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The Colonial Kangaroo Hunt

Ken Gelder and Rachael Weaver

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Chapter One: Shooting the First Kangaroos

Who shot the first kangaroo? Aboriginal people had been hunting kangaroos with spears and clubs for thousands of years, of course, either alone or in groups. Penny Olsen and Lynette Russell note the wide variety of Aboriginal hunting methods, 'including pursuit with dingoes, spearing, ambush, encirclement, stockades, pitfall traps and battues, where beaters drive game towards the hunters.'[i] In *Dark Emu* (2014), Bruce Pascoe has also noted the Aboriginal use of large nets and described the 'battue system of kangaroo and emu harvesting' that involved driving many of these creatures into an enclosed site and killing them *en masse*.[ii] The battue (from the French *battre*: to beat or hit) became important to white pastoralists after settlement too, and we shall see some examples of the large-scale extermination of kangaroos in colonial Australia later in this book. But the first shooting of a kangaroo – or rather, the first *documented* shooting – happened a few years before white settlement officially began.

James Cook's first *Endeavour* voyage around the world saw the ship grounded on a reef off the coast of far north Queensland in June and July 1770. The botanist Joseph Banks was on board, along with Daniel Solander who had studied under the famous Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus – whose taxonomies for species classification were already profoundly influential. The Quaker artist Sydney Parkinson was also there, and Cook was assisted by a number of experienced naval officers including Lieutenant John Gore, the *Endeavour's* third in command. About ten months earlier, when the *Endeavour* visited New Zealand, Gore had shot a Maori man for taking a 'piece of Cloth': 'I must own it did not meet with my approbation,' Cook reported in his journal, 'because I thought the Punishment a little too severe for the Crime.'[iii] While carpenters worked to repair the damaged ship off the coast of Queensland, Cook sent some of his crew ashore to look for food. The men returned with some pigeons, and an account of a strange new species: 'One of the Men saw an Animal something less than a greyhound; it was of a Mouse Colour, very slender made, and swift of Foot.'[iv] The next day Cook himself spotted a kangaroo for the first time: 'it was of a light mouse Colour,' he wrote, 'and the full size of a Grey Hound and shaped in every respect like one, with a long tail, which it carried like a Grey hound; in short, I should have taken it for a wild dog but for its walking or running, in which it jump'd like a Hare or Deer.'[v] Two weeks

later – on 14th July 1770 – Gore went into the bush with his gun. 'Mr. Gore, being in the Country, shott one of the animals before spoke of,' Cook reported; 'it was a small one of the sort, weighing only 28 pounds clear of the entrails.... It bears no sort of resemblance to any European animal I ever saw; it is said to bear much resemblance to the Jerboa, excepting in size, the Jerboa being no larger than a common rat.'[vi] Soon afterwards, Cook noted that local Aboriginal people seemed to refer to this animal as a 'Kangooroo, or Kanguru'.[vii]

For John Simons, the first documented shooting of a kangaroo on 14 July 1770 'contains in itself the microcosm of the settlement of Australia'.[viii] In fact, he goes on to compare Gore's shooting with the famous 'shot heard round the world' fired five years later at Concord, Massachusetts, that would literally trigger the American Revolution. Perhaps this is making too much of the reflex action of what Tim Flannery has called 'the *Endeavour's* most accomplished hunter.'[ix] Even so, Simons is right to note that this event had much larger and long-lasting ramifications both for native species and for Aboriginal people – who were also fired upon with muskets by the *Endeavour*'s crew. It is certainly a foundational moment in the violent European settlement of Australia. The first shooting of a kangaroo also happens simultaneously with the naming of the species, as if these two things are inevitably tied together. Markham Ellis has noted that the *Endeavour's* naturalists were also interested in 'collecting vocabulary' and drew on local Aboriginal names for the kangaroo: for example, the Guugu-Yimidhirr word *ganguru* 'which signified one of the five kangaroo and wallaby species indigenous to Endeavour River.'[x] There is a common view that the naming of the kangaroo was also a *misnaming* based on Banks's misunderstanding of his Aboriginal interlocutors (or vice versa). Ellis suggests that 'the adoption of an Indigenous name was not accorded to other species where Banks was more confident of his classification'; but he also adds that the word *kangaroo* 'was an unstable Anglophonisation…of an Indigenous word.'[xi] To shoot a native species and to name that species are both colonising acts. Soon afterwards, naturalists would compete with each other to give the kangaroo its scientific name. It was the English zoologist George Shaw who eventually succeeded and, as Danielle Clode notes, 'the full taxonomic designation of the species' is now in fact '*Macropus gianteus* Shaw 1790.'[xii] But something interesting happened with Cook's earlier Aboriginal-derived naming of the kangaroo which, for a moment at least, placed this creature outside the developing taxonomic framework of western scientific classifications of species.

In Cook's descriptions above, the kangaroo is perhaps surprisingly compared to a greyhound. Joseph Banks kept a greyhound on the *Endeavour*, which soon afterwards joined in the hunt for kangaroos. In his own journal of the expedition, the botanist has a running title for this earliest of encounters – *Kill Kanguru* – that both names the new species and immediately sentences it to death.[xiii] The kangaroo, Banks writes, 'hops so fast that in the rocky bad ground where it is commonly found it easily beat my grey hound, who tho he was fairly started at several killd only one and that quite a young one.'[xiv] Banks's greyhound in effect becomes the first imported kangaroo dog, killing the creature to which it is also descriptively connected in these early explorer accounts. This particular event takes place on 29 July in his journal and sets an early size limit on the greyhound's capacity to kill: 'we saw few and killd one very small one which weighd no more than 8½ lb. My greyhound took him with ease tho the old ones were much too nimble for him.'[xv] Banks goes on to record and confirm the Aboriginal name for this creature, *kangooroo*. The 'largest we shot,' he adds, 'weighd 84 lbs.'[xvi] This is the third kangaroo killing recorded in these early journals. It happened on 27 July, two weeks after Gore's first shooting – and two days before the greyhound kills the juvenile. Cook himself gives a functional, understated account of the event, rounding down the weight prior to the kangaroo's dismemberment: 'Mr. Gore shott one of the Animals before spoke of, which weighed 80 lbs. and 54 lbs., exclusive of the entrails, Skin, and head; this was as large as the most we have seen.'[xvii] Banks also devotes a brief entry to this killing, lending the kangaroo a kind of feral anonymity: 'This day was dedicated to hunting the wild animal. We saw several and had the good fortune to kill a very large one which weighd 84 lb.'[xviii]

Cook's journal entry for 27 July goes on to provide a sense of just how quickly the body of the kangaroo was dismantled into its component parts – for scientific analysis, but also to provide meat for an expedition low on provisions. His blunt account of the stripping down of this kangaroo contrasts with Banks's comments on the treatment of the first kangaroo Gore had shot two weeks earlier. This first kangaroo was much smaller, at 38 lbs. 'The Beast which was killd yesterday,' Banks writes, 'was today Dressd for our dinner and provd excellent meat.'[xix] This is an expression of refined culinary taste by an Eton-educated English soon-to-be-baronet, an immensely wealthy landowner – the complete opposite of Cook,

who was the son of a Scottish farm labourer. The *Endeavour's* crew were hunting and eating a number of native species: pigeons, turtles (which Banks also relished), shellfish, and so on. But the kangaroo is the first native species to be placed in an aristocratic, epicurean register. Having stripped the creature down, they perform the civilising ritual of 'dressing' (the word is capitalised) it for dinner; they then value the taste of this new form of game meat accordingly. They do the same again with the 84 lb kangaroo shot two weeks later, but this time Banks's culinary tastes are disappointed: 'Dind today upon the animal, who eat but ill, he was I suppose too old. His fault however was an uncommon one, the total want of flavour, for he was certainly the most insipid meat I eat.'[xx]

As we shall see in this book, shooting the kangaroo is the first in a chain of reactions to species that works to secure colonisation in the New World: skinning, butchering, cooking, preserving and eating; but also culling, clearing, managing and trading; and scientifically recording, dissecting, classifying, and stuffing (taxidermy); and producing along the way an immense amount of commentary, a great many sketches, poems and novels, and a number of significant works of art. Sydney Parkinson was one of two artists or 'draughtsmen' on the *Endeavour*, best known for the extensive collection of botanical drawings and water-colours he completed on the journey, now held at the Natural History Museum in London. Parkinson died of dysentery and malaria on board the *Endeavour* on 26 January 1771, but he kept his own journal of the expedition which was published posthumously in 1773. This was the same year John Hawkesworth published a commissioned edition of Cook's journal that notoriously took a number of liberties with the text, mixing up details from Cook and Banks, adding some of Hawkesworth's own observations, 'weaving together an imagined, composite point of view,'[xxi] and incorporating some of Parkinson's sketches without acknowledgement. Parkinson's grieving brother Stanfield was keen to publish Sydney's journal himself, arguing bitterly with Banks and Hawkesworth who both took legal measures to try to stop his publication going ahead. Most commentators have been flatly unsympathetic to Stanfield Parkinson's role here;[xxii] but Noah Heringman has offered a different perspective on all this, arguing that Stanfield's claims to his brother's intellectual property (drawings, notes, collected items) were perfectly reasonable under the circumstances.[xxiii] Stanfield's Preface to the eventual 1773 publication of Sydney Parkinson's journal certainly gives an aggrieved, often downright furious, account of Hawkesworth and

Banks's various threats and transactions. The journal entries themselves, on the other hand, quietly bask in the abundance and complexity of the natural world, offering vivid, colourful descriptions of the various examples of native flora and fauna that Sydney Parkinson was seeing for the first time. His account of the kangaroo is the most detailed and keenly observed of any of the *Endeavour* journals, although it also echoes Cook and Banks in several ways, not least through that peculiar tendency to compare the kangaroo to a greyhound. The kangaroo is, he writes,

> an animal of a kind nearly approaching the *mus genus*, about the size of a grey-hound, that had a head like a fawn's; lips and ears, which it throws back, like a hare's; on the upper jaw fix large teeth; on the under one two only; with a short and small neck, near to which are the fore-feet, which have five toes each, and five hooked claws; the hinder legs are long, especially from the last joint, which, from the callosity below it, seems as if it lies flat on the ground when the animal descends any declivity; and each foot had four long toes, two of them behind, placed a great way back, the inner one of which has two claws; the two other toes were in the middle, and resembled a hoof, but one of them was much larger than the other. The tail, which is carried like a grey-hound's, was almost as long as the body, and tapered gradually to the end. The chief bulk of this animal is behind; the belly being largest, and the back rising toward the posteriors. The whole body is covered with short ash-coloured hair; and the flesh of it tasted like a hare's, but has a more agreeable flavour.[xxiv]

Banks and Parkinson were active participants in what Peter Macinnis calls 'evidence-eating science,'[xxv] which saw naturalists routinely consume the species they killed and examined. The taste of the meat then becomes one more way of classifying, and distinguishing between, different species. Kangaroo meat, for example, is ranked in relation to other examples of game more familiar to Europeans: for Parkinson, the kangaroo has 'a more agreeable flavour' than, say, hare.

But before it can be eaten, each part of the kangaroo must also be carefully described and detailed. This was as important to the naturalists as it was to the artwork that gave visual representation to their scientific, classificatory interests. Parkinson produced at least two

pencil sketches of a kangaroo, one of which shows the animal in motion with hind legs outstretched, the other of which is still and upright (or perhaps, from another perspective, lying on its side: already dead).

SYDNEY PARKINSON SKETCH OF A KANGAROO (A) 1770
SYDNEY PARKINSON SKETCH OF A KANGAROO (B) 1770

These sketches and the mathematically precise descriptions in Parkinson's account above accompany the various physical specimens that Banks took with him back to England. It has been difficult to establish the precise species of kangaroo killed and drawn here. The Australian zoologist Geoffrey Sharman concluded in 1970 that the first smaller kangaroo Gore had shot was 'almost certainly, an eastern Wallaroo,' while the second, larger kangaroo was an Eastern grey.[xxvi] Thirty years earlier, the prominent American zoologist Henry Cushier Raven had tried to give a definitive statement on the species identity of what became known as 'Cook's kangaroo,' drawing on Solander's notes and looking in detail at teeth, ear size, skin colour, and facial appearance. There was some suggestion that Cook's kangaroo may have been a whiptail wallaby, with its distinctive facial colouration and longer tail. But Raven has faith in the descriptive accuracy of the *Endeavour's* ill-fated artist: 'it is inconceivable,' he writes, 'that the draughtsman Parkinson…would overlook those characteristic markings if he had been depicting a whiptail.'[xxvii]

Even so, there seems to be no definitive determination about the species identity of Cook's kangaroo. This is D. J. Carr's conclusion in a later, detailed investigation of the issue: 'Unfortunately, we are still left with the apparently insoluble problem of the identity of Captain Cook's kangaroo.'[xxviii] One reason for this indeterminacy is that the kangaroo's removal from its original locale/habitat led almost immediately to its transformation into a reproducible image elsewhere. Bits and pieces of kangaroo were taken back to Britain by Banks: among other things, a couple of skins and skulls, along with Parkinson's sketches. Banks then commissioned one of the most famous English artists of the day, George Stubbs, to paint the kangaroo. Stubbs had made his reputation as a painter of horses, but he was also fascinated by anatomy and had taught himself how to dissect and analyse both animals and humans. His ground-breaking book, *The Anatomy of Horses*, was published his 1766,

giving an elaborate and detailed catalogue of the horse's body parts, along with life-like and anatomically exact illustrations. By this time, as Andrew Cunningham notes, 'the horse was being given new roles by the aristocracy and gentry, for it was the beginning of fox-hunting on horse-back, of horse-racing on a large scale, of the selective breeding of animals, and particularly the specialised breeding of hunters and racehorses.'[xxix] Stubbs capitalised on the coincidence of these things, gaining the support of wealthy patrons who then commissioned portraits of their thoroughbred racehorses. He also depicted aristocratic English sporting pursuits such as fox and stag hunts, in paintings famous for their visceral action scenes (e.g. *Hound Coursing a Stag* [1762]) and their vivid rendering of the kill (e.g. *The Grosvenor Hunt* [1762]).

The combination of Stubbs's anatomical skill and aristocratic connections through hunting and sport would have made him an obvious choice for Banks and his (or Cook's) kangaroo. It is generally agreed that Stubbs worked from Parkinson's sketches as well as the skull or skulls; he also used one of the 'stuffed or inflated' kangaroo pelts to produce a more three-dimensional model.[xxx] The result was an oil painting of a slender, upright creature with its head turned back to look over its shoulder, which was exhibited at the Society of Artists of Great Britain in 1773 under the title, *Portrait of the Kongouro from New Holland*, 1770.[xxxi]

GEORGE STUBBS *PORTRAIT OF THE KONGOURO FROM NEW HOLLAND* 1770

John Simons wonders if the kangaroo 'is turning to notice the approach of Banks's greyhound and reacting to the report of a musket and the distant puff of smoke which might be fascinating it in that brief moment before the lead ball arrives.'[xxxii] If this is true, Stubbs's portrait is created out of bits of dead kangaroo in order to show a live kangaroo anticipating his own death. Certainly, this portrait was never going to be anatomically correct: more informed, contemporary commentators have noted that the hind legs are 'misrepresented', the ears are 'too big', and so on.[xxxiii] Perhaps this kangaroo, assembled out of a few remains and the barest of line drawings – all that survived after the long journey back to England in the *Endeavour* – is inevitably much more about affect than anatomy. There is indeed something poignant in the soft, curious gaze his kangaroo casts back, as if it registers what is coming after it, and what has now been lost.

Not long afterwards, an engraving of Stubbs's painting was used to illustrate Hawkesworth's bestselling 1773 journal of Cook's voyage. Further engravings were made soon afterwards, the image began to circulate, and within a couple of years, as Cowley and Hubber put it, 'the kangaroo had entered the European popular imagination.'[xxxiv] We can give one example here of just how quickly the kangaroo became familiar to British readers in particular at this time. Samuel Johnson had corresponded with Banks in 1772 and greatly respected the botanist and his work. John Hawkesworth was in fact a friend and occasional collaborator, although Johnson reportedly dismissed Hawkesworth's 1773 edition of Cook's *Endeavour* voyage because the crew 'found very little, only one new animal.'[xxxv] Nevertheless, that 'one new animal' must have made quite an impression. In his account of their 1773 tour of the Hebrides, James Boswell reported that, at a dinner at Inverness on 29 August, Johnson talked enthusiastically about Banks's discovery of 'an extraordinary animal called the kangaroo.' The great writer then got up from his chair to mimic 'the shape and motions' of the creature: 'He stood erect, put out his hands like feelers, and, gathering up the tails of his huge brown coat so as to resemble the pouch of the animal, made two or three vigorous bounds across the room!'[xxxvi] This is the first recorded mimicry of a kangaroo outside Australia; it functions rather as Stubbs's painting does, as an attempt literally to breathe life into what at this time was otherwise known only through a few preserved specimens, a couple of sketches and some fascinating prose descriptions.

George Stubbs's kangaroo was, as Cowley and Hubber note, 'a surprisingly resilient creature';[xxxvii] it was reproduced in various incarnations across a number of publications over the next fifteen years or so, including the Welsh naturalist Thomas Pennant's *History of Quadrupeds* (1781) where the kangaroo appears for the first time in an Anglophone scientific treatise. A few years later – towards the end of January 1788 – the First Fleet arrived at Botany Bay and Port Jackson under the command of Arthur Phillip. The eleven ships brought with them a number of artists and naturalists who continued the task of visually documenting the kangaroo. One of the surgeons, Arthur Bowes Smyth, kept a journal of the voyage and produced a number of sketches and watercolour paintings of local species. But for John Simons, Smyth's sketch *The Kangooroo* (1788-89) remains essentially a copy of Stubbs's painting.[xxxviii]

ARTHUR BOWES SMYTH *THE KANGOOROO* 1788-89

On the other hand, midshipman George Raper's 1789 illustration *Gum-Plant and Kangooroo of New-Holland* is, for Simons, 'the most charming of the First Fleet kangaroo drawings' and 'set in a distinctively Australian landscape.'[xxxix]

GEORGE RAPER *GUM-PLANT AND KANGOOROO OF NEW-HOLLAND* 1789

The First Fleet's surgeon-general John White also kept a journal of the voyage and early settlement. His entry for 8 February 1788 reads, 'This day, for the first time, a Kangaroo was shot and brought into camp.'[xl] This may very well seem like a minor incident in a busy chronicle of daily activities just a few days after disembarking: clearing the land, building shelters, monitoring relations with Aboriginal people, setting up systems of settler governance, and so on. But placed alongside Lieutenant Gore's earlier kangaroo shooting during the *Endeavour* voyage, we can view it as the beginning of an already taken-for-granted pattern of species killing that would soon massively escalate in scale.

White's journal was published in London in 1790, to popular acclaim; it was soon translated into French (by Charles Pougens), Swedish (by Samuel Odmann), and German (by J.R. Forster). White was also a naturalist and his journal contained sixty-five engravings based on drawings of local species by several London-based artists, including Charles Catton and Sarah Stone. Stone's *The Kangaroo* (Plate 54) is accompanied by notes on the kangaroo's anatomy, with White remarking that although he 'was favoured with one of the sculls from Sir Joseph Banks,' he did not have enough body parts to form (literally) a complete picture of the animal.[xli]

SARAH STONE *A KANGAROO* C.1790

Relying on this and other specimens, Stone's painting has unsurprisingly disappointed some contemporary commentators. Alan Bewell, for example, describes it as a 'disastrous illustration of a kangaroo standing at attention like a trained dog. No one who had ever seen

a living kangaroo could have drawn it in this manner.'[xlii] White himself had already recognised this problem, however, turning the pursuit of a 'living kangaroo' into a kind of self-defining colonial quest. 'I was obliged to wait with patience till I could get the whole,' he writes.[xliii] Spotting 'shy' kangaroos and unleashing the impulse to kill them are immediately tied together: 'we saw a Kangaroo, which had come to drink at an adjacent pool of stagnated water, but we could not get within shot of it.'[xliv] When White finally gets his whole (dead) kangaroo – 'so very accurately delineated by Cook' – it is weighed at 149 lbs. What is worth noting here is that this surgeon-general's careful anatomical examination of the kangaroo's body then almost immediately deviates into an excited description of the animal as adversary and quarry:

> The conformation of this animal is peculiarly singular. Its hinder parts have great muscular power….The velocity of a Kangaroo as far outstrips that of a greyhound as that animal exceeds in swiftness a common dog….The tail, from its size and weight, seems to serve it for a weapon both of defence and offence….It has been reported by some convicts who were out one day, accompanied by a large Newfoundland dog, that the latter seized a very large Kangaroo but could not preserve its hold. They observed that the animal effected its escape by the defensive use it made of its tail, with which it struck its assailant in a most tremendous manner. The blows were applied with such force and efficacy, that the dog was bruised, in many places, till the blood flowed.[xlv]

Natural history, anatomical description and hunting are intertwined here, but they also work to enhance or magnify each other. White's account is another example of someone breathing life back into a dead kangaroo, making it worthy of the chase: difficult to catch, and hard to kill. These characteristics are the things that make the kangaroo 'peculiarly singular.' But the settlers' already-adversarial relationship to this animal also works to universalise it, turning it into a synecdoche for all other native species in the New World – which, by this time, are being shot, examined and eaten pretty much indiscriminately. This is certainly one way of reading the significance of White's closing comment about the kangaroo as a *type*, a kind of meta-species: 'Every animal in this country,' he writes, 'partakes, in a great measure, of the nature of the Kangaroo.'[xlvi]

Arthur Phillip had also written a chronicle of this earliest moment of colonial settlement at Botany Bay, published in London in 1789 – a few months before White's journal. Phillip shares some of White's observations: for example, 'Kanguroos were frequently seen, but were so shy that it was very difficult to shoot them.'[xlvii] He is also interested in the kangaroo's potential for domestication and as a food source for the embryonic colony. But kangaroos in captivity do not survive 'more than two or three weeks'; in any case, Phillip finds the flesh 'coarse and lean, nor would it probably be used for food, where there was not a scarcity of fresh provisions.'[xlviii] Kangaroo specimens were already being transported back to England as part of a rapidly growing investment in native species as both scientific discoveries and cultural 'curiosities.' Phillip notes that the naval bureaucrat Evan Nepean (who helped to administer the departure of the First Fleet) owned a 'stuffed kangaroo'; and Penny van Toorn suggests that Phillip himself had sent 'a large stuffed kangaroo' to Joseph Banks.[xlix] Phillip's journal contains an engraving of a kangaroo skull by the Irish artist Peter Mazell; it also contains Mazell's engraving of a living 'Kangooroo,' standing upright and looking forwards this time, with very small, rather limp, forepaws and long whiskers. An Errata at the beginning of the journal corrects the spelling of this engraving: 'for *Kangooroo*, read *Kanguroo*. The orthography of a word derived only from oral sound is in some degree arbitrary; but it ought to be consistent. The plates, by mistake, have Kangooroo.'[l]

Phillip's journal was published in London by John Stockdale, who signed an opening dedication to the Marquis of Salisbury '25 November 1789.' This is the exact same day that, under Phillip's orders, two Eora Aboriginal men were captured on a beach on the north side of Port Jackson and brought into the settlement. One of them, Colbee, escaped not long afterwards; but Bennelong remained to become 'the first…Aboriginal man who formed an ongoing relationship – though initially a forced one – with the white invaders.'[li] It is well known that, three years later in 1792, Phillip sailed back to England on the *Atlantic* with Bennelong and a younger Aboriginal man, Yemmerrawanne. It is less well known that the ship also carried four live kangaroos as well as dingoes, birds and other native species from the colonies.[lii] Stuffed and mounted kangaroos had already been exhibited in London in 1789, attracting much public interest. The first live kangaroo left Sydney for London on the *HMS Supply* towards the end of 1791 and, when displayed, quickly created a popular

sensation. Phillip gave two of his own kangaroos – a male and a female – to Banks, who presented them to Queen Charlotte for her developing menagerie at Kew Gardens.[liii] Simons notes that by 1793 there were also kangaroos in the royal menagerie at Windsor Great Park.[liv] Around this time the entrepreneur Gilbert Pidcock included a live kangaroo in his small travelling menagerie; he even produced entry tokens or coins featuring a kangaroo with a joey in her pouch.[lv] In his book *The Georgian Menagerie* (2015), Christopher Plumb goes on to describe the resulting 'kangaroo mania' in England, 'represented best,' as he puts it, 'by the commissioning of the *HMS Kangaroo* in 1795'[lvi] – an intrepid 18-gun warship tasked with protecting England from French and Spanish privateers. As Richard Neville puts it, by 1800 there were so many kangaroos living in England 'they were said to be almost naturalised.'[lvii]

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There was, of course, a great deal of interest in England in accounts of the First Fleet's arrival at Botany Bay and Port Jackson. 'Botany Bay,' Ellis writes, 'was a media event in London,' generating two key imports: 'preserved kangaroos,' and 'information.'[lviii] John Stockdale had printed Arthur Phillip's journal in 1789; his London neighbour and rival, John Debrett, published John White's journal in 1790 and had also commissioned the journals of a young lieutenant in the Marine Corps on the First Fleet, Watkin Tench. Tench's *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay* was published in April 1789, six months before Phillips' account; his sequel, *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson*, was published in 1793. The latter book is a foundational colonial Australian text, notable especially for Tench's documentation of the earliest encounters with Aboriginal people in and around the fledgling colony. But Tench was also fascinated by the kangaroo, recognising it – as White had done – as a kind of meta-species. 'The leading animal production', he writes, 'is well known to be the kangaroo.'[lix] Tench is already aware of the kangaroo as a spectacle, a curiosity that seems to symbolise the strangeness of the New World. His account of it begins by deferring, perhaps ironically, to English scientific expertise: 'The natural history of this animal will, probably, be written from observations made upon it in England, as several living ones of both sexes, have been brought home….The genus in which the kangaroo is to be classed I leave to better naturalists than myself to determine.'[lx] But this doesn't stop

Tench from giving a confident account – *in situ* – of the living kangaroo, correcting anatomical and behavioural details and adding his own aesthetic evaluations of the species: for example, 'The elegance of the ear is particularly deserving of admiration.'[lxi]

Soon, however, he turns his attention to the kangaroo hunt as an emergent colonial activity. 'Our methods of killing them,' he notes, 'were but two; either we shot them, or hunted them with greyhounds. We were never able to ensnare them. Those sportsmen who relied on the gun seldom met with success….The greyhounds for a long time were incapable of taking them; but…since the greyhounds have acquired by practice the proper method of fastening upon them' (239). In this interesting passage, shooting is unsuccessful and the greyhounds need to learn how to kill effectively. The fledgling colony is by this time already depending on kangaroo meat as a food source, which means making a significant local adjustment in terms of culinary taste: 'Of the flesh we always eat with avidity, but in Europe of would not be reckoned a delicacy. A rank flavour forms the principal objection to it. The tail is accounted the most delicious part, when stewed.'[lxii] But taste is over-ruled by sheer necessity. The kangaroo's carcass is so sought after in the hungry colony that at one point Tench and some others are driven to feast on carrion: 'I once found in the woods the greatest part of a kangaroo just killed by [wild] dogs, which afforded to three of us a most welcome repast.'[lxiii]

John Hunter was trained as a navigator and astronomer. Appointed second captain of *HMS Sirius* in the First Fleet, he went on to become the new colony's governor after Arthur Phillip, in 1795. Tench recalls that Hunter's 'accuracy as an astronomer and conduct as an officer had inspired us with equal gratitude and admiration.'[lxiv] Hunter was also 'an able sketcher of animals and plants';[lxv] his *Birds & Flowers of New South Wales drawn on the spot in 1788, 89 & 90* (1790) contained 100 illustrations of native flora and fauna, including a watercolour of a kangaroo. Fascinated by the diversity of local species, he was also in fact 'the first European to draw a platypus and a wombat.'[lxvi] Hunter's *An Historical Journal of the Transactions of Port Jackson and Norfolk Island* was published in London in 1793 by John Stockdale. It begins with the voyage to Port Jackson and then, on arrival, a detailed account of encounters with local Aboriginal people, along with pseudo-ethnographic information about their way of life. Early on, Hunter describes Aboriginal techniques for hunting

kangaroos and other fauna; he also notes their strategic use of burning off parts of the forest for – among other things – 'the purpose of disturbing such animals as may be within reach of the conflagration' to enable large-scale killing.[lxvii] When he concludes his account of Aboriginal practices, he turns his attention to the kangaroo:

> The animal described in the voyage of the *Endeavour*, called the kangaroo, (but by the natives *patagorong*) we found in great numbers; one was lately shot which weighed 140 pounds; its tail was 40 inches long, and 17 in circumference at the root; it is very well described in Phillip's Voyage; we ate the flesh with great relish, and I think it good mutton, although not so delicate as that which we sometimes find in Leadenhall-market.[lxviii]

This is one of the largest kangaroos shot so far in the various journals we have looked at here (and it is interesting to note that Hunter himself is familiar with the journals of Cook and Arthur Phillip). Hunter also provides an Indigenous name for the kangaroo. Tench had done the same thing is his own account of settlement at Port Jackson: 'Hitherto I have only spoken of the large, or grey kangaroo, to which the natives give the name of *patagaràn*.'[lxix] A more systematic attempt to record Indigenous names for native species was made soon afterwards by another First Fleet chronicler, David Collins, who was Secretary to the Governor at Port Jackson and later led settlement expeditions to Port Phillip and Hobart. The first volume of Collins's *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales* (1798) contains a long glossary of Aboriginal words, including names for flora and fauna. Here are the entries for the kangaroo:

> *Pat-a-go-rang*, A large grey kangooroo.
> *Bag-gar-ray*, Small red ditto
> *Wal-li-bah*, Black ditto[lxx]

These entries show us that the earliest settlers were already distinguishing between different kangaroo species – but the Aboriginal names also raise interesting questions about the kind of species information that was being provided to settlers by local communities at Port Jackson. Did these Aboriginal names help to indicate species differentiation? What

other details about behaviour and physical characteristics accompanied them? In any case, these recorded Aboriginal names remain specific to their location; only 'wallibah' goes on to gain the kind of broad generic currency of species description, functioning, like *kangaroo*, as (to recall Ellis, above) an 'unstable Anglophonisation…of an indigenous word.' In Chapter Four we shall look at a long and important colonial poem by Charles Harpur, 'The Kangaroo Hunt; or, A Morning in the Mountains' (1843, 1860), which returns to the use of Aboriginal names for kangaroos and other native species: a rare thing to encounter in colonial literary writing.

Hunter had some interest in Aboriginal names – and practices. But when it came to the kangaroo, he remained true to his name. We have already seen the kangaroo turned into a fitting adversary in these First Fleet journals. For John White, the 'velocity of a Kangaroo…far outstrips that of a greyhound,' making it difficult to catch but worth the chase; it also manages to defeat the greyhounds in a violent struggle. In Hunter's account, the kangaroo is no less adversarial and the struggle is no less combative and blood-thirsty. But on this occasion, the greyhounds – and the hunters – turn out to be victorious:

> The strength this animal has in its hind quarters is very great: in its endeavours to escape from us, when surprised, it springs from its hind legs, which are very long, and leaps at each bound about six or eight yards….they have vast strength also in their tail; it is, no doubt, a principal part of their defence, when attacked; for with it they can strike with prodigious force, I believe with sufficient power to break the leg of a man….We for some time considered their tail as their chief defence, but having of late hunted them with greyhounds very successfully, we have had an opportunity of knowing that they use their claws and teeth. The dog is much swifter than the kangaroo: the chase, if in an open wood, (which is the place most frequented by the animal), is seldom more than eight or ten minutes, and if there are more dogs than one, seldom so long. As soon as the hound seizes him, he turns, and catching hold with the nails of his fore-paws, he springs upon, and strikes at the dog with the claws of his hind feels, which are wonderfully strong, and tears him to such a degree, that we have frequently been under the necessity of carrying the dog home, from the severity of his wounds; few of these animals have ever effected their escape, after being seized by the dog, for

> they have generally caught them by the throat, and held them until they were assisted, although many of them have very near lost their lives in the struggle.[lxxi]

This remarkable passage describes a vicious battle between settler colonials and a native species. At one level, it works as a precursor to violence on the colonial frontier as local Aboriginal populations are killed or dispossessed. At another level, it expresses settler domination over species themselves: a naturalist's knowledge of species is only the first part in a chain of colonising events that, as we have noted, includes naming, describing, visually representing, killing, eating, dissecting, transporting (exporting), exhibiting, and so on. Here, the killing of a kangaroo is now registered with much more confidence: dogs may be torn open in the process, but the kangaroo will ultimately die. This is also a colonial governor's expression of triumph over a generally 'shy,' grazing creature that doesn't offer any actual physical threat outside of the hunting paradigm. John Hunter's journal therefore gives us what is essentially the beginnings of the colonial kangaroo hunt as a *narrative genre*. It is a narrative that, as it unfolds, inflates the risk and danger of the chase in order to magnify the excitement of conquest not only over the kangaroo but over *all* native species. It works in broad terms to secure the governance of the colony itself. But it also folds that governance into an event that soon becomes self-defining, a colonial rite of passage, especially for young men.

Chapter Two: Settlers, Aboriginal People and the Kangaroo Hunt

Towards the end of 1802, the French-born engineer and land surveyor Francis Barrallier set out from Sydney to explore the Blue Mountains. Governor Philip King had authorised the expedition, partly as an ambassadorial exercise to meet with the 'king of the mountains,' a Gandangarra tribal leader.[lxxii] In his journal of the expedition, Barrallier writes that he took with him an Aboriginal guide named Gogy, 'one of the natives of the Cow Pastures.'[lxxiii] Gogy was a Dharawal man; his territory south of the Nepean River had been renamed the 'Cow Pastures' by the colony because it was occupied by rapidly increasing numbers of wild cattle. Early colonial Sydney was struggling to keep its imported cattle under control, with little fencing or adequate supervision. This meant that it depended at least to a degree on a local supply of fresh kangaroo meat. In Barrallier's account, the expedition moves from the one to the other within the briefest of moments: 'When passing Carabeely, we saw a kangaroo which we killed, and after half-an-hour's walk we entered a valley where there was a herd of cattle. I counted 162 of them peaceably pasturing…'[lxxiv] It is worth noting that the kangaroo is easier to kill at this point than the wild cattle – which later seem to threaten to attack his party. It is also worth noting Barrallier's attention to Aboriginal places names here, aided by the advice of Gogy and a 'mountaineer' named Bungin. When Gogy and Bungin hear the voice of some Gandangarra people from the mountains, Barrallier gives us the first instance recorded by a settler of the greeting *coo-ee* (or *cooy* in the original French): '…they went together towards the spot whence the sound of the voice had appeared to come. I heard them repeat, several times, the word coo-ee, shouting with all their strength…'[lxxv]

Barrallier is alert to Aboriginal names for kangaroos as well. On 12 November, a soldier shoots a 'warring' and brings it back to the expedition party. Barrallier explains, 'The warring is a kangaroo of a smaller species than the ordinary kangaroo. It possesses the same characteristics, and its only habitat is the mountains. It is of a dark-brown red colour, with small stripes on the head.'[lxxvi] It is difficult to know precisely what species Barrallier is describing here: possibly a Brush-Tailed Rock Wallaby, or a Swamp Wallaby. The name *warring* does not appear to be anywhere in use. But interestingly, a close approximation can be found in the final footnote to Charles Harpur's poem 'The Kangaroo Hunt; or, A Morning

in the Mountains' (1843, 1860), where Harpur writes about 'a little shag-haired species of kangaroo which is peculiar to mountain copses', the 'mountain wallaby' – 'known amongst the Hawkesbury mountains by the native name of *whirring*.'[lxxvii] We shall discuss this poem in Chapter Four.

Barrallier observed his Aboriginal companions in great detail, commenting on and judging their social and cultural practices, their weapons, and so on. The kangaroo became a valuable object of connection and exchange during the expedition: the gift of a kangaroo head, for example, helps Barrallier to secure Bungin's assistance and goodwill. The expedition has mixed success in killing kangaroos, but the species becomes necessary to the settlers' survival and personal well-being; feasting on kangaroo soup one evening 'comforted us and made us forget our fatigue for a while.'[lxxviii] The hungry colony itself needed a much greater supply of kangaroo flesh; killing a single kangaroo was not enough. So Barrallier's description of an Aboriginal kangaroo drive or battue – the first recorded account after the establishment of settlement – is of immense significance, despite the fact that it appears only as a footnote in his journal. It works as a detailed (pseudo-)anthropological aside to the chronicle of the expedition. But it might also register a settler colonial's momentary (envious?) fantasy of kangaroo plenitude, where the hunt delivers bountiful rewards and immediate satisfaction:

> When the natives assemble together to hunt the kangaroo, they form a circle which contains an area of 1 or 2 miles according to the number of natives assembled. They usually stand about 30 paces apart, armed with spears and tomahawks. When the circle is formed, each one of them holding a handful of lighted bark, they at a given signal set fire to the grass and bush in front of them. In proportion as the fire progresses they advance forward with their spears in readiness, narrowing the circle and making as much noise as possible, with deadening shouts, until, through the fire closing in more and more, they are so close as to touch one another. The kangaroos, which are thus shut into that circle, burn their feet in jumping on every side to get away, and are compelled to retire within the circle until the fire attacks them. They then try to escape in various directions, and the natives frightening them with their shouts throw their spears at the one passing nearest to them. By this means not one

> can escape. They roast the product of their chase, without skinning nor even gutting the animals, and then divide it among themselves, after having cut each animal into pieces.[lxxix]

This is a version of the Aboriginal 'battue system' that Bruce Pascoe had talked about in *Dark Emu*; it also enables what would soon become a familiar racist discourse that represents Aboriginal people as improvident and 'of the moment,' unable to save or preserve their kill for future use. The only early colonial visual representation of an Aboriginal battue is *Aborigines using fire to hunt kangaroo* (c. 1817) by the convict artist Joseph Lycett.

JOSEPH LYCETT *ABORIGINES USING FIRE TO HUNT KANGAROO* C.1817

Even so, this suggests the Aboriginal battue is now at least familiar enough to be chosen as one of Lycett's representative scenes of colonial life. The watercolour shows groups of Aboriginal men with spears and boomerangs at the ready, surrounding a gully which has been set alight in order to flush out kangaroos. There are just three kangaroos in the painting, each of which is marked as a target by the hunters. There are no colonial settlers present in the scene: in this sense it recalls Andrew Sayers' comments about colonial visual representations of Aboriginal corroborees, that fall 'somewhere between ethnography and landscape painting.'[lxxx]

The first extended visual record of Aboriginal people was in fact a pseudo-ethnographic book devoted to images and descriptions of Aboriginal people hunting: a curious work by the Scottish artist John Heaviside Clark, *Field Sports, &c. &c of the Native Inhabitants of New South Wales*, published in London in 1813. Clark was best known for his depictions of scenes at the Battle of Waterloo (1815); he also published a series of books about painting and drawing techniques and, interestingly, collaborated with the British artist Henry Thomas Alken to produce some prints of English fox hunts. *Field Sports* gives a confident but contradictory account of Aboriginal people in the early days of the colony. The opening 'Sketch of the Manners, Pursuits, &c. of the Natives of New South Wales' notes that 'since the establishment of the colony, no change has taken place' in Aboriginal people's way of

life. But he also observes that they 'speak English well' and the book closes with a fantasy of assimilation, where Aboriginal people will become 'at no very distant period, useful members of society.'[lxxxi] Clark insists that 'Wherever the colonists establish themselves, the natives resign that part of the country'; yet his introduction ends with an Aboriginal man declaring, defiantly, 'the country is *ours*.'[lxxxii] In a short section titled 'Hunting the Kangaroo,' Clark casts the kangaroo as large and powerful, difficult to spear, and capable of driving native dogs away with a 'lash [of] its tail.' But it is also understood as a bountiful food source, with Clarke reproducing Barrallier's racist colonial view that Aboriginal people consume them immediately and impulsively, having 'no idea of providing for the morrow.'[lxxxiii] In the accompanying visual image, there are five Aboriginal men, separated from a small mob of kangaroos only by a shallow creek. One of the kangaroos has been speared through the middle: killing them, here, seems easy enough. The kangaroos are standing upright on hind legs, almost on tiptoes. Given Clark's work with Alken on the English hunt around this time, it is perhaps not surprising to see that they resemble foxes, with sharp pointed ears, sleek bodies, long forelegs and white-tipped tails.

