned the rapid expansion of colonial wool growing. As Gipps was well aware, by ‘giving security to Flocks and Herds which are depastured there, we encourage the dispersion of our Population’.¹⁰¹ While the Batman incident in 1835 had aroused Crown concerns about securing perfect settler sovereignty, it had also confirmed to Bourke and Glenelg that concentrating settlement was of limited benefit compared with expansive pastoralism, the colony’s ‘Chief wealth’, so long as it was accompanied by ‘order and social union to the most distant parts of the wilderness’.¹⁰² Glenelg, making his soliloquy on the ‘motives’ of ‘Mankind’, approved settlement at Port Phillip, and Bourke introduced an annual £10 licence fee for unlimited occupation beyond the settled districts.¹⁰³ The licence was designed to encourage the rich to expand their flocks as well as protect the runs of poorer graziers, while giving formal ‘recognition of the rights of the Crown’ over wastelands.¹⁰⁴ Arriving three years later and facing more testing circumstances with increased violence and squatter attacks on the licence as an ‘unjust’ tax, Governor Gipps introduced a new rating system that determined licences by size of runs and flock. The role of Crown Land Commissioners were also expanded, now put in charge of nine districts, and given power to assess stock and enforce the levies, cancel licenses on spot, forcibly remove unlicensed persons, impound cattle, and settle conflicting claims to runs and disputes between master and servants.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Gipps to Glenelg, 6 April 1839, *HRA* 1:20, 91.

¹⁰² Bourke to Glenelg, 10 August 1835, *HRA* 1:18, 154, 156.

¹⁰³ For Glenelg and Port Phillip, see: Glenelg to Bourke, 13 April 1836, *HRA* 1:18, 380-81. Bourke to Glenelg, 21 December 1835, 1:18, 235-36; Glenelg to Bourke, 18 June 1836, 445. The licence fee was legislated as “Crown Lands Unauthorised Occupation Act 1836”, 7 Wm IV c 4. This had been devised initially as a response to wealthy settlers’ complaints crime had increased with vagabonds illegally occupying Crown lands, although Bourke fully knew these “*Squatters*” (the term still a pejorative in 1835) were ‘only following in the steps of the most influential and unexceptional colonists’. Bourke to Glenelg, 21 December 1835, 1:18, 235-36.

¹⁰⁴ Bourke to Glenelg, 14 September 1836, 1:18, 538. From the outset, Glenelg thought the licence needed to be higher: ‘I entertain, however, some doubt whether the penalties are sufficiently high to check the temptation to the unlicensed occupation of Land by the Wealthier Class of Settlers’. Glenelg to Bourke, 29 August 1837, *HRA* 1:19, 72. Burroughs has interpreted this passage as indicating the Imperial Government’s disapproval of squatting and thus another instance of the discord between British design and local conditions. However, Glenelg was not opposed to squatting, but the means to properly regulate it. Burroughs, *Britain and Australia, 1831-55*, 153

¹⁰⁵ “Crown Lands Unauthorized Occupation Act”, 2 Vic No 27. The districts were: Port Macquarie, New England, and Liverpool Plains to the North; Bligh, Wellington, and Lachlan to the west; Murrumbidgee, Maneroo and Port Phillip to the south. Rating included 1d per annum on every sheep, 3d on every horned cattle, and 6d for every horse depastured in the unsettled districts, in addition to the £10 licence per annum for occupation of the land.

The effect of this licence and expanding bureaucracy was to formalise the framework of expanding pastoral settlement. Together with the elimination of import duties in the 1820s, the licence signalled not only to colonists but financiers, too, that sheep farming was to be expansive, accumulative and profitable, and securely regulated. Moreover, like the pricing of land or licensing gold digging, the lease entrenched an instrumental relationship to land as a site of investment and calculation.¹⁰⁶ When Gipps pushed his reforms in 1844, he was wrong to assume squatters desired a ‘permanent interest’ in the soil. Many only wanted security of tenure in the long cycle of growing, consigning, shipping, and selling their clip in London. So long as the terms of occupation provided sufficiently security, squatters were satisfied. And this had already been achieved after the Supreme Court had upheld in 1839 that ‘a right of occupancy [in the form of the licence] is good against everybody but the Crown’, with Commissioners being directed to protect against ‘encroachment by any New Comer’.¹⁰⁷ The major land users in colonial New South Wales, the squatters, did not represent a ‘landed interest’ but instead the ‘capitalist’, as introduced last chapter. They sought not a ‘stake’ in the land but security of their capital.

Second, bureaucratic developments to deal with the problems of secure Crown land from the claims of squatters reinforced this capitalistic figure. The conversion of the frontier from a site of barbarity to progress was achieved primarily through counting and numerical representation. The 1839 Occupations Act gave Commissioners power to assess stations primarily as means of calculating the depasturing fee for Treasury. In practice, the individual squatter, or ‘Proprietor’, as they were disarmingly termed in the legislation, was responsible for making half-yearly returns of his own ‘stations’, from which commissioners issued their ratings.¹⁰⁸ The commissioners also frequently visited stations to verify returns and assess uses of land, wood and

¹⁰⁶ As A.R. Buck has noted, there was an ongoing process in colonial Australia where the traditional English legal distinction between ‘real’ (landed) and ‘personal’ property, and all the political and social vestiges of the former, were dissolved as forms of personal property, including livestock, leases and securities on wool, proved greater in value than land itself. See at length, Buck, *The Making of Australian Property Law*.

¹⁰⁷ Gipps to Glenelg, 6 April 1839, *HRA* 1:20, 91. The case was, 1839, *Scott v Dight* [1839], see: *Sydney Herald*, 25 March 1839. It is interesting to note the defence provided by Dight was that the plaintiffs occupied more land than they required, and that a party must not take possession of more land than he can actually use, and that there was plenty of room for both of them. This was fundamentally Lockean equation, which link property to man’s labour. It did not stand up in a nineteenth-century colonial court.

¹⁰⁸ See 2 Vic c27. The legislation for rating was updated by Assessment Stock Act 1855, 19 Vic c26, which introduced new forms but maintained a similar practice. For records???

water. This rationalised knowledge of the frontier was collated, depicting the ‘progress’ of settlement in new statistical tables and maps that became the basis of colonial knowledge (**figure 5.2**).¹⁰⁹ Filling out returns inscribed techniques of calculable self-discipline into the everyday practices of colonial wool growing, as did shipping lists and auction reports, trade and mortgage statistics, and stock agent and wool broker reports and the farming manuals noted above. In concert with nascent forms of pastoral accounting, these representations and technologies – like the emigrant guides, property circulars, advertisements, and surveyor reports discussed in the last chapter – enmeshed the pastoralist into a calculable set of relations that could be mapped in terms of future rates of return on investment.¹¹⁰

Finally, the debate over tenure offered scope for squatters to redefine their political function. In an effort to circumvent the legalism of the tenure debate, pastoralists appropriated the categories of political economy to assert, as early governors had, that squatting was fundamentally a calculable economic phenomenon, the value of which preceded political or legal questions. A petition issued by the Pastoral Association resolved that ‘the commercial and trading classes of the community are most intimately connected with ... the prosperity of the great pastoral interests of this Colony’.¹¹¹ On this view, there were no inherent conflicts between the landed and merchant ‘interest’, as there had been in eighteenth-century Britain. There were only self-regulating, interdependent economic dynamics. Energised by the squatters’ attack on Gipps, newspapers espoused the colonial community was one of unified commercial interests, which were threatened by the governor’s regulations.¹¹²

Appealing to the reductive dynamics of ‘economic’ necessity excused the squatter from the deadlock between natural and common law. Gideon Scott Lang’s *Land and Labour in Australia*, discussed in Chapter Four, was the most eminent example of this strategy.¹¹³ The

¹⁰⁹ On cartography as colonial knowledge, see: Simon Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye: How Explorers Saw Australia* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹¹⁰ Garry D. Carnegie, “The Development of Accounting Regulation, Education, and Literature in Australia, 1788-2005,” *Australian Economic History Review* 49, no. 3 (November 1, 2009): 276-301; Garry Carnegie, *Pastoral Accounting in Colonial Australia: A Case Study of Unregulated Accounting* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997); Peter Miller and Ted O’Leary, “Accounting and the Construction of the Governable Person,” *Accounting, Organizations and Society* 12, no. 3 (1987): 235-65.

¹¹¹ *SMH*, 10 April 1844, 2. See also the Pastoral Association resolution in Enclosure, Gipps to Stanley, 16 April 1844, *HRA* 1:23,604-605.

¹¹² For a plethora of examples, see: Burroughs, *Britain and Australia, 1831-1855*, 309-11.

¹¹³ Lang, *Land, Labour and Australia*, 150.

Figure 5.2 John Arrowsmith, “Sketch shewing the squatting districts in New South Wales, 1844” (London: Luke James Hansard. Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, June 1846). National Library of Australia.

squatter mouthpiece, *The Atlas*, similarly employed economic calculation to exonerate squatters from charges of monopoly while accusing everyone else, especially government, of the same. In distinction to the ambiguous land grant memorials in the 1820s, *The Atlas* defended squatters' claims to land not on grounds of patriotic virtue, but because 'it is in the interest of the Colony to dispose of its waste lands on the easiest terms consistent with the requisite adjustment of capital and labour'. In defiance of Gipps' regulations, Robert Lowe, at this time still an ally of the squatters, wrote: 'It is of no importance to the community whether these lands are in many or few hands; but it is important to the community to retain its capital, to lighten its taxation, and to make

the wilderness useful to the support of man'.¹¹⁴ Where Huskisson had depicted British wool growing as a stunted pet child, now colonial satirists depicted the squatter as Prometheus bound by regulation and preyed upon by the 'vulture' Gipps (**figure 5.3**).

Lowe's rhetoric about 'community' is crucial to note. It was argued that in Chapter Two that depicting a distinct 'economic' domain was achieved by articulating 'community' as a formation or 'distribution' of wealth-producing agents. It was then argued in Chapter Four, reviewing colonial debates over land settlement, that colonists' recognised multiple ways in which this economic community might be calculated and configured. Squatters advocated a highly specific formulation of community which placed the woolgrower at the centre of a dynamic set of exchanges. As it had for Huskisson in the 1820s, the metaphors of political economy generated a particular narrative about wool growing that sanctioned future behaviour and set the standards of measurement and judgement of his achievements.

The apogee of this economic justification of squatting was in their bid to have Parliament revoke Gipps' 1844 proposed regulations. Here the legitimising significance of leases, enumeration and economic discourse were realised. In London, Lord Stanley had initially been convinced of Gipps' program. However, as he received the Pastoral Association petitions, Cowper's 1844 select committee report (see Chapter Four) and a deputation of squatters, he was less conceived of its efficacy. Following Lang and others, he suspected forcing squatters to purchase homesteads would unprofitably sink capital. The same arguments were condensed in petitions from London merchants, bankers and manufacturers backing the Australia sheep growers. They implored authorities to give 'security to the large Investments of Capital made by the Licenced Grazieres in the production of this most important staple of the Colony'.¹¹⁵ Legislation to this effect was drafted in 1845, passed in 1846 and enacted in 1847. In Parliament, the long leases were justified by transposing Wakefield's logic of distributing productive resources throughout empire:

¹¹⁴ *The Atlas*, 7 December 1844, 15.

¹¹⁵ "The Memorial of the Merchants, Bankers, Manufacturers, and others in London, interested in the colony of New South Wales", *HRA* 1:24, 462. See also: "The Memorial of the Glasgow Association for the Promotion of Squatting and the General Interests of New South Wales", *HRA* 1:24, 571-3; "Lord Polworth to Lord Stanley", *HRA* 1:24, 573-4.

Figure 5.3 Edward Winstanley, “Prometheus and the Vulture”. Sydney: Published Raphael Clint, early 1840s. State Library of New South Wales.

Here [Britain] we have abundant capital and plentiful labour, but are limited in space. There the space is boundless, but capital and labour are wanting. Supply the deficiency of the one from the superfluity of the other. Take the workman to his work, and, as has been truly said, your loss will be a gain, and every shepherd there will move a loom here.¹¹⁶

To this extent, Lang and Lowe were successful in deploying an economic framework to provide an economic justification of what had initially been a dubious practice. Moving squatting onto an economic terrain suspended moral and legal critiques by setting it in relation to different ends of exchange, wealth accumulation, and prosperity.

The most prominent stage on which these economic narratives of pastoralism were constructed was not the debates over tenure, however, but labour supply and immigration. By the 1840s, immigration committees, often populated by pastoralists, doubled as reports of the state of

¹¹⁶ *BPD* (HC), 22 August 1846, Vol. 88, 965.

the wool industry. In an 1845 report, authored by the polymath and grazier Charles Nicholson, the woolgrower was identified not in terms of law, security or civilisation, but a regime of production, costs and prosperity:

The primary object of all our colonial enterprise is sheep farming. Seven-eighths of our exportable produce consist of wool, and whatever affects the cost of its production must have the most direct and intimate relation to the interests of the Colony, as well as to those of Great Britain. A reduction in the price realized by this commodity, or an increased expenditure in the cost of its production (whether arising from exorbitant wages or any other cause) must strike at the root of our general prosperity, as restoring our export altogether, or as rendering the cost of its production equal to, or exceeding the prices realized for it, in the European market' ... When, owing to the high rate of wages, a flock master is driven to the necessity of converting into tallow, for which he probably realizes not more than five shillings a sheep, whose annual fleece ought to furnish him with a net revenue of two shillings or two shillings and sixpence, he adopts a step, the consequences of which are the extinction of his own capital, and diminution of an exportable product of the Colony, the supply of which is intimately connected with the interests of the British manufacturers.¹¹⁷

Nicholson's arguments were more than ideological posturing on the pastoralists' behalf, but offered perhaps the clearest example yet of a narrative of colonial existence defined purely by economic processes or 'our general prosperity' were conceived of as a deductive balancing of profits and wages, costs and prices, and prices and exports. As with Huskisson's speech in 1825, this is not to impute 1845 as a specific year of rupture in colonial discourse, but it is to register an increasingly distinctive way of formulating activities such as sheep farming and the dynamics of the colonial community more generally.

As will be seen in the next chapter, these deductive formulations were highly contested. Labourers challenged this mathematical relation between wool prices and labour costs, between high wages and labour demand. But they also immediately identified as 'labour', that is, as a constitutive member of the system Nicholson described. And so we are reminded what is crucial

¹¹⁷ "Report from the Select Committee on Immigration 1845", *V&P LCNSW (1845)*, II, 601, 602.

about official narratives, as produced by Nicholson, is not their coercive power, but capacity to frame public discourse. This was to make social world tangible, governable and debatable, canonising social agencies that could be embodied or resisted, but also managed and equipped. And no equipment was more crucial to the community of productive pastoralists than credit.

The woolgrower as a figure of credit

The naming and legitimisation of colonial wool growing as an economic activity, expansive, profitable, and accumulative, which necessitated particular means and mechanisms of facilitating this kind of activity. Supplying British manufacturers on the other side of the world had considerable lead times between shearing, consignment, transportation, and sale, necessitating costs to be covered through systems of credit.¹¹⁸ This practice began informally with local marketing connections between growers, shopkeepers, and merchants that facilitated the inflow of money credit in exchange for wool.¹¹⁹ It was greatly accelerated with the inflow of banking capital after 1834 and was institutionalised with the *Liens on Wool and Stock Mortgage Act*, the focus of the remainder of this chapter.

Historians have long appreciated that the Lien on Wool Act was a measure to alleviate pastoralists in the downturn of the 1840s. As a financial innovation, it has been assigned a neat inevitability that typifies much finance historiography.¹²⁰ The expansion of wool naturally lead to an expansion of finance. Ville, for example, explains the emergence of the stock and station agent, who after around 1840 was the chief broker of credit arrangements, as filling a self-evident ‘entrepreneurial gap’ in the colony.¹²¹ But the emergence of pastoral credit might also be understood within the broader scope of transformations we are tracing in this thesis. Like much

¹¹⁸ Alan Barnard, *The Australian Wool Market, 1840-1900* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1958), 47-50, 96-103.

¹¹⁹ McMichael, *Settlers and the Agrarian Question*, 69.

¹²⁰ ‘... capital needed to get faster or more mobile, and so it did, and the manner in which it did so logically followed from what went before’: Bill Maurer, “Islands in the Net: Rewiring Technological and Financial Circuits in the ‘Offshore’ Caribbean,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, no. 3 (July 2001): 470.

¹²¹ Simon P. Ville, *The Rural Entrepreneurs: A History of the Stock and Station Agent Industry in Australia and New Zealand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

finance history, innovations in pastoral credit generated moments of political conflict over the kind of community such securities were creating.¹²²

Issuing private credit was no new matter to nineteenth century New South Wales. Forms of credit had been ubiquitous since the early modern period in Britain, however these were regulated not by formal legal instruments but trust, obligation and one's immediate reputation in the community.¹²³ New kinds of credit, in the form of paper money, began to emerge from the late seventeenth century, most prominently with the 'financial revolution' and establishment of a National Debt, which raised war funds for Britain's 'fiscal-military state', but also modes of corporate and private financial instruments, mortgages and securities.¹²⁴ These increasingly depersonalised credit certificates, in which Britain's woollen industry quickly participated, were highly controversial, and created new legal, intellectual and moral problems, encompassing issues of 'virtue, corruption, power, passions, stability, justice, fairness and faith'.¹²⁵ The invention and proliferation of formal credit systems thus fundamentally marked a 'political struggle over its proper meanings, legitimacy and possibility of new secondary markets in shares in credit'.¹²⁶ While political economy provided a new rationale for credit that helped to absorb (or simply

¹²² Marieke de Goede, *Virtue, Fortune and Faith: A Genealogy of Finance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

¹²³ Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998); Craig Muldrew, "Interpreting the Market: The Ethics of Credit and Community Relations in Early Modern England," *Social History* 18, no. 2 (1993): 163-83.

¹²⁴ See Chapter Four for the National Debt and Britain's fiscal-military state. On the expansion of private forms of credit, useful survey still include: B. L. Anderson, "Provincial Aspects of the Financial Revolution of the Eighteenth Century," *Business History* 11, no. 1 (January 1, 1969): 11-22; Peter Mathias, "Capital, Credit and Enterprise in the Industrial Revolution," *Journal of European Economic History* 2, no. 1 (1973): 121-43; B. A. Holderness, "Credit in English Rural Society before the Nineteenth Century, with Special Reference to the Period 1650-1720," *The Agricultural History Review* 24, no. 2 (1976): 97-109.

¹²⁵ On eighteenth-century pastoral credit system, see: Pat Hudson, *The Genesis of Industrial Capital: A Study of the West Riding Wool Textile Industry, c. 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Michael Zell, "Credit in the Pre-Industrial English Woollen Industry," *The Economic History Review* 49, no. 4 (1996): 667-91; J. Smail, *Merchants, Markets and Manufacture: The English Wool Textile Industry in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: St Martin's Press: 1999). These works have not been sensitive to the moral and political controversies in which 'credit' was embroiled, however. For an overview of such controversies, see: Julian Hoppit, "Attitudes to Credit in Britain, 1680-1790," *The Historical Journal* 33, no. 2 (1990): 307.

¹²⁶ Goede, *Virtue, Fortune and Faith*, 23.

disguise) some of these tensions, it remained an object of great suspicion into the nineteenth century.¹²⁷

Credit was pervasive in colonial New South Wales from the outset. With a shortage of specie at least until the imperial standardisation of the pound sterling in 1825, the colony effectively operated on ad hoc credit systems for its first thirty years.¹²⁸ Colonial woolgrowing sprang up on these systems. Only the biggest growers could afford to finance shipping and sell direct in London. In the initial years of pastoralism, most graziers were keen for an early sale of their produce locally to finance the shearing season. Sales to speculating merchants or shopkeepers were often completed in country towns or on the roadside heading into Melbourne or Sydney.¹²⁹ From early on, merchants also began advancing money to growers on the security of their clip. Credit from these sources enabled smaller woolgrowers to begin operation.¹³⁰ The 1834 Interest Act invited a flood of banking capital, which facilitated the emergence of stock and export agencies, allowing small settlers to get their clip direct to London auction houses, too.¹³¹

In a sense, the *Lien on Wool and Stock Mortgage Act* was, then, a formalisation of practices already underway in the colony. The authorisation of these practices, and the protections from fraud offered by the creation of a register of liens and mortgages, accelerated the rate of such techniques and amplified its significance. The Act was a direct response to the ‘commercial

¹²⁷ For a perspective on these ongoing tensions, see: Anthony Howe, “From ‘Old Corruption’ to ‘New Probity’: the Bank of England and its directors in the Age of Reform”, *Financial History Review* 1 (1994): 23-41

¹²⁸ S. J. Butlin, *Foundations of the Australian Monetary System 1788-1851* (Sydney: Sydney University Press Sydney, 1968), see Chapters One to Six. No money was sent out with the first fleet requiring Macquarie’s experimentation in coin making and the importation of Spanish dollars before 30,000 sterling silver coins arrived in the colony in December 1825. The colony ran a combination of private promissory notes, merchant credit, assignment of crops, property mortgage (though these were of limited validity because of tenuous grants) and Treasury bills issued by the Commissariat. Ibid, 126, 131.

¹²⁹ Roberts, *The Squatting Age in Australia*, 344-45.

¹³⁰ McMichael, *Settlers*, 68.

¹³¹ Two banks in 1834 with paid up capital of £84,321 had become seven in 1840 with an aggregate of £2,300,955. Banks did not lend as it was considered bad practice but made profits by discounting bills of exchange, however a mortgage market with specialist companies and private brokers. This influx of capital, together with the formation of the land market after 1831, provoked a ‘speculative mania’, fostered by both the banks and government. Easy money fuelled property speculation, which swelled the land fund, half of which was deposited in the colonial banks, at high interest. In meeting these dividends, banks were compelled to further discount the proceeds of those sales, further fuelling a vicious cycle. When government then withdrew heavily to pay for its assisted immigration schemes, the banks were forced to suddenly restrict discounts, sapping confidence from the money market and contracting supply. For a lucid account of the role of government depositing and withdrawals in the ‘monetary confusion’, see: “Evidence of William Hamilton Hard, Superintendent of the Bank of Australasia, 12 September 1843, “Report from Select Committee on Monetary Confusion”, *V&PNSW 1843*, 5.

embarrassment' of the early 1840s, which, as Frank Decker has recently explained, was essentially a major 'monetary event', where following the collapse of banks, illiquid but otherwise solvent parties, especially sheep farmers, could not obtain money to pay their balances, putting other solvent parties also at risk.¹³² Liens on wool was one of three proposals to relieve the crisis, and the only one enacted. The second was a system of government-backed mortgages, proposed by the 1843 Select Committee on Monetary Confusion.¹³³ A third proposal was to restrict the supply of credit by capping lending rates at five per cent, thus overturning the 1834 Interest Act. All three attracted widespread debate. State-sponsored mortgages were widely condemned as an 'artificial remedy' by the banking witnesses addressing a Select Committee on Monetary Confusion in 1843 and subsequently by the press. Despite some denouncement of easy credit in the colony, interfering with interest rates were also considered an attack on 'natural liberty' and undermining the 'rights of capitalists', as Sydney businessmen R.A.A. Morehead wrote.¹³⁴ A lien

¹³² Frank Decker, "The Legal and Economic History of the *Lien on Wool and Stock Mortgage Act 1843 (NSW)* - A Case Study on the Significance of Property Law for Understanding Economic Development," *Legal History* 12, no. 2 (2008): 151-175. The most complete account of the crisis was provided by William Westgarth, *Observations on the present commercial, agricultural and civil condition of the Australian Colonies* (Leith: Thomson & Forman, 1844). Curiously, Westgarth, in discussing the recovery, does not mention the Liens on Wool Act.

¹³³ The committee report explained the proposal: 'A landed proprietor wishing to raise money upon his property, applies to a Land-board, which values it, and agrees to lend him the credit of the State, for one-half of the valuation. The Land owner mortgages his property to the Board, which then gives him a paper called a *pfandbriefe*, or pledge certificate, which contains the name of the mortgagor, of his estate, the letter and number of the transaction in the books of the Board, and two official signatures. The interests to be received by the holder of the *pfandbriefe*, is made payable in half yearly dividends, on fly leaves called coupons, calculated for two years in advance, which a guaranteed by the Board. These coupons are cut off and presented at the Treasury, where they are paid, as they become due, or they may be cut off beforehand, and circulated till they become due'. 'Report from Select Committee on Monetary Confusion', *V&P LCNSW 1843*, 1.

¹³⁴ For example: Philo-Palinurus, *Land Gambling: New South Wales, Its Present Social and Political Condition, with Suggestions for Its Amelioration* (London, Palmer and Clayton, 1842), 6-7. John Curr, *Statistics of Banking, in the Colony of New South Wales* (Sydney: James Reading, 1843), 11. Bankers giving evidence to the 1843 committee on monetary confusion also expressed concern credit had been too easy. See: Bultin, *Foundations*, 329. On opposition to limiting interest rates, see: R.R.A. Morehead, *Some Words for and to the Capitalists and Shareholders in Banks and Other Moneyed Companies* (Sydney: James Tegg, 1843), 1, 6, 12. The *Colonial Observer*, no defender of the status quo, mocked the bill as a 'first-rate specimen of the political economists of 1743'. For the Legislative Council debate: *SMH*, 21 September 1843, 2. Gipps doubted the efficacy of the bill, fearing it would violate 'nine tenths or more of the engagements between man and man in the Colony' and received petitions from bankers and merchants who decried the 'impolicy and absurdity of any enactments for regulating the rate at which capitalists should be allowed to employ their funds'. Gipps to Stanley, 7 October 1843, *HRA* 1:23, 181; Petition to Gipps, 31 December 1844, *HRA* 1:24, 159. See also John Innes (Australian Trust Company) to Under Secretary Hope, 27 May 1845, *HRA* 1:24, 380.

on wool, while untried, was the only measure not to affront what bankers conceived as the highest principle of leaving ‘things ... to their natural course’.¹³⁵

The Act had two components, a mortgage and a lien. Mortgaging stock was already common practice in English common law, a variation of a non-possessory chattel mortgage. Its only innovation in the colonial context was to exempt it from insolvency laws and create a public register of all wool under mortgage to avoid fraud. The lien on wool was more complex and innovative. A lien is a possessory security providing the creditor with the right to detain personal chattels until the debt is discharged, but unlike a pledge, provides the creditor no power of sale. Clearly, a common law possessory security makes no sense in the context of wool growing, as possession of the wool needs to remain with the debtor, growing on the sheep’s back to be cut, baled and sold.¹³⁶ The Act thus created an entirely new kind of security, taking ‘investment’ to new levels of imagination, which would have ‘astounded the orthodox lawyer’.¹³⁷

From the outset, the measure was deeply divisive. Wentworth, who introduced the legislation, admitted the ‘bill itself was a novelty’.¹³⁸ But he also attempted to downplay this aspect, pointing to similar cases with ships or plantation crops in the West Indies.¹³⁹ The Bill would enable the ‘proprietor’ to pay wages and expense, and bring the wool ‘ultimately to market, and thus obtain a profit for himself’.¹⁴⁰ While the Council was generally in support of the measure

¹³⁵ The phrase was repeatedly used by banking witnesses at the “Select Committee on Monetary Confusion”, *NSWLC V&P 1843*: Evidence of W.H. Hart, 12 September 1843, 4 G. Miller in evidence, 20 September 1843, 17, 18; W.C. Botts, in evidence, 20 September 1843, 19, 20; T.W. Smart, in evidence, 23 September 1843, 49; W.H. Hart, in evidence, 12 September 1843, 4; James Mitchell, in evidence, 22 September 1843, 36; F. Kemble, in evidence, 20 September 1843, 14. Charles Roemer, a former bank chairman, endorsed only discipline in his response: ‘people must form more correct judgments, as to the profitable nature of their pursuits, and make their arrangements accordingly.’ In evidence, 22 September, 1843, 40. Gipps’, meanwhile, did not want ‘the Government to become the Mortgagee General of the Colony’ and withheld the bill from assent. Gipps to Stanley, 29 November 1843, *HRA* 1:23, 231.

¹³⁶ Frank Decker, “The Legal and Economic History,” 159-161.

¹³⁷ E. I. Sykes and Sally Walker, *The Law of Securities* (Sydney: The Law Book Company, 1993), 701.

¹³⁸ Wentworth told the Council: ‘The Act was not a measure of his own suggestion, but had been suggested to him by an eminent mercantile man in the country, who had pointed out to him the advantages which the owner would derive from the facilities granted for the advancement of money and on the other hand the security which a Bill such as that which he proposed would give to the party advancing money upon wool’. *SMH*, 11 August 1843, 2.

¹³⁹ *SMH*, 1 September 1843, 2.

¹⁴⁰ *SMH*, 1 September 1843, 2. There was considerable angst over how it would work in practice in the Council. The bill was described as ‘one of considerable difficulty’, raising questions about how registration of mortgages was to be enacted and publicised to avoid fraud (should duplicate records be kept throughout the colony, or only in Sydney?) and concerns that sheep could easily be sold while still under mortgage. It was also noted these were risks woolgrowers were already engaging in and the new registry would offer better security than existed. The novelty of the lien was thought ‘very valuable’.

passing it in September 1843, 'he press were more sceptical. The *Herald* thought 'on principle the provisions of the Bill are objectionable', however circumstances called for such measures.¹⁴¹ The *Colonial Observer*, less gratuitously, thought it a 'gilded pill for those who choose to take it, which we understand very few will'.¹⁴² Similarly, Gipps had initially anticipated 'no very salutary effect is anticipated from it by any party'.¹⁴³ Nonetheless, by the end of 1844, thirty eight per cent of all colonial sheep were under lien or mortgage, with a value representing forty per cent of exports, over half all registered colonial mortgages whether land, lien, and stock, and thirty eight per cent of colonial money supply.¹⁴⁴ Following such developments, Gipps provided a more detailed account of the Act to the Colonial Office. He confessed that in 'ordinary circumstances' he would have objected to the 'evils' arising from 'too prevalent practice of trading or farming on borrowed Capital', but with the failure of banks, it had proven useful.¹⁴⁵

Gipps' despatch elicited a vicious reply from London.¹⁴⁶ There was considerable speculation in the colonial press whether Stanley or a clerk had penned the 'didactic' response, which disparaged the Act 'a measure so irreconcilably opposed to the principles of Legislation immemorially recognised in this Country respecting the alienation or pledging of things moveable'. While recognising the colony's 'unhappy' circumstances might 'furnish an apology' for the Act, such a measure also presented 'unwonted facilities for borrowing money and increasing the evil of credit'. It would amount to nothing but 'authorising transactions which the Law of England regards as affording the conclusive indication of fraud,' wrote Stanley. 'It is a Law, which will place Society at the mercy of any dishonest Borrower, and which will stimulate the speculative spirit which it is so important to discourage.' Stanley ordered the Act be repealed or else have it 'disallowed by the Queen in Council' when it expired in July 1846.¹⁴⁷

Legal historians have focused on the inaccuracy of Stanley's jurisprudence, noting he was wrong to see it either in contradiction to common law or particularly susceptible to fraud. In

SMH, 1 September 1843, 2. Gipps proposed minor amendments, *SMH*, 29 September 1843, 2. *SMH*, 28 November 1844, 4.

¹⁴¹ *SMH*, 23 August 1843, 2.

¹⁴² *Colonial Observer*, 16 September 1843, 1.

¹⁴³ Gipps to Stanley, 7 October 1843, *HRA* 1:23, 180.

¹⁴⁴ Decker, "Liens on Wool", 164.

¹⁴⁵ Gipps to Stanley, 1 January 1844, *HRA* 1:23, 281.

¹⁴⁶ *SMH*, 18 March 1845, 2.

¹⁴⁷ Stanley to Gipps, 28 October 1844, *HRA* 1:24, 57-58.

defending the Act against Stanley, Wentworth himself was careful to articulate this critique, likening a lien on unclipped wool to sugar canes not yet planted on West Indian estates while highlighting the register protected investors from lending to fraudulent borrowers.¹⁴⁸ However, there was clearly more at stake here than legal technicality, but a political exposition of the principles that *ought* to organise ‘Society’. Looking at the colonial monetary crisis from afar, Stanley’s reflex was to appeal to old principles that elevated landed property as true security, the basis of social and commercial relations. By the 1840s, however, following a decade of authorised squatting, a different kind ‘society’ was being articulated and legitimated in New South Wales through new instruments like the Liens on Wool Act.¹⁴⁹

The Legislative Council were defensive of their innovation. John Lamb reminded ‘this country was in a very different state from England, and what was a very proper law for a young country like this, might be a very improper one for an old country like England’.¹⁵⁰ Robert Lowe, typically, was definitive. Any ‘spirit of speculation would correct itself,’ Lowe argued, warning repeal would sap ‘the energy and enterprise on which the country depended’. Interfering officials in London, Lowe concluded, were ‘ignorant of the laws of political economy’ and ‘could not bring their minds to imagine the kind of people they were legislating for’.¹⁵¹ Lowe thus again appealed to a particular, economic configuration of the colonial ‘community’ to defend the interests of pastoralists.

In his 1845 *Report from the Select Committee on the Preferable Liens on Wool Act*, staged to resist Stanley’s call for repeal, Wentworth extended Lowe’s economic rendering of the colonial community.¹⁵² ‘With us, sheep, cattle and horses ... form the principles or staple property of this Colony, as fixed property is the principal or staple property of England and ought, therefore ... by analogy to have all these uses and incidents of fixed property here’. The Act put Australian wool on ‘an equal footing’ with English land, ‘so that capitalists may lend as freely on the one

¹⁴⁸ Decker, “Liens on Wool”, 168; “Report from the Select Committee on the Lien on Wool Act”, *V&P LCNSW 1845*, 727-750.

¹⁴⁹ It ought to be noted the press shared some of Stanley’s doubts. The analogy between crops and wool was not equal said the *SMH*, ‘with the planter there is real security; with the grazier there is none’. *SMH*, 29 April 1845, 2.

¹⁵⁰ *SMH*, 8 August 1845, 2. See also Wentworth’s speech, *SMH*, 22 October 1845, 2.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.* For a regurgitation of Lowe’s argument in the press, *Australian*, 9 August 1845, 3.

¹⁵² Again, the press differed, see: *Sentinel*, 20 August 1845, 3. *SMH*, 3 November 1845, 2;

sort of property as the other'. Wentworth reinforced this argument by analogising Australian sheep with West Indian slaves, where planters had been allowed to mortgage 'without distinction'.¹⁵³ 'Any state of the law which should prevent the freest use of them, would be an unwarrantable interference with the rights of property, and as far it impeded its circulation would, *pro tanto* be an injustice to the owner, and an injury to the community'.¹⁵⁴ Where the patriotic landlord remained at the heart of Stanley's 'Society', Wentworth was shifting the dispute into a different idiom and mode of justification, identifying the woolgrower as 'capitalist', 'the principal class of our community.'

