1.3 The Journal of Lucy Gray

These letters are to be chiefly about what I did, what I saw, what I thought, etc. – developed exclusively from my point of view. Consequently things that are in the foreground in my pictures are in the middle distance, or on the far horizon of other people’s.¹

In this chapter I look at Lucy Gray’s handwritten journal, using her short diary for cross referencing. I explore what appear to be some of the special features of the journal, and how they might be utilized in an historical sense, emphasising that Lucy’s manuscript is, as she indicates in the quotation above, essentially an extended letter, with some of the features of memoir and diary as well. It is thus appropriate that I look also at the etiquette of letter-writing in the nineteenth century, and discuss ways in which the style and content of such writing could be adapted to suit a particular audience – keeping in mind too the length of time it took for mail to reach Britain from colonial Australia. The epigraph also anticipates much that will be discussed here and in later chapters. In the ‘foreground’ of her ‘pictures’ Lucy does not include the economic or political aspects of the colonies, nor does she voice an opinion as to the rights or wrongs of European settlement. Instead, she concentrates on matters that impact directly upon her, and upon her immediate surroundings. This, as I demonstrate, enables access to events, situations and experiences that are less likely to be included in male-authored primary texts.

Although there are similarities between women’s diaries and journals, there are differences as well – and these can also be document specific. There are sections in her journal where Lucy appears to depend upon memory. However, she does not depend upon such long-term memory as Addy Bowler does in her memoir sections. Addy was sometimes looking back over twenty or thirty years. Lucy’s Australian manuscript seems to have been completed in a period spanning less than eight years. However, an approximate four-year time-span is more realistic, with revisions usually

taking place within a few months, or days, of the event being described, but often building upon notes taken immediately after the event.

Lucy Gray’s journal is significant for the purpose of my study, first, because the document is in original handwriting, with all cross-outs, punctuation inconsistencies, and other irregularities intact. Such corrections and inconsistencies are of use, as they can point to historically relevant constraints that a writer may have placed upon herself. Such pointers disappear in transcription and/or publication. Apart from sections of the journal appearing in the two issues of the journal Queensland Heritage in 1966, as mentioned in the Introduction, I could not find evidence of the journal being transcribed or published in its entirety. However, it has been accessed by some historians and those interested in family histories. For example, Joan and Gordon Flood, the present owners of Hughenden Station, have a copy, as does Mrs Hunter of ‘Toriguy’, Hughenden, who is writing a history of the Hughenden region.\(^2\) While in 2002, Rebekah Crow, a PhD student at the University of Queensland, gave a paper to the Australian Historical Association conference entitled ‘Lucy Gray’s Journal: Writing the Self. Writing the World’ in which she explored how Lucy wrote about her experiences in north Queensland.\(^3\)

Second, Lucy’s journal, together with her short diary and fragments, shows a certain spontaneity that is less likely to be present in more strategically composed and heavily edited published works. As I have said, parts of the journal were compiled from sketchy notes made closer to the time of the event described, later omissions suggesting some editing for the final copy. This re-writing was either for the writer’s own satisfaction, or in preparation for sending the journal out to various family members, or both. The thought of future publication may also explain why Lucy later changed words that occurred too frequently in the actual journal, and improved upon poor expression. She also uses single letters for people’s names, as though wishing to preserve their anonymity in case a wider audience were to view the manuscript, or as a short-hand that would be understood by the family.

Of particular importance is the fact that Lucy, at twenty-seven years of age, was fresh from England when she first experienced colonial life. Her enthusiasm and powers of observation, evoked both in her writing and in her sketches, drawings and

\(^{-2}\) Private conversations during a visit to Hughenden in August 2005.
\(^{-3}\) I was unable to obtain a copy of this paper. However, the abstract was available at http://www.griffith.edu.au/text/conference/aha2002/Abstracts.html on 8 May, 2005.
paintings, provide us with a ‘fresh look’ a: the colonial environment – an environment taken more readily for granted by those who were actually born in Australia. This is obvious in the writing of Addy Bowler, who was Australian-born. Her description of landscapes and events lacks some of the enthusiasm of first discovery found in Lucy’s texts.

Because of their very different backgrounds, useful comparisons are possible between these two writers, across the genres of journal, memoir and diary which they adopt. Addy Bowler grew up in the socially stimulating, but otherwise somewhat insular, environment of Bathurst and district, while Lucy Gray’s youth was spent in the socially and intellectually stimulating environments of both Ireland and England. I explore Lucy’s background in more detail in Chapter 2.3, and discuss ways in which her formative years may have influenced her representations of colonial life. Both women moved to isolated rural properties after their marriage. However, Addy’s access to family and friends in times of trouble, although difficult, was possible. Lucy had to depend upon unreliable mails for any kind of communication with her family and friends.

Unlike the haphazard education reflected in Addy’s writing, the sophisticated style of Lucy’s writing and pictorial representations suggests advanced training in English literature, prose and the visual arts. Reference in her brief diary to the various books she is reading confirms this. Two lists of letters sent by Lucy to England mention the return of books, while correspondence with the Grays’ former governess, Miss Butcher, points to Lucy’s on-going interest in education and educated people (see Fig. 1). While Lucy’s education was obviously taken seriously by her parents, Addy Bowler admits her schooling was patchy, and even non-existent at times.4

As I indicated in the Introduction, in the file known as the Lucy Gray Papers there are other documents besides Lucy’s journal and her short diary. These include diaries and letters written by various members of the family, and fragments of text in Lucy’s own handwriting. Because I will be referring to some of these documents from time to time, it is appropriate that I now list the contents of the file in more detail. First, there is the short diary written by Lucy, commenced one year after she and Charles arrived in the Hughenden region. It is headed: ‘Glendower, Oct. 1869 –

4 For example, see Adelaide Bowler, ‘Bowler (Sutor) Diaries and Memoirs 1840 –1890’ (private collection, Sydney) book 1: 5. Record of Miss Butcher as the Gray’s governess from the England Census 1861.
Lucy Gray – Private’, with ‘Private’ underlined twice. The diary continues until 31 March 1872. Filed with the diary are the two pages mentioned above that list people to whom she has written letters. The first commences 11 October 1869, ending in July 1870 (Fig. 1). The second starts January 1872 and ends in July of the same year.

Fig. 1 List of letters sent to Britain from north Queensland by Lucy Gray in 1869 and 1870, filed with the Lucy Gray Papers. Above some of the names is a small number, most likely identifying parts of the journal sent to that particular person. The last two lines read: Miss Butcher, Agnes, Ernest, Georgie, sketches to Agnes, Adelaide. Miss Butcher was the Gray’s governess, Agnes was the oldest female member of the Gray family (sister to Charles), Ernest was Lucy’s brother, and Georgie and Adelaide her two younger sisters. (See family trees, Appendix 1.)
Fig. 2  After she was no longer required as a governess in the Gray household, Miss Butcher ran a boarding house for young boys at 20 Eaton Place, next door to Belgrave Place. Number 20 is the third house on the left in the above photograph. Several boarding houses and private schools for boys and girls were situated in Eaton Place at the time. 5 Note the view of the sea – a prime location. Lucy’s records show that she wrote several letters to Miss Butcher from Queensland, and their friendship suggests Lucy’s ongoing interest in education and educated people. (Photographer: M. Vivers, October 2006.)