JOHN HEAVISIDE CLARK *HUNTING THE KANGAROO* 1813

Clark never came to Australia. So one question worth asking is, which local artist's work was he drawing on? Commentators suggest that the most likely source was John William Lewin, the colony's 'first free settler professional artist.'[lxxxiv] Lewin was also a naturalist, producing early illustrated studies of local moths and birds; his *Birds of New South Wales* was advertised in George Howe's *Sydney Gazette* in September 1806 as 'the first fruits of the labour of Mr John Lewin, A.L.S. [Associate of the Linnean Society], who has spent near 8 years in this Colony: occupied in collecting and arranging Materials for its Publication.'[lxxxv] Lewin would have known Francis Barrallier: they went on two surveying expeditions together along the Hunter River in 1801. He famously painted the first portrait of a koala in 1803; and he went on to produce numerous natural history watercolours (fish, insects, birds, butterflies, and so on), as well as landscapes, colonial scenes, and some sketches of Aboriginal people. Richard Neville comments that Lewin's 1808 watercolour *Sydney Cove* places an Aboriginal man in the foreground but only in order to 'highlight the achievements

of colonisation by contrasting the expanse of the town against a symbolic figure of its original "primitive" inhabitants.'[lxxxvi]

JOHN LEWIN *SYDNEY COVE* 1808

This Aboriginal man is carrying a spear, but he is solitary and his arm is down: he is an example of what Neville calls 'passive visibility,' gazing across the water as colonial development begins to overtake him. In Heaviside Clark's written commentary, the impact of colonial progress on Aboriginal people is a theme; but the images themselves (as in Lycett's 'Aborigines using fire to hunt kangaroo') represent a pre-colonial condition where the activities of Aboriginal people – hunting, fishing, dancing, resting – happen without any reference to settlement at all. It is not clear just how many paintings or sketches of Aboriginal people Lewin produced. But the few that remain in museum collections tend to be generic scenes or portraits of specific individuals. So far as we know, Lewin himself did not paint any scenes of Aboriginal people in active roles such as kangaroo hunting.

The State Library of New South Wales holds an 1819 oil painting attributed to Lewin, titled *Male and Female Red Kangaroos in a Liverpool Plains Landscape*.

JOHN LEWIN *MALE AND FEMALE RED KANGAROOS IN A LIVERPOOL PLAINS LANDSCAPE* 1819

Richard Neville notes that Lewin had 'inserted the animals into a landscape he copied from another drawing' by Major James Taylor 'of the original field sketch' by the land surveyor and explorer George William Evans – brought back from John Oxley's 1818 expedition to the Liverpool Plains and Port Macquarie.[lxxxvii] It can indeed often be confusing to track the origins of colonial sketches and paintings. The Taylor/Evans drawing had put three explorers into the landscape. Lewin took them out and replaced them with two kangaroos to give what Neville calls 'a theatrical illustration of a newly discovered species, feeding in an open, park-like plain.'[lxxxviii] The library's record for this work suggests it was 'most likely painted in Lewin's studio in Sydney, composed from specimens or skins of the red kangaroo' brought back by Oxley's expedition.[lxxxix] It might be surprising to hear that a local painting was created from the body parts of dead kangaroos rather than a living creature. Oxley himself

was already an experienced kangaroo hunter, bringing some 'valuable dogs' with him on an expedition along the Lachlan River a year earlier: 'Kangaroos of a very large size abound in every direction around us,' he wrote; 'our dogs killed one weighing seventy or eighty pounds, which proved a great and refreshing acquisition to us.'[xc] In his 1818 expedition, Oxley presents kangaroo hunting as a field sport; members of his party are 'our sportsmen', and the game they kill ('Kangaroos, fish, and swans') enables his companions to enjoy – as he puts it – 'all the necessaries, and many of the luxuries of life.'[xci]

It might be worth recalling here Barrallier's comment above about kangaroo soup on an earlier expedition as providing 'comfort' to the explorers, in a context where kangaroos were difficult to kill. In a discussion of Daniel Defoe's novel *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Franco Moretti examines the ideological meaning of *comfort* as a bourgeois ideal or aspiration. The O.E.D. defines *comfort* as 'distinguished from necessaries on the one hand, and from luxuries on the other' – almost exactly recalling Oxley's phrase above. Comfort is created out of conditions of scarcity, as on Crusoe's remote island; it aims to turn very little into something more agreeable. As Moretti puts it, 'Comfort [means] everyday necessities made pleasant.'[xcii] But in Oxley's journal, kangaroos are the opposite of scarce; they seem to be everywhere. Killing them delivers the 'necessaries' but also allows the explorers to achieve something more aristocratic, 'the luxuries of life.' The word 'abundance' is used repeatedly in his journal to describe native-species-as-game. Kangaroos here are not only abundant but also extra-large. 'We killed this day one of the largest kangaroos we had seen in any part of New South Wales,' he writes, 'being from one hundred and fifty to one hundred and eighty pounds weight. These animals live in flocks like sheep; and I do not exaggerate, when I say that some hundreds were seen in the vicinity of this hill; it was consequently named Kangaroo Hill…'[xciii] We have already seen an account of the abundance of colonial livestock in Barrallier's description of the many wild cattle at the Cow Pastures – and in both cases, the proliferation of a species inspires the naming of a place. For Barrallier, a domestic species (cattle) goes wild. But for Oxley, a wild species (kangaroo) is represented as if it is already domesticated ('These animals live in flocks like sheep'). The problem is that the sheer number of kangaroos almost runs the risk of ruining the pleasures of hunting. When they are so abundant, the animal is no longer elusive, there is little need for a chase, it is too easy to catch, etc. But scarcity is also a problem: obviously, there can be no hunt without a

quarry. Perhaps the kangaroo hunt needs its own register of comfort, located somewhere in between scarcity and abundance, 'necessaries' and 'luxuries.' We shall continue to see various expressions of the tensions between these things as we further explore the kangaroo hunt as a narrative genre in this book.

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We mentioned earlier the convict artist Joseph Lycett's *Aborigines using fire to hunt kangaroo* (c. 1817). Arrested for forging bank notes, Lycett was transported to New South Wales in 1813. A talented artist, he worked with the publisher Absalom West to produce drawings of colonial Sydney, its buildings and its surrounds. Lycett was soon convicted of forgery again and sentenced to three years hard labour at the Coal River penal settlement (later renamed Newcastle). But he continued to paint; his *Aborigines with spears attacking Europeans in a rowing boat* (c. 1817) depicts a number of Worimi men throwing spears at a boat in which Lycett himself was a passenger.[xciv] John Maynard has discussed Lycett's paintings of Aboriginal people around the Newcastle area and gives this positive summary: 'His work captures Aboriginal land, the importance of Country, ceremony and culture, and his observations provide insight into early Aboriginal life pre-colonisation…'[xcv] Lycett's *Aborigines spearing kangaroos* (1820) continues in the vein of *Aborigines using fire to hunt kangaroo*, as an 'ethnographic' landscape painting where Aboriginal people inhabit a precolonial idyllic moment with no signs of European settlement. Here, an Aboriginal man in the foreground raises a spear at a group of seven kangaroos, suggesting abundance rather than scarcity; and four Aboriginal men approach in the background, partly concealed by some trees.

JOSEPH LYCETT *ABORIGINES SPEARING KANGAROOS* 1820

Other paintings, however, place Aboriginal hunters side by side with white settler hunters, representing them as mutual participants in the developing framework of settlement. Lycett's *Inner View of Newcastle* (1818) depicts a settler, a convict and an Aboriginal man walking in single file (settler first, Aboriginal man last), with the coast and an embryonic Newcastle townscape in the background. There are four kangaroo dogs with them, and the

convict is carrying the carcass of a kangaroo over his shoulder. John McPhee suggests that this painting 'shows the social order that was in existence in Newcastle and in the colony in those very early years.' 'It is a peaceful scene,' he writes, 'suggestive of the fertility of the landscape and its ability to provide both a living and sport for the settler.'[xcvi] It also works as a quietly triumphal colonial counterpoint to *Aborigines with spears attacking Europeans in a rowing boat*. The hierarchical order of the three figures now seems taken for granted, all working in unison to service the needs of the rapidly-growing convict settlement. It is indeed 'a peaceful scene,' but it comes in the wake of the violence of a successful hunt and it is worth recognising that in the centre-foreground of the painting is a dead kangaroo.

The merchant and landowner John Bingle arrived at Port Jackson at the end of 1821, acquiring an inland property just north of Newcastle. In his record of early settlement here, he writes about convict participation in kangaroo hunting:

> At this time there was scarcely any animal food – not even for the Government House – beyond a herd of goats, kangaroos, and wild ducks. The kangaroos and ducks were in great abundance, as the surrounding country was in a wild state, and afforded excellent sport. Six gamekeepers were kept to procure a sufficient supply for the Commandant and officers' quarters. They were constantly employed, two or three for ducks, and the others for kangaroos. They were allowed so much ammunition, and expected to bring in daily a certain number of each kind of game, or as much more as they could get. These men were convicts, and considered it a mark of favour to be so employed; and used every effort to bring into camp (as the town was then called) above the allotted task. They had been mostly poachers at home, and well adapted to the work.[xcvii]

These are convicts with previous hunting experience in Britain; a criminal activity back home that has seen them transported to New South Wales turns out to be a skill both valued and exploited by the colonial authorities. Kangaroos are in abundance here. The colony then allocates the hunters it needs to ensure a continuous supply of meat. Later in his account, Bingle travels down to Lake Macquarie (south of Newcastle), where all signs of settlement suddenly disappear:

> On arrival I was enchanted with its beautiful scenery, and can never forget it. The whole surrounding country and lake were serene and still, solitude reigned, no tree disturbed, and no trace of the white man's civilisation, but all in its natural wild state. We enjoyed all the wild sports of Australian bush life in its primitive state as the Aborigines of that day (before they were contaminated with our vices) were accustomed to enjoy them. Shooting, fishing, kangarooing, and hunting – our game was ample for us all.[xcviii]

This is a fascinating prelapsarian colonial fantasy, with settlers imagining themselves in a 'primitive' space before colonisation, hunting native species (according to the fantasy) just as Aboriginal people once did. It inserts these settlers into the 'ethnographic' space we have seen in those paintings by Lycett and Heaviside Clark, that were previously inhabited only by Aboriginal people. Again, abundance is the key: there is now enough native species here for everyone. But perhaps the language of sport (where kangaroos are 'game,' killing them is 'kangarooing,' etc.) brings this all back to the present day. It naturalises cohabitation and cooperation between Aboriginal people and settlers. But it also identifies colonisation as the end point to the abundant, unspoilt world in which these settlers now find themselves. Or rather: colonisation is the very thing that enables these settlers to project their enjoyment onto this imaginary precolonial moment.

This is one available expression of the Australian pastoral in colonial art that Jeanette Hoorn observes, where 'nature was seen to provide wealth and leisure for its citizens.'[xcix] Nature can be enjoyed here precisely because settlers have already explored it, mapped it out, chronicled and painted it, and claimed it. For Hoorn, Joseph Lycett was one of the first colonial artists to produce pastoral work, which represented two apparently contradictory things: celebrating 'white settlers in harmony with a bountiful nature' while also portraying 'images of private property.'[c] Enjoyment, abundance-in-nature, and the comforts of settlement all seem to go hand in hand here. Sometimes these things coincide in the same painting, as in Lycett's *Inner View of Newcastle*. In other paintings, settlement is hidden away but it still drives the sense of enjoyment-in-nature that we see in Bingle's account above. Lycett's *View on the Wingeecarrabee River, New South Wales* (1824) – possibly a

copy of a drawing by the surveyor George Evans[ci] – takes us down from Sydney to the Southern Highlands, inland from Wollongong.

JOSEPH LYCETT, *VIEW ON THE WINGEECARRABEE RIVER, NEW SOUTH WALES* 1824

Here, nature is a grand and luscious backdrop to a kangaroo hunt, where a settler with a musket and an Aboriginal man with a spear chase after their two kangaroo dogs, which are pursuing a single kangaroo. As with Bingle, the painting naturalises cohabitation and cooperation, except the settler is once again in front, pointing ahead and taking the lead. We might even see Lycett's *Inner View of Newcastle* as a sort of aftermath to this painting, even though it chronologically precedes it. A settler and an Aboriginal man hunt a kangaroo; later on, with the addition of a convict, they carry the carcass back to a hungry settlement, thus performing their (that is, colonial settlement's) 'allotted task.'

Lycett returned to England in early 1823; in 1824-25 he published 48 etchings and aquatints in London, under the title *Australian Scenery: comprising Twenty-Four Views in New South Wales and Twenty-Four Views in Van Diemen's Land*. It is generally agreed that Lycett had never visited Van Diemen's Land; Bill Gammage suggests that he drew instead on works by surveyors like Evans, who had gone to the island a decade earlier.[cii] One of Lycett's paintings, *View on the River Tamar, and part of the Asbestos Hills, Van Diemen's Land* (1825), shows two settlers looking westward across the river mouth.

JOSEPH LYCETT *VIEW ON THE RIVER TAMAR, AND PART OF THE ASBESTOS HILLS, VAN DIEMEN'S LAND* 1825

There are two kangaroo dogs; one of the settlers is carrying a musket, and the other has the hindquarters of a kangaroo slung over his shoulder. Indigenous figures are absent, which is significant considering the year this painting was produced. In 1825 Tasmania gained recognition as an independent colony; but it also embarked on the so-called 'Black War,' a notorious campaign of systematic violence against Aboriginal people which saw hundreds either killed or dispossessed and forcibly removed to smaller islands off shore. The British historian Tom Lawson sees Lycett's painting as an early example of 'emigration propaganda'

for English audiences, noting that the absence of Indigenous figures in this case works 'to emphasise the "emptiness" of the land.'[ciii] The early 1820s saw a period of rapid settler expansion, especially along major river systems like the Tamar; in fact, settlement at the mouth of this river (Port Dalrymple) was established as early as 1804. By 1806, as Henry Reynolds notes, the 'foundations' had been laid for the island's two major cities, Hobart and Launceston. He adds: 'In both settlements recourse was had to the massive hunting of kangaroo, which required men and their dogs to venture farther and farther into the interior.'[civ] Kangaroo hunting was a driver of settler expansion in Van Diemen's Land – and it radically escalated conflict with Aboriginal people. Settlers sometimes registered their awareness of this in the fledgling local press. Here is a letter to the editor of the *Hobart Town Gazette*, published more or less contemporaneously with Lycett's painting:

> I would beg the European hunters of kangaroo in this Colony to remember…that what proves their amusement, is the cause of starvation to the Natives. For it cannot admit of doubt, that to the flesh of the kangaroo and opossum, the Aborigines naturally look for support; and if that support be abstracted for the thoughtless recreation or superfluous profit of intrusive Europeans – what, Sir, can result, but desperation, degeneracy, extinction, or recriminative robbery?[cv]

An abundance of kangaroos for the settlers means scarcity of kangaroos for Aboriginal people – and this is expected to have catastrophic consequences. This letter to the editor presents a settler's sympathy for the predicament of local Aboriginal people. But it also buys into what have become known as 'extinction discourses,' where colonial commentators routinely regarded the decline and demise of Aboriginal people as an inevitability in the wake of settler development and 'progress.' It is, of course, not unusual to see these responses placed side by side: as Patrick Brantlinger notes, 'celebration and mourning are fused' in many early colonial expressions of extinction discourse, producing examples of what he calls 'sentimental racism.'[cvi]

James Boyce suggests that Aboriginal people were involved in 'regular skirmishes with kangaroo hunters' around Oyster Bay, on the east coast of Tasmania, as early as 1805 and 1806.[cvii] Risdon, just north of Hobart, was the island's first settlement; the *Lady Nelson* had

in fact been bringing settlers there since the middle of 1803. On 18 March 1804 the *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* reported:

> The Natives are very numerous, and undaunted, even at the explosion of a musket, but are very friendly to small parties they meet accidentally, though they cannot be prevailed on to visit the Establishment. During the Lady Nelson's stay, a large Kangaroo was taken in the Woods by Henry Hacking attended by a Sydney native; but being intercepted by a tribe of the sooty inhabitants of that neighbourhood, the Kangaroo, between 50 and 60 weight, was for a moment considered as lost. The blacks made use of every policy to wheedle Hacking out of his booty, but as they did not offer or threaten violence he with counteracting policy preserved it. Although they treated him with much affability and POLITENESS, yet they regarded his companion with jealousy and indignation; and the poor fellow, sensible of his critical and precarious situation, appeared very thankful when safely delivered from their unwelcome presence.[cviii]

Hacking had arrived with the First Fleet in 1788; he was believed to be the settler who shot and killed the Aboriginal resistance fighter Pemulwuy in 1802.[cix] Transported to Van Diemen's Land for stealing spirits, he became a convict gamekeeper in the service of Lieutenant-Governor David Collins. James Boyce identifies Hacking's companion as 'John Salamander,' an Aboriginal man from New South Wales. In this 1804 account Hacking and Salamander have to negotiate with local Aboriginal people to keep the kangaroo they have taken. The emphasis here is on a peaceful resolution, although Salamander's position is viewed as the more vulnerable. Six weeks later, however, a much more violent encounter unfolded – the 'Risdon Massacre' – which saw soldiers at the settlement open fire on a large group of Aboriginal men, women and children. The company's commander, Lieutenant William Moore, claimed that 'a large body of Aborigines armed with spears had descended on the British camp and forcibly taken a kangaroo from [a] convict servant.'[cx] In Moore's account, Aboriginal people are now the aggressors in a dispute over a kangaroo. But testimonies given at a parliamentary inquiry into the event later on offered a different view. Edward White, a convict and builder who had been working nearby, suggested that Aboriginal people were in fact involved in a battue at the time, coming down a hill 'in a

circular form, [with] a flock of kangaroos hemmed in between them.'[cxi] This is only a year and a half after Barrallier's description of the Aboriginal battue system used in New South Wales. The scale of the hunt and possibly the use of fire may have escalated the 'deep sense of vulnerability' felt by these early settlers.[cxii] But in White's account, these Aboriginal people were simply intent on hunting kangaroo:

> the natives did not threaten me; I was not afraid of them…the Natives did not attack the soldiers; they would not have molested them; the firing commenced about 11 o'clock; there were a great many of the Natives slaughtered and wounded….there were hundreds and hundreds of kangaroos about Risdon then, and all over where Hobart Town now stands…[cxiii]

Such an efficient, large-scale Aboriginal hunt for kangaroo may, of course, have been the very thing that provoked the massacre. These early settlements soon became heavily dependent on kangaroos as a food source. Not long after the Risdon Massacre, Collins put a price on kangaroo meat to increase government provisions and secure the health of the new colony. 'A large cash market for kangaroo was immediately created,' Boyce writes, 'and, in direct consequence, the foundation for a new society was laid.'[cxiv]

But for settlers, hunting kangaroos was an increasingly precarious occupation. Local newspapers began to report the discovery of human remains in outlying areas: like Thomas Davenport, an assigned convict who was last seen 'on the morning of his departure to hunt kangaroo.' 'The deceased went with his master's permission with a musket and dogs into the wood to hunt,' one article tells us; 'but after an absence of three days the dogs returned without him…'[cxv] (This particular killing was attributed to the bushranger Michael Howe.) Boyce notes that in these circumstances officers were increasingly reluctant to go out hunting, sending their convict servants instead. 'Convicts were prepared to risk danger for freedom,' he notes, 'but the officers preferred to stay closer to home.'[cxvi] An emancipated convict, William Pigeon, went missing near Launceston in 1821. The court report tells us that he 'got his living by kangarooing and selling the skins'; the coroner had known him and 'advised him not to go a kangarooing, as an idle life; that was the last time he saw him…'[cxvii] By the mid-1820s these kinds of stories were escalating in number and becoming more

sensationalised. An article in the *Colonial Times and Tasmanian Advertiser* in December 1826 is headlined: 'Another Murder!' 'It appears the unfortunate young man had been hunting,' the newspaper reports, 'and was returning with two kangaroos on his back. His game was found nearly a mile from the spot where he was discovered; it is therefore conjectured, that the poor fellow must have been pursued for a considerable distance before he was finally put to death.'[cxviii] All this is a long way from Lycett's representations of settlers and Aboriginal people hunting together in harmony. Now, kangaroos are a resource to be bitterly struggled over, a root cause of violent Aboriginal/settler conflict.

Benjamin Duterrau was a London-based artist and engraver who emigrated to Tasmania in 1832 when he was sixty-four years old. Opening up a studio in Hobart, he went on to paint portraits of a number of Aboriginal people, including Woureddy and Truganini. In 1835 Duterrau produced a drawing of the government-appointed Aboriginal 'conciliator,' George Augustus Robinson, meeting with a group of Aboriginal men and women: the last group of Aboriginal resistance fighters on the island. It is titled *The Conciliation*.

BENJAMIN DUTERRAU *THE CONCILIATION* 1835

Most of the men are holding spears; one of them has his hand clasped by Robinson. There are also three slender kangaroo dogs in the drawing. In 1840 Duterrau used this work as the basis for an oil painting, *The Conciliation*, now regarded 'as one of the nation's founding documents.'[cxix] There are several more Aboriginal people in this painting, including figures modelled on Woureddy and Truganini. Robinson is still clasping the hand of the Aboriginal man, rather than shaking it: but the meeting seems to offer a sense of official finality, clinching its role as an effective piece of colonial propaganda. The three kangaroo dogs are still there, but are now greatly enlarged: suggesting settler power, and certainly adding to the tension of the event. It is interesting to note that a small kangaroo has been added, standing nervously in the foreground.

BENJAMIN DUTERRAU *THE CONCILIATION* 1840

Greg Lehman has analysed this painting – and the meeting it represents – in wonderful detail, seeing it as 'a complex picture of colonial triumph' that also acknowledges 'the consequent loss and deception suffered by the Tasmanian Aboriginal people.[cxx] 'The kangaroo,' he writes, 'is corralled between the dogs and its back being positioned towards Robinson is a symbol of vulnerability….In this way, the threat experienced by the kangaroo is extended to the colonial audience: their prospects for peaceful settlement hang in the balance.'[cxxi] This small kangaroo is certainly exposed to immediate risk, utterly defenceless, not quite knowing which way to turn. No one has yet claimed it, but at least one of the dogs seems eager to move in. Lehman is probably right to see this kangaroo as a symbol of the precariousness of a negotiated colonial settlement. But it may also be a sacrifice-about-to-happen, its vulnerability linking it more to the position of the Aboriginal people (despite their spears) than the settlers – whose interests are represented, and protected, by those huge kangaroo dogs.

We have noted that kangaroos were central to Aboriginal-settler conflict both before and during the Black War. A few years earlier, in 1837, Duterrau had painted *Native Taking a Kangaroo*.

BENJAMIN DUTERRAU NATIVE TAKING A KANGAROO 1837

Here, an Aboriginal man is grasping a small kangaroo below the back of the neck. Interestingly, his pose and appearance closely resemble one of the Aboriginal men on the right-hand side of *The Conciliation*, who is touching the shoulder of an Aboriginal woman. A kangaroo dog in this painting is also biting the kangaroo's ear; it, too, is closely replicated in *The Conciliation*, a variation on the kangaroo dog in the centre of that painting. Sharon Morgan notes that Aboriginal people in Van Diemen's Land had by this time been using settlers' dogs for hunting.[cxxii] In the 1837 painting, Lehman identifies the small kangaroo as a Bennett's wallaby. There is no conflict here, no settlers, no engagement with the events of the Black War; this painting (much like Lycett's *Aborigines spearing kangaroos*) takes us back to an earlier 'ethnographic' moment when Aboriginal people hunted kangaroos uninterrupted by colonisation – except this particular hunter is using a settler's dog. What does it mean to depict an event that is no longer possible? It may be nostalgic, or it may

simply be a visual denial of the decimating effects of settler expansion. By the time we get to *The Conciliation*, the kangaroo hunt is over; but a kangaroo is still there in the picture, which brings hunters, hunting dogs and quarry together in an uneasy accord that works as a kind of inbuilt commentary on the bigger picture of settler-Aboriginal relations.

*

1825 saw another significant event in Van Diemen's Land: the arrival of the artist Augustus Earle, 'the first professionally trained freelance travel artist to tour the world.'[cxxiii] Earle stayed on the island for four months, then spent two and a half years in New South Wales where he visually chronicled various aspects of colonial life. For Andrew Sayers, Lycett and Earle 'were the most important topographical artists to work on Australian subjects in the 1820s.'[cxxiv] Earle painted landscapes, portraits of colonial personalities, and social scenes in early Sydney, including sketches and watercolours of local Aboriginal people. He journeyed into the Blue Mountains towards the end of 1826 and then travelled into the Illawarra subtropical rainforest south of Wollongong in April 1827 where he painted a number of forest scenes. Two watercolour sketches from the latter trip – *A Bivouack, Day Break on the Ilawarra Mountains* (1827) and *The Cabbage Tree New South Wales* (1827) – provided the source material for a later, much-celebrated oil painting, *A Bivouac of Travellers in Australia in a Cabbage Tree Forest, Day Break*, exhibited at the Royal Academy in London in 1838.

AUGUSTUS EARLE *A BIVOUAC OF TRAVELLERS IN AUSTRALIA IN A CABBAGE TREE FOREST, DAY BREAK*
1838

This painting depicts a detailed scene in a forest clearing, with a group of nine settlers and two Aboriginal men arranged around a campfire. Some of the settlers are wearing red nightcaps; two of them are still half-asleep. Another settler is preparing breakfast, with cups and food arranged on a tablecloth, while two others are tending to a horse. One of the Aboriginal men stands in the background, while the other is seated by the campfire, conversing with the settlers. There are two kangaroo dogs curled up and sleeping. In the foreground of the painting – but almost hidden in the shadows, lying beside a rifle – is a large kangaroo: dead, but otherwise untouched.

In her book about Augustus Earle, Jocelyn Hackforth-Jones notes the significance of the term *bivouac* in the painting's title, suggesting that it came out of his investment in the Romantic concept of the 'noble frontiersman.' This concept, she suggests, 'helped to make popular the practice of "bivouacking," or camping in the open air.'[cxxv] Earle's painting shows settlers and Aboriginal people sitting harmoniously together: the kangaroo is not a resource to be struggled over in this particular scene. The term *bivouac* is generally associated with military camps, but it also regularly appears in Australian settler chronicles of exploration. Thomas Braidwood Wilson was a medical doctor who visited Australia several times, acquiring a large property in New South Wales in 1826. Travelling to Perth a few years later, he explored the Swan River and then sailed down to King George's Sound on Western Australia's south coast and arranged an expedition into the interior. He published an account of his experiences in the *Hobart Town Courier* and the *Sydney Monitor* in early 1830. Wilson was joined by an officer, two 'crown prisoners' and an Aboriginal man named Mokare. Soon they find themselves in 'a rich and romantic country' with 'excellent water.' 'In the evening,' he writes, 'we bivouacked near a stream running N.W. through a tract of land, bearing considerable resemblance both in appearance and quality to the cow pastures.'[cxxvi] The aim here, of course, is to find suitable land for grazing and agricultural development. Later, 'we bivouacked near a torrent in the midst of a wildly picturesque glen.' As they travel, kangaroos are 'skipping about us in large herds from the time we entered into this fine open forest land'; Wilson responds by allowing his men 'half a day to spend in hunting.'[cxxvii] Kangaroos are abundant here and easy to kill. Once again, 'near a pool of good water we bivouacked of Saturday evening. Mokare having shot a kangaroo, all the party were in high glee preparing for a feast.'[cxxviii] The description clearly recalls the romance of the scene in Earle's *A Bivouac of Travellers in Australia*, except it is evening not daybreak, an Aboriginal man now has possession of a musket (we shall see another example of this below, and again in Chapter Six), and the dead animal is about to be devoured.

Wilson published his more ambitious memoir, *Narrative of a Voyage Round the World*, in London in 1835. In fact, this account is almost entirely about his experiences in Australia, including his time at the short-lived Fort Wellington military settlement at Raffles Bay in the far north. His journey along the Swan River leads him to an Aboriginal hunting ground which

once again ‘abounded in kangaroos.’[cxxix] Local Aboriginal people help the party find water and contribute to the complex question of the correct Indigenous name for this species: ‘They distinctly pronounced “kangaroo,” without having heard any of us utter that sound; they also called it *waroo*, but whether they distinguished “kangaroo” (so called by us, and also by them) from the smaller kind, named “*wallabi*,” and by them “*waroo*,” we could not form any just conclusion.’[cxxx] Wilson’s journey down to King George’s Sound is revised here, adding some new details. His Aboriginal guide Mokare now carries ‘a fowling-piece, which he would not go without’; ‘as he was a good shot, we thought he might be of use in procuring fresh provisions.’[cxxxi] Later, ‘we bivouacked in the vicinity of a lagoon.’ Once again, kangaroos are abundant in the area, but they prove ‘far too fleet for the dogs, while the sportsmen, from the open nature of the country, could not approach sufficiently near them.’[cxxxii] The explorers stumble across an Aboriginal man on a ‘hunting expedition’ who seems to be participating in a large-scale battue, ‘his present occupation being to assist in driving the kangaroos to a certain place, where they could be surrounded, and speared.’[cxxxiii] Eventually, Mokare ‘succeeded in shooting a large kangaroo.’ The party settle down to camp ‘by the golden rays of the departing sun’; a fire is kindled, ‘and the kangaroo was speedily cooked in various ways.’[cxxxiv]

Wilson’s *Narrative of a Voyage* is one of many early explorer chronicles that also maps out terrain for future settlement. It works by generating excitement and interest in the colonial project, not least through its investment in the romance of bivouacking and the thrill of the kangaroo hunt. Published in London, it can be seen (rather like Lycett’s River Tamar painting) as an example of ‘emigration propaganda’ for English readerships, 'offering a few words of advice to persons intending to become settlers in these colonies, to whom the hints I have given may, perhaps, prove advantageous.’[cxxxv] On the other side of the country at around the same time, the agricultural agent Robert Dawson was working on a much more overt example of this kind of propaganda. His book, *The Present State of Australia; a description of the country, its advantages and prospects, with reference to emigration: and a particular account of the manners, customs and conditions of its Aboriginal inhabitants* (1830), is an account of three years spent in New South Wales exploring country on behalf of the Australian Agricultural Company. Dawson arrived in Sydney in 1825 and took a group of settlers with him to Port Stephens, north of Newcastle, heading up the Karuah River. The

AAC had been granted a million acres for pastoral settlement and Dawson oversaw its management and development – although he was heavily criticised for his performance. Stocking the land with sheep and cattle, building farming infrastructure, setting up industry, cultivating crops and gardens: these things soon lead Dawson confidently to conclude that 'every department was rapidly advancing.'[cxxxvi] Travelling north along the Karuah River, Dawson encounters Aboriginal people – and much of his book is devoted to detailed descriptions of their characteristics and practices. Like Wilson, Dawson's account combines several different kinds of colonial racism: patronisingly noting positive attributes (honesty, affectionate parenting, etc.) but also reproducing assumptions about Aboriginal non-ownership of land ('no fixed place of residence') and assigning Aboriginal people roles as servants. 'I have a complete ascendency over them,' he says at one point.[cxxxvii] On the other hand, he socialises with Aboriginal people and forms relatively close relationships with a number of different individuals. He is also sharply critical of the racially-motivated violence of settlers, referring to them as 'white savages.'

The kangaroo hunt is a good example of the way these conflicted settler dispositions in relation to Aboriginal people interact with each other. The following passage puts Dawson's admiration for Aboriginal hunters into the framework of a romantic colonial racism: 'The kangaroos are too subtle and shy for us to get near, and frequently the natives will return from their sporting excursions without game, although they are as subtle as the game itself.'[cxxxviii] Eager to kill kangaroos, Dawson (like Wilson) shares his guns with his Aboriginal guides: 'They are excellent shots, and I have often lent them a musket to shoot kangaroos, when it has always been taken care of and safely returned.'[cxxxix] This is a self-confident racism, certain that Aboriginal people will always dutifully return guns to settlers (rather than, say, use them to shoot them) – while affirming their capacity to respect settler equipment and keep it in good condition. On another expedition in November 1826, Dawson's party carries muskets, rifles, 'a brace of pistols,' 'two double-barrelled fowling pieces' and 'two brace of kangaroo dogs.'[cxl] He writes, 'we bivouacked for the night on the banks of the Karuah, in the pleasant country before described.'[cxli] The details in the description of the camp almost precisely recall the socially integrated scene in Earle's *A Bivouac of Travellers in Australia:*

> my black friends had squatted themselves around the fire, smoking their pipes, and patiently awaiting their turn to partake of the favourite beverage. Our utensils were not many upon this occasion: they consisted of a tea-kettle, a large saucepan, a frying-pan, a few pewter plates, several tin pannicans, which served us for tea and drinking-cups, a spoon or two, some knives and forks, and a few napkins.[cxlii]

It is also worth noting that there is almost always a dead kangaroo beside these campfires: 'And now back to our bivouac…[where] native dogs…[are] carrying off the remains of kangaroo which the blacks had left about the fire.'[cxliii]

For Dawson, kangaroo hunting draws settlers and Aboriginal people together; but it also reinforces racial hierarchies. 'I need hardly observe here,' he tells us, 'that all savages are fond of hunting; it is the chief business of their lives; and the frequency of the sport does not appear in the least to diminish their relish for it.'[cxliv] Hunting is racially determined in this passage, understood as an essential or defining drive for Aboriginal people – although the term *sport* slips it into a different register, one with which settlers can identify. It has long been a commonplace to imagine that 'civilisation' brought with it a transition from hunting (associated with Indigenous people) to agriculture (associated with settled, or settler, people). An article in the *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* in 1822 finds amusement in exactly this point when it notes that schoolchildren are taught about 'the different progressive stages of society': 'The Hunter…The Shepherd…The Agricultural…The State of Manufactures – Arts and Sciences.' 'Now, I recollect,' this author writes, 'and indeed it is only the other day when we were a race of hunters, and if the chace [*sic*] did not furnish us with a kangaroo steak, many of us went supperless to bed….We have, thank God, emerged from the hunter's state, and fairly established ourselves as a race of shepherds….The next stage is the agricultural.'[cxlv] In *Dark Emu*, Bruce Pascoe makes a compelling case that the routinely-drawn distinction between Aboriginal people as hunter-gatherers and settlers as agriculturalists ignores extensive evidence of Aboriginal land management, buildings, cultivation and the large-scale farming of species – with the kangaroo battue system as an example. Bill Gammage makes a similar case in *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia* (2011). Aboriginal people, he suggests,

'first managed country for plants. They knew which grew where, and which they must tend or transplant. Then they managed for animals.'[cxlvi]

The insistence that Aboriginal people were essentially and exclusively hunters (rather than land managers) is, of course, also tied to self-interested settler investments in the idea of *terra nullius,* that is, the view that if Aboriginal people didn't seem to manage the land in any 'settled' way they could not be said to own it. We have also noted the related colonial prejudice that Aboriginal people are improvident, consuming their kills immediately and without any thought of saving and storing for the future. Dawson's account of how the various parts of a dead kangaroo are distributed amongst settlers and Aboriginal people gives us an acute example of this view:

> Whenever we caught a kangaroo, the hind quarters, or as much of them as I required, as well as the fry, which is much superior either to that of a lamb or a calf, were always reserved for me. The natives like the employment of skinning the kangaroos, and they do it very dexterously. The head and the entrails the moment they were separated were thrown into the fire, and turned with a stick till they were about half done, when they were fairly divided and eaten by them before dinner.
>
> The kangaroo was then put upon the fire and cooked in the same manner. The natives always eat (when allowed to do so) till they can go on no longer: they then usually fall asleep on the spot, leaving the remainder of the kangaroo before the fire, to keep it warm. Whenever they awake…they begin eating again; and as long as any food remains they will never stir from the place unless forced to do so. I was obliged at last to put a stop, when I could, to this sort of gluttony, finding that it incapacitated them from exerting themselves as they were required to do the following day.[cxlvii]

A racial hierarchy is applied to the kangaroo's body in this passage: Dawson claims the 'superior' parts while Aboriginal people take the entrails and head and devour them on the spot. Dawson also intervenes to moderate Aboriginal people's appetites, for moral as well as practical reasons. Even so, he shares in the pleasure Aboriginal people clearly derive from hunting, 'which served to keep the party in a state of cheerful excitement.' As much as it is burdened with colonial racism, kangaroo hunting is too compelling an activity for settlers to

renounce. 'Kangaroos were also seen in the greatest abundance,' Dawson writes, 'and…as the country was so level and free from timber, such a fine opportunity for coursing could not be resisted, and we had accordingly some of the finest enjoyment of that sport which can be conceived.'[cxlviii]

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The surgeon-naturalist Robert McCormick arrived in Hobart Town in 1840 – the same year Duterrau painted *The Conciliation* – as part of James Clark Ross's four-year expedition to Antarctica in the *HMS Erebus* and *HMS Terror*. McCormick had earlier sailed with Charles Darwin on the *Beagle* with Augustus Earle, who was employed as the ship's artist. In Tasmania, he visited Risdon: by this time the Black War had largely concluded, decimating Aboriginal populations on the island and enabling settler expansion to continue uncontested. McCormick soon befriended the wealthy landowner (and later, briefly, Premier of Tasmania) Thomas Gregson and made a number of sketches of the area. Risdon, he wrote, is 'most picturesquely situated on a rising knoll, embosomed in trees, and perfectly isolated, approached by a winding road skirting the creek.'[cxlix] This is a space, like Lycett's painting of the Tamar River, that completely erases the presence of Aboriginal people. During luncheon, McCormick sees an eagle, a 'tiger-cat' and a kangaroo. On 27 August 1840 he watches a kangaroo hunt 'with Gregson's pack of hounds'[cl] – the so-called and much admired 'Risdon Hounds.'[cli] 'The weather was fine,' he writes, 'and two kangaroos were started. I saw one of them leap across the road at some distance, followed by the barking and yelping of dogs; they, however, gave the dogs a long run, taking the hillside into the dense woods; both were soon out of sight and hearing. We learnt subsequently that one had been killed some miles off by the dogs.'[clii] Back in Hobart Town, McCormick spends his days collecting scientific specimens and mixing with a settler aristocracy, attending a ball at Government House held by the Lieutenant-Governor and the explorer Sir John Franklin, and so on. Travelling to Launceston, he visits the Tamar River and meets the famous geologist and explorer ('Count') Paul Edmund de Strzelecki. Dining at the Eagle Inn just south of Launceston, 'I had a young dead kangaroo given me.'[cliii] Later that evening he stays at the Fox-hunter's Hotel in Campbell Town.

McCormick's *Voyages of Discovery in the Arctic and Antarctic Seas, and round the World* (1884) is an exuberant account of his expeditions to Antarctica and Tasmania in the early 1840s. It is worth comparing with Wilson's earlier *Narrative of a Voyage Round the World*: both men are surgeon-naturalists, they both relish the romance of picturesque landscapes, and they both operate in military-colonial frameworks. But McCormick's account has no connection with Aboriginal people. He circulates instead in an elite settler world where kangaroo hunting is now a marker of cultural distinction, a leisure activity for a privileged class. Returning to Tasmania in mid-1841, McCormick visits Risdon and once again participates in a kangaroo hunt: 'Mr Gregson with his fine pack of hounds, and we with our guns. Not a very successful kangaroo chase, as the dogs having started one, took to the hill and got over it.'[cliv] The surgeon-naturalist compensates for this disappointment by almost immediately shooting a number of native birds: 'a guinea-fowl…a ground thrush…an island crow, a thrush, and four paroquets.'[clv] The kangaroo hunt as a narrative genre – and an actual activity – depends on the satisfaction of the chase and the success of the kill-as-climax. But sometimes it fails to deliver; and when that happens, settler frustration ensures that other native species pay the price.

