2.2 Landscapes or Inscapes? Representations of Space and Nature in the Lucy Gray Texts

I saw the inscape though freshly, as if my eye were still growing.[1]

I now explore an evolving sense of belonging and a certain spirituality in some colonial women's texts that emerges within the context of the bush countryside through which they travelled, or in which they camped or lived. Lucy Gray's 'first time' experiences are particularly valuable for this exercise as I trace her growing empathy for, and understanding of, her new environment. I also discuss briefly some descriptions of the natural environment in Addy Bowler's diary and memoirs.

I noted, in Chapter 1.4, that many British men in the early days of exploration and colonial settlement saw the Australian countryside much as a landscape painting, framed within the confines of their own intentions and desires. In fact, the term 'landscape' was originally a painter's term, and it was fashionable for nineteenth-century landscape artists to work in the style of the 'picturesque' or pretty, or the 'sublime'. The sublime evoked an elevated sense of viewing a pure and 'promised land' from a position of authority and control, while the picturesque landscape tastefully combined the best elements of aesthetically 'good' or 'pretty' art with direct observations of nature.[2]

Paul Carter suggests that, during early exploration, 'the landscape that emerges from the explorer's pen is not a physical object: it is an object of desire, a figure of speech outlining the writer's exploratory impulse'.[3] Similarly, some feminists have suggested that the language of much male colonial discourse positions

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[1] Gerard Manley Hopkins, journal entry quoted in Gardner, W.H., ed., *Gerard Manley Hopkins: Poems and Prose* (Melbourne: Penguin Books, 1986) 127.

[2] Chris Wallace-Crabbe, 'The Escaping Landscape', in *Intruders in the Bush: The Australian Quest for Identity*, ed. John Carroll (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) 159–60. See Chapter 1.4 of this thesis for more detail, and examples of the picturesque.

[3] Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Essay in Spatial History* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987) 81, 77.

the Australian landscape, in a metaphorical sense, as a female body of desire – virgin ground to be penetrated and possessed.[4] Alison Byerly also observes that recent writers on landscape have pointed to the diverse ways in which it functions as a symbolic space that helps to authorize the power of the controlling gaze that defines it. She cites W.J.T. Mitchell as claiming that the traditional representation of landscape is 'intimately bound up with the discourses of imperialism'.[5]

However, in spite of their generally striving for scientific objectivity in accordance with the imperial ideal, Kerry Heckenberg says there are some explorers who have been singled out for their successful combining of romance 'with the permanent qualities of an historical and scientific treatise'. For example, Major Mitchell's *Three Expeditions* with drawings, and George Gray's journals, both of which describe exploratory journeys into inland Australia in the first half of the nineteenth century, have been said to contain 'a happy blend of information and amusement'. It seems that romanticised observations were acceptable in explorers' journals if 'the selection of a typical image involved interpretation on the basis of experience'. However, Heckenberg sees Mitchell's use of topographic and picturesque compositional practices as complex, suggesting that different types of perspective construction suggest different kinds of viewing, or different ways of relating to the depicted landscape.[6] As I will demonstrate, this is evident in the ways in which Lucy Gray represents her bush surroundings in her journal, and in her separate paintings, as she grows more familiar with her new environment.

On the whole, however, imaginative accounts of inland Australia by explorers like Major Mitchell are in the minority and during the second half of the nineteenth century even Mitchell began to reduce the 'natural history' content in his later journal, joining others in a more 'dry' approach.[7] By then, as Simon Ryan says, with

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[4] Kay Schaffer, *Women and the Bush: Forces of Desire in the Australian Cultural Tradition* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 77–111; Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991) 75. Mills questions this feminist viewpoint, pointing out that there are colonial documents that do not gender the landscape.

[5] Alison Byerly, *Realism, Representation, and the Arts in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 20–21. See also Sara Mills, 'Gender and Colonial Space', *Journal of Gender, Place and Culture* 3, no. 2 (1996) 124–47. Mills cites the work of G. Rose, A.K. Mellor, M.L. Pratt and P. Yaeger concerning male and female perspectives on landscape – the male masterful gaze as against the female locus of relationships.

[6] Kerry Heckenberg, '"Monarch of All I Surveyed, and Lord of the Fowl and the Brute" or Man of Science: The Dilemma of the Explorer in Nineteenth-Century Australia', *Australasian Victorian Studies Journal* 9 (2003) 65–88.

[7] *Ibid.* 82. Describes contrasts with the dry writing style of Leichhardt's 1847 journal.

a wider and increasingly more educated reading audience, 'the artist and the scientist were being constructed as particular types of individual with ideal characteristics', with the idea of the explorer as hero becoming dominant.[8]

Because the ideological implications of the term 'landscape' render its use problematic, both in the context of the artist and the conqueror, I propose instead to introduce the term 'inscape', a word originally coined by the poet and Jesuit priest Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–1899). Hopkins was a contemporary of Lucy Gray, being born only four years after her. Although it is unlikely they ever met, and the timing of the publication of his poetry would appear to exclude the possibility that Lucy ever saw his work, there are aspects of their writing that reflect the general interest in botany prevalent at the time. For example, John Ruskin's delight in natural phenomena, and the moral and spiritual connotations that he recognised in nature, through artistic expression, are discernable in Lucy Gray's written and pictorial representations of the Australian bush, as they are in Hopkins' art and poetry.

Hopkins, like Lucy, lived in a prosperous middle-class environment, growing up in a home that encouraged scholarship and enquiry. While his mother was a devout member of the Church of England, his father 'had a passion for curious psychological problems and out-of-the-way knowledge', encouraging his children to study music and drawing. Later, in his poetry, Hopkins was to communicate through words 'the essence and individuality of visual forms in nature' that were introduced through his art.[9] Had Lucy been a man she, like Hopkins, might have studied at Oxford, where religious questioning was, in the mid-nineteenth century, creating tension between pious believers and more liberal thinkers. Hopkins himself grew disillusioned with the Church of England, converting to Catholicism in the 1860s. Meanwhile, with her ladies' education and marginal involvement in scientific matters, Lucy had to be content with her art, writing and reading. However, in her written and pictorial representations of the Australian bush Lucy evokes an 'essence' and 'individuality' similar to that found in Ruskin's writings and in Hopkins' poetry.

In his introduction to a book on Hopkins' writings, W.H. Gardner writes that Hopkins presented:

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[8] Simon Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye: How Explorers Saw Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). See also Heckenberg, '"Monarch of All I Surveyed, and Lord of the Fowl and the Brute" or Man of Science' 79–81.

[9] W.H. Gardner, ed., *Gerard Manley Hopkins* xvi.

> written observations on natural phenomena – on colour, organic form, movement, in fact the intrinsic quality of any object which was capable of striking through the senses and into the mind with a feeling of novelty and discovery.[10]

It was during this search for intrinsic qualities, and the desire to organize essential characteristics into a pattern or significant form, that Hopkins coined the term 'inscape'.[11] Many of the qualities mentioned by Gardner can be found in Lucy's texts, especially the sense of epiphany, or discovery, and so I use 'inscape' to describe a similar impulse in Lucy's representations of the Australian bush.

Lucy Gray was an extremely adaptable woman who was quick to recognise the inappropriate imposition of European values on the Australian landscape. Just before landing at Townsville and engaging more intimately with the bush, she writes:

> Everyone had told me that it [Australia] was a dreary, ugly, place but as I have often found the generality [sic] of people don't know what is pretty, unless they are told – Australians, especially, don't seem to care for any place that is quite wild & uncultivated. They prefer trim, well kept gardens & open country without many hills or trees.[12]

In this passage Lucy does not appear to empathise with the Eurocentric view of 'civilisation' and the idealised concept of 'pretty'. In any case, she sees them as inappropriate as a way of viewing the Australian countryside. In doing so, she questions the European trend in art that favoured the picturesque. Although fresh from England, Lucy's early attitude anticipates a growing affinity with, and understanding of, the Queensland bush as she and her husband Charles make their way up the Queensland coast in a steamer, heading for Townsville.

After landing and entering the bush on their way inland to Hughenden, a special dialogue begins to develop between Lucy and what, for her, is soon to become

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[10] *Ibid.* xx.
[11] *Ibid.* xx–xxi.
[12] Lucy Gray, 'Journal', 'Journal, Diaries, Correspondence and Fragments', *Lucy Gray Papers* (JOL OM 75–123) 5.

an inscape. However, that first journey on horseback is hot and dusty, and Lucy, like many newcomers to Australia, at first sees the bush as an unfriendly, almost hostile, place as she struggles to divorce herself from pleasant memories of the English countryside.