Following on from Lucy’s diary is a brief diary by Charles, commencing 30 March 1873 and ending 16 August 1873. It was written partly at Glendower, and partly when he and Lucy were travelling in a steamer down the coast of Queensland. In the latter part, there is the first indication that Lucy is ill, as an entry on 15 August 1873, written in Sydney, states: ‘With Lucy to Dr Cox …’

There is, of course, the main manuscript, which I refer to as the journal. Lucy commenced writing this in September 1868, and continued more or less chronologically, although the time-frame can only be surmised by comparison with her diary. However, towards the end, the manuscript becomes more like a narrative of self-contained chapters describing various features of life in north Queensland,

5 In 1867, Eaton Place schools included a boarding school for young ladies run by the Misses Blundell. Before Miss Butcher took over 20 Eaton Place it was a boarding school for young gentlemen run by a Reverend Leopold. (Pages Directory, 1867, Brighton History Centre.)
including the birds and insects that Lucy encountered and observed. There are also
enlightening descriptions of encounters with Aboriginal people, which appear to have
originated from fragments kept together for use in a single chapter later on. The first
part of the journal takes the form of a serial letter while in the later, more self-
contained sections, Lucy appears to be re-living her experiences and her past
observations through her writing. If Lucy had eventual publication in mind, these
more carefully structured sections centred around a particular theme, may have been
written specifically for that purpose. There is no indication of exactly when Lucy
stopped writing her journal. It simply ends, after a story about an Aboriginal
stockman and his ‘wife’, with the following:

I will now say goodbye to my kind reader who has accompanied me so far,
referring him (or her) to my esteemed pardner (Mr C. Gray) for further details
(should he or she wish for them) of our Life on the Flinders.⁶

Note the Americanism ‘pardner’. Elsewhere she refers to Charles as my ‘ol man’,
another American term – perhaps a reflection of the literature coming out of America
at the time. Why Lucy is handing over the reins to Charles is a puzzle. Perhaps the
illness that was later to claim her life was beginning to take its toll and to dampen her
initial enthusiasm for colonial life. The ‘kind reader’ could indicate a family audience
and/or a more public audience.

There are also various family letters in the file, including correspondence from
Charles to Lucy when they were living apart – he at Glendower and she at nearby
Hughenden – as they waited for their own home to be built at Glendower or when
Charles was away mustering cattle. There are letters too from Lucy’s brother-in-law
Robert to Charles, to another brother Mowbray, and from Robert to a John Macrae –
most of the latter written after Charles and Lucy had left Australia in 1875.

Finally, there are some textual fragments that appear to be preliminary notes
for Lucy’s journal, and extra pages that have been copied from the journal itself, some
in handwriting that does not appear to be Lucy’s. Sketches and drawings embedded
in the text of the journal, and in the fragments, are studied in detail in later chapters.

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⁶ LG. ‘Journal’ XXVI.
Whatever her ultimate aim, Lucy’s journal appeared to be destined in the first instance at least for a small circle of family and friends back home in England, and perhaps even in Ireland. In the introduction to the two sections of the transcribed manuscript published in the *Queensland Heritage* it is suggested that a letter-book may have been part of Lucy’s chosen style for publication, and that any actual recipient was fictitious. However, the farewell at the end of her journal to her ‘kind reader’ is problematic. Any reader of a published version of the journal would presumably have had access to further writings by husband Charles. In fact, a journal by Charles dated 1873–1879 is held by the Tairawhiti Museum and Art Gallery, Gisborne, New Zealand, suggesting some collaboration between the two writers. However, further research would require access to the New Zealand records, which is beyond the scope of this thesis, which focuses on Lucy’s journal writing.

The small numbers above the names in the list of ‘letters sent’ appear to identify parts of the journal being sent home. By enlarging the text in Fig. 1, a small number can be detected above the name of some of the recipients. For example: ‘Oct 15 – Agnes, with sketches’ and then, ‘Feb 10 – Agnes … Ernest, etc.’, with a small ‘6’ above ‘Agnes’. Then, May 23: Agnes, Lottie, Mother … with a small ‘14’ above Agnes. In July, she notes: ‘Sketches to Agnes’. Other recipients with an identifying number include: ‘Gussie’, ‘Tom’, ‘Lily’, ‘Alphie’ and ‘Lottie’. Agnes receives the most letters and sketches, and has the most numbers above her name. She is almost certainly Charles’ sister, who was only three years younger than Lucy. It would appear that the numbers indicate a particular part of the journal that Lucy was sending to certain people and, by numbering them, she is reminding herself that she has done so.

Cover letters, with the journal sections enclosed, were posted off whenever an opportunity arose. This is also recorded on the ‘letters sent’ pages. For example, on 23 March, a letter to ‘Agnes, Lottie, Mother’ went ‘per Robert via the [gold] diggings’. Lucy was obviously an efficient and methodical record keeper, an attribute possibly impressed upon her by her doctor father and almost certainly by her mother, a discipline expected of Victorian middle-class ladies.

A passage, in the journal highlights the irregular time-intervals between the mails. Lucy and Charles were camping fifteen miles from the homestead, and were

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7 ‘Life on the Flinders River (1868–70)’. *Queensland Heritage* 1, no. 2 (1965) 17–27.
8 LG. ‘Fragment’.
visited by one of their men, Mac, who had remained at the homestead but was bringing them supplies at regular intervals. Lucy writes:

He [Mac] brought us other refreshment, in the shape of a budget [mail bag] of home letters, a pleasure that you, getting letters every day, can only imagine. But, if the pleasure is great when they come so is the disappointment, if some special one that you have been counting upon is not in the budget, you know you have a whole month to wait before it can come.\(^9\)

The ‘refreshing’ arrival of letters suggests homesickness and a longing to know what was happening back in Britain. The value of letters was enhanced by distance and irregular mail services.

As Lucy’s journal was a kind of serial letter, further discussion must necessarily commence with a very brief account of the history of the letter book, and letter writing in general during the nineteenth century, particularly in Victorian England. Dale Spender says that as early as 1664 Margaret Cavendish experimented with the published letter-writing form for a range of purposes, including philosophical concerns and scientific explanations. She did this because there were then few other genres available to women. Letter writing, considered a less sophisticated art-form, continued for at least a century after to be an acceptable genre for women, while poetry and novel writing (the latter emerging in the eighteenth century at first in an epistolary form) were generally considered genres for men. In fact, it was considered ‘ridiculous’ for women to ‘venture at writing books and verse’.\(^{10}\)

The tradition of the published letter-book grew to be popular with both men and women into the nineteenth and early twentieth century, although the novel was becoming an increasingly acceptable genre for women writers.\(^{11}\) As may have been the case with Lucy Gray, women sometimes wrote letters with eventual publication in mind. Rather than remaining ‘private’, letters could therefore eventually cross over into the public domain. Spender suggests that this interweaving of the public and the private adds an extra dimension to women’s written heritage, as we gain insights into

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the way women lived, and also the ways in which they thought about themselves and their society.\textsuperscript{12}

Letters in the nineteenth century were expected to follow strict codes. By the end of the eighteenth century women, as well as men, were being addressed in letter-writing manuals, and it was soon accepted that women brought a ‘special sensibility to the writing of letters’. Familiar letters for both men and women (as opposed to polite business letters) were supposed to be written with ‘conversational warmth rather than oratorical elegance’.\textsuperscript{13} However, the manuals advised their readers to:

\begin{quote}
think carefully before writing a letter as faults due to haste could reflect poorly on the personal character and social grace of the letter writer … The ideal style for a familiar letter was an appearance of spontaneous ease, even where tremendous care was taken.\textsuperscript{14}
\end{quote}

There may have been an appearance of ‘spontaneous ease’. However, such ‘careful’ writing could actually result in loss of real spontaneity and even, one might suspect, reasonable balance, due to careful selection of topic and emphasis. This occurred in the colonies, not only because of letter-writing etiquette, but also because of regard for the feelings of those back home who would not receive the letter until up to six months after the event described. This may partly account for a down-playing of the unpleasant side of frontier life in Lucy’s journal, as she generally relates events and experiences in a cheerful and optimistic way, and seldom, if ever, suggests personal hardship, imminent danger, or even boredom.

