2.3 THE Formative Years:
Their Effect on Women’s Life Writing

The next day we went (not “home” that means England) but back to the station.¹

I now take a closer look at Lucy Gray’s formative years in England and Ireland, as summarised in the Introduction and mentioned elsewhere in the thesis, and explore possible ways in which her early life may have shaped her attitudes and ultimately her texts. In the same context, I look briefly again at the background of Addy Bowler, already discussed to some extent in the Introduction, and in Chapters 1.1 and 1.2. Then, in the next chapter, I discuss how, within the scope of their very different formative years, but still influenced by Victorian ideologies, Addy and Lucy were able to suggest, albeit in subtle ways, how Victorian fashions and ‘acceptable’ female behaviour could be challenged in the colonial situation. While doing this, I look further at some of the silences that I noted in earlier chapters, and consider what they tell us about Victorian ideologies and loyalties.

In discussions involving the colonies we tend to think of middle- and upper-class ‘Victorian women’ as an homogenous group that left a sheltered and often privileged environment in the ‘old’ country to be confronted with a raw and dangerous colonial wilderness where the more easily applicable ideals of their childhoods were often tested and questioned. Conveniently perhaps, in much colonial discourse individual circumstance and past experience are marginalised as much as, or more than, the women themselves. This is problematic, and might be considered alongside observations by historian Bain Attwood that the homogenous grouping of Aboriginal peoples fails to take into account individual and regional differences that contradict the convenient use of the collective term ‘Aborigines’.²

Anne Allingham, when transcribing Lucy Gray’s journal and diary in 1987, tried to discover something of Lucy’s life before she arrived in Australia. However, improvisation due to lack of accessible records resulted in a brief, idealistic description of Lucy’s formative years which amounted to something like the following: Lucy grew up with her siblings in Birr, a market town on the Little Brosna River in County Offaly, west of Dublin, amidst a central lowland landscape of tiny, carefully tended farms and extensive boglands. She learnt to ride well as a young child.¹ In the Introduction I was able to expand upon Allingham’s brief summary, while still remaining at a physical distance from Lucy’s geographical origins and the more personal circumstances surrounding her formative years. This has not been the case with Addy Bowler. Bathurst and its surrounds are within reasonably easy driving distance of my home, and the landscape there, and further out at Condobolin, is familiar enough for me to be able to visualise and more easily relate to the context of, and the inspiration for, Addy’s writing.

In August of 2005, I visited the remains of the old Glendower homestead in north Queensland where Lucy and Charles Gray spent seven years together, and I experienced (if only briefly) the bush surroundings that are described so vividly in Lucy’s journal and diary. But what of Lucy’s life before she came to Australia? Her background was already emerging as something special, even unique, inviting a first-hand investigation of the places in which she had lived before her marriage. So, laden with a great deal of information gathered from the web, and from descendants of Charles Gray and his second wife Emily, I set off in October 2006 for Birr in Ireland – or Parsonstown as it was called when the Waters family lived there – and Dorking and Brighton where the family lived after the death of Lucy’s father.

In spite of the strict divisions often seen to be in place between the spheres of public and private in Victorian Britain, which I discuss further in the next chapter, I was already cognisant of the fact that, as early as 1780 and 1820, there was a revolt by some women against ‘acceptable’ standards of female delicacy, both physical and mental. There was also a certain questioning of an education that produced ‘inert young ladies’. Catherine Parr Traill, for instance, who moved to Canada with her husband in 1832, had a father who saw value in educating his daughters and

cultivating their ‘Reason’. He personally supervised their studies in history, classics, arithmetic and science.\(^4\) By the mid-nineteenth century, mixed messages were coming through. In 1852, when Lucy was twelve and Addy fifteen, Florence Nightingale was protesting about the ‘poor lives we [women] lead’ and saying that family ‘is too narrow a field for the development of an immortal spirit’.\(^5\) However, nine years later, in 1861, Isabella Beeton was still stressing the importance of a woman’s role in bringing happiness to the family; and, as late as 1889, Maria Grey spoke of the noble services performed by ‘old maids’ who carry on their shoulders ‘half a dozen husbands, and as many families of children’.\(^6\)

This was also a time when people were trying to construct a meaningful dialogue between the traditional teachings of the Christian Churches and the emerging fields of evolution and science. What impact, I asked myself, had these discussions and debates on Addy in Australia and on Lucy, who had easier access, not only to the latest newspapers and journals, but also to the conversations of intellectuals like her father and her uncle Oliver Robinson? In particular, in what ways had the formative years impacted on their later representations of colonial life?

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My husband and I entered Birr, in County Offaly, Ireland, over the old Oxmantown Bridge, as Thomas Lacy must have done in 1856. We found the centre of the town, once known as Parsonstown, had changed little since famine, religious unrest and scientific achievement coloured the days of Lucy’s childhood. While development is now going on beyond the old town boundary, the original town is still much the same as Lacy described it (see Introduction). However, the Catholic nunnery set up by Catherine McAuley in 1840 is now a modern library. The grounds adjacent to the Catholic school are still in use, the bright playground equipment looking slightly out of place against the old grey stone walls of the buildings. Just outside the town the workhouse, where Dr John Waters strived so hard for the good of the people, is still standing – although in disrepair. In keeping with a recent push to

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preserve historic buildings in and around the town efforts are being made to turn the old workhouse into a museum. Local historian, Margaret Hogan, and Lord and Lady Rosse of Birr Castle, are working particularly hard to preserve this important part of Birr’s history.

Fig. 1 The old workhouse just outside Birr, established in 1842 and now falling into disrepair. Behind the row of attic windows was the children’s dormitory where dozens of children died of the cold in winter, while children like Lucy lived comfortable lives in the nearby town.7 (Photographer: M. Vivers, November 2006.)