> Mr C told me that there were trees all the way along the road. I pictured to myself delightful shady roads. Alas they were not at all what I imagined – Trees there were in plenty but so ugly, tall & straight – very few leaves in proportion to their size, & those set on edgeways, giving the least possible shade – a birch or oak the same size I should think would have as many leaves as a dozen of these gums.[13]

Note the mention of British trees, as Lucy tries to introduce familiar points of reference for the benefit of those back home, and for herself. However, although disappointed at first, she is quick to emphasise any positive aspects of the ride which might bring welcome relief to those wishing to imagine her in pleasant surroundings.

> In the river beds or on the banks among the trees are very pretty one[s] called 'tea tree' with slender drooping branches bright green: others with tropical looking foliage broad leaves & delicious shade.[14]

Upon reaching the top of the escarpment Lucy recognises, from a new perspective, the strange beauty of the country they have just passed through, and sketches the scene.

> A few more steep ascents & we were at the top from where we had a lovely view looking back towards the sea. The mountains on either side. All the country we thought so ugly last night looked soft & green over the tree tops ~~in the distance~~ stretching away to the sea, with the blue hills of the islands in the distance.[15]

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[13] *Ibid.* 15.
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] *Ibid.* 21.

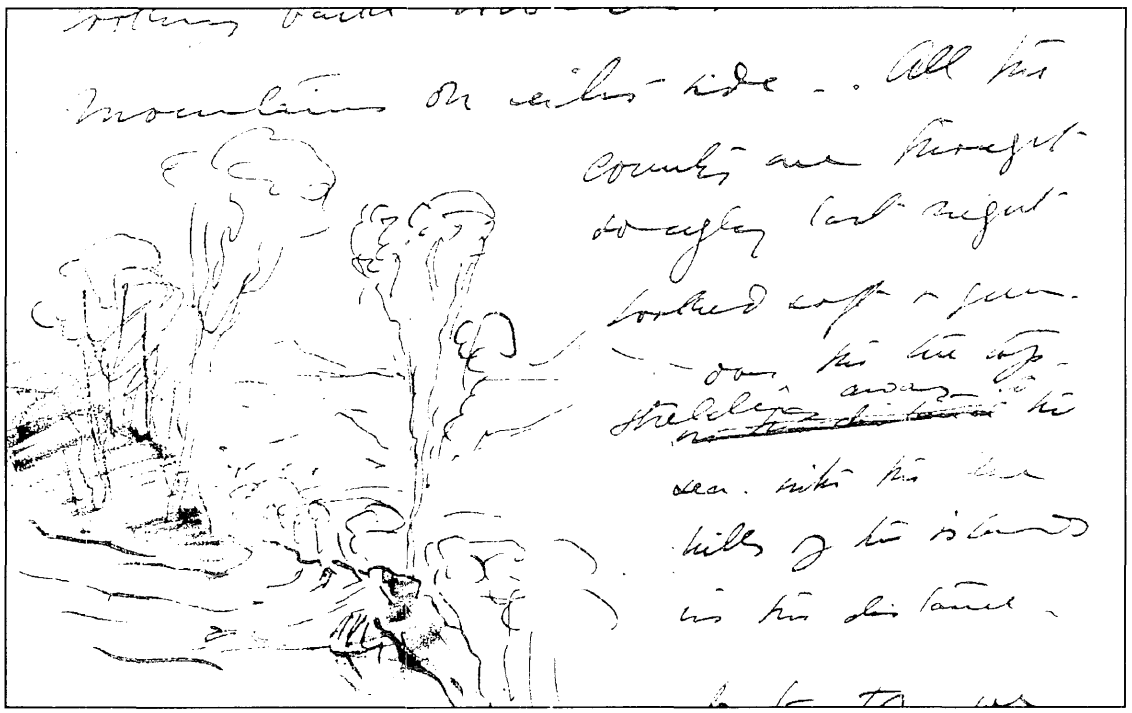

Fig. 1 Lucy Gray's sketch from the top of the range. Note the distant hills between the trees and the straight horizontal line in the middle distance on the right indicating the sea, with Magnetic Island beyond. The sketch complements and enhances the written text. It also demonstrates Lucy's attention to detail, and shows her experience with the accurate sketching necessary prior to a more formal watercolour painting. (LG, 'Journal' 21.)

Note the cross-out in the above extract, as Lucy avoids using the word 'distance' twice. There is evidence here of an aesthetic impulse at work, a conscious effort on the part of the writer to create an artistic literary effect, perhaps again with eventual publication in mind. As I noted at the end of Chapter 1.4, the watercolour painting of this same scene, although somewhat idealised in the picturesque tradition, suggests an amazing early 'feel' for the Australian countryside. (See Fig. 4, Appendix 2 and, for similar landscapes, Figs 16, 22 and 23, Appendix 2.)

Even Australian born artists like Louisa Atkinson often struggled to capture the essence of eucalyptus trees. In some of Atkinson's more picturesque vistas the artist loses the sense of inscape evoked in her more intimate drawings of flora and fauna. Taught by her mother, Charlotte, who was a follower of John Glover, many of Louisa's paintings have a distinct look of Glover's work about them, which suggests a certain lack of confidence in her own concept of Australian landscapes.[16] Although newly arrived, there is little evidence of lack of confidence in Lucy's wonderful depictions of the Australian bush. However, after being in the colonies for over a

[16] Elizabeth Lawson, *The Natural Art of Louisa Atkinson* (Sydney: State Library of New South Wales, 1995) 31, 38. The Glover influence can be seen in illustrations throughout the book.

year, she admits to struggling at times with her representations of the natural environment. In her diary she notes:

> Began a sketch of the same gum trees – very unsuccessful. No shade no colour that can be defined and expressed successfully.[17]

Contrasts of light and shade in Europe may have been easier to draw and paint than the more subdued tones of the Australian bush. However, Lucy's keen sense of observation and her determination to succeed, are reflected in the Australian pictures she left behind. (For paintings by Lucy of scenes in Britain see Figs 9, 10, 11, 12, Appendix 2.)

A positive aspect becomes even more noticeable in Lucy's writing when she and Charles settle at last on their new station, Glendower. Note the poetic and sensuous language used to describe her favourite bush spaces and special times of day.

> It is pleasant riding after dark in this [strange] land of shadowless trees. The twilight is very short, but we have the afterglow in the sky long after[wards] with first clear crimson light, not colour on the clouds, there may not be one, but light all over the sky & when it has faded there comes a hard belt of clear green between the deep orange on the horizon & the dusky blue overhead. Just now there are so many sweet smelling flowering shrubs on the river banks, that the air is delicious in the early morning or evening.[18]

Lucy sees the colours of the evening with an artist's eye. Meanwhile, juxtaposed with the visual encounter, is the perfume of the sweet–smelling flowering shrubs. One of Lucy's favourite words is 'delicious' and, in using it to describe sensations other than taste, she succeeds in producing an evocative interaction of senses. The air is full of fresh and exciting scents, which marry with pleasant sensations on the surface of the skin. After a hot dry spell, Lucy comments in her journal: 'Delicious warm rain, I cannot resist going out in it. A real "shower bath" the only kind I like'.[19] The mouth-watering feel of cold rain clears the way for 'delicious' air, which can be

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[17] LG, 'Diary' 28, April 1870.
[18] LG, 'Journal' 12a.
[19] *Ibid.* 2b.

tasted, smelt, felt, and even observed in the form of a sunset. Not only is Lucy engaging with her surroundings in a very personal and sensitive way, but with evocative language she manages to involve the reader as well.

Joy Hooton notes that many female Australian authors writing about their association with place 'perceive the land as emotional, and as speaking to the inner self'.[20] She identifies an intimate involvement with the land in some autobiographical texts by women, detecting, through language, the same evocative interaction of the senses that I have found in Lucy Gray's writing. In Eve Langley's *The Pea Pickers*, for example, Langley writes that the wattle was 'so golden and fluffy soft that I felt as though my eyes were hands'.[21] Similarities can be found within the work of Gerard Manley Hopkins. In the following passage he is describing the sky as observed through the fingers of his hand as he lies in Hyde Park, London.

> It was not transparent and sapphire-like, but turquoise-like, swarming and blushing round the edge of the hand and in the pieces clipped in by the fingers, the flesh being sometimes sunlit, sometimes glassy with reflected light, sometimes lightly shadowed in that violet one makes with cobalt and Indian red.[22]

Like Lucy Gray and Eve Langely, Hopkins manages to include the body, and sensual language, in his descriptions of nature. Also like Lucy, he sees his surroundings with an artist's eye, likening the colours to his artist's palette. There is a similarity in the way they describe the changing colours of an Australian outback evening and a London sky, suggesting an acute awareness of light and colour. Both use qualifications in 'not colour on the clouds' (Lucy) and 'not transparent and sapphire-like' (Gerard). The same attention to temporality, movement and overall sensory delight is evident in both extracts. The scenes become inscapes that not only involve the body but the senses as well.