Lucy Gray was not the only colonial woman who attempted to maintain a cheerful tone in her correspondence home. For example, Charlotte Bussell, writing to England from colonial Western Australia, admitted that she waited until she was cheerful before putting pen to paper. She said she took a ‘firm decision that “little worries” were only aggravated “by writing, and talking to others, for nobody can help

\begin{flushright}\	extsuperscript{12} Spender, \textit{Writing a New World} 5.
\textsuperscript{13} David Barton and Nigel Hall, \textit{Letter Writing as a Social Practice} (Amsterdam and Philadephia: John Benjamins, 2000) 33–34.
\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid.} 35. (Quoting from Konstantin Dierks, ‘The Familiar Letter and Social Refinement in America’.)
\end{flushright}
you to bear them but yourselves”. Later, Charlotte advised her grandchildren not to write sad letters to her.¹⁵

Even before settling permanently at their new station, Glendower, Lucy’s journal is reasonably cheerful and optimistic, although she says she misses Charles, who is away a great deal. This is suggested in the passage below, written when Lucy was staying with her sister-in-law, Charlotte (or Lottie as the family called her) at Hughenden Station.

I must say the life here like this country is monotonous. C [Charles] is away a good deal at the Cattle Station [Glendower]. L [Lottie] does not care for riding. I ride a good deal alone generally in the afternoon. I explore the bush but the most interesting [?] are shepherds huts which are made like this of sheets of galvanized iron laid together. The kanakas make a shade of [bush?] over this. Outside is their fire place & all their cooking utensils.¹⁶

![Drawing of the shepherd’s hut](image)

Fig. 3 Drawing of the shepherd’s hut mentioned above – slightly enlarged.

Lucy is letting those back ‘home’ know that she is making the best of things, although life in her new surroundings was ‘monotonous’. Note in the tiny drawing with the text (Fig. 3) a bucket and cooking pot, symbols of domesticity that are more likely to be overlooked in male representations of colonial life. Lucy wrote: ‘About the station the country was quite bare of grass. I thought it very ugly but there were

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¹⁶ I.G. ‘Journal’ XVI.
low blue hills in the distance which made the view pleasant". Pleasantness for Lucy when she first arrived was understood in terms relative to her past experience in Ireland and England.

Fig. 4 The entrance to Hughenden station as it is today. The country around the homestead is, as Lucy suggests, flat and relatively uninteresting. (Photographer: M. Vivers, August 2005.)

Although most of her journal is undated, we know that Lucy began to write this particular document on the trip from Melbourne to Townsville. It commences with the heading ‘Cleveland Bay’, and then with (what looks like) ‘Sept. 1868’.

Since I wrote to you from Melbourne we have continued our voyage, in different steamers, up the coast, taking about ten days, not counting the time we stopped in Sydney / Steamers going North, keep near the coast on account of the currents, so we get a [succession] of views, more or less pretty all the way.

17 Ibid. XII.
rarely seeing any sign of life, or habitation except in the ports and [from] time to time among the hills the smoke of the blacks fires.  

These first impressions set the tone for the rest of the journal, as Lucy’s writing develops alongside her growing sense of self and place in the Australian countryside. There are few dates after this, although the diary does help situate various events mentioned in the journal within certain time frames. Towards the end, Lucy’s journal sometimes wanders back and forth across time as she describes various incidents that illustrate particular themes, while fragments filed with the journal suggest some rough note-taking around the time of a specific event, followed by a more careful account written later on. On the whole, however, much of her early writing takes the form of a carefully written diary/letter in that there is some chronological sequence.

After the couple had been some time at Glendower there are, as I have said, sections in which the chronological structure is completely abandoned. Clearly defined chapters discuss, for example, the birds, animals and insects of the Hughenden region. In a chapter on insects, Lucy concludes with the story of a fight between a wasp and a hornet.

The little wasp fought valiantly, but the hornet tore open the cells [of the nest] & dragged out whatever the wasp had put in – having dragged it away it re-appeared … I daresay the [hornet] had killed its eggs.

Unlike some other women ‘pioneers’, such as Evelyn Maunsell and Jane Bardsley, who provide the historian with useful anecdotes that point to sometimes friendly accommodation and acculturation between themselves and the Aboriginal people, Lucy’s descriptions of Aborigines, like her descriptions of insects, often tend to be amateurishly scientific. Ethnographic observation of Indigenous peoples was a pervasive cultural form at the time and, cognisant of that, rather than describing personal interaction between white settle’s and Aborigines, Lucy is more inclined to stand back and observe, at least in her journal, even though she employs Aboriginal servants in and around the house.

18 Ibid. 1.
19 Ibid. I–XII.
Describing the first Aborigines she encounters around Townsville on her way to Glendower, Lucy considers their living conditions in relation to those of Europeans.

The blacks seem miserable enough to people who cannot imagine happiness without comfort, but really in their free open life, they are far happier than the poor in crowded alleys and close rooms of large towns. We think they must be [wretched] having to eat rats & snakes. They consider them delicacies & there is no very great difference between rats & rabbits, snakes & eels, except taste & customs.\(^{21}\)

This is an excellent example of cultural mediation between colony and familiar metropole, produced for the benefit of those back home unfamiliar with colonial conditions. While still new to colonial life, Lucy reflects on the learning ability of Aborigines compared with the South Sea Islander servants employed by the Grays.

The native blacks until they have been some time with white people & become partly civilized do not seem to have the organ bump of [the next word looks like ‘wonder’] & gaze look with indifference on whatever they are not accustomed to see – they the wild ones have only a part of their faculties awakened in use the rest they are very keen – the rest have not been awakened.\(^{22}\)

The study of phrenology was a popular pseudo-science at the time, and Lucy was apparently keen to apply what she had read to the local people. She seems confused as to the possibility of Aborigines having the same level of intelligence as Europeans, although she acknowledges their potential to ‘awaken’ and adapt to European customs. At the same time, she reflects on contemporary views on racial difference based on physical characteristics, which were seen by some to indicate degrees of intellectual ability. However, Lucy has crossed out words like ‘bump’ and ‘organ’, perhaps to avoid offence, or maybe as an indication of her uncertainty as to the correct terminology. ‘Scientific’ examination of Aborigines appears to have been more attractive to those who, like Lucy, came straight to the Australian ‘frontiers’

\(^{21}\) L.G. ‘Journal’ 12.
\(^{22}\) Ibid. XV.
from Britain. (For more on Lucy’s formative years and their possible effect on her texts see Chapter 2.3.)