Chapter Three: The Kangaroo Hunt as Sport

The earliest prose description of a kangaroo hunt as a recreational pursuit (literally) appears in the *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* in October 1811, under the heading 'Sporting Intelligence':

> A fine Hunt took place, the 8th instant at the Nepean; of which the following is the account given by a gentleman present: – "Having cast off by the government hut on the Nepean, and drawn the cover in that neighbourhood, for a native dog unsuccessfully, we tried the forest ground for a kangaroo, which we soon found. It went off in excellent style along the sands by the river-side; and crossed to the Cow-pasture Plains, running a circle of about two miles, then re-crossed, taking a direction from Mr. Campbell's stock-yard, and from thence at the back of Badge Allen Hill to the head Boorroobahan Creek, where he was headed; from thence he took the main range of hills between Badge Allen and Badge Allenabinjee in a straight direction for Mr Throsbey's farm, where the hounds ran in to him, and he was killed after a good run of about two hours."[clvi]

This short description gives us a micro-geography associated with the hunt, which takes place in south-west Sydney along the Nepean River. It heads for the Cow Pastures and then maps its trajectory in relation to local settler properties and landmarks. 'Mr Campbell's stock-yard' is most likely a farm bought from the convict entrepreneur Jane Codd by the merchant Robert Campbell. Badge Allen Hill is in the vicinity of what is now Badgally Road and Boorroobahan Creek is now known as Bow Bowing Creek. 'Mr Throsbey' is Charles Throsby, previously a commandant of the Newcastle penal colony, who had recently been granted 1500 acres in the area by Governor Lachlan Macquarie. The kangaroo is a second choice for the hunters here. But the lengthy chase is considered a 'good run,' and the hounds finally manage to kill their quarry. A few years later, Macquarie himself visited the Cow Pastures, with a party that included the explorer John Oxley – who by this time owned a property at Kirkham (named after his birthplace in Yorkshire), about twenty kilometres to the west. In a journal entry for 5 October 1815, Macquarie wrote, 'I learned this Evening on my return to Camp for the first time that my Greyhound Dog Oscar had been hurt severely

Hunting a Kangaroo two days since….I ordered the poor Animal to be taken particular care of, and to be carried in one of the Carts till he recovers.'[clvii] Macquarie toured the district, visiting various farms including Throsby's, dining and socialising. In the meantime, his greyhound's health steadily worsened and not long afterwards 'to my great concern and mortification' it died 'in great agony.' 'I ordered him to be buried in a part of the farm of Macquarie Grove,' he wrote, expressing a rare moment of sorrow in the early establishment of the kangaroo hunt as a colonial blood sport:[clviii] sorrow for the death of a hunting dog, not the death of the kangaroo.

The breeding of dedicated hunting dogs was instrumental to the professionalisation of the kangaroo hunt in Australia and it began relatively early on. In her book *Land Settlement in Early Tasmania* (1992), Sharon Morgan notes that when the minerologist Adolarius Humphrey arrived at Port Dalrymple in 1804, he brought four kangaroo dogs with him 'which he believed would "kill about 1000lb weight of Kangarroo a Week".'[clix] Humphrey didn't stay long in Tasmania; but for settlers who remained on the island and prospered after the Black War, the establishment and training of packs of hounds soon led to the kangaroo hunt's identification with wealth, property and social occasion. We have already seen Thomas Gregson's hounds in Chapter Two, the so-called 'Risdon Hounds.' Gregson was a powerful, abrasive and controversial colonial, heavily invested in local politics and governance; he was also a kangaroo hunt *aficionado* who made a point of dressing for the occasion. Morgan writes that he cut '"no despicable figure in so distant a clime" in his scarlet coat, mounted on a good hunter.'[clx] Gregson was a supporter of the anti-government *Colonial Times*, which reported enthusiastically on his regular 'hounds meetings.' An early example takes place in May 1835 at Richmond Park, the 'country seat' of David Lord, one of the wealthiest landowners on the island, 'where the assembled sportsmen were most hospitably entertained with an elegant *dejeuné*.' The account of the hunt itself is centred on the speed of the chase and delivered with a kind of aristocratic *bonhomie*. The hounds 'found almost immediately a fine kangaroo, which went away at a slapping pace, and continued to run in a brilliant manner, for twenty-five minutes….The hounds then ran into him in view. They had afterwards two other good runs, and killed in gallant style.'[clxi]

The *Colonial Times* worked hard to valourise the kangaroo hunt as a distinctively local and worthwhile enterprise, influenced by the business of fox hunting in England – but represented here as much more challenging and exciting. A report in July 1835 writes: 'Mr Gregson's hounds have offered amusement to many, who, till within the last few months, never imagined there could be any sport in kangaroo hunting. The old fox hunters in England will tell you, there is nothing like old Renard for sport; but fox hunting is as far inferior to following the hounds after a boomer, as sparrow shooting is to that of snipe.'[clxii] Even so, the chronicling of the kangaroo hunt in early colonial Tasmania owed a great deal to British fox – and stag – hunting traditions. A longer article in the *Tasmanian* in September 1837 recommends kangaroo hunting to any young colonial who is thinking of returning to England ('if you can ride, go with the hounds, if you cannot, learn immediately'). It then presents a hunting scene with Gregson's hounds – east of Hobart this time – where hunters meet in their 'pink jackets' and almost immediately follow the hounds after a large 'forester', 'the very worst kangaroo of his size I ever saw.'[clxiii] When they lose their quarry, the hounds begin 'to "work" a little on the *drag* of a travelling forester', suddenly switching to 'a racing pace straight down for a mile and a half.' The hounds' burst of speed inspires this writer to recite some lines from the opening of Sir Walter Scott's *The Lady of the Lake* (1810), the first canto of which is titled 'The Chase.' It begins with a stag hunt in the Scottish highlands:

> A hundred dogs bayed deep and strong,
> Clattered a hundred steeds along,
> Their peal the merry horns rung out,
> A hundred voices joined the shout;
> With bark, and whoop, and wild halloo…[clxiv]

By reproducing these lines, the *Tasmanian* article situates its kangaroo hunt in a fairly recent poetic tradition that was elevating hunting to the status of a noble recreation – while also emphasising the noise, excitement and numbers associated with the chase. In Scott's poem, the stag escapes, the hounds are 'baffled' and one of the hunters falls onto his exhausted, dying horse. The *Tasmanian*'s account of the kangaroo hunt is less dramatic: one of the horses 'got an awkward fall, but luckily no damage done.' The hunt proceeds through

various landmarks and settler properties (Single Hill, Romney's Marsh Paddock, Lauderdale, etc.), with 'no serious accidents' – although some hunters 'got *spilt*, and some got lost.' Thirty hunters leave, although only thirteen manage to return 'at the close of this long and brilliant day.'[clxv]

Mandy de Belin notes that hunting as a sport in Britain was 'totally transformed' by the beginning of the nineteenth century, with deer hunting replaced by fox hunting 'in terms of both popularity and prestige.'[clxvi] Emma Griffin makes the same point in her book *Blood Sport* (2007), noting that during this time 'the fox, so long disregarded as hardly worthy of a gentleman's attention, was transformed into hunting quarry par excellence.'[clxvii] Peter Beckford's popular *Thoughts Upon Hunting* (1782) is generally taken as a point of origin in the modernisation of the fox hunt in Britain – and an inspiration for 'the growing taste for writing about sport' that rapidly developed soon afterwards.[clxviii] The 'intemperance, clownishness, and ignorance of the old fox-hunter, are quite worn out,' Beckford wrote; 'fox hunting is now become the amusement of gentlemen; nor need any gentleman be ashamed of it.'[clxix] Another key figure in the establishment of fox hunting as a modern, aristocratic practice was Hugo Meynell, whose country house in Leicestershire, Quorn Hall, became a renowned centre for the sport. As with Beckford, a primary focus was on breeding high quality hounds to give the hunt what Raymond Carr calls 'the essential ingredient of pace.'[clxx] The Quorn Hounds soon become synonymous with English fox hunting – along with hound packs associated with other nearby places like the small town of Melton Mowbray, which the popular English Regency sports writer Pierce Egan had called the 'renowned metropolis of the fox-hunting world.'[clxxi]

Tasmanian settlers almost immediately replicated these hunting sites, effectively claiming a distinguished English genealogy for their own local sport. W.G. Cheine re-named his 7,000-acre property Gaddesden, near Cambell Town, 'Quorn Hall' in the late 1830s.[clxxii] David Lord's son James became the master of the hounds here, the so-called Quorn Beagles. Neighbouring landowners were soon involved in regular local hunts. News of the first Clarendon Hunt – tied to the wealthy pastoralist James Cox's nearby stately home and property – was published in July 1842: hunters 'assembled to enjoy the day's sport' at Campbell Town, 'killing a couple of kangaroos, in a brilliant run' and then spending the

evening 'at the hospitable residence of the master of the hounds, James Lord, Esq., at Quorn Hall.'[clxxiii] The Clarendon Hunt soon became an unmissable event, enjoyed by both locals and visiting dignitaries. Sir William Denison, Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land at this time, was invited by 'hospitable colonists' in July 1851 to hunt in the Campbell Town area in order 'to make His Excellency's tour as agreeable to him as possible.'[clxxiv] Around fifty hunters gathered at Quorn Hall for the occasion; 'twenty-two,' one report notes, 'were attired in scarlet costume a la Melton Mowbray':

> At half-past 10 o'clock, Nat. [Nathaniel Paul] Allison's beagles were laid on, and very soon got on the trail of a brush kangaroo, which they run in gallant style for nearly forty minutes, when the field divided, a portion of the pack, having got on the scent of a forester, which after a capital run, succeeded in giving the fielders the go-by…both kangaroos escaped their pursuers during the run.[clxxv]

A year earlier, the Captain of *H.M.S Maeander*, Henry Keppel (who went on to become Britain's Admiral of the Fleet), had visited Tasmania. 'It was the winter, and hunting season; and the Governor, Sir William Denison, who is a lover of the sport, kindly mounted me,' he wrote in his journal.[clxxvi] Keppel gives a lively sense of the social and sporting worlds he encounters at Quorn Hall and its environs:

> Our meet one morning was at Oatlands, the residence of the master of the hounds [James Lord], prettily situated on the banks of the Macquarie River; there was a *déjeuner* for a large party; and no young ladies, with all the advantages of English society and English education, could have presided at a table with more natural grace than did the pretty sisters of our worthy host, assisted by an equally pretty friend, none of whom had ever been out of the colony. In the field too these young ladies were equally conspicuous for their nerve and graceful riding.[clxxvii]

This is a rare acknowledgement of the active participation by women in colonial hunting (we shall see a few other examples later on). Keppel clearly relished the experience of participating in a colonial hunt: 'Our game was the kangaroo; the pack were fox-hounds. If awkward fences and dangerous jumping add to the excitement of the chase, the sport could

not be surpassed in merry England, nor could the well-mounted cheery set of young fellows who composed the field be outdone in deeds of gallant riding by any in the world.'[clxxviii]

The replication of English hunting practices in Tasmania also saw the importation of deer as quarry and game meat. Thomas Gregson, James Cox and John Bisdee of Hutton Park were all early providers of deer to local hunters, bringing 'the novelty of stag-hunting to Van Diemen's Land' – an early account of one of these hunts, in 1841, interestingly notes the participation of an Aboriginal man from Port Philip Bay who 'acquitted himself admirably in his equestrian state.'[clxxix] The novelty of stag hunting soon becomes commonplace in Tasmania, continuing over many decades. Often a stag hunt would turn into a kangaroo hunt. An article in the *Mercury* newspaper about Campbell Town daily life in August 1861 describes a large group of hunters gathering at Quorn Hall in search of 'some out-lying deer known to be generally in that locality'; failing to find any, they resort to kangaroo hunting, with one kill 'in good style.'[clxxx] Deer and kangaroo hunting are mixed together here: it can be difficult to tell which species the 'bucks' and 'does' actually are. Even so, the author is inspired enough by the spectacle of hunters and hounds to quote some lines from anther earlier hunting poem, William Somerville's *The Chace* (1735), an elaborate poetic tribute to the English hunt (foxes, stags, hare, otters etc.) and its methods:

> Delightful scene,
> When all around was gay, Men, Horses, Dogs,
> And in each smiling countenance appears
> Fresh blooming health and universal joy.[clxxxi]

Colonial hunting can sometimes be cast as a way of alleviating boredom; but when these organised meets take place, they bring with them something much more, a jaunty sense of enthusiasm and pleasure ('a well-mounted cheery set of young fellows') and an aristocratic revelling in plenitude and luxury. This is a long way (in a short period of time) from the desperate struggles with Aboriginal people over kangaroos as a much-needed resource during the Tasmanian Black War. The shared exuberance in colonial hunting here is a direct expression of settler triumph, where the violent frontier has now become a post-frontier playground for those settlers who had immensely profited from the brutal removal of

Aboriginal people from country. A report in the *Mercury* from 1869 is typically titled 'A Merry Spin with the Quorn Beagles' – it would have been impossible to imagine Tasmanian hunting just a few decades earlier as a 'merry spin' – and describes a stag hunt that begins at Avoca, not far from Campbell Town. Here, a long chase ends with a satisfying kill ('Most of the field were well up at the death'); the hunters return to Avoca for 'a slight refresher'; then the hounds 'were laid on to a kangaroo, which was killed, after a short but exciting run.'[clxxxii]

The 1861 article about Campbell Town, above, also talks about 'Mr Blackwell's merry little pack of hounds.'[clxxxiii] This is Samuel Blackwell, who was born in Melton Mowbray, England. He emigrated to Tasmania in 1840, built an inn which he named after his home town, bred a pack of hounds and went on to establish the Melton Mowbray Hunt Club. Blackwell's hounds become as well known as the Quorn Beagles; they might even join forces and hunt together. A report from June 1862 sees a large hunt gathering ('as numerous a field of horsemen as ever met in this colony') in honour of a visit by the then Governor Thomas Gore Browne:

> We left Mr Blackwell's about 11.30, and trotted away onto a run belonging to J[ohn] Bisdee Esq.; the hounds were at once set to work, and in half-an-hour, a gentle whimper told us that game was a foot and ere long the whole pack burst away in full cry, making the whole valley ring with their melodious notes; unfortunately the Kangaroo took straight away for Bothwell road, and being a very rough country, it became necessary to whip off the hounds, notwithstanding we had a splendid run…the kangaroo[s] were too numerous, and caused the hounds to separate, and one good sportsman from town was fortunate enough to have followed some five of the hounds that had got away from the body of the pack, and after a capital run killed his kangaroo, and came back to us with the brush dangling from his horse's bridle.[clxxxiv]

When kangaroos are 'too numerous,' the hunt breaks up; but this, too, brings its own rewards. We can also note a kind of hunting poetics here which pauses to admire the morning scenery ('one of those mornings that this fair island is celebrated for') and transforms the baying of the pack into 'melodious notes.' The hunters then adjourn to

Blackwell's inn with the Governor, who tells them 'it had given him great pleasure to have been present at a hunt in Tasmania, where the old British sport of hunting was so thoroughly carried out.'[clxxxv]

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We have noted that the first organised hunt in New South Wales was recorded in 1811. The influential pastoralist and politician (and poet) William C. Wentworth gave an account of 'Colonial Sports' in a handbook for prospective emigrants published in London in 1819, with hunting as a prime activity. 'Coursing the kangaroo and emu form the principal amusement of the sporting part of the colonists,' he remarked, adding that 'To enjoy…these sports in perfection, it is necessary to go far beyond the limits of colonisation; but this is a necessity to which those who are really sportsmen cheerfully admit.'[clxxxvi] The frontier in New South Wales was still a volatile place but colonial hunting carried on regardless, a 'cheerful' symbol of settler domination (and regarded here as 'necessary': a 'necessity'). Wentworth also noted that a subscription pack of hounds had been put together earlier on by members of the 73rd Regiment, who were active in New South Wales between 1810 and 1814. When these soldiers finally left Sydney for Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), he wrote, 'the pack was broken up, as they were the principal supporters of it, and their successors had no taste for it. Since that period no attempt has been made to form another pack, although the breed of hounds is not yet extinct in the colony.'[clxxxvii]

It looks as if the next incarnation of a hunting club built around a pack of hounds was the Bathurst Hunt, established in 1825. A notice in the *Australian* on 19 May announced: 'The Gentlemen West of Mount York [in the Blue Mountains] have raised a Subscription Pack of Hounds, to enjoy the pleasures of the Chace.'[clxxxviii] A week later, the Bathurst Hunt posted its charter, outlining its rules and regulations and naming its committee members. The President was John Fennell, the Civil Commandant of Bathurst and an aide-de-camp to the then Governor of New South Wales, Thomas Brisbane. The Vice-Presidents were George Ranken – the owner of a property titled Keloshiel, who is often remembered for his discovery of fossilised remains of megafauna – and James Walker, owner of a property called Wallerawang. Brisbane, himself a keen sportsman and horse racing enthusiast,

became the Bathurst Hunt's Patron. Ownership of hunting packs thus shifted from the military to the squattocracy in the space of ten years. But this is still the frontier: just one year earlier, in August 1824, Brisbane had declared Martial Law, aimed at suppressing reprisals and attacks on settlers by local Wiradjuri people as colonisation rapidly spread inland.

Hunt Clubs soon proliferated in New South Wales, just as they did in Tasmania. We can see them as a means of organising and consolidating a powerful and exclusive network of settler landowners – what hunting commentaries often refer to as 'the right sort.' Immaculate dress, lavish dinners and *dejeuners*, an emphasis on pleasure and amusement, and a license to go wherever the game leads you: these all work to impose a kind of post-frontier idyll on the colonies before the fact. In the process, country was remade in an often-bizarre mimicry of English traditions and typologies. Meets such as the Cumberland Hunt and the Sydney Subscription Hounds imported fox hounds and foxes – using them as so-called 'bagged foxes,' which would be released on the day of the hunt and sometimes recaptured to be hunted again later on. The Sydney Subscription Hounds was formed in early 1835; an early account describes a chase after a dingo, with the hunters dressed 'in *pinks* [scarlet coats]' and their dogs finally 'put off the scent by a Colony of Wallabies.'[clxxxix] Dingoes were identified as a pest by pastoralists early on, which meant that Hunt Clubs could regard killing them as an honourable act in the service of the colony. It helped if hunters could re-imagine dingoes in the fox's image – something the Sydney Subscription Hounds went to great lengths to encourage. An account of a meeting in July 1835 'proposed the health of the Australian fox, which is by the *canaille* [common people] ignorantly denominated the native dog.' The chairman then rules that any member who calls a dingo anything but a fox 'should be deemed guilty of contempt of the laws and regulations of this Club, and liable to be mulct'd in a sum not exceeding half-a-crown.'[cxc] Fox hunting in the Sydney district began to attract its own brand of hyperbolic, semi-satirical commentary. Here is an 1836 description of hunters left behind by the pack as they pursue a fox:

> Alas! Some of those well-filled pigskins [saddles] have been emptied of their contents, the pieces indeed have been picked up since, but, oh! How fallen from their ancient beauty. The glowing pink, the cords [trousers] of driven snow, the unexceptionable

> tops, which contracted with their bottoms, are different, even as the shades of night and day, are now covered by the cold earth, and their beauties 'in one wide burial' blent.[cxci]

The quotation here comes from the young classical scholar Joseph Anstice's 'Coeur de Lion: A Poem' (1828), about the fall of Richard I, the English king. The Australian fox hunt generated at least one poem of its own, a sort of undersised mock epic which ends rather grimly:

> The nags are sobbing broken hearted,
> And riders from their pigskins parted,
> Have sunk to rise no more.
> The varment now begins to fail.
> He cannot prick his ears;
> And neither can he cock his tail,
> He's flummox'd by his fears.
> They cut it off, that tail of black,
> And gave his carcase to the pack –
> His mug was nail'd upon the door,
> Which looks upon the kennel floor,
> And neither epitaph nor tomb
> Marks his untimely doom.[cxcii]

This poem is signed 'Esau', after the hunter from the Book of Genesis. But it has no heroics: it works by humorously deflating the noble register of older British hunting poems such as Somerville's *The Chace*, investing in the excitement of the hunt and tracking its geographical trajectory ('Away they went to Bondi beach') – but also bringing home its careless, profane brutality.

Occasional satires such as this didn't diminish colonial enthusiasm for the hunt, which continued to work as a way of securing – and ritualistically celebrating – settler domination of the land. An article on the Sydney Hounds in May 1836 notes the establishment of a new

pack at Goulbourn, 'supported by all the wealthy and influential inhabitants of that quarter': 'Foxes and Kangaroos abound so as to ensure sport; it is a good "sign of the Times" when the settlers look to something more than mere money making – the institution of an amusement of this nature shows that they are contented with the land they live in and are willing to make it not only the field of acquiring wealth, but their permanent home…'[cxciii] Kangaroo hunting had by this time become an everyday recreation among well-heeled colonial landowners, something to look forward to. It was a key event on the social calendar. When eminent people visited the colony, they were treated to a kangaroo hunt as a matter of course. Hyacinthe de Bougainville was the son of the famous French explorer Louis de Bougainville. He visited Sydney in June 1825 as part of an around-the-world voyage, collecting specimens (including kangaroos), touring the settlement and enjoying colonial hospitality. Visiting John Oxley's farm at Kirkham, he joined James Macarthur – son of the wealthy landowners John and Elizabeth Macarthur – in a kangaroo hunt on the Cow Pastures:

> Soon we had reached the foot of the mountains where the hunt was set to start. Because our horses were fiery and well-trained, all we had to do was to let them race along. No doubt in a plain or through open countryside, it would be most enjoyable to follow the pack as it chased the game, especially when the latter moved in as singular a manner as did the kangaroo. Unfortunately, this was far from being the situation, and we soon realised the perils of the hunt as we proceeded through a forest….It was not long before we abandoned the main body of huntsmen and went to take up a favourable position on high ground from where we hoped to watch the pack, but in vain, for the thick wood obscured our view completely! Mr Macarthur sounded his horn loudly but to no avail; the noise made by the horses and dogs gradually faded into the distance…[cxciv]

The forest is the problem in this hunt, blocking entry and obscuring their view of the kill. Although he relishes the excitement of the chase and the novelty of the quarry, de Bougainville finds himself left behind by the other hunters and the pack.

Ten years later – around the time of the establishment of the Sydney Subscription Hounds – another important visitor arrived in Australia: the young naturalist Charles Darwin. *HMS Beagle* landed at Sydney Cove in January 1836 and during his brief time in the colony, Darwin crossed the Blue Mountains to visit the Wolgan Valley and stayed with James Walker at his property Wallerawang. It is likely that he also met the amateur fossil-hunter George Ranken: as we noted above, both Walker and Ranken were senior officials in the Bathurst Hunt. Darwin was also a keen hunter; Keith Thomson writes that while a student at Cambridge he became a 'well-heeled amateur naturalist/sportsman and all-round sporting gentleman.'[cxcv] At Wallerawang, Darwin joined a kangaroo hunt organised by David Archer, the property's superintendent. 'Mr Archer,' Darwin wrote in his *Beagle* diary, 'took me out Kangaroo hunting. We continued riding the greater part of the day; but my usual ill-fortune in sporting followed us & we did not see a Kangaroo or even a wild dog.'[cxcvi] De Bougainville and Darwin are two disappointed international guests of the kangaroo hunt. In Darwin's case, the impossibility of finding a kangaroo to hunt was enough to shape his view of the current predicament of the species. As Tom Frame remarks in his book *Evolution in the Antipodes* (2009), 'Darwin was among those who thought hunting would lead to kangaroos becoming an endangered species – he failed to see a single one during his time in Australia.'[cxcvii]

In early colonial Australia, kangaroo hunting was often a matter of survival and struggle, life supporting but also sometimes life threatening. We have seen this especially in relation to the Black War in Tasmania from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the late 1820s. In New South Wales during this time, however, hunting was already being established as an amusement, a recreational activity for privileged settlers, the 'landed gentry.' Edward Smith Hall had arrived in the colony from England in 1811, a well-connected young man. Lachlan Macquarie immediately gave him a large land grant. Hall went on to become an editor of the Sydney *Monitor*, a newspaper that spoke up for the future of white 'native born' settlers – what one of the editorials called our 'semi-barbarous bush-ranging kangaroo-hunting sons.'[cxcviii] But as a prominent landholder, Hall also helped to recast kangaroo hunting as a social pursuit specific to a class of colonials with aristocratic pretensions. A newspaper advertisement selling a large estate in 1838 presents Hall's neighbouring property as a selling-point and something to be emulated: 'a splendid place,' the advertisement writes,

'for amusement, both in the field and on the water; few, if any, surpasses it, as Kangaroo, Emu for hunting, Pigeons, Quails, and Wild Duck for shooting, and Fish in the Lake, are proverbially good.'[cxcix] This is colonial property cast as a kind of game park for the enjoyment of well-situated settlers: abundant with quarry. We have mostly talked about kangaroo hunting as a male pursuit. But the *Monitor* published an early account of kangaroo hunting from the perspective of a wealthy young woman that also gives us a lightly satirical take on the event. 'Miss Susan —— at Hunter's River,' Newcastle, writes to her sister Nancy in Sydney about what she did while staying with the O'Hare family to avoid '*ennui*':

> new sources of amusement were suggested; and it was determined, that like the times of our grandfathers at home, the *chase* should usher in the auspicious morning. Don't stare Nancy when I tell you, that I and Katherine O'Hare joined in the (unfemenine [*sic*] you'll say) sport of hunting the kangaroo, for so we did, I assure you. I was specially accommodated with Mr O'Hare's dapple grey horse…[cc]

One of those invited to join the hunt is a young dandy called Flam – 'a redundant lopping from the tree of fashion' – who is the object of Susan's particular scorn: 'the sprig of dandyism was incessant in his viturperations against a "bush life", [and] expressed an immensity of astonishment that people of the least *fashion* could think of burying themselves therein; and implored to understand, that he only honoured this part of the country with his delectable presence once a-year.'[cci] This is an inexpert participant who is definitely not one of Hall's 'kangaroo-hunting sons.' Later on, he falls off his horse into a swamp, emerging 'soak'd, choak'd, and bemired.' There are eight hunters in this group, 'with nearly a score of dogs, and four or five *black fellows* in our train, as the honest natives are called.' A kangaroo is spotted and the hunt soon gets underway:

> Off we all set – scampering first here and then there, like mad people. I have often read of Lady Hunters or Huntresses, and in my own mind classed them with the amazons of old, but I had not yet tasted 'the pleasures of the field'. Having so tasted them, I hesitate not to pronounce them to be monstrously agreeable; and I think not at all incompatible with female delicacy. We got warm in the pursuit, which was renewed several times with sportsman-like ardour (as it appeared to me at least) till

> near noon, by which time some half-dozen of the spirits of Australia (as the amiable and poetic [Barron] Field once sang or said of the Kangaroo) became suspended across the shoulders of the poor blacks, whose animated good-natured countenances, dingy as they were, evinced the delightful anticipation they enjoyed, of faring sumptuously off the fore-quarters of the game, it being usually divided between them and the dogs, except a few steaks for the *whites*. In this order we returned home. Changing our dress, a light tiffin, introductions to each other, etcetera, brought on dinner time. A marquee was pitched by the river-side, attached to a cluster of peach-trees. I shall never forget what a dinner we all made…[ccii]

We can note several things about this passage: the patronising and disdainful view of the Aboriginal hunters (who, with the dogs, dine on most of the kangaroo meat when the hunt is over); the identification with a literary genealogy of 'Lady Hunters' and the affirmation of hunting as an appropriate and enjoyable activity for women; the concluding feast (mostly English food, mutton, beef, etc., but not kangaroo) that consolidates these settlers' social networks and collective ascendancy; and that passing reference to the kangaroo as a 'spirit of Australia,' an image taken from Barron Field's well-known early colonial poem 'Kangaroo,' included in his foundational collection *First Fruits of Australian Poetry*, published in 1819.

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In Victoria, hunters were meeting with packs of hounds by the late 1830s. The Indian-born army officer William Mercer arrived in Geelong in 1838 and went on to become a wealthy pastoralist and parliamentarian. Quoting from an August 1839 article in the *Port Phillip Gazette*, Margaret Kiddle notes that Mercer 'imported a pack of thoroughbred fox hounds, and introduced the sport beloved by generations of farmers. The first meet was held in 1839, when "eighteen horsemen with a sprinkling of red coats, left in high spirits in the cool of a fine August morning". They hunted a kangaroo, but later meetings pursued the dingo…'[cciii] Another colonial officer from India, Foster Fyans, arrived in Port Phillip in 1837, becoming Police Magistrate of Geelong. Helping to oversee the dispossession of Aboriginal people across the western district frontier, his aim was essentially to establish a

squattocracy and maximise land productivity. But he also wanted these wealthy settlers to enjoy their properties as a recreational *post*-frontier space – which meant first and foremost a place to freely congregate and hunt at leisure, uninterrupted by struggles over resources and land. 'A noble pack of hounds was kept up by gentlemen squatters who met every season,' he wrote in a letter about his experiences in the colony, 'hunting twice and thrice a week, and meeting at each other's houses, where good cheer and good and happy society were ever to be met.'[cciv]

Another foundational hunting figure here was the settler Thomas Pyke, whose property extended from (the eponymous) Pyke's Creek, west of Bacchus Marsh, to Melton – named, for the same reasons as the Tasmanian example, after Leicestershire's Melton Mowbray. Pyke had also brought fox hounds to Australia, establishing the Corio Hounds. The other main hunting pack at the time was the Werribee Hounds. By the mid-1840s these groups were meeting regularly and the 'Hunt Week' became a much-anticipated event on the local social calendar. One article in September 1846 notes that this occasion – 'with its concomitant balls, dinners, *et cetera*' – 'commenced most auspiciously' when 'no less than thirty-six well-mounted and well-appointed horsemen (of whom fifteen sported "the pink") followed the Corio hounds in as pretty a run as any reasonable man could desire' – finally killing a fox, and a kangaroo.[ccv] This particular Hunt Week ended with a lavish dinner in honour of the 'Corio and Werriby [sic] Hunts,' with Pyke delivering a speech in which he noted that his title as the 'Father of Fox-hunting in Port Phillip' more correctly belonged to William Mercer, 'who kept a pack of fox hounds in Geelong long before he [Mr Pyke] came to the colony.'[ccvi] This is a genial dispute over settler patriarchy: the question of who takes credit as the founding father here is displaced onto public recognition for one's role in the establishment of a recreational hunting pack rather than, say, the dispossession of Aboriginal people.

Just two years earlier, another subscription Pack of Hounds was established further afield in Port Fairy, the Mount Rouse Hunt. Other regional Victorian hunts sprung up later on, in the early 1850s. An 1857 account of kangaroo hunting at the goldrush town of Avoca in Victoria's central highlands is subtitled 'Hark Forward, Australia!' – as if this particular sport now propels the nation-to-be into the future. Around 'sixteen or eighteen choice spirits of

the right sort' gather at Charles Pearson's Avoca Hotel early one winter morning, with the hunt described to lyrical effect:

> No huntsman's horn sounded the signal for the gathering; but the first musical notes of the Australian magpie were previously notified to be the signal for the time of meeting. After winding through the picturesque vale of the Avoca, where kangaroo to any extent may be obtained, about a dozen or fifteen kangaroo were soon stared, being troops of three mobs. Three separate hunts took place. A fine female kangaroo gave the party a smart run for three miles and a half through almost impenetrable scrub and a very rough country. Jenny then surrendered, Mr Wise, a well-known and first-class horseman in the Avoca district, being first in at the death.[ccvii]

In this account, a kangaroo hunt is 'naturally' called into being by the song of another native species; and this is a gendered killing, with a group of men eager to be there at the death of a named female kangaroo, 'Jenny.' To the west, the small prospecting town of Pleasant Creek (later, Stawell) formed its own Pleasant Creek Reef Kangaroo Club. An account of a hunt in September 1858 sees 'about forty gentlemen…enjoying a day's sport in hunting the kangaroo.' The word 'gentleman' is interestingly applied to both hunters and quarry: 'An old gentleman with a tail was started, and the whole crowd, hounds and all, were in hot pursuit for four of five miles along the seven-mile flat, until at last victory and death closed the chase…'[ccviii] It is as if the kangaroo ('an old gentleman with a tail') is absorbed into the good fellowship of the hunters here, as a sort of 'companion species,' to use the term theorised by Donna Haraway for animals that are close to us[ccix]– until, at last, the hunters are able to kill it.

The racehorse owner George Watson established the Melbourne Hunt Club in 1853, and became the Master of the Hounds, holding that office for many years. When *Bell's Life in Victoria and Sporting Chronicle* began publication in Victoria – modelled on the English sporting weekly *Bell's Life in London, and Sporting Chronicle* (1822-1886) – the activities of the Melbourne Hunt Club were avidly recorded. Here is an account of their first meet of the season in April 1857, contributed by someone called 'Nimrod's Ghost': 'Most truly are we of these colonies turned topsy-turvy from our home customs, for Easter is the acknowledged

wind-up of the English hunting season, whilst here it is only the commencement.'[ccx] This contributor was in fact Frederick Dicker Hamilton, a sporting enthusiast and racing identity who also wrote about the track for the Melbourne *Herald* under the pseudonym 'Tout Cela.' He had been Master of the Hounds in Ballarat for a while; he also routinely found himself in court, not least for unpaid gambling debts. 'Nimrod's Ghost' is of course a reference to another great hunter from the Book of Genesis. But it also invokes the great British sporting journalist, Charles James Apperley, who wrote as 'Nimrod' for the *Sporting Magazine* – his first published piece on fox hunting in Leicestershire in 1822 securing him 'almost instantaneous fame.'[ccxi] In Victoria, 'Nimrod's Ghost' reinvented the kangaroo hunt as a narrative form, imbuing it with all the colourful English vernacular of the chase. His flamboyant descriptions embrace both the comedy and the drama of the event, and as an active participant in the hunt, he conveys an immediate sense of its thrills, challenges and momentum. When hunters in the first meet of 1857 spot a kangaroo, the dogs suddenly spring into motion:

> 'Dauntless' whimpered, and old 'Welcome' answered the hint with a bold challenge; 'Dulcet' settled the point by dashing away, and a glorious burst of music many a heart feel too large for the constraint of a waistcoat – 'Tally ho!' was shouted in a brace of seconds, and a fine 'flyer' [kangaroo] was seen bounding over the heath at a pace that proved his astonishment at the sudden disturbance. Reins were tightened in hands, hats tightened on head, and knees tightened on saddle, as each settled to work for a rattling gallop, and inwardly swore to 'get the brush' [the tail].[ccxii]

In the event, there is no kill; even so, the author thinks his account of the hunt is appealing enough to attract new participants to join in the sport. When there *are* kills, there is often an emphasis – as in the Avoca hunt above – on killing female kangaroos. Reporting on a hunt a couple of months later, 'Nimrod's Ghost' notes that a 'booming "old man"' kangaroo is passed over during the chase in favour of 'a beautiful doe': 'on the latter the hounds were laid', he writes, 'as always affording the better sport.'[ccxiii] Another account, in August 1857, describes hunters in pursuit of a female kangaroo and her joey. 'The darlings [hounds] were quickly laid on,' he writes,

> and opened on the trail with such a rattling burst as almost foretold the sport that was in store for us. For three miles we streamed straight away towards the Dandenong Ranges…the hounds keeping true to the line, and never giving more than a momentary check, till the closeness with which she was pressed, forced her to break away from her known haunts, and face a fine open country….For more than an hour the steam was kept up, every man being half-crazy with delight, and the horses pegging along with an equal enjoyment of the fun….Through mud and water all scrambled and splashed, mounted a teasing hill on the opposite side, turned again, and went through the boggy bottom, a third time around the grog-shop, and crossed above ugly drain, when the doe was seen dead beat and gradually sinking before the eager hounds. In another minute they were into her, and she was pulled to earth after as fine a chase as ever kangaroo afforded.[ccxiv]

This is a remarkable passage, based on the conviction that hunting is a 'cheerful,' healthy and vigorously masculine activity – all of which makes a description like this oblivious to the gendering of its violence against a female kangaroo. The hunters are driven into a frenzy ('every man being half-crazy with delight'); they chase her until she is exhausted, trapping and killing her in a squalid place (the grog shop, the 'ugly drain') that in no way seems to diminish their exhilaration.

The 'Nimrod's Ghost' articles on the Melbourne Hunt Club celebrate male fellowship and *bonhomie*, built around the often brutal business of colonial kangaroo hunting in Victoria. They reproduce the familiar trappings of British fox hunting in a kind of belated homage to the writings of Charles James Apperley, 'the "Nimrod" *par exellence*.'[ccxv] But they also want to carve out a distinctly Australian experience here, one that supersedes its British 'prototype.' The local climate, the scenery, the costumed company, the hounds, and the quarry: all these things combine to turn hunting in Australia into something that is at once vernacular and transcendent:

> What man who has the soul of a sportsman can help feeling himself elevated to 'the fifth heaven' as, on one of the lovely mornings of an Australian winter, with a company of thorough good fellows, and a choice lot of hounds, he enters the dewy

> bush in search of a bounding 'forester' or swift warrigal [dingo]? As the red-coated, neatly-equipped, and well-mounted cavalcade jog along to the first cover, the woods, hills, and gullies re-echo to their merry halloo, song, and jest, for the stern etiquette of a British hunting-field is not necessary in a country where game is found in its native wilds.[ccxvi]

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A number of visual artists during this time also celebrated the (manly) pleasures, excitements and mishaps of the kangaroo hunt. The monthly *New South Wales Sporting Magazine* ran for only three issues, from October to December 1848. It was edited by D.C.F. Scott, an ex-army officer from Bombay who went on to become Police Magistrate of Newcastle. Edward Winstanley was a promising young artist in the colonies around this time, although he sadly died in 1849 of tuberculosis, aged twenty-eight. The previous year he had designed the cover of the first issue of this magazine – a tableau of hunting and sporting imagery, framed by a dead kangaroo on the left (hanging above a pair of riding boots) and a brace of ducks on the right.

EDWARD WINSTANLEY *NEW SOUTH WALES SPORTING MAGAZINE* 1848

In 1844 he had also produced a set of watercolours for four lithographs by Thomas Balcombe, *The Five-Dock Grand Steeple-Chase,* to local acclaim. Balcombe was himself a sporting artist, providing illustrations for T. Revel Johnson's equally short-lived *Australasian Sporting Magazine* (October 1850 – January 1851). Like Winstanley, he arrived in Australia as a young teenager, in 1824; he worked for the Australian Agricultural Company at Port Stephens and then, after a riding accident, went to Sydney to work as a field surveyor. A watercolour generally attributed to Balcombe, *Kangaroo Hunting* (c. 1850), is a colonial rendition of an English fox hunting scene: with a well-dressed hunter on a thoroughbred horse galloping after his powerful, lean hounds – which are bearing down fast upon a diminutive kangaroo.

THOMAS BALCOMBE *KANGAROO HUNTING* C. 1850

The kangaroo seems to be gendered female here, leaping gracefully in front of the menacing dogs; the disproportionate size of dogs and quarry and the inevitability of the kangaroo's death lend this otherwise rollicking painting an unexpected poignancy. Richard Wingfield Stuart's oil painting *Kangaroo Hunt Near Braidwood* [*in southern New South Wales*] (c.1870) gives us a later version of the same event. Stuart came to Australia in 1862, aged nineteen; he went on to become a squatter in Queensland but he also produced numerous sketches of comic colonial scenes, often involving accidents with horses and other animals. In *Kangaroo Hunt Near Braidwood*, a hunter on a spirited black horse waves his hat in the air, spurring his kangaroo dog into the chase. A small kangaroo is bounding away into the distance; in this case there is some possibility, at least, that it might escape.