It was almost two years before the Colonial Office responded to the report. While the Secretary of State, Earl Grey (formerly Lord Howick), 'fully concur[ed]' with Stanley's opposition to the bill, the efficacy of Wentworth's argument was reflected in Grey's decision to launch his own set of economic arguments against the Act. On Grey's view, not only did liens encourage speculation, they also inflated the price of labour, greatly disadvantaging the woolgrower 'who conducts his business on his own means'. He thought the analogy with West Indian planters a warning, not a justification, for crop securities had only 'rendered' planters 'Agents of the merchants' rather than 'real proprietors of their own Estates'.¹⁵⁵ However, like the earlier debate on tenure, by combating Wentworth with his own economic arguments, Grey reduced the problem to one of competing, deductive calculations.¹⁵⁶ There was no disadvantage to those 'trading on their own capital', responded Wentworth, for an indebted woolgrower had to pay wages *and* interest. He recited a deluge of figures to defend the Acts. Securities worth almost

¹⁵³ If 'human beings were allowed by law, because they formed the principal stock or property of their owners, to be sold, mortgaged, or otherwise incumbered [sic], without restraint, like any other real or chattel property', Wentworth argued in the report, the same should apply for this colony's sheep, cattle and horses.

¹⁵⁴ "Report of Select Committee on Liens on Wool", 730.

¹⁵⁵ Grey to Fitz Roy, 9 February 1848, *HRA* 1:26, 219-220.

¹⁵⁶ There were, to be sure, local dissenters who acquiesced Stanley's and Grey's traditional outlook. In the Council debate responding to Grey's despatch, the Colonial Secretary Edward Deas Thomson, and Attorney General John Plunkett, both of whom were broadly loyal to 'government' in debates in the Legislative Council, that is, the Governor, proposed the matter be reviewed in yet another select committee. They reminded Wentworth had admitted the bill contained 'a new principle' when first introduced, and it was only ever meant to be temporary. 'It was not, therefore, astonishing that the English minister should look on it with surprise or that the English people should think it strange, that a law should pass, which made a sheep the property of one person, while the wool growing on their backs was the property another'. But a further ten members (all with pastoral interests) spoke in defence of the Act and the 'disastrous consequences' if it were to suddenly ceased. Grey's despatch was condemned and the call for another committee dropped. *SMH*, 31 August 1850, 4.

three million pounds had been registered under the Act since its inception, yet there was not one conviction of fraud. At the same time, debts due to banks had fallen by about six hundred thousand pounds, while the population, livestock and trade had all increased considerably. On these numbers, Wentworth argued, almost everyone was implicated in the system of credit and debt. Its repeal would 'lead to a monetary panic, which would lead to the ruin of hundreds of solvent stockholders, as well as their creditors, and spread dismay and confusion throughout the entire colony'.¹⁵⁷ It was made permanent in the early 1860s.

While the lien on wool was normalised through its pervasive usage, the kinds of numbers Wentworth drew upon also helped to sanitise the lien from moral or political quandary. The public register of liens and mortgages created under the Act enabled government bureaucrats to annually report on the quantity and value of securities. The press began to report these statistics as indicators of the 'progress' of colonial pastoralism, in tandem with the size of flocks and value of exports. Wool liens and stock mortgages were publically tracked in big bold tables, adding to the 'literature' that aided the calculating, accumulating woolgrower.¹⁵⁸ In turn, the lien became an object of public scrutiny and there emerged a new debate over what the relation between 'debt and trade' ought to be. There was, for a time, a sense that debts should be kept to a minimum. It was more 'economical' to '*realise* rather than encumber'. However as the extension of the use of the lien could be correlated with an increase in production, the cycle of perpetual debt became accepted, even deemed necessary. As delegates told the 1861 International Statistical Congress: 'it has been eminently beneficial, judging by the extent to which it [liens] has been used'.¹⁵⁹ The pastoralists' 'stock in trade', reflected one newspaper, had ceased to be 'counted by heads and is recognised only in the Loan Company's and Mortgage Bills of Sale'.¹⁶⁰

The lien also served as a device of argumentation. John Robertson, in his evidence to the 1855 Select Committee on the State of Agriculture, argued agricultural cultivation had suffered as the lien lured 'intelligent men, of inconsiderable capital' into pastoral rather than agricultural

¹⁵⁷ *SMH*, 31 August 1850, 4.

¹⁵⁸ For example: *SMH*, 9 August 1847, 2; *SMH*, 26 June 1848, 2; *SMH*, 26 August 1854; *Empire*, 13 October 1859, 6.

¹⁵⁹ *SMH*, 26 August 1861, 2; See also: *SMH*, 21 August 1852, 2; For earlier caution: *SMH*, 14 August 1847, 2; *Bathurst Advocate*, 5 May 1849, 3

¹⁶⁰ *Bathurst Advocate*, 25 August 1849, 3.

pursuits. Agriculture, if it were to flourish, required a similar instrument that had ‘saved’ the woolgrower.¹⁶¹ Liens on crops were legislated for in 1862.¹⁶² On the other hand, the public calculability of liens also made them amenable to attacking squatters. Just as Wentworth had enumerated the growth of liens to defend its necessity against Grey, the squatters’ opponents, especially Henry Parkes’ *Empire*, argued the growing rate of pastoral debt revealed ‘their ostensible wealth was not their own’, calling into question squatters’ claims to be the colony’s premier producers and their rights to long leases on Crown land.¹⁶³

The liens on wool were a consequence of a process of reclassifying wool growing as an economic problem, an instrument to facilitate the political project of expansive, ‘unlimited’ pastoralism. It was in this intellectual and sociological context an ‘entrepreneurial gap’ opened for the stock and station agent as a mediator between banks and growers, since bankers considered it bad practice to deal directly with the farmers.¹⁶⁴ Such agents acted less as a purveyor of wool, as the eighteenth-century ‘wool stapler’ had, than a purveyor of credit. Ville has estimated that by the 1840s, fifty per cent of colonial clip was still sold locally by growers to colonial buyers who resold in England, while twenty per cent was shipped directly by large growers, and the remainder consigned to England by colonial merchants.¹⁶⁵ By mid-century, dedicated auction houses for Australian wool had opened in London and the majority of growers turned to consignment with the likelihood of realising better prices. This, however, also exposed them to the stresses of delayed ‘harvest income’, the period between shearing and sale being up to nine months.¹⁶⁶ The lien became essential to financing growers in the interim, encouraging, facilitating, and normalising practices of global exchange. What had begun initially as a novel emergency measure, became foundational to colonial pastoralism.¹⁶⁷ And so began a new rhythm

¹⁶¹ Evidence of John Robertson, Appendix. “Report from Select Committee on the State of Agriculture, V&P LCNSW 1855, 513-16; Reprinted in *Empire*, 23 January 1856, 2.

¹⁶² *Liens on Crop Act*, 26 Vic. 10.

¹⁶³ *Empire*, 19 December 1853, 2; “Letters”, *SMH*, 30 October 1857, 3.

¹⁶⁴ Evidence of L. Duguid, 22 August 1845, “Report...Liens on Wool,” V&P NSW 1845, 736.

¹⁶⁵ Ville, *The Rural Entrepreneurs*, 120.

¹⁶⁶ Barnard, *The Australian Wool Market*, 96.

¹⁶⁷ A cornerstone business technique of the stock agent was to offer the woolgrower credit on the condition that the grower continued to use the agent’s services year to year.¹⁶⁷ If he wished to realize higher London prices, the grower was bound to this arrangement. *Ibid.*, 120; Butlin, *Foundations of the Australian Monetary System*, 508-9.

to the agrarian cycle, governed not by the seasons, but unceasing, perpetual demands of borrowing and repayment.

Conclusion

The woolgrower occupies a revered place in Australian economic historiography. The focus of this chapter, however, has been to suspend assumptions about the ‘economic’ significance of rising wool exports, squatting and pastoral finance to Australian history, and to examine how these phenomena were in fact products of the imperial and colonial government’s reclassification of wool growing as an economic problem in the first half of the nineteenth century. The key shift here, reflected in a series of House of Commons reports and speeches, was the realignment of wool production from a problem of state administration and military strategy, to a factor in the optimisation of industry and wealth accumulation across empire. These shifts in rhetoric and perception, provoked by the circumstances of resuming trade after the Napoleonic Wars, had unique manifestations in colonial New South Wales. The most important aspect was the emergence of the capitalist-woolgrower in the form of the ‘squatter’, who while presenting moral and political threats to colonial order, was substantiated and defended by various actors (including governors) in the terms with which the imperial Parliament had originally justified major trade reforms: ‘unrestrained competition’ that would optimise the production and accumulation of wealth throughout empire.

The re-categorisation of wool growing as an ‘economic’ activity transformed not only the significance of wool growing to the community, but reshaped the very idea of the colonial ‘community’ as one constituted by economic agents. As was reflected in the 1845 *Report from the Select Committee on the Liens on Wool Act*, by mid-century, leading pastoral interests – who were often also leading local elites – were increasingly proficient in self-identifying as capitalists, as the ‘principal class of our community’. Invoking the woolgrower-as-capitalist both beckoned and justified the need for innovative forms of credit which underpinned the enormous expansion of wool production. But in constituting himself a debtor, the capitalist-woolgrower was also realigning a broader arrangement of social relations in the colony. This included his unique

relationship with merchants and consignment factors, and then the specialised stock agent who came to dominate colonial pastoralism in the second half of the century. But there was also the unending demand for shepherds, shearers, hut keepers, and drovers who were coming to be homogenised in a different set of government reports as a 'labour market' that could be measured in terms of 'labour demand'. Indeed, as the historian Charles Bean reflected over a century ago: 'The wool industry turns out wool and meat and tallow and glue and cold cream, and many other things. But the most important things it turns out is men'.¹⁶⁸ Economic pastoralism excited the 'need for men', but the mechanisms that brought them across the oceans to the colony also constituted a particular kind of labouring 'man'. It is to that process we now turn.

¹⁶⁸ C.E.W. Bean, *On the wool track* (London: Alston Rivers, 1910), viii.

(6)

Economic Narratives of Migration

The demand for men necessarily governs the production of men, as of every other commodity.

Karl Marx¹

KARL MARX KNEW WAKEFIELD'S THEORY OF SYSTEMATIC COLONIZATION well. With its ultimate aim of 'manufacturing wage-labourers in colonies', Marx argued at the end of the first volume of *Capital*, Wakefield's theory had 'discovered' the 'truth of capitalist relations in the mother country'.² The epigraph, lifted from one of Marx's earliest critiques of political economy written twenty years earlier in 1844, might have been an equally appropriate depiction of the Wakefield system and the government schemes in assisted migration that it informed, which by then had been operating to New South Wales for over a decade. Having examined some of the economic 'demands' produced by colonial wool growing in the previous chapter, we will now trace the subsequent 'production' of a particular kind of labouring, wage-earning 'man' (and the gendering is important) in Britain's assisted-migration schemes. These programs, which were a corollary to the 'Wakefieldian' Ripon Regulations discussed in Chapter Four, were not initially generated by the needs of colonial pastoralism, but as an imperial response to the newly discovered problems of a 'redundant' working population in Britain after the Napoleonic wars. Framed in the language of supply and demand, profits and wages, the governance of assisted migration neatly dovetailed with economic 'needs' created by the cessation of transportation, land settlement, and wool growing and constituted the migrant as the economic subject Marx and Wakefield envisaged: the 'labourer'. In this way, assisted migration reflected a governmental

¹ Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts in Early Writings* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1975), 283

² Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 1 (London: Penguin, 1990), 932.

performance of the third aspect of the Ricardian economic community in New South Wales, 'labour'.

Migration can no longer be treated as the poor relation of imperial history, as it was described only a decade ago.³ The labyrinth of policies, emigrants' lived experience, and the cultural significance of mass migration has recently been well covered by imperial, British, and Australian historians. My concern is with a set of deeper underlying conceptual shifts, largely overlooked by historians, which legitimised government involvement in migration. Prior to the nineteenth century, emigration was generally derided at all levels of British society.⁴ Largely a product of indentured servitude or religious persecution, it was commonly understood as a form of banishment from the mother country and treated by authorities as a threat to national security. In the early nineteenth century, however, imperial authorities reconceived emigration as a solution to the newly discovered 'economic' dimensions of its population. In this context, the Wakefieldian metaphor of 'relief', which, stemmed from his idea of 'proportioning' land, capital, and labour throughout empire, served to legitimise government-assisted migration as means of relocating a redundant population in colonies.

New South Wales was central to this new imagining. Of the 160,000 'free' emigrants who arrived in the colony between 1826 and 1860, seventy-five per cent were government assisted.⁵ A series of novel schemes, including emigrant loans, free passage and 'bounty' or remittance schemes, developed out of this approach to the labouring population.⁶ While migration historians have tended to hold the differences between these programs as fundamental, here they are read together as motivated by the same basic economic reimagining of population. In overall

³ As was claimed by A. James Hammerton, 'Gender and Migration', in Philippa Levine (ed.), *Gender and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 156. Two monumental studies have led the way: Eric Richards, *Britannia's Children: Emigration from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004); James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁴ The most recent account of a 'transition' in attitudes to emigration in the early nineteenth century is Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*, 145-147. See also: R.B. Madgwick, *Immigration into Eastern Australia, 1788-1851* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1969), 2, 5; Hugh J. M. Johnston, *British Emigration Policy 1815-1830: 'shovelling out Paupers'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

⁵ By way of comparison, the CLEC selected and financed 352,215 emigrants throughout empire between 1840 and 1878, this accounted for twenty-seven per cent British migration. The state assisted over one million migrants to Australia between 1851 and 1927. Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century, 1815-1914: A Study of Empire and Expansion* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1976), 43.

⁶ The distinctions are treated in Robin F. Haines, *Emigration and the Labouring Poor: Australian Recruitment in Britain and Ireland, 1831-60* (London: Macmillan, 1997).

global terms, immigration to New South Wales' remained a tiny fraction of global flows in this 'age of mass migrations'.⁷ However, it was also the chief means by which the language of economic calculation was extended into colonial discourse.

The central thread of this chapter is to trace how an economic re-conception of population entailed new ways of narrating migration as an issue of calculable 'labour', and some of the consequences this generated for government. This approach develops a number of major themes raised throughout this thesis. First, it deals with the inverse set of governmental problems and practices established by the Wakefieldian metaphors of 'relief' and 'proportion', introduced in Chapter Four. Just as these metaphors reconstituted land from an 'oak' ordering the moral, patriotic community to a 'machine' regulating productive relations, so was labour disaggregated from a unified, moral human capacity of the lower orders into an assessable, calculable factor of production, regulated by the dynamic of wages and profits. Second, these processes further broke-down the notion of 'property in service' introduced in relation to convict management in Chapter Two. The bureaucratic management of the migratory population, especially by the Colonial Land and Emigration Commission (CLEC) after 1840, involved inventing new sites of measurement and calculation, which transformed labour from a 'service' into a homogenised, enumerable commodity. Consequently, the wage was reclassified from regulating parochial legal and familial relations to administering productive economic relations, as embodied in two new objects of governance, 'labour demand', and the 'labour market'. Third, these processes heightened the gendering effects of economic knowledge. Government was concerned with women's work as much as men, but migrating women tended to be assigned a civilising role in penal society, whereas men were inserted into calculations of production, consigned to an economic realm of production, while women were allocated to the non-economic realm of the household. Finally, at the centre of these processes were again the authority of committee reports, normalising 'theory'

⁷ Hatton and Williamson estimate that fifty-five million people set out for New World destinations in the century after 1820, three-fifths going to the United States. The only comparable intercontinental migration had been that of black slaves from Africa to the America and the Caribbean. It was not until the 1840s that annual, free European migration to the Americas exceeded that of coerced African migration. They note prolonged peace, falling transportation costs and government '*laissez-faire*' policy as the three crucial factors behind this development. Clearly, I am emphasising a variation on the third here. Timothy J. Hatton and Jeffrey G. Williamson, *The Age of Mass Migration: Causes and Economic Impact* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 7.

through ‘government’. We have already noted the importance of the near-annual colonial immigration committees in previous chapters in constructing official economic narratives of land and wool in New South Wales. The significance of these immigration reports now come into full view. So too does a range of other authoring devices, produced by authorities such as the CLEC, which increasingly used numbers to stabilise and reify a world of economic phenomena.

This chapter has five parts. First, I recount the transition in British officials’ attitudes towards emigration as population was reframed from a household to a wealth-producing entity in the early nineteenth century. Next, I trace how these developments, beginning again with the 1831 Ripon Regulation, informed colonial authorities calculations of immigration and population as a productive dynamic as reflected in select committees and public debate. Third, imperial and colonial authorities’ modes of calculating populations generated new enumerative, bureaucratic techniques which, fourthly, did not just ‘represent’ populations but constituted the wage and the labour market as sites of governance. Finally, these processes were not just imposed on migrants, but internalised and reappropriated by labouring people, who re-conceived of themselves as a ‘working class’. At this point, we find economic categories beginning to solidify as the basis of political claims, naturalising the economic as a domain of life.

The problem of populations in the nineteenth-century British world

The plan for a system of government-assisted migration unveiled with the 1831 Ripon Regulations marked a radical departure from British authorities’ attitude towards emigration and conceptions of populations. On the eve of the American War of Independence, Britain continued to be absorbed by fears of national depopulation. Since the mid-seventeenth century, English practitioners of ‘political arithmetic’, and the parliamentarians they informed, had assessed population as an indicator of the kingdom’s ‘strength’, examining its component parts and making arguments about how each contributed to the realm. Political arithmeticians offered the first numerical mode of analysing different sectors of the nation as a whole, assessing the relative merits of each sector in relation to augmenting the wealth and security of the nation. Specific forms of employment were evaluated not as a proto-assessments of the ‘division of labour’ but to make arguments about the sovereign’s ‘interest’. William Petty, for example, thought seamen

most useful, while David Hume in the following century celebrated manufacturers.⁸ Support for populousness was not reducible to ‘mercantilist’ ideas of wealth, but fundamental to a common conception of the kingdom as a royal household, even as polemicists debated whether commerce, luxury, and inequality were sources of depopulation or population growth. Even Adam Smith, the arch-critic of the so-called mercantile system, equated ‘greatness’ with ‘populousness’, believing that ‘the most decisive mark of prosperity of any country is the increase of the number of its inhabitants’.⁹

On this view, outbound emigration from Britain was considered to weaken the kingdom. As James Belich has recently written, most eighteenth-century Britons saw emigration as ‘social excretion’, associated with compulsory removal of convicts and indentured servants. For those moderately comfortable and not persecuted, life in colonies was considered degrading, and emigration a form of banishment.¹⁰ Fears of migration were even more acute for political elites. From the 1750s there was growing hostility among British landlords, parliamentarians, and pamphleteers towards the apparent increase in departures from Ireland and Scotland to the American colonies. The kingdom, they feared, was being dis-peopled. This hostility could partly be construed as it was by those supporting migration into America, such as Benjamin Franklin, as British landlords’ self-interest in keeping their servants on their estates. But there were also broader, patriotic concerns about national security, especially as the population of the American colonies continued to swell. Such views permeated the heights of government. As early as the Seven Years’ War and acquisition of territory in the Canadian provinces, George Grenville warned Parliament that Britain, like Spain, risked being drained by its American colonies. Lord Hillsborough, first as President of the Board of Trade and then Secretary of State for Colonies (from 1768 to 1772), led a sustained attack on British migration to America and attempted to

⁸ See Chapter Two, 82.

⁹ WN, I.viii.23. For a general discussion on Smith and late eighteenth-century views on populousness, see: Donald Winch, *Riches and Poverty: An intellectual history of political economy in Britain, 1750-1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 80-86.

¹⁰ Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*, 145, 152. It became the task of promoters of emigration in the 1830s onwards ‘to remove from the minds of persons of all classes that emigration to Canada [or elsewhere] is banishment’. On the other hand, some nineteenth century emigrant guides still recognised emigration was akin to a form of ‘exile’. See discussion on the colonial ‘capitalist’, chapter four.

obstruct westward expansion in the colonies.¹¹ ‘By 1773’, wrote the historian Bernard Bailyn, ‘it was commonly believed that emigration was leading to virtual depopulation in certain regions of the British Isles’.¹² Elites and landowners formulated solutions, including raising the cost of passenger fares, licencing emigration, and tightening the granting of colonial lands to would-be emigrants. The controversy reached a climax in November 1773, when a draft bill to curb emigration was leaked to the press, which spurred further hysteria over its wisdom and legality. The bill never reached Parliament, but incited American resentment at such efforts to curb its own population, contributing to the discontents that culminated in the War of Independence. Nonetheless, this attitude remained current in Britain into the nineteenth century. As late as 1818, *The Times* could still quite emphatically ‘conceive the strength of the country to exist in its population’ and argued that any migration was only to risk ‘swelling the list of our enemies’.¹³

This outlook was greatly challenged by a sudden and dramatic shift in public discussion about population in the final decade of the eighteenth century, which encompassed doubts over the moral and financial efficiencies of the poor laws, speculation over the rise of pauperism, and new modes of ‘policing the poor’.¹⁴ Ricardo’s good friend, Thomas Robert Malthus, gave the definitive statement of these issues in his then anonymous 1798 *Essay on the Principles of Population*, which famously posited a terrifying but captivating inverse relationship between rising populations and food scarcity, placing England in grave danger given what he calculated to be her rapid population *increase*.¹⁵ Malthus transformed the problem of population from one

¹¹ Linda Colley, “‘This Small Island’: Britain, Size and Empire,” in *Proceedings of the British Academy, Volume 121, 2002 Lectures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 176; Peter Marshall, “Lord Hillsborough, Samuel Wharton and the Ohio Grant, 1769-1775,” *The English Historical Review* 80 no. 317 (1965): 717-739.

¹² Bernard Bailyn *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1986), 36. The ‘problem’ of depopulation became widely regretted in popular culture, with one futuristic essay prophesizing the inevitable ‘ruins of London’. *Lloyd’s Evening Post*, 1774, quoted *ibid*.

¹³ *The Times*, 31 March 1818,

¹⁴ J. R. Poynter, *Society and Pauperism; English Ideas on Poor Relief, 1795-1834* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1969); Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* (London: Faber, 1984); Mitchell Dean, *The Constitution of Poverty: Toward a Genealogy of Liberal Governance* (London: Routledge, 1991). In his authoritative *Riches and Poverty*, 24 n52, Donald Winch adjudged Poynter’s work ‘still the most detailed and insightful of the whole debate on the Poor Laws, and Malthus’s part within it’. For Winch’s own views on interpretations of Malthus role in this passage, particularly a critique of the old interpretation of Malthus as ‘de-moralising’ political economy, which had been resurrected by Himmelfarb and Dean, see: “Robert Malthus: Christian Moral Scientist, Arch-Demoralizer or Implicit Secular Utilitarian?,” *Utilitas* 5, no. 2 (1993): 239-253.

¹⁵ Malthus’ earliest writings pre-dated the first census and estimated the population of Britain to be seven million when it was soon discovered the population much closer to eleven million.

of strength in numbers to a theoretical problem about the relationship between population growth and natural resources. Historians have accorded Malthus, or his ‘idea’, significant explanatory power for the turn to mass migration in the early nineteenth century, and the development of complex governmental programs and regulations.¹⁶ But it was only in the period after the Napoleonic Wars, and the discharge of huge numbers of British soldiers and consequent social dislocations, that British emigration as an idea and phenomenon began to normalise.¹⁷

From around 1815, a steady flow of books and pamphlets, including William Wentworth’s *Descriptions*, were published around the empire promoting migration from Britain to her colonies as a means of alleviating an apparent social crisis, all invoking the Malthusian principle.¹⁸ The first political economist to actively advocate emigration as a solution to labour distress was Robert Torrens, a future Commissioner at the CLEC. Efforts such as Torrens’ helped to define the post-1815 situation in economic terms, identifying emigration as a solution to what was increasingly seen as an imbalance between profits and wages. Torrens’ 1817 pamphlet was partly a response to Robert Owen, the industrialist and social reformer, who proposed to create cooperatives to relieve distressed workers. Such experiments, said Torrens, belonged ‘to the order of political Alchymists [sic]’, reminding his readers ‘the question affording the comfort and independence of the people, depends not only on the principles according to which wealth is produced, but also upon the principles upon which wealth is distributed’.¹⁹ In the context of post-war unemployment, most political economists, including Malthus, were tentatively supportive of

¹⁶ For example: Eric Richards, “Malthus and the uses of British emigration”, in Kent Fedorowich and Andrew S. Thompson (eds.), *Empire, Migration and Identity in the British World* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 42-59.

¹⁷ Johnston, *British Emigration Policy*, 15. On the emigration of soldiers of the Napoleonic Wars to Australia, see: Christine Wright, *Wellington’s Men in Australia: Peninsular War Veterans and the Making of Empire c.1820-40* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). One of the earliest advocates of outbound emigration was the Thomas Douglas, Earl of Selkirk, *Observations on the present state of the Highlands of Scotland; with a view of the causes and probable consequences of emigration* (Edinburgh: J. Ballantyne, 1805).

¹⁸ This ‘booster literature’, which promoted colonies and America as sites of pauper emigration but also developed rival schemes for state-sponsored migration, have become the subject of great scholarly interest in recent years. See especially, Robert Grant, *Representations of British Emigration, Colonisation, and Settlement: Imagining Empire, 1800-1860* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

¹⁹ Major Robert Torrens, *A Paper on the Means of Reducing the Poors [sic] Rates, and of Affording Effectual and Permanent Relief to the Labouring Classes* (London, 1817), 515.

emigration, although unlike Torrens, thought it only a temporary ‘palliative’ to unsustainable population growth.²⁰

In this emerging intellectual context, the British government was compelled to at least appear to act. Between 1815 and 1825, Parliament began experimenting with pauper emigration, funding six minor schemes to settle poorer families on colonial lands, carried out directly by the Colonial Office. The most significant effort was the four thousand emigrants selected by ballot and sent to Eastern Cape in 1819. As Johnston has noted, however, this program was not an act of economic calculation but designed for distinct political ends. These assisted settlers, who were given land but little else, were intended to be English-speaking foil to the Boers. Concurrently, in the year of the Peterloo Massacre, they were also subjects of a contentious political stunt by the Liverpool Government to *appear* to be holding down the poor rates and effecting social control.²¹ Systematic emigration, understood as an ‘economic’ solution to deductive problem of over population, still needed a champion in Parliament. It found one in the early 1820s in Robert Wilmot-Horton, parliamentary under-secretary of State for War and Colonies from 1821 to 1827. An adherent to Malthus’ principles, it was Horton who transformed emigration into an ‘economic’ problem of state, channelled through a series of well-publicised select committees he chaired in 1826 and 1827.²²

We have seen in previous chapters that liberal Tories, led by the Board of Trade president William Huskisson, sought to repurpose colonies to ‘economic’ ends in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars. Horton’s promotion of emigration extended this economic reimagining of empire. He based his proposed scheme on a simple account of the Ricardian wage-fund theory.²³

²⁰ For economists early responses to the prospect of emigration, see: Donald Winch, *Classical Political Economy and Colonies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 55-72.

²¹ Johnston notes that in reality, removing four thousand people was going to make little difference to either of these objectives. Recruitment was not focused on political trouble spots. Indeed the departure of emigrants had little local impact since recruitment was spread over most counties in southern England and the Midlands, with the addition of a significant Irish contingent. Johnston, *British Emigration Policy*; See also: John Tosh, “Children on ‘free’ emigrant ships: From England to the Cape of Good Hope, 1819-20”, *History Australia* 9, no. 2 (2012): 5-26.

²² Horton originally outlined his evidence a few years earlier in his evidence to the Select Committee on the Employment of the Poor in Ireland. See: “Outline of a Plan of Emigration to upper Canada”, in Evidence, R. Wilmot Horton, 2 July 1823, in *BPP 1823* vi (561), 171-175.

²³ Winch, *Classical Political Economy and Colonies*, 52. The point was elaborated in a ‘hypothetical statement’ in the first report: ‘If a district be admitted to require only nine hundred labourers for its adequate cultivation, and if a thousand are found to exist there, who are all more or less employed, it is evident, whether the case be supposed to happen in England or in Ireland, that the fund for the

The present crisis in Britain, he argued, was attributable to a ‘superabundant Population, or rather to a disproportion between the demand and the supply of labour’, which had been in part effected ‘by the transition from handloom to Power-loom weaving’. His basic formulation was reductive and compelling. ‘The fact being, that the rate of wages depends upon the supply of labour, (whether manufacturing or agricultural) as compared with the demand for it.’ As ‘machine labour’ was now proving as ‘effectual, and more cheap than manual labour’, capitalists sought to purchase labour at the best rate possible rate, whether machine or human. ‘Labour, the commodity of the poor man’, had decreased in value.²⁴

In contrast to the finer distinctions of labour as a ‘service’ and community resource outlined in Chapter Three, Horton, following Ricardian precedent, homogenised labour into a calculable ‘commodity’, subject to ‘the universal operation of the principle of supply and demand’. In consequence, wage rates became an indicator of productive processes. Schemes for pauper relief that did not honour this principle, such as radical plans for wealth redistribution or agricultural communes proposed by reformers such as Owen, would only ‘excite false hopes, and consequently discontent, in the minds of the labouring classes’.²⁵ The only suitable remedy, argued Horton, was a form of pauper evacuation and emigration. Under his plan, poor-rates would be mortgaged by parishes to secure loans from the government for the emigration and settlement of British and especially Irish paupers as agricultural proprietors in Canada.²⁶ The plan was trailed in 1823 and 1825, but no permanent commitment made.²⁷

Historians have granted Horton few accolades, except as a precursor and interlocutor of Wakefield. This has largely resulted from the success of Wakefield and the Colonial Reformers

remuneration of labour in that district is divided among a thousand instead of nine hundred persons; the consequences may and probably will be, that the whole one thousand will receive less than would be adequate to support them, and that they may *all* present an appearance of want and destitution; but if one hundred labourers be removed from this district, and by that operation the supply of labour be proportioned to the real demand, the wages of labour will necessarily rise, and the condition of the remaining nine hundred may be materially improved.’ In: “Report from the Select Committee on Emigration from the United Kingdom,” *BPP 1826* vi (404), 20.

²⁴ “Second report from the Select Committee on Emigration,” *BPP 1826* v (237), 3.

²⁵ “Third report from the Select Committee on Emigration,” *BBP 1826-27* v (550), 15-16.

²⁶ For Ireland and Scotland where there was no Poor Law he believed that a government loan could be secured by a fund collected by private subscription.

²⁷ The government, following their outlay for the Cape, sent 2,500 Irish emigrants to Canada at a cost of £56,000 on such terms. Winch, *Classical political economy and colonies*, 54.

in later denigrating Horton's proposals as inadequately 'shovelling out your paupers'.²⁸ But we begin now to see Wakefield's indebtedness to Horton in transposing the problem of emigration to an economic matrix. Horton's achievement, as James Mill congratulated him, was bringing to public attention the 'practical consequences of the Principle of Population'.²⁹ Population was now being assessed in terms of wealth and production, not wealth and strength, and prosperity and comfort, not security and order.

Horton's scheme was, nonetheless, rejected in Parliament on two grounds. The first was due to the alleged inadequacy of his economic reasoning, and the second due to parliamentarians who continued to reject 'theory' and doubt an economic analysis of population altogether.³⁰ In the first instance, the leading parliamentary spokesperson for the economically-minded philosophical radicals, Joseph Hume, attacked Horton's scheme as 'a most wanton piece of extravagance' that mishandled the Ricardian logic of proportion: 'Employment must always be in proportion to capital, and when so much floating capital was withdrawn from circulation [if allocated for emigration, for example], a proportionate quantity of employment must be withdrawn from the labouring part of the community.'³¹ On such grounds, a number of quarterly reviews endorsed emigration only to the United States and not to the capital-poor colonies where extra assistance would be required. Even tacit supporters of colonisation, such as Robert Peel, preferred voluntary emigration of moneyed settlers over colonies 'composed entirely of paupers'.³²

²⁸ The famous phrase is attributed to Charles Buller, who was also parliamentary agent for the Australian Patriotic Association in the 1830s. See: P. Gray, "'Shovelling out Your Paupers': The British State and Irish Famine Migration 1846-50," *Patterns of Prejudice* 33, no. 4 (October 1, 1999): 47-65.

²⁹ Quoted in Winch, *Classical Political Economy and Colonies*, 62, n2.

³⁰ There was an attempt in February 1831 (after the Ripon Regulations had been outlined) to establish a migration scheme based on Horton's principles, however the bill fell over in Parliament due to objections noted in the text. See also: Peter Burroughs, *Britain and Australia, 1831-1855: a study in imperial relations and crown lands administration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 60-74.

³¹ *BPD*, HC, xvi (15 February 1827), 510. Although Horton's proposed Bill did receive the support of Nassau Senior, *Remarks on Emigration, with a Draft of a Bill* (London: R. Clay, 1831).

³² *BPD*, HC, xviii (17 April 1828), 1556. This was slightly unfair to Horton, who recognised the need of his emigrants having capital, and hence the parish-loan system. While wage relief at home was clearly Horton's primary concern, he also had a keen sense of empire building. Although it was a 'subordinate object of enquiry', Horton insisted he wanted to send out not 'labourers' but 'colonists' and distinguished sharply between 'emigration' and 'colonization': the former simply sent 'Emigrants *without capital*', the latter 'an emigration where the labourers are *aided by capital*.' 'Until very lately, the system of Colonization by paupers, upon the principle of advancing capital to them, has never been fairly acted upon by any county'. *BPP* 1826, iv, (404), 11; *BPP* 1826-27, v (550), 35-36. On Horton's relation to legitimising the figure of the 'settler' and 'settler ideology', see: Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*, 147, 153.

On the other hand, as we have seen recurring in this thesis, throughout the 1820s there were others in Parliament who denied the economic calculation of population. Ultra-Tories remained wedded to notions population was a source of national power and prosperity.³³ Like Lord Redesdale in Chapter Four, Michael Thomas Sadler sought to embarrass purveyors of ‘theory’ with the wisdom of experience. He told the House of Commons that the ‘alleged redundancy of human beings in this country’ had ‘always been the complaint of certain class of reasoners [sic] from the earliest periods of history’. As the greatest of empiricists, Francis Bacon, had argued, experience showed ‘where men ... were most crowded, they were most prosperous and happy’. Talk of ‘redundancy’ was illusory, said Sadler. It was a ‘well-known fact’ labourers were scarce in the harvest season and superabundant in winter. Echoing the analysis of Petty and Hume, Sadler ‘objected’ to Horton’s scheme ‘not only because of the amount of expense and suffering which attended it’, but because it drained ‘the select portion of the community’.³⁴ Horton responded with a series of pamphlets defending his scheme. The satirist John Doyle depicted their clash as the quintessential conflict between the ‘March of Intellect’ and ‘the Wisdom of our Ancestor’: one worldview governed by the precepts of theory, the other not (**figure 6.1**).