By the mid-nineteenth century, with a new questioning of religion by way of science, many people were beginning to see racial difference as based on physical characteristics, such as skin colour which, in turn, were thought to indicate intellectual ability. Andrew Markus comments that a growing interest in scientific enquiry freed from the shackles of religion challenged certain views on the unity of the human race.  

23 Also, in some cases, it became ideologically useful for European colonists to see Aborigines as ‘living fossils’ who were obstructing colonial expansion and were destined to die out.  

24 In the earlier part of the nineteenth century racial attitudes were based on a variety of philosophies. One, originating from the story of Babel, saw all races as descended from Adam and Eve, but a resulting division placed the white race as superior physically, intellectually and culturally. ‘Inferior’ races were, however, seen as having the potential to be regenerated. On the other hand, a polygenesis theory, based on the curse of Ham, saw various races as being the result of separate creative acts that resulted in different species of mankind, blacks being seen as ‘brutish, ignorant, idle, crafty, treacherous, thievish, mistrustful and superstitious.’  

25 An ancient philosophy originating from Plato and Aristotle, also prevailed. This was the Great Chain of Being, in which all living things were arranged in an hierarchical way with some races, like the Australian Aborigine, occupying ‘the lowest rung’ in the hierarchy of mankind, being closest to apes. For many white settlers, these ideologies were moulded to suit the circumstance and the concept of the Aboriginal people as being of a lower standing, or even a separate race, was often used as an excuse to dispossess and mistreat the original inhabitants. The Grays had, therefore, brought with them, as did other colonials, a mixture of ideologies concerning ‘black’ people informed by confused and often contradictory beliefs.
Soon the excitement of choosing a homestead site, building and settling into a new home, become evident in the journal.

Since I wrote to you last we have been up at the Cattle Station (ie up the river) thirty miles from this to settle where our house is to be built & the said house is now in progress, so far as they are cutting the wood & bringing it in. I liked the country up there better than here. The Hills close in – halfway from here & form a gorge through which the river runs & then opens again into wide wooded valleys. In one of these in a great bend [in the river] is the station. At present it consists only of stockmen’s huts & yards for the cattle.\textsuperscript{26}

Visiting Hughenden Station in 2005 it was easy for me to see why Lucy might have thought the country there less appealing. The new Hughenden homestead is situated on the same flat, semi-open plain as the old one once was (see Fig. 3 above). Rather than the beautiful eucalypts that line the rivers, the trees around the homestead are small and uninteresting, and would have been especially so for Lucy, accustomed to larger English trees with thicker foliage. Like Lucy, I was to find the tablelands and river valley of Glendower station much more attractive.

The next part of the journal shows a shift in narrative focus, with some confusion as to chronological sequence, suggesting again that these are sections intended as inclusions in different letters.

The next day we surveyed the ground & finally settled on a gravelly [sic] hill some distance from the yards & the river out of the reach of dust & flood. There is no soil for a garden but the advantages of gravel and height outweighs that disadvantage – this settled we had dinner & went for a ride to some ‘water holes’ higher up the river.\textsuperscript{27}

Following on from the above, Lucy experiments with Australian terminology and explains why some Australian words are more appropriate than the equivalent English words with which she has been familiar. This is a sign that Lucy is prepared to separate herself from her origins, not only in a physical sense, but in a mental and emotional sense as well.

\textsuperscript{26} L.G. ‘Journal’ XIX.  
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid. XX.
Now a ‘stream’ is a ‘creek’ & a pool a ‘hole’. Perhaps these words express more exactly what they are – the greater number of creeks are only watercourses & are dry at some time of the year & the pools that last through the dry season must be [?] tolerably deep holes to last & some are very pretty – those we rode to see are where the river has cut its way through a rocky gorge with steep sides. When the river has stopped running in shallow places it remains here in deep still pools. In one the blacks say there is an alligator & they will not bathe there. We did not see him but there are quantities of fish.²⁸

Here we see not only the beginnings of a sense of place and a growing understanding of her new surroundings, but also a thoughtful exploration of the most appropriate language to use when describing elements of Australia’s natural environment. ‘Hole’ is more appropriate than ‘pool’, ‘creek’ better than ‘stream’. However, Lucy had not yet learned that underground water seeping up into waterholes keeps them full during the dry season.

Once settled in their new house at Glendower (after a brief stay in one of the men’s huts while the house was being completed), Lucy describes the problems she is having with her new vegetable garden. At this particular time crows were eating her seeds and seedlings.

They [the crows] continued picking out the seeds & tearing young plants in pieces. At last we tried poison. In ten minutes there was a victim, & all the crows in the neighbourhood were holding an inquiry into [?] on the death of one of their leading members. They evidently decided that the garden was dangerous ground & for a while my poor plants had rest.²⁹

The humanisation of insects, birds and even ‘poor’ plants, is part of the charm of Lucy’s writing, and reflects a sense of humour that successfully conceals the more solemn reality of living in a harsh, unforgiving country.

Sara Mills notes that in colonial travel writing, women ‘nearly always write about accidents and incompetence with a sense of humour’, whereas setbacks and accidents when described in men’s narratives are usually detailed in such a way as to

²⁸ Ibid. XX–XXI.
²⁹ Ibid. IIa–IIIa.
promote the strength and ability of the central male character. Women are not so inclined to situate themselves in a position of power. In fact, according to Mills, they are more likely to make fun of themselves so as not to appear too masculine and powerful.\textsuperscript{30} The tendency to downplay dangers through humour was even carried over into early reviews of women’s travel writing. Alison Blunt quotes from a review of Mary Kingsley’s account of her adventures in West Africa. Assuming Kingsley to be ‘an eccentric subject who lacked the control and bravery that might be expected from white men establishing imperial power and authority’, she is described in the review as someone who ‘warded off the attack of a crocodile, tumbled into the water out of a canoe, escaped many other dangers, and was extricated from several awkward predicaments’.\textsuperscript{31} Kingsley’s bravery is thus devalued by a flippancy that undermines the actual dangers she had to overcome.

Lucy Gray’s apparent strength of character and self-confidence do not allow for self-deprecation. Instead, she uses humour as a way of making light of difficult circumstances, bearing in mind a far-away audience concerned for her well-being. Diminished femininity does not appear to be an issue, while emphasis on her own personal frustrations, in this case brought about by her damaged vegetable garden, is transferred to the antics of the principal cause of frustration – the crows. However, Lucy’s sense of humour would later be sorely tried when the well-established vegetable garden was completely washed away in an overnight flood. ‘I groaned over the havoc one night had made in our flourishing garden, scarcely a trace remained’, she wrote, hardly managing to conceal her disappointment.\textsuperscript{32}

In spite of set-backs, Lucy’s journal continues to be strongly optimistic. She describes riding adventures, encounters with Aborigines, and camping excursions with equal enthusiasm. The suggestion of danger is suppressed, and long periods of boredom are seldom mentioned, or at least not dwelt upon in the journal. However, her brother-in-law, Robert Gray, is more forthcoming about the possible dangers

\textsuperscript{32} L.G., ‘Journal’ 9b.
women like Lucy faced in the newly settled regions. In his book about life at Hughenden, he writes:

My brother’s wife was a great rider, and although a risky thing to do with blacks about, she used sometimes to ride down to us, doing the thirty miles in four hours unattended, and armed with a revolver which I am afraid would not have been much use to her if the blacks intended mischief. The manner in which she used to remain at the Homestead [Glendower], sometimes for ten days at a time whilst my brother and his party were out mustering was very plucky; it was a lonely spot, no travellers pass that way, and her only companion was frequently a black gin when old Naim, the carpenter, was away at his work.33

Robert may have been inclined to exaggerate the threat posed by the local Aborigines, toning down his harsh treatment of them for the benefit of his readers. In fact, his Reminiscences suggest an ambivalent attitude towards the original inhabitants. He speaks often of the need to carry firearms yet, when shepherding sheep at Hughenden, he recalls an event which demonstrates the complex nature of racial relations on the frontier.