RICHARD WINGFIELD STUART *KANGAROO HUNT NEAR BRAIDWOOD* C. 1870

The English-born Edward Roper was a keen naturalist and travel artist – rather like Augustus Earle – who is best remembered for his 1891 book about his experiences in Canada, *By Track and Trail*. He came to Australia in 1857, living in Melbourne and travelling through the Grampians and Western District – where he painted a range of distinctive colonial landscapes and scenes. One of several hunt paintings Roper produced is *A Kangaroo Hunt under Mount Zero, the Grampians* (1880), which has four hunters galloping through a woodland of red gums and grass trees, chasing three kangaroos. A long brushwood fence separates the hunters from the quarry – showing that the land, with a number of trees cut down, is already under development.

EDWARD ROPER *A KANGAROO HUNT UNDER MOUNT ZERO, THE GRAMPIANS* 1880

The riders and their hounds are approaching the fence at break-neck speed: perhaps they will clear the obstacle and kill the kangaroos, perhaps not. Roper's *After the Flying Doe* (c. 1880) gives us a similar scene, although with a closer view of everything including Mount Zero, which now looms in the background. There is no fence in this version: two hunters on horseback are pursuing kangaroos, with a couple of hounds racing along in front. Unusually, the kangaroos themselves are in the foreground of the painting. The doe's femininity is

apparent in the delicate representation of her features, and possibly there is a joey peeking out from her pouch. It looks as if this painting wants to elicit some level of sympathetic identification with the female kangaroo's plight by placing her in the foreground, registering the distinctiveness of her gender and invoking her directly in the title.

EDWARD ROPER *AFTER THE FLYING DOE* C. 1880

S. T. Gill is probably the best known local artist to represent the kangaroo hunt. Born in England in 1818, he emigrated to South Australia aged twenty-one; in the early 1850s he went to the Victorian goldfields, visually documenting life at the diggings. Moving to Melbourne, he produced a popular book of lithographs, *The Australian Sketchbook* (1865), which – among many other scenes of colonial life – includes an image of an Aboriginal man crouching behind a fallen log next to a settler who is poised to shoot a kangaroo. Gill also worked and taught in Sydney during this time. Around 1858 he produced a series of three lithographs, printed and published by F. Mader and Allan and Wigley (both in George Street, where Gill had his studio), under the general title *Kangaroo Hunting*. Each lithograph depicts a representative moment in the hunt. The first, *The Meet*, shows a gathering of men outside a rustic colonial homestead, with their horses and dogs (and some chickens; and a magpie on the roof). An announcement of the publication in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 October 1858, describes the scene: 'The rude wooden hut in the wilderness, slim dogs, and strong, swift horses, with the colonial Nimrods and their attendants, form altogether a very pleasing and lively group.'[ccxvii] One of the hunters stands out, tall, commanding, elaborately styled (black riding boots, yellow waistcoat, scarlet riding jacket): a squatter, most likely.

S. T. GILL THE MEET 1858

The second lithograph, *The Chase*, puts the squatter into the foreground, leaping over a fallen log on his powerful white horse. The reckless excitement of the hunt is conveyed by the proximity of the hunters to one another, the dangerous terrain – the horses are about to traverse a dry creek bed – and the whips being brandished. The dogs are chasing a kangaroo: in contrast to Roper's 'After the Flying Doe,' this animal is now retreating into the distance.

S. T. GILL THE CHASE 1858

The third lithograph, *The Death*, seals the kangaroo's fate, although it may not be the same kangaroo – or even the same hunting event. Here, a squatter (now in a blue coat) stands beside his exhausted hounds as another hunter holds a bloodied knife in one hand and the tail of the dead kangaroo in the other, ready to 'get the brush.' One of the mounted hunters is raising his hat in the air, looking back. He may be saluting the success of the hunt, or he may be acknowledging the arrival of some Aboriginal people in the distance. The Aboriginal man leading this group – a family? – is carrying a spear, perhaps himself returning from a hunt. This lithograph foregrounds settler hunting and its rituals, but it also reminds us that this is not yet a fully realised post-frontier place. There is no sense of impending frontier violence, but the image seems to register disparities between settlers and Aboriginal people over the body of the kangaroo: who hunts and claims it, and for what purpose.

S. T. GILL THE DEATH 1858

We have talked elsewhere about the capacity of some squatters and landowners to combine the crudest expressions of racism with at least some level of humanitarian compassion towards Aboriginal people.[ccxviii] It is worth adding that this kind of compassion is always belated, a rhetorical display of emotion that comes in the wake of Aboriginal dispossession and the establishment of settler occupation of land and the full appropriation of local resources. Godfrey Mundy was an Eton-educated military officer who had served in India; he chronicled and illustrated his adventures there in *Pen and Pencil Sketches, Being the Journal of a Tour in India* (1832). We can note here that chronicles of travels and adventures across the empire by authors like Mundy who illustrated their own work were a relatively familiar literary form by the middle of the nineteenth century. In June 1846 Mundy arrived in Australia, where for five years he acted as Deputy Adjutant-General of the colonial military forces. Mundy's cousin, Sir Charles Fitzroy, had been appointed Governor of New South Wales by this time, and they worked closely together. In November they set off with a small entourage across the Blue Mountains on a month-long journey into the interior where Mundy and Fitzroy 'visited many wealthy pastoralists, admiring their stock

and properties and hunting as opportunity offered.'[ccxix] This journey became the basis for *Our Antipodes* (1852), Mundy's popular and fascinating personal diary and narrative of colonial development during this time. We can see the kind of conflicted racism noted above – part settler triumph, part sentimentalised settler recrimination – in the following passage on the hunting of kangaroos:

> The native lords of the soil have, I conceive, infinitely greater cause for displeasure, when they see the white usurper hunting down for mere pastime the kangaroo and bustard of their rightful demesne, or pulling out of their scanty rivers the magnificent cod-perch, than has the English lord of the manor and country justice of the peace when he finds his coverts have been thinned 'of a shiny night,' of a few pheasants, or his stews swept of a sack-full of carp and tench.[ccxx]

In this account, settler colonials are like English poachers; the refrain '['tis my delight] of a shiny night' comes from 'The Lincolnshire Poacher,' a folk song that became popular in the late eighteenth century.[ccxxi] As we have seen before, however, English poachers can thrive in colonial Australia, with no game laws to limit the game they plunder. In any case, Mundy's view of Aboriginal people as 'native lords of the soil' is tinged with a 'dying race' pathos, an extinction discourse – with the decline of kangaroo populations irrevocably linked to Aboriginal dispossession. Earlier on, Mundy had suggested that settler ownership of the colonies is based on the 'gradual eviction' of Aboriginal people.[ccxxii] But he also registers numerous violent conflicts over resources and property to remind his readers that this is still the frontier.

Published in London by Richard Bentley, *Our Antipodes* was illustrated with fifteen sketches, twelve by Mundy and three by his wife, Louisa. Helen Hewson notes that these sketches were given 'a clarity and sophistication not previously seen in this genre' through the English landscape painter W.L. Walton's tinted lithographs.[ccxxiii] One of them – by Mundy – is titled *Hunting the Kangaroo*.

GODFREY MUNDY *HUNTING THE KANGAROO* 1852

The composition of this sketch is already familiar from scenes such as we saw in Roper's paintings above, with a woodland as the backdrop and open grassland as the stage for the hunt. There is almost always an obstacle running down the centre of the picture that the riders must surmount. In Roper's case, it was a brushwood fence; here, it is a flowing creek at the bottom of a gully and some fallen trees. There are two hunters, each in hot pursuit of their hounds. In the foreground, one of the hounds has a large kangaroo by the throat; at their feet lies another hound, perhaps mortally injured and with the kangaroo's hind foot across its belly. Interestingly, Mundy depicts himself as one of the hunters, with his initials 'G.M' branded on the shoulder of one of the horses. *Hunting the Kangaroo* appears in the course of a long commentary on his visit to the town of Wellington, New South Wales, with Governor Fitzroy. On 30 November 1846, he writes, 'the resident gentlemen of the vicinity…attempt to show the Governor the sport, *par excellence*, of the country – kangaroo hunting.'[ccxxiv] But they find only one kangaroo ('known as a red-flyer'), which eludes them: 'I never saw a stag in view go at all like our two-legged friend; and, in short, after a sharp burst of twelve or fourteen minutes, both dogs and men were fairly distanced.'[ccxxv] The landscape is the thing that makes the kangaroo hunt both difficult and dangerous, with 'the hardness of the ground, the stump-holes' and so on. Mundy himself rides 'at full speed into the fork of a fallen tree' and has to 'retreat.' But he also wants to insist that, when cornered, the kangaroo is a formidable opponent. 'At bay','he writes, 'the kangaroo is dangerous to young and unwary dogs from the strength with which he uses the long sharp claw of his hind foot, a weapon nearly as formidable as the wild boar's tusk.'[ccxxvi] In Mundy's sketch, he is still mounted on his horse and in full pursuit; one hound is injured but another has caught its quarry. This is the kangaroo hunt sketch as wish-fulfilment, a fantasy conclusion to the reality of a hunt that did not go according to plan.

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We have seen disappointed kangaroo hunter-visitors before, such as Hyacinthe de Bougainville and Charles Darwin. The renowned English novelist Anthony Trollope came to Australia twice, in 1871 and 1875; the first visit was the longest, tied to Trollope's investment in his son Frederic's ill-fated sheep station, Mortray, near Grenfell, in New South Wales. Trollope's *Australia and New Zealand* (1873) is an ambitious attempt to survey the

past and present social and political conditions of the colonies. In a section on 'Australian Sports' (rather like Wentworth's 'Colonial Sports,' above), Trollope writes at length about kangaroo hunting in Queensland and New South Wales. Almost from the beginning of his commentary, the hunt is in disarray: 'The hounds scatter and the men scatter, and it will often happen that a man is attempting to ride down a kangaroo without a hound, and a hound making the same attempt without a rider.'[ccxxvii] Trollope reminisces about various moments during the hunt: the focus on an 'old man' kangaroo which is 'stout in running'; the time he saw a kangaroo 'catch up a terrier in his arms, and carry the little animal in his embrace throughout the run'; and a female kangaroo he saw 'throw her kid out of the pouch in which she carried it' in order to escape the hunters.[ccxxviii] As with Mundy, the landscape is too obstacle-ridden to make for ideal hunting conditions. 'The turns are rapid,' he writes, 'and the ground is strewed by prostrate forest trunks. There is danger too of riding against trees. This on one occasion I did, with great force; and could not use my leg for six weeks after the accident.'[ccxxix] Trollope was an avid fox hunter and had earlier published an amusing collection of observations, *Hunting Sketches* (1865), which both valorised and caricatured the sport. He notes, for example, that even the most enthusiastic hunter 'has his own miseries.'[ccxxx] The book in fact begins with a chapter on 'the man who hunts and doesn't like it.' Despite all this, his comments on the kangaroo hunt in Australia conclude by offering the event some faint praise: 'In default…of anything better, kangaroo hunting is good sport.'[ccxxxi]

When the twenty-three-year old Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, first visited Australia in October 1867 in the *H.M.S. Galatea*, the kangaroo hunt loomed large as a representative entertainment fit for royalty. This meant it was crucial to ensure its success. Different colonies went into competition to offer the most pleasurable local hunting experience. Anticipating his arrival in Adelaide, the *Illustrated Adelaide Post* boasted,

> A visit of a Prince to the antipodes is a phenomenon so rare that it is worthy of special notice….Let us shew him the novelties and characteristics of the country – the primary objective of the Prince's visit – say a grand hunt of kangaroos, as in the south-east, where a mob of 20,000 can be easily got together; this would be a sight that would be remembered for years…[ccxxxii]

It looks like the aim here is to involve the Duke of Edinburgh in a battue, killing kangaroos on a large scale. A later report from South Australia noted that some of the officers from the *H.M.S. Galatea* had indeed enjoyed 'some first-rate sport' on Yorke Peninsula in November: 'There was abundance of kangaroo, and the party succeeded in killing 27. They were highly delighted with their excursion.'[ccxxxiii] But the Victorian newspapers were less impressed. 'The kangaroo hunt appears to have been a failure,' reported the Melbourne *Herald*, 'and no wonder, seeing that the number of kangaroos in the whole settled portion of South Australia is not much larger than might be found on many a run in the western portion of Victoria.'[ccxxxiv] Kangaroos in South Australia are scarce here, not abundant: which for the Victorians, at least, will never satisfy aristocratic tastes.

Shortly after arriving in Victoria, the Duke of Edinburgh went on a tour of Geelong and the Western District, accompanied by the Russian-born colonial artist Nicholas Chevalier. Chevalier had arrived in Melbourne in 1854, and soon became a prominent figure in the local art scene. He had already travelled through the Western District as an official artist on the geophysicist Georg Balthasar von Neumayer's magnetic survey expedition of the region in 1862, taking his sketches back to Melbourne where he developed them into major works. Mount Abrupt in the Grampians became a familiar landmark. One painting, *Mount Abrupt* (1864), has an Aboriginal family and their dogs camping in the foreground on a plateau above a gully, with the cattle grazing on the pastures behind them and the mountain in the background. This is an accommodating and peaceful scene, where Aboriginal people are shown to be not (yet) dispossessed from settler property.

NICHOLAS CHEVALIER *MOUNT ABRUPT* 1864

But in a second work, the same location gives us a very different experience of the landscape. *Mount Abrupt and The Grampians* (1864) was published as a colour lithograph in Charles Troedel's *The Melbourne Album* (1863-64). It gives us exactly the same perspective of the mountain, with the gully to the right and the pastures behind; but now, the Aboriginal family is replaced by a group of settler hunters and their hounds wildly chasing

after kangaroos. In fact, two of the hunters are trampling over the very space this Aboriginal family had occupied in Chevalier's other work.

NICHOLAS CHEVALIER *MOUNT ABRUPT AND THE GRAMPIANS* 1864

It is as if the kangaroo hunt itself has wiped away any trace of Aboriginal presence in the land. The chase follows what looks like a well-worn path; perhaps the hunters have done this many times before. They look triumphant, and the hounds are close to their quarry. Although no kill is depicted, there is a strong sense that this particular hunt will be successful.

Chevalier produced a number of commemorative sketches of the Duke of Edinburgh's 1867 Western District tour. From 6 to 9 December the Duke's entourage stayed at John Moffatt's Chatsworth House, Hopkins Hill, a recently built and very expensive colonial mansion, 'the first of the Victorian "Bush Palaces".'[ccxxxv] Moffatt asked Chevalier to paint various scenes from the visit, which he used to further adorn his lavishly decorated homestead. But Chevalier also produced some light-hearted sketches to do with the Duke's tour, several with hunting themes. One of them shows the well-known marine painter Oswald Brierly – another of the Duke's official artists – sitting on a fallen log and drawing a kangaroo hunt (*Ye Duke's artist sketching ye 'Sport'*). Another sketch dated 7 December 1867 – now held at the Art Gallery of Ballarat – shows the Duke himself 'riding ahead of the field, on a kangaroo hunt,' where he leads a vast number of riders, almost on the scale of a military assault.

NICHOLAS CHEVALIER, *THE DUKE RIDING AHEAD OF THE FIELD IN THE KANGAROO HUNT* 1867

But as with Mundy's example above, this is a case of the kangaroo sketch as wish-fulfilment (or colonial obsequiousness). The Melbourne *Herald* had sent a special reporter out to Chatsworth to cover the Duke's visit and his account of the kangaroo hunt there is wonderfully deflating:

> Of the said kangarooing much had been expected; but the great expectations had not eventuated into a 'spanker.' Why or wherefore, it would be invidious to say; but on

> Mr Moffatt's place the sport was simply *nil*, although I believe he had gone to considerable trouble and expense in the matter, taking down wire fencing, etc. For this failure everyone had his own reason to give; some laid it to local jealousy – the general excuse for anything of the kind in a country district – others to want of due notice; but anyhow the kangaroos of that locality got off, and are doubtless very grateful for it.[ccxxxvi]

Another hunt was arranged for the Duke, but this also failed. A local report from the *Hamilton Spectator* gives a detail account of what happened next. Around thirty-five kangaroos were rounded up and herded into a nearby cattle yard. More than two hundred and fifty spectators then gathered to watch as the Duke, armed with a rifle, began to shoot the trapped kangaroos at close range:

> One by one [they] fell victims to the skill of their royal executioner. Several of the gentlemen surrounding the Prince tried their hands at the work of slaughter, but by far then greater number of kangaroo was knocked over by the Duke himself, who is an excellent shot. Two or three of the beasts succeeded in jumping the fence and getting away, but all that remained were very quickly disposed of, and then, at the Duke's command, collected for inspection. There were no very large kangaroos in the lot, but some few of tolerable size, and the Duke having expressed a wish to preserve some of the skins and claws, Mr Moffatt himself, assisted by one or two others, remained behind to satisfy his Royal Highness's desire.[ccxxxvii]

This is the end point of the kangaroo hunt as sport, with no chase, no hounds, no element of risk or danger, and no 'merriment' or pleasure. Without these things, the hunt is reduced to its base level, exposed as nothing more than an 'execution,' a 'slaughter.' The impulse to claim the kangaroo's 'brush' is also absent here, or rather, oddly recast through the Duke's request to preserve the skins and claws. And a wealthy colonial squatter demeans himself, taking down his own fences, cutting off body parts – willing to do just about anything to 'satisfy' the visiting Duke.

The next royal visit took place fourteen years later, when Prince George of Wales (later George V) and Prince Albert Victor arrived in Western Australia in May 1881. In June the teenage princes travelled to South Australia and stayed at Campbell House, residence of the wealthy pastoralist Thomas Bowman, near Lake Albert, south of Adelaide. Bowman arranged a kangaroo hunt for them, employing beaters to drive a number of kangaroos into the open. The two princes were given prime position and soon opened fire; 'they proved themselves to be good shots by the amount of execution they did.'[ccxxxviii] After lunch, the 'hunt proper' commences, with the princes riding in the chase. Bowman then calls them back to his property, where a half-dozen kangaroos are trapped in a pit. Various settlers risk injury by dragging each 'prisoner' out to hunt, one by one; but the kangaroos refuse to run, and when they do the hounds quickly kill them. The princes are then presented with two joeys; Bowman assists, attempting to drag a third joey out of the pit 'by placing a noose around its neck.' This is another instance of the hunter as executioner – and jailer. 'The number of kills for the day amounted to between forty and fifty,' the report concludes, 'and quite a formidable array of tails was deposited at the house on the arrival there of the hungry and tired sportsmen.'[ccxxxix] We began this chapter with some early accounts of organised recreational kangaroo hunts in Australia which charted elaborate local geographies while at the same time attempted to replicate familiar English landmarks, enthusiasms and hunting traditions. It was a way of importing an authentically aristocratic way of being into the colonies, providing settlers with a means to enjoy the land they had claimed and occupied. It also enabled a narrative genre to develop that relished the ups and downs of the chase. But when actual British royalty arrives, it has the effect of emptying this narrative of its content. The hunt is effectively foreshortened in the scramble to get directly to its conclusion. The kangaroo is already caught and condemned to death; killing it up close, without any challenges or obstacles (fences, fallen trees, etc.), is the only thing that counts.

Chapter Four: The Kangaroo Hunt Poem

The first poem to be published in Australia on an Australian topic was in fact about a wallaby hunt. The anonymous 'Colonial Hunt' was printed in the *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* on 16 June 1805 and is worth quoting here in full:

> When Sol has commenc'd his diurnal career,
> And the bright spangled dew drops from buds disappear,
> With my dog and my gun to the forest I fly,
> Where in stately confusion rich gums sweep the sky.
> Then anxious, my eyes each direction pursue,
> Till the fleet footed WALLABY rises to view!
> I point to the Game, and uplifting my hand,
> Brisk Lurcher, obedient, flies off to command:–
> Perceiving her danger, Puss doubles her pace,
> And well prim'd and loaded, I bring up the chace,
> Exclaiming, transported the course to review,
> 'Hoick ! hoick ! my bold Lurcher! Well led Kanguroo!
> Fatigu'd, broken hearted, tears gush from her eyes:
> In vain to the thicket for shelter she flies:
> Secure for a moment – yet shouts rend her ears,
> And the brush fired round her, again she appears.
> Delighted the Victim once more to behold,
> Away scampers Lurcher – and gets a firm hold.
> In vain has she doubled, since now she must yield:
> A stream from her haunches empurples the field:
> My transports subside – gentle Pity takes place,
> And Death puts an end to the joys of the Chace.
> Then varied my toil, to my cottage I come,
> And a sweet smiling Welcome proclaims me at home![ccxl]

This foundational New South Wales poem joins a long tradition of English hunting poetry, reproducing some of its key generic features. To begin a hunting poem with a celebration of the early morning, for example, goes back at least as far as William Grey's popular ballad, 'The Hunt is Up' (1539):

> The east is bright with morning light,
> And darkness it is fled,
> And the merie horne wakes up the morne
> To leave his idle bed.[ccxli]

Here, the hunting horn calls the day into motion. In 'Colonial Hunt,' however, it seems as if the hunter is called into action by the rising sun itself. The galloping pace of this poem is also generic to hunting poetry, with four stresses per line: beginning with the second or third syllable and then every third syllable after that with the final stress on the line's last word. The poetical term for this is anapestic tetrameter, a rhythm other hunting poems have sometimes used, most memorably perhaps in Lewis Carroll's *The Hunting of the Snark* (1876). Other English generic features in 'Colonial Hunt' include the hunter's shout of encouragement to his dog, 'Hoick!' – described in John Badcock's 1823 dictionary of English hunting slang as 'the cheer used by hunters at the death.'[ccxlii] And the wallaby is given a nickname, 'Puss': which genders it female and also links it to older commentaries about English hare-hunting. As Donna Landry writes, 'by the eighteenth century, the hunted hare would be generically feminised as "bold puss," a tradition that has continued [in hunting narratives] to this day…'[ccxliii]

But 'Colonial Hunt' is also resolutely Australian, naming the wallaby in capital letters as the hunter's quarry and then adding the name 'Kanguroo' soon afterwards, possibly as a way of generalising the identity of the species. This is a *colonial* hunt; and yet it also seems as if the poem ignores or represses its real colonial conditions. The hunter goes into the bush with his gun and his dog Lurcher (named after its breed, a sighthound cross), and kills a wallaby. When he returns to his cottage afterwards he is welcomed home, presumably by his wife. There is no sense in this poem of early colonial Sydney and its environs as a site of military occupation and frontier violence. In fact, the same issue of the *Sydney Gazette* had reported

that local Darug people 'did considerable damage' to a farm on the Hawkesbury River, 'continuing to menace the neighbouring settlers.'[ccxliv] John Connor discusses this raid in *The Australian Frontier Wars, 1788-1838*, emphasising the precariousness of settler properties and their occupants during this time.[ccxlv] But 'Colonial Hunt,' even at such an early stage of settlement, already imagines a space through which a settler could travel, and hunt, freely and without interruption – returning at the end to the welcoming security of a place now identified as 'home.' There are no Aboriginal people in the poem; the hunter has the wallaby all to himself.

When the wallaby appears, the poem gives itself up to the 'joys of the Chace': the word invokes the title of William Somerville's famous 1735 hunting poem. 'Well led Kanguroo!' is a compliment to the quarry's ability to make the hunt a challenging and pleasurable one. But the wallaby also knows she will die early on. Gendering the wallaby as female is important to the emotion of the poem as she begins to weep, not long after the chase has begun: 'broken hearted, tears gush from her eyes.' We can think about what it means for the first published poem in Australia to give us a weeping kangaroo – and a hunter, the voice of the poem, who responds by being moved to 'pity' after her death. The description of a kangaroo that weeps at the moment of its death comes from another European tradition of hunting narratives, this time about the 'sobbing deer' – where the stag is cast as a noble victim whose life has been tragically cut short. In *A View to a Death in the Morning* (1996), Matt Cartmill traces the long history of this trope – particularly prevalent during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: for example, in Margaret Cavendish's 'The Hunting of a Stag' from *Poems and Fancies* (1653):

> The Stag no hope had left, nor help did 'spy,
> His Heart so heavy grew with Grief and Care…

The death of the wallaby in 'Colonial Hunt' most likely references a well-known scene along these lines in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, where Duke Senior has been exiled, with several Lords, to the forest of Arden. Here, the Lords tell the Duke about Jacques, a nobleman and a noted melancholic who had been seen attending a wounded stag in the forest, after a hunt. 'The wretched animal heaved forth such groans', one of them says, 'That their discharge did

stretch his leathern coat / Almost to bursting, and the big round tears / Coursed one another down his innocent nose / In piteous chase' (Act 2, Scene 1, lines 36-40). The Lords listen as Jacques goes on to condemn the hunters who 'fright the animals and…kill them up / In their assigned and native dwelling place' (lines 62-63). He is last seen 'weeping and commenting / Upon the sobbing deer' (lines 65-66). In 'Colonial Hunt,' the hunter's pity for the weeping kangaroo or wallaby doesn't turn into the dogged melancholy of Jacques. It doesn't make him rail against the cruelties of hunting, and it doesn't prevent him from moving easily to yet another settler occupation ('Then varied my toil…') before returning home to his wife. Even so, there is something transgressive about the poem, especially since the wallaby is cast as a weeping woman – as if the hunter has committed a terrible act of gendered violence in the forest, to which his wife is oblivious. The way the hunter's 'transports subside' after the death of the animal seems to resonate with what Cartmill calls 'the profane extreme of the spectrum of hunting symbolism' where a hunter's pleasure in the kill can seem almost orgasmic.[ccxlvi] It is perhaps worth noting that the blood flowing from the dying female kangaroo – 'A stream from her haunches empurples the field' – recalls lines in another English hunting poem, Richard Powney's 'The Stag Chace in Windsor Forest' (1739): 'Now here, now there, in giddy Maze they ride, / And Streams run purple from the Courser's Side'. So 'Colonial Hunt' is a hunting poem that knows a great deal about its own literary tradition.

The weeping kangaroo went on to become an occasionally reproduced poetical trope in colonial Australian writing too, putting the hunter into a sympathetic relation with the dying animal once the 'joy of the chase' is over. An account of kangaroo hunting near Newcastle in 1827 actually cites the passage above from *As You Like It*, used here as a way of shifting the mood from enjoyment to 'regret' and turning the hunt from 'sport' into 'slaughter':

> We had an excellent day's sport on the parson's farm, killed five large kangaroo's [*sic*] and started about fifty others in the space of five hours, with about ten or a dozen dogs. We were in at the death of one of them.
>
> 'The Wretched animal heav'd forth such groans,
> That their discharge did stretch his leathern coat,

Almost to bursting; and the big round tears
Coursed one another down his innocent nose.'

I could not help regretting such a wholesale and useless slaughter...[ccxlvii]

The Shakespeare quotation triggers the transformation of the hunter's disposition: from enjoyment to regret. George Bennett, a surgeon and naturalist, had visited Australia twice, in 1829 and 1832; his *Wanderings in NSW, Batavia, Pedir Coast, Singapore and China* (1834) chronicled the developing social and cultural life of colonial New South Wales and provided a remarkably detailed account of local flora and fauna and (much less reliably) Aboriginal customs and practices. Bennett goes kangaroo hunting on the plains not far from Tumut River to the west of Canberra, where he sees his party's dogs kill 'a female of the common species.'[ccxlviii] Soon afterwards, he dissects the corpse. Affected by the event, he offers a stylised appreciation of the figure of the dying kangaroo, casting it as aesthetically significant enough to attract the attention of the British painter Sir Edwin Landseer. Landseer was renowned for his portraits of horses, dogs and stags, as well as for his powerful hunting scenes which often highlighted the suffering of animals at the moment of their death – like *The Hunting of Chevy Chase* (c. 1826) or *The Dying Stag* (c. 1830). Interestingly, Bennett's description also repeats some of the imagery in 'Colonial Hunt' (e.g. 'A stream from her haunches empurples the field'):

The dying kangaroo would afford a subject worthy of the inimitable pencil of Landseer, as it lies prostrate on that ground, where, but a few minutes before, it fed and gambolled, unconscious of danger, moaning piteously under the unmerciful fangs of the hounds: its eyes, dim with tears, seeming to upbraid the hunter for his cruelty. No one can behold the tragic scene without feelings of regret, as the dogs worry the animal until the hunter dismounts, and passing his knife across the creature's throat, the crimson stream flows, and the fixed glassy eye indicates the termination of life.[ccxlix]

The dying kangaroo is written as a 'tragic scene' here, elevated to the subject of poetry and portraiture. Once again, the account turns the triumph of the kill into 'regret,' although the hunter's knife efficiently puts an end to any lingering melancholy.

The English-born artist and naturalist George French Angas arrived in Adelaide on New Year's Day in 1844, aged twenty-one. Travelling through South Australia on various expeditions, he recorded his experiences visually in many watercolours – including one titled *Kangaroo Hunting, Near Port Lincoln*, in Angas's *South Australia Illustrated* (1847).

GEORGE FRENCH ANGUS *KANGAROO HUNTING, NEAR PORT LINCOLN* C. 1847

His account of his travels through the antipodes was published in London in the same year, titled *Savage Life and Scenes in Australia and New Zealand*. Here, Angas describes attending a kangaroo hunt in April 1844 along the Coorong, south of Victor Harbour. His party pursue a large 'boomer' and soon the kangaroo is held at bay by a couple of dogs, a scene he sketched for his book. 'He was a noble creature', Angas writes,

> and fought desperately with his fore-paws; a single kick with his hind-feet would have laid one of the dogs dead. It was a cruel sight to see the poor beast struggling hard for life beneath the bright sky, in his own free deserts; his large and eloquent eyes filled with tears, and his head and shoulders covered with blood.[ccl]

The weeping kangaroo is now gendered male and cast as a powerful opponent. But the mixture of tears and blood are enough to generate some pity and the kangaroo is dignified with an elevated status ('noble', with 'eloquent eyes') as a result – very much in the vein of the suffering stag in Landseer's hunting scenes.

Descriptions of weeping, dying kangaroos are intermittently scattered through colonial writing. They could provoke regret for the kill; they could even generate enough sympathy for the dying animal to make the participants reject kangaroo hunting outright. Emilia Marryat Norris was the daughter of the bestselling sea adventure novelist, Captain Frederick Marryat. She wrote sea adventure novels herself, some of which were set in the Pacific. Norris never actually visited Australia, but she was one of several English women writers – we shall look at some others in Chapter Six – who wrote about colonial kangaroo hunts in their fiction. In *Jack Stanley; or, the Young Adventurers* (1882), a seasoned military officer, Colonel Bradshaw, describes a kangaroo hunt to the eponymous hero to show the young man 'why I dislike the idea of it.'[ccli] In this account, the hunting party singles out 'one large male

kangaroo' and their dogs run it down until it is exhausted. 'I was nearest to him at the time he gave in', the Colonel says,

> and I saw him rushed upon by the savage brutes, who gnawed and worried him, covering his soft grey fur with blood. He stood impotently beating the air with his forefeet, and the great tears ran from his beautiful eyes and down his cheeks. I was thankful that I was armed with a gun, that I might as soon as possible shoot the poor beast dead; and by the time the others came up, I was standing over him, feeling in my own mind that I had joined in a cowardly, unmanly sport, and vainly regretting that I had been an accessory in any degree to what I now looked upon as unworthy of me.[cclii]

W. Gunston's illustration in the novel also conveys a general impression of melancholy in the wake of the killing.

W. GUNSTON 'SPORT!' *JACK STANLEY; OR, THE YOUNG ADVENTURERS* 1882

Interestingly, the Colonel's account is very close to Bennett's description of the weeping, dying kangaroo above; clearly, this is now a transferable literary trope. The difference in this case is that a female novelist presents a retired soldier who is sufficiently moved by the sight of the kangaroo not only to regret the killing but also to disavow the 'idea' of the hunt altogether. Male kangaroo tears from 'beautiful eyes' are enough to turn hunting into something 'unmanly' (for men). In an illuminating commentary on this novel, Robin Pope suggests the weeping kangaroo – whether male or female – makes the hunt seem, to the Colonel, like 'the slaughter of defenceless women.'[ccliii]

A final example presents another view of the weeping kangaroo and a hunter's regret, and takes us back to poetry. Malta-born Francis Adams was a novelist, poet, dramatist and radical social commentator who lived in Australia – Sydney and Brisbane – for much of the later 1880s. His *Poetical Works of Francis W.L. Adams* was published in Brisbane and London in 1887 – and one of the poems in this collection is 'The Kangaroo Hunt.' Adams was an admirer of the poet Adam Lindsay Gordon and paid tribute to the latter's 'regular and rhymed rhythms' and the valorisation of Australian manhood and horsemanship in his verse.[ccliv] But he also commented at length on Gordon's 'failure' as a writer and his suicide

at Brighton beach in Melbourne. Adams himself committed suicide after years of debilitating illness, in 1893. Suffering from severe tuberculosis, it seems unlikely that he ever participated in a kangaroo hunt himself – although he lived on a sheep station near Jerilderie in the mid-1880s and may well have seen hunts take place.

Adams's 'The Kangaroo Hunt' brings poet, hunter and reader together in a shared first-hand experience of sport, perhaps in the spirit of Gordon – and certainly in the spirit of his regular, rhymed rhythms. The kangaroo hunt poem is as generic in the late 1880s as it was for that anonymous poet in 1805, but Adams's poem has some important points of difference. Once again a hunter rises early in the morning, but this time he goes out with a party, horses, and two kangaroo dogs: one female, 'Squito, and one male, Wheels:

Up and away by the break of day,
  Over the silvery plain;
'Squito and Wheels atrot at our heels.
  Our horses all flash and fain.

Up soars the sun. Hoop! Yonder is one;
  An 'old man,' too! Set on the dogs.
Off, off we go, bent down to the bow,
  As we crash through the scrub-tress and logs.

Now we are clear. We have got him, no fear.
  Dear horse of me, spare you no breath;
My life's in my knees, and you hound as they squeeze,
  We mean to be in at the death!

O the wild rush past grass, tree, and bush,
  The whistling wind and the sun!
Where it is, if you'll tell, we'll ride into hell
  And out again ere we have done!

Over the ground, fourteen feet at each bound,
  The kangaroo strikes wild ahead.
O swift she sails by, the grey lightning pup!
  She's turned him; his feet are like lead.

He's round; he's at bay. Now, 'Squito, girl, stay;
  You're too pretty a damsel for him.
In she goes! At her heels to his throat leaps old Wheels.
  They're down. He's done, Seraphim!...

Quite dead…on the plain he'll browse never again.
  His mate, will she pine? Can I know?
I've been glad, I've been mad, and now I am sad.
  'Have you done?' I say, 'Let us go.'[cclv]

The quarry here is another large male kangaroo and the poem is determined to kill it early on ('We mean to be in at the death!'). A series of exclamation marks underscores the pace and frenzy of the hunt, almost to the point where hunter, dogs and horse become one and the same (''Dear horse of me…you hound as they squeeze'). Interestingly, the cry 'Hoick!' in 'Colonial Hunt' is now 'Hoop!' in Adams's poem, perhaps a version of 'whoop!', an early-morning rallying cry; we have seen the call before in Sir Walter Scott's *The Chase* (1810), 'With bark, and whoop, and wild halloo.' It may also tie the hunt to a horse race, since in Australia a *hoop* is a term sometimes applied to a jockey. The gendering of the hunting dogs is important here. The hunter does not want his 'pretty' female to attack the 'old man,' even though she jumps in regardless. The word 'dead' at the beginning of the last verse is a delayed rhyme with 'ahead' and 'lead' in the fifth stanza, bringing the hunt and the poem to a close and triggering a final moment of poetic reflection (following the ellipsis after 'dead'). Killing a kangaroo means literally taking native species out of their habitat: 'On the plain he'll never browse again.' But the hunter also wonders if the kangaroo's mate is now conscious of her loss ('Can I know?'), as if the hunt has produced a grieving widow. This is as close as the poem gets to a weeping kangaroo, but it is enough to take the hunter from the frenzy and immediacy of the chase to something like a closing state of melancholy. In the

last line it is not clear who asks, 'Have you done?'– the hunter himself? other members of the hunting party? the female kangaroo, perhaps? (The question echoes 'Can I know?') Either way, the poem's Prufrockian ending ('Let us go then, you and I…') gives expression to the regret that comes to the hunter as he ponders the consequences of his kill.

*

The most formally and thematically ambitious kangaroo hunt poem of the nineteenth century was *The Kangaroo Hunt, or, A Morning in the Mountains*, an extended work in six parts by the colonial-born poet Charles Harpur (1813-1868). The son of emancipated convicts, Harpur grew up in Windsor in rural New South Wales, along the Hawkesbury River, where the poem is set; it has this location in common with the 1805 'Colonial Hunt.' It has often been noted that Harpur wanted to be remembered as the first authentically Australian poet, and he emphatically signed this particular work 'Charles Harpur, An Australian.' But *The Kangaroo Hunt* was never published in its completed form during his lifetime. A small section of Part III first appeared in the Sydney-based *Weekly Register* in November 1843. Later on, the first three parts of the poem were serialised in seven instalments from June to November 1860 in the *Australian Home Companion and Band of Hope Journal*. The final instalment was left hanging, with its promise 'to be continued…' never realised. Harpur persisted with the work, however, labouring into the 1860s on three (slightly) different manuscript versions.[cclvi] Elizabeth Perkins has reproduced one of these revisions – signed 'Euroma 1863' – in her comprehensive 1984 collection *The Poetical Works of Charles Harpur*, and this is the version cited here. (Another manuscript version of this long poem signs off with: 'The End. Thank God!') All three complete versions of Harpur's 'The Kangaroo Hunt' can be found online at *The Charles Harpur Critical Archive* (charles-harpur.org).

Harpur takes all the familiar elements of hunting poetry and the kangaroo hunt narrative specifically – the sunrise in the mountains, the early morning, the cheerful prospect of the hunt, the challenges of the chase, and the witnessing of the death – and then magnifies them in order to produce what we can think of now as Australia's first epic poem. Its epic qualities arise not only from the grandeur of its scale and the complexity of its structure, but also from the European Romantic tradition it calls upon to take the kangaroo hunt outside

the province of light sporting verse and into an elaborate and affective relationship with landscape and nature. The poem begins by withdrawing from the artifice of metropolitan life to embrace the ecology of the colonial bush, or what Harpur calls (following European traditions) the 'forest':

> Here in the Forest; afar and free
> From the City's enervate luxury –
> Luxury that ne'er attains
> To comfort, swallowing all its gains –
> That seldom knows, and ne'er enjoys
> Or health, or peace, for dust and noise;
> And reached not by those senseless rules
> That Folly cons in Fashion's schools; –
> When first beyond the skiey trees
> That fringe some dawning height,
> Aurora spreads her traceries
> Of grey and golden light –
> Whilst yet the western stars may be
> Glimmering far and fitfully,
> As they were tarrying, – fain to pay
> Apostate homage to the day; –
> Glad as the spirit of the song
> Poured by the birds from every spray…[cclvii]

The opening of this poem takes readers out of the city – a place interestingly defined as 'luxury' without 'comfort' – and into the restorative space of an Australian forest somewhere west of Sydney along the Hawkesbury. This is partly also a provincial poet's complaint about the 'folly' and 'fashions' of metropolitan literary tastes, from which Harpur felt excluded. He responds to that exclusion by reconfiguring the Australian bush as a kind of greenwood, a proper subject for poetry – or rather, hunting poetry. To reinforce this, he invokes an elaborate ecology of species and habitat that he comments on at length in the poem through a series of detailed prose endnotes: the first of which (after the word 'spray,'

above) shows off his knowledge of native birdsong in all its 'richness and volume.' This provides the foreground for the poem's kangaroo hunt, and seems also to foreshadow some kind of transformative possibility for readers as they accompany the poet on his journey.