It was into this debate that Wakefield’s theory of ‘systematic colonisation’ emerged in 1829. The genius of Wakefield’s program, Bernard Semmel pointed out, was to satisfy each of these objections to Horton’s scheme. His notion of sending out labour in proportion to capital addressed Hume’s and Peel’s ‘economic’ concerns, and promoting ‘concentration’ gestured some

³³ Tory sympathisers, such as the Romantic poet Robert Southey were, nonetheless, beginning to endorse emigration as a method of poor relief. See: “Emigration Report”, *Quarterly Review* 37 (1828), 577: ‘A regular as well as a regulated system of emigration is required in the stage of society which we have attained: it becomes as necessary in the economy of a state as of an anti-hill or bee-hive.’ On the connection between Horton and the Romantics, see: Karen O’Brien, “Colonial Emigration, Public Policy and Tory Romanticism, 1783-1830”, in Duncan Kelly (ed.), *Lineages of Empire: The Historical Roots of British Imperial Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 161-179. The endorsement of emigration and fears about population generally by Southey and other Romantic poets is one of many examples of there being close relation on many matters with their arch-rival, Malthus. See: Winch, *Riches and Poverty*, chapter 14.

³⁴ *BPD*, HC, xxi (4 June 1829), 1727-1729. Sadler elaborated his critique of the Malthusian population principle in *Law of Population: a treatise in six books, in disproof of the superfecundity of human beings and developing the real principle of their increase* (London: John Murray, 1830).

Figure 6.1: John Doyle, “The battle of the pamphleteers, or Newark versus Newcastle” (Published by Edward McLean: Leicester Square, 1829). Courtesy the NLA.

way towards Sadler’s critique.³⁵ The most appealing aspect, however, was its seemingly self-regulating motion of ‘restriction, anticipation and free migration’ that gave the whole program a kind of scientific logic and necessity.³⁶

As we have seen, Wakefield’s model provided the semantic basis of the 1831 Ripon Regulations, the reception and negotiation of which in New South Wales transformed public

³⁵ Semmel, *Free Trade Liberalism*, 107. Wakefield and Horton enjoyed a brief alliance, though the latter was soon reduced to a denigrated straw man against which the Colonial Reformers pitched their own ideas.

³⁶ Horton himself longed for the ‘sanction of scientific men’. The emigration committees, Horton regretted, had only gained ‘the evidence of essentially practical men, of magistrates, of clergymen, of overseers’ in which ‘there was not one word of theory’. See: Robert Wilmot Horton, *Causes and remedies of pauperism: four series: Explanation of Mr. Wilmot Horton’s Bill in a Letter and Queries Addressed to N.W. Senior* (London: Edmund Lloyd, 1830), 3. He corresponded with Malthus, Ricardo, James Mill, McCulloch and Senior with his plans, each providing a varying measure of support. Malthus’ attitude to emigration as poor relief varied. In the 1803 edition of his *Essay* he thought it ‘a natural and obvious remedy’ but only temporarily. Malthus’ endorsement was even more reluctant later in life. R. N. Ghosh, “Malthus on Emigration and Colonization: Letters to Wilmot-Horton,” *Economica*, New Series, 30, no. 117 (February 1, 1963): 45-62; R. N. Ghosh, “The Colonization Controversy: R. J. Wilmot-Horton and the Classical Economists,” *Economica* 31, no. 124 (1964): 385-400; Semmel, *The rise of free trade imperialism*, 106-8; Winch, *Classical Political Economy and Colonies*, 56-72.

discourse. But before turning our attention to developments internal to the colony, it is important to note the extent to which of this discourse penetrated across the empire. Horton's report ignited an entire sub-genre of prospective, calculative schemes to finance evacuating paupers to colonies, of which Wakefield's was only the most famous and significant. Horton fortified a new common sense, if not a 'settler ideology'.³⁷ Wakefield's proposal was significant, for as noted in Chapter Four, it gained official sanction in events such as the 1836 Select Committee on the Disposal of Colonial Waste Lands. In his wake, a growing network of individuals, colonization societies, philanthropists and loan companies flooded the British reading public with pamphlets and emigrant guides that distilled the metaphors sustaining the newly envisioned relation between labour supply and demand, between metropole and colonies.³⁸ Many took issue with specifics of the 'Wakefield system', but each proposal involved combining pricing colonial Crown land, raising a government loan, using land proceeds to pay off loans, and systems of public works to engineer alternative 'self-regulating' system of transferring labourers from Britain to colonies.³⁹

While emigration retained a strong providential impulse – the political economy of Genesis was to 'replenish of the earth', J.D. Lang wrote in 1833 – it was also becoming impossible not to conceive migration in terms of economic necessity.⁴⁰ Increasingly, the labourer was no longer counted in relation to national 'strength', but in proportion to the imperial spread of land and capital to employ them. Schemes of poor relief that did not acknowledge this 'principle' were

³⁷ The term is belongs to James Belich. As Belich and others have noted, this 'booster literature' began well before Wakefield and indeed Horton, however the rival attempts to theorise colonisation greatly accelerated after Horton's reports while the development of private colonisation schemes, societies and funds also only appeared after this period. On emigration as 'the ideology of the Settler Revolution', or 'settlerism', see: Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*, 153-165.

³⁸ On these philanthropic societies, see: Haines, *Emigration and the Labouring Poor*, 196-219.

³⁹ For example: Thomas Bartlett, *New Holland: Its Colonization, Productions & Resources, with observations on the relations subsisting with Great Britain* (London: Longman, Brown, green and Longmans, 1843); Lieutenant Colonel (Edward) Macarthur, *Brief Reflections on Colonization* (London: Harrison and Co., 1846); John Fletcher, *Letter to the Right Hon. Earl Grey on the Subject of Emigration* (London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1847); Anon, *Practical Suggestions for the Formation of emigration Mutual Aid Societies, with A Concise View on the probable expense and most profitable mode by which may be effected the transplantation of unemployed labouring classes to Australia* (Dublin: James McGlashan, 1849); Richard West Nash, *Stray Suggestions on Colonization* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1849); Thomas M'Combie, *Essays on Colonization* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1850).

⁴⁰ Although as Duncan Bell has shown, throughout the nineteenth century state-sponsored emigration was also bound up with a number of 'social questions', including the Malthusian overpopulation of Britain, the dangers of socialism, national and imperial 'character', and the drain of workers to the United States, which encouraged ideas of Imperial Federation. My point is that this was all discussed in increasingly economic terms. Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future World Order, 1860-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 46-55.

denigrated as irrational. ‘It must be left to common sense,’ the philanthropist Caroline Chisholm wrote in 1847, ‘whether it is better to endeavour to support the overburdened labour market of the United Kingdom by the instrumentality of Government works which are not required’, or ‘in accordance with the sound spirit of political economy to give a free passage to her Majesty’s Colonies, to such eligible families as should voluntarily come forward and solicit this boon’.⁴¹ With repetition, such arguments were increasingly simplified: ‘In like manner the scales of labour and unemployment are uneven here; they are as uneven in the antipodes, but in the opposite direction’.⁴² The remainder of this chapter is concerned with the consequences of speaking of populations in such deductive terms.

Making migration an ‘economic’ problem in New South Wales

While the Ripon Regulations definitively reframed the problems of land settlement and emigration as a problem of redistributing land, capital, and labour throughout empire, they did not transform colonial conceptions of migration instantaneously. Rather, they informed an ongoing negotiation of the problems created by migration as it related with other spheres of colonial development. Nonetheless, the enduring consequence of this economic rationalising of migration was the reconstitution of the migrant as a labourer, assessed in terms of expense and selection, rates of investment, and the needs of production. To achieve this, however, required significant governmental efforts separating the moral from the productive dimensions of the immigrant, homogenising the human capacity to labour into a calculable form.

⁴¹ Caroline Chisholm, *Emigration and Transportation Relatively Considered; in a Letter, Dedicated, with permission, to Earl Grey* (London: John Ollivier, 1847), 3-4

⁴² Thomas Waghorn, *Waghorn on Emigration to Australia: on the broadest possible principles, for the future amelioration and prosperity of Great Britain* (London: George Mann, 1848), 13. George Blakiston Wilkinson, similarly wrote: ‘In a word, their one cry there, is WANT OF LABOURERES, whilst the echo here is WANT OF LABOUR’: *A Letter to the Right Honourable Lord Ashley, on the Necessity of an extended Government Plan of Emigration to the Australian Colonies* (London: Whittaker, 1848), 5. Importantly, these continued to be overlaid with religious impulses. Waghorn opened this letter to Earl Grey hoping ‘Emigration upon the widest and broadest scale, for the future prosperity of that happy land to which we belong, and thereby help to realise the dispensations of an Almighty Providence, through whom has been discovered a fifth portion of the globe where every plant under the sun may be grown in its nature to fruitfulness; for everyone is indigenous to Australia’.

Before 1831, those arriving in New South Wales not as convicts, military, or officials under free migration was negligible, never more than one thousand people per year.⁴³ While patronage was critical in acquiring grants of land, migration continued as it had to North America the previous century, as a complex system of private shipping, contracts, and self-enterprise. Some poorer agriculturalists came on free passage in convict ships, and presumably some on indenture. There is also evidence some settlers came explicitly seeking to take advantage of free land and the cheap felon labour.⁴⁴ But there was no sense of a generalised, migrating ‘labour force’ that government shaped and deployed. To recall the conceptual typology developed by Belich, the focus for authorities prior to 1830 was on the figure of the ‘settler’, who like the ‘colonist’, was monied, respectable, and capable of reproducing their own society. The ‘emigrant’, on other hand, generally meant the labouring poor. Both settlers and emigrants were moral and civic figures, carrying degrees of social prestige, moral office, and English liberties, which, like the convict, were calculable in terms of their cost to British ‘strength’.⁴⁵ While, convict administration did necessitate new modes for managing the labouring population, as argued in Chapter Two, this did not translate into procuring ‘free’ labourers. One attempt was made by Darling in 1826, when, following Bathurst’s earlier request for convict ‘demand’ after opening of the new penal settlements, he returned a list of the number of ‘competent farming men of ... good character’ required by settlers. Having made the initial the inquiry, however, Bathurst realised ‘the arrangements connected with this proposition’ made it nigh impossible to fulfil. As in eighteenth-century America, all responsibility was thrust back on settlers seeking labourers.⁴⁶

The ingenuity of Goderich’s plan to send out ‘redundant’ or ‘distressed’ agricultural labourers to the colony is highlighted against this background. As was discussed in Chapter Four,

⁴³ In 1828, there were only about 4,500 free immigrants in a total white population of 36,500. See Madgwick, *Immigration into Eastern Australia*, 65.

⁴⁴ Madgwick, *Immigration into Eastern Australia*, 17; Edward Smith Hall to George Murray, 8 May 1830, *HRA* 1:15, 639. Hall said he emigrated to the colony for a grant of land quit-rent free, for the use of convict labour, in common with other colonists, and for the use of Crown pastures.

⁴⁵ Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*, 149-151. Commissioner Bigge encouraged the movement of free, capitalised settlers for multiple reasons (see chapter four) but said nothing of the need or methods for obtaining labouring ‘emigrants’, only that when ‘the means of subsistence becomes more abundant and more ease of access ... will [New South Wales] offer advantages to emigrants that are not found united in any other portion of the British dependencies’. Bigge, *Third Report*, 82.

⁴⁶ Bathurst to Brisbane, 30 May 1823, *HRA* 1:11, 86; Darling to Bathurst, 1 September 1826, *HRA* 1:12, 516; Bathurst to Darling, 31 March 1827, *HRA* 1:13, 213.

the metaphors of proportion, as with Horton's notions of supply and demand, tabulated the British agricultural worker and colonial needs into a new matrix of deductive economic calculations that rendered migration a necessary project of state. However, while a rhetorical shift was demonstrable in the 1831 despatches, no program in assisted-migration began immediately because the Colonial Office itself was not decided on a singular logic at this stage. Rather, officials continued to conceive of the migrant functioning in a number of competing emergent economic and residual non-economic programs. On the one hand, for example, while Goderich had floated the idea of paying for labour with land sales, he initially preferred a different kind of calculation, raising an emigration fund by taxing assigned convicts at 10s. per annum that would decrease convict demand while simultaneously increase 'the supply of free labour' and lowering wages overall.⁴⁷ Only after colonists protested against the tax did paying for migration with land sales look more certain.⁴⁸ Moreover, when assisted migration did begin, however, it was in fact not geared to economic needs, but following the fleeting inquiries of a temporary Emigration Commission in mid-1832, committed £10,000 for female emigration to Australia.⁴⁹ While land funds were now, for the first time, committed to emigration, this was to transfer to women to Australia 'to correct the existing disproportion of the sexes' and facilitate the moral cleansing of the penal colony.⁵⁰ Here, women assigned the same 'civilising' role as they had been designated since the eighteenth century. Thus, the self-regulating system of land sale and emigration was, in

⁴⁷ Goderich to Darling, 23 January 1831, *HRA* 1:16, 34-35. On enquiries into indenture system, see: Darling to Goderich, 10 September 1831, *HRA* 1:16, 346-351.

⁴⁸ The plan for rating the employment of convicts as a means of raising revenue (though not assisting emigration) had been first put forward by the 1830-31 *Report of Commission on Colonial Revenue*. Goderich had first suggested it to Darling as a means of supporting mechanic emigration, 23 January 1831, *HRA* 1:16, and again to Bourke 28 September 1831, *HRA* 1:16, 380 after it had been considered by the Emigration Commission in their Report, 24 September 1831, to which Treasury agreed, in Howick to Stewart, 7 October, 1831, an Stewart to Howick, 12 October 1831, *BPP* (328), 21-5. Darling and Bourke repeatedly relayed colonists' resistance to taxing employers of convicts: Darling to Goderich, 10 September 1831, *HRA* 1:16; Bourke to Goderich, 27 February 1831, *HRA* 1:16, 532-3, and Bourke to Goderich, 30 April 1832, 1:16, 624-6.

⁴⁹ The Commission included Howick, Francis Barring from Treasury, the Colonial Under-Secretary F.W. Hay, Henry Ellis and the Duke of Richmond. Goderich informed Bourke of the formation of the Commission for the explicit purposes of 'promoting the Emigration to the British Possessions of Agricultural Labourers', as outlined in 'my Dispatch to General Darling the 23d of January last'. Goderich to Bourke, 9 July 1831, *HRA* 1:16, 298. On the functions of this Commission, and its consultation with colonies, see: Peter Dunkley, "Emigration and the State, 1803-1842: The Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Government Reconsidered", *The Historical Journal* 23:2 (1980), 353-380.

⁵⁰ The quote is Howick's, in his letter to Treasury: *BPP* 1831 xix (328), 15. It was sanctioned Goderich to Bourke, 12 October 1831, *HRA* 1:16, 408. The subject is well covered: A.J. Hammerton, "'Without natural protectors': female immigration to Australia, 1832-36", *Australian Historical Studies* 16, no. 65 (October, 1975), 539-561.

fact, not initially established on purely economic grounds, but to address the penal colony's distinctive 'moral' concerns. The use of land funds to pay for labouring, male emigrants would normalise after these initially experiments, but even this was a consequence of circumstance rather than design. Emigrants had been expected to repay government for their 'loan' but by the mid-1830s, it had been consigned a 'gift' since it was proving impossible to collect the dues.

Before more certain declarations were made in the 1836 House of Commons Select Committee on the Disposal of Waste Lands, imperial authorities therefore continued to experiment with the designs and functions of disposing of its 'redundant' population. So too, then, did colonial authorities maintain a conception of its new *immigrating* population in residual 'household' terms. Initially, colonial authorities assessed the labouring migrant as a singularly 'sober and industrious' agent, whose morality and productivity, like the convict who needed to be reformed, belonged within the same analytic frame.⁵¹ The colonial Legislative Council's first Committee on Immigration, staged in early 1835, reflected this logic, as it sought 'the introduction of persons of both sexes, of good moral character and industrious habits'. While the committee explicitly took Goderich's 1831 despatches as its frame of reference, it conceived the benefits of migration not in deductive economic terms but as a more complete moral analysis. The female emigrants that had arrived were, the committee concluded, 'quite unsuited to the wants of the colonists'. There were too many from English towns, 'low characters ... impossible to recommend to respectable families'. It advised dedicating land revenue to the recruitment of agricultural men as well as women, 'introducing a moral and industrious population' to counteract 'the long train of moral evils' endured through convict transportation. The migrant was, then, foremost imagined as an agent to facilitate the 'moral improvement of the Colony', laying the foundation for 'the future prosperity and character of the Colony'.⁵² A petition from leading colonists the following year similarly sought free immigrants to raise 'the Colony from its present depth of moral debasement'.⁵³ In this context, the 1835 committee, with the endorsement of

⁵¹ On the pervasiveness of this couplet, 'sober and industrious', in early nineteenth-century British and colonial discourse, see: Karen Downing, *Restless Men: Masculinity and Robinson Crusoe, 1788-1840* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 102-104.

⁵² "Report from the Committee on Immigration", *V&P LCNSW 1835*, 16-17.

⁵³ Bourke to Glenelg, enclosure A2, 13 April 1836, *HRA* 1:18, 397.

Governor Bourke, recommended diverting some land funds to a ‘bounty system’, whereby selection agents would be paid for bringing out migrants that met strict criteria to avoid further disappointments. The free labouring male migrant was envisaged by authorities with a unified personality just as labourers and servants had in centuries prior, as ‘useful and respectable’ with ‘active, moral and industrious habits’.⁵⁴ In a colony shedding its penal origins, the immigrant’s industry was geared as socially corrective more than wealth-generating.

This mode of analysis soon diversified as subsequent immigration committees embraced alternative metrics of calculation. After 1835, committees were staged almost yearly to assess every aspect of the inflow, expense, quality, and demand for migrants. While not always acted upon, the recommendations from these reports informed changing regulations and immigrant selection requirements. The reports were usually tabled to the House of Commons and dissected by both the CLEC and the colonial press. Because of their regularity, breadth, and publicity, these reports operated as definitive statements of colonial development. To be sure, within this, distinctly non-economic concerns emerged. Fitness of the social body increasingly occupied these inquiries. Governmental monitoring of immigration increasingly scrutinised passenger health and behaviour and naval surgeons were placed on ships, submitting detailed reports on arrival. There were also constant concerns not enough women and too many Irish Catholics were arriving, threatening social cohesion. Later committees similarly critiqued the effects of Chinese on the colony’s moral and racial composition.⁵⁵ From this perspective, administering migration reflected a dimension of what Michel Foucault described as the ‘discovery of populations’ which could be codified, intervened, and managed, constituting the main objects of liberal government in the early nineteenth century.⁵⁶

What such analyses ultimately enabled was to assess the migratory population as having multiple dimensions. In this sense, the ‘economic’ regularities of population emerged as one of

⁵⁴ As per the bounty regulations, *Government Gazette*, 28 October 1835, (No. 191), 769; As Gipps described to the Legislative Council in his 1842 opening address: *V&P LCNSW 1842*, 3.

⁵⁵ On religious and Irish make up, respectively, see “Immigration Committee Report”, *V&P LCNSW 1841*, 7; “Immigration Committee Report”, *V&P LCNSW 1842*, 314-5. On management of immigrating non-European populations in the nineteenth century, see: Andrew Markus, *Australian Race Relations, 1788-1993* (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1994), Chapter Three.

⁵⁶ Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-1978* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Bruce Curtis, ‘Foucault on Governmentality and Population: The Impossible Discovery’, *The Canadian Journal of Sociology* 27, no. 4 (2002): 505-533.

several ways of viewing population, a view that soon became predominant. As House of Commons reports, and, after 1840, the recommendations of the CLEC, increasingly utilised economic metaphors to conceive of the dynamics of the imperial population, so did colonial authorities increasingly identify the migrant as serving a distinctive function in relation to convict transportation, land settlement, and wool growing that could be assessed purely in terms of price, production, and export. The ultimate effect of such analyses, was to prise about the unified ‘sober and industrious’ personality of the migrant to isolate and abstract his ‘labour’ in a system of production and distribution, just as Bigge and Brisbane had prised apart the reformatory and productive dimensions of the convict worker.

This shift in perspective was reflected in the kinds of preambles that began to adorn most immigration committee reports from the late 1830s, linking population growth with prosperity. ‘The necessity of an extended and continual introduction of productive labour to keep pace with the growing wants of the Colony is now so universally admitted’⁵⁷, that the ‘principle’ of ‘an adequate supply of labour’,⁵⁸ or ‘to accumulate a disposable amount of that commodity’⁵⁹, ‘seemed perfectly self-evident’⁶⁰, ‘so obviously indisputable a character’⁶¹, and a ‘proposition to be unquestioned’.⁶² Or as Gipps told the Legislative Council in 1841: ‘a more abundant supply of labour is, undoubtedly one great thing wanted in the Colony, for without Labour no wealth can be produced, no Capital can be profitably employed.’⁶³ And this, Gipps later added, ‘drew us into the consideration of political economy.’⁶⁴ Such considerations made it possible to momentarily suspend other dimensions of the migrating body, locating them more exclusively in relation to the colony’s ‘general advancement ... [in] a direct ratio to the amount of its population’.⁶⁵ To see migration from ‘the economic point of view’, as the 1847 immigration committee report clearly delineated, was to assess the emigrant purely in relation to the ‘periodical supply of particular species of labour’, especially those ‘connected with the production of the most important stable

⁵⁷ “Report from Select Committee on Immigration”, *V&P LCNSW 1840*, 1 [325].

⁵⁸ “Report from Select Committee on Immigration”, *V&P LCNSW 1843*, 1.

⁵⁹ “Report from Select Committee on Immigration”, *V&P LCNSW 1842*, 309.

⁶⁰ “Report from Select Committee on Immigration”, *V&P LCNSW 1840*, 1 [325].

⁶¹ “Report from Select Committee on Immigration”, *V&P LCNSW 1840* 1843, 1.

⁶² “Report from Select Committee on Immigration”, *V&P LCNSW 1845*, 1 [599].

⁶³ “Governor’s Address”, June 8, 1841 *V&P LCNSW 1841*, 2.

⁶⁴ *SMH*, 10 Sept 1842, 2.

⁶⁵ “Report from the Select Committee on Immigration”, *V&P LCNSW 1847*, II, 271, 272.

of the Colony'.⁶⁶ This did not always result in a calculation for increased population. At the height of the 'commercial embarrassment' in 1843, for example, as Sydney dealt with increased unemployment, there was a terse exchange between Gipps and London over the extent the colony could 'absorb' further immigrants that year, leaving shipping contractors and hundreds of emigrants docked at Liverpool and Bristol for months. Here, Gipps' 'absorb' metaphor was crucial. If optimising imperial populations meant balancing capital with labour throughout empire, then there were also limits, computed the governor, to the extent the colony could 'relieve' Britain.⁶⁷

If the 'principles' of economic calculation were becoming essential to governing migration in the select committees and despatches, the terms on which these assessments were made remained contested. Wakefield had offered one way of thinking about the necessary ratio between land and labour to optimise agricultural production. But as Gipps asserted in his memorandum to Russell in 1840, such a 'ratio' was of little guidance for pastoral production. By the late 1830s, committees were taking evidence from pastoralists who determined immigration specifically in terms of an allocation of shepherds and flocks. Henry O'Brien, 'a considerable land and stock proprietor' from Yass, submitted to the 1837 Committee on Immigration this table calculating the needs of emigrants for the next year:

The number of bales of wool shipped during the year 1836, was	22,000
And supposing that on the 1 st of January, 1837, there remained to be shipped	1,000
And that there were manufactured in the Colony	1,000
The aggregate produce of 1836, would thus amount to	<u>24,000</u>
Again: supposing that each bale contained 100 fleeces, the number of sheep clipped that year would be	2,400,00
To which are to be added the September lambs not shorn; say to each 10,000 sheep, 1,200 lambs; making the total number of lambs	288,000
To which add the next March lambing, say	<u>300,000</u>
Making the total number of sheep in the Colony, in the present year	<u>2,988,000</u>
For each 1,200 sheep, three men are required as shepherds and hut-keepers, which would give	7,470
And for every 100 men thus employed, 10 laboring men would be required as farm servants, laborers, and bullock drivers, which would give for these purposes	<u>747</u>

⁶⁶ "Report from the Select Committee on Immigration", *V&P LCNSW 1847*, II, 271, 272.

⁶⁷ Gipps to Stanley, 1 September 1843, *HRA* 1:23, 95; Stanley to Gipps, 28 February 1844, *HRA* 1:23, 422; Also reported on in CLEC, *Fifth General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commission* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1845), 3-4.

Making the total number employed on sheep establishments	8,217
To which add the number employed on cattle establishments, say	1,200
Which would give as the total number of men employed in 1837, on the several sheep and cattle stations in the Colony	9, 417
For every 10,000 sheep, 10 extra men will be required in May, 1838; and taking for granted that the flocks will at that time amount to 3,000,000, there would then be immediate employment in tending the flocks alone, for	3,000
And there would be required for the cattle establishments, about	500
Making the number of immigrants that would be required for the increased flocks and herds alone of 1838	3,500 men

O'Brien's was the most elaborate version among several such calculations offered by woolgrowers to the committee in 1837.⁶⁸ But this tabulation soon proved a relatively limited way of inserting immigrants into the broader dynamics of wool production. A more enduring method of adjudicating the optimal 'proportion' of labour needed was scrutinising profits and wages. 'The test however for determining whether the supply of labour is excessive,' Charles Nicholson, chairman of the 1843 Committee on Immigration wrote, 'is only to be afforded by the rate of wages obtained'. For Nicholson, as for Horton, the wage served a distinct theoretical function in registering the supply and demand of labour, regulating the composition of colonial society. Calculations could then be made to optimise the rate of profits:

Your Committee have directed their enquiries, with a view of eliciting the opinions of witnesses as to the rate of wages the flockmaster can pay, with a due regard to his own interest and the profitable investment of capital. Were wages for shepherds reduced to an average of from £10 to £12 per annum, exclusive of and in addition to lodging, fuel, and liberal rations, your Committee believe that the profits arising from the growth of wool would be sufficient to supersede the practice he now had recourse to, either of ceasing to breed stock, or of boiling down the surplus increase; and no sooner would profit be annexed to the pursuit of grazing, than the staple of the Colony (its flocks) would acquire a marketable value, and an impulse and activity be again communicated to colonial enterprise ... Could labour be obtained at rates commensurate with the profits arising from the growth of wool, the increase of the flocks would still go on; fresh districts

⁶⁸ Evidence of W.C. Wentworth, 24 June 1837, "Report from Committee on Immigration," *V&P LCNSW 1837*, 644; Evidence of John Edye Manning to Committee on Immigration, 26 June 1837, *V&P LCNSW 1837*, 648.

for depasturing be opened; the annual exported produce of the Colony enlarged; and its general wealth and resources in a corresponding degree augmented.⁶⁹

As with Nicholson's 1845 report discussed in Chapter Five, we need to read this passage as more than that of pastoralist ideology, but note the novel framing of labouring populations. The important feature is the seemingly self-regulating quality of the 'system' Nicholson described, whereby the adjustment of specific factors – namely, the reduction of wages by increasing competition among labourers through accelerated immigration – would facilitate a revival of pastoral investment and output, encouraging other sectors of colonial production. Unlike the 1835 report, which sought immigrants for the colony's 'moral improvement', the labouring population was posited in relation to increasing flocks and exports. Here, population was not constitutive of national 'wealth', but rendered 'labour' a factor in augmenting 'general wealth'. Nicholson's final move, aligning the 'interests' of the employer with his servants by assuming profits would 'augment' wages, was typical of the Ricardian long-run projection on the rate of profits, so long as the field of investment was continuously extended. The alignment of capitalist and labourer was, of course, entirely contestable, as it had been by British radicals since 1820s. But contesting the narratives of these committees required adopting their terms of reference and offering a rival political economy.

The response of the *Weekly Register* to Nicholson's report was a case in point. It retorted that the report had proceeded on the 'threadbare axiom that "an adequate supply of labour, and an increase of population, are essential to the present interests of the Colony"'.⁷⁰ It was 'threadbare' because Nicholson presupposed the rate of wages alone indicated the demand for labour, and failed to account for ongoing levels of 'distressed' workers in Sydney, which were treated as no more than mere 'machines for guarding their sheep against the native dog'. Rather, by demanding shepherds at the lowest possible rate, Nicholson had founded his argument on a paradox that pastoral labour was both in high demand but also beyond 'what the master can afford to give'. The *Register* was, therefore, not rejecting the language of calculation. It agreed 'that due

⁶⁹ "Report from Select Committee on Immigration", *V&P LCNSW 1843*, 2.

⁷⁰ *Weekly Register*, 16 December 1843, 313.

proportion ought to exist between supply and demand'. Rather, it was attempting to reconfigure the factors of calculation to include some degree of 'social and moral welfare'. In such instances, the terms of supply and demand as a framework of social interaction were being consolidated rather than challenged. Increasingly, radicals sought to build amelioration in to the price of their 'labour', rather than reject the calculation of employment relations outright. This, then, was to cognise new tensions between employers and the unemployed, between frontier and the city, and between existing labourers and new immigrants. Most significantly, as is elaborated below, while employing the official language of economic calculation helped make radicals' claims visible and legitimate, it also sharply delimited what they could claim and justify.

Officials could introduce other factors to calculate wages as 'commensurate' with the rate of profit. Even before transportation had ended, enterprising pastoralists were scheming to introduce Indian 'hill coolie' labour as a 'truly imperial solution' to finding cheaper shepherds for sheep farming.⁷¹ Immigration committees were initially tentatively supportive, although cautioned that employing 'Coolies' would depress 'wages below their natural level' and entrench servility among the labouring classes. The Imperial Government snuffed out these plans before they ever took off, fearing not so much for wages rates but the colony's racial composition, so to remain an appealing destination for British labourers.⁷² In this instance, the moral and racial trumped the economic. But even as these projects were rejected, debating them nevertheless entrenched a calculative logic by contrasting the British emigrant with 'cheaper' options, refining and homogenising 'labour' as a commodity of 'free labour'. As one witness, a pastoralist, told the 1841 Committee on Immigration:

⁷¹ The topic was considered by the 1837 Immigration Committee, which gave qualified support. "Immigration Committee on Immigration", *V&P LCNSW 1837*, 676. The phrase is Rose Cullen's, who has unearthed the network and flow of information and people that facilitated a trade in Indian indentured labour after the abolition of the slavery. Rose Cullen, "Empire, Indian Indentured Labour and the Colony: The Debate Over 'Coolie' Labour in New South Wales, 1836-1838," *History Australia* 9, no. 1 (2012): 84-109. For a broader imperial perspective on the controversy, see: Andrea Major, "'Hill Coolies': Indian Indentured Labour and the Colonial Imagination, 1836-38," *South Asian Studies* 33 no. 1 (January 2, 2017): 23-36.

⁷² Glenelg to Gipps, 14 December 1837, *HRA* 1:19, 202. On the development of these arguments, see: Janet Doust, "Setting up Boundaries in Colonial Eastern Australia Race and Empire," *Australian Historical Studies* 35, no. 123 (2004): 152-166. Doust estimates between 1837 and 1846, 150 Indian 'coolies' were brought into New South Wales by agents. In defense of the moral capacity of the Indian labourer, see especially: P. Friell, *The Advantages of Indian Labour in the Australian Colonies* (Sydney: Richard Thompson, 1846).

Q12: In a flock of 1000 sheep what would be the saving per lb on the wool in consequence of employing Coolies instead of free emigrant Shepherds? Assuming that each fleece would weight 2½, the produce of wool from the 1000 Sheep would be 2500lbs; and calculating that the 1000 sheep would require the services of three men, the saving on employing two Coolies as shepherds, and only one white man as watchman, instead of three white men, would be the difference between their expenses, which would be about £47, or about 4½d. per l on wool.⁷³

The witnesses' evidence included a rudimentary table outlining the 'cost' of a 'free man' compared to a 'prisoner' or 'coolie' (**figure 6.2**). In such a schema, the labouring immigrant was reducible to a single figure: his 'cost ... for a year'. As in Chapter Three in relation to convicts, the collapsing of once distinct occupations under the ubiquitous heading of 'labour' was essential to the functioning of economic discourse. In practice, this slippage was imposed upon the migrating population. As Nicholas urged in his 1843 report, colonial progress required migrants to 'overcome prejudices attached to previous associations ... and ... acquire the habitudes and likings of a country life'. The migrant was to be malleable to the needs of production.

Such prescriptions became common sense, both in mainstream colonial newspapers and also emigrant guides targeted at the labouring poor. Even as bounty regulations and the CLEC advertised for specific categories of workers, prospective migrants were encouraged to be flexible. 'Hundreds of mechanics have for a time abandoned their trades and adopted pastoral or agricultural pursuits with ultimate benefit to themselves', encouraged a popular emigrant guide.⁷⁴ Such advice was part of a more general mode of assessing populations that blurred occupational distinctions in ways necessary to translate a world of moving people into a world of dynamic economic phenomena. The bulk of this translation was not being done in word, however, but number.

⁷³ Evidence of J. Lord, 25 June 1841, "Immigration Committee," *V&P LCNSW 1841*, 9

⁷⁴ J.C. Byrne, *Emigrants Guide to New South Wales Proper* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1849), 13.

C.									
<i>Calculation of the Cost of a Free Man.</i>									
					Per Week.		Per Annum.		
		s. d.			£	s. d.	£	s. d.	
Flour 12lbs.	.	@ 0 3	.	.	0	3 0			
Beef 10lbs.	.	@ 0 3	.	.	0	2 6			
Tea $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.	.	@ 2 0	.	.	0	0 6			
Sugar 2lbs.	.	@ 0 3	.	.	0	0 6			
Cost of rations for a week					£	0 6 6	16	18	0
Wages							25	0	0
Cost of a Free man for a year							£ 41	18	0
<i>Calculation of the Cost of a Prisoner.</i>									
		s. d.			£	s. d.	£	s. d.	
Flour 10lbs.	.	@ 0 3	.	.	0	2 6			
Beef 8lbs.	.	@ 0 3	.	.	0	2 0			
Tea 2oz.	.	@ 2 0	.	.	0	0 3			
Sugar 1lb.	.	@ 0 3	.	.	0	0 3			
Soap 2oz.	.	.	.	.	0	0 1			
Cost of Rations					0	5 1	13	4	4
SLOPS.									
MAY.	s. d.	AUGUST.	s. d.	NOVEMBER.	s. d.				
1 Jacket	7 0	1 Shirt	2 3	1 Duck jacket	5 0				
1 Pr. trousers	7 0	1 Pr. boots	7 9	1 Pr. trousers	4 0				
1 Shirt	2 3			1 Shirt	2 3				
1 Pr. boots	7 9	10 0	1 Pr. boots	7 9					
1 Blanket	10 0								
34 0					19 0		3	3	0
Tobacco and small sundries							0	10	0
Actual cost of a Prisoner for a year							16	17	4
<i>Calculation of the Cost of a Coolie.</i>									
		d.			£	s. d.	£	s. d.	
Flour 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.	.	@ 3	.	.	0	2 7 $\frac{1}{2}$			
Beef 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.	.	@ 3	.	.	0	0 10 $\frac{1}{2}$			
Chillies, Ginger	.	.	.	.	0	0 1			
Cost of Rations						3 7 9	6	4	
Wages 10s. per month							6	0	0
Passage and expenses from Calcutta, average							2	0	0
Ditto ditto to Calcutta, not yet known.									
Slops.—1 Jacket 7s.; 1 Pr. Trousers 7s.; 1 Blanket 6s.;							1	1	8
1 Red Cap 1s. 8d.									
							£ 8	8	0
<i>N. B. In this Calculation there is nothing allowed for Superintendence, or waste in issuing the Rations.</i>									

Figure 6.2: “Calculations of the Cost of a Free Man, Prisoner and Coolie”, Evidence of J. Lord, 25 June 1841, “Report from Committee on Immigration”, *V&P LCNSW*, 11.