‘On one occasion when I was sitting down against a tree, a boomerang struck the tree and dropped on to my head. The weapon, however, was not a heavy one, and was probably sent by way of a joke.’34

Despite this rather light-hearted account, Robert is quick to defend the role carried out by the Native Police in protecting white settlers, estimating that during the eighteen sixties probably ten to fifteen per cent of the white population lost their lives at the hands of the blacks.35 Many of these were shepherds. While he is prepared to admit that punishment dealt out to the ‘wild’ Aborigines, not only by the Police but by white settlers, may have been excessive, Robert also suggests that some stories concerning

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34 Gray, Reminiscences 78.
35 For estimates by Loos and Reynolds as to the number of white people who died at the hands of the north Queensland Aborigines see Anne Allingham, ‘Burdekin Frontier’, in Race Relations in North Queensland, ed. Henry Reynolds (Townsville: James Cook University, 1993) 120.
cruelty to Aborigines could be ‘taken with a grain of salt’.\textsuperscript{36} Speaking of his friend Robert Christensen, from neighbouring Lammermoor Station, he notes that ‘Christensen was a very powerful man, and had great influence amongst the blacks’.\textsuperscript{37}

![Robert Christensen](image1.jpg)

**Fig. 5** Robert Christensen who owned Lammermoor Station. He was kind to the local Dalleburra tribe, allowing them to hunt and camp on his station. Lammermoor was next door to Hughenden, where Charlotte and Robert Gray lived.

![Dalleburra tribe](image2.jpg)

**Fig. 6** Members of the Dalleburra tribe before a corroboree at Lammermoor in 1874, the year before Lucy and Charles Gray left nearby Glendower. (Images in Figs 5 and 6 from Robert Armstrong, *The Kalkadoons: A Study of an Aboriginal Tribe on the Queensland Frontier* (Brisbane: William Brooks and Co., n.d.) 167, 173. Originals held at John Oxley, Queensland State Library, Brisbane. Photographer unknown.)

Christensen was renowned for being firm but kind to the local Aborigines, allowing them onto Lammermoor, and employing many of them as stationhands. He denied the Native Police access to his property.\textsuperscript{38} Because of the apparent success of Christensen, and several other neighbours, Robert and Charles Gray also decided to allow the Aborigines access to their old hunting grounds, on the condition that they

\textsuperscript{36} Gray, *Reminiscences* 79.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid. 130.

\textsuperscript{38} See Mary Bennett, *Christison of Lammermoor* (London: Alston Rivers, 1928); in particular pages 107 and 228 concerning Christison’s fairness to the local Aborigines. See also Allingham, ‘Burdekin Frontier’ 127–28 and Armstrong, *The Kalkadoons* 167–68.
did not spear cattle. ‘I thought it right to give them a fair trial’, wrote Robert.\(^{39}\) However, in spite of good intentions, negotiations often broke down in the wet season, when cattle could be speared without easy detection by their owners. When that happened the Grays lacked the patience of Christensen, and lost the ability to ‘turn a blind eye’, eventually calling in the Police or taking off after the offenders themselves.

While admitting to attacks on their cattle by the Aborigines, any concern for her own safety is silenced in Lucy’s journal, and the carrying of a pistol is not mentioned.\(^{40}\) In fact, fear is an emotion that Lucy does not readily admit to, even in her private diary, although she was susceptible to the power of suggestion. During a big muster, when Charles and the men were away from the homestead for several days, Lucy wrote from Glendower:

> I was very glad to have Mrs C with me while they were away, ‘or I would have been quite alone’. Although she was in perpetual fear of the blacks, & with good reason for they had murdered her brother down at the Gulf where she had been living & where they were numerous & dangerous. I [assured her] that they were quite different here, & were never seen unless people followed their tracks to their retreats among the hills. Yet when we rode out she saw a black-fellow in every stump or stone half hidden in the grass, & at night as we were sitting by the fire, she started & looked round at every sound, & in the intervals told me dreadful stories of murders, etc, done by the blacks until at last I began to start & look round.\(^{41}\)

Although Lucy may have been infected by her friend’s very real fear of Aboriginal attack, there is a note of humour in the above account, as the pleasurable make-believe sense of Gothic tales undercuts, for the reader at least, the possibility of any real danger. By crossing out what appears to be ‘or I would have been quite alone’ Lucy was perhaps trying to protect her family from the frightening thought of her being by herself at Glendower, surrounded by ‘wild’ Aborigines – although, on this occasion at least, it appears that the South Sea Islander servant Nungita was with


them. Then, when Mrs C realises that there are no locks on the doors, Lucy reports she ‘had to get Nungita to sleep in the verandah across her [Mrs C’s] doorway armed with a revolver’. Did Lucy feel that she would not be telling the exact truth if she said she was alone? Or was she simply shielding her family from the very real danger she and her husband faced? The journal invites us to pause and question colonial behaviour and attitudes, suggesting truths based on experience beyond the scope of traditional source material. We are warned, too, against making anachronistic judgements that do not take into account the confused ideals and difficult circumstances that prevailed.

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It is to Lucy’s short diary, rather than her journal, that we must turn for a clearer understanding of the loneliness and isolation she experienced, although, even in her diary, danger and fear are not openly expressed. This is in spite of the fact that the document is headed ‘private’, and the brevity of the entries would appear to put it into the category of those narratives which would supposedly allow for a more honest depiction of living conditions and personal feelings. Lucy’s fluctuating moods, so carefully suppressed in the journal, do sometimes surface in the diary, telling us a little more about the inner feelings of this remarkable woman. However, although the diary paints a seemingly more honest picture of the hardships experienced by women like Lucy who lived on remote out-back stations, even there Lucy never resorts to the dense self-examination that characterises some of Addy Bowler’s diary writing.

Lucy’s loneliness is either expressed openly or simply suggested in her diary. Charles is often away from home searching for cattle, visiting the gold diggings nearby, looking for markets for their cattle, or picking up supplies. On 7 November 1869 Lucy writes in her diary:

Charlie still away – at home all day – read [the name of a book which looks like ‘Six Lectures’] – talk to Mac [one of the stockmen] & wish for Charlie. [My italics.]

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42 Ibid. 40.
There is relief when, on the following Thursday, she writes: ‘Charlie came home in the [evening] from Hughenden – bringing with him two puppies’, and on the Saturday: ‘Charlie mending saddles on the veranda. I read to him…’

![Image](Fig. 7 This evocative little scene not only demonstrates Lucy’s skill as an artist, but is symbolic of her dread of being left alone as the men ride away into the bush. (LG, ‘Fragment’.)]

The tiny sketch in Fig. 7, enlarged slightly here, symbolises Lucy’s greatest dread – being left alone at Glendower. Here, two male figures ride away into the distance, a sight that often meant Lucy would be by herself for days at a time, except perhaps for her Kanaka helper, Nungita, and later on the Aboriginal girl Moggie, while sometimes a female friend, or old Nairn the carpenter, would keep her company. Note the skilful use of lines in the sketch that minimally depict the body positioning of one rider as he turns to the other, and the expressive movement of the horses. The men sit low in their saddles, a sedentary position not easily reproduced satisfactorily in paintings and drawings.