Critics have sometimes dismissed Harpur's poetry for what they see as its derivative relationship to the work of English Romantic poets generally, and William Wordsworth in particular. Harpur's contemporary, the Sydney journalist and literary critic G.B. Barton, suggested that by 'disdaining the more common sources of poetical inspiration, he has striven to emulate the lofty flights of Wordsworth,' but with limited success.[cclviii] In their later historical survey, *The Development of Australian Literature* (1898), Henry Gyles Turner and Alexander Sutherland commented: 'Enthusiastic admirers have dubbed [Harpur] the Australian Wordsworth, but although his strength lay in that communing with nature that marked the "Lake School," his somewhat deficient education, and his limited range of language, prevented him from attaining the success which his ambition essayed.'[cclix] These are critical metropolitan assessments of Harpur's work and they help to explain why he was often defensive about his provinciality. More recently, however, Harpur's *The Kangaroo Hunt* has been re-appraised through the framework of what is now called the environmental humanities – which, in literary studies at least, thinks about the kinds of narratives that give expression to transformative interactions between humans and the natural world. For Cassandra O'Loughlin, Harpur was nothing less than an 'ecopoet' who devoted himself to the 'empirical recording' of species and habitat.[cclx] In *The Kangaroo Hunt*, this kind of 'empirical recording' plays out most obviously through the extensive endnotes to the poem, which gloss examples of bird and animal life as the hunters pass through the forest in pursuit of their quarry. Harpur chronicles the physical traits of a number of native birds, for example, along with their calls and behaviours, how common or rare they might be, and so on. He also sometimes talks about his encounters with them. A note about the Australian magpie at breeding time, for example, highlights their ferocity:

> The Author has had his hat dashed off by a bird of this kind, while passing unwittingly under the tree in which it had built its nest….On an occasion like this, the parentally aroused magpie will come whizzing down at you with a really startling impetuosity,

> and you will hear his horny mandibles snap – close to your cheek perhaps – with the severity of an iron rat-trap.[cclxi]

Significantly, Harpur includes species information that suggests some acquaintance with natural science. The relationship between science and literature has been of particular interest to Romantic scholars, some of whom have shown that these two things are more symbiotic than we might have supposed. Lisa Ottum and Seth T. Reno have talked about Romantic environmentalism as 'generative of ecological thinking' for Wordsworth and what they call the 'Green Romantics': whenever a 'poet offers a metaphor or simile of the natural world, grounded in science,' they argue, 'that figures as an affective state compatible with an ecological sensibility.'[cclxii] Several English Romantic poets attached elaborate endnotes to their poetry – as Harpur had done – often to explain scientific details: Erasmus Darwin's popular *Botanic Garden* (1791), for example, subtitled *A Poem: with Philosophical Notes*, which drew heavily on Linnaeus's plant classifications; or Charlotte Smith's *Beachy Head* (1807) and Percy B. Shelley's *Queen Mab* (1813). But Harpur's notes show the influence of both the natural sciences and taxonomies that were more vernacular and local. His poem and its endnotes are also unique in their extensive documentation of Aboriginal names for native species. ''*Bidawong*,' he writes, in a note to Part II, 'is an Aboriginal name of the animal which Colonists have called the flying squirrel. I say *an* Aboriginal name, because almost every tribe of Blacks has a different set of names for our indigenous animals.'[cclxiii] Harpur also considers the impact of colonial land occupation on biodiversity. 'Our future ornithologists will look in vain for many kinds of birds which they will find mentioned in the earlier Colonial records,' he writes, partly attributing species extinction – even by the mid-nineteenth century – to the dispossession of local Aboriginal people and the resulting 'unchecked increase of the large tree-climbing gwana [goanna]' they had previously utilised as a food source.[cclxiv]

All this listing and notation of species forms an essential part of the poem's descriptive and ecological project and is integrated into the action of the hunt narrative itself. The lengthy final stanza of Part I, for example, enthusiastically calls for the listener ('But Hark!') to attend to the 'many warbled' bird songs that fill the forest at daybreak. The 'pipe of the brown thrush,' 'the wren's soft trill,' 'the parrot's cry,' 'the sounding troll of the valorous

pie,' and 'the bell-bird's pensive tinkle' blend together into 'one wild-wood merriment' which works to incite and spur on the hunt in the greenwood – volubly charging the atmosphere with the excitement of the occasion.[cclxv] A few lines later, the 'earliest Hunter's cheery call' itself works as another morning bird song, 'passed along from house to house': the poem blends the hunters into its ecology here. Robert Dixon has noted that Harpur's early drafts of *The Kangaroo Hunt* in the 1840s were contemporaneous with the zoologist John Gould's seminal work of local natural history, the eight-volume *Birds of Australia* (1841-48). 'Although there appears to be no direct evidence that Harpur had read Gould's books,' Dixon writes, 'it is not unlikely that during the twenty years he spend revising *The Kangaroo Hunt* his interests would have led him to seek out the latest publications of the celebrated ornithologist.'[cclxvi] Birds are certainly important to Harpur's poem. But its composition also coincided with Gould's first book about kangaroos, *A Monograph of the Macropodidæ* (1841-42), which described twenty-nine species of kangaroo, wallaby and wallaroo. This early scientific work became the basis for the second volume of Gould's later *Mammals of Australia* (1845-63), which expanded the list to forty-seven different species. Gould arrived in Australia in 1838 with his family and a naturalist assistant, John Gilbert. He began his fieldwork in Van Diemen's Land, and then travelled extensively around the country to identify, collect and record species. The second volume of *Mammals of Australia* begins with an entry on the Great Grey Kangaroo, invoking James Cook's 1770 expedition and that first shooting by Lieutenant Gore. It also draws on several more recent accounts of kangaroo hunting by public figures in Van Diemen's Land, like the botanist R.G. Gunn and Henry Elliot, who was the *aide-de-camp* to Sir John Franklin from 1836 to 1839. Elliot talks about kangaroo hunting with Mr Gregson's hounds: we mentioned these in Chapters Two and Three. Gould himself went kangaroo hunting: 'Although I have killed the largest males with a single dog, it is not generally advisable to attempt this, as they possess great power, and frequently rip up the dogs, and sometimes even cut them to the heart with a single stroke of the hind leg.'[cclxvii] John Gilbert may have gone kangaroo hunting too, contributing a vivid passage about the behaviour of the animal as the hunters close in for the kill:

> The moment it observes the approach of man, it seems intuitively to know that its most formidable opponent is before it; its lips are then twisted and contracted, its eyes become brilliant, and almost start from their sockets with rage, its ears are in

> constant motion, and it emits a peculiar, low, smothered grunt, half hiss or hard breathing-like sound; in fact, when man approaches, it seems altogether to forget the dogs, and regardless of the consequences of withdrawing its attention from them to him, soon loses its former advantage, and the dogs being enabled to obtain a secure hold, soon bring it down.[cclxviii]

This is the complete opposite of the weeping kangaroo; here, the kangaroo reacts to its imminent death with rage, directed straight at the hunter. In fact, many of Gould's entries on kangaroos focus on behavioural traits: for example, there is a discussion of whether or not the Great Grey Kangaroo is 'gregarious.' His colourful descriptions elaborate what might otherwise have been a neutral, taxonomic account of species. Even so, each entry also contains its own bibliography, providing a genealogy of scientific names. The Great Grey Kangaroo is *Macropus major* Shaw, George Shaw's amendment to his original name, *Macropus gianteus* Shaw. Other significant sources here include the taxonomies of John Edward Gray, who was Keeper of Zoology at the British Museum, and G. R. Waterhouse's *A Natural History of the Mammalia* (1846-48).

Scientific names are important here, but Gould acknowledged vernacular colonial names for species too. The Great Grey Kangaroo, for example, is also the '*Boomer*, *Forester*, *Old Man Kangaroo* of the Colonists.'[cclxix] And, like Harpur, Gould included a number of Aboriginal names, often tied to particular places. The Great Grey, he writes, is '*Bundaary* of the Aborigines of the Liverpool Range'; the Red Wallaroo is the '*Mar-ra-a-woke* of the Aborigines of Port Essington'; the Rufous-necked Wallaby is the '*Warroon*, of the Aborigines of the Illawarra district'; the Black-gloved Wallaby is the '*Goörh-a*, Aborigines of Perth' and '*Quär-ra*, Aborigines of the interior of Western Australia'; Derby's Wallaby is '*Bangap*, Aborigines of Perth'; the Short-tailed Wallaby is '*Ban-gup*, Aborigines around Perth' and '*Quäk-a*, Aborigines of King George's Sound'; the Stripe-sided Rock Wallaby is '*Moö-roo-rong,* Aborigines of the Perth and Toodyay districts of Western Australia'; and Gray's Jerboa Kangaroo is '*Boor-dee*, Aborigines of the mountain districts of Western Australia.'[cclxx] We cannot be sure whether Harpur had drawn on Gould's descriptions of kangaroos. He certainly left out all the scientific taxonomies, clearly regarding these as inappropriate to poetry. But like Gould, he was careful to distinguish species from one another: his poem, of

course, also comes in the wake of eighteenth century Linnaean classificatory systems of species identification. A long endnote talks about the wallaroo 'which differs from the ordinary forester in colour,' with the male being 'darker, or almost black' and the female being 'comparatively…much lighter, or more exactly, a sort of cream colour.'[cclxxi] Gould says more or less the same thing about the Black Wallaroo, 'the black and powerful male' contrasting with the lighter-coloured 'small and delicate' female.[cclxxii] Harpur also used vernacular colonial names for species: Flyer, Forester, and so on. One endnote specifies, 'Forester is the term generally applied to the kangaroo proper.' There are, Harpur adds, 'several kinds of foresters,' 'the grey-brown common sort; the large red species, rather scarce; the blue flyer, still rarer; and a white kind, of which the writer has only heard…'[cclxxiii] Finally, as we have noted, Harpur used a number of Aboriginal names for species as well. In Chapter Two we mentioned that – in the final endnote to his poem – Harpur talks about 'a little shag-haired species of kangaroo which is peculiar to mountain copses,' a 'mountain wallaby' which 'is (or was) known amongst the Hawkesbury mountains by the native name of *whirring*.'[cclxxiv] The closest we get to this name in Gould is his description of the Rufous-necked Wallaby as the '*Warroon*, of the Aborigines of the Illawarra district.' But the Illawarra may be too far from the Hawkesbury for this to be the same species; and it is, of course, hard to determine the historical accuracy of the colonial transcription of these Aboriginal names.

The parenthetical shift from present to past tense in Harpur's description of the *whirring* above – 'is (or was)' – is ambiguous. Does it relate to the disappearance of the Aboriginal people of the Hawkesbury mountains, or to the type of kangaroo being described? Both Harpur and Gould were certainly aware of the extinction of *species* as a problem, even by the mid-nineteenth century. Gould puts the extinction of kangaroos in particular in the framework of rapid settler expansion, writing of the Great Red Kangaroo, for example, that pastoralists are killing them to such an extent in New South Wales that 'unless some law be enacted' to protect the species, 'a few years will see them expunged from the Fauna of Australia.'[cclxxv] We have noted Harpur's concern about the extinction of bird species, but he never really talks about kangaroos in this way. This is because, although his poem does indeed evoke an elaborate bush or forest ecology, its over-riding investment is in the narrative of a kangaroo hunt that ends with a successful kill. The bird song and atmospherics

of the forest and the mountains in this poem are meant to be restorative, bringing life back to the weary metropolitan reader. But – and there is no tension in the poem between these two things – the kangaroo is meant to die. In fact, one of the longest endnotes relating to kangaroo behaviour is an anecdotal account of various types of kangaroo as quarry. When Part III describes a 'solitary flyer' sighted by a shepherd on the previous day, the note explains the vernacular term:

> Namely, a young doe kangaroo. A young buck of the same age would be called a 'large flyer,' an old one being generally and *venerably* cognominated an 'old man.' A bushman, for example, trumpeting forth the merits of a particular hound, would assure you that the hound had, single-handed, ran into and killed, a regular *old man* and no mistake, – a most ugly customer, in short, and a veritable grey father of the forest, standing full as high in his boots…
> I do not know of there being any distinguishing term for the mature doe, other than 'large flyer' in common with the young buck; than which, however, she is somewhat fleeter – that is for a *burst*. But if the young buck have (*sic*) a good start on the hounds, he will generally, from his more muscular build and freshness of constitution, maintain the longest flight.[cclxxvi]

Here, the relative merits of different ages and genders of kangaroo are weighed up against each other as satisfying game, all in the context of the kinds of apocryphal stories that colonial Australia told itself in its enthusiasm for the hunt. A 'solitary flyer' or 'young doe' or even the 'brawny flyer' that is finally hunted becomes at once 'a large flyer' or 'young buck,' an 'old man' or 'grey father of the forest.' The quarry being pursued in the poem itself therefore becomes both one possible type of kangaroo worth hunting and *all* possible types of kangaroo worth hunting. It is (and we have seen this before) both specific and representative: a meta-species.

Overflowing with stories, viewpoints, grievances, explanations and – above all – information, Harpur's prose endnotes constitute their own epic of sorts, composed over the course of more than twenty years of revisions. They hint at the prolonged struggle of an unfulfilled literary career, and – along with Harpur's extensive Preface – they literally swell

the proportions of *The Kangaroo Hunt*. The Preface elaborates the poem's purpose in documenting 'the habits and pastimes of the inland-dwelling Colonists.' It is doubly historical: 'written many years ago,' it looks back 'to a period yet earlier.'[cclxxvii] The Preface wants to idealise or romanticise this early period of colonial development. Kangaroo hunting in those days, Harpur tells us, was properly done on foot with dogs, without the 'luxuries' of horses or guns. The hunt itself becomes 'the centre and pivot'[cclxxviii] of the poem, equally specific and representative. In his Preface, Harpur writes that he is presenting '*one* hunt only, because there would be too much sameness in a succession of "runs" for particular description.'[cclxxix] But to make this *one* hunt generically definitive, he has to take some poetic license. 'For the purpose…of bringing as many characteristic circumstances as possible into this *one*,' he notes,

> the Kangaroo is carried over more ground than he would, with swift hounds at his heels, be likely to cover in an actual case, unless endowed with an extraordinary degree of both speed and endurance. But to render this more probable, he is allowed, through an error of his pursuers, to get considerably ahead of them about the middle of the Hunt. And also, in keeping the hunters well up with the hounds… many advantages are thrown into them, in the cast of the ground and otherwise, which they would not often be favoured with in any given locality.[cclxxx]

If the hunt usually determines the shape or structure of a kangaroo hunt poem, in Harpur's case the poem also determines the shape (the course and duration) of the hunt. *The Kangaroo Hunt* spans an entire day, from dawn untill twilight. In William Wordsworth's poem 'Hart-Leap Well' (1800), a stag hunt 'lasts so long that all but one of the hunters are left behind [and] the dogs fall away or die of exhaustion….'[cclxxxi] Wordsworth was an opponent of the hunt; his poem, for David Perkins, was 'an utterance in a campaign against hunting.'[cclxxxii] But Harpur gives the opposite view, presenting the kangaroo hunt not only as a definitive colonial experience but also one that is essential to the early forging of an Australian national identity. The ecology of the forest is certainly celebrated here, but the poem also turns its gaze to nation-building, linking earth to labour: 'With Husbandry's fair births – the Soil/Confessing well the Settler's toil.'[cclxxxiii] The poem's list of early settler activities – cultivation, tree-felling and land clearance, the construction of homesteads and

'rough sheds,' the management of herds and flocks – culminates in a kangaroo hunt that encapsulates the healthy simplicity, manly sociality, vigour and athleticism characteristic (as Harpur sees it) of young settlers in a youthful colony:

> Until the younger neighbours all
> Are forth, each followed by his hounds:
> Then quickly gathered on the spot
> They wake the Morn with merry sounds,
> As oft they hie the Forest through
> To hunt the bounding Kangaroo.[cclxxxiv]

The use of anachronistic language in this poem – *skiey*, *treen*, *trow*, *amain*, and the Old English *hie* (to hasten) – embeds these merry, fleet-footed young colonials from the early days into an even earlier poetic tradition, while yet another prose endnote meditates on the aptness of 'bounding' to describe the movement of the hunted kangaroo.

Hunting is a social occasion here, bringing settlers together: 'There a band of Hunters meet!' The hunters themselves are English, Scottish, Irish and 'native-born' ('nurtured in the land'), and they set off with their dogs, searching for grey foresters – Great Grey Kangaroos – which as 'dream-born spirits' take on a sort of mystic, elusive quality in the grey mountain fog. But the poem also unleashes an indiscriminate lust for quarry:

> I trow a wilder bounding speed
> This day would fail their desperate need!
> Glare shall it too with an eye of wrath
> On the luckless emu that crosses our path!
> And even the warragl vainly shall try
> All his arts of escape – the red ruffian shall die![cclxxxv]

The 'warragl' – or dingo – seems a bit like a fox here. Driven on by a combination of excitement and ferocity, the hunters tell each other stories about past hunting feats and give 'lusty voice to a hunting rhyme.' But the hunt itself proceeds in fits and starts as they

make their way through the wilderness. It isn't until the beginning of Part IV that the 'stirring Chase' gains momentum. Once a mob of kangaroos is finally disturbed, the hunters seem hardly able to believe their eyes:

> But now 'tis rife with rapid life,
> As, cunning in their terror, - out
> Scatter the game – and scattering, seem
> The spectral troop of some wizard dream![cclxxxvi]

For a moment the dogs are confused and the hunters begin to dread disappointment. But the pack fixes on a 'brawny Flyer' as their target and 'Ho! the Hunt is well begun!' The dogs' names – Red Lightning, White Whip, Dun Towler and Slim Lady – along with their exploits and characteristics, are all noted as they ruthlessly pursue the kangaroo, now a 'doomed soul.'

Part V begins with six hunters leading the pursuit 'scattered wide,' while several others fall behind 'with limping gait and angered look'; yet another's progress is blocked by a gorge. Only when the hunt has distinguished them does the poem properly identify the leading hunters. One is of 'foreign name' from elsewhere, eager but '[m]oody and lone.' The others are all colonial-born 'sons of this sunny Clime/ All quick with its spirit – its pristine prime!'[cclxxxvii] Their expertise as hardworking pioneer farmers – their skill with 'wedge,' 'yoke,' 'plough,' 'hook,' and 'hoe' – is synonymous with their expertise as hunters. Their tools are the objects that, in capable hands, will build the nation to come. Interestingly, two of the hunters are also identified as poets: 'Linus' – Michael Farrell calls him 'an exemplary hunter-poet'[cclxxxviii] – and 'graceful Ossian' who is known for his 'Rhymes beautiful as strong.' Paul Kane has suggested that 'Ossian' is in fact the early colonial poet, Charles Thompson, whose *Wild Notes from the Lyre of a Native Minstrel* was published in 1826, when Harpur was thirteen years old.[cclxxxix] But the poem also identifies him as a 'beardless War God' who has participated in vengeful acts of settler violence against 'Dark savages': 'And smote them back and as they fled/ Littered the forest with their dead!'[ccxc] In contrast to the 1805 'Colonial Hunt,' which seemed oblivious to its local conditions of frontier violence, Harpur's

poem casually invokes Aboriginal dispossession and reproduces familiar links between military conquest and hunting rituals as expressions of settler triumph and domination.

By Part VI the hunters and their 'fagged and desperate kangaroo' have come out of the gloomy shadows of a gorge into the bright daylight; the kangaroo is stumbling and, now that its fate seems sealed, the poem's sympathies momentarily shift towards it. With the surrounding birdlife encouraging it to escape its terrible fate, it becomes a 'fellow child of the forest.' But one of the dogs launches itself – 'Quick as thought his quarry is caught' – and the other dogs join him in the kill. There is no time for tears from this kangaroo, and only the most fleeting moment of sympathy from the hunters:

> Till up the foremost hunters run
> In silence, briefly touched each one
> With pity, – a swift inward sting:
> But soon the flaying is begun,
> Soon ended – and the quartering
> As deftly also done:
> Then harken how the mountains vast
> Through all their echoey gorges ring
> With calls that tell the slaughter's past.[ccxci]

After such prolonged anticipation and so many obstacles to overcome, the description of the kill itself is quick and the skinning and 'quartering' of the carcass is perfunctory. It is the understated climax of the poem, dealt with in just three lines. The only acknowledgement of the kangaroo's death is expressed mystically, in resounding echoes across the mountains. Michael Farrell has noted that these echoes act as kind of 'cast for the performance of the hunt'; but they also announce that the hunt is over, the slaughter is 'past' (or now, *in* the past).[ccxcii]

The death of the kangaroo, however, does not quite conclude *The Kangaroo Hunt*. Harpur adds a kind of coda, emphasising his status as the first Australian poet who also writes the first poem about hunting a kangaroo:

Then be it enough that his rhymes run o'er
A Sport that never was sung before:
Nor let the cavils of critic display,
In thankless return for the sylvan lay
Which he hath framed in the joy of his heart
And poured on the winds of the world to-day,
Give his spirit in lonely abashment to smart
(For the young are most hurt by denial alway),
And as homeward he wends with glad Whip at his side,
Humble the step of his bardic pride.[ccxciii]

Here the poet casts himself as returning home at the end of his poem, and the end of the kangaroo hunt. He might very well be one of those 'exemplary hunter-poets,' like Linus; his dog Whip (or White Whip) is beside him, one of the kangaroo dogs in at the kill in the poem. What is surprising here is that this epic quasi-Romantic poem in fact ends pretty much like the 1805 'Colonial Hunt': where the poet also returns home after the kangaroo has been killed. This tells us that Harpur's poem wasn't quite as foundational as it wanted to be. But he intends to have the final word on the kangaroo hunt, tying it both to the ecology of the forest and the organic processes of the poem itself ('poured on the winds of the world to-day'). Early in the poem, the forest promises something restorative to the reader. But it also wants to say that hunting – and killing – is a natural part of this realm. The hunters do their job and, after a brief moment of sympathy for the kangaroo, they leave, untroubled by what they have done. They are the products of a poetic synthesis between nature and colonial settlement: just as much at home in the ecology of the forest as anywhere else. In the midst of all this species description, nation-building is already underway ('While toiling along the plough's first tracks'), the forests are being cleared (' 'twixt the strokes of the felling axe') and Aboriginal people have been dispossessed ('where the savage whooped and the wild dog cried'). These are the closing lines of this epic eco-poem, and they sit awkwardly alongside the poet's self-conscious, slightly defensive register of what it all might do – if it was ever published in full – to his literary reputation.

*

Harpur's *The Kangaroo Hunt* represents both the culmination and the conclusion of the colonial kangaroo hunt poem, simultaneously elevating and exhausting the genre in its scrupulous detail and its marriage of the kangaroo hunt narrative to a period of early settlement and development that is now already over. Interestingly, Henry Kendall – a friend and admirer of Harpur as well as his poetical successor – also published a kangaroo hunt poem called 'The Wild Kangaroo' in the *Australian Home Companion* in 1861, just one year after that same journal printed the early parts of Harpur's poem. 'The Wild Kangaroo' revisits the rollicking, rhythmic meter of less poetically ambitious hunting poetry, as 'Colonial Hunt' had done in 1805 and as Francis Adams would do in 1887. The repeated refrains in each stanza are a kind of chorus, each marking a pivotal exclamatory point in the hunt. The poem keeps up a cracking pace that is fully invested in the 'life-stirring' pleasures of a chase that once again begins at daybreak. As with Adams and Harpur, the poet is one of the hunters; like-minded readers are welcomed into the poem as well ('ye, who are fond of the sport'). There are no individual hunters here, no framework of colonial settlement, and no Aboriginal people (which means the poem has nothing to say about frontier violence or dispossession). Kendall's poem offers a different kind of cliché about colonial life to Harpur where, instead of spelling out the details of colonial experience over time, it captures it as an activity that is both abstract and spontaneous, a crystallisation of the adventurous colonial spirit:

> The rainclouds have gone to the Deep –
> The east like a furnace doth glow;
> And the day-spring is flooding the steep,
> And sheening the landscape below.
> Oh! ye who are gifted with souls
> That delight in the music of birds,
> Come forth where the scatter'd mist rolls,
> And listen to eloquent words! –
> Oh! ye who are fond of the sport,
> And would travel yon wilderness through,

Gather – each to his place – for a life-stirring chase
In the wake of the wild Kangaroo!
  Gather – each to his place –
  For a life-stirring chase
In the wake of the wild Kangaroo!

Beyond the wide rents of the fog,
The trees are illumin'd with gold;
And the bark of the Shepherd's brave dog
Shoots away from the sheltering fold!
Down the depths of yon rock-border'd glade
A torrent goes foaming along;
While the blind owls retire into shade,
And the 'echu' beginneth its song.
By the side of that yawning abyss,
Where the vapours are hurrying to,
We will merrily pass, looking down to the grass
For the tracks of the wild Kanagroo!

Ho! brothers away to the woods –
Euroka hath clamber'd the hill;
But the morning there seldom intrudes,
Where the night shadows slumber on still
We will roam o'er these forest lands wild,
And thread the dark masses of vines,
Where the winds, like the voice of a child
Are singing aloft in the pines.
We must keep down the glee of our hounds –
We must *steal* through the glittering dew;
And the breezes shall sleep, as we cautiously creep
To the haunts of the wild Kangaroo!
  And the breezes shall sleep,

As we cautiously creep,
To the haunts of the wild Kangaroo!

When we pass through a stillness like Death,
The swamp-fowl and timorous quail,
Like the leaves in a hurricane's breath,
Will start from their nests in the vale;
And the forester, snuffing the air,
Will bound from his covert so dark,
While we follow along in the rear,
As arrows speed on to their mark!
Then the swift hand shall bring him to bay,
And we'll send forth a hearty halloo;
As we gather them all, to be in at the fall
At the death of the wild Kangaroo!
As we gather them all,
To be in at the fall –
At the death of the wild Kangaroo![ccxciv]

'The Wild Kangaroo' is a condensed imitation of Harpur's poem, embracing the beauty and delight of the Australian wilderness in the morning, the 'merriment' of the hunt , the sounds of the waking forest ('and the bell-bird beginneth its song') and the gloomy, gothic resonances of the forest landscape ('the winds like the voice of a child') as the hunters move quietly through the shadows after their quarry. The magnitude of Harpur's poem is mirrored here but it is also significantly reduced in scale. There are no delays, no meandering, no obstacles: the poem instead returns to the more popular tradition of ebullient hunting poetry that courses along at speed and never stops to reflect on the suffering or demise of its victim. There are no tears from, or for, this kangaroo, which is given little characterisation or agency beyond its repeated description as 'wild' – a description that works to place it well outside the limits of colonial settler empathy.

As we have noted, Harpur had attached extensive endnotes to his poem: there are fifty-five of them in total, of varying length and detail. Kendall's poem has just three notes, glossing the following terms: 'Echu,' 'Euroka' and 'Forester.' The latter word is the only vernacular colonial expression Kendall uses for the kangaroo. He takes his explanation for it directly from Harpur, but without attribution: 'Euroka is an Aboriginal name of the sun.'[ccxcv] Only the word 'Echu' (or 'Jehu' in Harpur's poem) is specifically attributed: 'The Echu is a bird called by bushmen, "The Coachman's Whip." I am indebted to Mr. Harpur for the more poetical appellation.'[ccxcvi] Kendall's inclusion of Harpur's terms and explanatory notes pays a kind of fleeting tribute to this earlier kangaroo hunt poem while completely rejecting the weight of its ambition and its sustained investment in green Romanticism. Interestingly, he wrote to Harpur complaining that 'The Kangaroo Hunt' 'is *too lush* for me.'[ccxcvii] Kendall's poem was reprinted in *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Chronicle* the following year (losing the attribution to Harpur). It makes the case that a kangaroo hunt poem can still contribute to an Australian poetic tradition. But it puts an end to its epic aspirations and focuses instead on the kangaroo hunt as a *sport*, an enthusiastically rehearsed ritual killing that reduces 'the death of the wild Kangaroo' to a collective cry of colonial settler triumph.

Chapter Five: Dogs, Skins and Battues

Since kangaroos were a much sought-after food source, dogs that specialised in hunting them soon became one of colonial Australia's most valuable commodities. In New South Wales, settlers were trading in kangaroo dogs as early as 1805. 'CAPITAL KANGAROO DOG,' the *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* announced on 21 July; 'To be sold by WILLIAM FURBER, at Kissing Point, an excellent Dog, of the above description, broke in by Miller of Paramatta, warranted sure.'[ccxcviii] Everyone seemed to want a kangaroo dog; they were routinely bought, sold, and stolen. Rewards for a stolen kangaroo dog could be exceptionally high. In October 1812, the *Sydney Gazette* advertised a reward of £5 for a 'Brindled Kangaroo Dog, with a white breast, neck and belly, answers to the name of *Dart*.'[ccxcix] Another advertisement saw the merchant and trader Garnham Blaxcell offer £2 for the return of 'a white Kangaroo Bitch' called Speedy and 'a red Kangaroo Dog' called Bush.[ccc] In Van Diemen's Land, kangaroo dogs were initially owned by military officers and various colonial administrators. But in 1805, as James Boyce notes, 'a development occurred that was to have profound consequences: the monopoly ownership of [kangaroo] dogs was surrendered.' 'Hounds were too easily stolen and bred too fast to remain a restricted possession,' he writes; 'The possession of a single dog, stolen or purchased, meant a convict could live independent and free in the bush.'[ccci] To own a kangaroo dog meant that convicts could leave the settlements and hunt for themselves; some of them went on to become the island's 'first bushrangers.'[cccii]

As we noted in Chapter Two, colonial administrators set a price for kangaroo meat and often determined how much settlers could consume when meat became scarce. Boyce regards early colonial Australia as a 'kangaroo economy,' in which kangaroo dogs played an essential role. The rampant competition for them brought about a 'change in dog control' and a redistribution of power away from soldiers and administrators. 'Bushrangers with stolen hunting dogs presented the most immediate obstacle to achieving a secure supply of food and profit' in early Van Diemen's Land.[ccciii] Unsurprisingly, the theft of kangaroo dogs was treated harshly by the authorities. A local newspaper report from 1821 looks at the trial of John Morell and Thomas Gutteridge, who had stolen 'three kangaroo dogs, some meat, a tomahawk, &c.' from a farm at Norfolk Plains in north-east Tasmania.[ccciv] A military officer's

kangaroo dog was also seen with the two men. Morell and Gutteridge were both found guilty and executed; at the trial Morell 'had nothing to say, but that bad usage drove him into the bush.'[cccv] Replacing stolen dogs was costly. The surveyor-naturalist George Harris reported the loss of four kangaroo dogs 'valued at 25 guineas…each.'[cccvi] On the other hand, the dedicated breeding of kangaroo dogs had worked to increase their value. Boyce also notes that in 1807 the cleric and magistrate Robert Knopwood paid £25 for a kangaroo dog. Towards the end of the year, when more dogs were available, he bought one for £8.[cccvii] Interestingly, two years earlier, Rev. Knopwood – an enthusiastic hunter – had presented Lieutenant-Governor David Collins with the skin of a 'very beautiful white kangaroo, a very great rarity, the first that has been seen in the colony.'[cccviii]

Kangaroo dogs were crossbreeds, like the lurcher – part sighthound and part terrier – in the 1805 poem we discussed in Chapter Four. A report from South Australia by Stephen Hack in May 1837 gives us a vivid description of a lurcher and a mastiff attacking a kangaroo:

> While I was exploring I killed my first kangaroo; it was a monstrous 'old man,' as they are called here; my white lurcher pulled him, but the kangaroo took him up in his forepaws and dashed him to the ground as if he had been a puppy; but luckily my mastiff was out with me and came up in time to get a spring at him; the kangaroo was not able to throw him about quite so easily, but still he actually held him, at arm's length, till I came up: I put my shoulder under his tail, and with a great effort capsized him, and as soon as I could, cut his hamstrings; before I could do this, he gave a kick that sent the white dog up in the air three or four feet; but the instant the kangaroo was down the dogs fastened on his throat, and soon made an end of him.[cccix]

In his 1847 compendium of dog breeds, the Irish naturalist H.D. Richardson describes the kangaroo dog as 'bred between a Mastiff, or Newfoundland, and greyhound, with a dash of bull-dog.'[cccx] For Richardson, this eclectic combination of breeds is what makes the kangaroo dog particularly well-suited to the challenges and dangers of hunting: 'A mongrel is therefore the best for such a use, as it would not answer to expose valuable or high-bred dogs to so much risk.'[cccxi] The kangaroo dog as a *mongrel* leaves the breed open to local variations. It also means that a range of different types of dog can participate in the hunt. Some hunters,

however, were purists. The Irish nationalist John Mitchel was transported to Bermuda for his radical political views and then shipped out to Van Diemen's Land in 1850 where, given a ticket-of-leave, he settled in Bothwell, north of Hobart. In his *Jail Journal; or, Five Years in British Prisons* (1854), he asks, 'what is Van Diemen's Land without a kangaroo hunt?' Dismissing the aristocratic English habit of hunting kangaroo with large packs of beagles, Mitchel regarded the 'proper dog for this sport' as 'a kind of powerful greyhound bred for the purpose'; 'two of them,' he insists, 'are enough.'[cccxii] But other hunters were more flexible about what breeds of dog could join in. James Goodenough was an officer in the Royal Navy who went on to become Commander-in-chief of the Australia Station from May 1873 to his death in August 1875. His journals – posthumously published by his widow – describe landing at Portland on 22 January 1875, where he took part in a kangaroo hunt. The local pack of hunting dogs, Goodenough writes, consisted of 'two yellow hounds, a sort of lurcher, or more like Scotch deer-hounds, and a couple of black greyhounds, a half sheep-dog, and a nondescript crossed; there were also a capital Irish retriever and a cross-bred spaniel, eight hounds in all.'[cccxiii] With all these breeds and crossbreeds thrown into the mix, the day's events proved remarkably successful: 'We killed in all twelve brush kangaroos and one *forester*, a big fellow, who showed fight, and had to be knocked over with whips.'[cccxiv]

Kangaroo dogs were necessary for survival in the early stages of European settlement. But as they rapidly increased in number, they became difficult to control. Various dog taxes were introduced in Van Diemen's Land in the 1830s in an attempt to limit the dangers they presented to farmers and smallholders. By 1833 the so-called Black War was in its final stages, with George Augustus Robinson's rhetoric of 'conciliation' driving the removal of remaining populations of Aboriginal people from the island. An editorial in the *Hobart Town Courier* in November 1833 thanked Robinson for his 'unwearied and providentially successful exertions in conciliating the blacks and relieving the country from their long continued and murderous outrages.'[cccxv] But it then identified a new threat to settler well-being: the kangaroo dog.

> The ravages committed by the wild dogs on the sheep throughout the interior, continue to be the subject of daily and increasing complaint. The rapidity with which these animals multiply, and the growing savageness of their nature, render them one

> of the worst scourges, as far at least as regards property and subsistence, that have yet visited this young colony. Indeed the kangaroo dog or mongrel of the mastiff and greyhound from which they have sprung, is in their wild state both fierce and powerful, and congregating in parties as it does, is far more dangerous to man than so many wolves. In one or two instances indeed, human life has already been put in danger by them.[cccxvi]

The kangaroo dog is both mongrel and feral in this account; instead of working *for* the settlers, they end up working *against* them, attacking livestock and even settlers themselves. Nevertheless, settlers could still love and revere their kangaroo dogs. A colourful account by a 'Naval Officer' in 1829 – published in the midst of the Black War – paid tribute to his dogs Juno and Danger. 'No dog tax, trial by jury, or Catholic petition shall ever prevent me from caressing you, my dear four-footed companions,' he writes. 'Juno was a black dog, a jet black beauty, the fleetest and most faithful of kangaroo dogs in the island. Danger was of ruder make, befitting his masculine form. His limbs were sinewy and his chest broad and swarthy….He was shot about two years ago for his partiality to live mutton'.[cccxvii] Here is a military officer who privileges his affection for his dogs over the best interests of the colony. It is also a complaint about the excesses of bureaucratic intervention in colonial life, as if a dog tax and a judicial ruling more or less amounted to the same thing. For this writer, hunting is still a basic necessity; but he also considerably enjoys it and wants to dignify his description of an early morning hunt for a 'boomah' with a literary genealogy that takes us back to William Somerville's 1735 *The Chace* as well as the Roman goddess of the hunt: 'Hunger gives a powerful relish to all the pleasures of man,' he writes, 'and to none more than those of the chase, if you are dependent on the fruits of your pursuit for a meal. Oh, Somerville or Diana, lend me your aid to paint the anxious moments we experienced…' The dogs finally capture the kangaroo and the hunters (despite their literary aspirations) respond to the kill prosaically enough: 'we had the satisfaction to see both Juno and Danger busily engaged in throttling him.'[cccxviii]

We have noted that settlers could hunt kangaroos with or alongside Aboriginal people – and that dogs were sometimes shared or borrowed or even stolen. Edward Snell was a Dorset-born engineer and artist who emigrated to Australia in November 1849, when he was twenty-nine. He kept an elaborate and fascinating illustrated diary of his travels and

experiences, beginning with a surveying excursion to Yorke Peninsula in the second half of 1850 that saw Snell living closely with local Aboriginal people. Kangaroo hunts are an important aspect of settler-Aboriginal interactions in his diary. On 16 August he wrote,

> Went out kangarooing, taking the dogs Rocket, Spring and Famine – found a dead one which the blacks stuck up a tree for future eating – about three miles from the Police Station we started a young buck which we killed after a sharp run of about 2 miles – the kangaroos and dogs were soon out of sight but the blacks followed up their tracks nearly as fast as I could run and when we got to the kangaroo he was laying dead with the dogs panting by the side of him.[cccxix]

A few days later, Aboriginal hunters 'took away Rocket without leave…and came back with two kangaroos.' Kangaroo dogs are a shared resource here, at least temporarily. And kangaroos are abundant, which means that settlers and Aboriginal people are not aggressively competing for them. Snell produced a watercolour the same year that celebrated settlers and Aboriginal people hunting kangaroos together, with dogs in fierce pursuit of two kangaroos and a joey in the foreground.

EDWARD SNELL *KANGAROO HUNTING, YORKE PENINSULA* 1850

His diary entries are often light-hearted, as if much of his excursion inland is a kind of holiday, with plenty of time to read, play chess, collect specimens, and so on. Kangaroo meat is relished and eaten by the settlers, although by this stage it is not really essential to their survival. Usually, they skin the kangaroos and keep the tails for soup – giving the rest of the meat to Aboriginal people in the district (and looking on with interest as they cook and consume it). But Snell also turns parts of the kangaroo into useful or ornamental items: preserving and oiling a pouch and filling it with shells or spending the day 'making a meerschaum pipe stem out of a Kangaroo's foot.'[cccxx]

To own a good, fit kangaroo dog was a source of pride for colonial hunters and a visible expression of their social status. Kangaroo dogs were much admired for their skill and tenacity, as well as their physical attributes – as we saw above with Juno, 'a jet black

beauty,' or Danger with his 'sinewy' limbs and 'broad and swarthy' chest. In Britain, it was not uncommon for wealthy landowners to commission portraits that celebrated the features of their best fox hunting dogs: a good example is George Stubbs's *Ringwood* (1792), an oil painting of the leading hound in the 1st Earl of Yarborough's renowned Brocklesby pack. We mentioned Thomas Balcombe in Chapter Three; he had arrived in Sydney as a teenager with his family in 1824. Like Snell, he went on to become a surveyor and artist who used his inland expeditions as source material for his sketches and art works. Later on, he specialised in colonial scenes, including animal portraiture and hunting sketches; a newspaper account in 1855 interestingly mentions two wax models he had produced, of the famous racehorse Jorrocks and of an Aboriginal man 'waddying an old man Kangaroo.'[cccxxi] In 1853 Nicodemus Dunn, an ex-convict who went on to establish a well-known ginger beer brewery in Castlereagh Street, Sydney, commissioned Balcombe to paint his prized kangaroo dog. This is another sinewy animal, with well-defined musculature and a delicate face; it seems active but is poised for a moment as if responding to a call or signal of some kind. It looks backwards beyond the frame of the painting, with a nervous intelligence.

THOMAS TYRWHITT BALCOMBE *KANGAROO DOG OWNED BY MR DUNN OF CASTLEREAGH STREET, SYDNEY* 1853

Other contemporary artists similarly relished the slender, sculpted form of the kangaroo dog. Adam Gustavus Ball was another surveyor-engineer-artist who emigrated from Dublin to Sydney in 1839, aged eighteen; he later moved to South Australia, where he produced most of his artworks and illustrations. Ball painted a number of kangaroo hunting scenes featuring both settlers and Aboriginal people. But he also focused on the kangaroo dog: for example, in his watercolour *Dog Chasing a Kangaroo* (1872), where a sleek, powerful hound is in full flight, pursuing a kangaroo through thick grassland. The dog's haunches interestingly resemble those of a kangaroo; in contrast, the (red) kangaroo itself is stylised with softer, well-rounded lines.

