The University of Sydney

Copyright in relation to this thesis*

Under the Copyright Act 1968 (several provision of which are referred to below), this thesis must be used only under the normal conditions of scholarly fair dealing for the purposes of research, criticism or review. In particular no results or conclusions should be extracted from it, nor should be copied or closely paraphrased in whole or in part without the written consent of the author. Proper written acknowledgement should be made for any assistance obtained from this thesis.

Under Section 35(2) of the Copyright Act 1968 'the author of a literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work is the owner of any copyright subsisting in the work'. By virtue of Section 32(1) copyright 'subsists in an original literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work that is unpublished' and of which the author was an Australian citizen, an Australian protected person or a person resident in Australia.

The Act, by Section 36(1) provides: 'Subject to this Act, the copyright in a literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work is infringed by a person who, not being the owner of the copyright and without the licence of the owner of the copyright, does in Australia, or authorises the doing in Australia of, any act comprised in the copyright'.

Section 31(1)(a)(i) provides that copyright includes the exclusive right to 'reproduce the work in a material form'. Thus, copyright is infringed by a person who, not being the owner of the copyright, reproduces or authorises the reproduction of a work, or of more than a reasonable part of the work, in a material form, unless the reproduction is a 'fair dealing' with the work 'for the purpose of research or study' as further defined in Sections 40 and 41 of the Act.

Section 51(2) provides that: "Where a manuscript, or a copy of a thesis or other similar literary work that has not been published is kept in a library of a university or other similar institution or in an archives, the copyright in the thesis or other work is not infringed by the making of a copy of the thesis or other work by or on behalf of the officer in charge of the library or archives if the copy is supplied to a person who satisfies an authorized officer of the library or archives that he requires the copy for the purpose of research or study'.

*Thesis' includes 'treatise', 'dissertation' and other similar productions.
ENTREPRENEURS, EMPIRES AND PANTOMIMES:

J. C. WILLIAMSON'S PANTOMIME PRODUCTIONS AS A SITE TO REVIEW THE CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF AN AUSTRALIAN THEATRE INDUSTRY, 1882 TO 1914

by Josephine Vita Fantasia

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Department of English University of Sydney

March, 1996

© J. V. Fantasia, 1996
Acknowledgements

In the preparation of my work there are many colleagues, family members and friends who have encouraged and supported my efforts and though they remain nameless, I thank them.

My research would not have been possible without the extraordinary theatre archives situated in various States and the skill and dedication of the librarians who care for them. The past five years have been fruitful because of their assistance. In particular, I want to acknowledge Elizabeth Barnard at the Performing Arts Museum for her assistance since 1991. Likewise, the exemplary staff at the State Libraries of N.S.W and Victoria and at the Australian National Library.

I would also like to acknowledge the personal and professional encouragement which my friend and colleague, Dr Jacquie Lo, has given me over the past five years, most recently in proof-reading my final draft. Similarly, my friend Jane Humble for critical proof-reading of earlier drafts. Special mention also to Dr Mimi Colligan for collegiate support and research assistance in the final stages when work and family commitments prevented me further traveling to Sydney and Melbourne. Thanks to Julie Butner and Shane Monks for invaluable assistance in helping me read the legal cases in relation to J. C. Williamson Ltd's various fights with the Musicians' and Actors' Unions. I am also very appreciative of the assistance Joan and Michael Tallis extended to me early in my research with regard to George Tallis' importance to the pre-1914 Firm.

Special thanks to my supervisor Professor Elizabeth Webby whose understanding of early nineteenth-century pantomime significantly altered the course of my work. I have greatly benefited from the breadth of her knowledge of Australian theatre and literary history. I would also like to thank my friends and teachers at the University of Western Australia, in particular Professor Robert White, Professor Gareth Griffiths, Collin O'Brien, David Williams and Bill Dunstone. Special thanks to Collin O'Brien for sharing with me his knowledge of and enthusiasm for Australian drama.

My profound thanks to my darling husband, Michael, who has both encouraged and supported my efforts in every way possible, at times at the cost of his own valuable work. Likewise my daughters, Catherine, Elena and Joanna who have sacrificed many fun-times in the past five years so that I could complete my research. I trust that they have known that they always come first with me. Finally, thanks to my mother, Vita, and grandmother, Maria, for their unconditional love. I am fortunate to have as my role models women who continue to live with a sense of courage and optimism.