After searching in the Birr Castle archives it was conversation with the locals that finally confirmed precisely in which house the Waters family had lived. (See map of old Parsonstown, Fig. 6, Appendix I.) The house, built in the early 1820s, has recently been renovated and is again much the same as when Lucy lived there, a substantial three-story home standing in what is still the most prestigious street in Birr – Oxmantown Mall. (See Fig. 2 below.) The back yard, through which the family carriage turned in off what is still known as Dr Waters’ Lane, is now a neat garden with the old carriage house, cow shed and stables at the far end. Eerily, the footprints of the family cow can still be seen impressed upon the cobblestones, where she once stood to be milked.8

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7 Details from Margaret Hogan, local historian, Birr.
8 Special thanks to Catherine Deacon and Marita Cosgrove of Birr, and Lord and Lady Rosse of Birr Castle.
This was indeed the home of a man of important social and professional standing in the town. John Waters’ eulogy describes him as a man of ‘high professional attainments’. He was, said the *King’s County Chronicle*,

an accomplished gentleman, and possessed of a highly cultivated mind and refined tastes; his wide range of information, and his prompt and ready application of it, not only rendered his companionship and society fascinating and instructive ... During his career his ardent zeal, good sense, judicious guidance, and unwearied perseverance, largely aided and were instrumental in giving progress and development to every project for good set on foot amongst us. In private life he promptly converted all his acquaintances into attached and permanent friends, and well and cordially did he reciprocate the warm affection with which he was regarded; he was truly a firm, faithful, and undeviating friend, every ready with useful advice and services.⁹

⁹ *Kings County Chronicle*, 14 January 1857.
Fig. 3 Connaught Street, Birr. It was in this street, little changed today, where Dr John Waters had a medical dispensary in 1856.

Fig. 4. Mill Lane, Birr. Note the old corn store, later converted into a warehouse, and adjacent sheds and cottages. Efforts are now being made to preserve the historic buildings of Birr.

Fig. 5 Birr Castle on a misty day in November 2006, home of the present Lord and Lady Rosse. The gothic windows look out over the Castle demesne and lake. (Photography on this page by M. Vivers, November 2006.)
Even allowing for the customary generosity of eulogies, this is a glowing testimonial. It continues for several columns, describing John Waters’ comprehensive and thorough study, enabling him to become a respected physician in Parsonstown. There he treated patients in the workhouse, fever hospitals and public dispensaries. While studying at Edinburgh, he had asked to work amongst the cholera patients in the local hospital, where he gained valuable experience that would prepare him for a similar outbreak in his home town. In 1832, the year John Waters graduated, 288 deaths from cholera were reported in Kings County alone.\(^10\)

As mentioned in my Introduction, weakened by starvation exacerbated by the failure of the potato crops in the mid to late 1840s, the poor of Parsonstown and surrounds fell ill more readily. Fever hospitals soon overflowed, and fever sheds and auxiliary workhouses were established around the region. In 1846 a Relief Committee was set up, which later took charge of a local soup kitchen.\(^11\) Meanwhile, the third Earl of Rosse and his wife the Countess did what they could to alleviate the situation by employing large numbers in the Birr Castle demesne, results of which can still be seen today in the lake and adjacent landscaping. There were, however, some men with productive land who tried to avoid paying the obligatory rates to charity institutions such as the Parsonstown workhouse, making the job of the Board of Guardians more difficult.\(^12\) For John Waters it must have been a struggle to care adequately for the sick and dying.

It was in this environment of hard work, tolerance and unselfish devotion to duty that Lucy grew up. Although the family was well off, the suffering of the poor, and the work her father did for them, could hardly have gone unnoticed by the young girl. Concern for those less fortunate was shared by others in Parsonstown. An article in the same edition of the *Kings County Chronicle* as Dr Waters’ eulogy, headed ‘Slavery in America’, states that the ‘Evangelical Methodists [of Parsonstown] are opposed now, and always have been opposed to slavery’. This reflected a world-wide attitude by Wesleyan Methodists against slavery.\(^13\) However, other Protestant

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\(^{10}\) See Fig. 4, Appendix 1, for a map of Kings Country, now County Offaly. For cholera deaths see Michael Byrne, ‘Milestones in Offaly History: 1830–1980’, http://www.offalyhistory.com/content/reading_resources/offaly_gen/offaly_milestones.htm [cited 26 June 2006].

\(^{11}\) Dr Waters donated three pounds to the Parsonstown Relief Committee in 1846, and in 1847 he is listed as being on the Committee. Information supplied by Margaret Hogan, Birr.


\(^{13}\) *Kings County Chronicle*, 14 January 1857.
Churches, and even the Catholic Church, remained divided on the issue well into the second half of the nineteenth century – some considering it wrong to go against certain parts of the Bible that appeared to condone slavery.

Fig. 6 Early morning mist rising off a portion of the lake dug by starving men employed by the Third Earl of Rosse during the 1840s famine. (Photographer: M. Vivers, November 2006.)

With the eventual passing of anti-slavery laws, the credibility of the Church, already weakened by Darwinian theories, was again called into question.\textsuperscript{14} The Church of Ireland, to which the Waters belonged, may also have been divided in its opposition to slavery. However, generous in their donations and charitable works, a good proportion of the town of the population of Parsonstown were concerned for the plight of the poor and the disadvantaged in their own region, if not for the plight of slaves elsewhere.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{15} Information about the workhouse and concern for the poor supplied by Margaret Hogan, Birr.
The Waters children, therefore, grew up in a volatile and traumatic, but also a stimulating environment, as famine and prosperity existed side by side, along with scientific enquiry, religious questioning and political unrest. The large Catholic population, only just recovering from what was known as the Crotty Schism, which was a rift amongst the Catholics of Parsonstown during the 1830s, was pressing for a greater voice amongst the Protestant minority, as Catholics were elsewhere in Ireland. In 1850, following a new franchise bill, the culmination of a series of ‘relief’ statutes for Catholics, the number entitled to vote in Kings County (today County Offaly), increased from 470 to 2,600. Lucy was by then ten years old, and living in a privileged Protestant household, the members of which may have considered Catholics inferior. This might help explain her later acceptance, in her writing at least, of the hierarchical structure of master/servant, white/black relationships in Queensland. However, ‘anti-papist’ attitudes varied within families. For example, Susan Mitchell (1866–1926), a poet, journalist and mystic who spent some years living in a street adjacent to Owmantown Mall, Parsonstown, was vocal in her opposition to the anti-papist attitudes of her uncle, Crown Solicitor Adam Mitchell, and rebelled against privileged society and the Protestant Church in which she was reared. Born the year Lucy left the town, perhaps Mitchell’s rebellion was a reflection of a questioning already simmering when Lucy was growing up.