Calculating ‘Proportion’

In giving evidence to the 1837 immigration committee, Lieutenant-Colonial Henry Dumaresq, Commissioner for the Australian Agricultural Company, regretted, either sheepishly or in annoyance, that he was not ‘in possession of *data* on which to found calculations with respect to the present deficiency of labourers’ in the colony, and that he could only ‘bring little more than

vague conjecture in aid of the interesting subject now under consideration of the Committee'.⁷⁵ Dumaresq's concession indicates how the 'demand for men' was also producing an equal demand for 'data' and enumeration. Wakefield appreciated this trend from the outset. In Article V of his 1829 *Sketch of a proposal for colonizing Australasia*, he noted systematic colonisation and assisted migration 'would require considerable intelligence and judgement in the persons to whom it might be confined' and recommended the creation of 'an Agent of Emigration at each settlement'.⁷⁶ Governing migration would, then, require new technical practices to imagine and visualise 'demand' and 'proportion'. In a classic article, Frank Broeze, drawing attention to the importance of private shipping contractors and loan societies that helped facilitate migration, described the system of assisted migration as a 'marriage of philanthropy, socio-political concern and self-interest'.⁷⁷ At its heart, however, were systems of bureaucratic counting and reporting which smoothed the operations between these different actors. It made mass migration imaginable, and in turn permeated the ways in which it became the subject of diverse conversation.

As soon as they turned their gaze to emigration, it was immediately apparent to authorities in London and Sydney that new means of visualising the dynamics of the settler colonies were required. It was not clear, however, what form that picture might take, or how to make it. The efficacious Darling, once advised of the plan to send out free mechanics and labourers in July 1831, circulated a request to district magistrates seeking to know 'of the Settlers in your neighbourhood desirous of obtaining the services of Free Agricultural Labourers', and under what conditions. Bourke returned an impressive table to Goderich seven months later (**figure 6.3**).⁷⁸ But no similar document was produced for another decade.⁷⁹ Perhaps lacking Darling's bureaucratic energy, imperial authorities were less systematic. When Goderich established an

⁷⁵ Evidence of Lieutenant-Colonial Henry Dumaresq, 28 June 1837, "Committee on Immigration," *V&P LCNSW 1837*, 650.

⁷⁶ Edward Gibbon Wakefield, *Sketch of a proposal for colonizing Australasia* (London: J. Dove, 1830), 29.

⁷⁷ Frank J. A. Broeze, "Private Enterprise and the Peopling of Australasia, 1831-50", *The Economic History Review* 35, no. 2 (May 1982): 235-53.

⁷⁸ Darling to Goderich, 18 September 1831, *HRA* 1:16, 346-48; "Correspondence Relating to Emigration to North America and Australia", *BPP 1833*, xxvi (141), 26-27.

⁷⁹ Lieutenant-governor Arthur, once promoted, produced something similar for Van Diemen's Land in 1834. "Papers relating to emigration," *BPP 1835*, xxxix (87), 27-13.

of emigrant mechanics. Bourke was instructed to return up-to-date information, however with no guidance how.⁸⁴

Other enumerative practices developed in the 1830s. Initially, in the absence of official information, private associations in London and Sydney collated ad hoc details on ‘demand for servants and labourers’, and wages, some of which were published in Henry Carmichael’s popular 1834 emigrant guide.⁸⁵ Slowly, government increased its reporting capacities. The appointment of a London-based, pan-imperial Agent-General for Emigration in 1837, together with local Immigration Agents in major port cities, greatly empowered the capacity for official information gathering.⁸⁶ Superintendents on government ships were appointed after a series of mortalities and instructed to record on arrival, ‘the mode in which they [emigrants] are distributed, at what wages, and in whose employment.’⁸⁷ This enabled the Immigration Agent in Sydney to compile annual reports detailing arrivals and average wages achieved for different occupations each year, which the Agent-General collated into a more general annual statement.⁸⁸ By 1840, the Agent-General and his migration officers throughout empire were tracking a relatively detailed picture of the migrating labouring population, yet this action was ultimately reactive. No general ‘data’ existed for the wage rates in the colonies, but was based on what newly arrived immigrants were

⁸⁴ Bourke to Goderich, 24 September 1832, *HRA*, 1:16, 758; Stanley to Bourke, 26 July 1833, *HRA* 1:17, 171-74. This instruction enclosed the same instructions supplied to the Emigration Commission in 1831, see note 4. Bourke instructed his Collector for Internal Revenue to investigate the state of wages. Bourke to Stanley, 6 December 1833, *HRA* 1:17, 297-301.

⁸⁵ SANSW: Immigration Agent, NRS 5307, Papers Relating to Immigration [9/6184], Circular No 33/5; 12 December 1833. *Sydney Monitor*, 26 September 1832, 3; *Sydney Gazette*, 4 October 1832, 3; Evidence W. Macpherson, 22 and 23 May 1835, “Report of Immigration Committee,” *V&P LCNSW 1835*, 18-19. Rev. Henry Carmichael, *Hints relating to Emigrants and Emigration; embracing observations and facts intended to display the real advantages of New South Wales, as a sphere for the successful exercise of industry*. (London: D. Walther 42, Piccadilly. 1834).

⁸⁶ On the Agent-General’s appointment: Glenelg to Bourke, 23 March, 1837, *HRA* 1:18, 705-6. Instructions were clearly given to aid Elliot’s procurement of information, Glenelg to Bourke, 29 April 1837, *HRA* 1:18, 740, notes: ‘I would further request that, for the guidance of the agent in this country, and for the satisfaction of Parties who may contemplate emigration to New South Wales, you will forward to me, on the 1st of January and the 1st of June in each year, Returns of the rates of Wages in the Colony, of average Prices, and of the demand for labor as far as it can be ascertained, in the form which was sent to you in my despatch of the 28th of July, 1836’. However it does not appear such returns were made until the CLEC was established in 1840, by when the centralised machinery was in place to collate such data. On Pinnock in Sydney: Gipps to Glenelg, 28 July 1838, *HRA* 1:19, 513

⁸⁷ Elliott to Roger, sub-enclosure 3, in Glenelg to Bourke, 21 July 1837, *HRA* 1:19, 37-8. These remained a feature of ship surgeon instructions for years to come. See: *Instructions to surgeons of emigrant ships sailing under Government Superintendence* (London: W. Clowes, 1847), 15; *Instructions to surgeons superintendents of Government emigrant ships* (London: Printed by G.E. Eyre and W. Spottiswoode, for her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1858). *Instructions to surgeons superintendents of government emigrant ships*. (London: Printed by George E. Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1866).

⁸⁸ For Elliott’s annual reports: *BPP 1838*, xl (388); *BPP 1839*, xxxiii (536).

obtaining. Reports of labour ‘demand’ were derived from the ‘opinions’ and anecdotal authority of committee witnesses.⁸⁹

Data collection was greatly extended and rationalised with formation of the CLEC in 1840, which collapsed the Agent-General role and the South Australian Commission into a single, three-person authority.⁹⁰ The Commissioners had four main duties: ‘the collection of and diffusion of accurate statistical knowledge’ on colonial emigration; overseeing the sale of waste lands in the colonies; the application of land revenues to emigration; and periodical publications. Statistical collection was, then, the ‘first principle’ of their Commission. The Commissioners were ‘distinctly’ to warn ‘every capitalist or emigrant’ seeking such information that they could not ‘warrant the exactness of the intelligence’, but it was only ‘the truth according to your own apprehension of it’. Nonetheless, this initiated the building of a singular, ‘official’ depiction of the imperial world. The Commissioners were instructed to gather fragments of information from all settler colonies relating to agriculture, commerce, natural products, physical structure, the ecclesiastical and political institutions, and then ‘sift them scrupulously before you stamp them with any sort of authority’. ‘Such facts’ were to be presented ‘in the most precise and determinate form, unaccompanied by any superfluous comment, and still more, to strip them of any language calculated to work on the imagination’.⁹¹ The CLEC was designated an information powerhouse, the home for all official returns on colonies including colonial books, maps, and charts.

One of the Commissioner’s first exercises was to circulate a set of standardised forms to the immigration agents in the colonies, requiring quarterly returns on estimating labour demand and wage rates. It also issued schedules and returns to be filled out on the departure and arrival of every government-sponsored emigrant ship. Unlike the earlier reports of the Agent-General, which were reactive to government arrivals, the CLEC would create a general, standardised impression of the employment situation in colonies that could proactively guide policy and

⁸⁹ “Immigration Agent: Annual Report”, *V&P LCNSW 1838*, 6-7; “Report from Committee on Immigration Committee”, *V&P LCNSW*, 11.

⁹⁰ The only full study of this important pan-imperial organisation remains Fred Hitchins, *The Colonial Land and Emigration Commission* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1931).

⁹¹ “Copy of Instructions addressed by Lord John Russell to the Land and Emigration Commissioners”, 14 January 1840, printed in *BBP, 1840*, xxxiii (35), 3-4.

calculations of prospective migrants.⁹² This emphasis on official, sanctioned information was, again, crucial in stabilising a world of economic knowledge. Standardised forms made for standardised reports, which, in appearance at least, made for a standardised, stable world. The inflow of data from around the empire back to CLEC office, at 9 Park Street, Westminster, was crafted into annual reports that gave generalised narratives of the condition of land settlement and work opportunities in each colony. By the 1850s, this included extensive accounts of primary industry, productive output, and gold seeking. These annual reports were the culmination of the CLEC's yearly activities promoting immigration through public notices, advertisements and application forms. In turn, collected data was synthesised into an annual *Colonization Circular*. This pamphlet, which expanded from sixteen pages in 1843 to seventy-five pages in 1859, compiled the average wage rates and prices of basic provisions in colonies, and provided extracts from the immigration agents on 'demand for labour'. Initially based on comments of the governor and later compiled from investigations made by the immigration agents, 'demand' was not enumerated but descriptive, providing narratives in which the potential migrant identified and located themselves. The account of New South Wales in 1845 read, for example:

...the colony at present does not hold out any inducement to labourers or mechanics looking for town employment and that no additional numbers are likely to be required for some time to come. Individuals of such callings who may notwithstanding be disposed to emigrate in the hope of ultimate employment at their trades, should distinctly understand that on their arrival they must take employment as shepherds, or at some other country work which they may be sufficiently qualified to perform. The emigration of rough carpenters and smiths willing to go into the country, and not caring about exclusive employment of their trades, need not be discouraged.⁹³

Such descriptions were the prospective emigrants' window to the colonies and a mirror of the conditions to those already there. Like the return on investment tables in the emigrant guides

⁹² Villiers and Torrens to Colonial Office, 10 January 1841, CO 854/3, 33-41; Russell to Gipps, 29 May 1841, *HRA* 1:21, 381. There were periodically updated. See: Stanley to Gipps, 22 March 1845, *HRA* 1:24, 303; Grey to Fitz-Roy, 19 April 1847, *HRA* 1:25, 492.

⁹³ *Colonization Circular*, No 5, February 1845, 5.

discussed in Chapter Four, these narratives were designed to stimulate British labourers to calculate themselves into a system of imperial production. The CLEC stamped each *Circular* as an extract of ‘authentic information’, offered on the ‘responsibility of a department of Government’.⁹⁴

Just as the *Circular* encouraged prospective migrants to calculate, however, so too was it clearly the product of a series of economic computations that depended on a long line of delegations and requests for information. On receiving the official quarterly forms from the CLEC, the local colonial Immigration Agent in turn distributed his own forms to district magistrates to report on average wage rates, commodity prices and demand for labour across the frontier. When these were returned, they were aggregated and tabulated by a growing army of clerks at Sydney’s Immigration Office into imposing columns and rows to create a colony-wide report (**figure 6.4**), before being compressed by the Immigration Agent into a single document to be returned to the CLEC. These quarterly returns were then again averaged for the year by the CLEC and published in the *Colonization Circular* (**figure 6.5**).⁹⁵ The narratives of labour ‘demand’ were constructed from returns by magistrates and collated into neat tables of brief commentaries on the specific types of labourers required in each district, objectifying a form of knowledge which had hitherto been based on hearsay (**figure 6.6**). These figures and tables also provided the basis of the Immigrant Agent’s annual report, which contributed to an ever-growing appendix in the select committees report, informing increasingly revisions of regulations and preferred categories of migrants.

All this counting amplified the decisive gendering process implicit in the new economic discourse. Men and women’s work was recorded with equal interest, however in the wage returns, there was clear and categorical distinction between what constituted ‘male’ and ‘female’ occupations. The Immigration Agents reports on demand frequently recorded the need for female domestic servants, but when the tables on demand were converted into brief, generalised narratives, whether by select committees or the CLEC *Circular*, they almost always emphasised

⁹⁴ *Colonization Circular*, No 1, May 1843, 1; “Seventh General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners”, *BPP 1847* (809), 4.

⁹⁵ ‘Returns called for by Mr Stephen Walcott’s letters of 31 March 1846’. See the compiling of returns in: SANSW: Immigration Agent, NRS 5289, ‘Quarterly, half-yearly and yearly returns’ [4/4691].

APPENDIX A.

1. STATEMENT compiled from Returns from the several Police Districts of the Colony, (not including the District of Port Phillip) shewing the Rates of yearly money-wages given in each District, in the first two quarters of the present year; food and lodging being provided by the employers.

POLICE DISTRICT.	Miles from Sydney.	CARPENTERS.		SMITHS.		WHEELWRIGHTS.		BRICKLAYERS.		MASONS.		FARM LABORERS.		SHEPHERDS.	
		1st January to 31st March.	1st April to 30th June.	1st January to 31st March.	1st April to 30th June.	1st January to 31st March.	1st April to 30th June.	1st January to 31st March.	1st April to 30th June.	1st January to 31st March.	1st April to 30th June.	1st January to 31st March.	1st April to 30th June.	1st January to 31st March.	1st April to 30th June.
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
		LOCATION.													
Sydney	33	28	38	33	34	33	30	31	31	23	23	21	21	21	21
Parramatta	15	39	39	47	47	47	47	47	39	47	39	21	19	20	20
Liverpool	30	45	46	45	46	45	46	45	41	42	41	18	18	18	18
Brisbane Water	30	40	45	36	36	36	36	36	45	45	45	18	18	18	18
Penrith	33	45	45	36	36	36	36	36	45	45	45	18	18	18	18
Campbell TOWN	33	40	40	39	40	39	40	40	40	40	40	15	15	15	15
Windsor	34	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	19	19	19	19
Camden	39	35	35	28	28	28	28	28	30	30	30	19	19	19	19
Pictou	49	35	35	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	18	18	18	18
Illawarra	64	35	35	40	40	35	35	35	40	40	40	20	20	20	20
Newcastle	70	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	14	14	14	14
Hartley	78	30	30	30	30	28	28	28	28	28	28	21	21	21	21
Berrima	81	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	18	18	18	18
Raymond Terrace	83	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	20	21	21	21
Port Stephens	91	35	35	45	45	50	50	55	55	55	55	20	20	20	20
Wollombi	105	46	46	54	55	45	45	45	42	43	43	18	18	18	18
Bathurst	113	30	35	35	35	30	35	35	35	35	35	22	22	22	22
Bungonia	117	35	35	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	20	20	20	20
Singamon	125	35	35	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	18	18	18	18
Goulburn	132	32	32	32	32	31	31	31	32	32	32	21	21	21	21
Maitland	140	39	39	39	39	36	36	36	39	39	39	20	20	20	20
Paterson	141	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	19	19	19	19
Carcoar	146	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	19	20	23	23
Dungog	150	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	20	20	20	20
Mudgee	156	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	35	35	35	18	18	18	18
Murumbidgee	163	30	30	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	22	22	22	22
Braidwood	164	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	20	20	20	20
Merton	170	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	23	23	23	23
Yass	179	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	19	19	19	19
Queanbeyan	182	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	21	20	22	22
Scots	182	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	21	20	22	22
Murrumbidgee	200	50	50	35	35	35	35	35	40	40	40	20	20	22	22
Broulee	200	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	18	20	17	17
Wellington	230	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	22	22	23	23
Port Macquarie	278	35	35	30	30	25	25	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	28
Cassilis	335	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	40	40	40	22	22	22	22
Moreton Bay	420	48	48	45	45	45	45	55	55	55	55	36	36	38	38
Ipewich	470	49	62	62	62	62	62	62	71	71	71	28	31	26	26
BEYOND THE LIMITS OF LOCATION.															
Binalong (Lachlan)	305	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	23	26	22	25
Tumut (Murrumbidgee)	325	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	25	25	23	24
Wee Wee (Liverpool Plains)	350	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	21	24	21	23
McLeay River	350	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	25	25	23	23
Cooma (Maneroo)	351	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	25	25	23	23
Eden (Macintyre)	358	40	40	43	43	38	38	43	43	45	45	23	23	23	27
Tamworth (Liverpool Plains)	364	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	33	33	33	37
Dubbo (Murrumbidgee)	370	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	24	24	24	24
Warialda (Liverpool Plains)	380	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	23	23	23	23
Wellington (New England)	380	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	27	30	27	26
Armidale (New England)	384	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	25	25	25	25
Pockatoo (Liverpool Plains)	384	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	25	25	25	25
Albury (Murrumbidgee)	379	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	25	25	22	26
Grafton (Clarence River)	380	35	35	35	35	40	40	40	40	40	40	27	27	27	27
Canning Downs (Darling Downs)	390	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	30	30	26	26
Cassino (Clarence River)	430	35	35	30	30	30	30	25	40	40	40	25	25	25	25
Cambooya (Darling Downs)	490	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	27	27	27	27
Deniliquin (Murrumbidgee)	490	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	28	28
Cressbrook (Moreton Bay)	500	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	26	26	28	28
AVERAGE IN ROUND NUMBERS.															
	56	38	38	38	39	35	38	37	39	37	39	22	23	22	23

2. STATEMENT compiled from Returns from the several Police Divisions of the District of Port Phillip, shewing the rates of yearly money-wages given in each Division, in the first two Quarters of the present year; food and lodging being provided by the employers.

DISTRICT.	CARPENTERS.		SMITHS.		WHEELWRIGHTS.		BRICKLAYERS.		MASONS.		FARM LABORERS.		SHEPHERDS.	
	1st January to 31st March.	1st April to 30th June.	1st January to 31st March.	1st April to 30th June.	1st January to 31st March.	1st April to 30th June.	1st January to 31st March.	1st April to 30th June.	1st January to 31st March.	1st April to 30th June.	1st January to 31st March.	1st April to 30th June.	1st January to 31st March.	1st April to 30th June.
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Melbourne	60	50	60	40	60	60	50	60	60	55	28	28	28	28
Geelong	40	45	40	43	40	43	43	45	45	29	29	29	29	29
Portland	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	30	30	30	30	30
Murray	55	50	33	50	40	40	35	50	35	60	30	30	30	30
Western Port	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	23	23	23	23	23
Gipps Land	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	23	23	23	23	23
AVERAGE IN ROUND NUMBERS.														
	46	45	43	41	50	43	47	42	46	49	27	28	28	28

Immigration Office,
Sydney, 7 July, 1847.

FRANCIS L. S. MEREWETHER,
Agent for Immigration.

Figure 6.4 "Statement compiled from Returns of the several Police Districts of the Colony shewing the Rates of yearly money-wages in each District, in the first two quarters of 1847", Appendix A in "Report from the Committee on Immigration", V&P LCNSW 1847, II, 294.

the need of agricultural and pastoral workers as the barometer of 'labour demand'. The 'dependent woman' was still a construction of a later period, one that would begin to play out in the census rather than immigration statistics.⁹⁶ But a binary of gendered 'spheres' was nevertheless already

⁹⁶ Desley Deacon, "Political Arithmetic: The Nineteenth-Century Australian Census and the Construction of the Dependent Woman," *Signs* 11, no.1 (October 1, 1985): 27-47. Marilyn Lake noted of the later nineteenth century, in terms salient to this study: 'Although men and women inhabited different worlds,

DISTRICTS. (Within the Limits of Location.)	COST AND ORDINARY MATERIALS OF COUNTRY LABORERS' DWELLINGS.	AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS.	DEMAND FOR LABOR AND DESCRIPTIONS OF LABORERS REQUIRED.
CAMPBELL TOWN	About £4 to £6, and constructed of wood.	Hay, corn, wheat, and butter.	The descriptions of labor most in request, are farm servants and domestic, both male and female. At present, their places cannot be supplied in the district, if one or the other leave their place, which now is almost invariably done when their engagement expires, without their wages are increased at least twenty-five per cent. Agriculture in a great measure, is at a stand still, for want of suitable laborers, and, when obtainable, the wages demanded are more than the farmer can afford to pay; domestic servants, male and female, can hardly be procured. House servants are most wanted—it is not requisite to send families with young children; generally single men and women who have been accustomed to labor would be preferred.
WINDSOR.....	About £10; generally constructed of slabs and bark.	Wheat, maize, potatoes, and hay.	Chiefly general farm servants, such as ploughmen, laborers, gardeners, milkmen, mowers, and thatchers. This district is amply supplied with mechanics, but there is a scarcity of the other kinds of labor; wages are decidedly on the rise. From the abundance of fertile land, and the proximity of the Sydney Market, the district affords an opening for the comfortable settlement of a large population. During the last five years the number of inhabitants has doubled itself; there are also ample means for public worship, religious instruction, and education. Laborers of every description would find ready employment.
CAMDEN	From £10 to £30; generally of slabs, and roofed with bark but for the latter sum a brick and shingled dwelling may be erected.	Wheat, maize, hay, and dairy produce; the culture of the vine is also considerable and increasing yearly; a good many horses are bred, and some sheep.	Farm laborers and general servants are most in request; farm and house servants are much wanted. The principal demand is for laborers and house servants.
PICTON.....	About £5; are usually built of wooden slabs, and covered with shingles or bark. They are erected by the employers, and no rent charged for them.	Wheat, maize, barley, oats, rye, hay, &c., &c.	Sherpards and agricultural laborers are most in request. There is a great scarcity of labor in the district; every description of laborers is much wanted, and would obtain good wages. Farm laborers and domestic servants are most in request.
ILLAWARRA	With slabs, roofed with bark, from £10 to £20.	Wheat, maize, barley, potatoes, and butter.	Agricultural laborers as well as female servants are much wanted. There is only one single adult female servant in the district; but from thirty to forty would be employed as none can be obtained even at the very high wages quoted in the list. More agricultural laborers would be employed were the wages lower.
NEWCASTLE	Generally constructed of split slabs; roofing &c. of shingles or sheets of bark; sometimes a bricked fire place and chimney. Expense from £5 to £7.	Wheat, maize, potatoes, pumpkins.	General agricultural laborers are most wanted; there is still a great demand for labor which cannot be furnished in the district. Sherpards, hutkeepers, sheoars, and agricultural servants of all descriptions, particularly laundresses, housemaids, and general house servants, are in request. The wages of hutkeepers and sheoars are increasing.
HARTLEY	£10.	Wheat, potatoes, and oats.	Sherpards are the persons principally required; it is most difficult to obtain an experienced man, and the want is daily increasing; female domestic servants are all but impossible to be obtained; as are, indeed, male domestics also, chiefly cooks; and families are required to perform the most menial offices, from their inability to procure servants.
BERRINA.....	Slabs and bark good £10.	Wheat, oats, barley, potatoes, hay, and all descriptions of English grain.	
RAYMOND TERRACE	A cottage of two rooms about £20 of split slabs externally with a shingled roof and stone chimney.	Maize, wheat, barley, oatmeal hay, potatoes, fruit, and wine.	
PURE STEPHENS	£80; of bricks, timber, and lime.	Wheat, maize, barley, oats, potatoes.	
WOLLONGI	Such dwellings are gratuitously provided by employers, and are generally constructed of timber, slabs, and bark roofs.	Wheat, maize, barley, tobacco, and potatoes.	
BATHURST	£10 to £15; slab walls, brick or stone chimneys, and bark roof.	Wheat, barley, corn, and potatoes.	
BUNGONIA	£7, the material consisting of split slabs and bark roof.	Wheat, barley, maize, oats, hay, potatoes, dairy produce, cheese and butter.	

Figure 6.6 “Papers compiled from the Returns from the several Benches of Magistrate throughout the Colony shewing the cost of erecting Laborers’ Dwellings, the principal Agricultural Productions, and the demand for Labor, &c., in each of the Districts named, in the half year ended 30th June, 1847.” *V&PNSW 1847*, II, 296.

assumptions about what should be counted and compiled, making the world amenable to moving large numbers of persons around empire for productive ends. Enumeration was part of the narrative that made mass migration imaginable, dependable and durable. Two such objects were of enduring importance: the wage and the labour market.

Governing ‘proportion’: wages and labour markets

The numerical artefacts created by the practices of migration officers in Sydney and London contributed to a fundamental transformation of wage relations. While historians, particularly of colonial America, have shown some interest in the changing legal framework of the increasingly ‘free’, contractual nature of employment in the nineteenth century, as Joanna Innes has written, we still know very little about the processes that ‘de-regulated’ the wage in the early nineteenth century from a familial relation to a commodity.⁹⁹ Techniques of enumeration might be

⁹⁹ On legal dimensions, see: Robert J. Steinfeld, *The Invention of Free Labor: The Employment Relation in English and American Law and Culture, 1350-1870* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), and Christopher Tomlins, *Freedom Bound: Law, Labor, and Civic Identity in Colonizing English America, 1580-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). On ‘de-regulation’, see: Joanna Innes, “Regulating Wages in Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth-Century England,” in Perry Gauci, *Regulating the British Economy* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 195-216.

considered as a significant aspect of this shift, for it made the ‘wage’ computable in a new, deductive market calculations. As such, assisted migrants were particularly exposed to processes in which wage and employment relations were being reclassified as ‘economic’.

The significance of immigration wage statistics needs to be contextualised against broader patterns of shifting wage regulations in Britain and New South Wales. Deep into the eighteenth century, the English labourer’s wage continued to be conceived as a function of governing household relations: a civic, juristic and familial category, calculated in accordance to the labourers’ subsistence and wellbeing. English county and borough magistrates and justices had periodically adjudged appropriate ‘wages assessments’ for various trades since the Statute of Artificers (1563), which were recorded in county and borough statute books.¹⁰⁰ Farmers might also meet in the parish vestry to decide wages in their area. During the eighteenth century, an increasing number of industries had Parliament legislate wages, too. Insofar as they were observed, wage assessments reflected specific regional needs, balancing the claims of masters, servants, craft guilds, and journeymen brotherhoods.¹⁰¹ Likewise, assize courts regulated the weight of bread and the quality of goods to ensure wages bought sufficient necessities. Wages and prices, as indicated in Chapter Two, were regulated by community needs and demands, adjudicated at a parochial, even personal level.

While the enumerative process associated with assisted migration would contribute to breaking down these concepts, initially these traditional patterns of jurisdiction were inherited into colonial New South Wales. The governor had power to control daily necessities by regulating wages and prices. In 1797, Hunter instructed mainland farmers to meet quarterly to decide on appropriate wage rates for free or emancipist labourers and had magistrates preside

¹⁰⁰ Attempts to centralise the regulation of employment relations, not only wages but especially movement and compulsion to work, dated back to the Ordinance and Statute of Labourers (1349 and 1351 respectively), enacted to help control the demographic chaos created by the Black Death. While centrally legislated, these were always characterised by variation in regional legal cultures, administered by local authorities and not an oppressive, uniform legal system as depicted by Steinfeld, or a centrally orchestrated mechanism of mercantilist policy, as depicted in the older historiography. See: Tomlins, *Freedom Bound*, 231-245.

¹⁰¹ Edgar .S. Furniss, *The Position of the Laborer in a System of Nationalism: A Study in the Labor Theories of the Later English Mercantilists* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1920), 157-197. For analyses of county wage assessments, see: Walter E. Minchinton (ed.) *Wage Regulation in Pre-Industrial England* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1972); M.F. Roberts, “Wages and wage earners in England: the evidence of wage assessments, 1563-1725”, PhD Thesis (University of Oxford, 1981).

over Assize of Bread courts.¹⁰² From 1803, the *Sydney Gazette* published the weekly weight and price of bread in each district. The practice appears to have continued up until the late 1820s.¹⁰³ While farmers were lax in setting labour rates, the early governors made intermittent proclamations on wages for task work and some occupations for both free labourers and convicts.¹⁰⁴ This authority was recognised into the 1820s. For example, when the Agricultural Society wrote to Brisbane in 1823 seeking changes convicts wages, it appealed not the dynamics of supply and demand, but readily acknowledged wages were regulated by ‘the Statute of Artificers ... respecting the plenty or scarcity of the time, and their circumstances necessarily to be considered’.¹⁰⁵

This familial concept of wages had, however, already come under threat in England during the 1790s, when the efficacy of the Poor Laws first came under attack.¹⁰⁶ Annual assessments were becoming an anachronism and there were proposals for revising and repealing statutory wage regulation. ‘Labour’, argued Burke against received wisdom in 1795, ‘is a commodity like every other, and rises or falls according to the demand’.¹⁰⁷ By the 1810s, there

¹⁰² The problem grew as convicts began to be discharged. See: Government Orders, 14 January 1797; 10 March 1797; Hunter to Portland, 20 June, *HRA* 1:2, 23, 73, 75. Alan Atkinson, *The Europeans in Australia: A History, Volume One: The Beginning* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997), 230-234. Macquarie appears to have conducted a similar meeting in March 1817: Macquarie to Bathurst, 29 March 1817, *HRA* 1:9, 219.

¹⁰³ Michael Quinlan, “Australia, 1788-1902: A Workingman’s Paradise”, in Douglas Hay and Paul Craven, (eds.), *Masters, Servants, and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 223.

¹⁰⁴ See for example, Macquarie’s conversion of ‘the general Rates and Prices of Labour and Wages’, in the Government and General Orders, *Sydney Gazette*, 7 December 1816, 1. When Brisbane first supplied a list of the ‘present demand of convict labour’ in 1824, he was able to include a list of “Prices paid to good Mechanics and Tradesmen” in Sydney. Enclosure, Brisbane to Bathurst, 29 October 1824, 388.

¹⁰⁵ SANSW: Colonial Secretary, NRS 897, Main Series of Letters Received. [4/1765]. Agricultural Society of N.S.W. to Goulburn, 23 July 1823. See also the Memorial to Brisbane, seeking intervention to stipulate wages that were being inflated by the Commissariat’s new policy of paying for supplies in Spanish dollars. Enclosure, Brisbane to Bathurst, 2 September 1822, *HRA* 1:10, 738-744.

¹⁰⁶ It is, of course, misleading to conceive of any single ‘view’ of wage relations prior to the nineteenth century, or to subsume the kinds of practices described above under a system of ‘moral economy’. The mechanisms noted – magistrate and vestry wage assessments, wage statutes, assize courts – were used for a variety of competing purposes. Innes, “Regulating Wages”, 197-204.

¹⁰⁷ Edmund Burke, *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity, Originally presented to the Right Hon William Pitt* (London: F. and C. Rivington, 1800 [1795]), 6. For a discussion of the significance of Burke’s views in this period, its relation to his ‘conservatism’, and most importantly, relation to Smith, see: Winch, *Riches and Poverty*, 198-220; Dispute over the meanings of the wage reached something of a highpoint this year, the year of the Whitbread Bill and Speenhamland, around which time Thomas Paine also introduced the idea of what we now recognise as a universal basic income in *Agrarian Justice, Opposed to Agrarian Law, and to Agrarian Monopoly* [1797], in Ian Shapiro and Jane E. Calvert, *Selected Writings of Thomas Paine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 552-568.

was general support for non-interference in wages on all sides for a variety of reasons.¹⁰⁸ The Ricardian sociology of landlord, capitalist and labourer, formalised this view by locking wages into a theoretical problem of ‘distribution’, regulated by the rates of profit and rent. But, as has been argued throughout this thesis, the salience of these theoretical formulations was in their application through government reporting. In England, this was reflected in numerous select committees, such as Horton’s emigration reports, that were beginning to deal with wage-earner distress by locating the labourer purely in dynamics of regional and national ‘supply and demand’. Legislation regulating wages in various industries was repealed at the height of liberal Tory reforms in 1824, as wages underwent a ‘de-regulatory shift’. While there was no such legislation in New South Wales, as the governor’s prerogative was slowly curbed beginning with the establishment of an Executive Council in 1824, so did his absolute power over commercial affairs through the use of general orders and proclamations, including fixing wages. But these processes reflected more than just rescinding intervention. The narratives produced by committees on immigration and the standardised representations assembled by immigration officials, converted the theory of ‘distribution’ into empirical fact, enacting the labourer as an agent in a dynamic, self-regulating ‘economic’ conditions.

The wage rates and bread prices published in the early *Sydney Gazette* were of a different epistemic order to average wage rates published by migration officials. In fact, they constituted wholly different conceptions of the ‘wage’. The former were public declarations of law regulating the resource of the royal household. The latter were early attempts at mapping the fluctuations of economic phenomena. In these practices, wages were not simply being left to ‘market forces’, as Innes ‘de-regulatory shift’ implies. The inquiries and publications of immigration agents translated the wage from a unit governing local, particular relationships into a functions of universal, generalised forces of global supply and demand, if the *Colonization Circular* was to be

¹⁰⁸ The development of wage policy and regulation in this period remains sorely under-studied. Joanna Innes has mapped out the broad, ‘complex set of alignments’ taking shape by 1810, ‘for and against official participation in the management of labour. On one side, most big and some small businessmen; political economy ideologues; some men with roots in militant unionism; and some radical literati [especially Francis Place]. On the other; some more cautious small businessmen and tradesman; workers in some overstocked, volatile and low-wage industries, and their more or less bullish sympathisers in the world of government, Parliament, and philanthropy’. Smith, Burke and others are absent from her brief account. “Regulating Wages”, 213.

believed. The wage was not so much ‘deregulated’ as *reregulated* through processes of official publication. The columns and rows of immigrant agent statistics seemingly corresponding perfectly with the narratives told by Nicholson in official reports. Indeed, the minimum wage of legislation of the early twentieth century can be seen as an attempt to deal with the legacies of this conceptual transformation.