In north Queensland during the wet season storms relieve the tension of stifling hot days and bring with them a heightened sense of awareness. Lucy's choice of language serves to emphasise the relief felt after the approach of 'a tremendous

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[20] Joy Hooton, *Stories of Herself When Young: Autobiographies of Childhood by Australian Women* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1990) 342.
[21] *Ibid.* 348.
[22] W.H. Gardner, ed., *Gerard Manley Hopkins* 109–10. (Journal entry.)

whirlwind of dust and threatening piles of steel gray [sic] clouds', which herald the breaking of the dry season. Lucy continues:

> The wind passes – there is an omir ous silence – a blaze of lightening, a crackling peal of thunder, right overhead, then comes the welcome deluge. In a couple of hours it is over. All the little creeks & gullies that have been foaming and rushing, are beginning to calm down, there are delicious smells of firm damp earth & a magnificent sunset amongst the tattered thunder clouds.[23]

The rivers and gullies are given human characteristics as they begin to 'calm down', and 'delicious smells' merge with the visual impact of a 'magnificent sunset'. With the 'tattered thunder clouds', reminiscent of a burst balloon, Lucy calls to imagination the dramatic event that has taken place, an event which has put an end to the oppressive heat. She has captured a thunderstorm in one of her watercolour paintings too, where a 'welcome deluge' can be seen slanting down from thunder clouds that hang over hills. Her heightened sense of colour and drama is obvious, even in this copy from an old and, more than likely faded, original. (Fig. 16, Appendix 2.)

There is something resembling what I perceive as an Aboriginal sense of country and spirituality in Lucy's descriptions of the natural environment. Compare this song-poem by Sam Mitchell from the Pilbara in Western Australia in which he engages in a similar way to Lucy with the natural environment during the wet season.

> After sundown the clouds start to burn
> A big one is bending low, stays and breaks up,
> Then it rounds again and raises its forehead high.
> On both ends sheet lightning shines.
> In the middle where the first layer is gone,
> You can see the flash, even inside your home.
> Everything dissolves.
> In the desert, wide-spread falls the cloudburst,
> Drenching all the trees between the two sandhills.[24]

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[23] LG, 'Journal' 2b.

[24] Deborah Bird Rose, *Nourishing Terrains* (Canberra: Australian Heritage Commission, 1996) 14. Song by Sam Mitchell, sung in Njangumera language and translated by him.

Here, 'the clouds burn', 'bend low' and 'breakup'. One 'raises its forehead high', producing an imaginative juxtapositioning of natural elements and human characteristics, reminiscent of some of the language and imagery in Lucy's journal.

Fig. 2 Drawing by Lucy Gray of a north Queensland waterhole. Note the emphasis on the foreground which allows the viewer easy access to the immediate scene. This differs from the picturesque tradition where pristine distant views are framed artistically by foreground shapes and the viewer's gaze is drawn through, discouraging actual participation in the scene, while encouraging an objective and 'masterful' gaze. (Copy supplied by Bryony Hollinrake, Canada.)

In the drawing in Fig. 2, Lucy evokes something of Sam Mitchell's sense of spirituality, with just a touch of gothic. Because of the emphasis on foreground in this picture, there an effect of dramatic immediacy as the bark from the gum trees hangs down, reflecting darkly in the water. This drawing was not with the journal, but is almost certainly of Keelbottom Creek, which Lucy and Charles encountered during their first journey to Hughenden.[25] The relevant journal description reads as follows:

[25] Information from handwritten annotations in the margin of 'Journey to Hughenden', *Queensland Heritage* 1, no. 1 (1964/6) 16, supplied by Joan and Gordon Flood of Hughenden.

> Suddenly we came to an end of the glare & dust – we found ourselves ~~on the high bank~~ among thick trees, looking down at lovely cool shining water, overhung with drooping trees & alive with screaming cockatoos and unnumerable parrots. We had still some distance to go & the road lay along the bank of the river, at times crossing or following the bed. The trees were beautiful with slender hanging branches like willow very bright green & immense stems, which looked as if they were wrapped in quantities of whitey brown paper.[26]

These early written and pictorial representations of river gums evoke an epiphany. Such exuberant representations by an outsider experiencing a special bush space for the first time are, in many ways, unique. They are also historically valuable, as much of the countryside has now been changed by grazing and farming.

Lucy was unusually quick to recognise differences between British and Australian vegetation and topology, and to accept and embrace those differences. In Fig. 17, Appendix 2 there is a rare example of how the artist practised suitable pen and brush strokes before attempting a drawing or a sketch of unfamiliar vegetation. Intense interaction between viewer and nature can be seen too in the untitled painting in Fig. 14, Appendix 2 where forbidding rocks at the edge of a gorge dominate the scene and both confront and engulf the viewer. Lucy's fascination with the many moods of the north Queensland rivers and the gorge country that they follow is vividly reflected in her written and pictorial texts.

Interestingly, Addy Bowler's descriptions of the natural environment do not contain the same evocative language and sense of inscape as do the writings and illustrations of Lucy Gray. Although there is some language involving the senses, Addy's creative writing is less imaginative, perhaps again because of her comparative lack of education. However, it may also have been because the Australian environment was not entirely new to her, so she tended to take her natural surroundings more for granted. In the following extract from her memoirs Addy's interest lies more in the mood of the moment as it is recalled. She commences with 'A Memory of late in the fifties', and then describes camping in the trees beside the road.

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[26] LG, 'Journal' 24–25.

> A merry party of nine or ten old friends and young start for a trip to the Lachlan and [we] camp[ed] for the night under a huge gum tree with the fire light playing on its branches high above our heads and now and then comes the rustle and squeak of the opossum who does not like the light and no doubt thinks we have no right there disturbing his evening meal. The rushing swish of the night birds flying high in the brilliant starlit sky like soft dark blue velvet studded with diamonds -- the distant lowing of cattle and the tinkle of our horse bells which grows fainter and fainter as they stray further into the forest for food – at last when tired of songs and stories some weird and some comic and the fire is growing dim and we each try to find a softer spot on mother earth for sharp bones and to fit our heads or backs more comfortably into our saddle pillows we fall asleep.[27]

By writing in the present tense Addy attempts to relive a past event while, at the same time, sharing a special memory with future readers. Although descriptive, this account does not bring with it quite the same sense of inscape and inclusion as do Lucy's various accounts of camping and bush life. The 'possum' in Addy's account remains outside the circle of light, the cattle 'low' in the distance, and the night birds 'fly high', while 'Mother earth' is something uncomfortable to lie on, not something with a 'delicious smell' as it is for Lucy. Lucy is also inclined to be more specific with the actual identification of 'cockatoos' and 'parrots' rather than resorting to general terms, such as 'night birds'.

Strangely, for native-born Addy the bush is still a 'forest', very much an English term, while Lucy is quick to recognise the appropriateness of using Australian words like 'bush', 'gully' and 'creek', which better describe her new environment. As she attempts to translate colonial conditions into a form meaningful to those back home, Lucy is conscious that she must describe in detail an environment that is essentially unimaginable to them. Meanwhile, never having visited the 'old country', Addy still clings to terminology that originated there, accepting it 'as is' without having any point of reference that might suggest its inadequacy for representing a very different natural environment. Therefore,

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[27] Adelaide Bowler, 'Bowler (Suttor) Diaries and Memoirs 1840 –1890', (private collection, Sydney) book 2: 14–15.

familiarity with her surroundings, and lack of experience with other countries and cultures, can be seen to shape the way in which Addy writes.

Both Lucy and Addy write in some detail about the insects that share spaces with them. For Addy, most are considered invaders or, at best, as something alien and distasteful. Rather than viewing them with a sense of discovery, she concentrates on their negative qualities. Lucy, on the other hand, considers certain insects interesting objects for study, going so far as to speak of them in human terms. This might again be a reflection of her background, with her doctor father guiding her education, and the scientific milieu of Parsonstown still informing her thinking and writing. (See Chapter 1.3.)

After a few early concerns Lucy is happy to share her homestead space with spiders and other insects. We follow her imaginative and enquiring mind as she writes about these encounters. Interestingly, her writing at this stage is more retrospective than usual, with the use of past tense, as in 'I used to put my lamp', suggesting the account was written some time after the event – even perhaps after they left Australia.