Lucy’s reading in Queensland of what she refers to as ‘The Life of Wilberforce’ may demonstrate an interest in, and perhaps sympathy for, the predicament of slaves. Mention is made several times in her journal of the paying of their South Sea Islanders and Aboriginal servants. Perhaps, because of the example of humanitarian intellectuals like her father, and listening to debates amongst their friends, she thought it appropriate to emphasise the fact that slavery was not a practice of which she or Charles approved. Note the journal entry below in which she mentions the payment of an Aboriginal woman’s husband who worked for them.

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16 Hogan, ‘The Great Famine, Birr and District’ 1–1.
19 L.G. ‘Diary’, 6 March: ‘Read on the veranda in the afternoon “Life of Wilberforce”’. 

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Her husband ‘Dingo’ was a runaway trooper and firmly believed that if he was caught by the police he would be shot as a deserter – fearing that a detachment was coming to the station he disappeared with this lovely Louise having more than 20 pounds wages which was due to him.20

However, although anti-slavery matters may have been an issue, as elsewhere in her writings any personal concerns Lucy may have had for the welfare of the Aboriginal man and his wife are overshadowed by her desire to present her idea of an ‘acceptable’ account. Meanwhile, evidence emerges as to how Aboriginal employees were treated, at least by the Gray family. Twenty pounds was quite a large sum of money in those days, suggesting ‘Dingo’ had been with them for some time and/or was well paid.

I had hoped to discover in the Birr Castle Archives evidence of personal interaction between the Waters family and Lord and Lady Rosse. However, documents of a personal nature were scarce amongst records involving politics, economics, and other more public matters. There were, of course, the old rate books in which were recorded monies paid and owed by Dr John Waters for the various premises and lands that he rented from the second and third Earls of Rosse. For example, a rate book dated 1848 indicates Dr Waters to be in arrears to Lord Rosse to the sum of eighty-two pounds, sixteen shillings and ten pence halfpenny – a considerable sum at the time.21

I did, however, find an interesting photograph taken in about 1855 by Mary Countess of Rosse. The ‘Three Young Ladies’ in the picture are unidentified, but could easily be Lucy and two of her sisters. The young lady on the left may be Amy, about seventeen years old at the time; on the right is perhaps nineteen year-old Elizabeth; and the central figure may be Lucy, aged about fourteen. The youngest girl has an air of self-confidence and intelligence that matches characteristics I have found in Lucy’s writing. Her skirt is decorated with similar ribbons to the girl next to her, suggesting they might be sisters. The older girls wear capes, as though they have just arrived for a visit, perhaps having walked the short distance from Oxmantown Mall to the Castle. Hats appear to have been recently removed, and are carefully arranged, demonstrating Lady Rosse’s eye for detail in her photography.

20 Ibid. XXVIc.
21 BCA Q58–61.
Fig. 7 ‘Three Young Ladies’ taken in c. 1855 by Mary Countess of Rosse. For comparison, on the right from top to bottom are two profiles of Lucy taken by J. Hubert Newman in 1875 and one of her siblings taken about the same time. The sister is possibly Amy, the only sister of the right age to be in the group photo above. Age difference, change of hairstyle, and professional ‘touching up’ of photographs make it impossible to determine whether the larger picture is actually of the Waters sisters, although facial features are somewhat similar. (Small photographs courtesy Jane Putt, Sydney and the Tairawhitii Museum, Gisborne, New Zealand. Group photograph supplied by Lord and Lady Rosse – original held at Birr Castle.)
Although the young ladies in the photograph may not be the Waters sisters, the picture enabled me to more clearly visualise Lucy as a girl, and the clothes that she may have worn. Apart from social visits, dressed in her riding habit she would have ridden side-saddle on her pony around the streets and fields of Parsonstown, observing the ladies promenading along Oxmantown Mall and the extensive building works that were taking place in the town. But she could not have failed to notice, too, the effects of the famine as beggars drifted into town, and people lay down to die along the roadsides. And, in the evenings when the family descended the wide staircase to the dining room, John Waters may have discussed his work, while explaining also the progress of the giant telescope in the nearby Castle demesne, and the religious unrest that continued in spite of (and perhaps because of) the famine. As I have suggested, slavery would most likely have been a subject of conversation, with humanitarian Dr Waters, one would assume, on the side of emancipation.

Fig. 8 The stairway down which the Waters family descended from their bedrooms for discussions in the dining room on the ground floor. The open door leads to the kitchen area, through which the children would have gone out to the stables to their ponies. Riding as a child prepared Lucy for the more difficult riding that was necessary in Queensland. (Photographer: M. Vivers, November 2006. Access kindly provided by David and Catherine Deacon.)
But what of Lucy’s formal education? The Topographical Dictionary of Ireland from 1836, published four years before Lucy was born, states that:

There are about 20 schools in the town and parish [of Parsonstown], four of which are free schools. The parochial school for boys is aided by an annual donation from the rector, as is also an infants’ school; a male and female school is aided by annual donation from E. Synge, Esq., and a female parochial school supported by subscription: in all of these there are about 400 children; and 15 private schools give instruction to 350 boys and 250 girls.\textsuperscript{22}

With Dr Waters’ income and position in the community it can almost be taken for granted that the Waters children attended private, single sex schools, although tutors and governesses cannot be ruled out. Towards the end of Lucy’s time in Ireland there was a growing trend to follow the English example in providing an education for girls similar to that available for boys, with the inclusion of Mathematics and Latin.\textsuperscript{23} Just how much this affected Lucy is unclear. It is possible that the Waters girls attended Miss Alley’s ‘Young Ladies’ Seminary’ around the corner in Green Street, or a school very like it. An advertisement in the King’s County Chronicle (10 July 1850) states that Miss Alley, along with her niece Miss Louisa Alley, and two other ‘well qualified Ladies’, offered ‘unremitting attention to the Comforts, Moral and Religious Instruction, Manners, and General Improvement of those committed to her charge’. However, there is no mention of academic subjects taught, which makes one wonder whether Dr Waters with his ‘highly cultivated mind and refined tastes’ may have preferred private tutors and governesses for his children. Although the matters mentioned above as being given ‘unremitting attention’ by Miss Alley were important for any young lady’s ‘education’, like Catherine Parr Traill’s father John Waters would almost certainly have seen value in cultivating his daughters’ reason as well. However, although the Waters boys almost certainly gained their enthusiasm for engineering and architecture through association with the sons of Lord and Lady

\textsuperscript{22} From an unidentified document provided by Margaret Hogan, Birr.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
Rosse, and their contact with the Castle telescope\textsuperscript{24}, going on to further studies in England and the Continent (see Chapter 2.2), I could not discover exactly how Lucy received instruction for her art and writing. It is frustrating not to know more about her mother who may have had a strong influence.