Within a generation, this re-conception of the wage was becoming common sense. Throughout the 1830s, colonial newspapers continued to scrutinise the produce of bakers closely and regularly advocated re-establishing the Assize on Bread.¹⁰⁹ By the mid-1840s, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which had aligned with orthodox free trade political economy, rejected such claims:

If the price of bread is to be fixed by law, why not the price of labour? ... It is a fair argument to the working man, “how would you like your only commodity, the turn of your hand, to be valued by a bench of Justices?” Free trade is founded on the golden rule, but an assize of bread, in circumstances affording unlimited competition, is a direct violation of its perfect mutuality. That perfect mutuality is an infallible test.¹¹⁰

The *Herald* was reflecting an idea of wage relations on par with the ‘free trade’ of commodities: the price fluctuated with competition. Migration and employment statistics helped facilitate this view because they reflected a world that could be mapped in the most general terms using number, whereby shifts in wages reflected a shift in demand. By mid-century, wage statistics were coalescing into a new concept that gave this new dynamic greater vitality as the ‘labour market’. Usage of the compound ‘labour market’ does not much pre-date the second decade of the nineteenth century.¹¹¹ Its first parliamentary use, tellingly, was in Horton’s 1826-7 reports on emigration, and then more frequently in the various reports on the Poor Laws and handloom

¹⁰⁹ *Australian*, 11 November 1833, 2; *Sydney Herald*, 27 March 1841, 2.

¹¹⁰ *SMH*, 29 July 1846, 2; The argument was in direct response to the *Sydney Chronicle*, 26 July 1846, 2, calling for the new Corporation of Sydney to enact an assize of bread.

¹¹¹ Robert Torrens refers to the ‘labour market’ in his 1815 pamphlet on the Corn Trade, but the other prominent pamphlets of that year on that topic by Ricardo, Malthus, and West did not. Nor did Ricardo use the phrase in any edition of his *Principles*.

weavers. It was used frequently in the report from the 1836 House of Commons Select Committee on Colonial Crown Lands. By the 1840s, it had become entrenched in the colonial lexicon. As in Britain, this innovation aroused resistance and critique. ‘The cant of “free trade” and “the labour market” when a traffic in human beings is meant, is worse than mere cant; it is inhumanity reduced to system,’ wrote the Catholic *Chronicle* in February 1840.¹¹² Others thought it an imaginative achievement that naturalised human relations as dynamics of competitive employment. ‘The labour market is a reality, and not the less so for our not knowing where to assign it “a local habitation”. In fact, it extends to all places the world over,’ proclaimed orator William Johnson Fox in an 1844 lecture. ‘To make the labour market visible, would be to pass in procession before us all the industrious classes on God's earth.’¹¹³

To make it visible would also be to make it durable. Authoritative wage statistics made this possible. While neither the CLEC nor the Immigration Agent described their statistics as representing the ‘labour market’, the immigration committee reports did. So did private agents who began to emulate such techniques. From mid-1853, the ‘labour agent’ W.B. Haigh, who facilitated employment for new migrants, began publishing in the Saturday trade pages of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Empire* lists of average wage rates and a description of labour supply through a commentary of ship arrivals, as well as demand for the previous week based on his own commissions and immigration statistics.¹¹⁴ He designated this the sum of this activity ‘labour market’ (**figure 6.7**). Within a few years, the newspapers published competing depictions of the ‘labour market’ created by Haigh and his rivals.

Initially, at least, it was not immediately apparent to all employees or employers what was being ‘represented’ in such tables. Writing in 1847, Caroline Chisholm recalled her encounters with ‘immigrants imagining, without consideration to the fluctuations of the labour market, that they had a claim on Government for the rates of wages named in the ... Commissioners’ Circular’, which ‘caused much embarrassment to the local government’. Haigh

¹¹² *Australian Chronicle*, 28 February 1840, 2.

¹¹³ William Johnson Fox, “The Labour-Market”, in *Lectures, Addressed Chiefly to the Working Classes*, Vol. 1 (London: C. Fox, 1845), 209-10; Republished in, *Sydney Chronicle*, 20 January 1847, 2.

¹¹⁴ These also soon appeared in the *Sydney Gazette and Sydney General Trade List* and *Illustrated Sydney News*. By late 1855, the papers were publishing a column by another agent, Oliver Staines, alongside Haigh’s and by the end of the decade publishing shorter extracts from the agent’s Haigh and Brown, Spencer Ashlin, and J.C. Glue.

LABOUR MARKET.			
During the past week the following Government vessels have arrived:—			
The Lady Kennaway, with	235 passengers		
St. Helena	297 ditto		
Marchioness of Londonderry	194 ditto		
Total	744 Govt. immigrants;		
and about 150 steerage passengers by our colonial steamers; and by the Ella Franca we have 73 steerage passengers from San Francisco.			
Two of the ships have been put into quarantine for a short time—the Marchioness of Londonderry and the St. Helena; the passengers by the former are of various classes, and consist of 194 adults and about 40 youths and children; those by the latter are principally English agricultural labourers. These by the Lady Kennaway are now hiring, and consist of married couples, single males and females, of which the single females are the greater number.			
The market is decidedly easier, but by no means over supplied with suitable labour, either for indoor or outdoor purposes, especially for good female domestics, the supply being scarcely as far as ever from meeting the demand.			
TOWN WAGES.			
Bookbinders, according to competency, per week, from	3	0	0 to 4 0 0
Printers' work, per week, from	3	0	0 to 3 12 0
Compositors on the "stab"	4	0	0
Herald, Morning Paper—Long primer, brevier, and nonpareil—equalised is 8d per 1000, and is 9d per hour overtime.			
The Empire's rates are about the same.			
At these rates men can earn, according to competency, per week, from			
Painters	6	0	0 to 5 0 0
Plumbers	0	13	0 to 0 14 0
Carpenters	0	16	0 to 0 18 0
Coopers	0	10	0 to 0 12 0
Joiners	0	16	0 to 0 18 0
Plasterers	0	0	0 to 1 10 0
Finsterers' labourers	0	12	0 to 0 13 0
Bricklayers	1	0	0 to 1 6 0
Ditto labourers	0	12	0 to 0 15 0
Masons	1	2	0 to 1 3 0
Ditto labourers	0	10	0 to 0 12 0
Quarrymen	0	18	0 to 1 0 0
Blacksmiths	0	14	0 to 0 18 0
Carters	0	8	0 to 0 10 0
Male servants—(if for town and without rations), £1 per week more)	£40 to	58	per ann., and found
Cooks	52	70	per ann.
Grooms	40	59	per ann.
Gardeners	45	55	per ann.
General work	40	50	per ann.
General female servants	20	30	per ann.
Cooks	30	40	per ann.
Laundresses	34	40	per ann.
Housemaids	20	25	per ann.
Nursemaids	15	20	per ann.
COUNTRY WAGES.			
Farm labourers	£35 to	£50	a year, with rations
Ditto married couples	50	70	per ann.
Hutkeepers	25	30	per ann.
Shepherds	30	35	per ann.
Stockmen	40	50	per ann.
Bullock drivers	40	50	per ann.
The rations are—flour, 10 lbs. to 12 lbs.; meat, 10 lbs. to 12 lbs. sugar, 2 lbs.; tea, 1 lb. weekly.			
SEAMEN'S WAGES.			
Coasting	£6 to	£7	per month
Steamers' seamen	0	7	per month
Ditto firemen	0	14	per month
Ditto trimmers	0	11	per month
England	0	7	per month
Great Britain, by way of India or China	6	7	per month
N. W. Zealand	0	7	per month
Whalers, A. S.			120th lay
Ditto, O. S.			140th lay
W. B. HAIGH, Immigrants' Labour Agent, 197, George-street, Sydney.			
December 16th, 1854.			

Figure 6.7 "Labour Market", *Sydney Morning Herald*, Saturday 16 December 1854, 8.

found it necessary to include in his extracts a note 'emphatically' reminding his readers that his list of wages 'will show as heretofore about the average rates for good hands, and is not intended to enumerate the highest wages that may be given.'¹¹⁵ The idea that wages were something competitively determined and no longer imposed by authority took time to coalesce. But in time, as discussed below, would soon shape migrants' political self-understandings.

¹¹⁵ Chisholm, *Emigration and Transportation Relatively Considered*, 24; *SMH*, 26 November 1853, 7.

While continuing to be regulated by master and servant laws, wage relations were coming to be viewed and encoded by government as a space of contractual exchange.¹¹⁶ When a select committee met in 1845 to determine a new master and servant law for the colony, it identified employment not in the narrow domain of the family, as it was for Blackstone, but as constituting ‘the operations of civilised life’. This required not laws for a hierarchical household, but ‘laws which regulate their mutual intercourse’, ensuring the protection of both employer and employee.¹¹⁷ Of course, even as employees increasingly utilised master and servant laws to claim unpaid wages, rather than employers punish errant workers, the employment relation remained decidedly asymmetrical.¹¹⁸ But like the language of ‘free labour’, the neutralising vocabulary of economic discourse, and its attendant practices of counting, were part of an ensemble of conceits that naturalised money-waged labour as a social relation. From mid-century, the Colonial Secretary’s office was collecting from magistrates annual returns on the number and value of wages claimed through the master and servant legislation. Saturated in information about competition for wages, emigrant labourers evidently had a sense of their monetary worth, which they were increasingly confident to claim.¹¹⁹ But this self-valuing turned more fundamentally on the migrant having come to recognise himself as ‘labour’. Indeed, the constitution of the migrant ‘labourer’ only makes sense by considering the emigrant’s own role in that process.

¹¹⁶ Master and servant laws were inherited in to New South Wales at the time of settlement before local legislation was passed in 1828, 1840, and 1845. Labour historians have tended to characterise this legislation as evidence of capital’s control over labour. But while the punitive aspects remained on the statute books and the wording of these acts changed only slightly in the nineteenth century, it is clear the meaning and use of the acts narrowed in many respects from a broad device to ‘police the poor’ to a mechanism for settling wage disputes. Adrian Merritt has shown that the colonial legislation was used in a majority of cases by employees to recover wages, beginning in a long process in which Australian wage-earners arguably turned to conciliation rather than collective action to guarantee workplace rights. For an overview, see: Michael Quinlan, “Australia, 1788-1092: A Workingman’s Paradise?”, in Paul Craven and Douglas Hay, *Masters, Servants and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562-1955* (University of North Carolina Press), 219-250.

¹¹⁷ Report from the Select Committee on Master and Servant Act”, *V&P LCNSW 1845*, 509. Where the jurist Blackstone had clearly identified as a law that fell under the head of ‘family law’, by 1861 John Hargraves was teaching students at Sydney University its significance was ‘very largely to “create property” under every Social System’. John F. Hargraves, *Syllabus of the Two Courses of Lectures on General Jurisprudence delivered at the University of Sydney* (Sydney: J.W. Waugh, 1861), 28.

¹¹⁸ Adrian Suzanne Merritt, “The development and application of Masters and Servant legislation in New South Wales, 1845 to 1930”. (PhD Thesis, Australian National University, 1981).

¹¹⁹ . For the register, see: “Law Commission: returns of cases under the master and servants Act tried before the various benches, 1849”, SRNSW, NRS 906 [4/7258.4].

The making of the colonial labourer

Over forty years ago, Stuart Macintyre, in the afterglow of E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*, challenged Australian labour historians to identify the historical 'making of the Australian working class'.¹²⁰ The challenge remains largely unrequited and a full treatment is beyond the scope of this chapter. We can, however, provide one perspective on this process by taking seriously Ian Hacking when he posed the question of who had more effect on nineteenth-century class-consciousness: Karl Marx, or the authors of official reports which created classifications into which people came to recognise themselves?¹²¹ At least one Australian historian has ventured in this direction, suggesting that as a category, the 'working class', was a construction of bourgeois reformers in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹²² What makes novel categories durable and powerful, however, is the extent to which they are self-identified and internalised by their target subjects.

The history of 'class' – and the 'labouring' or 'working class' in particular – as a social and analytical category has an extraordinary pedigree in Anglophone historiography. There is now a canon of work, stretching through Thompson, Gareth-Stedman Jones, Patrick Joyce and beyond, which offers a way of approaching class as a specifically historical 'experience' (to use Thompson's original and subsequently contentious term).¹²³ Recovering such experience has required drawing upon both intellectual and social historiography, for 'class', on these views, is a political language specific to place and time that shapes perceptions of social order, informs cultural practices, generates political conflict and constitutes collective and individual self-understandings. There is considerable disagreement in this literature as to when 'class' emerged – whether in the early-, mid- or even late-nineteenth century – and with what potency it existed among other modes of plebian, popular or religious self-understandings. At any rate, as Joyce

¹²⁰ Stuart Macintyre, "The Making of the Australian Working Class: An Historiographical Survey," *Historical Studies* 18, no. 71 (1978): 233-53.

¹²¹ Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 8.

¹²² Lynette Finch, *The Classing Gaze: Sexuality, Class and Surveillance* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1993).

¹²³ E.P. Thompson *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin, 1991 [1963]); Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, c. 1848-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

argues, ‘the consciousness of a *class* need not be the consciousness of *class*’.¹²⁴ Likewise, to identify the emergence of the category ‘the laboring classes’, as we have been in colonial select committee reports, is not to necessarily identify the emerging predominance of ‘class’ as a feature of everyday nineteenth-century reality. But it does indicate shifts in the way theorists and government could know populations, and, in turn, the way in which segments of a population understood itself, at least in some aspects of social life, and the political arguments and actions this bequeathed to them.

In Chapter Two, we examined the contributions political economists made to the formation of ‘class’ as a new category of analysis in the early nineteenth century, and the kind of meaning they invoked through it. (Political economy, of course, was only one source informing the language of class). In seeking to highlight that landlords were self-interested parasites, Ricardo and others rejected prevailing accounts of the agricultural sector as a unified ‘landed interest’ and instead demonstrated agricultural production to be constituted by a series of antagonisms between economic classes: landlord, capitalist and labourer. Having traced how this new vocabulary of economic classes entered into official-talk and functioned at the level of imperial and colonial government in the previous three chapters, we are now in a position to examine how those to whom the category of ‘labour’ referred or was targeted themselves encountered and interacted with this term. Processes of emigration were a key area for such encounters.

The government-assisted migrant was implicated in a process of self-declaration and self-constitution at every stage of the migratory process.¹²⁵ This began probably as whim and fancy, identifying oneself in the categories of occupations promoted in the CLEC advertisements or in the narratives of progress and accumulation presented in emigrant guides and booster literature. As we have seen, by the 1840s, this included constant advice to ‘overcome prejudices attached to previous associations’, and being prepared to take on new occupations.¹²⁶ This advice echoed the

¹²⁴ Joyce, *Visions of the People*, 15.

¹²⁵ This recalls the famous argument of Joan Scott, that subjects are constituted and not ‘recovered’ through various forms of personal testimony. See: Joan Scott, “The Evidence of Experience”, *Critical Inquiry* 17 (Summer, 1991), 773-797.

¹²⁶ “Report from Select Committee on Immigration”, *V&P LCNSW 1843*, 2.

attempts of authorities and political economists, noted above, to reconfigure the emigrant as a homogenised, enumerable source of 'labour'; to rescind one's 'service' or 'calling' to the needs of 'labour demand'. These demands were reflected in the categories used by government. Early application forms asked for assisted migrant's 'Trade or Calling', where the term 'calling', to recall Weber's important thesis, preserved the moral, providential, and Protestant notions of one's occupation. By 1855, these forms requested only the applicants 'Present Occupation' and 'Former Occupation'.¹²⁷ The disappearance of a discrete 'calling' was another dimension to the homogenisation of labour.

Having decided to emigrate, labourers were faced with an increasingly layered application process. Initially, this involved little more than providing occupational and family details on a basic application form. By 1847, with the CLEC overseeing imperial migration, details were required of the health and literacy of all family members, the applicant's employment history and whether *he* – the form was tailored for men with families – had ever been dependent on relief. It also required character references from a minister and a former employer or magistrate. Finally, the applicant signed a declaration that he was 'willing and intending to work there for Wages'. The regulations attached to the application form specified those 'intending to buy Land in the colony, or invest a small capital in a Trade' were not eligible for free passage and the applicant was required to disclose himself accordingly (**figure 6.8**).¹²⁸ By 1855, this disclosure read:

I do hereby declare ... the privilege of a passage, if granted, will be allowed to me on the faith that I really belong to the working class, as above described, that I am of good character, and that I go to the Colony intending to work there for wages in the calling above mentioned.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ The concept of 'calling' (*Beruf*) as an occupational and capitalistic category, borrowed from Protestantism, was of course memorably discussed by Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002 [1905]).

¹²⁸ Forms located in, SANSW: Immigration Agent, NRS 5306, Parliamentary papers, pamphlets and news cuttings relating to immigration, [9/6928]; Immigration Agent NRS 5307, Papers relating to Immigration [9/6184].

¹²⁹ See: SANSW, Immigration Agent, NRS 5308, Blank forms used by the Immigration Department, [9/6178].

vicissitudes of gaining competitive employment. Local newspapers kept clockwork account of ship arrivals and employers seeking workers would commonly meet a ship at the Sydney or Port Phillip docks. In 1840, the Sydney Immigration Agent began opening the Immigration Office every day from noon to two o'clock in the afternoon so 'Masters and Servants may meet.' Private 'labour agents', such as Haigh, soon began offering the same service; by the 1850s, at least four such agencies were operating in Sydney.¹³¹

State actors were central in facilitating these employment relations. In 1844, ship surgeons were provided with new 'forms of agreement' to encourage speedy employment when ships arrived. A clerk was appointed to each arriving ship to help draw up the agreements and carried a list of the wage rates obtained by passengers from the last arrived ship to help quantify appropriate wages. 'You will doubtless not fail to impress upon the Immigrants the desirableness of at once accepting any reasonable offer of engagement for the limited period of 6 or 12 months,' clerks and ship surgeons were instructed. Duplicates of the wage agreements were to be forwarded to the Immigration Office the following day.¹³² By the 1850s, the CLEC application forms doubled as wage contract and the Immigration Agent himself was meeting each passenger ship and seeking out the 'capabilities and wishes with regard to the employment of immigrants on board.'¹³³ So where colonists began to speak of and believe in a self-regulating 'labour market', state actors were involved in crafting the relations that quantified this entity at every stage, building up the figure of the labourer in the process. Beyond port, the emigrant labourer was then exposed to other emerging government, semi-government or government-sanctioned agencies and authorities such as savings banks, assurance companies, friendly societies, benevolent societies, unemployment and relief lists, and government works programs.

Equipped with guides, *Colonization Circulars*, price and wages lists, and letters from family members gone ahead of them, the first wave of 40,000 free assisted immigrants arriving between 1835 and 1842 were acutely aware they were products of imperial policy and the subjects

¹³¹ *Government Gazette*, 19 January 1841 (No. 5), 90; Evidence of Joseph Frederick Johnson, 11 September 1843, "Committee for Immigration", *V&P LCNSW 1843*, 27-28.

¹³² "SANSW: NRS, 5307, 9/6184, Forms and Letters of Instruction for Immigrant Ships on arrival, Immigration Office to the Surgeon Superintendent of the Ship, 22 January 1844; Surviving examples of such agreements are available at SANSW: Immigration Agent, NRS 5315, Wage Agreements and entitlement certificates of persons on bounty ships.

¹³³ *Colonization Circular*, No 19, May 1859, 17.

of economic precepts and calculation. With this knowledge, Terry Irving has argued, emigrants were able to influence policy-making, defend their status and campaign for land. 'Above all, they insisted they too should have the rights of citizens'.¹³⁴ Irving's concern was to show the development of a local Australian working-class identity and vocabulary, one not necessarily dependent on British radicalism and Chartism.¹³⁵ The everyday techniques of application and self-declaration were central to this process of identity making. The full implications of such processes were probably only realised decades later. Ben Maddison, for example, has argued workers' only began to articulate their skills as 'commodities' in the late nineteenth century.¹³⁶ Nonetheless, there was an evident transformation in the terms labouring emigrants collectively identified and articulated themselves.

Petitions are one useful source to recover emigrants' emergent use of calculable arguments and self-identification as economic 'labour'. One of the earliest emigrant petitions was addressed to Glenelg in December 1835 from self-describing 'emigrants' (not 'settlers'), who had arrived after 1830, and identified coming from the 'Mechanical Classes of Society'. They complained the information provided in the 'sanctioned Statements' by the Emigration Commissioners, which had encouraged them to emigrate, were entirely inaccurate. Neither the wages nor opportunities were so great, nor the price of provisions so low. Seeking 'an Act of justice towards ourselves', they requested small land grants, styling themselves to be 'a class of honest, industrious and virtuous peasantry, interspersed with numbers of respectable persons from the middle class of Society, to ameliorate and improve the moral desert by which we are surrounded'. This petition was composed the same year the first colonial immigration select committee endorsed assisted immigration to atone the colony's immoral origins, noted above. Justice, moral office, and landed independence continued to frame emigrants' outlook and claims.

¹³⁴ T. H. Irving, *The Southern Tree of Liberty: The Democratic Movement In New South Wales before 1856* (Annandale, N.S.W: Federation Press, 2006), 37.

¹³⁵ Terry Irving and Paul Pickering, "Debate: Terry Irving and Paul Pickering," *Labour History Review* 79, no. 2 (January 1, 2014): 227-37.

¹³⁶ Ben Maddison, "Labour Commodification and Skilled Selves in Late Nineteenth-Century Australia," *International Review of Social History* 43, no. 02 (1998): 265-86; Ben Maddison, "From 'Moral Economy' to 'Political Economy' in New South Wales, 1870-1900," *Labour History*, no. 75 (November 1, 1998): 81-107.

The petition included a long critique of the difficulty of smaller settlers obtaining land; Glenelg responded saying that was the point of the regulations. Compensation was refused.¹³⁷

Within a few years, free immigrants were appealing their case on very different terms. This began to emerge in petitions to the Legislative Council during the monetary confusion of 1843. Now self-designated as the ‘labouring population’ and ‘Free Working Classes’, they again sought compensation considering ‘the many fair promises and flattering hopes that were held out’ in guides and advertisements and recited Adam Smith’s famous defence of high wages, in which ‘No Society’ could be ‘flourishing and happy’ if the majority ‘poor and miserable’. They argued it would be a ‘breach of faith’ to compel mechanics to ‘proceed into the interior and abandon their legitimate avocations’, both for the sake of their children and their own civility. As neither they nor urban employers benefited from ‘prison labour’, the petitions argued it was a ‘just claim upon Government’ to have convicts removed from public works in Sydney to the interior so the distressed might be afforded relief employed instead, ‘at a rate of wages sufficient for the comfortable maintenance of themselves and their families’.¹³⁸ Some relief on public works was provided, but government largely found the appeal unconvincing. A more deductive set of arguments were deployed when protesting plans to import ‘Coolie labour’ in another petition the same year, this time to Queen Victoria.¹³⁹ As with imperial authorities, the petitioners countenanced the vices these ‘Natives of India’ would introduce. Their lead argument, however, appealed to economic dynamics, supposing recent arrivals of ‘many thousand British immigrants has for the present sufficiently stocked the Labour Market’. The embarrassed state of the colony was not their making, but the ‘extravagant expenditure, over speculation, and efforts to monopolise all the Lands by the Capitalists of the Colony’. As such, ‘any attempt to lower the present low rate of wages by the introduction of Coolies would be unjust to those Immigrants’. Moreover, future supply should be limited to British labourers, not only because ‘the inhabitants of Great Britain’, who suffered continuing distress, ‘have a right to supply the demand for labour

¹³⁷ Enclosure, Bourke to Glenelg, 2 September 1836, *HRA* 1:18, 516-525. Glenelg to Bourke, 23 March 1837, *HRA* 1:18, 712.

¹³⁸ “The Petition of the Working Class to the Legislative Council”, *V&P LCNSW, 1843*, 717-19.

¹³⁹ The meeting at which it was adopted was thought to be ‘the largest meeting of the inhabitants of Sydney ever known since the foundation of the colony’. *The Sun and New South Wales Independent Press*, 28 January 1843, 3. For further petitions, see also: *Sydney Herald*, 26 June 1841, 2; *Australasian Chronicle*, 24 December 1842, 2; *SMH*, 19 June 1844, 2.

which may be created in this Colony', but because such labourers would become a 'valuable customer to his Native Country', whereas 'Coolies in New South Wales' would tend to 'annihilate the Market for European Manufacturers'.¹⁴⁰

These arguments anticipated those of 'free labour' in the anti-transportation campaign against 'unfree' convict labour at the end of the decade. By the 1860s, with transportation defeated, the claims of workers had narrowed to deductive, calculative terms targeted not only against Coolies or convicts, but other potential British assisted-migrants. A resolution from a mass meeting in Hyde Park in 1861 begged the Legislative Assembly, 'not to vote any sum either for assisted or any other kind of Immigration':

... Your Petitioners cannot help looking upon the employment of the public money (part of which they have contributed) for purposes of Immigration, as an interference with the labour market which the laws of free trade in no way justify, and in direct contravention of the law of supply and demand.¹⁴¹

This trajectory of what might be described a nascent colonial 'working class' discourse tracks a similar, if accelerated transition to that Gareth Stedman Jones noted in relation to nineteenth-century British radical vocabularies. Nineteenth-century British radicals, up to and including the Chartists, drew upon eighteenth-century opposition or 'country ideology' whose critique was motivated not purely by material inequality, but political corruption, exclusion and monopoly. Only in the late 1840s did the categories of political economy begin to structure mainstream British radicalism.¹⁴²

Likewise, forms of economic argument and identity were becoming essential for Sydney's radicals and the working classes they spoke for. Irving has identified at least three

¹⁴⁰ "Address to Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria", enclosed in Gipps to Stanley, 27 March 1843, *HRA* 1:22, 594-6. They also argued 'Coolies' would 'prevent or retard the growth of virtue and morality' and 'their employment would in all probability degenerate into a species of Domestic Slavery'.

¹⁴¹ "Petition of Mechanics against Assisted Immigration, 1862", printed in Manning Clark, *Select Documents in Australian history: Volume Two, 1851-1900* (London: Angus & Robertson, 1977), 249-50.

¹⁴² Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class*, 155-171. There was, of course, a rival usage of political economy by radical literati. See: Noel W. Thompson, *The People's Science: The Popular Political Economy of Exploitation and Crisis, 1816-34* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

different strains of radical thought in 1840s New South Wales, which he distinguished as constitutional, civic and plebeian radicalism, each with clearly separate intellectual lineages. As was reflected in each of their respective newspapers, all three were also organising their argumentative frameworks in terms of deductive relations between capital and labour. Irving notes that the first two varieties, exemplified in the Sydney newspapers the *Guardian* and the *Weekly Register* respectively, were well-versed in orthodox political economy.¹⁴³ As we have seen, both these publications employed political economic formulations to offer rival calculations to those presented in colonial select committees. But the cheap penny presses of plebeian radicals, targeted at the mass of unskilled workers, also stressed studying the ‘science of political economy’ – it was ‘the most difficult to master’ – even as it lampooned economists’ ‘tyrannical dogmas’ and ‘abstruse questions’. Such publications, many in existence only fleetingly throughout the turbulent 1840s, targeted the ‘Working Man’ and pledged to effect an ‘ultimate revolution in the whole system of [colonial] political economy, as regards his future destinies in this, the land of his adoption’ (although they outlined few practical programs).¹⁴⁴ They investigated, for example, the ‘causes of the general depression in the labour market’, examining why ‘flockmasters’ could demand labour at the same moment ‘the labouring classes’ could find no work. It was mere sophistry to drive down wages, they explained; ‘wealthy capitalists’ ought to be forced to engage agriculture that would give ‘employment to hundreds of human beings’, rather than speculative sheep-farming, which left colonial resources ‘destitute’.¹⁴⁵ In these columns, then, labouring emigrants, who were products of the textually-mediated world of the imperial ‘labour market’, were made sensitive to the conceptual shifts they were living through. Through such publications, the labouring poor identified readily with the social categories political economy purported to describe. Even as such publications envisaged alternative social arrangements, they naturalised a world in which ‘labour’ was necessarily employed by ‘capital’ for wages.

¹⁴³ Irving, *The Southern Tree of Liberty*, 127-146.

¹⁴⁴ Above quotes from: *Star and Working Man's Guardian*, 2 March 1844, 1; See also: *Sun and Independent Press*, 27 March 1843, 2 *Parramatta Chronicle*, 21 December 1844, 2.

¹⁴⁵ *Sun and Independent Press*, 25 February 1843, 1.

Colonial working class discourse amounted to more than a ‘petit bourgeois’ individualism, as it was once derided.¹⁴⁶ The connections working migrants established in various friendly societies, trade unions and provident associations always sought more than ‘economic’ safeguards, but moral and communal sustenance. Appealing to economic precepts and ‘laws’, however, was necessary in making legitimate claims in response to committee reports and regulations. And this strategy delimited the range of possible arguments and alternative proposals available to ‘labour’, narrowing from a ‘rightful’ claim to land grants in 1835 to adjusting the rate of immigration in 1862. A calculative language did offer some scope for experimentation, such as the right of workers to combine for wages.¹⁴⁷ But, perhaps because of this linguistic context, something like a radical land reform movement never developed in New South Wales as it did in other colonies. Amelioration was determined by the possibilities of the economic rhetoric at their disposal.¹⁴⁸

Such rhetorical appropriation was most evident in the campaigns for self-government and universal franchise in the 1840s and 1850s. Very early in these debates, colonial radicals developed a rhetorical strategy that transposed the categories of Ricardian political economy of ‘Land, Capital and Labour’ onto the tripartite structure of British constitutionalism, ‘Monarchy, Aristocracy, Democracy’, demanding a ‘legitimate and wholesome equilibrium between the constituent interests in the Colony’.¹⁴⁹ As the leader of the Democratic League, James McEachern later wrote: ‘Under a proper and equitable representative system, Labour, Capital and Property would be equally represented’.¹⁵⁰ The same year, the democratic *Empire* attacked Wentworth’s claim that only a hereditary upper chamber in the new legislature would properly represent the colony’s ‘interests’, by which Wentworth meant agricultural and pastoral ‘producers’, by reducing political agency to economic function:

¹⁴⁶ For a classic statement of this view: Humphrey McQueen, *A New Britannia: An Argument Concerning the Social Origins of Australian Radicalism and Nationalism* (Harmondsworth.: Penguin Books, 1970).

¹⁴⁷ *Weekly Register*, 26 August 1843, 57.

¹⁴⁸ Craufurd D. W. Goodwin, *Economic Enquiry in Australia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1966), 88-91.

¹⁴⁹ *Guardian*, 16 March 1844, 1:1

¹⁵⁰ James McEachern, *Manifesto of the Democratic League: “The Question of Questions”* (Sydney: Hawksley and Williamson, 1853), 14.

We claim to be heard within the arena of political economy, which is supposed to treat all such questions philosophically and practically. Does Political Economy warrant the assertion, that none in the community are producers except mere growers? ... Does not, then, the division-of-labour principles, so necessary in every civilized state, annihilate at once the fallacy, that the original growers are the only producers? Does the squatter wish to turn savage, rather than acknowledge that he is as much indebted to the artisan and merchant as these persons are to him? Wherever there is production, whether direct from the Boil, or by handicraft exercised upon that produce, or by mercantile enterprise bringing it to the market, the act of producing creates property for the producer. There is labour, profit, and interest, or rent – as Adam Smith says; and these are all property, and as soon as they amount to anything more than the consumption involved in them, they create capital. Is capital property, or not?

This entanglement of electoral and economic claims and identities might be explained by the prevalence of nineteenth-century British ‘popular constitutionalism’, which James Vernon identified as the protean ‘master narrative’ of British world politics. Constitutionalism was ‘master’, argued Vernon, because it could encompass such a wide range of intellectual and political positions, ‘popular political economy’ among them.¹⁵¹ But there is also an important sense in which constitutionalism was being supplanted by a new set of ‘master’ categories, whereby economic identities were coming to be seen as essential, foundational, and even pre-political. Community was coming to be defined by its ‘system of political economy’ and one needed to begin, as the *Empire* did, in the ‘arena of political economy’ to make claims on the organisation, direction and limits of politics power. As for the squatters in Chapter Five, so too for the working class, where their economic identities, amidst ‘economical phenomena’, was providing a new mode of justification. At this point, then, we begin to observe one of the many ways in which economic categories and an economic domain of life were naturalised by historical actors, from authorities down to migrating labourers. The archive now begins to cease yielding the historical novelty of economic discourse, and the language becomes familiar. We note too,

¹⁵¹ James Vernon, *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture, c. 1815-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 308-310; On popular constitutionalism in the colonial Australian context, see: Paul A. Pickering, “‘The Oak of English Liberty’: Popular Constitutionalism in New South Wales, 1848-1856,” *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 3 no. 1 (April 2001), 1-27.

then, the ways in which a theoretical imagining is made to seem empirical and objective, so politics as optimally or justly managing ‘economical phenomena’ came to be seen as necessary and normal, and the human inventiveness of our own conceptual schemes forgotten.

Conclusion

As matter of imperial design, if not always practice, assisted-migration was intended by colonial authorities to complement the processes of colonial land settlement, calculated so that requisite labour would occupy colonial land as it was increasingly alienated and brought under cultivation. The aim of this chapter has been to show that this reasoning, established through the 1830s in response to the discovery of a ‘redundant’ working population in Britain the previous decade, had consequences far beyond migration itself. Rather, the emergence of such practices of calculation reflected a broader transition in governmental attitudes towards ‘population’, reassessed from a resource of national strength to a dynamic governed by self-regulating laws of supply and demand. Again, the gradual restructuring of governmental knowledge of population by the metaphors of political economy facilitated this change. Here, then, we have examined an inverted set of processes related to the reconstitution of land settlement as a ‘machine’ in Chapter Four; the re-conceptualisation of population as an economic problem.

Fundamental to this new theoretical perspective on population was the constitution of ‘labour’ as a category of government and optimisation. Picking up on aspects discussed in Chapter Three, assisting and governing a mass movement of free people through a constant stream of reports, inquiries, and investigations reified labour as an object of bureaucratic management. The statistical analyses of wage rates and ‘labour demand’ in the colony transformed employment relations from regulating parochial familial relations into a homogenised, commodified form. These developments found their highest expression in the formation of a new governmental object that was represented as readily in committee reports as the commercial columns of newspapers: the ‘labour market’.