ADAM GUSTAVUS BALL *DOG CHASING A KANGAROO* 1872

Painting a portrait of a kangaroo dog both individualises and typifies a representative of the species. In Balcombe's painting, it also conveys the owner's pride in the animal's pedigree. We can see something similar in written narratives about the kangaroo dog as well. An anonymous article published in Samuel Bennett's *Empire* magazine in 1871 – 'Kangarooing' – describes two young settlers hunting along Mooki River, north-west of Sydney. Their rivalry over the prowess of their kangaroo dogs adds a competitive edge to the pleasure and enjoyment of the hunt. The narrator's dog, Lightning, is a male; his friend's dog is Gipsy, a 'slut' – a term sometimes used to describe female dogs around this time:

> Our dogs were of the right sort, and renowned alike for speed and pluck. My friend had a famous slut, of incomparable swiftness, according to his account, and I had a favourite dog, of whom I was in the habit of boasting that he had never as yet been outran by a competitor. These noble animals wanted little of being pure greyhounds; but the slight infusion of foreign blood, from whatever source derived, had imparted to them a degree of courage and strength which made them superior to dogs that were thoroughbred, and as they had never coursed against each other, we looked forward with the liveliest interest to the coming event that would determine once for all which of them excelled in fastness, pluck and sagacity….I expected with the utmost confidence that Lightning would be victorious, while my friend was no less sanguine in his anticipations on behalf of Gipsy. But we kept our thoughts on the subject to ourselves, as with admiring eyes each of us regarded the graceful shape and agile movements of his handsome dog, and rode forward cautiously not knowing at what moment we should start a kangaroo.[cccxxii]

These dogs are 'the right sort,' 'noble' and aristocratic; but they are also cross-bred ('the slight infusion…') which, far from tarnishing them, makes them even better. The hunters can hardly take their eyes off them, until they spot a 'veritable blue flyer,' a young female kangaroo that already has a reputation for eluding hunters in the district. This is a kangaroo as a *character*, given some level of individualising narrative. The chase is long and exhausting; at one point she runs through a mob of brown kangaroos which scatter in panic, but the dogs continue to pursue only her. It turns out that the blue flyer is carrying a joey, which she discards as she flees. Losing the joey seems to disorient her and she tries to circle

back to recover it: ‘Maternal anxiety and distress perhaps had something to do with the apparent feebleness and disorder of her movements,’ the narrator observes; ‘the blind, instinctive impulse to make her way back to the place at which her young one might be found, was fatal in its effects…’[cccxxiii] For a moment, the narrator is overcome by ‘a wish to save her.’ But the dogs are already attacking. ‘No animal dies so quickly and easily as a kangaroo,’ the narrator concludes: as if the chase is where all the excitement lies, with the blue flyer’s death bringing the hunt to an unremarkable end. There is an aftermath, however, where the narrator makes a cap out of the blue flyer’s skin and has it ‘suitably lined and ornamented by a female acquaintance in Sydney.’ ‘I wore it everywhere,’ he proudly writes, ‘being vain of its fancied surpassing elegance.’[cccxxiv] The blue cap is a lasting relic of the hunt, a memento of an exciting day. But it is also a rare moment of elevation, where the body part of a kangaroo now becomes a sought-after fashion accessory.

George Smyth Baden-Powell (the brother of the founder of the Scouting movement) was a conservative imperialist who acted as private secretary to the Governor of Victoria, Sir George Bowen, in 1877-78. His *New Homes for the Old Country* (1872) was a tribute to colonial life and chronicle of his personal experiences while travelling through Australia and New Zealand. A chapter on ‘Kangaroo Killing’ begins with an affectionate portrait of the mongrel character of the kangaroo dog, ‘a heavy greyhound; being usually the result of a cross between grey-, or Scotch stag-, hound, with bull-, or other dog, owning some desirable quality.’[cccxxv] A good kangaroo dog is tactical, working effectively with the pack to bring a kangaroo down. But for Baden-Powell, the key to a successful hunt is also ‘to have all the dogs well under control,’ keeping the pack ‘close in by the horses, instead of ranging about the country.’[cccxxvi] So discipline is important for the pack, not least because it helps to make the outcome of the hunt predictable: ‘some well-understood signal should be given to the dogs….they are almost certain to separate after different kangaroos, and then the riders usually separate likewise – following either their own special dogs; or, in the prospect of a fight, the largest of the kangaroos; or, in the desire for a “fly,” a middle-sized doe that looks like going.’[cccxxvii] The dogs give the hunters three different options here, according to their tastes: they can follow their dogs, or the largest kangaroo, or the fastest kangaroo. Hunters and dogs are perfectly synchronised in this account, with the dogs working efficiently and obediently for their owners.

But not every colonial writer shared a hunter's investment (or confidence) in the kangaroo dog's willingness to be disciplined and controlled. Kangaroo dogs could keep a hunt on track, or they could completely unravel it. The question of whether they work for or against settler interests – are they a valuable asset or a feral nuisance? – could therefore entirely determine a hunting narrative's tone and direction. The Queensland writer Steele Rudd (Arthur Hoey Davis) was the author of a bestselling series of comic bush sketches about a struggling selector, Dad, his son Dave, and their long-suffering family. The first volume, *On Our Selection* (1899), includes a story titled 'A Kangaroo-Hunt from Shingle-Hut.' Here, Dad organises a meet on his property, anticipating an exciting day of sport:

> A meeting of selectors had been held; war declared against the marsupial; and a hunt on a grand scale arranged for this particular Sabbath. Of course those in the neighbourhood hunted the kangaroo every Sunday, but 'on their own,' and always on foot, which had its fatigues. This was to be a raid *en masse* and on horseback. The whole country-side was to assemble at Shingle Hut and proceed thence. It assembled; and what a collection! Such a crowd! such gear! such a tame lot of horses! and *such* a motley swarm of lean, lank, lame kangaroo-dogs![cccxxviii]

The meet here is a parodic echo of the aristocratic gatherings of squatters and farmers that we saw in Chapter Three. In the article from *Empire*, above, the hunters had gazed admiringly at their 'noble' dogs, celebrating their pedigree. But in Rudd's story, the dogs are a 'motley swarm' that wreak havoc on their surroundings the moment they're set free: 'One pounced on a fowl; another lamed the pig; a trio put the cat up a peach-tree; one with a thirst mounted the water-cask and looked down it, while the bulk of the brutes trotted inside and disputed with Mother who should open the [meat] safe.'[cccxxix] Dad's kangaroo dogs are starving: he 'didn't believe in too much feeding.' The hunt itself is chaotic, deflating and anti-heroic. Dave and Paddy Maloney lead the chase but the dogs have their own ideas, singling out a 'waif' of a kangaroo, a 'weedy marsupial': the complete opposite of the *Empire*'s remarkable blue flyer. The kangaroo manages to outpace them and in any case the dogs are soon distracted by 'a straggling, stupid old ewe, belonging to an unneighbourly squatter.' Maloney's dog Brindle 'always preferred mutton to marsupial' and soon other

kangaroo dogs join him in the kill. The description has a typically dry wit, amusingly contrasting itself with the dramatic pretensions of other, more lavish hunting narratives:

> The death-scene was most imposing. The ground around was strewn with small tufts of white wool. There was a complete circle of eager, wriggling dogs – all jammed together, heads down, and tails elevated. Not a scrap of the ewe was visible…. The dogs were hungry, and fought for every inch of the sheep….when [one of the selectors] had dragged the last one off by the hind legs, all that was left of that ewe was four feet and some skin.[cccxxx]

Here, the prosaic realities of provincial life on a selection completely flatten out any poetic potential that the kangaroo hunt might otherwise have had.

We have already seen kangaroo dogs preferring mutton to kangaroo meat; in the Naval Officer's 1829 account earlier in this chapter, it results in his dog Danger being shot. Rudd's story goes on to subvert almost every bush and hunting cliché. The hunt is a shambles; the dogs are feral and out of control; they kill a sheep instead of a kangaroo; and their attack on the property of an 'unneighbourly' (rather than typically hospitable) squatter may well have legal consequences, with the historical antagonism between selectors and squatters underwriting the humour of the event.[cccxxxi] When the hunters come across a large 'old man' kangaroo, it looks for a moment as if the hunt will redeem itself. 'He was a monster, a king kangaroo,' the story tells us; 'and as he raised himself to his full height on his toes and tail he looked formidable – a grand and majestic demon of the bush.'[cccxxxii] But the dogs refuse to attack it; Maloney tries to swing his stirrup iron at the kangaroo's head but hits his horse in the eye instead. The kangaroo then grabs hold of Dad, who loses his trousers. This is colonial slapstick, a hunt-gone-horribly-wrong. The kangaroo dogs finally renew their attack, 'often mistaking Dad for the marsupial.' Eventually, Brindle and the other dogs rally to bring the 'old man' down: the joke here is the conflation of the kangaroo with Dad. Maloney finally sits on the dead body of the kangaroo and – although he played no part in the kill – claims the tail.

The best-known kangaroo dog in colonial Australian literature is Tom Collins's Pup in Joseph Furphy's *Such is Life* (1897, 1903). Collins is completely devoted to his dog, but Pup is routinely disobedient, only coming to Collins when he wants to be fed. Rather like Rudd's kangaroo dogs, he chases livestock; he kills and eats a chicken from a local farm; he steals and eats a turkey hanging on a meat pole; later, he steals salt mutton from some bullock drivers. 'One peculiarity of the kangaroo-dog,' Collins tells us, 'is, that though he has no faculty of scent at the service of his master, he can smell food through half-inch boilerplate; and he rivals [Frederick Baron] Trenck or Monte Cristo in making way through any obstacle which may stand between him and the object of his desires.'[cccxxxiii] The kangaroo dog, he concludes, is 'the hungriest subject in the animal kingdom.' Pup is driven by appetite and self-interest; despite Collins's affection for him, he works only for himself. Furphy's novel takes up the now-familiar tropes of the kangaroo dog narrative – the owner's devotion, the kangaroo dog as an unruly predator, a valuable asset, and so on – and both inflates and unpacks them. We have noted that kangaroo dogs were regularly stolen in early colonial Australia. In *Such is Life*, this is pushed to an amusing extreme when Pup is stolen by Mr Q——, a local magistrate. Collins goes to Mr Q——'s farm to retrieve him. 'I'm looking for…a big blue kangaroo dog, with a ——' he says, before he is interrupted.[cccxxxiv] Although the magistrate denies everything, his daughter Jemima leads Collins to a stable and opens a stall to reveal Pup 'crouched, sphynx-like, with a large bone between his paws.'[cccxxxv] Perhaps to impress the young woman, Collins tells her: 'His proper name is "The Eton Boy". It looks as if he is giving Pup some sort of aristocratic pedigree here. But the (now obscure) reference is also to a popular 1842 short play attributed to Edward Morton that was frequently staged in Australian towns and cities in the mid-nineteenth century. As Julian Croft has noted, *The Eton Boy* is a cross-dressing farce that resonates with the frequent gender confusion at work in Furphy's novel – where, for example, Collins mistakes Jemima for 'Jim.'[cccxxxvi]

Pup is also a kangaroo dog that never participates in a kangaroo hunt. For Damien Barlow, Pup is 'a working dog that does not work': mirroring Collins's own predicament in the famous opening line of *Such is Life*, 'Unemployed at last!'[cccxxxvii] Kangaroo dogs were bred to hunt kangaroos in difficult environments and under difficult conditions. But Pup is spectacularly ill-equipped to tolerate bush conditions of almost any kind. At one point, a

character called Alf admires Pup and asks Collins, ‘Do you get many kangaroos with him?’ Collins replies:

> Oh, no…I never get one, and don't intend to. I never let him go after anything. It's quite enough, and sometimes more than enough, for him to do his regular travelling. The hot weather comes very severe on him; in fact, some days I have to give him a drink every hour, or oftener. Then he has the hard ground to contend with; and when the rain comes, the dirt sticks between his toes, and annoys him. Windy weather is bad for him, too; and frost puts a set on him altogether. Then he's always swarming with fleas, and in addition to that, the flies have a particular fancy for him. And, seeing that one half of the population is always plotting to steal him, and the other half trying to poison him, while, for his own part, he has a confirmed habit of getting lost, you may be sure we have plenty to occupy our minds, without thinking about kangaroos. He's considerably more trouble to me than all my money, but he's worth it. As you say, he's a fine dog. I don't know what I should do without him.[cccxxxviii]

Collins is the opposite of every kangaroo dog owner we have seen so far: rather than encouraging Pup, he prevents him from hunting altogether. Pup is so indulged that he cannot tolerate the slightest discomfort. But it is a sign of their intimacy that Collins registers every changing symptom of his dog’s fragile condition. Pup is a kangaroo dog that neither works nor hunts. None of this diminishes his appeal for Collins, who cannot live without him – and who seems to enjoy Pup’s various transgressions in the bush. In a novel where every relationship is compromised, where the ideals of mateship are impossible to live up to, Pup remains ‘an invaluable and constant companion for Tom Collins in his nomadic bush life.’[cccxxxix] Barlow usefully draws on Donna Haraway’s term to describe Pup as a ‘companion species,’ a positive expression of human-dog ‘interspecies’ relations.[cccxl] But Pup is also a hazard, a liability: he gets lost, Collins trips over him, he capsizes Collins’s boat, and so on. As with Steele Rudd, Furphy is drawing on a colonial tradition of stories that both honour and vilify the kangaroo dog, to comic effect. Pup is a contradiction: this is why the colonial population is divided over his worth, wanting either to own him, like Mr Q——, the magistrate, or – because he is a predator, a thief and a pest – to kill him.

*

We have noted how valuable kangaroos themselves were as a food source to the fledgling colonial economy. But two other important factors contributed to the killing of kangaroos in increasing numbers: the early trade in kangaroo skins and, later on, the expansion of pastoralism and the need to secure land exclusively for settlement, farming and livestock. Kangaroo Island was a plentiful source of both kangaroo and seal skins in the first decades of settlement. Rebe Taylor reports that in 1809 the Sydney merchant Joseph Underwood's ship the *Eliza* brought 500 sealskins and 1000 kangaroo skins from the island. The trade marked the beginning of the devastation of the island's native species, where the kangaroo soon 'became a rare sight.'[cccxli] The 'most hunted animal' on Kangaroo Island, she writes, 'was the wallaby.' Wallaby skins were sold to make rugs and shoes in Adelaide throughout the 1840s; by 1865, they were 'the second-largest source of income on Kangaroo Island after farming.'[cccxlii] Ships from Kangaroo Island began to arrive in Sydney and Hobart with hundreds, even thousands, of kangaroo skins to sell or trade. The leather was valued both locally and overseas, used for clothing, boots, bags, furniture (like the 'Macquarie Chair'), and so on. But the price of kangaroo skins fluctuated wildly, depending on availability. An editorial in the *Hobart Town Gazette* in March 1827 thought that kangaroo skins were 'a bad export and…not worth in the London market more than 1*s*. each.'[cccxliii] Soon afterwards, the newspaper quoted an English shipping agent who complained that kangaroo skins 'are totally unsaleable, and not worth freight and charges'; he was unable to sell 'about 600' dried skins for more than 3*d*., having imported them for five times that amount.[cccxliv] A couple of years later the *Gazette* observed again that the price of kangaroo skins in London made them 'an article not worth exporting.' This time, however, it offset their reduced value against the ecological cost of large-scale killing:

> We were not displeased to learn this, since we hoped it would put a stop to the abominable carnage, for we can call it by no milder name, of this very interesting and most harmless animal. We regret to learn, however, that notwithstanding the positive prohibition by a Government Order for stock-keepers to maintain kangaroo dogs, and the neglect and ruin of the property of their employers when they thus occupy their times in so idle and profitless a pursuit, notwithstanding all this, we grieve to hear that

> the number of kangaroos killed lately exceeds anything before known in the island. The stock-keepers, for instance, in the employment of Mr. Edward Lord and Sir John Owes, about the Plains of Bashan and St. Patrick have, we are informed, put to death no less than 1800 [kangaroos], merely for the sake of the skins, which are not worth two-pence each.'[cccxlv]

Hobart's *Colonial Times* agreed: 'we do not advocate the destruction of the kangaroo,' it editorialised, 'for the sake of exporting the skins.'[cccxlvi]

Even so, kangaroos continued to be hunted, their skins providing a modest income. In his *Jail Journal*, John Mitchel noted that kangaroos were becoming scarce by the 1850s, which – 'unluckily for the kangaroo' – made their skins valuable all over again: 'They are much sought after…for their skins which, in Launceston and Hobartown, are tanned into very fine leather, by means of the mimosa, or wattle-bark…the best tanning material in the world.'[cccxlvii] For Mitchel, kangaroo skins provide rural people with extra income 'to gamble with and solace their leisure hours with rum.'[cccxlviii] Hunting in this account is no longer a necessity, essential to a settler's survival; it is tied instead to the more dissolute comforts of daily life. For some, kangaroo hunting was a full-time occupation, a profession. But it was often a precarious one. In the late 1860s Melbourne's *Australasian* newspaper hosted a series of commentaries about hunting game, preserving the meat, tanning the skins, and so on. In a letter to the editor in March 1867 signed 'Hunters,' one correspondent writes that he has been 'killing kangaroos for the skins for more than six years on one run' and has 'killed more than forty thousand kangaroos during this time'.[cccxlix] A note from the editor backs up this extravagant-sounding claim. Kangaroo hunting is a serious business requiring, as the correspondent puts it, 'sobriety, industry, and skill.' But it barely provides a living wage; the only people to profit here, he writes, are the squatters whose 'runs' are systematically being cleared of kangaroos to free up land for grazing:

> They might, and ought to, make it worth a man's while to kill kangaroos; but we are speaking of what is, and not of what might be. Practically, the hunter works for nothing. Professional shooting should be the last thing attempted in this country. Our

> advice to any young man inclined that way is, if you can get a situation as boots, chimney-sweep, or Government clerk, never try kangaroo-hunting.[cccl]

Other kangaroo hunters gave a more positive view of the profession. Horace Wheelwright emigrated to Australia in the early 1850s, aged around thirty-five. A young lawyer in Northamptonshire, he became increasingly interested in field sports and natural history. Wheelwright spent a few years 'rambling' in the forests of northern Europe before arriving in Melbourne and heading for the goldfields. But his experiences in Europe 'had totally unfitted me for any settled life'; having no luck as a digger, he decided to 'face the bush on my own account' and became a professional kangaroo hunter.[cccli] Wheelwright's *Bush Wanderings of a Naturalist; or, Notes on the Field Sports and Fauna of Australia Felix* was published in London in 1861. It is an elaborate account of native species and bush life in Victoria, but it also chronicles his time as a hunter who makes a living with his gun. Excitement and adventure are not so important to him. But the game is plentiful and 'the freedom of the bush, unshackled by the trammels of the British Game Laws' enable Wheelwright to 'seek an independent livelihood in pursuits which had hitherto been only an amusement.'[ccclii] There are, he suggests, various types of kangaroo hunter, some more authentic and hard-working than others. The 'swell' is someone who 'now and then comes out of town for a day's sport,' hires some professional help and then claims the kill as his own. The 'old hands' are 'men of sporting habits' who 'deal much in mysteries,' telling each other hunting stories over beer in public houses. The 'genuine sportsmen at heart' have extensive knowledge of the field, although they work in town and hunt only occasionally. The 'real shooters,' however, are those who 'stick to it year after year, rough weather and smooth, no matter whether game is plentiful or scarce, trusting solely to their guns and their own exertions for a living.'[ccccliii] Wheelwright is a 'real shooter,' committed to the demanding task of hunting every day. Unlike the professional kangaroo hunters in the *Australasian*, he enjoys 'the shooter's life' despite all its hardships: 'when properly followed,' he insists, 'few care to leave it when they have once fairly entered upon it.'[ccccliv]

Bush Wanderings of a Naturalist is among other things a field guide to Australian native species, drawing on previous studies of local flora and fauna – and paying special tribute to the 'splendid work' of the zoologist John Gould. But Wheelwright is also a hunter who relies

on kangaroos as a saleable resource. For example, he provides details on how to skin a kangaroo; and he sells the meat in the Melbourne markets. For Wheelwright, killing a kangaroo means putting it to good use. He doesn't regard them – as many farmers and squatters did – as a 'pest' to be exterminated. In fact, he is against killing 'just for the sake of killing,' where the bodies of kangaroos are left 'to rot in the forest': 'This does, indeed, seem a shameful waste of one of the bounties of nature.' On the other hand, Wheelwright was himself involved in larger-scale extermination. Hunting south of Melbourne around Port Phillip Bay, he reports killing 'more than 2,000 kangaroos' in two seasons.[cccv] His preferred method of hunting is with a small group, with 'three or four shooters in a line through the forest' and a rider on horseback – the *driver* – to direct the kangaroos towards the guns.[cccvi] Here, Wheelwright is distinguishing between a *drive* and a *battue*, terms that are often used interchangeably in colonial writing. In the former, in this account at least, there are a smaller number of hunters targeting a smaller number of kangaroos, and 'every man took what he killed.'[cccvii] It is all about the strategic positioning of the hunters, and the skill of the driver:

> The shooters are planted across a certain portion of the wood, in a line, about 150 yards apart, each one choosing a good run, with the shelter of a tree or bush. The best plan for the shooter is to sit at the foot of a large tree, not to stand behind it, as I have seen many do; and when the kangaroo are in sight, be very careful not to stir a limb, or even to move the gun, till they are well within shot. The driver goes round on horseback with the dogs, and when well round the kangaroo, he gallops on to them, and sends the mob right up to the shooters. On the come, crashing through the tinder like a troop of cavalry, and 'bang, bang,' puts every one on the *qui vive* [alert]. Sometimes the mob break the line at one point, and only one man gets a shot; but, after the first shot, they often divide, and run right down the line, when every gun pours in its broadside.[cccviii]

The so-called *grand battue* is something different. More hunters gather together, there is some feasting and celebration, and the killing is both indiscriminate and comprehensive. Wheelwright is a professional hunter who shoots kangaroos 'for my living and not for my pleasure.' But the battue seems to cross a moral line for him:

> I never could reconcile to my mind the wholesale and wanton destruction of this animal which is now carried on all over the bush. Whenever I wanted a kangaroo for the body or the skin, I felt no compunction in killing it in whatever manner I best could; but I never shot one wantonly, and it certainly used to go much against the grain when I saw a kangaroo pulled down by dogs and left to rot in the bush, and old does shot with a heavy joey in the pouch, which is mercilessly torn out and its brains dashed out against a tree: with the exception of clubbing seals, this certainly did appear to be about the most barbarous work I ever joined in.[ccclix]

By the 1860s, however, large-scale battues were more common, and the scale of killing was much greater. One of the earliest reports of a kangaroo battue appeared in the *Mount Alexander Mail* on 18 January 1860 and describes 'one of the grandest kangaroo hunts ever heard of,' held at the wealthy Scottish squatter Niel Black's property Glenormiston, near Terang, in Victoria's Western District. One hundred hunters were involved and over two thousand kangaroos were driven into an enclosure. Half that number escaped, but the rest 'were slaughtered in the yard.' This is the beginning of the squatter's campaign for the mass-killing of kangaroos, which they regarded as their primary competitor for valuable grazing pasture: 'It is said that one kangaroo consumes annually grass sufficient for the support of two sheep. The wholesale destruction of Kangaroos has therefore a very valid excuse. Better that kangaroos should die than that sheep should starve.'[ccclx] Another account of the same battue notes, a little more cynically, that the slaughtered kangaroos 'fell victims to the self-protection of the squatter.'[ccclxi]

Squatters made special provision for the large-scale slaughter of kangaroos, building huge enclosures for their entrapment. An 1867 account of a 'grand kangaroo battue' on William Carmichael's property, Harton Hills – near Belfast (now Port Fairy) in Victoria – describes 'first-class' yards 'capable of holding from 10,000 to 12,000 kangaroo.'[ccclxii] Another battue in Victoria's Western District took place at Henry de Little's Caramut station in October 1867. Like so many colonial squatters' properties, Caramut had an earlier history of violent dispossession. It was, notoriously, the site of what became known as the Lubra Creek Massacre of February 1842, which saw five sleeping Aboriginal people (four women and one

child) shot and killed by a group of settlers who were themselves hunting kangaroos.[cccLxiii] A description of the Caramut battue twenty-five years later buys into a post-frontier cliché that took diminishing Aboriginal populations for granted and then linked this to an apparent unchecked growth in kangaroo numbers. This then became the justification for the building of an elaborate series of enclosures with the aim of trapping and killing as many kangaroos as possible:

> Since the small remnant left of the Aborigines have given up the chase…and the shepherd kings have destroyed the dingo, kangaroos have an immunity from their natural enemies, and their numbers have, of late years, increased to an extent on some of the stations in the Western District, so as to render it necessary that some means should be devised of reducing the number beyond that of the rifle or dogs….A piece of ground is enclosed of some two or three acres in extent. This is surrounded with a double log-fence, and between the logs pieces of timber are placed perpendicularly, forming a stockade some twelve feet high. At the further end of this enclosure is a smaller one constructed in a similar manner, of about a quarter of an acre in extent, and communicating with the larger enclosure by a swing gate, which easily opens and shuts. A man in command of the gate stands on an elevated platform, hidden by boughs, who admits the animals as they approach, but prevents their egress. An opening is left in the first enclosure of a few yards wide, from which wings extend for about a mile in extent on each side, which diverge, affording a wide mouth, into which the kangaroos are driven and then urged forward to the stockade enclosure.[cccLxiv]

A number of station owners and their families and employees come together for three consecutive battues around the time of this account, with around 4000 kangaroos killed. This might seem like a purely systematic kind of slaughter, but the article still registers the pleasures of the hunting experience. The killings are 'the most exciting and amusing part of the whole hunt,' and the escapades of the riders and the 'grotesque movements of the kangaroos' as they try to flee combine to offer a 'capital sport.'[cccLxv] The only thing that troubles the author in the aftermath is the sheer waste of skins and tails left on the bodies to rot. Two months later – as we noted in Chapter Three – Prince Alfred, the Duke of

Edinburgh, visited the Western Districts with his entourage to participate in what the Melbourne *Leader* called a '*quasi* hunt' with other local squatters. 'I am gratified to learn that Prince Alfred thoroughly enjoyed it,' the *Leader* added; 'As for those who accompanied him, I am sure that they will long remember the shooting in the Caramut yards.'[cccLxvi]

In 1844 Rolf Boldrewood (Thomas Alexander Browne) settled on a 50,000 acre property along the Eumeralla River to the west of Port Fairy, which he named Squattlesea Mere – after Roger Wildrake's Lincolnshire birthplace in Sir Walter Scott's novel, *Woodstock* (1826). Boldrewood was just eighteen years old at the time. He wrote about his experiences much later on, in *Old Melbourne Memories* (1884), where he also recalled details of the long-running Eumeralla War between squatters and the local Gunditjmara people. This was a time, as Jan Critchett has observed, when squatters 'closed ranks to protect each other' from legal scrutiny when they aggressively defended their claims to land and livestock.[cccLxvii] Boldrewood in fact describes the killing of Aboriginal people during this time with considerable relish, despite claiming some sympathy for their predicament. Several of his accounts would later provide source material for Ian Clark's important register of massacre sites in Western Victoria, *Scars in the Landscape* (1995). Camping near Warrnambool – before he establishes his station – Boldrewood goes kangaroo hunting with his stockman, Joe Burge. 'What glorious times I had,' he writes, 'gun in hand, or with our three famous kangaroo dogs, slaying the swift marsupial. In those days he [the kangaroo] was tolerated and rather admired, no one imagining that he would be, a couple of generations later, a scourge and an oppressor, eating the sparse herbage of the overstocked squatter, and being classed as a "noxious animal," with a price actually put on his head by utilitarian legislators.'[cccLxviii] There is some nostalgia here for an earlier moment when the kangaroo was seen exclusively as a type of quarry rather than – when settlement expands and consolidates – as a pest to be eradicated. Boldrewood's kangaroo dogs are Chase, Nero and Violet, all cross-breeds; and he has real affection for them. Violet, he tells us, 'was so fast that she could catch a brush kangaroo (the wallaby) within sight.'[cccLxix] One day, she attacks a large forester and there is a long and violent struggle. Boldrewood and Burge carry the wounded dog back to Burge's house to be nursed, but she dies that night: 'a gloom fell over our little household as at the death of a friend.'[cccLxx]

Boldrewood moved to southern New South Wales in 1864, to become manager of his brother-in-law's sheep station, Bundidgerry, near Narrandera. Slowly recovering from an injury, he decided to write something for 'an English magazine': 'The subject I pitched upon was a description of a kangaroo drive or battue,' he recounted in an article for the *Australian Town and Country Journal*; 'This severe mode of dealing with the too prolific marsupial in whole battalions, I judged correctly, would be among the "things not generally known" to the British public.'[cccLxxi] Boldrewood's 'A Kangaroo Drive' appeared in *Cornhill Magazine* in December 1866 and was his first published literary work. The article opens at the fictionalised station of Ballandra, introducing an old Scottish squatter, Hector McDiarmid. This is now the post-frontier, with the squatter and his friends sitting peacefully on the verandah 'eating grapes and peaches' – literally enjoying the fruits of their labour. McDiarmid is 'rich beyond his cares or wants.' The only threat to his success is the proliferation of kangaroos on his property. As they drink their wine, McDiarmid casually picks up his gun and shoots an 'old man' kangaroo grazing nearby. This is the reaction of a squatter, not a hunter: it responds to the kangaroo purely as a nuisance, 'like rabbits' (which had been introduced to the colonies in 1859). Exasperated by their numbers, McDiamid advertises a 'Kangaroo Drive' in the local newspaper and builds a large enclosure on his property for the purpose. Neighbours arrive on a hot day, dressed as if the hunt is still a noble, aristocratic recreation: 'A silk coat, a puggree, boots, and white cords, adorned the wealthier. A daring swell or two rode in knickerbockers and brown Russian boots, still more delusive as to the temperature.'[cccLxxii] The drive – or battue – is like a military operation, with Captain O'Donnell in charge and 'an army of dogs in the rear.' Huge numbers of kangaroos are rounded up and herded towards the enclosure:

> we had in sight a continuous stream of terrified animals, hurrying to a common centre; the larger males – the "old men," as they are called – towered above the flying bucks, flying does and joeys, the half-grown bucks, does, and young ones. The wallaby, – a smaller variety, and bearing the same analogy to its larger *confrère*, the forester, as the rabbit does to the hare – might be seen scuttling along in the mêlée – joining perforce with the main troop, and sometimes making vain attempts to double back…[cccLxxiii]

With all the kangaroos trapped together, the killing begins. The narrator is momentarily troubled by what follows, but he rationalises his position through what was by then the well-rehearsed ethical world view of the squatter:

> They were all to be killed! Yes, dreadful as it sounds – butchered in cold blood. There was nothing else for it. We have our tendernesses like other people, and hate needless cruelty. But the lives of these animals represented an annual loss of a couple of thousands a year, at least; and sheep and cattle, and the welfare of Christian men, women, and children thereon depending, must be preferred to that of brutes, however directly inoffensive.[cccLxxiv]

Boldrewood then launches into the pragmatics of killing, where the hunters 'went in savagely enough' and 'sticks were the favourite weapons.' Of all the participants, it is the stockmen, his narrator recounts, who 'were decidedly the most efficient macropicides.'[cccLxxv] The battue is cast as a brutal slaughter of kangaroos, with the killing scene described in grisly detail. But it still carries all the residues of a hunting narrative, with everyone 'excited by the chase' and happily enjoying the feasting and celebrations afterwards. There is no mention of what the squatters do with the dead kangaroos and no sense of how they might be used as a saleable resource. The aim instead is to memorialise the battue itself as a bonding experience for the local landowners, an expression of settler bravado and triumph: 'But for years among the chronicles of the west, the memory will be fresh of the jests and the adventures, the hospitality and good-fellowship, of the great Ballandra Kangaroo drive.'[cccLxxvi]

Boldrewood's article is about the killing of large numbers of kangaroos, which it celebrates with only a passing moment of regret. It justifies clearing squatters' properties of what they had identified as a major threat to prosperity. In an article published much later on – 'A Kangaroo Shoot' – Boldrewood summed up the squatter's perspective on the mass-killing of kangaroos: 'If the kangaroo are allowed to live and multiply, our sheep will starve….it is our life and welfare against Marsupial Bill's, and he, being of the inferior race, must go under.'[cccLxxvii] The racializing of the kangaroo here ('the inferior race') shows us just how close the post-frontier could be to the frontier: with Boldrewood couching his description of

the removal of kangaroos directly in terms of the extinction discourses of colonialism in relation to Aboriginal people. We have seen earlier settler accounts where killing kangaroos (producing scarcity) impacts on the survival of local Aboriginal populations. We have also seen accounts where the dispossession of Aboriginal people results in an *increase* in kangaroo numbers (producing abundance) – which then poses new challenges to settler domination. The complex and often violent relationships between settlers and Aboriginal people are, of course, fundamental to the machinery of colonisation. But as we have argued in this book, kangaroos also play an integral role in all this. Squatter-writers like Boldrewood implicitly understood this fact, placing the killing of kangaroos on a continuum with the killing of Aboriginal people and working unapologetically, in *Old Melbourne Memories*, to memorialise them both.

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The 1870s saw an intensification of the squatters' war on the kangaroo and an escalation of anti-kangaroo rhetoric. The shift in the perception of the kangaroo from quarry to pest was embellished with a new vocabulary of pejorative terms: they are noxious (and obnoxious), a type of vermin, a scourge, a plague, an infestation, and so on. An article in the *Queenslander* in December 1876 wrote that 'Marsupials, taken singly, are the most innocent of wild animals, neither useful nor harmful enough to interest anyone but a naturalist; [but] taken in thousands or millions they rise to the dignity of a national plague….Not only are they in themselves an evil, but also a cause of evil in nature…'[cccLxxviii] Here, the lone kangaroo seems 'innocent' enough, and barely noticeable; but kangaroos in large numbers become something far more sinister and threatening. This is a pastoralist's highly-charged, moral response to an abundance, or hyper-abundance, of kangaroos at a moment in colonial development when they are no longer seen as having any value at all. A month earlier, the squatter-politician John Scott had proposed to the Queensland Legislative Assembly that 'the marsupial pest has become an evil of such magnitude in the colony as to demand the immediate attention of the Government.'[cccLxxix] Scott proposed offering a financial reward for kangaroo, wallaby and paddymelon scalps, a view that attracted much local support. Killing kangaroos *en masse* was soon regarded as a colonial duty that could be extended even to the most marginalised groups in society. The *Queenslander* article saw Scott's proposal as an opportunity: 'Mr. Scott would not only bring the blacks into activity and draw

them from the towns, but he would soon have all the ne'er-do-weel's in the colony profitably employed on the destruction of something more worthless than themselves.'[cccclxxx] This strikingly disdainful passage puts the killing of kangaroos into the framework of colonial development, where Aboriginal people and the socially disenfranchised are co-opted – and paid – to serve the squatter's interests and political agenda. Scott's proposal meant that the even *more* 'worthless' kangaroo could at least be turned into something 'profitable.'

In March 1877 P.R. Gordon, the Chief Inspector of Stock, drafted a bill that would see the establishment of district boards in Queensland, each with the power to fix rates of payment for marsupial scalps. 'A scalp,' he grimly specified, 'is defined to be a portion of the skin of the head of any marsupial to which both of the ears are attached.'[cccclxxxi] Gordon's bill was hotly debated for most of that year, but was finally passed on 5 November 1877 as the *Marsupial Destruction Act*. The rates of payment were part of this debate – Gordon's bill advocated 'not…more than 9d. for each kangaroo or wallaroo scalp, and not less than 3d. for each wallaby or paddymelon scalp.'[cccclxxxii] But there were also competing views over what caused the abundance of kangaroos in the first place, and how best to kill them. One correspondent wanted Gordon to become commander-in-chief of a 'marsupial exterminating army,' with each district given a force of 'well-drilled marksmen' armed with rifles, knifes, camping equipment, and so on.[cccclxxxiii] Another correspondent, 'Hunter,' interestingly advised squatters to look more closely at *Aboriginal* hunting practices, especially the use of large nets in battues. 'I obtained from the blacks in the neighbourhood a great quantity of their kangaroo nets, and so spliced them that they reached a distance of about half a mile,' he writes, using a type of wagon to unfurl them and a series of stakes in the ground to hold them in place.[cccclxxxiv] In any case, as Gordon's bill slowly made its way through parliament squatters began to take matters into their own hands, adopting whatever strategies seemed appropriate:

> Some work with dogs – a slow and unsatisfactory method at best – others build yards and drive the animals into small enclosures, when they can be destroyed, or secure the best of their pasture lands with paling fences. Others, again, obtain the assistance of the Aborigines, who, when working in sufficient numbers, do great execution

> amongst small game. The fact is, the evil may be most advantageously attacked in different places in different ways.[cccclxxxv]

Some squatters organised battues on unprecedented scales. Warroo station in south-eastern Queensland was renowned for its merino sheep and its owner, Henry Bracker, was credited as the first squatter 'to wage a really practical war against the greedy kangaroo.'[cccclxxxvi] Prior to 1877, according to one correspondent, there was 'no inducement to the sportsman to bring his battery and wage war against the wild denizens of the bush,' with the 'game not worth the candle.' But Henry Bracker changed all this, organising a series of *grand battues* that worked with military precision, re-animating in the process the sporting spirit of the colonial kangaroo hunt and producing conditions where pest and quarry amounted to the same thing. In an article in the Brisbane *Courier* titled 'Beatings about the Bush; or, How to Slay the Marsupials,' one of the Warroo participants describes the sheer thrill of being surrounded by so many fleeing kangaroos as the battue gets underway:

> You can't fire fast enough. Your gun is hot, and kicking like a three-year-old. Before, behind, on every side, the bounding forms go swiftly past. You turn, wheel, turn again. All is noise, bustle, mad excitement….On they come, faster and faster. You can't help almost shouting in your glee. Your blood is fairly up. The slaying is on you. The sporting instincts are fairly roused. For a minute 'tis a glorious, wild delirium. Hurrah! 'tis noble sport, and you chuckle your glee as one after another goes down before your gun, and for once in your life you feel the fierce, unconstrained delight of the successful hunter.[cccclxxxvii]

This particular battue lasted for fifty-one days, from 20 February to 12 April; somewhere between 14,000 and 17,000 kangaroos were killed, with 12,480 'shorn of their ears.'[cccclxxxviii] Aboriginal people were drafted in as well, including a local man known as General Wombat who 'ably commanded' the beaters as they drove the kangaroos towards the guns.[cccclxxxix] An article in the *Queenslander* gave an elaborate account of the immense amount of weaponry and ammunition used in the Warroo battues. 'In the meantime,' it noted, 'betting was active,' with 'one man backed against another' in a competition for the highest number of

kills. This is where the battue as mass slaughter coincided with the battue as a hunt 'of the true sporting kind.' Any settler 'who can raise a gun' could participate: the Warroo battues from this perspective were examples of colonial hunting at its most inclusive, and profitable. 'In estimating the value of the work,' the article tells us (reproducing the squatter's perspective), 'it may be reckoned that each week's shooting will save pasture for 2000 sheep…'[cccxc]

The scale of the *grand battue* in colonial Queensland could lend itself to epic descriptions by enthusiastic sporting journalists. Archibald Meston was a Scottish immigrant who lived in New South Wales and Queensland. In 1875, at twenty-four, he was appointed editor of the *Ipswich Observer*; around this time, he also wrote about hunting in the *Queenslander* and *Brisbane Courier* under the penname 'Ramrod.' Meston was the vice-president of the Farmer's Hunt Club at Laidley, west of Ipswich, which held its first meeting in September 1877. On 6 October Meston wrote about the Hunt Club's first battue, which began in 'the beautiful valley of Laidley Creek' on a local property where hundreds of kangaroos are feeding on pasture 'like flocks of sheep.' Meston immediately begins shooting: 'One huge old man was within ten yards of me, and a charge of double B [barrel] passed into his jugular and bronchial region, and he tumbled majestically over, a defunct macropus, while the left barrel effectually extinguished another as he passed about twenty yards to the right.'[cccxci] When the main party arrive, the battue unfolds like a military campaign. Shooters ('gunners') get into position on a ridge as kangaroos are herded towards them. They respond with continuous fire. Later on, Meston arranges more shooters on another ridge as kangaroos are driven up from below. The scale of killing significantly increases: 'They came up the slopes in thousands; they rushed along the gullies and up over the main ridge in countless masses, every shape, size, and colour of marsupial, from the small rock wallaby to the giant kangaroo.'[cccxcii] The battue here works as an efficient killing machine, functional and absolute. But Meston also wants to convey a sense of the excitement of the event, producing a colourful and entertaining account that – among other things – turns to poetry to elevate the proceedings. We have seen accounts of the kangaroo hunt draw on traditions of hunting poetry. In his account of the battue as a military campaign, however, Meston is moved to invoke the poetry of war:

They die, but ere their eyes could close
Their comrades o'er their bodies rose,
And fresh and furious, fast they fill
The ranks unthinned, though slaughtered still.