By 6 December 1869 Lucy appears quite depressed and even agitated: ‘Awake with mosquitoes all night’. Then, on 12 December: ‘All this week very tired of being home … mosquitoes, flies ditto’. Such strong complaints do not appear in the journal, perhaps an attempt to avoid ‘I told you so’s’ from her family in England. Occasional walks and rides with her husband give some relief from the boredom. On 9 and 16 January 1870, Lucy writes in her diary: ‘Went out for a prowl in the rain with C’ and ‘Out for a prowl on the premises with C’. However, in spite of sharing experiences with Charles, there were many occasions when Lucy had to entertain herself. On 2 March 1870 she writes: ‘Charlie went down to Hughenden – taking the small boy
Billy. Bathed at sunset in the river – clear deep stream very delicious.’ As I enlarge upon in Chapter 2.2, by using evocatively sensual language, Lucy is able to draw the reader into her own personal space, thus sharing her sense of pleasure and even intimacy with her bush surroundings, in spite of the negative aspects of colonial life.

Fig. 8 Charles Gray (1840–1918). Charles was employed as a midshipman in the Merchant Marines on the vessel ‘Queen’ at the age of seventeen. He had progressed to ‘Master’ on the ‘Gertrude’ the year before he married Lucy in May 1868.

(Information and image from Taiarawhitia Museum, Gisborne, New Zealand. Photograph by London Stereoscopic Company, n.d.)

The rather bleak entries that colour Lucy’s diary from time to time are so far removed from the overall light-hearted tone of the journal that one could almost be excused for thinking that these are two different writers living in two different places. However, by reading across the genres it is possible to recognise some of the silences and constraints in the journal and at the same be alerted to certain limits where journals in general are concerned. Meanwhile, more questions arise as to what may be omitted from diaries – such as details of illness, which appear in none of Lucy’s texts. In Chapter 2.4 I discuss silences that come to light by reading Lucy’s journal alongside her diary, together with letters and fragments.

Through Lucy’s journal we learn something of the character of the writer and something too of the colonial environment at the time. By mediation through her writing and illustrations, Lucy translates her experience of the colonies in a culturally significant way, a translation that tells us something about relationships – not only between the
writer and her readers, but also between a woman and her new environment, and between the colonies and what was still thought of by the colonists as ‘home’. Ultimately, the text is actually ‘shaped’ by the reader. This is because, as Gillian Whitlock says, speaking here specifically of published autobiography:

Although the shaping of the autobiography ostensibly follows the mould of the life, the personality and the individual, this is an illusion that is critical to the seduction of the reader. In fact, autobiographers manoeuvre for their public: for the privilege of addressing the reader about their life.\(^{41}\)

As Lucy ‘manoeuvres’ in her journal, a dialogue emerges, not only between herself and her family, but also between her own cultural background and the colonial culture that she is attempting to better understand and represent. Meanwhile, ideologies pertaining to culture, race, natural history, and even colonisation itself, are moulded into shapes that better suit a strange and seemingly alien environment.

If the cross-reading of various genres alert us to certain short-comings in journals written by women, the same can be said of journal accounts by men when read alongside similar accounts by women. For example, male explorers who were financed by governments or individual patrons had to produce journals, or even public diaries, that were selective, complying with the aims and expectations of those financing the expeditions. In that sense, women’s journals are historically useful in that they detail matters not easily accommodated in official reports.

The benefit of reading women’s writing across genres can be seen by comparing a simple event mentioned in a brief diary entry by Lucy, dated 19 October 1869, with a more detailed journal account. She notes in her diary: ‘Delicious morning – so fresh after the rain – Charlie at home. Read home letters ... Prowl about on horseback in the afternoon: watched the cattle watering’. This bare-bones account hardly scratches the surface when compared with Lucy’s journal account of watching cattle drinking.

We waited to see the cattle coming in to water – they came [traipsing] down the steep bank from the higher land in single file close on each others heals – the

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leaders stopped short on seeing us & had a good look & went down to the water. In a few minutes the lower end where the water was not too deep for them was crowded with them. They have not sense to stand still & drink. They all walk about in the water & soon make it so muddy that late comers sniff it discontentedly & only drink because they can get no other.  

This is a fascinating depiction of subtle interaction and a shared perspective between humans and animals – and a depiction too of human invasion of the animal world. Having quietly watched from horseback similar scenes myself I can relate to the ambience that surrounds such an intimate and yet, some would say, obvious event. This is the kind of happening that is taken for granted, and thus seldom described, in men’s writing. In fact, the special quality of such an event is representative of the ‘not saids’ of much male discourse, being part of the ‘understood’ of male familiarity with the minutiae of work on a cattle station. It is important to recognise that, while failing to mention certain aspects of colonial life which men often describe in detail, women’s journals provide some of the more subtle and sensual details, contributing vibrancy and energy to our understanding of past events and experiences.

While Lucy’s journal understates some of the hardships and dangers encountered in the Queensland bush, her accounts of dealings with Aborigines encourage further investigation into one of the most significant and complex aspects of early colonial life, racial relations. Read alongside the letters of Charles Gray, we gain across genres and across genders a perspective on the then ongoing conflict between European settlers and the Indigenous people of the region. In a letter to Lucy dated 13 February 1869, when she was staying at Hughenden, Charles writes:

After receiving your letter I made up my mind to come down [to Hughenden] with Mowbray [another brother] & would have done so had it not been for the blacks who have been in again. I found five or six of them quietly sitting around the mens [sic] fire several of the men at the hut at the time not knowing what to do with them. They brough: back my revolver with one barrel empty

44 LG, ‘Journal’ XXI.
[fired] & [?]. One of them has a bit of English[?] having probably been on some station. Mowbray will give you full particulars, of course I drove them away, although I did not commit cold blooded [murder] in shooting them on the premises – I had [written] private on the top [of this letter] as I would not talk of it before Charlotte unless Robert tells her – this being the case I propose that you should come up as soon as you like & I will endeavour to make the grass humpy as habitable as I can …\textsuperscript{35}

Does Charles mean that if Lottie had known the Aborigines were allowed to escape she would not have approved of Lucy moving over to Glendower? Or does he mean Lottie would not have approved of them being shot? I suspect it more likely that Charles did not want Lottie to know there were Aborigines hanging about the new homestead site in case she insisted it was too dangerous for Lucy to move there. This raises questions, too, as to just how much women were included in conversations concerning racial violence. Dorothy Green once wrote that ‘unanswerable questions are sometimes the most valuable’ as ‘they force us to examine … hidden motives for doing things’.\textsuperscript{46} The questions that arise through a careful reading of women’s life writing invite further examination into colonial attitudes and behaviour. While Lucy Gray avoids detailed descriptions of violence, in doing so she raises questions as to why it was necessary.

Earlier, I mentioned the ambiguous relationship that appeared to exist between the Grays and the local Aborigines. Although the visitors to the camp, as described in the letter above, did not appear to have been doing any harm and had, in fact, returned a pistol, they were still unwelcome at the homestead. More revealing still, Charles’ ‘private’ letter suggests that murder, if not acceptable around the homestead, was certainly happening further out in the bush away from the ‘civilised’ homestead environment. There is much evidence elsewhere to support widespread murder of Aborigines, and the search for such evidence has intensified recently as the extent to which Aborigines were actually killed has become the subject of heated debate.\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{35} Charles Gray, ‘Correspondence’, \textit{Lucy Gray Papers}.