The consolidation of economic ‘labour’ as a governable category was not only of importance for government and employers, however, but also for those at whom such analyses

were targeted. Through encounters with this vocabulary in the materials by which assisted-migration was conducted – from application forms to promotional material – labouring migrants were recalibrated as a ‘labouring class’. In appropriating this category for their own political ends in petitions and deputations, working migrants came to self-identify and embody the social categories that political economists had originally purported to describe. In doing so, working migrants also inherited a new kind of political language, mode of argumentation and justification that delimited the kinds of political claims they might make.

By mid-century, this naturalisation of economic categories was occurring in other ways, too. The creation of ‘economic narratives’ by statistical inquiry was not only reconstituting the poor migrant as an economic subject, but reconstituting the entire colony as an assessable, singular economic process. Such enumerated narratives were, in turn, prompting further theoretical reflection that was bringing the iterative process between theory and government full circle, encasing the economic as an essential feature of the imperial and colonial world.

Economic Narratives of New South Wales

In the fifty years which have since elapsed, the progress of New South Wales has been so astonishing, as far as regards the production and accumulation of wealth, as to afford the most remarkable phenomena in colonial history ... No communities have ever advanced so rapidly in economical progress as our Australian settlement for the past fifteen years.

Herman Merivale, *Lectures on Colonization*¹

IF GREGORY KING'S 1688 'SCHEME OF INCOME' REFLECTS THE ABSENCE OF A cognisable and governable 'economic' domain of production and distribution in the late seventeenth century, as discussed in Chapter Two, then a similarly 'ingenious table' published in New South Wales in 1845 illustrates such a domain beginning to consolidate in colonial consciousness by the mid-nineteenth century.² Sold as a coloured leaflet sheet in Sydney, J. Jones' *A Statistical Chart Shewing the Comparative Amounts of the Revenue, Expenditure, Exports, Imports and Land Sales of New South Wales, 1822-1844* graphically depicted the increase and decrease in colonial revenues and expenditure, population, land sales, and the quantity of wool, oil, tallow, and wheat exports in a year-on-year timeline series (**figure 7.1**). The differences between King's and Jones' tables capture the range of transformations charted throughout this study.

King's table, we will recall, was based upon his own estimations, which were arranged for specific political ends: to advise the sovereign in not 'overvaluing their own strength' in wars with the French and the Dutch.³ King, as with all political arithmeticians, presupposed no causal relation between his categories of analysis. Numerical representation was to create

¹ Herman Merivale, *Lecture on Colonies and Colonization: Delivered Before the University of Oxford, 1839, 1840, 1841*, Vol. 1 (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1861), 120.

² This accolade was awarded by the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 April 1845, 2.

³ See the discussion in Chapter Two.

Figure 7.1 J. Jones, *A statistical chart shewing the comparative amounts of the revenue expenditure, exports, imports, and land sales of New South Wales, 1822-1844* (Sydney: W. Coleman & W. Ford, 1845). Broadside chart, 33x41cm, folds to 9x15cm. Reproduction of original from Kress Library of Business and Economics, Harvard University.

and impose social order, nor reveal it. King's categories, in this case, families arranged as 'orders', were not abstracted generalities susceptible to quantitative study, but discrete and concrete entities to be controlled. By contrast, Jones' figures were not his own but drawn from annual statistical returns the colonial government had carried out since 1822. In further contrast to King, Jones supposed these figures could be quantified into a generalisation and were thus presented as indicators of what seemed a singular, integrated process. Unlike King, whose table was accompanied with copious explanatory notes, Jones offered no explanation of why he charted the variables together. The numbers were presumed to speak for themselves.

Jones' chart is of particular significance for it brings together the key processes explored in the preceding chapters: the sale of Crown land as a 'capital fund'; of wool as a marketable commodity;

and of population as proportionally related to capital investment. The presentation of these figures on a progressive time-series is premised on deeper assumptions about European temporality, civilisation, and progress, introduced in Chapter Two and elaborated upon in relation to governing Aboriginal peoples in Chapter Three.⁴ In effect, the chart integrates land settlement, wool growing, and migration as processes with distinct roles to perform as ‘land’, ‘capital’, and ‘labour’ in a system of wealth production and accumulation over time.

Jones’ table does more than reflect the themes of previous chapters, however, but raises two of its own questions which will begin to draw this study to a conclusion. The first regards the status of enumeration and use of number to convey objects of economic knowledge. The second introduces a question about the kinds of broader, expansive narratives that numbers are able to tell. In previous chapters, we have explored the ways specific problems and activities were reclassified as ‘economic’. In this chapter, I want to close this thesis by showing that these processes were also coalescing into narratives about ‘New South Wales’ as a totalised economic entity, geared towards production, accumulation, and ‘prosperity’. Such narratives posited the colony itself as an object of economic knowledge and thus the target of a new kind of politics, which, as we shall see, was one drawn along the lines of Free Trade and Protection. In turn, these narratives not only animated colonial politics, but were fed back into theorising political economy, helping consolidate the truthfulness of the ‘theory’ from which the processes of economisation had first sprang. In these two respects, politics and theory, a focus on the economic narratives of New South Wales returns us to the original, interlinked questions with which this thesis began: how should we think about the political legacies of the colonial project in New South Wales, and how was an economic domain made stable, durable, and real?

Numbers have permeated this thesis. They have calculated the expense, value, and productivity of convicts as in Chapter Three, illustrated the self-regulating relationship between land

⁴ Jones’ chart, as far as we know, is one of the earliest examples of such a series. See: Daniele Besomi, “The Great Depression of 1873-1896 and Price Fluctuations: British Forerunners of the Long Waves Perspective,” in *Including a Symposium on Austrian Economics in the Postwar Era*, (Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2016), 247-92.

sales and population as in Chapter Four, served to compartmentalise woolgrowers into productive enterprises as in Chapter Five, and constituted a ‘labour market’ through the immigration returns of the CLEC in Chapter Six. But while numbers helped make certain phenomena economically calculable, enumeration itself was not the same as economisation. As King’s ‘Scheme’ reminds us, projects in governmental counting and numerical representation have historically been made to do different kinds of political and intellectual work, quite distinct from what we assume ‘statistics’ to mean today. Both the idea that numerical representation presents an objective, unmediated picture of the social world, and that this representation could be interpreted in terms of ‘economic facts’ had still to engage the interventions of both theorists and government. By reviewing techniques of imperial and colonial government counting in early New South Wales, in particular the colonial ‘Blue Books’ from 1822, the first part of this chapter explores this changing relationship between number, theory, and government that constituted new objects of knowledge and new targets of political contestation.

In this sense, Jones’ chart posed as much a problem as a resolution to the questions of number and narratives. His chart was clearly an amalgam of intersecting economic phenomena as mapped out in previous chapters, but for reasons that will become apparent below, his contemporaries did not discern what exactly was being represented.⁵ The *Sydney Morning Herald* saw in the table ‘an index of the aggregate income and expenditure of the colony’ and was pleased to find affirmed in such figures a positive balance of trade as exports exceeded imports. Equally, however, the *Commercial Journal and General Advertiser* found that material in Jones’ chart that refuted ‘the common theory to the balance of trade’ as an ‘erroneous’ dogma of the ‘mercantile school’. Rather, the *Advertiser* ‘agreed with McCulloch and other economists that the ‘very reverse of that theory is true’. Commerce was not to be carried on to exert political advantage, but to create ‘reciprocal and equal advantage’ between trading nations. So while Jones’ chart encouraged reflection on political or economic

⁵ The chart was clearly a novelty. Although providing no advice on how to interpret the chart, Jones was careful to include instructions on reading the coloured lines with the ‘detailed statement ... immediately above it’.

principles, it did not necessarily convey an indisputable 'economic narrative' about New South Wales.

It was, nevertheless, clearly possible to use government-produced statistics to construct such economic narratives about the colony. A few years prior to Jones, Herman Merivale used a much smaller array of numbers to reify a story of unrivalled economic progress. But while it was possible for political economists and journalists to draw upon government statistics to create their own 'economic' narratives of New South Wales, these remained unauthorised interpretations, narratives that did not necessarily 'hold', as the inconclusive readings of Jones' chart reflected. The contrast between Merivale and Jones suggests both the possibility, but also the indeterminacy, of what official number 'said' about New South Wales.

While government statistics could be utilised to create new intellectual artefacts about land, wool, and an emigrant's wage, distilling a more general interpretation of what these numbers 'said' required both an organising concept and authorising statement to give them validity and significance. Finding this authority occupies the first part of this chapter, which traces the transformation of governmental counting from a practice of surveillance and transparency to creating generalisations about long term projections. By mid-century, bureaucrats were arranging colonial statistics around a concept of 'economical progress' that was concomitantly shaping the limits of political imagination, as increasingly defined by the conflict between Free Trade and Protection. While these two outlooks amounted to more than arguments about tariffs, we are reminded in this context they were also fundamentally rival approaches to governing a world of economic phenomena. In this sense, the emergence of new rival languages also marked the naturalisation of the 'economic' as a domain of political contest and knowledge. This contest thus marks one endpoint of this study.

Merivale's totalising narrative about the 'economical progress' of New South Wales also draws attention to two further endpoints to this thesis. Merivale, writing as a political economist, was clearly using 'economic' categories to analyse the colony, but he also saw New South Wales as affording 'the most remarkable' example of economical 'phenomena'. In Merivale's passage we detect, then, something of a feedback loop between New South Wales and political economy, wherein

New South Wales was increasingly looked upon by political economists as evidence of proving rather than simply testing theory. This question of feedback leads, in turn, to a consideration of William Hearn's *Plutology* (1863), long considered the first economic treatise written in Australia. Hearn's appointment as Professor of Political Economy at the University of Melbourne and which marks the institutionalisation of economic knowledge in colonial Australia. But is also marks a drift from 'classical' to 'neoclassical' economics, registering economic knowledge beginning a second sequence of looping, engendering a new phase of performances of political economy in antipodes and thus marking the terminus of this study.

Statistics and the Politics of 'Economical Arrangements'

From the outset, colonial New South Wales was, seemingly, one of the most enumerated places on Earth. The first governors were instructed to send back to Britain regular musters of the convict population and returns on land grants, livestock, and commissariat expenses. As we have seen in previous chapters, this later developed with the counting of indigenous populations, land occupation, wool production, immigration flows, and wages statistics, and the creation of official charts and indices that tabulated some of these variables against each other. Magistrates and missionaries, immigration agents, Crown Land Commissioners, surveyors, and customs officials were all involved in collection and collation. More comprehensive modes of information gathering were also being developed. The annual 'Blue Books' the Colonial Office demanded data from all settler colonial governors after 1822, which local authorities assembled as a 'Statistical Return' in turn published in the New South Wales Legislative Council papers after 1841. The first census was carried out in 1828, and again in 1833, 1836, 1841, 1846, 1851, 1856, and 1861, after which the practice was made every ten years.⁶ What was the purpose of all this counting, why did it proliferate, and what did it mean? To begin with, it had very little to do with economic knowledge.

⁶ For an overview of these developments, see: Colin Forster, "Australian Official Statistics, 1788-1850", *Working Papers in Economic History*, no. 33 (Canberra: Australian National University, 1985); J. C. R. Camm, *The Early Nineteenth Century Colonial Censuses of Australia* (Bundoora: Australian Reference Publications, 1988).

A generation of scholarship by historians and social theorists has revolutionised how we understand the history and significance of statistics.⁷ Noting the veritable ‘avalanche of printed number’ produced by European and colonial governments from the beginning of the nineteenth century, this scholarship has asked ‘who’ and ‘what’ was being counted in this state counting.⁸ Dispensing with old, common sense assumptions that statistics provided an unmediated, objective account of the social world, or were purely coercive techniques of state surveillance, scholars have come to understand official statistic-making as a creative process, including, most fundamentally the constitution of the modern state itself. Much attention, including among Australian scholars, has been given to the politics of the census, with its capacity, for example, to count women out of the workforce or count Aboriginal peoples out of existence.⁹ These practices did not so much reveal as constitute populations as governable entities by creating generalised categories, many of which became normalised social identities.¹⁰ Governmental enumeration was, then, never just a representation of

⁷ Donald A. MacKenzie, *Statistics in Britain, 1865-1930: The Social Construction of Scientific Knowledge* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981); Patricia Cline Cohen, *A Calculating People: The Spread of Numeracy in Early America* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1982); Theodore M. Porter, *The Rise of Statistical Thinking, 1820-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Silvana Patriarca, *Numbers and Nationhood: Writing Statistics in Nineteenth-Century Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Alain Desrosières, *The Politics of Large Numbers: A History of Statistical Reasoning* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Kathin Levitan, *A Cultural History of the British Census: Envisioning the Multitude in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Tom Crook and Glen O’Hara (eds.), *Statistics and the Public Sphere: Numbers and the People in Modern Britain, C. 1800-2000* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

⁸ Ian Hacking, “Biopower and the Avalanche of Printed Number”, *Humanities in Society* 5 (1982): 279-95.

⁹ Desley Deacon, “Political Arithmetic: The Nineteenth-Century Australian Census and the Construction of the Dependent Woman,” *Signs* 11, no. 1 (October 1, 1985): 27-47; Rob Watts, “Making Numbers Count: The Birth of the Census and Racial Government in Victoria, 1835-1840,” *Australian Historical Studies* 34, no. 121 (April 1, 2003): 26-47. On the early colonial census and musters see: Alastair Davidson, *The Invisible State: The Formation of the Australian State* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 38-40, 47, 215-17. For an alternative colonial perspective, see: Bruce Curtis, *The Politics of Population: State Formation, Statistics, and the Census of Canada, 1840-1875* (University of Toronto Press, 2002).

¹⁰ Ian Hacking, “How Should We Do the History of Statistics?” in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (eds.) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 181-196. Much of this counting was aimed at regulating social deviancy – in suicide, crime, vagrancy, madness, prostitution, and diseases – enchanting a newfound belief that these newly created subpopulations could be improved, controlled and regulated; the ‘taming of chance’, as Ian Hacking called it. Hacking, *The Taming of Chance*, 3.

pre-existing ‘social facts’, but practices that made things ‘hold together’ in new and purposeful ways, creating objects of knowledge and governance.¹¹

For number to do this kind of constructive work, however, required a transformation in the epistemological status of numerical representations. It required theoreticians and government coming to believe that statistics had an objective, value-free capacity to convey social reality. We have seen, reading Wentworth’s 1819 *Statistical, Historical and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales* in Chapter One, that the term ‘statistics’ only acquired its present, narrow meaning of numerical information in the late 1820s.¹² Prior to this, statistics referred to a broad, synthetic, descriptive account of a state. Enumeration and counting, on the other hand, was associated with the tradition of King’s political arithmetic, which as we saw in Chapter Two is best understood as an ambitious art of government by demographic manipulation that was considered to impose order, not reveal it. Number, and the practice of counting, therefore had its own distinct political as well as theological connotations.¹³ The idea numerical representation offered an objective, pre-interpretive account of reality or ‘data’ had to be invented, and it was only on these terms that a great enumeration of things could begin.

When official statistics began to proliferate in Britain in the 1820s, there was still a deep suspicion of governmental counting, which was a symptom of an older association between being counted and government excess or tyranny.¹⁴ The government’s first attempt to conduct a census in 1753 was blocked as an attack on ‘liberty’. Landed elites feared being counted officially would enable government to impose taxes, encroach local privileges, and level the ‘natural’ hierarchy of social

¹¹ Alain Desrosières, “How to Make Things Which Hold Together: Social Science, Statistics and the State,” in Peter Wagner, Björn Wittrock, Richard Whitley (eds.), *Discourses on Society: The Shaping of the Social Science Disciplines* (Dordrecht: Springer, 1990), 195-218: Statistical facts, writes Desrosières, ‘have at the same time *been constructed* and yet once constructed have sufficient *existence* that none can deny them’, 195. See also: Desrosières, *The Politics of Large Numbers*, 9-12.

¹² Porter, *The Rise of Statistical Thinking*, 19-21. In clear distinction from how Wentworth used the term, by 1829 Bisset Hawkins could define medical statistics as ‘the application of numbers to illustrate the natural history of man in health and disease’. Quoted in Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 308-9.

¹³ These dimensions have been covered in Poovey, *Modern Fact*, 264-306.

¹⁴ Hacking, *Taming of Chance*, 20.

distinctions. Attempts to create a General Register failed five years later for similar reasons.¹⁵ Only in the second half of the eighteenth century did social enumeration begin to be construed with less hostility. Non-conformists such as Richard Price argued number could, inversely, be used to check the activity of government, safeguarding liberties rather than threatening them. Dissenters carried out their own forms of political arithmetic to attack government corruption and its influence on English life.¹⁶ Subsequently, and in the face of ongoing attacks of ‘Old Corruption’, by the last decades of the eighteenth century, government too began treating enumeration as a technique to express itself as publicly transparent.¹⁷ In conjunction with the commission and select committee, counting was accepted as a tool enabling ministers to act responsibly, for bureaucracies to act effectively, and for government to purge itself of corrupt expenditure and proclaim they were governing ‘scientifically’ and not ‘legislating in the dark’.¹⁸ In contrast to the resistance fifty years earlier, Britain held its first census in 1801, almost unopposed. The Board of Trade established a statistical department in 1832 and a Register General five years later to count births, deaths and marriages.¹⁹

In the colony, official counting reflected both these assumptions about what governmental enumeration could do in terms of both transparency and control. The returns on population, livestock, expenditure, and salaries were clearly designed to monitor costs, part of the imperial government’s hypersensitivity to charges of financial corruption from its domestic critics. The detail of these returns was increased and regularised from 1822 when all colonial governors across the British Empire were instructed to complete an annual return on standardised forms provided by the Colonial Office. As Zoe Laidlaw has shown, the ostensible functions of these colonial ‘Blue Books’, as they were known, was to give an accurate sense of imperial expenditure, particularly the extent and salaries of civil and

¹⁵ Levitan, *A Cultural History of the British Census*, 16-17; David Victor Glass, *Numbering the People: The Eighteenth-Century Population Controversy and the Development of Census and Vital Statistics in Britain* (Farnborough: D. C. Heath, 1973).

¹⁶ Peter Buck, “People Who Counted: Political Arithmetic in the Eighteenth Century,” *Isis* 73, no. 1 (1982): 28-45.

¹⁷ See Chapter Two.

¹⁸ Poovey, *History of the Modern Fact*, 317.

¹⁹ Adam Tooze, *Statistics and the German State: The Making of Modern Economic Knowledge*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 2.

military offices in the colonies.²⁰ A 1817 parliamentary account of colonial officers had revealed the paucity of Colonial Office records, finding £100,000 worth of annual unregulated colonial sinecures.²¹ From 1819, colonial officers were instructed to return almanacs on appointments and their salaries in an attempt to curb absentee office-holders.²² The Blue Books formalised this reporting.

In addition to the search for such transparency, enumeration also reflected an extension of the colonial surveillance in the aftermath of American Independence. This process had already begun in imperial India, Ireland, and also provincial Britain.²³ Bigge's Commission of Inquiry to New South Wales and his subsequent Commission of Eastern Inquiry to Cape Colony, Mauritius, and Ceylon were part of an 'information revolution' in which information collection served as a method of centralised control.²⁴ As much as they were practices in transparency, then, the enumeration of colonies also reflected a residue in imperial thinking that counting could impose order. According to Laidlaw, local authorities were 'aware' of this dual purpose of counting 'that the metropolitan government was observing them, and of the importance now placed on the appearance of probity even beyond Britain's shores'.²⁵

The Blue Books embodied this dual purpose. The history of their colonial uses reflects that counting required a special kind of organisation, interpretation, and authority to convert numbers into

²⁰ Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections*, 171. In 1830, Governor Darling was corrected to call them 'Blue Books' after he referred to them as 'Crown Books'. Hay to Darling, 11 April 1830, *HRA* 1:15, 411.

²¹ "Account of Offices held under Crown in Colonies", *BPP* 1817 xvii (129); Phillip Harling, *The Waning of Old Corruption: The Politics of Economical Reform in Britain 1779-1846* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 154-60; Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections*, 170-1.

²² On the theme of purging 'Old Corruption', Laidlaw adds: 'From 1823 to 1835 returns listing absentee colonial office-holders were demanded by parliament, until and 1835 inquiry reported that of 71 colonial offices executed by deputies in 1812, 24 had been abolished and 30 remodeled, while 1 was vacant and only 4 were held by non-residents. The remaining 12 sinecures were so insignificant they were not even recorded, indicating the campaign of reduction's determined nature'. *Colonial Connections*, 171. On colonies and Old Corruption generally, see: *ibid.*, 3-4, 41-2, 52-3, 65, 95.

²³ C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); On provincial surveillance, see: David Eastwood, "'Amplifying the Province of the Legislature': The Flow of Information and the English State in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Historical Research* 62, no. 149 (October 1, 1989): 276-94.

²⁴ Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections*, Chapter Seven; Zoe Laidlaw, "Investigating Empire: Humanitarians, Reform and the Commission of Eastern Inquiry", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40, no. 5 (2012): 749-768.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 171.

governable, economic knowledge. The original format of the Blue Books covered revenue and expenditure, a schedule of taxes, duties and fees, and lists of civil and military establishments. Exports, imports and currency were soon added, as were geographical and topological subjects in 1827. Within five years, these 'Blue Books', returned by all governors in Britain's colonies, were considered 'essential' by metropolitan government.²⁶ From 1826, governors were also requested to supply a report or explanatory 'commentary' which were considered more useful by the Colonial Office than the returns. Without the report, Goderich observed, the returns would be of 'much less practical utility'.²⁷

There was, however, an indeterminacy to what these numbers 'meant'. Despite the premium put on their collection, much of this information was never used by London. The returns were not tabled to Parliament until the early 1840s, they were not printed, and while the Colonial Office struggled with persistently late and incomplete returns from most colonies, including from New South Wales, the use of standardised forms did not help colonial authorities. The categories on the original population form sent to all colonies, for example, tabulated 'whites', 'free blacks', and 'slaves'.²⁸ Little was done in the way of comparative analysis, either by colonies comparing their own year-on-year returns as they only retained copies after 1836, or between colonies.²⁹ In 1837, a House of Commons Select Committee on Colonial Accounts and Expenditure found that while the regularity and accuracy of the returns had improved over the past decade, they were not audited either in the colonies or in Britain.³⁰ Laidlaw notes most witnesses to the select committee had 'a limited conception of the possible uses of colonial information'. Rather, 'the mere collection of numerical information was seen as a powerful means of control for the imperial government'.³¹ The responses

²⁶ CO 854/1, fo. 253, 1 January 1827.

²⁷ CO 324/105, fo 64, circular, 15 February 1831.

²⁸ Of which complaints were made in New South Wales: McLeay to Darling, 23 February 1831, *HRA* 1:16, 99. There was a constant stream of reminders, rebukes and explanations for late returns; Murray to Darling, 6 June 1828, *HRA* 1:14, 222; Hay to Darling, 30 November 1830, *HRA* 1:15, 821; Stanley to Bourke, 20 August 1833, *HRA* 1:17, 195. Hay sends blank copies to avert delay: Hay to Bourke, 20 August 1833, *HRA* 1:17, 195. Russell to Gipps, 23 March 1840, *HRA* 1:20, 579; Gipps to Russell, 10 August 1840, *HRA* 1:20, 753-4.

²⁹ Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections*, 173.

³⁰ Evidence, Peter Smith, 1 June 1837, in "Report from the Select Committee on the Accounts of Colonial Receipt and Expenditure", *BPP 1837* vii (516), 40, 44.

³¹ Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections*, 179-184.

of Phillip Souper, who had filled numerous positions in Trinidad, were typical. He simply thought the blue books ‘as complete a document as you can well have; it contains every information.’³²

In colonies, there were both negative and positive associations with this counting. Not unlike eighteenth-century landed gentlemen hostile to the census, elites in some colonies harboured concerns that this information gathering threatened their autonomy and impeded the ‘liberties’ of local government.³³ This appears to have been of less a concern in New South Wales, where the governor retained unrivalled authority into the 1830s. But these regularised practices of data collection also reorganised colonial bureaucratic life. New administrative headaches emerged but also the possibility of creating new objects of knowledge. If the practical uses of the Blue Books were not apparent to authorities in London, they did encourage colonial bureaucrats to experiment with modes of numerically representing the colony.

While authorities in New South Wales had been accustomed to submitting returns since earliest settlement, the Blue Books demanded organisational, communicative, and administrative practices for which local officers were not equipped. Almost every return was late for the first decade, sometimes by up to two years.³⁴ There was initial confusion over who was responsible for compiling the book (it was the Colonial Secretary) and then a constant struggle to get the various returns on time from the district magistrates, Crown Land Commissioners, and department heads.³⁵ As late as 1842, the Colonial Secretary Edward Deas Thomson still complained it was ‘perfectly impossible’ to complete the Blue Books to order, even with four clerks working full time.³⁶ The surviving archival records used to compile the Blue Books in New South Wales are littered with checklists and reminders of returns not received from various districts.³⁷ Returns were also constantly marred with mistakes.

³² Evidence, P.D. Souper, 19 June 1837, *BPP* 1837 vii (516), 109;

³³ Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections*, 182-83.

³⁴ For an overview of the difficulties, see: Forster, “Australian Official Statistics”, 10-23.

³⁵ Macleay to Darling, in Darling to Durray, 7 July 1829, *HRA* 1:15, 69-70.

³⁶ Gipps to Stanley, 17 December 1842, *HRA*, 1:22, 434. He had been reminded two years prior, as per Colonial Office regulations, the first quarter of his year’s salary would be suspended if the book were late, a penalty Thomson quickly reminded his subordinates they in turn also faced. Russell to Gipps, 23 March 1840, *HRA* 1:20, 579; SANSW, Returns of the Colony, NRS 1287, Miscellaneous Papers Used to Compile Statistical Returns. [4/7582.5], Colonial Secretary to Superintendent at Port Phillip, 7 December 1840.

³⁷ See at length: SANSW: NRS 1287, 4/7582.5; and, SANSW, Colonial Secretary, NRS 906, Colonial Secretary’s Special Bundles, [4/722.2], “Blue Books, Preparation and Returns”.

The 1828 Blue Book, for example, recorded more hospital patients for the year than the colony's entire population.³⁸ The agricultural returns were especially pernicious. District returns were collected by constables and collated by magistrates, who often soon followed with letters of apology for an error having 'crept in' by a collector placing a figure in the wrong column, for 'clerical oversight' or that only 'estimates' could be afforded.³⁹ Colonial authorities treated the agricultural data with great caution even into the 1860s.⁴⁰

Despite such difficulties, from these practices emerged the beginnings of representing the colony as a single, knowable entity. Unsurprisingly, the mass of material in the Colonial Secretary's archival records for compiling the returns relate mostly to civil lists of salaries and abstracts of revenue and expenditure. From the outset these included year-on-year statements that explained the 'causes of increase or decrease', closely scrutinised by Treasury.⁴¹ There were also year-on-year comparative statements on imports and exports, and land sales, livestock, and productions. By the mid-1830s, Thomson, by his own initiative, was filling out his Blue Books with 'additional contents' for each category, experimenting with tables that gave an accumulative account of each field for the previous ten years (**figure 7.2**).⁴² These provided the basis for a new government artefact. While abstracts of revenue and expenditure had been printed in the Legislative Council papers from 1831, as were intermittent trade and immigration numbers, from 1842 the council papers also included a

³⁸ Murray to Darling, 9 April 1830, *HRA* 1:15, 406-7.

³⁹ For example, see: SANSW, NRS 1287, [4-7258.5], Magistrate at Dungong to Colonial Secretary, 23 June 1852; SANSW, NRS 906 [4-7488], Port Phillip Superintendent's Office to Colonial Secretary, 23 April 1844. A magistrate at Murrurundi complained that 'parties' in his district had sent their returns both to him and Tamworth, making it impossible to obtain the necessary information'. SANSW, NRS 906 [4-722.2], Magistrate at Murrurundi to Colonial Secretary,

⁴⁰ See Gipps Annual Report: "Report to accompany the Blue Book of the Colony, for the year ending the 30th Sept., 1842", in Gipps to Stanley, 17 December 1842, *HRA* 1:22, 430. Chris Rolleston, the colonial Registrar General wrote in his 1860 report: "It is much to be regretted that information of so much importance (agriculture)...should be left to the causal and unchecked collection of the constabulary....It would be a mere waste of time to entre upon an analysis of figures in which no one believes." "Statistical Register of NSW, 1850 to 1859", *V&P LANSW 1860*, 8.

⁴¹ SANSW: NRS 1287 [4-7528.1]; For example, SANSW: NRS 906 [4/1881.1], Return of Departmental Officers, 1851.

⁴² See for example, "Blue Book of Statistics for 1835", CO 206/75 [Reel 1171].

Figure 7.2 "Blue Book of Statistical for 1835", in CO 206/75, page 200.

more complete 'Statistical Return' that provided a decennial account of each category. The practice forged a permanent, accumulative official memory of colonial administration.⁴³

The written commentaries governors were required to supply with the Blue Books did provide scope to give an authoritative interpretation of these numbers. However, the governors were just as lax in returning such reports as the Colonial Secretary was getting to almanac in on time. When Gipps was reprimanded for failing to submit a report in 1839, he was careful to do so the following

⁴³ In 1846, Thomson forwarded to the Secretary of State 'A Comprehensive View in a Tabular Form of the Statistics of New South Wales', which on a single sheet detailed all the head of the blue books from 1836 to 1844. See: Drafts and final version in SANSW, NRS 1287, [4-6288]; Gipps to Stanley, 14 January 1846, HRA 1:24, 707.

year.⁴⁴ However, either ignoring or unaware of the instructions on how to organise these reports, he took the liberty to arrange this 1840 report as he pleased.⁴⁵ The result, remarkably, was something close to Merivale's account of the colony made in his *Lectures* the same year. Under the heading, 'Private and Public Wealth', Gipps reported:

No new Community (unaided by the accidents of War) has perhaps ever made such rapid progress in private and public wealth as the Colony of New South Wales. That this has been mainly the effect of Convict Labour is hardly to be disputed; but something is also owing to the Climate and accessible nature of the Country, there being perhaps no part of the world, in which valuable produce and in particular wool can be obtained at so small an outlay of Capital and Labour as in New South Wales.⁴⁶

By framing the colonial 'Community' as constituted by its 'outlay of Capital and Labour', measured by its 'progress ... in wealth', Gipps' report indicated the possibility of utilising number for something other than transparency and control, but a coherent economic narrative of New South Wales. Even so, Lord Stanley, a stickler for process, found the report unacceptable given Gipps' departure for instructions on how the report was to be formed, which directed numbers should be simply described under the same heads by which the Blue Books were organised.⁴⁷ Having suffered successive censures, Gipps, and his successor Fitz-Roy, thereafter submitted reports that did just this. While these reports included separate statements on whether there had been an annual increase or decrease in imports and exports, wool production, agriculture, and manufactories and mills, they included no integrated statement of the investment, production, and accumulated wealth of the colony as Gipps

⁴⁴ Russell to Gipps, 10 August 1841, *HRA* 1:21, 316.

⁴⁵ "Report of the General State of the Colony" in Gipps to Russell, 14 September 1841, *HRA* 1:21, 507-511. These headings were: Constitution and Form of Government; Executive Authority; Administration and Justice; Departments of Government; Ecclesiastical Establishment; Education; Moral and Social condition of the people; Public and Private Wealth; Immigration; Harbours; Finances and Taxation.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 510.

⁴⁷ Stanley to Gipps, 5 May 1842, *HRA* 1:22, 36; 31 May 1842, *HRA* 1:22, 98.

had done in 1840.⁴⁸ On Stanley's instructions, the colony's official numbers thus continued to be presented publicly as an unshaped mass.

On the balance of things, then, by mid-century colonial government number appeared to present greater difficulties than benefits. Despite his experimentation, Thomson clearly found the entire exercise a chore, and complained so in the Legislative Council.⁴⁹ By the 1840s, the Blue Books were publicly available and could be used in political debate. Amateurs such as Jones could arrange the material that readily translated to colonial readers into a narrative of progress, this data could also launch 'economic' arguments on issues such as anti-transportation, discussed in Chapter Three, or liens on wool discussed in Chapter Five. But these uses remained fragmentary and unauthorised interpretations of official numbers. In the absence of an official interpretative framework, the yearly accumulation of colonial number reflected an increasingly burdensome excess, both for its compilers and the public. As late as 1848, the *Sydney Morning Herald* welcomed the latest edition as such:

We have now in our possession many of those clumsy volumes known as blue books, this name being, given them for two reasons, first because they are stitched in blue covers; and secondly and cardinally, because the very sight of them gives one the blue devils. These productions illustrate the prevailing mania of this practical age for statistical information, without much regard to its use or necessity.⁵⁰

The *Herald's* critique reflected a broader struggle in early-Victorian intellectual life over the meaning and purpose of this 'avalanche' of number, whose history we now need to intersect to understand how the colony escaped this quandary.

While colonial authorities struggled with its enumerating responsibilities, statistics had risen to prominence in Britain as a 'science' in the 1830s when the newly formed British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) begrudgingly included a statistical section. This was

⁴⁸ For example, see: Report for 1842 in *HRA* 1:22, 414-434; Report for 1843 in *HRA* 1:23, 324-331; Report for 1844 in *HRA* 1:24, 331-341; Report for 1845 in *HRA* 1:25, 45-55; Report for 1846 in *HRA* 1:25, 594-600; Report for 1847 in *HRA* 1:26, 421-426.

⁴⁹ *Examiner*, 9 August 1845, 3.

⁵⁰ *SMH*, 20 January 1848, 2.

‘begrudging’ given numbers’ long association with politics, rather than ‘science’. This attempt to sanitise number as ‘scientific’ moved enumeration on from its politicised function of control and transparency, but what form it was to take was a matter for debate. While political economists such as J.R. McCulloch held that statistics were merely ‘raw material’ for the use of deductive inquiry, others, following the ideas of Continental statist Adolphe Quetelet, believed sufficient collection of such ‘material’ could eventually develop a holistic and *inductive* account of the ‘social economy’ that would supplant deductive political economy as a source of knowledge.⁵¹ Both views were eagerly satirised, such as in Dickens’ *Hard Times*, but also faced stern philosophical rebuke as being morally determinative, and epistemologically unsound. ‘Facts’ and ‘theories’ could never be separated, one contributor to the *London and Westminster Review* wrote, as the latter always informed the collection of the former.⁵²

Historian Mary Poovey has noted that these tensions have never been resolved, ‘because from a philosophical perspective they were unsolvable’.⁵³ But as Poovey also noted, statistics simply proved too useful for the controversy to ‘make much of a dent’ to its deployment by an expanding bureaucratic statehood.⁵⁴ For the debates had helped to transfigure the idea of number as ‘raw material’, even as practitioners debated what this number ought to be plugged into deductive models, or inductively synthesise the entire social structure. While government statistical departments were populated with bureaucrats who adhered to the latter view, such as William Farr at the General

⁵¹ For an account of this dispute, see: Lawrence Goldman, “The Origins of British ‘Social Science’: Political Economy, Natural Science and Statistics, 1830-1835,” *The Historical Journal* 26, no. 3 (1983): 587-616.