J. V. F.
'ENTREPRENEURS, EMPIRES AND PANTOMIME'

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 8

CHAPTER 1: 'LOCAL, VOCAL & JOKAL':
'Localising' the Pantomime and the Implications
for 'Original' Australian Pantomime

Introduction 27

1.1: Theatre Management and Pantomime Productions,
1882 - 1914: 'Detotalising' an Overview of Williamson's
Pantomime Arrangements 36

1.2: Representations of 'England and its Other' in Australian
Pantomime Scenarios and Stage Settings, 1879 - 1914 70

1.3: An 'Original' Australian Pantomime 89

CHAPTER 2: 'THE BOYS IN THE RED, WHITE & BLUE':
Representation of the British Empire in the Firm's Pantomime
Productions, 1882 - 1914

Introduction 139

2.1: Imperialist Historiography and the 'Legitimation' of J. C.
Williamson 146

2.2: Representations of British Militarism in Pantomime
Productions, 1882 to 1914 167

2.3: The Pantomime as a Spectacle of Patriotic Women:
Utopian Transformations Scenes and Two War-Time
Productions, 1899 Little Red Riding Hood and 1914 Cinderella 193
CHAPTER 3: 'REALMS OF HAPPINESS': Williamson's Pantomimes as a Site for Subverting Subversion

Introduction 216

3.1: Christmas Festivities and the Subversive Potential of the Australian Pantomime: Commedia dell'Arte, Harlequinades and other 'origins' of post-1882 arrangements 227

3.2: The 'Grotesque' Bodies of post-1882 Pantomime Productions and their Arrangement of the Pantomime's Sense of Humour 265

CHAPTER 4: THE 'GREAT EMPIRE OF THE SOUTH': The Firm's Post-Federation Australian Pantomimes and their Implications for Australian Drama

Introduction 295

4.1: Theatrical Partnerships 1874 - 1913 306

4.2: Pantomime and the Firm's Post-Federation Productions: Producing Australian Drama on the Margins of the Empire 335

FINALE 391

Appendices and Bibliography: Volume 2

Appendix 1: Sydney and Melbourne Pantomimes, 1879 - 1914 394

Appendix 2: The Harlequinade from 1914 Cinderella 469

Select Bibliography

Primary Sources:
- Newspapers and periodicals 480
- Manuscripts 483
- Pantomime scripts 487
- Books and articles 491

Secondary Sources
- Books 496
- Articles 506
- Theses and Manuscripts 512

Introduction 4
LIST OF PLATES

PLATE 1  Finale of J. C. Williamson Ltd's Sinbad the Sailor in 1911 theatre programme, Performing Arts Museum, Melbourne .................................................................Frontispiece

PLATE 2  Maud Beatty as Prince Eucalyptus in 1901 Djin Djin in Sydney Morning Herald, 9 February 1901.................................facing p. 26

PLATE 3  Two pictures of the finale of George Musgrove's 1900 Cinderella in theatre scrapbooks, Mitchell Library..............facing p. 42

PLATE 4  Frank Dix, writer and director of J. C. Williamson Ltd's 1913 Forty Thieves in theatre programme, Mitchell Library...........facing p. 49

PLATE 5  Mr George Gordon and his staff in Leader, 2 January 1897 .................................................................facing p. 50

PLATES 6, 7 & 8  Nellie Stewart as Aladdin in Leader, 11 January, 1902

Rehearsing the 'Pyjama Dance' in 1909 Aladdin, Australasian, 25 December 1909

The wardrobe room in 1909 Aladdin, Australasian, 25 December 1909.................................................................facing p. 53

PLATE 9  Mr J. C. Williamson, the Creator of the Pantomime in Leader, 2 January, 1897.................................................................facing p. 64

PLATE 10  From negative in A. J. Perier collection, Mitchell Library, showing village setting of unidentified 1890s pantomime produced by George Rignold.................................................................facing p. 71

PLATE 11  'Ariel' from the Djin Djin in theatre scrapbooks, State Library of Victoria.................................................................facing p. 77

PLATES 12, 13 & 14  Illustrations from theatre programme/script of 1887 Robinson Crusoe, Mitchell Library.................................................................facing p. 84

PLATE 15  Buildings along Circular Quay decorated for Commonwealth Celebrations, 1900.................................................................facing p. 107