\textsuperscript{46} Cited in Drusilla Modjeska, \textit{Timepieces} (Sydney: Picador, 2002) 40.

There is little doubt, however that, at the time, hunting those who speared and upset cattle was seen by many station owners as an integral part of running a successful cattle station. However repugnant by today’s standards, and perhaps even by many of those who took part in the actual reprisals, their actions can only be contemplated now in the context of individual circumstance.

An article published in the local Hughenden newspaper suggests that Robert Gray had little regard for the Indigenous people, calling in the Native Police whenever there was trouble, unlike his neighbour Robert Christensen who did not allow the Police near his station. Before coming to Australia Robert, an army officer, had been involved in putting down the Indian mutiny. Therefore, despite successfully employing Aborigines and South Sea Islanders in and around the homestead, Robert had had (in the opinion of Allingham), ‘his reflexes conditioned by Indian mutiny experiences, and did not hesitate to call in the Native Police at the first sign of trouble’.48

![Fig. 9 Robert Gray (1839–1931) from Hughenden Station, Lucy Gray’s brother-in-law. He had been an army officer in India before taking up land in Queensland.](image)

(Photograph from, ‘Old Glendower Homestead, a Pioneer Home of the Seventies’ (Queenslander, 15 February 1934) 28, Photographer: B.L. Burrell.)

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48 From an article copied from the Flinders Flier, supplied by Joan and Gordon Flood of Hughenden Station. No date or page number indicated, but most likely mid-1990s.
In her journal, Lucy suggests a certain leniency on the part of her husband Charles where the ‘wild’ Aborigines were concerned. Again this may have been for the benefit of her readers, as Robert indicates that Charles was often more concerned than he was about keeping the Aborigines away from the stock. After Robert allowed the ‘blacks’ to hunt in their old hunting grounds where his sheep and cattle were grazing, he noted that Charles ‘was doubtful of the wisdom of this concession’. Although Lucy’s husband did follow his brother’s more lenient example for a time, the following paragraph from the journal gives some idea of how communication and negotiation with the Indigenous people often broke down.

The blacks have begun to be very troublesome & spearing the cattle & driving them away. Some time ago – during the dry season, C allowed them to come “in” that is from the hilly country beyond the [lower] areas of the river – to hunt for game kangaroo, wallabys [sic], opossum, etc. of which there are plenty in the valley of the river. They promised not to molest the cattle. They kept their promise until the rain came, then they knew that the country was not fit for riding as long as the heavy rains lasted. Consequently, [knowing] that they were safe … they had fine times spearing & hunting the cattle, which they can follow on foot easily over ground that is very heavy for horses and cattle.

The numbers of cattle they kill is only a small part of the mischief they do. They scatter & frighten hundreds for every one they kill. Not long after they commenced their deprecations [sic], all the cattle left the river. There was not one to be seen in their [familiar] camps. They have all gone away out on the tableland, where there is no natural boundary to stop their wanderings. It still rains every day. The river is generally flooded, too high to cross without swimming.

Although there is no date on the above journal entry, certainly by 29 July 1870 the Native Police were being used to hunt down and disperse the ‘blacks’. Robert Gray writes that the local graziers had petitioned the Government for some time to send

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29 Gray, Reminiscences 148.
50 LG, ‘Journal’ 4–6; Robert Armstrong notes too, citing H. Fysh, that cattle were more easily speared when they bogged down in the muddy ground trying to escape. Armstrong, The Kalkadoons 126.
Native Police to the Hughenden district and, during 1870, police quarters were set up at the new village of Hughenden.\textsuperscript{51}

![Image of landscape](image)

\textit{Fig. 10} View of the Glendower valley as it is today with the tablelands in the background. Disturbed by the local Aborigines, cattle often retreated to the surrounding hills where it was difficult for the Grays and their men to find them and bring them back. (Photographer: M. Vivers, August 2005.)

The frustrations experienced by early cattlemen in north Queensland were many. In the then unfenced bush-country that spread for miles, and was inhabited by Aboriginal people only too keen to find an easy meal in familiar homelands, cattle-grazing was a dangerous and often precarious business. Frustration and fear in remote regions far from the influence of the white man’s law led to actions on both ‘sides’ not acceptable, or indeed possible, ‘closer in’. Journal entries like the above confirm the appropriateness of Mills’ direction. On the frontier, financial and personal survival often depended upon measures morally unacceptable back home in England or Ireland – and even in the then more closely settled areas of Australia. Further, the financial slump of 1866–1870, mainly caused by over stocking on the London wool market,

\textsuperscript{51} Gray, \textit{Reminiscences} 163.
adversely affected people like the Grays, already coping with unpredictable seasons and stock losses due to disturbances and spearings by Aborigines.\textsuperscript{52}

It is likely that the Grays financed their north Queensland properties themselves through monies inherited from their mother, who was an heiress to the wealthy Norris estates at the centre of which was Hughenden Manor (later purchased by Disraeli).\textsuperscript{53} However, many British settlers were committed to sleeping partners, to banks, to old-established merchant houses and to pastoral firms.\textsuperscript{54} When Aboriginal disturbances amongst the cattle and sheep began to interfere with profitability, calling in the Native Police may have seemed the only solution. Life writings, like those of Lucy Gray, which provide a more personal side to colonial life, help us to avoid anachronistic judgements. In many ways people in the past, whatever their social and cultural background, thought and felt much as we do today. However, they could also think and behave quite differently, especially under difficult circumstances, as they adapted to new and often threatening situations.\textsuperscript{55}

From Lucy’s perspective, it is worth remembering that during the period of her childhood in Ireland there was much discontent and upheaval in the countryside, with mass evictions and a good deal of clandestine protest amongst the poor and dispossessed. Although Dr Waters and his family enjoyed a privileged existence in comparison, Lucy would have been well aware of the problems confronting many of the Irish people as political and religious unrest added to the upheaval and misery of famine and disease. She would also have witnessed, at first hand, death and the dying as the famine worsened. Although life at Parsonstown in the 1840s and 50s, and later on in England, was to bear little resemblance to her life as a grazier’s wife in the Queensland bush, this particular ‘Victorian’ woman was no stranger to adversity and conflict, perhaps enabling a greater accept/ance, at least in her journal, of unusual and even violent behaviour. (See Chapter 2.3.)