> I even had a pet one [a spider]. I don't know whether he recognised a friend in me, but I certainly befriended him. Every night when I was going to bed I used to put my lamp on the same place on a table against a white wall which attracted quantities of insects, moths, etc. Immediately a large tarantula used to come out of his hole, take up his position in the light, & watch for his prey. His quickness was wonderful. He darted from one side to the other when he saw one that he liked, holding those he had caught already all squeezed together in a solid lump in his 'hand' which he ate steadily, all the time on watch for more. In daytime he rarely came out, but I could see his eyes like a double row of diamonds as he lay in ambush at the back of his den. In winter he made a barricade of little chips of wood, which quite shut up the entrance & I imagine he slept out the cold weather there.[28]

[28] LG, 'Journal' IIc–IIIc.

Lucy's close observation of this particular spider is beautifully recorded and humanised. There is something especially poetic in the line: 'I could see his eyes like a double row of diamonds as he lay in ambush'. In befriending the spider, Lucy finds a way to pass the time while Charles is away. Rather than complaining about loneliness she uses her imagination to write a story about the spider's habits and adventures. This shows an inventiveness that is typical of this particular woman, and of many others who searched for ways to pass the time in remote regions. My own interest in art and poetry came, not only from my parents' encouragement, but also from an isolation that encouraged independence and creativity.

Addy's interest in insects and crawling things is more negative – even defensive – in contrast to Lucy's more positive accounts. She seems to have lacked the enquiring mind of her colonial counterpart, perhaps again a reflection of their backgrounds. Unusual occurrences, situating animals as alien or 'other', are reported in Addy's writings, while 'normal' activities are supposedly seen as not worthwhile mentioning, although the horses that they depend upon appear often. In the following memoir extracts Addy dwells upon two unusual events involving frogs.

> Borambil some time in the sixties a great storm of rain came on one afternoon and from under the house and verandahs came frogs of all variety in hundreds some beautifully marked on the back with a cross of two or three colours and others spotted – at the same time came out innumerable little black beetles and Willie and I sat and watched the frogs picking these up and swallowing them, the frog would jump after one and pick it up and then sit straight up till the beetle went down h s throat and so he would go on until he could hold not more. Sometimes I wondered whether these frogs came down with the rain or from under the house certainly we never knew they were there.[29]

This is a rather unusual subject choice for Addy, who is usually more inclined to concentrate on matters pertaining to human activity. Although her description of the frogs' unusual behaviour and appearance is appealing, her fascination with frogs soon turns to repulsion as she remembers a nasty incident.

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[29] AB book 2: 13.

> Another very wet season frogs were troublesome in the house – we used to have sponge baths in the bed rooms which were filled at night for the morning bath but should you go for a bath at night you would find a rim of frogs as close as they could flock round the edge of the bath ... there was nothing for it but a broom to sweep them off and out – there were some horrid frogs that would literally walk up the walls and lodge on the top of windows and doors and then flop down on your bare body.[30]

Addy's emphasis on personal inconvenience and disgust contrasts strangely with Lucy's general enthusiasm. For Addy, animals are usually seen as 'other', while for Lucy they have almost the same importance as human beings, at least in her writings. Again, this could be due to the novelty of the Australian bush for Lucy, as compared with its familiarity for native-born Addy. Anticipated readership must also be taken into account.

However, both women were repelled by centipedes. Lucy writes:

> Among the myriads of insects that invade us in the wet season, there are a great many interesting ones, especially when one has become accustomed to them – Centipedes excepted. I cannot overcome my obsession to them. They always creep about as if they knew they were evil & their intentions guilty.[31]

These insects, like the others that Lucy describes, are anthropomorphosised in that they 'know' they are evil, and have 'guilty intentions'. However, such stories cannot be seen to dominate an otherwise cheerful journal for family and friends, and centipedes with their evil characteristics are soon left behind as Lucy moves on to other matters less likely to concern her readers.

Addy Bowler is not so reticent in her dairy. On 30 October 1866 she writes:

> I killed a large centipede carrying a large moth into the house today so suppose they live upon insects.

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[30] *Ibid.* book 2: 13.
[31] LG, 'Journal' Ic.

The casual 'I suppose they live upon insects' suggests that Addy had only a passing scientific interest in the flora and fauna of the region, unlike Lucy who recorded the habits of insects in more detail. On 1 November 1866, the centipede saga continues.

> A very hot day – Willie went to Cendobolin and stayed [to] tea. I had a battle with a centipede quite 6 inches long in the sitting room.[32]

Addy sees centipedes as a threat, while they are more of a curiosity for Lucy.

Snakes are also something that Addy does battle with, although (surprisingly) they are hardly ever mentioned in Lucy's writings. She perhaps left them out because she did not wish to alarm readers who believed dangerous snakes to be one of the extreme hazards of colonial life. However, there is brief mention in a fragment of how, during a big flood in the Flinders River in 1870, the reptiles clung to trees to escape the rising water, and human beings who also sought shelter in the trees, were forced to eat them, along with rats, in order to survive.[33]

With snakes already familiar to her Australian readers, Addy describes encounters in detail. On 26 January 1870 she writes in her diary:

> When Willie was in Melbourne I was sure I used to hear snakes on the verandah at night. Of course Willie thought it was only my imagination when I told him but last night after tea I heard the same noise and gaining courage by Willie's presence I took a light and said I was going to look for the snake and sure enough as I opened the door there he was on the verandah and fortunately Willie killed it making the second in the same place.[34]

At the time this was written Addy already had small children, and the maternal instinct to protect them may have made her particularly concerned about the presence of snakes around the house. However, she does not mention them in her earlier diary, although encounters must have been a common occurrence in the Bathurst district. In her journal Lucy tried to console the folk back home, while Addy simply recorded adventures with animals and insects that were unusual in her daily routine. In doing

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[32] AB book 2: 2.
[33] LG, 'Fragment'.
[34] AB book 2: 8.

so, their writings reveal ways in which colonial women with very different backgrounds managed to establish a sense of place in relation to the natural world.

The following description of a Queensland watercourse is another good example of how Lucy married human action and human sensitivities with natural phenomena. During the dry season the Flinders River is simply a string of disconnected waterholes or, in some places, simply sand and rock, with water running just beneath the surface. The river held a special fascination for Lucy, who loved swimming in the 'delicious' cool water when there were still pools remaining, which she and her servants dug deeper when necessary.

> Here & there the water had remained in deep shady pools lying asleep under the shelter of some high rock till the season of storm & rain came again, when it would have to join the other in a race for the sea.[35]

Lucy's pools take on human attributes such as 'lying asleep', and her flooded river joins the others in a 'race for the sea'. The romantic tone of this extract reflects the writer's education, and perhaps her reading of popular novels. We also get a glimpse of Hopkins' 'deep-down things' as nature becomes something in which one can immerse oneself in a both physical and spiritual sense.[36]

As described in Chapter 2.1, Addy Bowler often mentions climatic conditions at out-back Borambil. However, she does not use the same poetic language as Lucy to describe cloud formations and rain. Just the same, it is interesting to see descriptions of nature entering her discourse after she leaves the social life of Bathurst behind and moves to a place where loneliness and boredom encourage observations beyond the human sphere. Here is an extract from her diary dated 15 February 1869.

> Willie drove me and the children up the paddock to see the river coming down – it was curious to watch the tiny streams breaking over the end of a large hole as it was filled and creep along under the dry leaves into the next hole it seemed like a snake moving under the leaves until it becomes a strong stream.[37]

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[35] *Ibid.* IX.
[36] Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'God's Grandeur', poem 8, ll 9–10, in Gardner, W.H., ed., *Gerard Manley Hopkins* 27.
[37] AB book 2: 6.

Fig. 3 Pools in the Flinders River below the old Glendower homestead where Lucy swam. (Photographer: M.Vivers, August 2005.)

Fig. 4 The Flinders River in 'a race for the sea'. Here the water floods across the road near the present Glendower homestead during a wet season. Compare this recent photograph with Lucy's evocative watercolour painting of the Flinders in flood, Fig. 22, Appendix 2. (A recent photograph by Clive Poole of Glendower. Exact date unknown.)

Unlike Lucy, in this extract Addy does not use anthropomorphic language in her description of a flood. Although the tiny streams 'creep', tropes such as 'like a snake moving under the leaves' refer the reader back to the natural world rather than to human activity. Addy situates herself somewhat outside the event she is describing, whereas Hopkins and Lucy Gray become part of the natural environment they attempt to represent.