Around the time of Lucy’s birth a government initiative was promoting an education in science, which was thought particularly appropriate to the encouragement of economic prosperity and social harmony in Ireland. Public lectures by prominent scientists were being organised across the country, at least four being held in Parsonstown between 1838 and 1866. Huge audiences of up to 5,000 people attended. Because of the ‘refined’ nature of the lectures, being targeted at the general public, they were particularly popular with the ladies, who actually outnumbered men in Cork in 1848 and 1858, in Kilrush in 1857, and in Enniscorthy in 1863. Numbers are not available for Parsonstown, but women would most likely have made up a large part of the audience there as well. While the lectures were part of a push to educate the working classes, the entry fee prohibited the attendance of many of the poor.\textsuperscript{25} In 1845 Lucy’s father also gave a lecture and a series of evening courses in the new Mechanics Institute.\textsuperscript{26} When old enough, Lucy may have attended some of the lectures with her mother, perhaps explaining evidence of scientific interest in her later writings. The telescope under construction in the Castle demesne added to the general enthusiasm for scientific progress, bringing scientists and interested scholars from elsewhere in Ireland and overseas. Even for a girl whose education was focussed on ‘moral improvement’ and ‘manners’, the scientific influence must have been inescapable in Parsonstown, and Lucy’s reference to specific reading matter, and to reading to Charles, suggest something more than a preference for ladies novels.

While Lucy was being educated in Ireland, across the channel in England Charles Gray, her future husband, was taught at first by the governess, Miss Butcher, and then apparently for a period at Brighton College.\textsuperscript{27} In the ‘Local Intelligence’ section of Pages Directory, an advertisement for Brighton College gives an indication


\textsuperscript{26} Information supplied by Margaret Hogan, Birr.

\textsuperscript{27} Allingham, ‘Victorian Frontierswomen’ vol 1: 49.
of what was expected of an education for young English gentlemen in the mid-eighteen hundreds.

The College provides a sound liberal and religious education, so modified as to meet the demands for practical knowledge of this present age. It recognises the general principle that the basis for a good education must be the same, whether to prepare for the Universities, for the Learned or Military Professions, or for the higher class of Mercantile or Manufacturing Employments.

The principle adopted in the discipline is to give such liberty as may form manliness of character and habits of self-control, without exposing boys prematurely or unnecessarily to evil. The ordinary course comprises Religious Instruction, Classics, Mathematics, English, French (or German), History, Geography, Arithmetic, and Writing.28

Fig. 9 Charles Gray, as a teenager. He attended a Nautical Academy after Brighton College, and went on to become an officer in the Merchant Marines.

(Photograph courtesy Bryony Hollinrake, Canada, n.d. Information concerning naval career supplied by Tairawhiti Museum, Gisborne, New Zealand.)

It is interesting to see ‘Religious Instruction’ listed first in the Brighton advertisement – something that one would expect of a school chosen by a clergyman father. However, the instruction was ‘modified’ to ‘meet the demands for practical

knowledge of this present age' suggesting, perhaps, adaptation to comply with changing attitudes towards religion and science.

There is little doubt from her style of writing and her accomplished artwork that Lucy’s education was far superior to that of Addy Bowler, and Charles Gray’s schooling was perhaps more comprehensive than that of Willie Sutor, Addy’s husband, although Willie was tutored for a time by eminent scholar Dr William Woolls. For Addy, lack of education was not simply a matter of isolation. When she was a young girl in the 1840s, structured schooling in the colonies was thought less important for girls than for boys, in accordance with earlier Victorian ideals. When Addy was a baby, her older sister Julia was not offered the same educational opportunities as her brothers who, in the short time they had in Sydney before moving to the country, were given the best possible ‘boy’s’ education. Meanwhile, dance lessons were arranged for Julia. Even after the family moved to the Bathurst region, and Addy was old enough for school, education for her brothers was a priority. Remembering the period between 1848 and 1849 Addy records her disappointment at not receiving a formal education.

During the years we lived at the Meadows all the schooling that my brothers got was from a man who called himself a schoolmaster in Orange and they used to ride in every day for about a year.

I had a great desire at this time for education and have regretted ever since that it was not found for me ... the only regular lessons I ever remember to have had were a few weeks at a time when I used to be staying at Brucedale.  

30 Frances Mary Jane Bowler, ‘Diaries, 1837–’, (private collection, Sydney) February 1837, 27.
It seems that John Bowler, Addy’s father, was less interested in cultivating the mind of his daughters than in attempting to cultivate the soil, an activity that proved financially disastrous for the whole family. Addy’s writing suggests, at times, an autocratic man not prepared to listen to advice, characteristics perhaps developed during his time of authority in the army. However, he did have sympathy for the convicts under his care and, when accepting appointment as Magistrate at Carcoar, he stipulated that he should not be required to impose sentences of flogging except in extreme cases. He held the view that frequent use of the disciplinary lash was the principal reason why assigned convicts absconded to become bushrangers.\textsuperscript{32} He appears to have loved his family and they him. A friend of the family reported in her diary that when Addy was dangerously ill, after losing her first baby, ‘Major’ Bowler was overwhelmed with grief.