⁵² For a broad perspective on the controversy and suspicion towards statistics generally throughout this period, see: Tom Crook, “Suspect Figures: Statistics and Public Trust in Victorian England”, in *Statistics and the Public Sphere*, 165-184. For an example of Dickens satire of the statistical societies, Poovey points to: “Full Report from the First Meeting of the Mudfog Association for the Advancement of Everything”, *Bentley’s Miscellany* 2 (1837): 397-413. For the philosophical debates, see: Mary Poovey, “Figures of Arithmetic, Figures of Speech: The Discourse of Statistics in the 1830s” *Critical Inquiry* 19, no. 2 (Winter 1993): 256-276.

⁵³ Poovey, *History of the Modern Fact*, 317.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 316-17. Poovey adds that ‘by 1834, when the New Poor Law was passed, the machinery of government in Britain was indissolubly tied to the collection of numerical information, even though the methodological problems that persisted’. Under George Porter, the Board of Trade created a statistical department in 1832.

Registry Office, for politicians and commissioners, it was more important that statistics could increasingly ‘objectify’ their targets of intervention and justify and rationalise their actions.⁵⁵

In Britain, this governmental use of statistics as value-free ‘facts’ was pioneered in the workings of the New Poor Law after 1834. Briefly recounting the use of number by the Poor Law Commission helps contrast why government enumeration remained so ambiguous in colonies. Under the Act, governmental enumeration was transformed from an instrument of transparency and control, to a technique for creating, visualising, investigating and intervening into a discrete problem of ‘pauperism’ that could be treated uniformly, efficiently, disinterestedly, and above all, rationally. The Act had replaced 15,000 distinct, parochial and relatively independent poor-law authorities with 600 boards designed to collectively aggregate a standardised account of national pauperism involving the number, cost, and duration of those in poor houses. The Poor Law Commission, later Board, collated, and presented these statistics in annual reports that gave a general account – a narrative – of British pauperism. Through a process of category making and counting, the Commission could show the New Poor Law to have real impact on an enduring but improvable ‘problem’. In an anonymous 1836 review of the Commission’s publications in the *Edinburgh Review*, the secretary of the Commission, Edwin Chadwick, reiterated the merits of the New Poor Law in effecting ‘the progress of pauperism’ by presenting three tables that documented its ‘almost magical’ results. The first demonstrated a dramatic decrease in the number of paupers in the four unions of Kent. The second and third tables showed the savings the Act had achieved (**figure 7.3**).⁵⁶ In a sense, the Poor Law Commission’s numbers reflected both Quetelet’s idea that inductive collation could reveal social trends (here, the rates of pauperism) but also McCulloch’s idea that the utility of numbers lay in their application to deductive reasoning, as brief analysis of the Commissioners’ reports in Chapter Two indicated. But most significantly, the Poor Law Commission’s use of statistics highlighted the new relationship

⁵⁵ On the role of ‘statists’ proliferating the use of statistics, see: Lawrence Goldman, “Statistics and the Science of Society in Early Victorian Britain; An Intellectual Context for the General register Office”, *The Society for the Social History of Medicine* (1991): 415-434.

⁵⁶ “Extracts received from the information received by his Majesty’s Commissioners as to the administration and operation of the Poor Law”, *Edinburgh Review* 63, no. 128 (July, 1836): 487-537; For a discussion, see: Mary Poovey, *Making A Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830-1864* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 106-117.

between number, knowledge, authority, and narrative we are tracing in this chapter. Even as a putative division of labour between ‘facts’, ‘theory’ and ‘government’ was emerging in the early nineteenth century, in reality, the statistic, as a unit of knowledge, embodied all three. ‘Pauperism’ was thus reified by both inductive and deductive methods of statistical inquiry, but its unity, ultimately relied on an authorised speaker, a commissioner, to give it coherence and gravity.

COUNTIES.	No. of Unions.	Number of Paupers Relieved.			Workhouses.			Quarter's Expenditure up to 25th March last.	Estimated Annual Expenditure under the New Law.	Average Annual Expenditure previous to the formation of the Unions.	Saving on the Average Annual Expenditure.	Rate per cent of Saving.
		Indoor.	Outdoor.	Total.	Old.	New.	Room for					
Buckingham,	5	514	6,421	6,935	14	2	1,385	9,118	36,669	79,758	43,089	54
Berks,	11	923	7,555	8,478	22	6	4,142	17,687	63,649	128,434	64,785	51
Kent,	21	2,597	20,416	23,813	51	14	10,104	28,891	118,292	241,726	123,434	51
Oxford,	4	139	5,343	5,482	8	4	1,650	7,158	33,577	70,687	37,110	50
Bedford,	6	682	5,792	6,474	18	6	2,575	9,492	42,427	83,532	41,105	49
Cambridge,	4	186	3,927	4,113	4	2	420	6,039	23,006	45,032	22,026	49
Dorset,	9	326	4,862	5,188	4	4	1,290	6,508	27,262	53,372	26,110	48
Worcester,	2	65	1,750	1,821	2		100	1,826	7,304	13,628	6,324	46
Sussex,	18	2,199	10,022	12,221	52	4	5,440	27,223	110,102	198,639	88,537	44½
Wilts,	15	1,003	14,872	15,875	22	6	3,601	17,041	78,089	139,917	61,828	44
Middlesex,	1	133	318	451	2		150	1,263	4,920	8,568	3,648	42½
Essex,	12	1,138	10,404	11,542	61	3	3,589	21,742	94,179	162,164	67,985	42
Northampton,	10	319	9,906	10,225	21	6	2,181	11,535	60,829	104,927	44,098	42
Suffolk,	12	1,423	13,572	14,995	57	3	5,718	24,909	123,236	205,571	82,335	40
Somerset,	3		4,326	4,326		2	140	3,424	22,866	38,279	15,413	40
Herts,	10	1,464	4,634	6,098	26	3	2,745	12,663	50,654	84,480	33,826	40
Hants,	22	1,623	14,181	15,804	42	7	4,780	28,824	93,997	151,484	57,487	38
Lincoln,	4	610	2,152	2,762	18	3	1,836	4,940	23,539	36,422	12,883	35
Gloucester,	6	579	3,093	3,762	11		990	5,511	22,046	32,699	10,653	32
Norfolk,	5	51	6,576	6,627		5	1,505	11,211	36,844	53,124	16,280	31
Leicester,	2	64	2,413	2,474	2		230	2,528	16,736	21,676	4,940	23
Devon,	5	15	1,888	5,564	8	2	625	4,798	42,832	52,980	10,148	19
Totals,	187	16,053	154,423	175,030	445	82	55,196	264,331	1,133,055	2,007,199	874,044	43½

Figure 7.3: “Results of the measure in the unions of the several counties which have come into tolerably complete operation”, in *Edinburgh Review* 63, no. 128 (July, 1836): 487-507.

The enumerating work of the Poor Law Commission can be related to the creative work done by the Colonial Land and Emigration Commission in collating imperial wage rates and labour demand. It also highlights the epistemic potential but governable impotence of the colonial Blue Books as they continued to be conceived by the Colonial Office and governors into the 1840s. While creating a host of ‘interpretive artefacts’ relating to trade, land and wool production which could be used to illustrate economic narratives of these problems, in the absence of an *authorising*, organising interpretation, the broader trend or generalisation conveyed by the Blue Books, beyond transparency or control, was oblique.

This potential began to be realised with the appointment of the colony's first Registrar-General, Christopher Rolleston, in 1856.⁵⁷ An English immigrant who arrived in 1838 and worked for ten years as a Commissioner of Crown Lands for Darling Downs, Rolleston instituted the compulsory registration of births, deaths and marriages in New South Wales. Highly conversant with the British debates over the status of statistical knowledge and its place in British policy, he was dismayed by 'the indifference of our public men to statistical knowledge'.⁵⁸ He tasked himself with transforming the relationship between number and government in New South Wales. In an address to the Philosophical Society of New South Wales on the 'Science of Statistics' in late 1856, Rolleston lifted direct passages from British statistical publications, providing his own synthesis of these debates to assert the unique authority of statistics. Quoting from but not acknowledging the 'Introduction' to the first edition of the *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, he recalled of the strict division of labour between statistics and political economy, that the former did not 'discuss causes' but 'seeks only to collect, arrange, and compare' facts.⁵⁹ He then drew on the 'Fourth Annual Report of the Council of the Statistical Society', which had cemented the relation between number and theory:

It has been truly said, that 'the spirit of the age has an evidence tendency to confront the figures of speech with the figures of arithmetic; it being impossible not to observe a growing distrust of mere hypothetical theory, and *a priori* assumption ... statistical data must constitute the raw material of all true systems of economy and legislation.'⁶⁰

⁵⁷ On the origins of this office, see: Robert Crundwell, Hilary Golder and Robert Wood, *From Parchments to Passwords : A History of the Land Titles Office of New South Wales* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1995).

⁵⁸ Chris Rolleston, "Science of Statistics", in Joseph Dyer (ed.) *The Sydney Magazine of Science and Art*, Vol. 1 (Sydney: James W. Waugh, 1858), 254

⁵⁹ Ibid. For Rolleston's original source material, see: 'Fourth Annual Report of the Council of the Statistical Society of London', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* (May, 1838), 8; "Introduction", *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* (May, 1838), 1.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 255. See: 'Fourth Annual Report of the Council of the Statistical Society of London', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* (May, 1838), 8.

Where ‘distrust’ of ‘hypothetical theory’ lingered even mid-century, statistical data, Rolleston argued, would provide the ‘raw material’ to substantiate and stabilise such theoretical knowledge. Statistics would ‘form the basis for administrative and economical measures of the highest consequence’, being ‘indispensible as the basis on which a correct appreciation of the social and economical progress of the population must be founded’.⁶¹ Here, Rolleston introduced the necessary organising concepts that made colonial statistics ‘hold together’. By distinguishing between social and economic progress, as well as administrative and economic measures, Rolleston clarified the divisions of knowledge his statistics were to investigate enquire and the kind of narratives numbers were supposed to illuminate. In this instance, the colony could be expressed as a singular, integrated ‘economical’ process.

Rolleston began to develop this narrative of the colony’s progress two years later when he presented his first *Statistical Register* to the new Legislative Assembly. This work replaced the old ‘Statistical Return’ printed in the Legislative Council papers and the behemoth Blue Book as the basis of the colony’s collective memory, which by the 1850s extended well over 1000 pages. Instead, he submitted a slender 191-page volume. In contrast to the burdened Thomson, Rolleston’s commentary accompanying the *Register* enthused the connection he envisaged between the role of the statistician and governing ‘economical progress’:

Statistics when carefully collected and collated are replete with interest and utility. As with the merchant so with a nation, a periodical investigation into the state of the national ledger is not only interesting, but essential to the right understanding of the state and progress of the public interests, and, I trust, that the insight which this cursory review has afforded us, into the condition of our national resources, will be productive of this advantage at least, that we shall no longer look upon the social facts collected as a barren array of figures put together without order, meaning, or utility, but that it

⁶¹ Ibid., 255, 256. He outlined the range of data which could be collected, beginning with the census, but also births, deaths, marriages and baptisms, medical, legal, agricultural (the collection of which he advocated greater scrutiny and reform), education, moral and ‘Industrial Statistics’ – the last of which ‘would guide and extend international commerce’.

will lead to a more careful study of them, and by this means direct us in our endeavours to promote the public good.⁶²

The analogy with the merchant, rather than a patriarchal father figure of a national household or ‘body politic’, posited the ‘nation’ as a pre-eminently wealth accumulating entity. In distinction from the Blue Books, which lacked ‘order, meaning or utility’, Rolleston’s primary objective was to measure the colony’s ‘national ledger’ and ‘national resources’. Here, then, seventy years before the innovations of Kuznets, was a notion of national accounting as central to government.⁶³ At the very beginning of the register, Rolleston included a long, foldout sheet that itemised variables of colonial development in a year-on-year table stretching back to 1821. This tabulated data on population, schools, convictions, manufactories, livestock, coal mined, land sales, shipping, the size and value of exports and imports, and revenue and expenditure (**figure 7.4**). These were more than categories of imperial ‘surveillance’. In explaining his chart, Rolleston underscored these items as constituting an integrated system of production and accumulation which provided both a reflection and map toward ‘progressive development’:

I append a Table exhibiting at one glance the progressive development of the most important of her resources. It embraces a period of thirty-seven years, commencing with the year 1821; and it may safely be affirmed that if any person at the day had ventured to precept the extraordinary advance in wealth and population of which the Table exhibits such convincing proof ... he would have been looked upon as dreamer or a lunatic; but if we read the history aright, we shall hope for the future by what we know the past ... Adam Smith says, that plenty of good land, and liberty to manage their own affairs in their own way, are the chief elements of Colonial prosperity. If he is right, Australia ought surely in her onward progress to exhibit a development, that even the history of the western world will not be able to outvie.⁶⁴

⁶² “Statistical Register of New South Wales, from 1849 to 1858”, *V&P LANSW 1859-60*, I, 1193.

⁶³ Rolleston did not, however, precede to calculate any significant estimations in the way in which his predecessor, Timothy Coghlan, would. See Chapter One.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 1194.

eighteen general, descriptive headings. For the next few years he divided his material under four heads, which he termed the 'Political Social, Industrial and Financial condition of the Country'. Later he preferred a taxonomy of seven 'Parts', comprising Population and Vital Statistics; Religion, Education and Crime; Trade and Commerce; Mills and Manufactories; Production; Monetary and Financial; and Miscellaneous.⁶⁵ But it was the elongated year-on-year table that remained the centrepiece of his *Register*. Here, Rolleston 'grasped together' a definitive narrative of New South Wales as a progressing economic entity. The table Rolleston arranged at the beginning of his yearly *Register* permeated through government and public life, defining the story and objectives of colonial politics, which did not so much reflect 'development', as annually reinforced it as a political project.⁶⁶ 'Progress', defined in terms of rising exports, population and revenues, was the inertia of colonial life. As William Westgarth reflected in his indicatively titled 1861 work *Australia: Its Rise, Progress and Present Condition*:

A thriving British colony has usually but one kind of story to tell, and that, although a highly satisfactory, yet almost a monotonous one – of progress. The imports, the exports, the public revenues, the population of this year, are all so much per cent. Ahead of those of last year; and in like manner this year will itself be eclipsed by the next and so on.⁶⁷

The economic unity of New South Wales depicted through statistics was soon reflected in the kinds of select committee reports being tabled by the late 1850s. These now read specific problems as expressions of broader dynamics. In Henry Parkes' 1861 *Report from the Select Committee on the Condition of the Working Class of the Metropolis*, for example, pages of numerical data distilled working-class unemployment as not simply a problem of individual workers' indigence and self-respect, but a symptom of an integrated system Parkes called 'our economical arrangements':

⁶⁵ See: *Statistical Register of New South Wales, compiled from official returns in the Registrar General's Office* (Sydney: Government Printer, 1858-1888).

⁶⁶ The report was republished in full each year in the major newspapers.

⁶⁷ William Westgarth, *Australia: Its Rise, Progress and Present Condition* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1861), 44.

Your Committee are also of the opinion the connection of cause and effect is in some measure to be traced between the fiscal laws of the Colony and the existing social evils, and they consider a revision of our entire taxation a matter of necessity. We have the authority of eminent economists in support of raising revenue in a new country by the imposition of duties that would tend to foster manufacturing enterprise, and such encouragement to our own people, within well considered limits, would not be inconsistent with practical freedom in our commercial intercourse in the World, while no nation affords us an example of the establishment of manufactures without such encouragement. But it is respectfully submitted that we are not to blindly follow the course of other countries, but to be guided in our economical arrangements by such principles as are most applicable in the peculiar circumstances of our own.⁶⁸

This passage contrasts sharply with D.D. Mann's diagnosis of 'evils' bedevilling the colony in Chapter One, whose remedy was located solely with a munificent governor. Here, Parkes identifies the 'people' implicated in a much more complex set of dynamics. Following British precedent, these 'economical arrangements' were to be addressed in one of two ways, either 'Free trade', or 'Protection'.⁶⁹ In this instance, Parkes flirted with the latter, although his political career would be defined as a champion of the former.⁷⁰ After about 1852, New South Wales, in distinction to

⁶⁸ "Report from the Select Committee on the Condition of the Working Classes of the Metropolis", *V&P LANSW 1861*, Vol. 4, 1272.

⁶⁹ This was reflected in the solutions posed to working class distress. The committee gleaned two courses of action from the evidence. On the one hand, there were those with 'free-trade opinions', led by John Robertson, who '... traces the mischief in part to the Government tampering with "the labour market", or, in other words, supporting immigration from the public treasury, and maintains that the law of supply and demand in regulating labour, as in all other things, would work most healthily by being left to itself. In answer to what he [Robertson] terms the "spasmodic demands" for labour in particular localities, he says, if the want was real, "Immediately men found there was something worth coming for, they would come". Others consider that nearly all the social derangement has been produced by the operation of the principles that regulate our trading intercourse with other countries, and argue that the only effectual remedy would be the imposition of protective duties, to foster our infant manufactures, and to sustain a remunerative market for our agriculturalists against foreign competition. In support of these views they point to our perished manufacturers of cloth, cordage, nails, pottery, and tobacco, and to our farmers unable to obtain their wheat and potatoes the cost of their carriage'. *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ J. A. La Nauze, "'That Fatal, That Mischievous Passage': Henry Parkes and Protection, 1859-66," *The Australian Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (1947): 52-61.

protectionist Victoria, remained largely tariff-free for the remainder of the century.⁷¹ Indeed, free trade had been something of a default attitude in the colony, espoused even in the radical press since the 1840s. In the first decade of self-government there was, nevertheless, considerable debate in pamphlets and select committees over the direction the colony ought to take.⁷² An increasing number of inquiries, such as the 1855 Select Committee on the State of Agriculture, dominated by the free trader and later premier John Robertson, or the 1862 Select Committee on the State of Manufactures and Agriculture in the Colony, chaired by the protectionist John Lucas, fell along one of these two lines.

Historians in Britain and Australia have long established the complex ideological origins of these opposing movements, of their various political manifestations and above all, shown them to encompass much more than the regulation of trade, but political and moral philosophies for both individual and collective life.⁷³ However, by connecting the emergence of this politics with the colonial story of number, we are reminded that the politics of Free Trade and Protection were premised on more than their own distinct ideological commitments. Rather, both views were sustained by official, governmental concepts that were made to ‘hold together’ through the presentation of statistics: ‘economical measures’, ‘economical progress’ and ‘economical arrangements’. That is, through the medium of number and narrative, free traders and protectionists

⁷¹ J. A. La Nauze, “Merchants in Action: The Australian Tariffs of 1852,” *Economic Record* 31, nos. 1-2 (May 1, 1955): 77-89.

⁷² For an overview of debates, see: Goodwin, *Economic Inquiry in Australia*, 10-16, 40-48.

⁷³ Anthony Howe, *Free Trade and Liberal England, 1846-1946* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Anna Gambles, *Protection and Politics: Conservative Economic Discourse, 1815-1852* (Woolbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1999); For a recent treatment of the two in the same frame, see: Anthony Howe, “Free Trade and Its Enemies,” in Martin Hewitt (ed.), *The Victorian World* (London: Routledge, 2012), 108-124. This grand theme of colonial Australian historiography has fallen from favour in recent generations. Much of the scholarship tends to be split along colonial lines, treating ‘Free Trade’ in the context of New South Wales and ‘Protection’ in Victoria, rather than studies that integrates both locales and perspectives. Nonetheless, both are widely recognised as competing varieties of an Australian liberalism. The best overview from the perspective of political economy remains: Gordon D. Patterson, *The Tariff in the Australian Colonies 1856-1900* (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1968). For an account of the political alignments, see: Peter Loveday and Alan Martin, *Parliament Factions and Parties: The First Thirty Years of Responsible Government In New South Wales, 1856-1889* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1966). For the intellectual genesis of New South Wales’ Free Trade, see: Gregory Melleuish, *A Short History of Australian Liberalism* (St Leonards: Centre for Independent Studies, 2001). For Victorian Protection and its run into Deakinite liberalism, see: Stuart Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Victorian Visionaries* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1991).

shared a specific way of ‘seeing’ the social world, of the political *community* as a progressing, wealth-producing entity which they competed to manage. In 1862, W.B. Allen, a New South Wales protectionist, described this fundamental tension, but also reflected their shared worldview:

That which has latterly classified itself under the heads of Free Trade and Protection, aims at two different and distinct results, the former applicable to the condition of a people merely buying and selling, and only producing those raw products of the soil for which it may have a great capacity than most other nations, the latter applicable in addition to this, for establishing and carrying on the manufacture of such articles as may be congenial to its climate and condition, and for which it may be able to procure the raw material and labour. If New South Wales is to remain a pastoral country only, exchanging her wool, tallow, hides &c., for bread, clothes, and such luxuries as their profits may furnish her the means of procuring; or, her destiny is to be, in addition to this, a large store or depot for the sale of the productions of all the world, without producing any other things herself, free trade is her natural policy; it is best calculated to place and hold her in that position. If, on the contrary, her destiny is to be the centre of a group of united colonies, all producing and manufacturing up to their own wants and for export, she must adopt a modified protective policy, and follow in the wake of all successful countries.⁷⁴

At stake was a vision for the colony’s ‘destiny’ in achieving wealth, abundance, and prosperity. Both versions of this destiny were ‘economic’ insofar as they recognised a system of production, distribution, and accumulation as the integrated ends of government. With their metrics and indices, Rolleston and Westgarth were already mapping out what this destiny ought to look like. The *political* question was of the means to get there. The contest between free trade and protection in New South Wales, and the ongoing pan-colonial dispute that bubbled over into Federation, reflected the essential, ontological status the economic domain of life and government had achieved by mid-century, as a domain through which competing programs could be defined and justified. In a colony whose fundamental problems, social structures and identities had been so thoroughly shaped by economic

⁷⁴ W.B. Allen, *Lecture on protection: political economy proper for New South Wales* (Sydney: Empire General Steam Printing Office, 1860), 3.

discourse, often at the expense of any other intellectual tradition, so it was that by mid-century its chief political alignments were transposable onto 'economical arrangements'. An age of politics as economic debate was awakening.

'New South Wales' as an object of theory: the feedback effect of colonial economisation

By mediating between number and theory, New South Wales was constructed by colonial bureaucrats into a measurable economic entity. This marks something of an apogee in our story of the economisation of New South Wales. While important for the governmental objectives and political conflicts this created in the colony, this point also raises a question that has been implicit throughout this thesis: what was the significance of colonial economisation for British political economy, the original intellectual well-spring of that process? While this can only be treated briefly here, I want to suggest that there was a dynamic of reciprocity at play. That is, as political economy provided the semantic resources for government to reclassify problems and projects as 'economic', these renamed objects in colonial New South Wales, including the colony itself, reflected to political economists an image of what they purported to describe. The relationship between theory and government was mutually constitutive.

Other scholars have already noticed this phenomenon. In his classic 1974 study, *The Image of Australia: British Perception of the Australian Economy from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century*, Crauford Goodwin mapped several ways in which economists produced 'international economic images'. Economists created these 'images', said Goodwin, by informing what 'variables' are worth watching by building models to establish performance norms, and by promoting certain data over others. Most interestingly, he also noted 'there is a reverse or feedback effect from the formalised images of foreign areas upon the development of economic theory, the doctrine from which these images first sprang'.⁷⁵ It is this 'feedback effect' I want to briefly probe here, specifically that British political economists' 'scientific' analyses of Australia were moments of theoretical self-

⁷⁵ Crauford D. W. Goodwin, *The Image of Australia; British Perception of the Australian Economy from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1974), xvii.

affirmation. New imperial historians have noted this kind of effect between writing about colonies and metropolitan self-understanding as a process of co-constitution.⁷⁶ A similar theme has been noted in the history of political thought. Travel writings that looked like acts of orientalism, for example, categorising the ‘despotism’ or ‘misgovernment’ of colonised cultures, were in fact often exercises in domestic political analysis.⁷⁷ Similarly, political economists treated colonies less to say something true about colonies than to assert the truthfulness of economic laws.

This kind of ‘feedback’ was most evident in works that built upon Wakefield’s economic ‘theory of colonisation’. In 1833, only two years after the Ripon Regulations had been established, political economists parroted such hypothesis as new kind of fact. George Poulett Scope, for example, envisaged that the chief advantage of colonies was ‘the certain and extensive field they offer for the profitable employment of the capital and labour of the mother country, whenever their competition at home is such as to depress the rate of profits and wages’.⁷⁸ A decade later, Merivale’s *Lectures* purported experience that showed this to be the case. The ‘elementary principles of Political Economy’, he wrote in his preface, ‘are illustrated by the phenomena of colonisation and the growth of colonies’.⁷⁹ As Merivale’s epigraph at the beginning of this chapter indicated, the development of New South Wales was taken as a textbook example of economic principles. What made New South Wales interesting, said Merivale, was not only to its rapid capacity to accumulate wealth, but that the colony reflected tendencies economists designated as crucial to the accumulation of wealth. It was the ‘relative increase of trade and surplus wealth in proportion to population which gives these settlements their distinctive character’.⁸⁰ Even if New South Wales ‘has never yet raised corn for its own consumption, this seems in reality more attributable to the existence of much more profitable employments of labour’, by which Merivale meant wool.⁸¹ What we have examined in previous

⁷⁶ Kathleen Wilson, *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁷⁷ Alexander Cook, “‘The Great Society of the Human Species’: Volnay and the Global Politics of Revolutionary France”, *Intellectual History Review* 23, no. 9 (2013): 309-328, but especially 318-19.

⁷⁸ G. Poulett Scope, *Principles of Political Economy, Deduced from the Natural Laws of Social Welfare and Applied to the Present State of Britain* (London: Longman), 375.

⁷⁹ Merivale, *Lectures*, xi.

⁸⁰ Merivale, *Lectures*, 121.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 122.

chapters as processes of the deliberate renaming and enacting of practices like wool growing and immigration was repackaged and presented by Merivale as reflecting the necessity of economic ‘principles’. Wakefield’s political reimagining of the purpose of colonial settlement was redressed by Merivale as an empirical description of colonial development. A few years later, in his 1848 work *Principles of Political Economy*, John Stuart Mill generalised this view of colonies as Wakefield had suggested, noting that their value existed in the efficient reallocation of resources throughout the entire world. ‘The benefits of colonisation’ said Mill, related ‘not to a single country, but to the collective economical interest of the human race.’

The question is in general treated too exclusively as one of distribution; of relieving one labour market and supply another. It is this, but it also a question of production, and of the most efficient employment of the productive resources of the world.⁸²

Focused studies such as Merivale’s could find in colonies perfect illustrations of economic principles. More generally, settler colonies also served as ‘evidence’ to contest and affirm specific principles, in particular the possibility of gluts and the nature of capital accumulation. We will recall from Chapter Four that Wakefield developed his theory of colonisation in opposition to political economists’ orthodox hostility on two grounds. First and generally, that colonies were mercantilist mill-stones, a source of war and sinkhole of metropolitan capital and labour. And second and specifically, their orthodox adherence to Say’s Law of Markets. This ‘law’ held that the aggregate supply of goods and services, in other words ‘production’, always generates sufficient income to guarantee that the aggregate demand for those goods and services would be adequate.⁸³ Wakefield had instead followed

⁸² John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy with some of the Applications to Social Philosophy* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1909 [1848]), 970. As Cairnes wrote a few years later: ‘Capital, in a certain sense, is every day becoming less national and more cosmopolitan ... with the fact before us that even Asiatic populations are now beginning to emigrate, it is impossible to deny that labour [too] is capable, under the influence of economic causes, of international movement on a great scale. John Elliot Cairnes, *Some Leading Principles of Political Economy Newly Expounded* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1874), 303.

⁸³ On this view, while ‘partial gluts’ of short term exhaustion of demand in particular industries might be possible, following a ‘temporary reverses and contingencies’ in the channels of trade, such as wars, a ‘general glut’ across industry was not. *Overall* production overall could not be excessive, only misallocated. See, for

Malthus' heterodox position. He interpreted the post-war distress in which profits, wages, and prices were simultaneously depressed was a consequence of misallocated investment, but also a lack of effective demand from labourers, being underemployed, and elites who in volatile times chose to save rather than consume luxuries. It was in this context that Wakefield conceived a new role for colonies as providing an alternative 'field for employment' to idle British capital and avoid a decline into the 'stationary state'.⁸⁴ While Wakefield's interpretation was clearly significant in shaping colonies, more immediately for 'theory', it also provoked political economists to rethink the nature of capital export, and capital accumulation. As Samuel Hollander and Edward Kittrell have each shown, Wakefield did not shake the orthodox political economists' belief in Say's Law, but his heterodox approach to colonies did encourage them to recast their attitude to colonies not as sinkholes of capital, but opportunities to expand investment and accumulation.⁸⁵ In this way, colonies became objects through which to naturalise capital accumulation, even as they were being constituted by government as wealth-accumulating entities.

John Stuart Mill's exposition of colonies in *Principles* was a case in point.⁸⁶ Mill thought Wakefield's error had been to suppose 'his doctrines to be in contradiction to the principles of the best school of preceding political economists'.⁸⁷ He highlighted colonies acted as one of several 'counter-forces' that checked the downward tendency of profits. The 'perpetual overflow of capital into colonies or foreign countries, to seek higher profits than can obtained at home' had been 'one of the principal causes by which the decline of profits in England have been arrested'. The way capital migrated to colonies affirmed rather than denied Say's Law:

example: David Ricardo, *On The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* in Pero Saffra (ed.) *The Works and Correspondence of David Ricardo*, Vol. 1 (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2004), 267-273.

⁸⁴ Donald Winch, *Classical Political Economy and Colonies* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1965), 77-81.

⁸⁵ On Wakefield's influence on 'economic' debate, see: Edward R. Kittrell, "The Development of the Theory of Colonization in English Classical Political Economy," *Southern Economic Journal* 31, no. 3 (1965): 189-206; Samuel Hollander, *The Economics of John Stuart Mill*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 474-79. Edward R. Kittrell, "Wakefield's Scheme of Systematic Colonization and Classical Economics," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 32, no. 1 (January 1, 1973): 102.

⁸⁶ For his position on gluts, see Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, 556-563; Duncan Bell, "John Stuart Mill on Colonies," *Political Theory* 38, no. 1 (February 1, 2010): 34-64.

⁸⁷ Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, 728.

It is to the emigration of English capital, that we have chiefly to look for keeping up a supply of cheap food and cheap materials of clothing, proportional to the increase of our population ... The exportation of capital is an agent of great efficacy in extending the field of employment for that which remains: and it may be said truly that, up to a certain extent, the more capital we send away, the more we shall possess and be able to retain at home.⁸⁸

By mid-century, then, colonies were looked upon as paragons of the tendency towards a natural, globalising expansion of investment, employment, and accumulation. The great beneficiaries were the poor. ‘Rapidly increasing in wealth and population’, said Mill, the Australian colonies had demonstrated that ‘it was the normal condition of labour’ to begin as hired labourers, before working on the account of others and, finally, employing others.⁸⁹ Just as Merivale had perceived in New South Wales examples of specific ‘principles’ of political economy, colonies, suggested Mill, illuminated the universal nature of expansion capital accumulation.

By mid-century, British economists were looking to specific facets of the colony’s ‘economical arrangements’ to substantiate theory. Writing at the beginning of his career, John Elliott Cairnes, famously accounted for the effects of gold on Australia as a textbook case of the Ricardian comparative advantage theory of international trade. In altering the cost of money, remunerable wages, and price of provisions in the Australian colonies, the gold discoveries, said Cairnes, had realised conditions ‘under which, according to the theory of Ricardo, an immense change ought to take place in the external trade of the colony; and this was precisely what happened’. Consequently, the colony now imported timber from the Baltic, butter from Ireland, England, and Holland, imported nearly all her food and her shoes despite of its own abundant forests, agricultural land, and cattle. The colony’s curious dependence on imports could be easily accounted for, Cairns said:

⁸⁸ Ibid., 738-39.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 761.

What was the explanation of these facts? In all cases one and the same: it was to be found in the principle of comparative cost. Australia had considerable advantages over other countries in respect to timber, butter, food, and shoes; but she had a greater advantage still in respect to gold; and so it became her interest to obtain the former things by means of the latter. I have always regarded the commercial results of the Australian and Californian discoveries (for things in California followed a very similar course) as one of the most striking experimental verifications which a purely abstract doctrine has ever received.⁹⁰

This treatment of the Australian gold discoveries has retrospectively earned Cairnes a reputation as an early exponent of ‘positive economics’, a sub-discipline that seeks to describe economic phenomena as opposed to ‘normative economics’ that discerns principles and prescribes policy.⁹¹ But in formulating this image of Australia, and finding economic categories and behaviours that accord with ‘theory’ in his analysis of the gold discoveries, Cairnes was engaged in the kind of self-referential, ‘feed-back effect’ that characterised much of the analysis of colonies by political economists after the 1830s. This was not simply a case of forcing the ‘facts’ to fit the theory. Cairnes presupposed the gold discoveries to be a self-evident ‘economic’ event, where the discovery of gold presented a self-evident ‘advantage’ in capital investment that determined its productive, trade, and employment circumstances. Cairnes’ analysis of the colonial gold discoveries aligned so successfully with Ricardian theory, however, precisely because the original phenomenon of the gold discoveries emanated from a prior re-imagining of ‘land’ as an economic resource. The ‘gold rush’ was premised on the conditions of economic discourse that Cairnes took as tools for positive observation. That is, gold had already been socially constructed in these terms. In this sense, the world was literally deduced in the political economists’ terms.

⁹⁰ Cairnes, *Some Leading Principles of Political Economy Newly Expounded*, 314-5.

⁹¹ Michael David Bordo, “John E. Cairnes on the Effects of the Australian Gold Discoveries, 1851-73: An Early Application of the Methodology of Positive Economics,” *History of Political Economy* 7, no. 3 (September 21, 1975): 337-59; T. W. Hutchison, *Positive Economics and Policy Objectives* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964), 32-37.