There is no doubt that education and background dictated the ways in which Addy and Lucy represented their colonial surroundings, and I discuss this further in Chapter 2.3. Addy lived in an environment where one's acceptance into the society of the landed gentry was important for people like the Bowlers. It was, however, an insular society clinging to what it saw as enduring British values. Lucy, on the other hand, grew up in a society where some people were already beginning to question traditional beliefs – including religious beliefs. Although her education appears to have been generally focussed on female pursuits, education and scientific enquiry were very much part of her life. As young men, Lucy's brothers, Thomas James, Joseph Henry Ernest and John Albert Robinson received extensive training in architecture and engineering, both in England and Europe, and made a name for themselves in Japan, China, the United States and New Zealand.[38] Had it not been for Victorian values that excluded women from tertiary education and most public activities, Lucy and her sisters might have been equally successful. Lucy had, however, learned to ride as a child in Ireland and appears to have kept up with her riding until approximately two years before she came to Australia.[39] It was, of course, from horseback that Lucy first encountered and observed the Australian bush at close hand. Her vivid descriptions of her first encounters with the natural environment help readers today to better visualise some of the unique situations in which newcomers found themselves when they first arrived in Australia.

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[38] M. M. Nagata, 'The Waters Brothers: Their Mining Business in the United States', n.d., http://www.denniston.co.nz/Maruyama.pdf [cited 18 September 2006].

[39] Anne Janet Allingham, 'Victorian Frontierswomen: The Australian Journals and Diaries of Lucy and Eva Gray 1868–1872, 1881–1892' (MA Thesis, James Cook University of North Queensland, 1987) vol. 1: 68–69; LG, 'Journal' 19–20.

Fig. 5 Thomas James Waters (1842–1898). Trained as an architect but also practised as an engineer in Japan and later in New Zealand and the United States. Born two years after Lucy, his name is listed as one of those to whom Lucy wrote from north Queensland. Lucy and Charles may even have considered joining him in Japan.
(Allingham, MA Thesis, 1: 83 and Nagata, 'The Waters Brothers' n.p.)

Fig. 6 John Albert Robinson Waters (1846–1902). Worked as a civil and mining engineer in Japan and the United States. Lucy wrote to him from Queensland. He and his brothers eventually ran a very successful mining consultant business in the United States.
(Nagata, 'The Waters Brothers' n.p.)

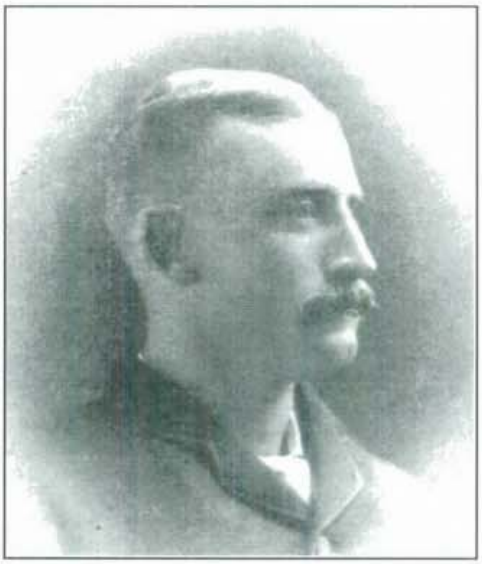

Fig. 7 Joseph Henry Ernest Waters (1851–1893). Very successful as a mining and civil engineer. Studied at the Royal School of Mines in London and elsewhere. After working in Japan, he became an international consultant on mining, and set up business with his brothers in the US. Fond of hunting, fishing and gambling, he committed suicide after his wife's death in England in 1892.
(Photographs and information from Nagata, 'The Waters Brothers', n.p.)

However, Paul Carter says that historians tend to overlook first encounters, and see them as more suitable for literary genres such as biography, fiction and epic poems. He explains that 'unique beginnings and unrepeatable differences do not lead to any lasting result and thus lie outside the mainstream of history'.[40] Although Carter is, in this case, referring to inter-racial encounters, his comments could also apply to first encounters with Australia's natural environment. He writes:

> What historians need is a method of interpretation, a textual hermeneutics that will lend their readings of primary material some semblance of consistency and plausibility ... in analysing the events of contact history, the interpretative method has to be matched to the text's poetic content, [and] the poetic structure of the events represented there.[41]

What Carter does not emphasise, or perhaps even recognise, is that women's life writing often contains a poetic element which can evoke intentions and emotions beyond the scope of other texts. The poetics of early communication, both between the European settlers and the Aboriginal people, and between settlers and the land, is beautifully portrayed in the writing and illustrations of women like Lucy Gray. Their writing stimulates the reader's imagination, initiating a deeper understanding of particular circumstances, and colonial situations in general, thus providing a foundation for a better knowledge of how accommodation and acculturation developed alongside a better understanding of the Australian bush.

I now look more closely at ways in which Lucy Gray describes her camping experiences in far north Queensland, and discuss how her pictures and paintings of inscapes add an extra dimension to her written representations. In the extract below she tells how she and Charles camped away from the homestead for a period, living in a makeshift hut in the dry bed of the Flinders River, while Charles dug wells for the cattle.

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[40] Paul Carter, *Living in a New Country: History, Travelling and Language* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992) 164.
[41] *Ibid.* 174–76.

> C [Charles] has been trying an experiment of watering the cattle at tanks made in the sandy bed of the river, to save the trouble of taking them away & bringing them back when the river comes down. The water runs under the sand in the dry season about a foot below the surface. It has only to be dug out & logs placed to keep the sand from coming in & there is a good supply of water. The first was made fifteen miles from the station -- we took Nungita and Walladui & went down there to camp. C made a delightful summer house like a large tent only covered it with boughs instead of canvass so thick that not a speck of sunshine came through.
>
> Our camp was in a clump of trees in the middle of the main stream. The river here was diverted into several branches at the time – showing only white sand. Nungita dug little wells everywhere for different uses. One close to a little tent in which I chose to fill my bath. Another for drinking water only, another for washing etc.

Such domestic arrangements, including a bathing area suitable for a woman, add an extra dimension to most traditional accounts of bush camping, more inclined to leave such matters unsaid. A special relationship appears to have developed between mistress and servant during this unique experience in a lonely bush setting. Lucy continues:

> My chief amusement was watching the birds coming to drink at the pools – I cannot imagine where they got water before we made them. There was none on the surface that we knew of within eight or ten miles. I daresay they had some little hole at the root of a tree somewhere that we did not know of. I would fill up Nungita's wells with sand, except one so that all the birds had to come to it.
>
> If I sat close by it there would be great talking & consultation overhead – at length an adventurous one would hop closer & come to drink, then another & another until there was a close ring around the pool & a continuous flapping of wings going up & down. There were quantities of tiny gray [sic] ones with crimson spots & bars & crimson beaks [finches] and a little solitary black thing with scarlet wings not bigger than a large butterfly [probably a mistletoe bird]. With these there were numbers of ~~parrots chiefly~~ cockatoos

> & small parrots, & towards evening, flocks of pigeons. They used to come running along the sand in hundreds close together, their heads stretched up on the look out for danger. On an alarm they stopped like one & either took flight, or swept on again to the water. There were also emus, wild Turkeys & kangaroos – the latter came at night with the cattle.[42]

Once again we see humanisation in this description, as the birds 'talk' and 'consult'. Even the unique personalities of the various bird species are observed and recorded, as the pigeons 'come running ... their heads stretched up on the look out for danger'. This demonstrates how closely Lucy observed the inhabitants of her new inscape. Although a mixture of artistic and objective observation can be detected, encouraged no doubt during her formative years, her depiction of intimate space-sharing with the native birds bears comparison with the Aboriginal concept of spiritual relationships.

Fig. 8 'Our Camp in the River' – Lucy's sketch of their camp in the bed of the Flinders. Note the man in a large hat carrying a rifle, while another man works on the hut in the background. The artist does not include herself in the picture, but a campfire and smoke can be seen in front of the camp, a symbol of temporary domesticity. (LG, 'Journal' 8a.)

[42] LG, 'Journal' 7a–10a.

Fig. 9 Bushy islands in the middle of the 'dry' Flinders River today, similar to the one described and sketched by Lucy Gray. (Photographer: M. Vivers, August 2005.)

For example, Paddy Fordham Wainburranga, a Rembarrnga man of Arnhem Land, speaks in the following way about his country and its birds.

> All the birds are your relations. There are different kinds of birds here. They can't talk to you straight up. You've got to sing out to them so they can know you... That's why I talked to the birds this morning, and all the birds were happy. All the birds were really happy and sang out: 'Oh! That's a relation of ours. That's a relation we didn't know about'. That's the way they spoke, and they were happy then to sing out. [43]

Although cultural differences give Paddy's birds a more spiritual dimension, being part of Aboriginal heritage and extended family, and Lucy's birds are simply metaphorical human beings, I detect similarities. For both writers, the birds are described as having human attributes although, for Paddy, they have feelings as well. They can be happy or sad, and can communicate directly with human beings.