PLATE 16  From negative in A. J. Perier collection, Mitchell Library, showing 'Fire and Water Ballet' in 1894 The House That Jack Built.................................................................facing p. 111

PLATE 17  European suitors in Djin Djin, Australasian, 25 January 1896 ..................................................................................facing p. 117

PLATE 18  May Pollard as Mitsa, Talma photograph in May Pollard Papers, Mitchell Library.................................................................facing p. 129

Introduction  5
PLATES 19 & 20
Two photographs of Commonwealth Celebrations, 1900: Government House Gates illuminated and the French Arch on Pitt St, Mitchell Library..............................facing p. 134

PLATE 21
Advertisement for 'Dr. Waugh's Baking Powder' in 1892 theatre programme/script of Babes in the Wood, Mitchell Library ..............................................................................facing p. 144

PLATE 22
Sundry images including principals in March of the Allies from souvenir programme for 1914 Sinbad, Performing Arts Museum .................................................................facing p. 167

PLATE 23

PLATE 24
'Crown Derby' in Leader, 11 January, 1902...........facing p. 174

PLATES 25 & 26
Carrie Moore as Leader of N. S. W. Lancers and the Gordon Highlanders in 1899 Little Red Riding Hood, Theatre scrapbook, State Library of Victoria.........................facing p. 183

PLATE 27
'March of the Nations' in 1904 Sinbad the Sailor in Theatre scrapbooks, State Library of Victoria..............facing p. 186

PLATE 28
Celia Ghiloni as Britannia in souvenir programme 1914 Cinderella, Mitchell Library............................................facing p. 187

PLATE 29
'A Little Group of Dancers' in 1899 Little Red Riding Hood, Theatre scrapbooks, State Library of Victoria....................facing p. 190

PLATE 30
Illustration of Transformation Scene in 1895 Beauty and the Beast, Illustrated Australian News, 1 January 1895..............facing p. 193

PLATE 31
From negatives in A. J. Perier Collection, Mitchell Library, Transformation Scene 'Birth of a New Year' in 1893 Jack the Giant Killer .................................................................facing p. 194

PLATE 32
Illustrated cartoon 'Why We Did Not Go On The Stage' from Sydney Mail Christmas Supplement, 1893 p. xxvi........facing p. 197

PLATES 33, 34 & 35
Souvenir programme of 1914 Sinbad, Performing Arts Museum .................................................................facing p. 214

PLATE 36
Crowd entering Princess Theatre, Melbourne for Matsu, Leader, 2 January 1897....................................................facing p. 217

PLATES 37 & 38
Pantomime boy, Violet Loraine, in 1912 Puss in Boots, theatre programme, Mitchell Library.

The Dame, Edwin Brett, in 1913 The Forty Thieves, theatre programme, Mitchell Library..........................facing p. 223

PLATES 39 & 40

Introduction
Sundry images including Harlequin and Columbine, souvenir programme 1914 *Sinbad*, Performing Arts Museum...facing p.227

**PLATES 41 & 42**

Celia Ghiloni as the 'Slave of the Ring' in 1901 *Aladdin, Million*, 30 January 1902

Millie Young as Robin Hood in 1897 *Babes in the Wood*, Theatre scrapbook, State Library of Victoria...facing p. 235

**PLATES 43 & 44**

Olive Marsden as Sinbad in 1914 *Sinbad*, souvenir programme, Performing Arts Museum

Arthur Stigant as Mrs Kilkenny in 1914 *Cinderella*, souvenir programme, Mitchell Library...facing p. 271

**PLATES 45 & 46**

Ada Reeve as Maid Marion in 1897 *Babes in the Wood*, Theatre scrapbooks, State Library of Victoria

Dolly Castles as Cinderella in 1914 *Cinderella*, souvenir programme, Mitchell Library...facing p. 289

**PLATE 47**

Advertisement for Prima S. L. Donna Corsets in 1903 programme for *Sleeping Beauty*...facing p. 293

**PLATE 48**

Maggie Moore as 'The Mascotte', *Lorgnette*, 11 October 1890...facing p. 313

**PLATE 49**

Maggie Moore as Mrs Sinbad in 1914 *Sinbad*...facing p. 314

**PLATE 50**

George Tallis, photograph courtesy of Michael and Joan Tallis, Adelaide...facing p. 332