There were, of course, some settlers who were sympathetic to the plight of the displaced Aboriginal people, as I have shown by Robert Christensen’s kindly attitude towards them. In This Whispering in our Hearts (1998) Henry Reynolds points to correspondence published in the North Australian and the Queenslander that spoke

\textsuperscript{52} Armstrong, The Kalkadoons 82–83.
\textsuperscript{53} From discussions with Jane Putt and Mark Blunt.
\textsuperscript{54} Armstrong, The Kalkadoons 82–83.
\textsuperscript{55} See Peter Burke, New Perspectives on Historical Writing, ed. Peter Burke (London: Polity Press, 1991) 16–18.
for and against the work of the Native Police. Eventually, in the late 1880s, bowing to humanitarian pressure, which also included strong complaints from some graziers, the *Queenslander* carried out ‘a long and sustained campaign’ condemning the ill-treatment and murder of Aborigines on sheep and cattle stations in northern Queensland.⁵⁶

Of course, atrocities were not always one-sided. Provocation of various kinds by white settlers often triggered attacks by Aborigines, not least the fact that sacred watering holes were being muddied by stock and Aboriginal women raped by white men.⁵⁷ However, there appear to have been no attacks on the Glendower homestead when the Grays were there, at least not during the period that Lucy was writing her journal. This may suggest that Charles and Lucy were more tolerant of the local people than most or, as is more likely, that they had strict policies in place that forbade them access to the homestead and its surrounds. Robert Gray’s cousin, Ernest Henry, estimated that Aboriginal attack was responsible for the death of from ten to fifteen percent of the early European population,⁵⁸ a figure that encouraged those like Robert Gray, already conditioned to shooting ‘black’ Indians, to be somewhat trigger-happy. Charles too, recently returned from running the gauntlet during the American civil war as an officer in the Merchant Marines, was no doubt hardened to war-time killing.⁵⁹

In any case, reports of conflict and death in the English press, and in private journals sent home, would have been alarming for those with relatives in the colonies, and off-putting for those planning to invest in stations in colonial Australia. This may have partly contributed to Lucy Gray’s toning down of her journal, especially where the possibility of Aboriginal attack was concerned. However, even though Lucy omitted the harsher details from her journal, it is more than obvious some squatters took the law into their own hands when the Police were not available to deal with difficult situations. Lucy writes:

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⁵⁸ *Flinders Flier*, n.d., extract supplied by Gordon and Joan Flood, Hughenden. Reynolds and Loos can account for between 800 and 850 white deaths in the fifty-odd years it took to fully occupy the whole of Queensland. See Armstrong, *The Kalkadoons* 119.
⁵⁹ Charles Gray, ‘Diary Extract’ (Gisborne; 1863) transcribed by Errol Gray and supplied by Mark Blunt. Original held in the Tairawhiti Museum, Gisborne, New Zealand.
The blacks have commenced their depredations among the cattle again. Charles found the remains of a beast yesterday about three miles from the station & in other places cattle wounded & one with a spear sticking in its side. He was obliged to go out after them [the Aborigines] himself as the Police are away.60

What Charles did when (and if) he found the offenders is not reported in the journal. However, Lucy does describe how, during his search, her husband came upon a group of Aboriginal women and children who were allowed to go on their way unharmed, perhaps indicating that Charles had a more tolerant attitude than his brother Robert – or perhaps the lives of women and children were respected by both. In any case, Lucy was keen to believe so, and more importantly to promote the view that he did.

By reading Lucy Gray’s journal together with other documents from the Lucy Gray Papers, and referring to texts by other colonial men and women, juxtaposed too with recent research, we get an indication of the complexity of life in far north Queensland in the 1860s and 70s, particularly with regard to interracial matters and what was seen as ‘acceptable’ behaviour. Agreements were made and broken, and degrees of retribution varied from station to station – even perhaps from brother to brother.

Not only does Lucy’s journal make us pause and think more deeply about racial attitudes and human behaviour on the colonial ‘frontier’, the sections on birds and insects reflect a growing nineteenth-century fascination with identifying and naming specimens from nature. In a discussion on the writings of Louisa Anne Meredith in colonial Australia, Judith Johnston notes Meredith’s comment that nature study in ‘old countries’ can always be ass sted by books on the subject. In Australia it is different. ‘Here, if we learn from Nature, we must strive to read her own untranslated history, and no one who has not tried can tell how pleasant a book it is.’ Johnston suggests that, in Meredith’s case, as well as carrying out a scientific examination of nature, she is also ‘governed by a need to capture the minutiae in the hope that in mediating the land back to the centre she will be granted some kind of

60 LG, ‘Journal’ XIII–XIV.
authority over it'. 61 Whether Lucy Gray attempted to ‘read’ the Australian landscape and its inhabitants with a view to achieving such authority is a matter for speculation. However, it seems that both popular and personal attitudes are reflected in the passages quoted above.

By including details of the plants and animals she finds at Glendower, Lucy’s journal can be seen to cross boundaries between the genres of letter, diary, memoir and even perhaps natural history. However, although several genres exist within the main document, the etiquette and constraints of letter writing exert a controlling force. As Sidonie Smith says, ‘the most valuable conversation, and that which best illustrates character, is that which passes between friends’. 62 Not only does Lucy Gray’s writing reveal something of her own character, it also highlights wider cultural and scientific concerns. In an historical sense, the journal personalises the scientific, social and cultural milieu that informed the lives, thoughts and actions of colonisers like the Grays.

Lucy’s journal is a more ostensibly public document than is Addy Bowler’s diary, and even Addy’s memoir sections lack the sophistication and detail of Lucy’s writing. This may be because Lucy understands that her audience is entirely inexperienced with colonial life, and thus requires more detailed explanation. On the other hand there is, in Lucy’s journal, little of the self-examination that occurs in Addy’s diary. Even in her own short diary, Lucy’s personal feelings are only occasionally revealed, and they are revealed then in a manner less expansive, obvious and self-indulgent. Perhaps this is because, as I enlarge on in a later chapter, Lucy’s formative years encouraged examination of matters beyond the self. Nevertheless, in spite of a slightly more scientific style, there are still aspects of Lucy’s journal that present as ‘typically’ gender specific. Her attention to detail and her description of individual people and animals are good examples of this. Rather than attempting to reach the generalisations often found in male discourse, Lucy focuses on minute particulars. This adds a degree of immediacy and intimacy to her writing, situating her as a gendered subject, a matter I examine further in Chapter 2.1.

Canadian feminist Helen Buss suggests a journal that adopts a style which is part journal, part diary and part letter is a particularly suitable form for describing a

journey through selfhood, a journey which parallels a woman’s actual journey through a new land. She sees journal writing as filling a woman’s psychic needs, while the text is disguised as practical information for family or friends in the old country. However, Buss, like Mills, acknowledges that there are more ways to approach the text than by simply applying psychoanalytical theory. I would agree. Lucy’s journal does much more than serve to illustrate psychologically based methodologies. While psychic needs inform the text, material aspects of colonisation can be seen to influence the behaviour and attitudes that she describes and passively condones. As such, the writer’s thought processes that determine ways in which behaviour and attitude are recorded are both psychologically and materially driven, with cultural and social aspects also worthy of consideration. Lucy’s journal reveals, in a somewhat understated manner, the kind of behaviour considered by many necessary to survive in the colonial circumstance. In doing so, it demonstrates how and why the writer, and those around her, saw fit to behave as they did.

Lucy Gray’s journal takes today’s reader on a journey as they experience, along with the writer, the excitement and complexity, if not the extreme dangers, of colonial life. Her journal has the immediacy and etiquette of the letter, at times the chronological sequence of the diary, and even the careful composition and narrative structure of the memoir. In spite of some romanticism and understatement, the colonial circumstance is brought to life through the accomplished writing of this educated and observant woman – a woman who is happier riding in the bush and looking for wild-flowers on the tablelands than working within the traditional female space of the home. I argue that a way must be found for the multi-layered narratives of women’s journals to be successfully incorporated into historical discourse – especially those narratives that are revealed through reading male accounts alongside those of their female counterparts. If that can be achieved, a better insight will be gained into various aspects of colonial life, attitudes and actions.

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