[43] Rose, *Nourishing Terrains* 15.

Although for Lucy, the birds talk and consult with each other, not with her, like Paddy she manages to draw the birds into her personal space, or inscape. They provide her with a sense of belonging, suggesting a certain intimacy which, in my opinion, is closer to an Aboriginal sense of place and spirituality than the more impersonal representations of animals and landscapes depicted in much colonial discourse.

Frank Ankersmit, citing Hayden White, explains that understanding, through the use of 'tropology', the use of metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, or irony, has the advantage of rendering the unfamiliar, familiar.[44] Apart from the spiritual aspect, by humanising an alien environment through her writing, Lucy attempts to translate the Queensland bush and its inhabitants into a domain of experience familiar to both herself and her family. The male writers I have examined are less likely to do this, or to dwell upon spatial events for their own sake. For example, although Robert Gray does not completely ignore the natural environment in his story about his life in and around Hughenden, any intimacy he might have felt with nature is not dwelt upon in his writing. Below is a description of birds from his *Reminiscences*, unusual in an account that focuses on sheep and cattle grazing, that is in some ways similar to that of his sister-in-law. This event supposedly took place on his first trip to Hughenden, but was almost certainly reconstructed from accumulated memories, and added to make his book more interesting.

> We had a light dray and tarpaulin under which to sleep, and at dawn the butcher bird would commence his melodious warble announcing to us that it was time to be stirring, and to put the ashes of the fire together to cook our breakfast. With the first appearance of the sun the air would be filled with the harsh cry of the cockatoo and the chatter and warble of birds in great variety, fluttering amongst the foliage of the high trees whose topmost leaves, stirred by an imperceptible breeze, glistened in the morning sun. The aggressive crow, with his head on one side, would watch our preparations, whilst the perky butcher bird hopped round on the look-out for some chance bit of meat or crumb of damper.[45]

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[44] F. R. Ankersmit, *History and Tropology: The Rise and Fall of Metaphor* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) 9.
[45] R. Gray, *Reminiscences – India and North Queensland 1857–1912* (London: Constable, 1913) 60.

Like Lucy, Robert describes individual species of birds and their peculiarities. This is a remarkably imaginative passage in an otherwise more objective account, but is still only an interlude in a narrative mostly devoted to more 'manly' matters, such as running a sheep and cattle station. In fact, read in the context, this is a narrative device rather than an account of the behaviour of birds for its own sake. It is a small, rather insignificant interruption in a forward-moving narrative describing the journey from Townsville to Hughenden and the establishment of a new station. Unlike Lucy's birds that share a particular inscape with her, Robert Gray's birds are simply part of the colonial landscape that he and his friend are penetrating, with the ultimate aim of material gain.

Robert, also like Lucy, writes of constructing wells for the stock, but his is a more practical account that focuses upon the technology of securing water:

> Everything now depended upon our getting water there, so collecting the sheep we took them thither...
>
> We brought down to this place a few sheets of galvanised iron to form the sides of a well, and after clearing away the debris of leaves and sticks, we soon found water, and as the sand was deep it was evident we had struck at last a good supply. Fortunately I had in store a roll of canvas, almost twenty yards in length, and whilst the well was in progress, I procured saplings and nailed them on to posts along the sand, and put the canvas between the rails to form a trough.[46]

This description emphasises male control, detailing how water was sometimes supplied to stock, but saying little about other animals, and even human beings, that may have been involved. This is a good example of a cause and effect narrative that focuses on specific matters and ignores those aspects of colonial life and colonial experience seen to be peripheral to the business of stock and station management.

Lucy's birds exist as part of a growing relationship between herself and the natural environment – as joint participants in a self-contained inscape. Their inclusion brings with it no ulterior motive, apart from an attempt to better understand the environment both for the writer's own satisfaction and for her reading audience.

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[46] *Ibid.* 120–21.

Spatial descriptions such as this are a special feature of women's life writing. By recognising this, we become acutely aware of some of the things left unsaid in traditional colonial discourse, as landscapes as sites for control and material progress are replaced by inscapes which nurture relationships between men, women and nature.

I have argued that artistic expression and poetic language have the power to suggest something akin to the spiritual where natural phenomena, or inscapes, are concerned. However, because of the timeless and subjective nature of spirituality, historians have tended to avoid the subject, or at least marginalise it – although some have been able to approach the matter in a more 'objective' way as they studied, for instance, the history of certain religious denominations in Australia.[47]

More recently, historians like Peter Read have begun research into a non-Aboriginal sense of belonging akin to what was initially seen as uniquely Indigenous.[48] Although Read's work does not include a gender perspective, Alan Atkinson has suggested that a search for the sacred sometimes appears just beneath the surface of some women's texts – a fact, he says, historians often ignore. Some women's writing, says Atkinson, describes a 'strange atmospherics' that can tie a 'sense of place to a kind of spiritual immanence'. As such, women are more open than men to the way in which 'a certain spot and a certain moment might be peculiar and distinct'.[49] This, as I have said, is partly because male discourse is usually expected to comply with a cause-and-effect narrative style that denies the writer the opportunity to explore a particular space or experience for its own sake.

Elaine Lindsay notes that Western dichotomies separating body and spirit appear to be less conspicuous in women's writing. She suggests that women have had the advantage of having to 'invent God and the world anew' because of a lack of theological training and their marginalisation from the Church. On the other hand

[47] For example, John Barrett's pioneering work on religious issues in colonial society in 1966, and later denominational studies at national, state and local level by people like Cardinal P.F. Moran and P. O'Farrell. See *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, ed. G. Davidson, John Hirst and Stuart Macintyre (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1998) 551–553.

[48] Peter Read, *Belonging: Australians, Place and Aboriginal Ownership* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[49] Alan Atkinson, *The Commonwealth of Speech: Argument About Australia's Past, Present and Future* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2002) 19–20.

men, when discussing religious matters, tend to rely 'not on their own experience but on their intellects and the writings of other theologians'. Lindsay suggests that, for men, God is 'an authority figure, one who dwells elsewhere', while women sense a 'positive spiritual presence' behind their lives. It would certainly appear that, for some colonial women, bush spaces could be determinants of religious experience because, for women, 'the divine presence is evidenced most often in the rhythms of forces of nature'.[50]

I have already discussed how Addy Bowler described low-hanging cloud over Wyagdon Hill as reminiscent of Hugh Miller's account of the Creation. But, in that passage Addy was referencing literary texts that she had read, rather than creating a spiritual inscape for herself through her writing. No such referral to biblical matters occurs in Lucy Gray's writing, although there is mention in her diary of prayers being held by Mac (one of the workmen) on the verandah at Glendower. Here Lucy does refer to a particular religious text. On 27 March 1870 she writes:

> Charles & Robert started out after breakfast – lovely day – went down to look at the melons with my maid Moggie – Mac read prayers & a chapter from Leighton's 'St Peters' in the evening.[51]

It may have been that Charles usually read prayers at Glendower but, being away, the task was left to Mac, thus making it an unusual event worth reporting. Charles' father, grandfather and uncle were all clergymen or bishops, so reading prayers would have been second nature to Charles. However, this does not explain the absence of biblical reference elsewhere in Lucy's texts. In fact, there is a suggestion in Lucy's texts that she is more interested in worshipping her natural surroundings. Note the following extract from her journal describing the washing away of trees from an island in the Flinders during a big flood.

> All the islands that I was so fond of have vanished. Just opposite the station there was one with very large trees. so thick & shady that we could not see the opposite side. Now the only trace of it are a few twisted roots in the

[50] Elaine Lindsay, 'Figuring the Sacred: Geography, Spirituality and Literature', *Kunapipi* 17, no. 2 (1995) 60–67. See also Margaret Vivers, 'Evidence of European Women in Early Contact History: With Particular Reference to Northern New South Wales and Queensland' (BA(HONS.), University of New England, Armidale, 2003) 65–75.
[51] LG, 'Diary'.