This passage comes from Lord Byron's *The Siege of Corinth* (1816), which chronicles an overwhelming attack on Venetian-occupied Corinth by the Ottoman army in 1715. (Meston's 'our comrades' in line two is 'avengers' in Byron's poem.) There are several quotations from *The Siege of Corinth* in Meston's account, all of which focus on the dead and give expression to the scale of the slaughter and its relentlessness. Kangaroos are anonymous canon-fodder here. The poetry lends them some dignity in death, but it works primarily to memorialise the battue itself. Soon afterwards, as he looks at the scenery around him, Meston quotes from another poem, Henry Kendall's 'The Mountains' (1861): 'Stately mountains high and hoary, piled with blocks of amber cloud.' This, along with Byron's poetic rendering of a historical massacre, invests the colonial landscape with a sense of drama that Meston's account of the battue both goes along with and casually undercuts. There is, at least, some momentary reflection on the significance of what has just transpired: 'Yes, there was an Elysian field for the poet and the painter, and as I turned sadly away and upset a couple of kangaroos, I felt that there is something after all in this terrestrial sphere capable of lifting a man's soul above the sordid contemplation of pork and beans and bank-notes.'[cccxciii]

Chapter Six: Colonial Kangaroo Hunt Novels and Fantasies

In his book, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism*, John M. MacKenzie insightfully reminds us that 'the colonial frontier was also a hunting frontier.'[cccxciv] Hunting game in India, Africa, North America and elsewhere was always, of course, an active and no doubt brutal expression of settler domination over species and territory. Sometimes it was just cold-blooded killing, to be narrated in the most matter-of-fact way. This is the explorer Matthew Flinders' account of his arrival on Kangaroo Island, off the South Australian coast, in March 1802:

> I had with me a double-barrelled gun, fitted with a bayonet, and the gentlemen my companions had muskets. It would be difficult to guess how many kanguroos were seen; but I killed ten, and the rest of the party made up the number to thirty-one….After this butchery, for the poor animals suffered themselves to be shot in the eyes with small shot, and in some cases to be knocked on the head with sticks….[the] whole ship's company was employed this afternoon, skinning and cleaning the kanguroos; and a delightful regale they afforded, after four months privation from almost any fresh provisions….In gratitude for so seasonable a supply, I named this southern land KANGUROO ISLAND…[cccxcv]

There is, at least, some bleak registering of the kangaroos' suffering as they die here; but these killings are entirely functional, nothing more than 'butchery,' with the sole aim of feeding a hungry crew. The island itself is essentially named after its capacity to provide a readily available food source. Elisabeth Findlay calls this young navigator's journal an 'austere text,'[cccxcvi] although the passage above does at least express delight and gratitude for what this island has to offer. Even so, there is no engagement with the novelty of the species (Flinders has seen kangaroos before), no interest in documenting habits and habitat, and no sense of anything new to be learned. There is also no chase and no sense of adventure.

On the other hand, as we have seen, accounts of the colonial kangaroo hunt were routinely imbued with imaginative force and driven by intellectual (e.g. scientific) inquiry. MacKenzie

notes that hunting game across the colonies was a significant indicator of the need 'to classify and order the natural world through a new scientific understanding.'[cccxcvii] But he also argues that colonial hunting as a genre of literary writing articulated British imperialism's investment in what he calls 'killing for character formation.'[cccxcviii] For settlers, hunting game delivered an experience that was 'rich in…ambiguities'. On the one hand, it could be 'primitive and elemental', unleashing visceral urges as the animal is killed, dismembered (for trophies etc.) and (as with Flinders and his crew) consumed. On the other hand, the experience for some could also be 'morally uplifting', a vital pathway towards 'mental instruction' and even 'scientific understanding' as specimens are identified, classified, collected and carefully examined.[cccxcix] Something is relinquished when an animal is killed – one's inhibitions, for example. But something is gained, too: forms of knowledge, even self-knowledge.

In Australia – and no doubt in other outposts of empire – hunting certainly provided the required rite of passage for ambitious young men in particular to learn about local conditions and establish their colonial credentials. The kangaroo hunt as a literary genre therefore fuctioned as a kind of *bildungsroman* or novel of education. For Franco Moretti, the *bildungsroman* in Europe saw the 'great city' (London, Paris, etc) as 'the natural goal of all young men of talent', opening the way for their transition to adulthood. But Moretti's European focus limits his scope; he suggests, for example, that these protagonists 'seldom embark on long-distance journeys' and are reluctant to 'leave the old world.'[cd] This chapter begins by looking at three colonial kangaroo hunt novels written by British women who had in fact never been to Australia. But in each case, they send 'young men of talent' from the old world to the new: as a means of charting their coming of age in terms of emotional maturity, the acquisition of new skills and knowledges, and their capacity to contribute to newly-developing national ideologies. Jed Esty's work on colonialism, modernism and the *bildungsroman* is useful here as a reminder that 'adulthood and nationhood' could indeed serve 'as mutually reinforcing versions of stable identity.'[cdi] But the kangaroo hunt itself can complicate this, especially on the colonial frontier: not least because what is 'primitive and elemental' and what is 'morally uplifting' can be difficult to reconcile.

The first kangaroo hunt novel is Sarah Porter's *Alfred Dudley; or, The Australian Settlers* (1830). It was in fact published the same year as Henry Savery's *Quintus Servinton*, generally regarded as Australia's first novel: so it is equally foundational as far as Australia's literary history is concerned. Porter was the sister of the famous economist and stockbroker David Ricardo. Her husband was George Richardson Porter, the political economist and free trader. She published a number of educational tracts on schools and children, including the best-selling *Conversations on Arithmetic* (1835), which advocated independent learning: 'The pupil,' she wrote, 'should be led to think for himself.'[cdii] Her kangaroo hunt novel drew heavily on Robert Dawson's popular travel memoir, *The Present State of Australia*, published in the same year: a work of emigration propaganda, as we noted in Chapter Two, which saw an agent for the Australian Agricultural Company chart a brief history of land development along the Karuah River, north of Newcastle, in New South Wales, in the mid-1820s. Porter's novel begins with young Alfred Dudley living in comfortable circumstances in England; but his father is swindled and soon loses much of his fortune. An unexpected letter from Australia gives 'a brilliant account of prosperity in that far distant land.'[cdiii] Dudley's father decides to emigrate but wants Alfred to remain in England and attend a public school: 'you are destined to fill a higher station than that of an Australian settler,' he tells his son.[cdiv] But Alfred insists on coming too and they finally emigrate together, leaving their mother and sister behind. Father and son settle along the Hunter River, purchasing land not far from Newcastle where they build a stone 'mansion' and – taking instructions from William Cobbett's *Cottage Economy* (1821) – cultivate an extensive property. The aim here is to acquire 'many comforts', 'more comforts than their neighbours';[cdv] recalling our discussion of Franco Moretti in Chapter Two, these are bourgeois rather than aristocratic aspirations, although they are not that far from the aspirations of a squattocracy.

The establishment of settlement takes precedence here; it creates the necessary space for the adventures that follow. Alfred helps an injured Aboriginal woman and befriends her son, Mickie. Later, he is welcomed by her tribe. Mickie, on the other hand, moves into Dudley's mansion as a servant. We can see Dawson's influence at work here ('I have a complete ascendency over them'): the emphasis is on settler domination alongside a form of Aboriginal compliance imagined here as willingly given, what Porter's novel calls 'cheerful assistance in all our labours.'[cdvi] Mickie talks to Alfred about the pleasures of kangaroo

hunting and soon they go into the forest together in search of quarry. The Aboriginal boy ventures ahead 'to catch kangaroo all by himself': he 'begged me not to use my gun, as he wished to prove that he was a man to-day.'[cdvii] But when Mickie chases a large kangaroo into a waterhole, a 'trial of strength and dexterity' follows and Mickie is in danger of being drowned. Concerned for his safety, Alfred intervenes by raising his gun and shooting the kangaroo. In this scene, a newly-arrived settler saves an Aboriginal life; but Mickie feels compromised, offended. Alfred realises that he has transgressed some local 'laws of honour' through what he calls 'my unadvised interference.'[cdviii]

This is the settler's first lesson in this novel. Alfred is forced to recognise Mickie's claim to pride and dignity and also, by extension, that settlers are indeed interfering wholesale in Aboriginal people's lives. When they spot more kangaroos, Alfred compensates for his gaffe by handing Mickie his rifle: 'He took my gun with delight,' the novel tells us.[cdix] *Alfred Dudley* is the first colonial Australian novel in which a settler gives his gun to an Aboriginal man (another foundational literary moment). It draws again on Dawson for this scene ('I have often lent them a musket to shoot kangaroos, when it has always been taken care of and safely returned'), although unlike Dawson Porter does not make a point of the gun's safe return. The kangaroo hunt works here as a kind of bonding lesson between a settler and his Aboriginal companion. But that night at an Aboriginal camp, Alfred distances himself from the feasting that follows – and from the sight of Mickie 'burying his hands in the entrails of the animals, and tearing off the skin with all the delight and dexterity of a veteran hunter.'[cdx] This is where MacKenzie's 'primitive and elemental' and 'morally uplifting' aspects of the hunt come into conflict. For Alfred, it is now a matter of rejecting the former and embracing the latter: 'I would willingly draw a veil over the excesses of my sable hero,' he tells us; 'I wish to paint him to you only in his most attractive points, and should be sorry to exhibit my little Mickie engaged in all the gross gluttony of a kangaroo feast.'[cdxi] The kangaroo hunt from Alfred's perspective is not 'morally uplifting' at all; he recovers his own moral position through his rejection of its 'inhumanity', of being 'cruel in sport, and of finding pleasure in the exercise of any pursuit which would cause pain to even the meanest creature that has life.'[cdxii]

Porter's *Alfred Dudley* wants to show that the kangaroo hunt is incompatible with the bourgeois sensibilities of an aspirant settler. Its work as emigration propaganda is to do both with disavowing frontier violence (saving Aboriginal people rather than shooting them) and refusing to hunt kangaroos: 'my principles', Alfred says, 'revolt from scenes of blood.'[cdxiii] Aboriginal people are not dispossessed here, but they are only accommodated in so far as they fit into the novel's regulatory framework for what constitutes successful colonial settlement: productivity, compliance, assistance, and 'comfort' ('a tribe of these have comfortably settled down on Mr Dudley's estate…'). Alfred's trajectory from a fifteen-year-old to 'rather more than twenty'[cdxiv] at the end of the novel finally produces an identity that is indeed *settled*, recalling Jed Esty's point above about the 'mutually reinforcing versions' of 'adulthood and nationhood.'

In Porter's early colonial *bildungsroman* the kangaroo hunt needed to be experienced and then disavowed, so that settlement could properly proceed. But other colonial *bildungsromans* invested in the adventure of hunting as a reward in itself. Sarah Bowdich Lee's *Adventures in Australia; or, the Wanderings of Captain Spencer in the Bush and the Wilds* was published in London by Grant and Griffith in 1851. In her Preface to this fascinating novel, Lee writes that, as a natural historian, her interest is in the various species found in the New World and much less on what she calls (refering to the early days of the gold rush in New South Wales and Victoria)) 'the fast-increasing riches of the settlements.'[cdxv] Her first husband was T. Edward Bowdich, who had worked for the African Company of Merchants and lived for a time in Ghana. In 1819 they both went to Paris to prepare for a second African expedition. They also worked closely with the famous French naturalist Georges Cuvier, with Lee publishing an extensive biography of him in 1833.

After Bowdich's death in Africa in 1824, Lee returned to London, married again, and continued her researches in natural history. Her best-known publication, *The Fresh-Water Fishes of Great Britain*, was issued in ten parts between 1828 and 1838 – a remarkable work both artistically (it contained forty-four exquisite watercolour paintings) and scientifically, as one of the first British books to draw on Cuvier's classification system for fish.[cdxvi] In the 1840s, Lee began to publish natural history text books for schools and popular adventure fiction. Porter's *Alfred Dudley* had relied on one Australian source, a land speculator's

memoir which was also a work of emigration propaganda. But Lee's *Adventures in Australia* acknowledges a large number of Australian source texts, all to do with natural history: including Robert Brown's (1804-06) *Prodromus of the Flora of New Holland and Van Diemen's Land* (1810) – Brown had sailed with Matthew Flinders on the *HMS Investigator* and went on to become head of the Botanical Department at the British Museum – the physician-naturalist George Bennett's *Wanderings in New South Wales, Batavia, Pedir Coast, Singapore, and China* (1834), and also John Gould's *The Birds of Australia*. Much of Lee's novel is in fact species description, with scientific names added in numerous footnotes.

The novel's protagonist, Captain Edward Spencer, is not quite a 'young man of talent.' He is instead a resourceful soldier who had served in the Bombay Native Infantry in India – and probably fought in the Second Anglo-Sikh War in 1848-49. He is already educated in England, at Eton. His journey from Bombay (Mumbai) to the north of Australia via Timor-Leste actually begins as a kind of *anti-bildungsroman*, with Spencer refusing the possibility of learning anything new: 'I have no intention of making discoveries', he declares, 'and no desire to come in contact with the very barbarous people of these places.'[cdxvii] Spencer visits Australia on a year's leave of absence to improve his health, bringing his horse and dog with him, as well as a talking parrot. Not long after arrival, however, his ship and crew are lost in a storm. Lee's novel then tracks Spencer's subsequent 'wanderings' in Australia. It appeared in print a year before John Morgan published *The Life and Adventures of William Buckley: Thirty-Two Years a Wanderer Amongst the Aborigines of the Then Unexplored Country Round Port Phillip, now the Province of Victoria* (1852) – and a decade before Horace Wheelwright's *Bush Wanderings of a Naturalist*. Wandering, as we noted in Chapter Five, was a colonial trope, structurally defined against the emigrant's imperative to settle. It relates a series of incidents that often involves the character literally losing his way. Richard Hibbitt has noted that the noun *error* derives from the Latin verb *errare* – to wander – which leads him to think about what he calls 'the value of detour' in the nineteenth century *bildungsroman*.[cdxviii] Can wandering have a goal or a purpose? In Spencer's case, he has just one aim while in Australia: to shoot a kangaroo. 'If I could but shoot a kangaroo', he tells himself, 'I would go back [to India] directly.' Killing a kangaroo, as the novel puts it, is 'the object of his present ambition.'[cdxix]

Lee's *Adventures in Australia* is nevertheless determined to see to Spencer's education, despite his reluctance to learn. She immerses him in the details of native species; he examines, and often eats, almost every species he sees. But she also launches him directly into frontier conflict. Attacked by a group of Aboriginal people, Spencer fires above their heads and quickly moves on. Wandering is outside the paradigm of settlement and its role in Aboriginal dispossession; Spencer keeps moving to avoid further conflict, but it follows him wherever he goes: 'Traces of the native Australians were now seen to be everywhere.'[cdxx] Under attack again, he kills an Aboriginal man. The novel writes, 'he felt greatly distressed at having been obliged to kill the native…it preyed upon him.'[cdxxi] This is the first moral lesson his frontier experience has to offer, although it might seem at odds with his identity as an active military officer in India (in which case it functions as another kind of detour for him that invites a different kind of reflection).

Meanwhile, Spencer helps a wounded Aboriginal man called Kinchela. Later, they speak Malay together, rather than the debased form of pidgin English we find in *Alfred Dudley*. They become companions: Lee is less invested in the kind of master-servant relationship we saw with Dudley and Mickie in Porter's earlier novel. She in fact refers to Kinchela as 'the Australian,' trying hard to be non-pejorative. Spencer watches him expertly stalk, hunt and kill 'an enormous kangaroo' and afterwards praises the Aboriginal man 'for his skill and courage.'[cdxxii] Unlike Alfred Dudley, he never intervenes, nor does Kinchela ever need his help. When he watches Kinchela cook the meat afterwards, Spencer recognises that he 'far out-does my best efforts.' He initially feels disgust at the way Kinchela eats the kangaroo (his 'gross habits'); but in contrast to Dudley, he 'tried to reason himself out of the disgust which he felt.'[cdxxiii] Unusually, Spencer is the one who needs to adjust in this novel, adapting his perspective in recognition of new expressions of cultural difference. It makes this particular *bildungsroman* reconcile the 'primitive and elemental' and the 'morally uplifting' in a way we have not previously seen. Spencer reflects at one point that his journey 'has only been for the gratification of my appetite'; 'there is a charm in this wild life', he writes, 'which attaches me to the place, and I feel as if I could not as yet go back to the old world forms.'[cdxxiv]

Adventures in Australia is close in kind to *The Life and Adventures of William Buckley*, since it charts a similar account of a solitary European who comes to live with Aboriginal people, recognising their customs and practices and even getting involved in inter-tribal warfare. At one point, Spencer joins a group of Aboriginal people on a large-scale kangaroo hunt: 'it was no longer the stealthy, artful attack of the native…it was a regular battue….the natives then dashed on them with their spears, and effected a great slaughter.'[cdxxv] Lee's novel was illustrated by emigrant artist John Skinner Prout, who lived and worked in Tasmania for much of the 1840s. Prout's lithograph of the battue shows Aboriginal people surrounding a large mob of kangaroos, spearing them at close range.

J.S. PROUT 'THE KANGAROO HUNT' *ADVENTURES IN AUSTRALIA* 1851

But it also shows Spencer on his horse, charging through the centre. He clearly stands out here – accentuated by his white dress and white horse – going against the collective spirit of the battue and scattering the kangaroos in front of him. But he is carrying a spear, not a rifle; so in this sense, he is integrated into the action, and he is certainly an enthusiastic participant. In the novel, he makes a series of ethnographic observations about Aboriginal hunting, the rights to game, and so on, all of which suggest he is learning from his experiences. He has also come to understand that Aboriginal hunting is a matter of recognising tribal boundaries: 'each tribe in every part had its peculiar hunting grounds, though disputes often arose about the boundaries, and led to war. When white man, however, appeared, they did not mind these boundaries, and took all, drove Kangaroos away, and by-and-bye they should all starve.'[cdxxvi] This is the perspective of a wanderer – not a settler – who is steadily gaining Aboriginal knowledges, at least as far as the novel understands them.

Early in the novel, Spencer goes into a cave and sees 'a rude painting of a man carrying a Kangaroo, and also a number of those animals, with a spear-head flying among them'; he thinks the paintings 'showed a greater degree of civilisation among the natives than he thought they possessed.'[cdxxvii] This is another moment in his education, and it also reveals another important Australian source for Lee's novel. Her account of Aboriginal cave paintings drew from the ambitious explorer and army officer George Grey's *Journals of Two*

Expeditions of Discovery in North-West and Western Australia, published in London in1841. Towards the end of 1837, Grey had mounted a hazardous expedition that began in Hanover Bay, north of Broome, in the Kimberley region. On 26 March 1838, he sketched some paintings he saw in caves near the Glenelg River. In fact, Grey was one of the first Europeans to produce a visual record of Aboriginal rock art. One of these represented, as he put it, 'a kangaroo in the act of feeding, two stone spearheads, and two black balls; one of the spearheads was flying to the kangaroo, and one away from it; so that the whole subject probably constituted a sort of charm by which the luck of an enquirer in killing game could be ascertained.'[cdxxviii]

GEORGE GREY *OVAL DRAWING IN CAVE, DISC[V] MARCH 26* 1838

Grey notoriously did not believe that Aboriginal people had actually drawn these and the other cave images he reproduced in his book: 'whatever may be the age of these paintings,' he wrote, 'it is scarcely probable that they could have been executed by a self-taught savage. Their origin, therefore, I think, must still be open to conjecture.' (263). The view that these cave paintings might somehow be '*pre*-Aboriginal' persisted for some time;[cdxxix] it gained even more notoriety through the pseudo-archeologist Erich von Däniken's 1969 'Chariots of the Gods' thesis, which imagined that ancient art works like these must have been produced by aliens. Susan Lowish calls Grey one of 'the first Christian ethnologists writing on the creative capacities of Indigenous peoples.'[cdxxx] In this context, Captain Spencer's view above, which might at first seem benign and well-meaning, takes on a much darker resonance.

Spencer's journey loosely follows Grey's route as the latter made his way down the coast (eventually) towards the Swan River. Lee also reproduces some of Grey's observations about native flora and fauna, his ethnographic details about Aboriginal people – Grey had in fact described large-scale Aboriginal battues, including the use of nets and 'pitfalls'[cdxxxi] – and his experiences of violent frontier conflict. The link between these two texts interestingly connects the notes of an ex-military wanderer to the journals of a military explorer sent by the Colonial Office to establish the basis for settlement in Western Australia. Spencer's experiences give us a character on the verge of 'going native' – but not

quite. In an insightful discussion of Benjamin Disraeli's novel *Tancred; or, The New Crusade* (1847), published just a few years before Lee's, Cara Murray suggests that the *bildungsroman* 'ensures that nobody "goes native"':[cdxxxii] wandering characters like Disraeli's protagonist are always, eventually, reabsorbed back into the acquisitive logics of empire. Towards the end of Lee's novel, Captain Spencer journeys east to South Australia where he meets a wealthy squatter, Philip St John. 'Where we now stand,' St John tells him, 'there will probably, in a few years, be the homestead of some settler…'[cdxxxiii] But when Spencer tells the story of his wanderings, the squatter is forced to reflect on the role colonial land acquisition has played in the dispossession of Aboriginal people: 'What you told me last night, about their inherited hunting grounds, prevented me from sleeping soundly…my mind was labouring under a feeling of usurpation, which made me very uncomfortable…. we have usurped their lands, and driven Kangaroo away, as they say, which, in other words, is to deprive them of their sustenance.'[cdxxxiv] This is a lesson the wanderer can now pass on to the settler: provoking guilt (and sleeplessness). Other settlers pressure Spencer to join them; romantic possibilities present themselves; but Spencer remains in character as a wandering, solitary figure and, with his horse, dog and parrot, leaves Australia for good and returns to military service in Bombay.

Lee's *Adventures in Australia* is a tribute to species biodiversity at the edge of empire. But she also situates this within a framework of natural theology, where to learn about the natural world is to appreciate the sheer range of God's creation: enabling readers, as she puts it, to 'admire His wonderful works.'[cdxxxv] The third kangaroo hunt novel we want to look at here was again written by an English woman who never came to Australia: Anne Bowman's *The Kangaroo Hunters; or, Adventures in the Bush* (1858). Bowman was the eldest daughter of a well-respected amateur naturalist from Newcastle, Robert Benson Bowman. With her brother Thomas, she took over the family printing and bookselling business in Richmond. She was also a prolific writer and educationalist, publishing a series of school textbooks (rather like Lee), advice books for women on domestic economy and, interestingly, a raft of adventure novels that took their young protagonists to various frontiers around the globe.

The novels by Porter and Lee were published by small-scale specialist publishers in London and probably sold modestly. But Bowman's *The Kangaroo Hunters* enjoyed an 'unusually high degree of popularity,' published in multiple editions in London and New York by Routledge, in Philadelphia by Porter and Coates, translated into French, and reprinted later on in Melbourne by E.W. Cole.[cdxxxvi] The novel also shares Lee's fascination with natural history. It begins in England by introducing Mr Mayburn, a recently widowed parish priest with 'ornithological tastes' who, now that his capable wife has died, is concerned about the future education of his children (Bowman 1818: 6). The cleric naturalist was by this time a familiar figure who worked to reinforce the connections between natural history, theology and education. William Paley's *Natural Theology; or, Evidence of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity* was published in 1802; the following year saw the publication of William Bingley's popular *Animal Biography*, which had argued that the study of natural history would bring about the moral improvement of the 'rising generation': 'they must not be contented merely with reading: the principal use of [natural history] is to direct them to contemplations on the objects themselves, and to induce a taste for more minute investigation.'[cdxxxvii] Bowman's adventure novel takes up this challenge, sending its characters out to the colonies where they can immerse themselves in what Bingley, drawing on Linnaeus, had called 'the empire of nature' (also the title of John MacKenzie's book): meaning, among other things, species you would find in the *British* empire. Bingley is a possible model for Mr Mayburn. In *The Kangaroo Hunters*, he takes his children, Hugh, Arthur and Margaret – along with Gerald, the son of a dying friend, and two parish orphans, Jack and Ruth – to Australia, intending to do missionary work. But the aim is also to educate these children in the natural sciences, to encourage the 'minute investigation' of species. He complains, for example, that Gerald 'has no taste…He has no judgement in the science. He has never learned to distinguish the *Corvidae* [crows, ravens, etc] from the *Columbidae* [pigeons, doves]…'[cdxxxviii]

In the event, Mayburn and the children are shipwrecked on an island somewhere off the coast of Western Australia: 'Worse than Robinson Crusoe's island,' Hugh declares, 'for we have not even the goats.'[cdxxxix] They do manage to retrieve guns and powder, but the question of whether to use them on the frontier provokes an ethical discussion. 'Shed no blood, I beseech you, my son,' Mayburn says to Arthur; 'We are intruders; do not let us

become invaders….Even if we should be attacked, we have no right to retaliate, but should rather take to flight.'[cdxl] Mayburn's position recalls both Alfred Dudley ('my principles revolt from scenes of blood') and Captain Spencer – except that Mayburn will not even shoot in self-defence. He has the same view of native species, urging restraint even as he encourages the children to collect specimens for him: 'I release you from the severe studies which…are unfitted to our circumstances and the relaxing climate. I merely require from you to obtain me specimens – single specimens only….and, if it were not cruel, I should long to possess some of these rare creatures in all their beauty.'[cdxli] But the children almost immediately begin to kill animals and birds, feasting on the spoils. They then pause to consider the ethical implications of shooting Aboriginal people. 'I should not feel that I had the same right to shoot a native', Arthur says, 'that I had to shoot a kangaroo.'[cdxlii] Just as Spencer does in Lee's novel, the children go into a cave and look at rock art: 'I couldn't draw so good a kangaroo as that myself', Gerald admits.[cdxliii] Under attack from Aboriginal people soon afterwards, Gerald wounds one of them with his hand-made bow and arrow. Another attack sees Arthur shoot an Aboriginal man in the head with his rifle. *The Kangaroo Hunters* is thus a colonial frontier novel which problematises ethical frameworks around the killing of native species and Aboriginal people. It offers a non-violent Christian settler perspective ('we have no right to retaliate') that is then shown to be incompatible with the imperative to survive and defend property at any cost.

Later, the group comes across the aftermath of an inter-tribal war and rescues an Aboriginal woman and her child. The novel reproduces the kind of relationships we have already seen with Mickie in *Alfred Dudley* and Kinchella in *Adventures in Australia*, where settler intervention is rewarded with Aboriginal gratitude and service – while at the same time (in *Adventures in Australia*, at least) some level of Aboriginal autonomy is granted. Like Kinchella, the woman, Baldabella, turns out to be a successful kangaroo hunter. Mayburn's sons soon plead for a kangaroo hunt: 'We are hungry, and kangaroo meat would fill us,' Hugh says to his father; 'and therefore…we have a right to kill and eat.'[cdxliv] The ethical discussion about the right to kill shifts to weighing up the value of different native species: 'it is more humane,' Hugh argues, 'to destroy one kangaroo than a dozen cockatoos or pheasants.'[cdxlv] But it is Baldabella who first kills a kangaroo, with her boomerang. Later,

when she is captured by an Aboriginal tribe, Arthur shoots a kangaroo with his rifle and trades the animal for her release – which elicits further Aboriginal gratitude and obligation.

One 'morally uplifting' lesson here is to do with identifying the proper limits to settler violence against Aboriginal people. 'We have no right deliberately to destroy so many human lives,' Arthur says; 'We are in the power of these strangers...our only hope must be in conciliation and treaty.'[cdxlvi] Killing native species, on the other hand, is tied to more 'primitive and elemental' needs. Kangaroo hunting is claimed as a 'right' here, primarily to satisfy this family's voracious appetites; but it can also produce the kind of disgust we saw with Alfred Dudley. When Hugh and Gerald chase a kangaroo into a cave, they engage in a frantic struggle – with Hugh held tight in the kangaroo's embrace, as the illustration in the 1858 Porter and Coates edition shows.

D. T. SMITH? 'FIGHT WITH THE KANGAROO' *THE KANGAROO HUNTERS* 1858

As Gerald stabs him, the kangaroo lashes out and the boy is badly injured. Hugh finally kills the animal, but he is immediately filled with remorse: 'I should never like to kill another in that way; it was just like murdering one's grandfather.'[cdxlvii] Even so, the boys continue to imagine a life devoted entirely to kangaroo hunting. As Hugh expresses it, 'we will squat by ourselves; like Robinson Crusoe and his man Friday, build a hut, and shoot kangaroos.'[cdxlviii] This is a fantasy about the castaway adventure novel as a perpetual source of pleasure, untroubled by frontier violence and with kangaroos as an endlessly renewable resource, this time to be hunted *without* limits – where 'Kangaroos…abound here enough for all.'[cdxlix]

But Bowman's novel finally returns its wandering family to a post-frontier world of colonial settlement. Mayburn and his children are reunited with a squatter they had met when they emigrated to Australia, Edward Deverell – who by this time has established a prosperous homestead and station. 'Our black neighbours are all tame,' he tells them, and the station itself is vigorous protected by native police.[cdl] Deverell has none of the settler melancholy we saw with Philip St John in Lee's novel. Aboriginal people are either dispossessed or placed in local schools, and the land is now cultivated (with orchards and vineyards). The emphasis is again on 'comforts' but also on plenitude and abundance and 'hospitality.'

Mayburn's family settles on the property; the one concession to the improving influence of natural history is to build a local museum for native species. Having reabsorbed its roaming characters into the 'acquisitive logics of empire,' however, this particular *bildungsroman* seems uncertain about its closing lessons. Arthur decides to return to England to complete his education. Margaret wants to teach in the local schools. But Gerald – who Mayburn identified at the beginning of the novel as a young man with 'no taste…no judgement in the science' – becomes a head ranger and promises to 'call you all around me for a field-day, to beat the bushes, and keep up our character of successful KANGAROO HUNTERS.'[cdli] Kangaroo hunting, by the end of the novel, is a post-frontier activity, recreational (for pleasure) rather than essential (for survival). It is cast as the means of transitioning from emigrant to settler; it also works to transform the old model of the cleric naturalist into a new form of active secular masculinity where the scientific study of species is now residual, secondary to the project of land development and settler expansion.

None of these three colonial novels by British women writers has a strong female protagonist, with the interesting exception of Baldabella in *The Kangaroo Hunters*. Their focus is instead on young men on the frontier, their conduct, and the lessons they're capable of learning. Porter's novel wants settlement without 'scenes of blood,' which means the kangaroo hunt must be a relic of the frontier, something you have to leave behind. Lee's novel gives freer play to the kangaroo hunt, exploring its possibilities for both Aboriginal and settler identities. Its wandering, kangaroo-hunting protagonist has the capacity to disturb the complacency of settlement, but (returning to India at the end) leaves its progress unchecked. Bowman's novel puts the kangaroo hunt into an ethical discussion of killing on the frontier; but when the frontier is over and settlement triumphs, it also wants to claim the romance of the kangaroo hunt as a defining aspect of settler identity. These British adventure novelists imagine frontier experiences in colonial Australia by drawing on a range of Australian source material. To recall John MacKenzie's remark, their novels are all about 'killing for character formation' – or in some cases, *not* killing. The kangaroo hunt is a 'primitive and elemental' event, an 'ambition,' an adventure. But it also works as a testing ground for young settlers-to-be, something to survive and in some cases, finally, to put behind them. The 'morally uplifting' trajectory for the kangaroo hunter here is colonial settlement itself.

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These early British kangaroo hunt novels played themselves out on the Australian frontier – although the two novels from the 1850s were by this time already historical, looking back to earlier, formative frontier moments. The frontier, of course, is not just an actual physical and social space unfolding in real time. It also gets imaginatively reproduced and reanimated as the decades pass. Indeed, it seems as if Australian literature can never stop talking about its frontier experience, no matter how distant (in time and space) it might seem to be. The 1890s saw a cluster of kangaroo hunt novels published both locally and in London, each of which continued to fashion themselves as *bildungsroman* adventure novels that involve young men learning about frontier life in Australia. A protagonist's opportunity to kill his first kangaroo becomes a defining experience, providing both a rite of passage into manhood and a way of establishing one's proper place in the ongoing business of settlement and nation building.

Elphinstone Davenport Cleland was a mining correspondent who worked in Coolgardie in Western Australia in the 1890s, contributing to the *Argus* and *Sydney Morning Herald*. He had also lived and worked in Adelaide and Broken Hill, where he was editor of the *Silver Age*. Cleland wrote a book about mining practices in Western Australia and at least a half dozen novels about mining and farming life, serialised in newspapers such as the *Adelaide Observer* and the *Australasian*. His novel *The White Kangaroo: A Tale of Colonial Life, Founded on Fact* was first serialised in the British children's journal, *Sunday Reading for the Young*, in 1889. This journal's publisher, Wells, Gardner, Darton & Co., had long specialised in ecclesiastical, historical and children's literature; in 1890 they issued *The White Kangaroo* as a successful novel that was reprinted several times over.

The story begins when teenage cousins Ralph and Ernest Everdale visit the family's sheep and cattle station in South Australia for their school holidays. Ralph almost immediately asks about a white kangaroo, seen on the property. A local Aboriginal man thinks it is 'bewitched,' and local settlers also believe it leads a charmed life, always evading capture. Ralph confidently declares, 'Ern and I will put an end to the mystery before we go back to

school: you see if we don't.' Ernest agrees, seeing the kill as a point of honour: 'If we can't run it down – well, we shall be ashamed to go back to school again, that's all!'[cdlii]

Everdale's station is both on the frontier, and remote from it. He makes a point of distinguishing between 'our blacks' – colonised, domesticated, given stereotypically racist names such as 'Sambo' – and 'wild blacks,' that is, Aboriginal people who are still cast as threatening to settlers, 'their hands being against everybody, and everybody's hands against them.'[cdliii] The problem here is how to balance squatter imperatives (to protect the land you've taken, to make it productive) and ethical responsibilities (to recognise that stock being plundered and settlers being speared 'in outlying huts' is a direct outcome of dispossession). 'I shan't go out against them just because they kill a bullock or two,' Everdale tells the boys; 'We've taken away their hunting ground, and must not be surprised if they resent it sometimes.'[cdliv] Soon afterwards, Ralph and Ernest go out to hunt kangaroos. A large 'old man' kangaroo struggles with their dog; Ralph intervenes and kills the kangaroo by hitting it over the head with a stick. Later, they think they see a kangaroo strung up in a tree. It turns out to be an Aboriginal man, whose leg is caught in one of the branches. The squatter, Everdale, praises the boys for rescuing him: 'That one act of kindness,' he tells them, 'may do wonders with that wild tribe.'[cdlv] *The White Kangaroo* in this sense works along the lines of *Alfred Dudley* and *Adventures in Australia*, creating a non-violent, Good Samaritan point of contact between settler and Aboriginal people on the frontier. Once again, this immediately places Aboriginal people into a position of gratitude and indebtedness – which settlers then use to their advantage.

The boys turn out to be enthusiastic hunters, shooting possums, riding horses, and so on. In a chapter titled 'Their First Kangaroo' they finally spot the white kangaroo and pursue it. But it soon eludes them, and – distracted by the chase – the boys lose their way. A group of Aboriginal people appear and threaten them with spears and waddies; but the Aboriginal man they had rescued intervenes and saves them, confirming the novel's version of *quid pro quo* frontier relations. Ralph and Ernest are so overcome with emotion that 'they both fell unconscious to the ground.'[cdlvi] We can say that the white kangaroo itself is entirely responsible for the emasculation of these boys: eluding them, disorienting them, putting them in danger on the frontier, and causing them to faint away. Later – when they're finally

rescued – the boys explicitly blame the white kangaroo for what we could call their *detour* (by taking them so far away from the family station, from settlement), and their humiliation. One of the station's stockmen, Smith, is more determined than ever to kill this quasi-mythical creature: 'It's time that 'ere animal was shot. There's been that amount of talk about it, and it's escaped so often, that folks really begin to think it's got a charmed life.'[cdlvii]

The final chapter begins as if the story is now over, but not quite: 'There is no more to tell, except to say that, as the party passed through the Never Never Ranges, the white kangaroo paid them a visit. It was at night; every man was asleep, except Smith…'.[cdlviii] When the white kangaroo suddenly appears at the campsite as a 'ghostly visitor,' Smith picks up his rifle and shoots it 'through the heart.'[cdlix] The killing – the gun shot – immediately takes the rest of the party back to the most violent days of the frontier, triggering a collective, albeit fleeting, nightmare: 'the effect of this sudden shot upon the sleepers was tremendous. They thought of nothing less than a charge of wild blacks, and as they sprang up they grasped their carbines, and stared out into the darkness.'[cdlx] The white kangaroo clearly works as a metonym here for Aboriginal people on the frontier at a time when the frontier is already disappearing. Killing it is a way of sweeping the old frontier away, a symbolic expression of colonial extinction discourse. Everdale himself notes that Aboriginal people have 'no hope' and are unable to 'think of a future':[cdlxi] settlement, in his view, has already left them behind. The white kangaroo is a persistent residue or after-image of all this. It has to die because it literally takes settlers away from the proper business (and place) of settlement. 'I shall skin this fellow now,' Ralph tells the others, 'just to show that it hadn't a charmed life…'.[cdlxii] The white kangaroo is unceremoniously despatched in the final paragraphs of the novel. Whatever aura it had is now casually stripped away, as if the novel's aim all along has simply been to realise this creature's complete demystification.