‘Australia’ as a site of theory: William Hearn’s *Plutology*

By the early 1860s, narratives of ‘New South Wales’ and ‘Australia’ as economic entities were doing a distinct kind of intellectual work, which not only consolidated the ‘truthfulness’ of an economic domain, but also began to redefine it. These processes were captured in William Hearn’s *Plutology*, first published in Melbourne in 1863.⁹² While we stray slightly from New South Wales proper, with Hearn’s professorship and authorship we reach an appropriate terminus to this study in two senses. First, as with the institutionalisation of political economy in British universities, Hearn’s appointment as a Professor of Political Economy in Melbourne consolidated the economic as a formalised mode of knowledge in the colonies. Second, Hearn’s study shifted the focus from the study of production and distribution in a community of economic classes to the study of utility maximisation and ‘want satisfaction’ of individual economic agents. This shift marked an early iteration of the so-called ‘marginal revolution’, beginning a move from classical political economy to neoclassical economics, and thus opened a new phrase in the historical looping between theory and government.⁹³

In Australia, as in Britain, political economy was consolidated as branch of formal knowledge when it entered the universities in the mid-nineteenth century.⁹⁴ The University of Sydney was established in 1850 and Melbourne in 1853, while Adelaide followed in 1873 and Tasmania in 1889. At Sydney, Political Economy featured as a degree course for only two years from 1866 to 1867 but then disappeared from the formal curriculum until a Department of Commerce and Economics was established in 1906. At Melbourne, Political Economy enjoyed full academic status from the University’s foundation and was included as a compulsory subject for the BA degree. One of the four

⁹² William Hearn, *Plutology: Or The Theory Of The Efforts To Satisfy Human Wants* (Melbourne: G. Robertson, 1863).

⁹³ Donald Winch preferred to use the distinction between ‘old’ and ‘new’ generation of political economists, for it was a distinction used by contemporary economists, and not the ‘marginal revolution’, an event no one was aware had occurred until coined by Thorstein Veblen. See: Donald Winch, *Wealth and Life: Essays on the Intellectual History of Political Economy in Britain, 1848-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 19-20.

⁹⁴ Alon Kadish and Keith Tribe (eds.), *The Market for Political Economy: The Advent of Economics in British University Culture, 1850-1905* (London: Routledge, 1993).

original chairs covered Modern History, Modern Literature, Logic, and Political Economy, for which Hearn was selected. From 1855, he assumed the title of Professor of History and Political Economy.⁹⁵

Hearn was born in Ireland in 1826 and educated at Trinity College from 1843 before arriving in Melbourne in 1854. He has been described as Australia's 'first' economist and *Plutology* the first sustained effort in economic theory carried out in Australasia. The book was positively reviewed in Britain, including by William Jevons, who wrote that *Plutology* was 'in many respects an advance of the treatises of the day, including on certain points even in Mr J. S. Mill's great work'.⁹⁶ Hearn's influence on Jevons, Alfred Marshall, and Francis Ysidro Edgeworth has been well documented. All three praised the work highly, cementing Hearn's international reputation as an economic thinker.⁹⁷ It is debatable as to whether Hearn directly influenced Jevons' 'marginal' turn, or merely reinforced an intellectual trend already extant. His influence on Marshall appears to be stronger.⁹⁸

Compared with the ways in which Nassau Senior attempted to define the 'science of political economy' in 1836, noted at the beginning of Chapter Two, Hearn's work was distinctive in its focus of inquiry. It affirmed aspects of Senior's definition, but also fundamentally altered it. In the introduction to *Plutology*, Hearn gave three reasons for his preference in borrowing Courcelle Seneuil's neologism 'plutologie', meaning 'science of wealth', and rejecting the use of 'Political Economy' as his title.⁹⁹ First, the etymology of political economy involved 'an inconsistency'. 'Economy' related to the family and 'political' to the affairs of state, said Hearn, reviving the word's original 'household' connotation. As such, 'the name hardly conveys without explanation the idea usually attached to it by economists, namely, the 'theory of national wealth'. Second, it follows that the meaning of this term, 'if it be taken strictly', actually refers to the prudent management of the

⁹⁵ La Nauze notes that 'Political Economy' as taught by Hearn 'was regarded with hostility or indifference by a majority outside the university because of its uncompromising advocacy of Free Trade', Victoria being a generally 'Protectionist' colony. John La Nauze, *Political Economy in Australia: Historical Studies* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1949), 18-19, 20.

⁹⁶ As reviewed in *Spectator*, 5 March 1864, 22.

⁹⁷ La Nauze, *Political Economy*, 49-52. Writing in 1948, La Nauze also noted an ongoing readership among his own generation, including Frederick Hayek, as well as American economists.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 88-9.

⁹⁹ For a discussion of the title and its appropriateness, see: Alan Treloar and John Pullen, "Hearn's 'Plutology' or Hearn's 'Olbology'?", *History of Economics Review* 27, no. 1 (1998): 16-20.

affairs of state, ‘an analogy which most economists now regard as false’, for the management of State is an ‘art’ and not the ‘science’ to which political economists aspired: ‘The art of government is doubtless of the highest importance, but it is a different thing from the theory of wealth’.¹⁰⁰ Third, and here Hearn fundamentally redefined Senior’s definition, if it is to be a ‘science’, the object of inquiry must not begin with national considerations, but with the study of the individual and ‘the means that men use to satisfy their wants’. ‘For scientific purposes, an inquiry into public or national wealth, before the principles of private or individual wealth have been ascertained, is an inversion of the natural arrangement’.¹⁰¹ As such, Hearn structured his work around the problem not of national wealth production and distribution, as earlier English political economists had, but ‘human wants’.¹⁰²

In continuing, and concluding, our central theme of this chapter, what is of particular interest is the way Hearn used the idea of ‘New South Wales’ or ‘Australia’ and other ‘nations’ throughout his work to illustrate this economy of human wants.¹⁰³ Hearn’s starting point was not to develop a deductive model of the proportion or distribution of wealth in a community, but to identify conditions essential to supporting individual needs and wants. This move enables him to assess the different advantageous conditions offered in rival locations and climates and the consequences these might offer. In Chapter Five, ‘On the Circumstances on which the Efficiency of Natural Agents Depends’, for example, Australia’s natural resources and open pastures are taken to exemplify the importance of ‘natural agents’ necessary to needs and wants satisfaction. Hearn noted that these kind of extensive resources do not immediately or directly satisfy wants or assist in procuring means of satisfaction. What was important, rather, was how individuals and then communities conceive of developing them.¹⁰⁴ For Hearn, what is to be celebrated in Australia is the way the individual makes use of

¹⁰⁰ Hearn, *Plutology*, 2.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰² La Nauze, *Political Economy*, 59-64, 64-71.

¹⁰³ The point here is not that ‘Australia’ is treated uniquely nor especially frequently in the text, but that Hearn speaks of England and the British, America and Americans, Ireland and the Irish more than ‘Australia’ or its colonies.

¹⁰⁴ Hearn, *Plutology*, 78.

these new discoveries to productive and industrial advantage.¹⁰⁵ Of gold prospectors and squatters in Australia, Hearn writes:

When they have discovered a promising claim, they sell their interest to those who follow them, and who desire to search for gold in the ordinary manner. When they find not merely a superior claim but a new gold field, they are entitled under the mining laws to receive an extended claim: and this claim they in like manner sell, and then recommence their search. Thus the actual miner is saved the loss of time and trouble and the expense of searching for a favourable locality for his operations. He quietly and without delay works at the claim that has been found and tested for him; and the prospector goes on his way to render a similar service to some new customer. In the more remote parts of the Australian continent the same practice prevails, and in the older colonies during the early days of their pastoral settlement formerly prevailed, in respect to runs. Men applied themselves to the discovery of new country suitable for pastoral purposes: when they had found and secured a run, they sold their interest to some intending settler; and then, like the backwoodsman or the prospector, they resumed their former search.¹⁰⁶

This passage alludes to something quite different to a nation exploiting its ‘comparative advantage’. Rather, Hearn draws on Herbert Spencer’s theory of social evolution to develop an idea of a human impulse whereby individual enterprise and ingenuity drives the transformation of ‘society’ from its basic, unorganised familial groupings, into a complex, progressing, industrial form.¹⁰⁷ It is this impulse, as conditioned by the available ‘natural agents’ to which they are exposed, together with the ‘natural’ tendency towards ‘liberal’ trade, that ‘determines the organisation of industry as between different communities’:

¹⁰⁵ This anticipates Shann’s *An Economic History of Australia*, as discussed in Chapter One of this thesis.

¹⁰⁶ Hearn, *Plutology*, 301.

¹⁰⁷ As outlined at the beginning of chapter XVII, ‘Of the Industrial Organisation of Society’, *Plutology*, 291-3, 302-305.

England obviously produces all those commodities which owe their cheapness to her abundant mines of coal and of iron. The vine and the silk-worm supply the industries which predominate in Southern Europe. In America the Southern States produce cotton; the Western States raise agricultural produce; while the principal seats of manufacturing industry are found in the North and in the East. The West Indian Islands confine their labours to the production of sugar. The Chinese are still unrivalled by tea. Among the Australian group of colonies the staple industry is in Victoria gold, in New South Wales and Queensland wool, in South Australia breadstuffs. So strong is this tendency towards a territorial division of employments that human efforts, although they may sometimes check it or even change its direction, are never able altogether to conquer it.¹⁰⁸

Advocacy of this kind of international division of labour was well established by the mid nineteenth century. What is novel here is Hearn's assertion that it animates *naturally* from the impulses of individual men and not the needs of governments or nations. Where authors like St. Julian and Silvester in Chapter One, writing only a decade prior, had found 'there was no absolute necessity for resorting' to wool, here pastoralism was presented as the 'obvious' outcome of man's natural propensity to satisfy wants according to distinct natural and economic circumstances in Australia.

None of this to suggest that his 'Australian' surrounds had any particular effect on Hearn's writing. Indeed, *Plutology* is best understood as the work of an Anglo-Irish economist engaging with 'English political economy at a time of transition'.¹⁰⁹ But Hearn's book does represent an important moment in the historical possibilities of thinking about Australia in two senses. The first is in providing a common sense blueprint for the 'economic development' of New South Wales as something separate to its political development, a perspective that would be more fully articulated by 'economic historians' like Shann and Butlin the following century. The second was Hearn's influence as an intellectual and teacher in the second half of the nineteenth-century. *Plutology* was a standard

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 311.

¹⁰⁹ Gregory Moore, "The Anglo-Irish Context for William Edward Hearn's Economic Beliefs and the Ultimate Failure of His *Plutology*," *The European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 18, no. 1 (2011): 19-54; La Nauze, *Political Economy in Australia*, 93. However, in his review Jevons speculated: 'Perhaps there is something in the development of a colony that nourishes studies of the kind.' *Spectator*, 5 March 1864, 22.

textbook in Australian universities, where students were drawn into the Free Trade and Protection debates of the next half century.

Free Trade and Protection became entrenched in official discourse in the second half of the nineteenth century, looping their own variations on ‘theory’ in to the colonial world, distinct from those under review here. To be sure, the authorised categories of ‘Capital’ and ‘Labour’ remained fundamental political identities within this framework, establishing that inescapable conflict we have come to know as ‘class conflict’. But following the teachings of Hearn, Free Traders, and Protectionists alike began to recognise ‘community’ as essentially composed not of only of productive factors, but a rich anthropology of want-satisfying individuals. To properly account for the significance of what Protection and Free Trade impressed into the social world, we would need to undertake a new study in the relation of economic knowledge, government, and theory effects. This would involve figures both from New South Wales and Victoria that Hearn taught, such as H.B. Higgins, H.G. Turner, Alexander Sutherland, Alfred Deakin, and perhaps Bruce Smith, each with varying discipleship to Hearn’s free trade liberalism. It would also include those protectionists who chastised Hearn as exemplary of the ‘English free trade school’, especially David Syme and Charles Pearson. Nonetheless, this latter story can be understood as an appendage to the economisation of colonial New South Wales in at least one crucial respect: it marked the beginnings of colonial Australian’s worship of a god of their own making, ‘the economy’. Tensions over how to worship that god, whether wealth or happiness, free trade or protection, liberalism or labourism, has, in certain respects, largely been the narrow story of Australian politics ever since.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to tie together the processes discussed in previous chapters of this thesis, and demonstrate the consolidation of the ‘economic’ as category of knowledge and government in New South Wales by mid-century. I have done so by exploring two related processes: first, the role of governmental counting in constituting New South Wales as a singular, integrated, economic entity;

and second, the ways in which British and later Australian political economists, beginning with William Hearn, came to treat colonial 'Australia' as an object of economic knowledge to be studied.

The first of these process involved retracing the shifting relationship between authority, numerical representation, and economic knowledge as it developed in techniques of colonial accounting, culminating in the establishment of the *Statistical Register* in 1857. By intersecting colonial history with the history of statistics, we have been able to chart the creation of a new, totalising concept: the 'economical progress' of New South Wales. By mid-century, this was becoming a major subject of political dispute, of which two alternative approaches – Free Trade and Protection – advanced rival claims to predominance. The emergence of this contest marks one endpoint of this study, reflecting a moment when 'economical phenomena' had been so readily consolidated that they became the naturalised target of political contestation.

As New South Wales was constituted an object of economic knowledge through these projects of government enumeration, by the 1840s the colony also began to be treated as an object of 'theory' in Britain. Political economists drew on these numbers, and the shape of the colony more generally, as proof of the 'principles' of political economy, even as the metaphors underpinning these principles had informed major aspects of the colonial project. This was to bring full circle the looping sequence between theory and government, thinking and acting. Finally, William Hearn's *Plutology* (1863) marked the emulation of such intellectual processes in colonial Australia itself, and thus the beginnings of the institutionalisation of economic knowledge in Australia's nascent universities. This text, we have seen, was of added significance, for it shifted focus from an analysis of economic classes as in the tradition of Ricardo, Mill, and Marx, to the utility maximisation of individuals. It was, then, an early movement in the so-called marginal revolution, and the shift from classical to neoclassical economics. Hearn's innovation purified the economic as a way of knowing, but also introduced a different set of conceptual metaphors to grasp its topic. It therefore also marks the beginnings of a new relationship between theory and government, and so bringing the present study to a close.

Conclusion

Countless, and motionless, and gigantic stood the forest army, up and down all the hill sides around us; in strong contrast to this, stood the great red piles of plank, squared with mathematical exactness, which spoke of *man and labour*. How simple the lesson that contrast read, and yet how grave! This toil-bearer must have a motive; he must want something that he has not;—he must be unhappy.

Alexander Harris, *Settlers and Convicts* (1847)¹

BEFORE HE WAS VISCOUNT GODERICH AND BEFORE HE AUTHORED THE 1831 RIPON Regulations, Frederick Robinson was known as ‘Prosperity Robinson’. He earned the sobriquet for the three successive budgets he delivered as Chancellor of the Exchequer in the early 1820s, although as his career progressed, it became a jibe for a career politician who had the briefest tenure as prime minister in British history (in 1828) and the ignominy of having both led the opposition against Corn Law reforms in 1815, and then championed its repeal thirty one year later.² The name has had less resonance for Australian historians, although perhaps it should. This thesis has traced a process whereby the vocabulary of Ricardian political economy came to permeate the language of imperial and colonial government in making sense of and enacting the unique project in New South Wales. The effect of this emergent relationship between ‘theory’ and ‘government’ was to reify the ‘economic’ as an autonomous domain of knowledge and governance, through which a variety of distinct administrative problems – convicts, land settlement, wool and migration – came to be regulated by forces of supply and demand, and profits and wages, and so reshaped the configuration of identities and institutions in colonial life. As we have seen in chapters Four and Six, Prosperity Robinson’s 1831 land regulations were central to this process. His reframing of imperial relations, as a ‘proportioning’ of land, capital and labour, was a crucial moment in this transformation. In one

¹ Alexander Harris, *Settlers and Convicts or, Recollections of Sixteen Years' Labour in the Australian Backwoods* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1969 [1847]), 199-200.

² Wilbur Devereux Jones, *Prosperity Robinson: the life of Viscount Goderich, 1782-1859* (London: MacMillan, 1967).

sense, then, ‘prosperity’ is an immediate contact point in thinking about the legacies of this passage of colonial history.

Promises of prosperity have pervaded the texts analysed in thesis. They were present in Bigge’s attempts to reimagine policies of land and trade; explicit in Wakefield’s earliest theoretical designs and the subsequent governmental inquiries and correspondence that drew upon them; they informed anti-transportation attacks on the inferiority of ‘convict labour’; they justified Glenelg’s sanctioning of squatters heading south towards Port Phillip and Wentworth’s defence of the lien on wool; there were foundational to the calculations imputed by immigration committees on balancing wages, profits and the output of wool; in the promises held out by emigration guides; in statistical representations that made ‘progress’ a measurable dynamic; and in the myths of a deep temporal distinction between Aboriginal peoples and the settler state. And, on some metrics, prosperity is what transpired. The flood of capital and labour into eastern Australia with the development of wool and then the discovery of gold was once taken by economic historians as the common-sense foundation of Australian prosperity. But as historians engaging in a neo-institutional turn in political economy such as Ian McLean have recently argued, it was the combination of institutional quality and legal apparatuses with extensive natural resources that shaped an enviable Australian prosperity.³ Following McLean, we might add that many of these prosperity-making institutions – securely priced and leased land, pastoral finance and assisted-migration – were not manifestations of an innate economic rationality, but expressed theoretical imaginings that government increasingly came to assume and employ. In this sense, the relationship between theory and government might be read as the rigorous application – or cultural internalisation – of the ‘science of wealth’ to the problems of colonisation in New South Wales. Its legacy, on OECD metrics of purchasing power and living standards, was to foster one of the most prosperous societies the world has ever known.⁴

³ See Chapter One.

⁴ For a discussion, see: Laura Panza and Jeffrey G. Williamson, “Australian Exceptionalism? Inequality and Living Standards 1821-1871,” *CEH Discussion Papers* (Centre for Economic History, Research School of Economics, Australian National University, February 2017).

Indeed, by the middle of the twentieth-century these ambitions seemed to have been more or less achieved, as the settler colonial project in Australia transitioned from establishing colonies and managing a new nation to, as Nicholas Brown described, ‘governing prosperity’.⁵ But as Brown also noted, ‘prosperity’ was not a self-evident achievement, but a problem constituted by experts and analysts as an object to be governed. Here, I have attempted to offer something of the pre-history to the intellectual and institutional transformations that made such a governable project imaginable. In recalling the early history of New South Wales as an interrelationship between theory and government, I have examined the complex, iterative and interactive ‘functioning’ of economic vocabulary as it layered a series of inheritances that cannot be subsumed under any singular logic. These legacies operated on a number of levels, which in this final analysis, we might identify as material, governable and conceptual.

Most readily, the ‘material’ legacies included totemic institutions of ‘economic life’, such as public debt and the commodification of land which remain pillars of daily economic reality. In the same breath, however, it also included successive settler government interventions against Indigenous peoples, which, from the outset, were initiated in the name of civilisation or ‘development’. On a micro-level, it also has involved the emergence of all those sites of calculation and visualisation that structured everyday practice – whose emergence I have tracked in emigration guides, colonisation and property circulars, advertisements, newspaper columns, affidavits and application forms, shipping lists, auction reports, returns and accountancy. These technologies enabled colonists to navigate a world in which they were coming to be constituted as labourers and capitalists. It is for this reason I have concluded with the epigraph from Alexander Harris, that enigmatic chronicler of colonial life, who reminds us that the relationship between theory and government as expressed in governmental reports, ultimately manifested in everyday material relations. While such ‘economic’ relations were encoded in binaries of labour and capital, man and woman, white and black, they also involved relations between ‘man’ and ‘nature, even ‘man’ and a more existential ‘self’. Whether

⁵ Nicholas Brown, *Governing Prosperity: Social Change and Social Analysis in Australian in the 1950s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Harris' melancholy was typical is beyond the scope of sources examined here. But his sense of calculation, exactness and accumulation have been themes that have dominated this thesis, seemingly inscribed even into the psychology of clearing trees.

These material processes were in many ways enactments of authoritative narratives which necessitated and justified governmental action. A second legacy, then, has been the innovation of a historically novel, technical vocabulary, much of which we inherit today. In colonial New South Wales, this vocabulary produced concepts such as the 'land fund', the 'average rate of wages', 'economical arrangements' and 'economical progress', and while such concepts are now arcane enough to merit historical curiosity, each also possessed that kernel of reductive calculation that is the hallmark of modern economic-speech. Meanwhile, the 'labour market', and the normative distinction between 'free' and 'unfree' labour, are as valid today in comprehending human relations as when first touted in the mid-nineteenth century. 'Supply and demand' has entrenched a seemingly eternal conflict between wages and profits, a push-and-pull which federated Australia's wage-policy famously sought to 'arbitrate' (the metaphor is again telling), but whose tensions continue to be the source of many contemporary anxieties. And these relations continued to be reified in practices of statistic-making that preserving their exacting necessity, and in social and political commentary and debates over the features of good government, the genesis we often located in the mid nineteenth-century.

Finally, these material and governable legacies have been bound up with a more fundamental conceptual innovation, that of the 'economic' as a distinct domain of argument, knowledge and justification. Indeed, what all these practices had in common was to be generalised within the same category of 'economical effects', as if sharing the same properties, regulated by the same principles, exhibitions of the same maxims. In this sense, the 'economic' helped establish what Boltanski and Thevenot have described as an 'order of generality', a 'form of worth that can be used to justify an action'.⁶ We have seen such justification used to profound effect, in explicating the reasons to initiate

⁶ Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thevenot, *On Justification: Economies of Worth*. Translated by Catherine Porter. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006 [1991]), 14.

mass migration, or in Robert Lowe's successful articulation of long leases for squatters. To identify the 'economical effects' of something was to exonerate it from consideration of other consequences. To this day, no other argument seems so compelling.

To be sure, to name something 'economic' was not necessarily to endorse market relations as the optimal method for organising social life. As was reflected in the rival political economies of Whigs, radicals, squatters and liberals discussed in Chapter Four, an 'economic' argument could involve configuring the 'economic community' in a variety of ways, to justify a variety of visions and moral or productive outcomes. But it did require recourse to the imperatives of supply and demand, of 'proportioning' capital to labour, so to make one's claims legitimate and visible in light of the 'official discourse' being layered up in government reporting. The cumulative effect of these strategies of 'rhetorical redescription' (to recall Quentin Skinner's term), was to naturalise the 'economic' as essential, and to inscribe such laws, principles and maxims as immutable necessities of social life.

In concluding this thesis, then, two questions seem pertinent. First, how might we further develop this line of inquiry? And second, how do the links between theory and government speak to us today?

The story of colonial economisation might be further developed in three ways. The first would be to look closer, to follow men like Alexander Harris into the forest and examine the extent to which the identities of the labourer and capitalist were evident in their everyday relations. This journey would require peering past census data, and looking further into colonial homes to chart the ways an imagined 'economic sphere' divided the world of men and women, as the enduring gendered disparity between wages, opportunities and rights so clearly suggests it did. It would involve assessing the extent to which an economic imagining served to divide 'work' from 'home', those spheres of middle class existence whose nineteenth-century origins Catherine Hall and Lenore Davidoff have

identified in Britain, and Graeme Davison has long gestured towards in Australia.⁷ But it would also involve, just as importantly, drawing attention to how this vocabulary functioned in archives that remain largely under-explored at the New South Wales State Records Office, from departments that regulated customs, trades and tariffs. Here, beyond the centralised report, we might recover the everyday bureaucratic activities that compressed goods into priced commodities, just as William Cronon observed at the Chicago Board of Trade.⁸

In this same way, it would also be fruitful to look more broadly, and abroad, examining the career of these theoretical categories as they helped redraw connections between the colony and the City of London and London auction houses, as Andrew Dilley and Simon's Ville works have indicated.⁹ A focus on economic language provides a lens through which to examine the mutual constitution of theory, government, markets and technology: the knot of capitalist life. In this way, the history of the economic might inform an Australian variation on what American scholars are calling 'the new history of capitalism', an approach which takes as one of its central tenants to 'follow the money', to trace the formation of new asymmetrical social relations.¹⁰ The question to ask here, as I did in relation to the lien on wool in Chapter Five, is who initiates and directs this flow of money and through what doors. Finance and banking have played a relatively minor role in this story, although their presence has been closely felt. These were once central subjects for Australia historians, and recent events may encourage them to be so again. Theory and government, I would suggest, offer a perspective on how the 'financialisation' of public and private life has been expanded, legitimated and justified.

⁷ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*. Second Edition. (London: Routledge, 2002 [1987]), 229-271; Graeme Davison, *City Dreamers: The Urban Imagination in Australia* (Sydney: New South, 2016).

⁸ William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991).

⁹ Andrew Dilley, *Finance, Politics and Imperialism: Australia, Canada, and the City of London, c.1896-1914* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Simon Ville, "The Relocation Of The International Market For Australian Wool", *Australian Economic History Review* 45 no. 1 (March 2005): 73-95.

¹⁰ The phrase belongs to Louis Hyman, see: Sven Beckert, Angus Burgin, Peter James Hudson, Louis Hyman, Namoi Lamoreaux, Scott Marler, Stephen Mihm, Julia Ott, Philip Scranton and Elizabeth Tandy Shermer, "Interchange: The History of Capitalism," *The Journal of American History* 101 no.2 (September 2014): 503-536.

A third approach would be to carry this story forward. In contradiction to W.K. Hancock's observation in 1930, which I noted in the Introduction, that 'Australians have always disliked scientific economics and (still more) scientific economists', my analysis suggests economic knowledge has always been central to Australian public life.¹¹ This is not to say that Australians have always been good economists – that they were not was Hancock's lament, and this refrain has a long lineage up to and beyond Donald Horne's 'lucky country'.¹² It is to say, however, that 'economic' concepts, identities and problems have remained central to Australia public discourse. To take this story further would be to alter the relationship between theory and government. Where the government report was the main vehicle for projecting theoretical imaginings in the first half of the nineteenth century, by the twentieth century, university departments, think tanks, corporate research teams and rating agencies, as well as new kinds of independent commissions and boards of review, worked with government to maintain an equivalent picture of the world: in short, the age of expertise in concert with markets, finance and capitalisation. While this 'expertise' was initially mostly located within the office of government statisticians, historians are also now exploring the ways in which, after the First World War, economists' carved out a distinctive niche in the forms of the Economic Society of Australia (1924), the Commonwealth's Bureau of Economic Research (1929) and on commissions and in the public service throughout the turbulent 1930s and reconstructing 1940s.¹³ It was in such contexts that the 'economic' was preserved as essential, if increasingly arrogated to the narrow purview of university-trained technocrats.¹⁴

¹¹ It is for this reason, perhaps, that historians seeking a distinctive form of Australian economics have found it most readily in the relationships between experts and government. See, for example: Peter D. Groenewegen and Bruce J. McFarlane, *A History of Australian Economic Thought*. (London: Routledge, 1990).

¹² Donald Horne, *The Lucky Country* (Melbourne: Penguin, 2009 [1964]).

¹³ This has been a highly productive field in recent years. See: Carolyn Holbrook, "The Collaboration of Intellectuals and Politicians in the Postwar Reconstruction: A Reassessment", *Australian Historical Studies* 47 no. 2 (2016): 278-294; Stuart Macintyre, *Australia's Boldest Experiment: War and Reconstruction in the 1940s* (Sydney: New South Book, 2015); Sam Furphy (ed.) *The Seven Dwarfs and the Age of the Mandarins: Australian Government Administration in the Post-War Reconstruction Era* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2015); Alex Millmow, *A History of Australasian Economic Thought* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).

¹⁴ For a classic study of this phenomenon, see: Michael Pusey, *Economic Rationalism in Canberra: A Nation Building State Changes Its mind* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Looking forward might also shed new light on the character and relative strength of Australian unionism, who as bearers and manipulators of this economic tradition could better identify their claims on an economic terrain – and thus challenge the language of government – than their British or French counterparts, who maintained visions of utopian, socialist reformism. In particular, the distinctly Australian tradition of *labourism*, as a politics that begins by identifying with an economic agency, perhaps demands renewed scrutiny.¹⁵ On this view, the ‘rationalisation’ of the Hawke-Keating Accord might be seen less a betrayal of a ‘labour tradition’ than the continuation of adjustments and realignments in a two-century process of adhering, manipulating and redesigning a world supposedly held together, like puppet’s strings, by putative economic ‘laws’.¹⁶ Through these processes we might trace the ongoing colonisation of new problems by economic vocabulary, even as economists became more self-conscious of their ‘discipline’. As with settler colonialism, economisation has been an ongoing process, one of ‘economic imperialism’.¹⁷

This final point begs a second question, as to what the history of ‘theory’ and ‘government’ might mean for historians today? Almost from its inception, political economy, as a discipline, doctrine and way of speaking, suffered attacks as a dehumanising force, igniting an enduring ‘bitter argument between economists and human beings’, as Arnold Toynbee famously declared in his 1880 lectures.¹⁸ However, this dispute did not culminate in the rejection of ‘the Political Economy of Ricardo’ as ‘an intellectual imposture’, as Toynbee supposed, but its refurbishment as neoclassical economics, through a series of marginal, macroeconomic and econometric revolutions. In this sense, the ‘bitter argument’ continued throughout the twentieth century, and we do not need to look to

¹⁵ This is, of course, not say these traditions were not present in Australia. But if political economic discourse was as pervasive as I have suggested, it might explain how radicals coloured some of their claims with officialised economic discourse. The best history of this movement’s intellectual foundations remains: Frank Bongiorno, *The People’s Party: Victorian Labor and the Radical Tradition, 1875-1914* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1996).

¹⁶ For an attempt to think about the ‘neoliberal’ 1980s as a continuum rather than break with earlier economic traditions in the Australian context, see: Nicholas Brown, “‘A sense of number and reality’: economics and government in Australia”, *Economy and Society* 26 no. 2 (1997): 233-256.

¹⁷ Ben Fine and Dimitris Milonakis, *From Economic Imperialism to Freakonomics: The Shifting Boundaries between Economics and other Social Sciences*. (London: Routledge, 2009).

¹⁸ Arnold Toynbee, *Lectures on the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011 [1884]), 1.

extremes to see how. On the one hand, as McLean's recent history suggests, there remains a general commitment, in mainstream, behavioral and institutional schools, that economics, if properly calibrated to historical, cognitive and social circumstances, continues to operate as a 'science of wealth' for both national betterment and individual choice. On the other hand, and without appealing to its most strident critics, there is long tradition of heterodox economics, which, in the famous words of John K. Galbraith, has argued the 'conventional wisdom' of classical economics – its adherence to long-run growth, production and consumer demand – are outmoded assumptions for affluent societies that have comfortably met their material wants.¹⁹

Events since the 2008-09 Great Recession have, in many respects, exposed the adequacy of both these outlooks. The crisis has prompted a new round of attacks on mainstream economics, in Australia as much as anywhere, just as economists were relied upon for the subsequent 'recovery', to 'fix the economy'.²⁰ But the failures of governments, experts and commentators in not only foreseeing the financial crisis, but their disagreements over how to respond to it and comprehend the transformations in technology, employment and inequality which the crisis reflected, has brought into sharper focus the compromises forged in the historical relationship between theory and government. The decade since the crisis has been awash with predictions of societal Armageddon, encapsulated in Wolfgang Streeck's question, 'how will capitalism end'?²¹ What a number of scholars have shown in such critiques is that the Great Recession and its attendant challenges have not only been failures of 'the system' or 'regulation', but in some ways failures of language and thought itself. This has been analysed at the level of the derivative, which some scholars have reinterpreted not as a complex security but a linguistic act of promise-making, based on the logic of financial theory – promises

¹⁹ J.K. Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (London: Penguin, 1998 [1958]). For a more recent, Australian iteration of this argument, see: Clive Hamilton and Richard Denniss, *Affluenza: When Too Much IS Never Enough* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2005).

²⁰ For example: Frank Stilwell, "What's wrong with economics?" *Journal of Australian Political Economy* 80 (Summer 2017/18), 5-10.

²¹ Wolfgang Streeck, *How Will Capitalism End? Essays On A Failing System* (London: Verso, 2016); See also: Immanuel Wallerstein, Randall Collins, Michael Mann, Georgi Derluguian, and Craig Calhoun, *Does Capitalism Have a Future* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

which made impossible demands that could not be honoured.²² The consequences were ruinous. But such a critique is also pursuing government and policymaking, by recognising governmental responses to the Recession – in the United States, in Europe and indeed in Australia – appealed to the same reductive, theoretical principles that initially blinded authorities to the impending crisis.²³ As Judith Bessant has recently written, drawing on the critiques of Immanuel Wallenstein and Robert Unger, such responses have reflected the enduring inheritance of nineteenth-century determinist social scientific paradigms in political thought and practice, dictating that all political options are fixed and limited by imagined laws of ‘history’, ‘society’ or, indeed, ‘economy’.²⁴ In this sense, what is at stake, or should be the target of historical critique, is not the technical, quantifiable object, ‘the economy’, as much recent scholarship has contended, but the persistence of sterile, passive, technical maxims politicians routinely cling to. This was what Hannah Arendt, back in 1958 – the same year as Galbraith’s famous book – identified as the root of a contemporary ‘thoughtlessness’ in modern politics, founded in ‘the heedless recklessness or hopeless confusion or complacent repetition of “truths” which have become empty and trivial’.²⁵ In ways not dissimilar to Edmund Burke’s anxieties about ‘system’, political imagination, for Arendt, was fostered by cautioning against the claims of absolutes: whether scientific, artistic, philosophic or economic.²⁶

In this respect, this thesis has been a critical, if preliminary exercise in denaturalising the tacit, almost unconscious functioning of economic-speech in contemporary everyday politics, and life. As for the Colonial Office, CLEC and colonial immigration committees in the 1840s, so too for

²² Arjun Apparudai, *Banking on Words: The Failure of Language in the Age of Derivative Finance*. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015); Randy Martin, *Knowledge LTD: Towards a Social Logic of the Derivative* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015).

²³ For an exposition of this in the European case, see: Yanis Varoufakis, *Adults in the Room: My Battle with Europe’s Deep Establishment* (London: Vintage, 2018).

²⁴ Judith Bessant, *The Great Transformation: History for a Techno-Human Future* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018). See also: Immanuel Wallenstein, *Unthinking Social Science: The Limits of Nineteenth-Century Paradigms* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), and, *The Uncertainties of Knowledge* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004); Roberto Mangabeira Unger, *False Necessity: Anti-Necessitarian Social Theory in the Service of Radical Democracy* (London: Verso, 2001).

²⁵ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 5.

²⁶ Hannah Arendt, “Crisis in Culture”, in *Between Past and Future*, 222. See also: Hannah Arendt, “Truth and Politics”, in *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (London: Penguin, 2006 [1954]), 223-259.

treasurers, bureaucrats and commissions today: whether governments treat the ‘wage’, for example, as an economic necessity requiring ‘protection’, ‘flexibility’ or ‘agility’ in the face of the laws of supply and demand, or as a question of what we owe each other, will depend on the ‘community’ they imagine to be governing, and will determine the relations of our immediate, collective futures. Alexander Harris, for whatever he felt in that forest, still knew that just beyond the cedar trees were people who retained ways of speaking and relating that did not have recourse to simple maxims and principles. It exudes a clarity that is as salient today as it was for Harris: ‘They understand no theories of capital and labour ... all they feel is that they are wronged; all they see, the fact that it is done by those who are already rich’.

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