\textit{4 January 1865}

Fine day. I read to Addy all the morning. Her mind seemed in a terribly unsettled state: her hands kept up a continual nervous twitching, most painful to see. Major and Mrs Bowler came in from Wyagdon about half past one. It was a great relief to us all, their being at Brucedale to see the state Addy was in. It was impossible to form any idea, without seeing her, of the fearful nervous irritability she was suffering from. The poor old Major was terribly cut up about Addy. I felt quite overcome myself when I saw him sitting in the verandah alone, sobbing like a child. I hope he did not think me a goose, but I could not help throwing my arms around him and kissing him most affectionately and begging him not to give way, as Addy was getting better every day.\textsuperscript{33}

Although Addy’s father was not motivated, nor perhaps able, to provide a good education for his daughter, her husband Willie may have been largely influential in persuading her to continue with her diary, perhaps also encouraging her to fill in any gaps with memories. In the 1880s he himself wrote various articles about the pastoral industry, and his contributions to the \textit{Daily Telegraph} were reprinted as \textit{Australian Stories Retold and Sketches of Country Life} (Bathurst 1887). He also gave public readings for charities. When in Bathurst he, like Addy, became

involved in a variety of community activities, and was nominated to the Legislative Council in 1880. From 1889–91 he was Vice-President of the Executive Council, but bankruptcy was to curb further parliamentary ambitions. He died in Sydney on 20 October 1905, leaving assets valued at 8,102 pounds and debts to the value of 118,188 pounds. Willie Suttor has been described as quiet, unassuming and genial. His marriage to Addy appears to have been a happy one, until the couple were forced to sell up and move their family to Sydney. Before long, Willie’s mental and physical health deteriorated, and Addy and her family were left to ‘make do’ as best they could.\(^\text{34}\)

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‘scientific’ objectivity and focus on the natural environment, and the sophistication and poetry that can be found in the Lucy Gray texts, it enables an insight into this particular writer’s personal growth, sense of self and sensibilities. Addy gives us a better idea of how it actually ‘felt’ to be a respectable lady living in the Bathurst and Condobolin regions during the mid- to late 1800s. Although native-born Addy had access to some current literature, the Bible would have been the principal text of her formative years, explaining its use as a reference in times of trouble or confusion.

Only a few metres from the Waters’ old home in Parsonstown stands St Brendan’s Church of Ireland, established in 1815. However, in spite of its proximity to her childhood home reference to the Bible is noticeably absent from Lucy’s colonial writings, which is not the case in the writings of Addy Bowler and many other women from the period. This absence in Lucy’s texts invites speculation, as does her seemingly superior and unsympathetic attitude to her Aboriginal servants.

As I have indicated, religion and science were experiencing a volatile relationship during Lucy’s formative years. In the 1830s, ten years before Lucy was born, the second Earl of Rosse had begun what was one of the first systematic attempts to assemble the evidence of scientific investigations in support of orthodox Christian belief. In 1834, his An Argument to Prove the Truth of the Christian Revelation was published in London. This work belongs to a period that saw the emergence of the theory of natural evolution, as enunciated by Bakewell and later formulated by Darwin.36

Informed by such literary and academic example, debate on humanitarian, racial, scientific and religious matters must have been very much part of general discussions in Parsonstown, and in the Waters household. Mixed messages would no doubt have emerged from the various discussions, perhaps helping to explain why biblical reference and admission of empathy with Aboriginal people, are lacking in Lucy’s colonial texts.

35 Murray, Strong Minded Women 7–8.
Of course, any sense of superiority reflected in Lucy’s writing may have been largely determined by her upbringing as a Protestant in a district in Ireland that was overwhelmingly Catholic, but where Catholics were only just beginning to achieve some sort of political and economic equality with the Protestant minority. In any case, whether Aboriginal, Catholic, or simply of ‘inferior’ class, servants were never openly considered ‘friends’ to their masters and mistresses in Victorian society. If Lucy’s personal feelings conflicted with these hierarchical traditions they are not revealed through her writing. She maintains certain standards in her journal, possibly for the sake of her readers – and, in her diary, for the sake of her husband. Meanwhile, her avoidance of the use of traditional religious terminology in her later writing was perhaps influenced by her enlightened reading beyond the scope of religious matters, rather than by any doubt she may have had about the Bible and its teachings.
But just how ‘enlightened’ was Lucy’s attitude to the Aborigines in Queensland? In both journal and diary Lucy tells how she ‘trains’ the Aboriginal girl Moggie, who is expected to comply with European standards. However, Moggie remains very much a child in Lucy’s writing, unable to learn with the speed and enthusiasm of even the Aboriginal boys. One is forced to ask whether this is a gendered reaction. In spite of Lucy’s inspired background, perhaps she still anticipated a difference between the learning potential of males and females. Sara Mills has observed similar attitudes amongst women writers who travelled in the colonies. However, although Mills says that women travel writers often took on a maternal role in relation to Indigenous women, ‘a role that challenged neither the imperial assertion of superiority’ nor the assertion that ‘natives’ were ‘childlike’, she does not explore implications of gender concerning the perception of the potential learning abilities of Indigenous people.

She may have become frustrated when ‘training’ Moggie. However, by 27 March 1870 Lucy appears to be resigned to her servant’s little idiosyncrasies and seems somewhat proud to refer to her as her ‘maid’. She writes in her dairy:

Went down to look at the melons with my maid Moggie.

Then, on an unidentified day at the end of May 1870, recognition of shared humanity becomes an important, if temporary, part of the discussion:

Moggie laid up with a [needle?] in her knee – requiring treating night & day.

5 June 1870:

Moggie very bad all the past week.39

Although Moggie’s illness required some degree of human compassion, and a certain knowledge of medical treatment (perhaps partly acquired from her doctor father) most of the diary entries, and even the journal, suggest an impersonal attitude towards

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39 LG, ‘Diary’.

Moggie and the other Aboriginal servants at Glendower. However, we should bear in mind that silences and irregularities may indicate selective reporting, certain facts only being revealed to comply with familial beliefs of racial superiority and class structure. (See Lucy’s reference to phrenology in Chapter 1.3.) Lucy’s private concerns about the fate of the Indigenous people, if she had any, remain unclear and undefined, as do her feelings about traditional religion.

Lucy lived in London, Dorking and Brighton after the death of her father and before her marriage, apparently travelling overseas as well. There was a fascination with overseas travel and Eastern cultures at the time, and significant parallels can be seen to exist between Lucy’s easy acceptance of alien landscapes and the people who inhabited those landscapes, and Britain’s growing fascination with Japan and Japanese customs and art. Whereas Addy Bowler simply lived and wrote within the bounds of her own experience, and what she saw as socially and culturally familiar and acceptable, Lucy was not afraid to look beyond her background and the Victorian stereotypes that were part of her upbringing, to enthusiastically embrace new worlds and new cultural experiences, both in her visual art and her writing.