> sand. One huge gum stood alone after all the others had gone – steadfast in a tremendous rush of water & under the weight of an increasing pile of logs & drifting trees, which seemed to have the instinct of drowning creatures clinging about its base. I was quite grieved when, having stood the worst of it, after the water had begun to subside, it shook two or three times as it if had received a violent blow, bowed once, twice, & laid itself softly down (so it seemed, in the roar of the water we could not hear the agony of its breaking roots) and was carried away.[52]

In the forcefulness and detail of this description of the vanquished tree there are spiritual connotations that connect nature, not only with the human psyche, but also with the human spirit. The huge eucalypt takes on human characteristics as it stands 'steadfast' until the end. Lucy 'feels' its pain and identifies with its fall. Evocative language, such as in 'laid itself softly down' and the silent 'agony' of the solitary tree's 'breaking roots', evokes a deeply symbolic or mythic quality that could be seen to have biblical connotations, if such language had been used elsewhere. Instead, there is something of the 'strange atmospherics' that Atkinson says can tie a 'sense of place to a kind of spiritual immanence' in women's writing. This sense of the spiritual is again reminiscent of some of Hopkins' poetry. Perhaps Lucy, like Hopkins, was searching for a way through the confusion arising from scientific questioning of traditional religious beliefs. A doctor's daughter, surrounded by science as a child and young woman, and then married to a clergyman's son, may well have experienced some confusion as to her spirituality and religious beliefs.

Lucy's fusion of nature and art is reminiscent too of the work of American nineteenth century poet Emily Dickinson (1830–1886) in whose poetry the 'emotional sympathy with her garden is so intense that she literally *becomes* one of her flowers'.

> Where I am not afraid to go
> I may confide my Flower –
> Who was not Enemy of Me
> Will gentle be, to Her –

[52] *Ibid.* 8b–9b.

Nor separate, Herself and Me
By Distances become –
A single Bloom we constitute
Departed, or at Home – (F 986)[53]

Like Gerard Manley Hopkins, and almost certainly Lucy Gray, Dickinson was inspired by the work of Ruskin, depicting flowers as quasi-human presences.

Returning to Lucy's description of the fall of the tree during the Flinders' flood, it is interesting to note similarities in this passage by Hopkins.

> There is one notable dead tree, ... the inscape markedly holding its most simple and beautiful oneness up from the ground through a graceful swerve below ... the spring of the branches up to the tops of the timber.[54]

And in his journal, dated 8 April 1873:

> The ashtree growing in the corner of the garden was felled. It was lopped first: I heard the sound and looking out and seeing it maimed there came at that moment a great pang and I wished to die and not to see the inscapes of the world destroyed any more.[55]

Sensitivity, artistic observation and spirituality are very much part of the poetry and prose of Lucy Gray, Gerard Manley Hopkins and others of the period.

For instance, the popular author Rosa Praed was also fascinated by the trees of outback Queensland. She introduces 'a strange atmospherics' bordering on the spiritual in her novel *My Australian Girlhood* (1902).

> The camp fire throws leaping lights upon the trunk of the gums, so that the naked branches gleam gaunt and appear to move against the shadow, in the shape of beckoning arms... The white shreds of bark hanging down are like phantom garments, while the thickening bush seems one vast array of unearthly forms melting into the gloom of the night.[56]

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[53] Judith Farr, *The Gardens of Emily Dickinson* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004) 72, 82.
[54] Cited in W.H. Gardner, ed., *Gerard Manley Hopkins* xi.
[55] *Ibid.* 128.
[56] Rosa Praed, *My Australian Girlhood* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1902) 83.

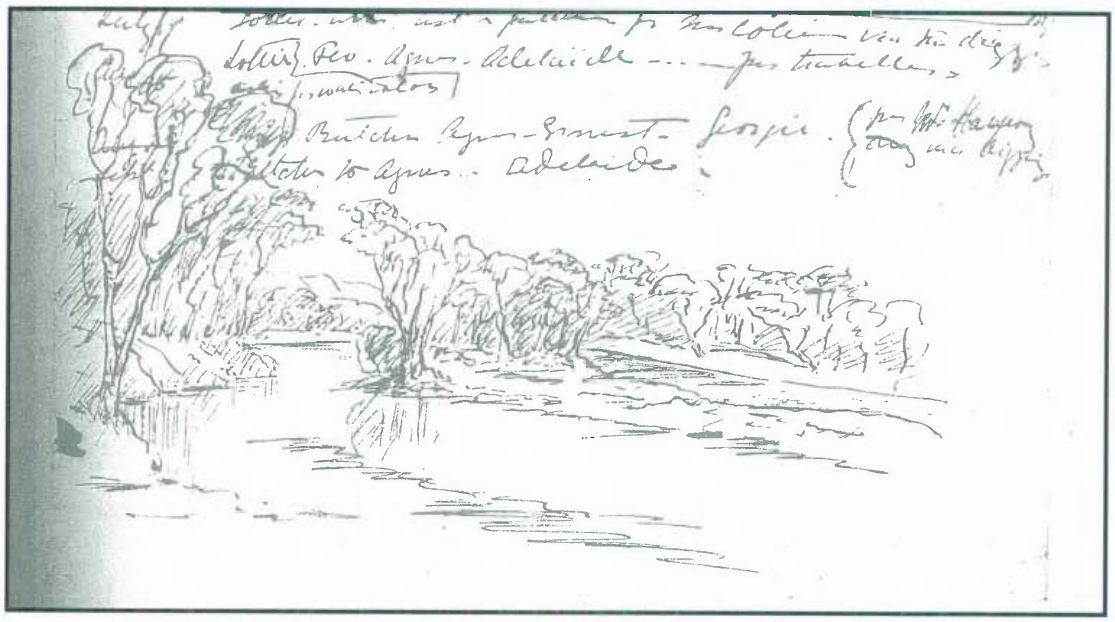

Fig. 10 Lucy's artistic impression of the island across from the Glendower homestead surrounded by flood waters. Note the large tree that would later be washed away by the big flood of 1870, described so vividly in her journal. (LG, 'Fragment'. A similar scene of the Flinders in flood is beautifully depicted in the watercolour painting in Fig. 22, Appendix 2.)

Fig. 11 The same view today taken from a little higher up, looking over the old stockyards. Note the peaked hills on the far left, the same hills that can be seen in the sketch, although slightly exaggerated there. The island that was washed away can be seen re-forming behind the central foreground gum, with a few half-grown trees already clinging to the sandy river bed. (Photographer: M. Vivers, August 2005.)

'Naked branches' become 'beckoning arms', hanging bark mimics 'phantom garments', and the 'unearthly forms' contribute to something bordering on the spiritual, and even the supernatural. A similar scene is represented pictorially by Lucy Gray in her water colour painting 'Camp Scene at Night' (see Fig. 1, Apendix 2). Again the campfire throwing 'leaping lights' is a special feature, while the moonlight catches the edges of the trees, the tent and the wagon.

There is again something in this kind of writing that is reminiscent of the Aboriginal sense of country. David Tacey says of Aboriginal spirituality:

> In Aboriginal cosmology, landscape is a living field of spirits and metaphysical forces. The earth is animated by ancestral creator-beings who engaged in primal rituals at the dawn of time and whose spirits fused with the earth to shape, form, and sacralise it.[57]

Although he uses the term 'landscape' Tacey, like me, is uncomfortable with it. He sees it as inadequate when attempting to describe the inclusiveness of natural and human forces, which constitute the cosmological and existential ground of the Aboriginal Dreaming. Bill Edwards also recognises inclusiveness in Aboriginal spirituality. He points out that the ancestor spirit beings are 'recorded in the stories and songs as having performed the daily activities ... they dug for water, hunted, made implements, cooked food'. In this sense, Edwards notes an absence of any notions of Western dualisms in traditional Aboriginal views of the spiritual and physical.[58]

Similarly, Sara Mills, in a discussion on Indigenous spatiality within the colonial sphere, notes that 'Indigenous people had different ways of exploiting and viewing their land' and that they 'had different aesthetic principles in relation to the land and different religious beliefs in which the relation between the supernatural, humans, the land and nature is made sense of'. 'These factors', she says, 'make for

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[57] David J. Tacey, *Edge of the Sacred: Transformation in Australia* (Melbourne: Harper Collins, 1995) 149.