Boys' adventure novels of empire in the second half of the nineteenth century were increasingly underpinned by Christian values, a robust anti-intellectualism, a love of active outdoor life, and a commitment to militarised forms of discipline and organisation. In the 1890s, various boys' organisations dedicated themselves 'to the ideals of Christian manliness and patriotism,' responding to 'the increased militarism of the age';[cdlxiii] for example, Howard Spicer's Boys' Empire League or the Glaswegian William Smith's Boys'

Brigade – which went on to open branches in towns and cities across Australia. Perhaps the best-known writer of boys' adventure fiction at this time was G.A Henty, author of well over a hundred novels to do with feats of bravery, battles, and conquests from around the world. C.C. Eldridge writes that Henty always 'preferred the lad who could ride and shoot to a boy who could quote Euripides or solve problems in higher mathematics.'[cdlxiv] Learning by rough-and-ready first-hand experience was the priority of this kind of adventure-based *bildungsroman*, and the frontier always had to be interesting, never boring. Romantic involvements, however, were not allowed. Henty's first biographer was G. Manville Fenn, who claimed there was 'nothing namby-pamby in Henty's writings, for his adolescent characters were not so much boys as men, saving in this, that he kept them to boy life, and never made his works sickly by the introduction of what an effeminate writer would term the tender passion.'[cdlxv]

Fenn was himself a prolific and popular novelist of empire, following Henty's example almost to the letter. *The Dingo Boys, or, The Squatters of Wallaby Range* (1892) is a staggeringly racist novel set in Australia. It was illustrated by the British artist Walter Sydney Stacey, whose drawings accompanied stories by some of the most popular adventure writers of his time, including Henty, H. Rider Haggard, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The novel begins with some new arrivals in northern Queensland. Two teenage brothers, Norman and Raphael, and a friend, Artemus, have emigrated with their family to 'start afresh in the antipodes' after a financial disaster at home.[cdlxvi] Their father, Captain Bedford, takes them out to the frontier to look for land, but they worry continually about Aboriginal attacks, responding nervously every time they encounter something unfamiliar (a 'savage' turns out to be a black cockatoo etc.). Sam German, a farmhand, later stokes a campfire, producing more paranoia by 'throwing up the figures of the little party clearly against the darkness, ready for the spears of the blacks…'.[cdlxvii] An Aboriginal man, Ashantee – his west African name reflects the global conflations of empire – hangs around the party, further complicating the settlers' 'possession' of this 'new Eden.' In response to all this, Captain Bedford gives his sons military titles ('Private Norman') and trains them for battle. He gives them nicknames, too: Man, Rifle and (less connected to masculine soldiering) Tim. Ashantee helps the family to draw a now-familiar distinction between domesticated Aboriginal people – although the party's racist views of him only increase – and 'wild' or 'myall' Aboriginal

people on the frontier, and they try to use him to their advantage. But their fear of attacks remains:

> the evening meal was discussed in peace, but not without an occasional glance round, and a feeling of dread that at any moment there might be an alarm; for they felt that after all they were interlopers in an enemy's country, and on their voyage out they had heard more than one account of troubles with the blacks, stories of bloodshed and massacre, which they had then been ready to laugh at as traveller's tales, but which now impressed them very differently, and filled them with an undefined sensation of terror, such as made all start at every shadow or sound.[cdlxviii]

Two years pass and the family has now built a prosperous station. Captain Bedford then allows the boys to go on a kangaroo hunt, which again works as an interlude (or *detour*) in the novel. Although they are still troubled by the possibility of Aboriginal attacks, the boys feel the land is 'theirs as much as any one's' and head out into the bush. Ashantee – or Shanter – accompanies them and kills a wallaby with his boomerang. When a mob of large kangaroos head towards them, the boys panic and begin to gallop away 'to avoid what they looked upon as an enemy.'[cdlxix] Shanter throws a spear at an 'old man' kangaroo which grabs him and holds him tightly in its arms, 'like a child in the grasp of a strong man.'[cdlxx] A violent struggle ensues and Shanter implores the boys to shoot the kangaroo and save him.

W. S STACEY 'WITHOUT A MOMENT'S HESITATION…' *THE DINGO BOYS* 1892

This is clearly a generic scene in colonial kangaroo hunt fiction: we saw it with Alfred Dudley and Mickie in Sarah Porter's *Alfred Dudley*, for example. The kangaroo in Fenn's novel is charged with malice, 'as if endowed with human instinct' and with 'a peculiar triumphant leer in its eyes.'[cdlxxi] Artemus/Tim finally shoots the kangaroo in the head. Shanter seems to be mortally wounded, but he suddenly gets up and cuts the tail off the wallaby he had killed with his boomerang. That night, Raphael/Rifle dreams 'that a huge black came hopping like a kangaroo' to carry off their aunt Georgie, while Artemus/Tim dreams the kangaroo still has Shanter in his arms and 'when he took up the gun to fire it would not go off.'[cdlxxii] The dead kangaroo haunts their unconscious here and fuels their frontier paranoia – rather like

the white kangaroo in Cleland's novel. The next day, Shanter is dismayed to realise the boys had killed the kangaroo, and he falls ill; the boys, on the other hand, just want his gratitude. Remaining at the campsite as Shanter recovers, the expedition turns melancholy: 'it was a sad vigil, and not made more pleasant by the sight of the great kangaroo lying just at the edge of the water-hole, and towards which a perfect stream of insects were already hurrying over dry ground, while flies buzzed incessantly about it in the air.'[cdlxxiii] The kangaroo carcass – far from being a trophy of the hunt, or sustenance for hungry settlers – becomes instead a sort of ill omen, decomposing in front of them as they remain behind, lost in the bush without Shanter's direction. The menace of the kangaroo merges with the boys' fear of Aboriginal attacks. As he looks out from the campsite, Norman/Man sees 'nothing but a few kangaroos which looked like blackfellows in the distance.'[cdlxxiv]

The kangaroo hunt can produce merriment and the thrill of adventure, a reward for the hard work of settlement. But here, it drains the boys of their energy: 'The pleasure had gone out of the trip now.'[cdlxxv] It has an emasculating role, a bit like the white kangaroo in Cleland's novel. In *The Dingo Boys*, however, kangaroo hunting also works as a kind of preparation for the frontier violence its characters have dreaded all along. It haunts their dreams and makes them melancholy. Captain Bedford says at one point, 'if it were not for thoughts of the black fellows, what a paradise this would be!' His brother replies, more insightfully, 'Perhaps the blacks say something of the kind respecting the whites.'[cdlxxvi] The novel ends by unleashing its frontier paranoia through a sustained Aboriginal attack on the settlers' property. This is something the boys have been trained for, something that enables them now to leave the kangaroo hunt as *detour* – and their boyhood – behind them: 'Norman Bedford, as he lay there among the bushes, felt, at the sight of the blacks, as if boyhood had suddenly dropped away with all the joyous sport and fun, to leave him a thoughtful man in a terrible emergency…'.[cdlxxvii]

As a *bildungsroman*, Fenn's novel takes the boys from a (failed) kangaroo hunt in the bush to a violent encounter with Aboriginal people on the station: from boyhood to a militarised form of manhood. When the attacks finally take place, the settlers go to war as a way of consolidating their claim on the land. *The Dingo Boys* is strangely caught between imagining the end of the frontier and acknowledging that this cannot be so easily realised as the

attacks continue, relentlessly, night after night. And yet each morning 'there were no horrors to see. Silently, and unknown to the defenders of the happy little English home, the blacks had carried away their dead and wounded, and all outside looked so beautiful and peaceful, that the events of the past night seemed like a dream.'[cdlxxviii] This is quite different to watching the steadily decomposing corpse of the kangaroo day after day. It helps, from the novel's perspective, to sweep away settler guilt and prevent the homestead from recognising itself as a massacre site. It also turns Aboriginal-settler conflict into a 'dream': this could only happen in a post-frontier novel that is nevertheless unable to stop itself from reanimating the frontier as a site of racial violence.

Looking back and learning about frontier violence at some later stage can also be important to the colonial *bildungsroman*. The Jamaican-born C. Stuart Ross came to Australia as a young man in the 1850s. A Presbyterian minister at Skipton in Victoria's western district, he wrote a number of books about the role of the church in Fiji, New Guinea and New Zealand – where also lived and worked. His *Colonisation and Church Work in Victoria* was published in 1891. Ross was also interested in the history of pastoralism in Australia and New Zealand and wrote tributes to significant figures here, such as the western district Presbyterian squatter and philanthropist Francis Ormond. *Dick Arnold: A Tasmanian Romance* (1893) was his only substantial novel. It introduces 'a youth of exuberant spirits' who leaves his dreary job in Melbourne ('the distasteful bondage of the desk') to embrace the 'wild, happy freedom' of travel and adventure in Tasmania.[cdlxxix] When he arrives there, Dick meets an old school friend, Edward Salcombe, and together they tour the island enjoying the wilderness but also admiring the achievements of colonial settlement (the 'prettiest' country residences, stations, orchards, gardens etc.). On an out-station near Myrtle Park they go kangaroo hunting. Edward kills a doe with his first shot; they discover a joey in its pouch which they 'set at liberty to find her way as best she could through life.'[cdlxxx] Along the way Edward tells Dick a number of stories about earlier colonial life in Tasmania, going back to the Black War. **'**My patriotism,' he says, 'will never make me shut my eyes to that black shadow which, like a bar sinister, lies across our national escutcheon.'[cdlxxxi] Unusually for a colonial novel, Edward entirely blames white settlers for the events that escalated the violence. He goes on to explain the circumstances leading to the so-called Risdon Massacre, which we discussed in Chapter Two:

> it was there, early in 1804, that the tragical event took place which really formed the beginning of what was subsequently known as the Black War. A large body of natives, consisting of men, women, and children, came one day pell-mell down the hill which rose above the encampment, in full cry after a herd of kangaroos. The capture of game was their only object, without any intention to molest the whites. But whether from mere wantonness of cruelty, or from actual fear of an attack I can't say; the officer in command ordered the soldiers who were with him to fire upon the advancing crowd, who were unsuspicious of any threatening danger, and a large number of them were killed.[cdlxxxii]

This account directly recalls Edward White's testimony in 1830 – casting aside the ambivalence of many contemporary accounts of this event to place the blame squarely on the actions of the militia.

Dick Arnold's commitment to remembering and understanding actual historical events does indeed make it unusual as a colonial kangaroo hunt adventure novel. It wants Edward to provide history lessons to Dick that register the 'atrocities' of frontier violence against Aboriginal people, working as a reminder that settler pleasures (sport, hunting, tourism) are laid over the top of a history of massacre and conquest. But it also reproduces late colonial extinction discourses ('only a feeble remnant of them left') and enthusiastically endorses the role of the Aboriginal 'conciliator,' G.A. Robinson. Edward's lessons are in any case followed by an old shepherd's narrative of the early days that tells of a station under attack from Aboriginal people: 'I don't like to shed human blood, but it must be done in self-defence,' he tells the young men.[cdlxxxiii] Ross's novel gets close to *The Dingo Boys* here, but it refuses to dismiss colonial frontier history as a passing 'dream.' For Edward, the rewards of settlement have to be measured against its violent origins: 'these advantages…can never compensate for the crimes and woes, the tragedies and tears which have so deeply shadowed and stained the earlier chapters of our colonial history.'[cdlxxxiv] Dick finally returns to Melbourne, emerging from this local *bildungsroman* adventure novel with 'his mind well stored with useful and varied information respecting the country over which he had been rambling.'[cdlxxxv] This is a novel that takes both its characters and its readers on a kangaroo-

hunting *detour*, teaching them something significant about colonial history along the way – although with no sense of the consequences of all this for contemporary life.

John Kevin was a teacher and Inspector of Schools in regional New South Wales who was particularly interested in children's literary education, much like Sarah Porter and Ann Bowman. By the 1880s he was publishing verse and serialised fiction for 'young folks' under the pseudonym Arthur Ferres. His edited *Poetic Selections for Schools* (1882) rather shamelessly included some of his own work, along with other more renowned Australian and British writers. It is fair to say that Ferres has been generally overlooked as a late colonial writer. But he did produce two interesting kangaroo hunt narratives for younger readers, both published in 1896. *His First Kangaroo: An Australian Story for Boys* follows the familiar colonial *bildungsroman* adventure novel formula as it takes its young men from city to bush and from school work in the classroom to learning-through-experience. Dick Morrison is 'a fine, manly, handsome boy of eighteen' who hasn't quite completed his education at Sydney Grammar School. He goes with his friend Tom Flood to stay at a pastoral property near Wellington in central New South Wales, owned by the Baird family. Ned Baird – Dick's cousin – 'might have gone on to the University and taken his degree, but he preferred station life.'[cdlxxxvi] There are also three sisters; the eldest, Maggie, is a good shot with a rifle. The novel gives us a very brief, racist frontier history of the station's early days ('Seventy years ago…'), when 'the blacks were numerous and troublesome – spearing or killing in a merciless manner any white unarmed man that came their way.'[cdlxxxvii] But *His First Kangaroo* does not allow itself to become preoccupied with the colonial frontier. It remains resolutely focused on the present day, relishing the 'fine sport' of kangaroo hunting as a recreational activity that, among other things, can – despite the injunctions of G.A. Henty – lead happily to settler romance.

One consequence of this is that there is no Aboriginal companion in the novel. Instead, there is a 'new chum,' Archie M'Tavish, a Scottish relative who comes 'to see and learn' about settler life. Soon they all go to Long Flats where there are 'emus and kangaroos by the dozen': 'The party consisted of Miss [Maggie] Baird, Miss Laura, Ned, Dick, Flood, and M'Tavish, all mounted on horse as fleet and reliable as could be found in any part of the colony. Ned did not forget to bring his three kangaroo dogs, for the sport was to be hunting,

pure and simple, and firearms were forbidden.'[cdlxxxviii] This particular hunt opens with some now-familiar elements – a 'delightful' morning in the bush, an awareness of surrounding ecologies (bird song, wild flowers), and a taken-for-granted sense of settlement as a material fact ('the great heavy beef-afflicted bullocks lay about here and there…').[cdlxxxix] The men proceed to chase some kangaroos. Soon they split up and M'Tavish, with one of the dogs, pursues his first kangaroo on his own. The kangaroo and the dog become caught in a struggle and M'Tavish attempts to intervene, using his whip-handle to strike the kangaroo over the head. But the kangaroo catches him 'between his short fore-legs' and holds him 'like a grisly bear.' Ned comes to the rescue and kills the kangaroo with a club. Full of bravado and confidence, M'Tavish, declares 'that it was the greatest mistake in the world to hunt a kangaroo or battle with him without a bowie-knife in one's hand.'[cdxc] There are overtones of the North American bear hunter in these passages. But the important thing to note here is that M'Tavish takes the place of those Aboriginal companions in some of the other novels we have been discussing, like Mickie and Ashantee. This is not a scene about Aboriginal-settler reciprocity. It is instead about settler expertise and masculine rivalry.

Unusually, *His First Kangaroo* is a kangaroo hunt romance, going against the grain of Henty and Fenn. At one point Mr Baird, the squatter, tells a story about chivalry and kangaroo hunting in an earlier phase of settlement, when 'each young hunter was dubbed a knight, and had among the assembled fair a lady-love who he was supposed to please no matter the peril, fatigue, or danger; and the he who fairly killed the first kangaroo was the hero of the day, and was supposed to claim as his lady-love the beauty of the assembled fair ones.'[cdxci] Women in the novel join the hunting parties but they are excluded from the hunt itself; instead, they receive its bounty as romantic offerings. When Dick kills a kangaroo, he 'gallantly jumped down from his horse and secured the brush or tail for Miss Baird…'[cdxcii] Ferres' novel was illustrated by the prolific Sydney-based artist Percy Spence, a painter of colonial bush scenes who was also much admired for his portraiture and paintings of fashionable women. In the late 1890s and early 1900s he sketched and painted several kangaroo hunts, a couple of which present well-dressed young women on horseback jumping fences in pursuit of their quarry. One of Spence's sketches in *His First Kangaroo* shows Maggie Baird mounted on her horse. It relates to a later scene in the novel where Dick again rescues M'Tavish from a kangaroo's embrace, killing the kangaroo in a water hole

and scalping it with his pocket knife. He then steps up to Maggie and brandishes the 'bleeding scalp' as a token of love (or lust). 'MY FIRST KANGAROO, Maggie!' he exclaims, pretty much as if he is publicly announcing the loss of his virginity.[cdxciii]

PERCY SPENCE 'MY FIRST KANGAROO, MAGGIE' *HIS FIRST KANGAROO* 1896

In Spence's sketch, Dick is holding on to one of the kangaroo's ears and the other hunters are raising their hats in approval. M'Tavish, on the other hand, never manages to kill a kangaroo; he had been attracted to Maggie but now he is forced to put his feelings to one side. At the end of the novel he marries a neighbouring farmer's daughter and then leaves Australia 'abruptly and…uncivilly.' Both Dick and Tom, on the other hand, marry into the Baird squattocracy: success in kangaroo hunting, for those who remain in the colony, brings romantic rewards and secures their claim to property and wealth.

*

In the male rite-of-passage colonial *bildungsroman*, the kangaroo has to die so that young men can develop and prosper. But in other kinds of colonial writing for younger readers, the lessons learned about native species can work on character formation in quite different ways. Louisa Anne Meredith was a poet, novelist and chronicler of colonial life, as well as an amateur botanist. She emigrated from England to Sydney with her husband Charles in September 1839. The following year they moved to the east coast of Tasmania, setting up a family farm. Meredith wrote several books about her life there, including *Tasmanian Friends and Foes, Feathered, Furred, and Finned*, first published in Hobart in 1880 and then in London the following year. This lightly fictionalised narrative introduces the Merton family and their seventeen-year-old daughter Lina, who is writing to her cousin in England about native species on the island. Lina's first letter (or 'gossip') is about kangaroos. 'The kangaroo's face is very like a deer's,' she explains, 'with full dark eyes, and quite long eye-lashes, and such beautiful large delicate ears, like a mouse's, only magnified I don't know how many times.'[cdxciv] But this rather endearing description is followed by the sombre observation that the largest kangaroos on the island, the Foresters, 'have been so hunted

and destroyed that there are very few left in Tasmania, and those are in private preserves, or very remote out-of-the-way places, and rarely seen.'[cdxcv]

Tim Bonyhady has noted that while Meredith 'looked on cruelty as a human failing, she regarded extinction as an inevitable consequence of colonisation.'[cdxcvi] We have sometimes talked in this book about extinction discourses in relation to Aboriginal people. But there was also a prevailing extinction discourse in colonial Australia about kangaroos – adding another dimension to the conflations that routinely took place between the predicaments of Aboriginal people and native species under colonisation. Lina passionately opposes the 'wanton cruelty' that leads to the sweeping destruction of species, and as a Christian she invokes 'the Creator's mercy and beneficence' as a model for colonial settlers to follow. It becomes a matter of pedagogical necessity: 'I wish all children were taught this as we have been…', she writes.[cdxcvii]

Earlier in this chapter we noted the links between natural history, natural theology and the education of the young in Bowman's *The Kangaroo Hunters*, where young men immerse themselves in 'the empire of nature' in all its variety. Children's literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in fact often used 'a natural theological framework to teach versions of what we would call ecological understanding.'[cdxcviii] Lina herself is alert to the value of studying and classifying bush ecology. But she also likes to domesticate native species, bringing them into the shelter of the farm. This is something quite different to the 'ideals of Christian manliness' promoted in, say, Fenn's boys adventure novel – which tied these ideals to the violent defence of the frontier. We could say that Lina's perspective on species *feminises* its Christian framework, turning wild animals into charming, docile house pets. Domesticating species is supposed to protect them from the 'wanton cruelty' of hunters. But every story Lina tells about tame kangaroos also ends in their death. A forester kept by a shepherd's wife 'was pulled down and killed by strange dogs,' the 'usual sad fate of such pets'.[cdxcix] A female kangaroo is killed by a kangaroo dog, who then carries her joey in its mouth into the family home where a domestic servant feeds and nurtures it. 'With all the care that is possible', Lina writes, 'many more Joeys die than live, when taken young from their mothers. I know ours have always been most kindly attended to, but most of

them died soon.' This particular joey also dies, 'without the least hurt, and without a struggle.'[d]

Later in the narrative, a wealthy squatter friend of the Mertons, John Bexley, talks to Lina about a parliamentary Act for the protection of black swans in Tasmania. He also hopes for further species legislation to ensure that 'every native animal, bird, and fish shall be…secure from utter annihilation.'[di] A footnote tells us that Meredith's husband Charles had in fact introduced an Act for the protection of black swans on 4 October 1860. Charles Meredith was elected to the Tasmanian Legislative Assembly as member for Glamorgan in 1856. During the 1860s and 1870s he was responsible for passing a number of other laws for the protection of species – native and introduced – now identified as 'game.' The 1879 *Game Protection Act*, for example, banned kangaroo hunting between 1 August and 30 January. It stated that 'for every head of kangaroo so hunted or found in [the hunter's] possession and for every skin or carcase of kangaroo so found…[the hunter must] forfeit and pay a penalty not exceeding Forty Shillings.'[dii] This is the opposite of Queensland's *Marsupial Destruction Act*, which began to pay hunters for kangaroo scalps at this time. Louisa Meredith would have been an important influence on the *Game Protection Act*, not least because she had so often registered the vulnerability of kangaroos in the wild. Foresters, she wrote much earlier on in *My Home in Tasmania* (1853), are 'always the least swift, and consequently most frequently taken,' which means 'the great boomer kangaroo has become in all the inhabited districts an extinct animal.'[diii] But concerns about species extinction here are traded off against the protection of game as a valuable resource. This confirms Tim Bonyhady's point: sentiment about species and an acceptance of the inevitability of extinction are not as remote from each other as we might first imagine.

Lina's letters to England are concerned less with large-scale questions of extinction and more to do with local examples of cruelty to animals – writing to inform her friend of the suffering 'many poor little creatures endure in the possession of careless or unfeeling children or grown people.'[div] She is troubled by the suffering of native species and feels close enough to them to speak on their behalf. But what if animals could speak about their *own* suffering? In fact, two fantasy narratives were published in Australia around the end of the nineteenth century which revolved around traumatic encounters between children and

talking kangaroos. The first is Arthur Ferres' *His Cousin the Wallaby, and Three Other Australian Stories*, published in Melbourne by George Robertson in 1896. The second is Ethel Pedley's *Dot and the Kangaroo*, posthumously published in London by Thomas Burleigh in 1899. Pedley's book soon became a perennial favourite, reprinted many times over.

The nineteenth century saw an increasing number of fantasy children's narratives featuring children and animals talking together, often with a moral (and even ecological) purpose. Lewis Carroll's hallucinatory *Alice* books (1865, 1871) were popular in Australia, and so were Kipling's *Jungle Book* stories (1893-95); Kipling had visited Australia in 1891 to great acclaim, and the *Jungle Books* were bestsellers in the colonies with some of the stories serialised locally in Melbourne's *Argus*. Tess Cosslett sees talking animal stories for children as part of the 'educational Enlightenment,' promoting 'the better treatment of animals' by enabling children to 'learn lessons in good behaviour.'[dv] In Ferres' *His First Kangaroo*, we saw young men kill and scalp kangaroos to prove their manhood; unlike some of the earlier the kangaroo hunt novels, they never experience this as an ethical dilemma. But *His Cousin the Wallaby* gives us a completely different perspective on killing kangaroos – and on colonial Australian masculinity. The fantasy begins with a young farm boy, Richard Hawkins, who weeps as he daydreams about being an unloved orphan, tormented by a cruel stepmother. His imagined predicament helps him to bond emotionally with his pet wallaby, Frong Frong:

> Richard Hawkins stood under the cowshed, and looked out on the dismal day, while the tears ran down his cheeks in quiet streams….Frong Frong, the tame wallaby, sat on his tail in the garden, looking sad and dejected too, for though he did not cry as little boys and girls do, yet he was far from happy. It would be hard to say what he was thinking about – (I suppose we must allow that wallabies think, otherwise how could they act?) – but he was certainly thinking about something not very pleasant, for his face was as sad and as dull as anything could be.[dvi]

The wallaby recognises Dick's distress and offers to take him into the bush – an 'enchanting' place 'full of light and sunshine' – to introduce him to 'the whole tribe of wallaby land.'[dvii] Soon, Dick is living happily amongst Frong Frong's relations, essentially becoming a wallaby

himself. But one day a group of hunters arrive, cracking their stock-whips and firing their rifles. The fantasy pauses for a moment to explain how a large-scale wallaby hunt works, euphemistically linking the killing of native species with Aboriginal dispossession (and finding the law inadequate here as a way of dealing fairly with this predicament):

> Will you allow me here to try and describe a wallaby drive? Many of you have no doubt been at one; but I am sure that a great many more have never even heard of the name. This is how it is done:
>
> A certain district or locality is supposed to be infested by wallabies. These creatures are thought to eat up the grass that should go to fatten sheep and cattle, and are accordingly destroyed. If we had a proper court of jurisprudence in which the wallaby side could be heard, I think a good case could be made out for the wallaby family. They were here long before sheep or cattle or horses were heard of, and the first possessor has surely the right to claim the soil before all comers?[dviii]

Dick and his friends hide in a cave, where they meet an old wallaby wearing a 'turban.' It turns out the old wallaby had been shot and scalped by a hunter who 'cut off both ears and the portion of skin over the top of the head by which they were joined.'[dix] This is where Ferres' fantasy contrasts so strikingly with the novel he published earlier the same year. In *His First Kangaroo*, a young man also named Dick holds up a kangaroo's scalp in triumph. In *My Cousin the Wallaby*, however, Dick is a child who hears first-hand all about the suffering this causes from the perspective of the scalped animal. In talking animal stories, children have a (sentimentalised) kinship with animals. But the colonial adventure *bildungsroman* seems to educate its children *out* of that kinship, inducting them into an adult world where killing native species becomes both a recreational pleasure and an imperative to settler development.

Talking animal stories enable children to question animals in their own habitat, learning about how they live. But to do that, children have to leave home – which is why Dick imagines he is an orphan – and go into the wild. In *My Cousin the Wallaby*, the old wallaby is deranged by his traumatic experiences; but he is also a kind of instructor, teaching Dick about wallaby life. When Dick asks the old wallaby why he sits on his tail, he replies in the

form of a verse that replicates Lewis Carroll's famous mock-educational poem, 'You Are Old, Father William' ('And yet you incessantly stand on your head', etc.) in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*:

'You ask me why I sit on my tail',
  The wallaby said with a sigh;
  'Your question to answer I fear I shall fail,
  But it can be no harm to try'.[dx]

In Carroll's poem, the old man finally threatens to push the inquisitive boy down the stairs. In the old wallaby's verse, the wallaby hits the child with his tail and 'dashed with all speed away down the creek, / Taking forty long yards at a bound.'[dxi] There are obviously limits here to how close a child can get to a native species. The verse also shows us that native species can turn *against* curious children who merely 'gape' and 'stare.' But Dick nevertheless takes the wallabies' side. When the hunters return, he whitewashes the old wallaby to look like a 'demon.' Hypnotised by the spectacle, the hunters hand their guns over to Dick who then makes them sing a song about the business of professional kangaroo hunting in colonial New South Wales:

At five we rise - oh! bother the flies -
  Is breakfast ready, Mary?
We'll have no dogs, nor calves, nor hogs
  To chase the wallabies early.

Some run here, and some with fear
  Dash through the scrub and briars;
Oh! there he goes - see his black nose;
  They're a lot of regular fliers.

We'll hunt all day, nor stop, nor stay,
  With scalps we'll fill our wallets – [dxii]

It is worth comparing this poem to the 1805 'Colonial Hunt' that we talked about in Chapter Four. In this case, however, there is no lyrical relationship to the bush, no wallaby tears, and no thrill of the chase. The hunters' song now is purely functional, and occupational – playing itself out in the wake of the New South Wales *Pastures and Stock Protection Act* (1880), which (in the wake of the Queensland *Marsupial Destruction Act*) had offered a 'certificate of destruction' and an agreed sum of money for 'the scalps of any noxious animals [kangaroos, wallabies, and so on] killed within a district.'[dxiii] The 'mention of scalps' in the song makes the old wallaby grin 'most horribly.' Dick then interrupts the singing and reprimands the hunters for being so mercenary: 'You think, perhaps, it is fine fun to shoot down a poor defenceless wallaby, and then scalp it, getting in the course of vile trade perhaps the sum of threepence or fourpence each for your butchery.'[dxiv]

Later, Dick sings a song about a young boy called Tommy Potshot, who is given a 'little gun' by his mother. This a song about a child aspiring – too early, perhaps – to be a 'sportsman,' a recreational hunter. Tommy takes his gun into the forest and comes across a defiant old kangaroo:

'I'm the king of all this forest,'
  The kangaroo did say,
'And who are you, you little scamp,
  Who dare to come this way?'

'I am a sportsman,' Tommy said,
  And out in search of game;
I have a gun, a gun so fine –
  You had better mind the same.'[dxv]

The old kangaroo snatches Tommy's gun and fires it at the boy, who runs away in terror:

The kangaroo he kept the gun,
As a caution to all boys
Who dared to shoot in kangaroo ground,

Or there to make a noise.[dxvi]

This is only instance we have seen in kangaroo hunt narratives where a kangaroo takes a gun and shoots back – in this case, to protect its habitat. But by this time, the hunters have already slaughtered countless wallabies and Dick and his friends are horrified to discover their remains, 'all with the top of their heads raw and bleeding.'[dxvii] *My Cousin the Wallaby* is a sometimes-whimsical children's fantasy about talking animals that also starkly chronicles the extreme violence of native species extermination. It ends by returning Dick to his home, paying a final lyrical tribute to the wallabies by asking its young readers to appreciate their qualities (as 'good neighbours,' devoted parents, optimistic about their future) and even to emulate their naturally 'joyous' way of living in the Australian forests.

Ethel C. Pedley was a successful violinist, vocalist and music teacher. Born in England, she arrived in Sydney with her family in 1873. She later trained in London at the Royal Academy of Music, returning to Sydney in 1882 where she became well-known locally as a musical performer and founder of the St Cecilia all-female choir. Pedley died of cancer in August 1898, aged thirty-nine. The work for she is best remembered, *Dot and the Kangaroo*, was published posthumously the following year in London, with nineteen black-and-white illustrations by Frank P. Mahony.

FRANK P. MAHONY DRAWINGS FOR *DOT AND THE KANGAROO* 1898

Mahony was best known at the time for his magazine sketches of bush scenes and bush workers; he also illustrated some literary works such as Henry Lawson's *While the Billy Boils* (1896) and Louise Mack's *Teens* (1897). Most of his work celebrated settler culture, with a particular interest in the figure of the horse (the boundary rider etc). He rarely seems to have sketched scenes of wilderness or native species. In fact, his illustrations for Pedley's children's fantasy narrative were probably the first time Mahony had drawn kangaroos.

Dot and the Kangaroo begins with a dedication: 'To the Children of Australia, in the hope of enlisting their sympathies for the many beautiful, amiable, and frolicsome creatures of their fair land, whose extinction, through ruthless destruction, is being surely accomplished.'[dxviii]

This is a narrative that – just prior to Federation – wants to put species extinction onto a national agenda. Louisa Meredith's *Tasmanian Friends and Foes* had reluctantly accepted the inevitability of extinction in the face of settlement. But Pedley's dedication gives children a more active role to play in preserving native species. *Dot and the Kangaroo* is also a *bildungsroman*, except – as with *My Cousin the Wallaby* – its child protagonist doesn't grow up. The aim instead is to educate children about species, kangaroos in particular; and in the case of Pedley's elaborate fantasy narrative, the children are expected to educate adults in turn.

The story begins with a young girl, Dot, who – chasing after a hare in Alice-like fashion – finds herself lost in the bush, 'miles away from her father's selection.' Her thoughts immediately turn to cases of other lost children who were never found, and she begins to cry. The lost child in the bush was by this time a familiar trope in representations of colonial life: a well-known example is Frederick McCubbin's *Lost* (1886), an oil painting of a young girl weeping amongst tall gum trees that may have drawn on the case of Clara Crosby, a twelve-year-old girl who disappeared on the way to a selector's property near Lilydale, Victoria. Crosby was in fact found a few weeks' later. 'She had kept herself alive by eating berries, succulent roots and herbs', the *Age* reported in June 1885; 'Her scanty clothing was saturated with moisture and literally in rags…'[dxix] In Pedley's narrative, a large grey kangaroo comes up to Dot and begins to weep in sympathy for her ('for down the animal's nice soft grey muzzle two tiny little tears were slowly trickling').[dxx] We have seen the weeping kangaroo before, in Chapter Four. But here, the kangaroo is not lamenting its own demise; it is instead empathising with the predicament of a lost little girl. Kangaroo (her name is capitalised in the story) hops away and soon returns with 'a spray of berries' in her hand. Dot eats the berries and suddenly she is able to understand the language of animals. The berries transform the forest from a silent, eerie place to a place full of chatter and information (about species): suddenly, 'the whole bush seemed filled with talking.'[dxxi]

Anxiety over a lost child becomes a theme in the story. It turns out that Kangaroo had taken her joey out of her pouch during a hunt – rather like the blue flyer we described in Chapter Five – hiding him in the scrub in an attempt to save him. But when she returns to recover the infant, he is gone. This is in fact a version of what C.N. Johnson, in a scientific study of

the relationship between wallaby mothers and their joeys, calls 'separation in flight.'[dxxii] When disturbed, Johnson writes, 'the mother and the young-at-foot would flee to different patches of cover….I often suspected, and on several occasions was able to confirm by careful observation…that the two rejoined soon afterwards. Both mother and infant seemed to be active in bringing about their reunion.'[dxxiii] Commentaries on the colonial kangaroo hunt routinely observed the separation of a kangaroo and its joey, viewing it in a variety of ways. In his popular chronicle *Two Years in New South Wales* (1827), the visiting surgeon Peter Cunningham cast it as a desperate act of self-preservation, which he then invested with sympathy and sentimentality:

> When hard hunted, the mother will stop suddenly, thrust her fore-paws into her pouch, drag out the young one and throw it away, that she may hop lighter along. They are always *very* hard pressed however before they thus sacrifice the life of their off-spring, to save their own; and it is pitiful to see the tender sympathetic looks they will sometimes cast back at the poor little helpless creatures they've been forced to desert.[dxxiv]

The transported Irish nationalist John Mitchel description of a kangaroo hunt in *Jail Journal* includes the killing of a large female kangaroo still carrying a joey that 'she had not time to throw away.' He notes, 'The females, always, as they rise from their lair, at sight of an enemy, put their hands in their pockets and throw their young ones into some place of safety, that they themselves may run the lighter. This one had fought desperately for her life and her little *joey*, as the young are called.'[dxxv]

In *Dot and the Kangaroo*, the Kangaroo gives a personal voice to this recurring narrative, investing the horror of separation from her joey with maternal emotion and a deep sense of regret. She tells Dot what happened when hunters pursued her to the point of exhaustion:

> 'I asked Joey if I dropped him into a soft bush whether he would hide until I came back for him. It was our only chance. I had an idea that if I did that he would be safe – even if I got killed; as they would be more likely to follow me, and never think I had parted from my little Joey. So we did this, and I crossed a creek, which put the hounds off the

> scent, and I got away. In the dusk I came back again to find Joey, but he had gone, and I could not find any trace of him. All night and all day I searched, but I've never seen my Joey since', said the Kangaroo sadly, and Dot saw the tears dim her eyes.[dxxvi]

This is another weeping kangaroo moment, when a mother is separated from her child. Hunting becomes the traumatic core of this story, continually present in the lives of species who incessantly talk about it and fear it. The Kangaroo is melancholic because she has lost her child, but she is also fatalistic because native species are treated by humans only as game and quarry: 'sooner or later', she tells Dot, 'we all get murdered.' Like *My Cousin the Wallaby, Dot and the Kangaroo* is a children's fantasy about native species that invests its whimsy and sentiment with a dark foreboding that at times touches the apocalyptic. 'White Humans are cruel, and love to murder,' the Kangaroo says. 'We must all die.'[dxxvii]

Later on, Dot and the Kangaroo come across an Aboriginal corrobboree where 'painted figures' appear, 'like fiends and skeletons.'[dxxviii] The racism of this scene has often been remarked on;[dxxix] we can note here that it is entirely clichéd and formulaic, reproducing a trope of the corrobboree that routinely flows through colonial Australian writing, notably, in Marcus Clarke's famous 'weird melancholy' commentary in the introduction to Adam Lindsay Gordon's *Poems* (1880). For the Kangaroo, on the other hand, Aboriginal people are 'just Humans' in as much as they all 'kill kangaroos.' 'The Black Humans kill and devour us,' she tells Dot; 'but they, even, are not so terrible as the Whites, who delight in taking our lives, and torturing us just as an amusement.'[dxxx] Soon afterwards, the Kangaroo – with Dot in her pouch – is pursued by Aboriginal people and a pack of dingoes. Dot begs the Kangaroo to leave her behind, but the Kangaroo refuses to be separated from what has now become her surrogate child ('Never again!'). A dingo attacks the Kangaroo who holds it in a 'tight embrace' and then tears its body open with her hind claw. With other dingoes still in pursuit, she leaps over a gully and lands them both to safety on the other side.

There are two kangaroo hunts in *Dot and the Kangaroo*: the originating narrative that sees the Kangaroo lose her joey, and the chase involving Aboriginal people and dingoes where the Kangaroo fights to keep Dot with her. But the story also makes space for a variety of other native species, gathering them together, giving them a voice, letting them express

their predicaments and stand up for their rights. As with Meredith's *Tasmanian Friends and Foes*, laws for the protection of species become an issue and are generally regarded as useless. A Willy Wagail notes that 'Two Kookooburras were shot last week, in spite of Government protection,' while the Kangaroo – when she hears emus are being poisoned by settlers – remarks: 'But I heard…that Emus were protected by the Government.'[dxxxi] Later, in a reinvention of the trial scene in Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Dot is taken to an animal court of justice and prosecuted 'for the wrongs we Bush creatures have suffered from the cruelties of White Humans.'[dxxxii] The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) held its first meeting in New South Wales in August 1874; by the late 1870s and 1880s various Cruelty to Animal Acts were being debated and amended across the colonies. In Dot's trial, a Swallow quotes a Cruelty to Animals Act in order to draw a distinction between domestic animals ('horse, mare, pony, bull, ox…') and native species – what a Pelican calls 'the denizens of the Bush.'[dxxxiii] These are native species talking back to settler cultivation and expansion, prioritizing 'Bush law' over British-derived acts of legislation. But the Kangaroo refuses to testify against Dot. Instead, she puts the girl back in her pouch and hops away.

The Wagtail points them in the direction of Dot's farm, but as they approach Dot's father emerges holding a gun, along with Jack, a stockman. **'**The next instant,' the story tells us, 'the Kangaroo bounded out of the bush into the open paddock. Swift as lightning up went the cruel gun, but, as it exploded with a terrible report, the man, Jack, struck it upwards, and the fatal bullet lodged in the branch of a tall gum tree.'[dxxxiv] The father's reflex action to shoot a native species on sight almost ends in disaster: shooting a kangaroo here would literally mean shooting your own child. Instead, Dot tumbles out of the Kangaroo's pouch and quickly tells her story. The father immediately renounces hunting altogether. Later he turns his property into a sanctuary for native species; and the mother also learns 'to be kind to the bush creatures, and protect them all we can.'[dxxxv] The Kangaroo's joey appears and mother and child are similarly reunited, because it turns out that Jack had brought the joey to the farm as a pet after the initial hunt. When they hop away, Dot realises she can no longer understand the languages of animals. But the fantasy *bildungsroman* has already performed its educational task. Dot has become what the story calls 'an improved Human': which means recognising that humans are simply one species among many in a bush

ecology with finite resources. This also means recognising the need to share space with species. The father creates a waterhole nearby and soon the bush animals and birds move freely across his property, undisturbed.

In Porter's *Alfred Dudley*, we saw a young settler renounce the 'cruel sport' of the kangaroo hunt ('my principles revolt from scenes of blood'). But *Dot and the Kangaroo* does something different. It is no longer just about disavowing the hunt; it is also about recognising the rights of native species to exist and accommodating their needs and habitats within the ever-expanding fabric of the colonial settler project. This children's fantasy wants to hold the nation to account in terms of its treatment of native species. The ethical choice here isn't *between* species, as it was for the characters in Anne Bowman's *The Kangaroo Hunters* who weighed up the value of killing one native animal or bird over another. It is instead about valuing them in all their diversity, their *ecology*. As she looks towards Federation and the beginning of the twentieth century, Ethel Pedley – already a dying woman – asks a Kangaroo to forgive human cruelty and hope that future Australians will take Dot's lesson away with them and reassess their relationship to the natural world. As we have seen in this book, the colonial kangaroo hunt is a brutal event. It might also be exhilarating and exciting, fashionable and sociable, challenging and, sometimes, disappointing. In every case, it is an expression of settler domination over land. But *Dot and the Kangaroo* suggests it can also be an occasion for introspection and reflection: one that can take you into an understanding of native species that might lead to new levels of respect for the dignity of animals and their right to continue to live.

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