In 1862, when Lucy was twenty-two, an international exhibition of Japanese art works, and other products from Japan, was held in London, which could not have escaped the notice of Lucy with her passion for art.\(^4\) A willingness to adapt her artistic style to mimic the art and artistic techniques of other countries may have gained impetus from the very different Japanese art forms that were appearing in England, and elsewhere in Europe. It is likely that this outside stimulation made Lucy more receptive to difference, enabling her to make representations of her Australian surroundins comfortably divorced from the stereotypical images of England and Ireland.

Impressionists like Monet, Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec were similarly influenced by Japanese art and, in fact, many Europeans admired Japan, not only for the beauty of its natural scenery, but for the discipline, manners and cleanliness of its people. Of even more relevance here, David Walker suggests that part of the English

fascination for Japan was that the people had not allowed themselves to be dominated by religion – in particular the moral severity and gloom that many Victorians (including Addy Bowler to some extent) tended to have their lives coloured by.\(^{41}\)

The idea that one could live happily without allowing religion to crush one’s spirit must have accorded for some with the realisation that science and evolution had an important part to play in better understanding the world and its origins – and accorded too with growing disillusionment with the Church and its teachings.

While part of the fascination was for travel in the ‘old’ Japan, the Meiji Restoration (1866–1869) resulted in a revolution in the medical sciences, agriculture, economics, law, natural sciences and engineering, along with art and education. By 1874 up to 520 foreign experts were employed by the Japanese government, on one- or two-year contracts, with many more being employed privately.\(^{42}\) This was part of a drive by the Japanese government to achieve equal status with the West and thus safeguard Japan’s sovereignty. For some Japanese people, Britain’s fascination with Japan and Japanese customs was reciprocated, as they were attracted to Western customs and scientific progress.\(^{43}\)

It was possibly a combination of all these things, including the notion that there did not appear to be the ‘dreadful emiseration and grinding, joyless poverty’ in Japan that was to be found in Britain\(^{44}\) (something which the Waters family would have remembered well from Parsonstown and which they might rightly have blamed for John Waters’ death) that encouraged Lucy’s three brothers to spend time working in Japan as engineers and architects at the invitation of the Japanese government. (See Chapter 2.2 for photographs, and more on the three Waters brothers.) Thomas, having recently studied architecture and engineering, was the first to go, arriving in Japan in 1865. Interestingly, it is to Thomas that Lucy writes most frequently from Queensland, even noting in her diary that she and Charles were ‘entertaining the idea of Japan’ for themselves. In correspondence with ‘Tom’, Lucy appears to have been

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\(^{41}\) Ibid. 60.


\(^{44}\) Walker, Anxious Nation 52.
asking about possible opportunities for Charles in Japan, suggesting that the country held a fascination for them all.\textsuperscript{45}

Artistic like his sister, Thomas has been described as ‘a young dynamic, and versatile Irishman’ who, amongst other impressive accomplishments, designed and built the old Osaka Mint. Toshio Watanabe, Professor at Chelsea College of Art and Design, London, says that Thomas Waters ‘belonged to the circle of that ubiquitous Scottish merchant, Thomas Blake Glover’ and ‘worked himself up the ladder through these connections’. Watanabe indicates that youth was something that Thomas had in common with many of the Western experts invited to Japan to carry out particular projects, and to teach their skills to the Japanese.\textsuperscript{46}

![Fig. 12 Façade of the old Osaka Mint, designed by Thomas Waters between 1868 and 1871. It is now the front porch of Sakurayama Public Hall. (Watanabe, ‘Josiah Conder’s Rokumeikan’ 22.)](image)

Helena and John Waters must have been exceptional parents who encouraged vision, creativity and adventure in their children. It is almost certainly their influence, along with the environment in which the children were raised and later their exposure to external cultural influences, that we have to thank for the enlightened writings and explicit pictorial texts of their daughter Lucy. It is frustrating that, while there is information available concerning John Waters, his wife Helena, in true Victorian style, exists as only a shadow in the background.

\textsuperscript{45} LG, ‘Diary’ 17 October 1869.
\textsuperscript{46} Watanabe, ‘Josiah Conder’s Rokumeikan’ 22–23, 27.
Enlightenment had, of course, come at a price. Lucy and her siblings must have watched in horror as their sister Helen died in their Oxmantown Mall home in 1850, at the age of ten. Seven years later Lucy’s talented and much loved father also died, aged only forty-eight, and wife Helena, then only forty, was left to raise a large family on her own.

The 1861 England Census has Helena living with the youngest of her children at Holmwood Cottage in Dorking, England. I found the old home to be much more than a cottage by today’s standards, an indication that John Waters left his widow well provided for – or perhaps her extended family was assisting financially. There is always the possibility too that Lord Rosse may have arranged accommodation for Helena through his contacts with the gentry, although no real evidence of that has come to light.

Fig. 13 Holmwood Cottage, Dorking, where Helena Waters was living with some of her younger children at the time of the 1861 census. At the time, Lucy and sister Elizabeth were staying with their uncle, Oliver Robinson, in London. The size of the house is an indication that Dr John Waters left his wife and family well provided for, or that her extended family was well off. (Photographer: M. Vivers, October 2006.)

Holmwood Cottage, built in 1830, is today beautifully restored with only minor changes. Helena Waters would have been pleased to be bringing up the remainder of her family in such a relaxing and healthy environment. Although regular coaches travelled through to London, the country roads were impassable in heavy rain, as what was known as ‘wheeled clay’ clung to the wheels of horse-drawn
vehicles, making it impossible to move.\(^{47}\) In spite of that, Holmwood was becoming a popular retreat for those in London wishing for some peace and quiet, and country air.\(^{48}\) However, by 1862, Helena had moved her family to 17 Belgrave Place, Brighton, where perhaps she hoped that her remaining daughters might find suitable husbands amongst the elite society of that sea-side town.\(^{49}\) With Lucy at least she was to be successful.

Fig. 14 Belgrave Place in 2006. In the foreground on the right is Number 17 where the Waters family lived. Across the street, and a little further down, lived the Gray family in Number 6. Belgrave Place faced the ocean and must have been a prestigious address at the time. (Photographer: M. Vivers, October 2006.)

Charles Gray’s family lived opposite the Waters in Belgrave Place until 1864, daughter Agnes being in charge of the household after the death of her mother in 1862. Later, Agnes moved to Hervey Terrace, and Miss Butcher, the Gray’s former governess, set up her own boarding house for young boys around the corner in Eaton

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\(^{47}\) Information from Dr Martin Cole, Dorking Museum.