[58] William (Bill) Edwards, 'Lecture at the Annual Conference of the Australian Association for the Study of Religions', presented to the Charles Strong Memorial Trust, Adelaide (2001) 15–20. See also Margaret Vivers, 'Evidence of European Women in Early Contact History' 65–75; Meg Vivers, 'Dealing with Difference: Evidence of European Women in Early Contact History', *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 4, no. 2 (2002) 89–94.

very different ways of situating humans in relation to land'.[59] Also, Deborah Bird Rose, who has studied Aboriginal spiritual relationships with the land, says that for the Indigenous people, country has 'a consciousness, and a will towards life ... country is home, and peace; [it provides] nourishment for body, mind and spirit'. For the Aborigines, says Rose, 'country is multi-dimensional – it consists of people, animals, plants, Dreamings; underground earth, soils, minerals and waters, surface water, and air'. It is a nourishing and all-inclusive terrain. Lucy Gray's depictions of a white woman's sense of inscape suggest many of these things. (Incidentally, Rose also has problems with the term 'landscape' which she sees as 'signalling a distance between the place ... and the person or society which considers its existence'.)[60]

It would appear then that some colonial women and nineteenth-century poets sensed a spiritual presence when engaging with nature, a presence that emerges through their writing by way of strange anthropomorphisms, sensual language, and personalisation of natural forms. This presence, sometimes bordering on the supernatural, is vaguely reminiscent of the Aboriginal concept of landforms that take on weird human shapes, being part of a strange, sometimes frightening, spirit world. A sense of the spiritual may have helped sustain some colonial women as they tried to make sense of their new surroundings. At the same time nature could be seen as alien and even frightening. The inscapes of women's texts tell as much about the women themselves as they tell about the bush surroundings. Through them, multilayered aspects of the colonial experience are revealed, aspects that are neglected in discourse principally concerned with the mainstream thrust of imperial progress.

That said, although the bush beyond the homestead and surrounds held a special fascination for women like Lucy Gray, for many colonial women the space immediately adjacent to the home constituted both the centre and the circumference. Not only did it provide a place in which interracial and interpersonal interaction took place, it provided a relatively safe haven from which women looked both outward towards the return of their men, and inward toward a better understanding of themselves and their relationship with their immediate surroundings. Theirs was a cyclic existence that revolved around domestic duties, self and family. As Cynthia

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[59] Sara Mills, 'Knowledge, Gender and Empire', in *Writing Women and Space: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies*, ed. Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose (New York: Guilford Press, 1994) 137.
[60] Rose, *Nourishing Terrains* 7–8, 10.

Huff suggests, diaries by such women reveal 'the spatial world of women's separate sphere' which 'gave women support during the recurring life cycle events that regularly punctuated a woman's daily existence'. Such domestic spaces might appear to be confining, says Huff, however their structure was loose enough to accommodate a woman's self-creation, which emerged through their writing.[61] While some women stayed within the confines of the homestead, treating the bush world beyond the home as 'other', their writing still has potential as source material through which some of the silences in male discourse can be exposed.

On the other hand, while many women viewed the bush as 'other', most men saw the homestead and domesticity as 'other', engaging in domestic activity only when absolutely necessary.[62] Evelyn Maunsell, who lived on the Mitchell River in Queensland, just north of Glendower, was somewhat surprised and even offended when her husband lacked interest in household matters. Upon his return from a lengthy mustering trip she was keen to tell him everything that had happened while he was away.

> I just talked on and on. I showed him all the things I had done around the house, and when we went and sat in the squatter's chairs on the veranda, I was still telling him about everything.
>
> I was far too excited to notice that he did not seem to be paying any attention to what I was saying ...
>
> After a while he got up without a word, went inside, picked up the gun, and walked away into the bush to get some peace and quiet.[63]

This gender-specific affiliation with homestead space existed not only in Queensland, but also on the earlier 'frontiers' further south, where people like Addy and Willie Suttor established their first home as a married couple, and from where the men rode off most days to attend to matters of the station. Like Addy, Lucy appeared, in her

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[61] Cynthia A. Huff, 'Textual Boundaries: Space in Nineteenth-Century Women's Manuscript Diaries', in *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries*, ed. Suzanne L. Bunkers and Cynthia A. Huff (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996) 124–25.
[62] Vivers, 'Dealing with Difference' 89–91.
[63] Hector Holthouse, *S'pose I Die: The Story of Evelyn Maunsell* (London: Angus and Robertson, 1985) 58–59.

journal at least, to make the best of things when confined to the homestead and its immediate surrounds. However, her diary indicates she was desperately lonely when Charles was away, and she liked nothing more than to join him on rides into the bush, onto the tablelands, and along the Flinders River.

As with Lucy, there were other women who found the bush intriguing and inviting, and attributed to the 'wilderness' environment a special sense of spirituality. On the property Lammermoor, next door to Hughenden Station and nearby Glendower, the first wife of Robert Christison, an artist like Lucy, loved the bush and was affected by a 'strange spell' when she entered it.[64] However, Christison's second wife, the mother of activist and writer Mary Bennett, made only brief visits to Lammermoor, spending most of her time on the New England Tablelands at Stanthorpe and Tenterfield, living for a period in Tasmania, and eventually taking the children back to England to live permanently.[65]

But how do historians, driven by a particular agenda such as colonial development or frontier conflict, manage to include women's spatial accounts effectively in their discourse? Or can this only be done once the more traditional themes are replaced by what have previously been seen as marginal aspects of history? These are difficult questions which were partly answered earlier in this thesis when I explored the possibility of inserting anecdotes within traditional cause and effect narrative. The same use could perhaps be made of the inscapes women like Lucy describe.

While spatial accounts might present problems for some traditional historians, they have distinct possibilities for those interested in a spatial telling of history. Paul Carter says that 'spatial history – history that discovers and explores the lacuna left by imperial history – begins and ends in language'.[66] He points to the advantages of examining spatial aspects of the past which have not found a place in traditional history telling. 'Contact history is', says Carter, 'spatial history', and the inclusion of such history can be a way of discovering and exploring aspects of the past left behind

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[64] Mary Bennett, *Christison of Lammermoor* (London: Alston Rivers, 1928) 137.
[65] *Ibid.* 22, 210–11.
[66] Paul Carter, *Living in a New Country* 179; Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay* xxiii–xxv.

by imperial history. Further, he suggests (as I have in Robert Gray's description of birds) that landscape has been, in the past, an object of interest only in so far as it exhibits a narrative interest.[67] Carter sees the 'specificity of historical experience' as 'the enemy of positivist history', while the 'active charge of historical time and space', he says, enables the undermining of the cause-and-effect patterning of lives, events and facts, converting the telling of the past into 'something significant'.[68]

There is an echo of Carter's desire for 'something significant' in Michel Foucault's description of what he sees as 'effective history'. Foucault writes:

> Effective history differs from traditional history in being without constants ... The traditional devices for constructing a comprehensive view of history and for retracing the past as a patient and continuous development must be systematically dismantled ... we must dismiss those tendencies that encourage the consoling play of recognitions.
>
> Effective history ... shortens its vision to those things nearest to it – the body, the nervous system, nutrition, digestion, and energies ... It has no fear of looking down, so long as it is understood that it looks from above and descends to seize the various perspectives, to disclose dispersions and differences ...[69]

Much of the potential of women's life writing is implied in Foucault's words, although gender is never his primary consideration. However, although they have opened up possibilities, in my opinion neither Carter nor Foucault provide an acceptable alternative to the traditional linear style of historical narrative, their concern being more with theory than with practical example.

Simon Ryan, Bain Attwood and Alan Atkinson have also questioned the suitability of a linear 'cause and effect' telling of Australian history, seeing problems with traditional texts that focuss on exploration, early conflict, and the progress of white settlement. Ryan is particularly concerned that Aboriginal people are not allowed their own space in colonial discourse. Instead, they must occupy the same

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[67] Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay* xxiii–xxv, 77.
[68] *Ibid.* 4.
[69] Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. D.F. Bouchard (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977) 153–56.

space as the white settlers, but at a lower level.[70] The same could be said of European women, and their writing. Although women's life writing would appear to fit easily into discussions on spatiality and spatial discourse, their texts being of an especially spatial, subjective and even cyclic nature, like the Aboriginal people they, along with their representations, are often marginalised or even ignored. Strangely, neither Ryan, Attwood nor Carter appear to regard women's life writing as worthy of special mention as they negotiate ways in which to rupture, or entirely displace, the linear system – a system which has necessarily cast aside much of the specificity and spatial nature of the historical experience in order to maintain its structure.

In their textual and pictorial representations some colonial women depict a natural environment that, for them, existed in its own right, without the necessary mediation of imperialism, reference to familiar British landscapes, or the carnage of the axe. Lucy Gray may not have had the opportunity to meet Gerard Manley Hopkins, Sam Mitchell, Paddy Fordham Wainburranga, or even Emily Dickinson. However, her sensory perception of inscape was surprisingly similar to theirs. Where early interaction with the bush environment is involved, I suggest that historians must find a way to effectively include women's inscapes if they are to more realistically reconstruct the milieu that surrounded Australia's early colonial development from anything other than an insensitive, impersonal and rather distant perspective.

[70] Atkinson, *The Commonwealth of Speech* 14–15; Bain Attwood, ed., *In the Age of Mabo: History, Aborigines and Australia* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1996) viii; Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye* 4.