**PLATE 51**

The Gymnasium Scene from *The Dairymaids, Theatre*, 1 November 1907...facing p. 357

**PLATES 52 & 53**

Striking a Scene in *Mother Goose* in *Sydney Stage Employees' Annual, 1910*

The flies, Her Majesty's Theatre Sydney, *Sydney Stage Employees' Annual, 1910*...facing p. 359

**PLATE 54**

Charles Howard as Sinbad in 1911 *Sinbad*, theatre programme/script, Mitchell Library...facing p. 371

**PLATE 55**

Tableaux of March of the Commonwealth States to the Federal Capital in 1903 *Red Riding Hood, New Idea*, 6 January 1904...facing p. 379

**PLATE 56**

From negatives in A. J. Perier Collection, Mitchell Library, unidentified scenes from Rignold's 1890s pantomime showing clash between 'whites' and 'blacks'...facing p. 383

**PLATE 57**

The Flying Ballet ("Aviation without the Aeroplanes") 1911 *Sinbad* in souvenir programme, Mitchell Library...facing p. 390

Introduction
INTRODUCTION

The great industrialists utilise all the existing parties turn by turn, but they do not have their own party. This does not mean that they are in any way 'agnostic' or 'apolitical'.

Antonio Gramsci (1971), Selections from Prison Notebooks, 155.

###

To be sure, we must always start from the satisfaction of wants, since they are the end of all production, and the given economic situation at any time must be understood from this aspect. Yet innovations in any economic system do not as a rule take place in such a way that first new wants arise spontaneously in consumers and then the productive apparatus swings round through their pressure. We do not deny the presence of this nexus. It is, however, the producer who as a rule initiates economic change, and consumers are educated by him [the entrepreneur] if necessary; they are, as it were, taught to want new things, or things which differ in some respect or other from those which they have been in the habit of using. Therefore, while it is permissible and even necessary to consider consumers' wants as an independent and indeed the fundamental force in a theory of the circular flow, we must take a different attitude as soon as we analyse change.

Sitting in the gallery of the Princess Theatre, Melbourne, watching *The Phantom of the Opera* in 1992, was a catalyst for my research on the importance of 'entrepreneurial' theatre in Australia. Undoubtedly, the fact that the theatre visit occurred while I was at a conference at the Performing Arts Museum on 'Preserving Our Performing Arts Heritage' in no small way contributed to my critique of *Phantom* that night. The evening seemed to demand that I see a cultural connection between Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical and the particular subject of my research, J. C. Williamson and his Firm. I was sitting in J. C. Williamson and George Musgrove's Princess Theatre, opened in 1886 with Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado*, and which subsequently housed a spectacular array of imported English musical productions: I was watching, over a century later, another musical from London. At one stage, I even speculated on the possibility that, if Williamson's phantom was wandering about the theatre that night, he would be viewing something he would have loved to have imported.

Accompanying the production was a glossy 'souvenir' theatre programme making an adroitly selective use of 'history' for the purpose of marketing *Phantom* to modern audiences. *The Complete Phantom of the Opera* (Perry 1992) includes the histories of the Paris Opera House and the original 1911 novel by Gaston Leroux as preludes to the 'official' history of Webber's musical. It focuses on particular parts of the Opera House's history, later to feature in the contemporary production's set design. The underground lake, used to spectacular effect in the musical, was there because the planners built the Opera House on water-logged land and then had to devise an engineering feat to remove the water from the building's foundations, thus creating a subterranean lake.

The same use of history is evident in the programme's explanation of how Webber borrowed from Gaston Leroux for the *Phantom's* narrative. Leroux's 'detective' story of a deformed killer had 'romantic' possibilities and allowed Webber
to transform the 'phantom of the opera' into a tragic hero. Hence the justification for Webber's use of nineteenth-century theatrical forms in his 'true theatrical instinct' intuited that 'the day of the spiky, abrasive, loose-structured musical may well have passed, and that there is a public thirsting for extravagant romance, colourful spectacle, proscenium arches, orchestra pits, helpless heroines, rugged heroes, tragic villains and evocative melodies' (Perry 1992, 81). Though Webber is not the subject of my research, what struck me about his construction of The Phantom of the Opera on stage, and the reporting of its coming into being in the theatre programme, were the similarities between his apolitical views of musical theatre and Williamson's vision of a popular Australian theatre between 1882 and 1913.