\(^{48}\) Lucy seems to have done some of her paintings at Holmwood. The pine trees in Figs 10 and 11, Appendix 2, are similar to those found around the old Holmwood church today.

\(^{49}\) *Kelly’s Directory*, 1862.
Place, assisted by her mother. All of these addresses are within easy walking distance and, when on leave from the Merchant Marines, Charles must have had every opportunity to keep in touch with the Waters family and get to know Lucy better. They began to correspond during 1864. A short carriage ride away is St Nicholas Church, where the two were married on 27 May, 1868.

Fig. 15 Number 17 Belgrave Place, Brighton, England, where the Waters family lived between 1862 and 1868. With a view over the ocean, and situated in an exclusive part of Brighton, the transition to a small hut in inland North Queensland must have seemed a daunting prospect for Lucy, and especially disturbing for her family. Although Lucy suggests she and Charles had never intended to set up house in the colonies, her adaptability to the hardships of bush life was extraordinary. This ability to adapt her life, and her written and pictorial texts, is a reflection of her upbringing and the influence of her father and her brothers – and almost certainly her mother – as she readily embraced change and adapted to cultural and racial differences while still retaining something of the Victorian ideal.

(Photographer: M. Vivers, October 2006.)

Lucy’s movements in the years leading up to her marriage are unclear. As I said, she was in London in 1861, and she appears to have travelled overseas between 1862 and 1868. One of her paintings dated March 1862 (see Fig. 39, Appendix 2) is not of an English scene, and a list of correspondence between Lucy and Charles supplied by the Tairawhiti Museum, Gisborne, New Zealand indicates travel by Lucy

50 England Census 1871.
51 Correspondence held by Tairawhiti Museum, Gisborne, New Zealand.
while Charles was also travelling with the Marines.\textsuperscript{52} She almost certainly studied art during that period as her later paintings show a marked improvement on the earlier ones. For example, compare the early paintings in Figs 36 and 37, Appendix 2 – again not typical English scenes – with the more accomplished works depicting scenes in Queensland, Tasmanian and New Zealand, in Appendix 2.

In 1871, the census has Helena and her daughters, Adelaide and Georgina, living at Tonbridge, Kent, a health resort like Brighton and Holmwood.\textsuperscript{53} Whether they had fallen on hard times, or whether Helena had simply tired of the social life of Brighton, is unclear. However, her desire to continue to live in a healthy environment may reflect her fear of the poverty, illness and death that had been so much part of life at Parsonstown. Meanwhile, Lucy wrote to them all from a strange new country, turning it all into an adventure and avoiding descriptions, in her journal at least, of anything that might cause alarm.

\textbf{Fig.16} The Parish Church of St Nicholas where Lucy Waters married Charles Gray in May 1868. (Photographer: M. Vivers, October 2006.)

\textsuperscript{52} List of Williams and Gray family documents held at Tairawhiti Museum.
\textsuperscript{53} England Census 1871.
Lucy and Charles were both twenty-seven when they married and left for Australia. The property Glendower, on the Flinders River in north Queensland, where the couple were to live, had no buildings, apart from rough bush shelters in which various workmen lived. Rather than expect his new bride to live in makeshift accommodation, with Aboriginal attack always a possibility, Charles left Lucy with his brother Robert and sister-in-law Charlotte at the already established Hughenden Station while he arranged for a new house to be built. However, unable to bear the separation, and apparently against the wishes of Charlotte and Robert, Lucy soon moved to Glendower, where she and her husband lived in one of the workmen’s huts until a carpenter completed their new house. Her description of the interior of the hut includes smells, sights and sounds that tend to draw the reader into the experience.

When we arrived at the station [Glendower] we found our tent put up on the sultry still morning blown down, everything was dripping and we had to accept the shelter of the stockman’s hut. They had moved into another a little way off. It had evidently been tidied for me & I am sure they must have left all their blankets. There was a great pile folded up on the ‘bunk’ for me to dispose as I pleased, but I preferred the rugs we had brought with us & managed to sleep although the rats were numerous & noisy.

The hut was made entirely of thatch with an opening in one gable for a window, at the other for a door which did not exist. At either side were berths (or ‘bunks’ as they call them) very roughly made & very high, which served for sofas, seats & beds, with some grass & hide for a mattress. The table was a section of a large tree. All round were hung stock whips, bridles, rifles, revolvers, etc, without any attempt at order. 54

Anyone with experience of saddle rooms and feed sheds in outback Australia, with rats scuttling along the rafters and dust underfoot, could easily relate to the realism of Lucy’s description of this stockman’s hut. Memories of the smell of greased leather, old hay and rats came back to me as I read this passage. However,

54 LG. ‘Journal’ XXII–XXIII.
even to those who have not experienced such things, Lucy's writing is effective in involving the reader in a sensory and imaginative experience.

Fig. 17 The stockmen's hut in which Lucy and Charles slept after a storm. They later moved in there while they waited for their new house to be built. Note the small cooking shelter in the front, and the canvas 'American' chairs. When compared with living conditions in Britain, this dwelling must have seemed primitive indeed. (LG, 'Journal' XXV.)

Soon, their new house was finished. Lucy writes:

Since I wrote last we have established ourselves in our new house, or hut as R [Robert] calls it. I daresay many huts are more better in many ways, but this although very rough & of the most primitive construction is not what I should call a hut. I think because it has wide verandahs & is a long strip of building instead of the compact structure one expects to see when one hears of a hut. It consists of three rooms in a row all opening into the verandah before and behind which answer for halls & passages & for windows as the - between the top of the walls & the roof there [is] about 2 feet open which has the advantage of letting in plenty of air & the disadvantage of making it impossible to shut out cats, etc. The partitions between the rooms being the same height as the walls leaves the whole length of roof open from end to end [so] that a person at one end has the benefit of conversation going on at the other. Wooden shutters shut out the light or let it in as you may dispose of them. Such things as glazed windows being unknown in these parts. The
walls are made of thick slabs of wood placed up & down & kept in place by thick horizontal beams called "wall plates" see sketch [sketch] all of a comfortable reddish brown but quite rough. Simply adzed. The chimneys like the rest are wood & wide enough to leave standing room on the hearths when there is a large fire.

C has been lately into the nearest Township and came back with pack horses laden with all kinds of things. I had given him a "carte blanche" so he brought everything he thought likely to be useful generally on a large scale from immense milk buckets, down to tea cups & a huge teapot … most approved of in the bush, where we drink tea morning, noon & night. i.e. breakfast, dinner, and supper. When we came up we had not intended to set up housekeeping & had brought very little with us. L [Charlotte] had sent us up some things, plates crockery, pots & pans … but you can imagine that I felt suddenly rich when C unpacked his purchases & when his drays arrived later with a fresh supply. It was after our poverty almost an embarras de richesses – I appreciated most a case of 12 American chairs all in pieces, which had to be put together, a puzzle which delighted Nungita’s ingenuity.\(^{55}\)

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\(^{55}\) LG. 'Journal' XXXI–XXXIII.

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Fig. 18 The old homestead at Glendower photographed in 1934, sixty years after Lucy and Charles left Australia. It has since been demolished. ('Old Glendower Homestead, a Pioneer Home of the Seventies', *Queenslander*, 15 February 1934, 28. Photographer: B.L. Burrell, 1934.)
Lucy paints a vivid picture of the two Queensland dwellings, demonstrating how dramatically different they were to the comfortable homes to which she had been accustomed. We glimpse again Lucy’s wry humour as she hints at the lack of privacy in the old homesteads. Interestingly, she mentions that she and Charles had never planned to ‘set up house’, a reminder of the temporary nature of their intended stay. Her sketch of the first dwelling (Fig. 17) enhances the written text. Well aware of her family’s difficulty in imagining colonial life, Lucy describes the buildings in detail and the equipment required at a remote homestead. Again with a touch of humour, and even irony, she introduces French phrases, which she knows sound incongruous in a land so far from France. Although foreign language aspects of her lady’s education were to prove totally irrelevant in the Queensland bush, her training in writing and art enabled a better understanding of the colonial circumstance, not only for herself, but for those back ‘home’ – and for today’s reader as well.

It is interesting to compare Lucy’s description of setting up house with Addy Bowler’s account when, as a young married woman, she moved from ‘civilised’ Bathurst to Borambil, where there was little more than a workman’s hut. (See maps in Figs 9 and 11, Appendix 1.) We must remember, of course, that Addy was addressing her diary, whereas Lucy was writing for an outside audience. In spite of this, and in spite of being accustomed to ‘roughing it’ as a child, this period of isolation for Addy in some ways parallels the isolation experienced by Lucy in north Queensland. Another similarity is their recent status as wives although, unlike Addy, Lucy never had children. Six months married, and now aged twenty-five Addy writes:

Borambil, Lachlan River N.S.W.
Sept 7th 1862

It is more than six months since I opened this book and I do so now in my new home and under a new name. However dear this home may become I fear I shall always look back upon the Bathurst district as my home. We were married on Thursday 20th of March 1862 at Kelso ... after spending a month in Sydney we returned to Brucedale and then came on here in May last. So far I have not been disappointed in matrimony but my ideas of it were never very matter of fact – I never expected it to be all sweets.56

This is a practical and realistic account. Addy’s experience as a child, living with financially embarrassed parents, had instilled the ability to make do, which is particularly evident as she continues.

The first night we arrived here we found the furniture that had been sent all piled up on the middle of one room, ro glass in the windows and the dirt on the floor and doors I shall never forget … the next days first work was to hunt for an old spade and scrape the mud and dirt off the floor and get the doors scrubbed so that we could paint them. The latter Willie undertook to do and started in a new coat scorning my advice to put on an old one …

Then alas the glass that had been sent was all too large for the sashes and what was to be done as such a thing as a diamond had not been thought of – however I set to work and hunted up an old emerald [?] that I had brought from Wyagdon and with that and the help of the door key we managed to cut the glass – of course Willie had a good laugh at my suggestion that it could be done in that way but he had not been obliged to resort to ‘make shifts’ all his life as I had … I am rather disappointed in this station as I had been told it was the prettiest on the river – but to me it is too flat I so long for the beautiful hills with their deep shadows.\textsuperscript{57}

Nostalgia for the Bathurst countryside, and for her old friends and family, situates Addy as emotionally remote from the Lachlan River landscape, while her new home requires much physical energy. Although she goes to great lengths to describe how she makes the house liveable, as I have said she seldom engages with her natural surroundings as Lucy Gray does, apart from occasional descriptions of rides to see emus or to Condobolin or Forbes for supplies. Writing in a document that would not be seen immediately by the family, Addy is comfortable including both positives and negatives in her discourse. Her disappointment at the scenery, her admission of hard times as a child, and her realistic approach to marriage, contrast with Lucy’s seemingly more optimistic outlook. However, personal letters sent home to Bathurst may have been a little more cheerful and optimistic to placate family members.

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Ibid.} 33, 34.
Addy Bowler and Lucy Gray offer different insights into colonial life, influenced, not only by their individual personalities, but also by their backgrounds. Addy, who lived from childhood in a rather insular colonial community, demonstrates through her writing that Victorian values inherited from Britain shaped her life and her writing to a greater extent than such values appear to have influenced women like Lucy, who grew up in a rapidly changing world with easy access to intellectual conversation, literature and art. Unlike Lucy, who admittedly was writing for an immediate and specific audience, Addy readily expresses her feelings, especially about people and their behaviour, defining and representing herself within the boundaries of Victorian ideologies. In doing so, she offers the historian a deeper insight into a ‘home-grown’ woman’s development and personal experience. As I have said, her anecdotes and diary entries provide a window through which a certain period and way of life can be glimpsed and better understood on several levels.

In Lucy’s case the dichotomy of ‘home’ and ‘away’, and an intellectually stimulating background, not only inform her texts but also vitalise the way she writes. Her descriptions of first encounters bring with them a freshness that is lacking in the writings of a woman like Addy, already accustomed to surroundings and circumstance. The production of Lucy’s texts is driven by an enquiring mind informed by a comprehensive but specialised education, and the experience and acceptance of outside cultural and scientific influences. Her writings also reveal something of the confused racial and religious ideologies prevalent at the time. Both women highlight aspects of early colonial life and colonial behaviour that I have not found in male accounts. While anticipated audience and Victorian ideals still shaped the production of the texts, formative years were instrumental in determining various discursive directions, and in dictating ways in which cultural, social, scientific and religious beliefs were negotiated and articulated throughout.