J. C Williamson: Life Story Told in his Own Words with Valedictory Messages (1913), published shortly after his death to commemorate his life's work in the Australian theatre, repeats the substance of a life-time of publicity created by or about him during those years. The biographical section of the publication was based on a series of interviews given to A. G. Stephens of the Bookfellow in 1907. Most significantly, it contains a tract, since quoted many times, describing Williamson's opinion of what constitutes a 'good play' and a 'popular' theatre.

People go to the theatre as a distraction, as an amusement, as a relaxation after the toil of the day, so that they can drop their burdens and forget their troubles for a little while. They do not go to be instructed, or to be puzzled, or to be bored, and being human beings, the same human qualities appeal to them generation after generation (28).

Life Story does not, however, even begin to interrogate the political nature of Williamson's popular theatre. Similarly, Complete Phantom does not in any way substantiate how Webber's 'extravagant romance' was politically different from 'the spiky, abrasive, loose-structured musical.' Does Webber mean musicals by Brecht and Kurt Weill or the likes of Peter Weiss's Marat/Sade or perhaps even Hair, Oh Calcutta, The Rocky Horror Show and Boys in the Band? What is most noticeable about Life Story and The Complete Phantom are their attempts to re-write 'history', and in particular theatre history, to legitimise both Williamson's and Webber's respective 'commercial' enterprises. The implications of this recall the concerns
Brecht (1964) raised in 'Gestic Music' as to the supposed apolitical spectacle of popular cultural forms.

The pomp of the Fascists, taken at its face value, has a hollow gest, the gest of mere pomp, a featureless phenomenon: men strutting instead of walking, a certain stiffness, a lot of colour, self-conscious sticking out of chests, etc. All this could be the gest of some popular festivity, quite harmless, purely factual and therefore to be accepted. Only when the strutting takes place over corpses do we get the social gest of Fascism. This means that the artist has to adopt a definite attitude towards the fact of pomp; he cannot let it just speak only for itself, simply expressing it as the fact dictates (105).

It is the entrepreneur's reluctance 'to adopt a definite attitude towards the fact of pomp' which lies behind my seeing a possible cultural connection between Webber's and Williamson's 'entrepreneurial' theatres. How, for instance, did Webber's 'true theatrical instinct' inform him that the public wanted 'helpless heroines' and 'rugged heroes' after all that has transpired within the Women's Movement from at least the 1890s? How was Williamson so certain that Australia wanted the productions from the Savoy, Drury Lane and Gaiety Theatres in London instead of 'Australian' drama? My night at Phantom of the Opera hence spectacularly focussed for me the motivating concern of my research. How do 'popular' theatrical forms come to dominate the social experience of theatre both materially and ideologically? And how do they give the illusion of novelty while being limited by the entrepreneur's fiercely conservative ideology? Furthermore, how is this related to the organisation of theatre industries?

'Entrepreneurs, Empires and Pantomimes' examines how Williamson influenced the form and content of one theatrical genre within his theatrical empire between 1882 and 1914. As the frontispiece signals in spectacular fashion, the pantomime was a vitally popular dramatic form. I believe that my findings have serious implications for the formation of an Australian theatre industry with regard to the 'development' of Australian drama. Ironically, as J. W. Gough points out in The Rise of the Entrepreneur (1969), the word 'entrepreneur' first appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1897 as referring to 'The director or manager of a public musical institution: one who 'gets up' entertainments, especially musical performances.' Not until its Supplement appeared in 1933 did the Dictionary
recognise the word had a place in the business as well as the entertainment world, and could mean 'one who undertakes an enterprise: especially a contractor...acting as intermediary between capital and labour' (Gough 1969, 9). Though economists never use theatrical allusions to describe entrepreneurship, many, like J. A. Schumpeter (1934), believe that the entrepreneur possessed an 'artistic' flair which expressed 'the joy of creating, of getting things done, or simply of exercising one's energy and ingenuity.' (Schumpeter 1934, 133). As Mark Casson (1990) argues in *Entrepreneurship*, it was Schumpeter who was also responsible for defining the entrepreneur as an innovator and risk-taker, organiser and leader (p. xvi). However, it is the *artist* who continues to be an important motif in explanations of the entrepreneurial type.

The *artist* is an entrepreneur who derives satisfaction directly from the creative art, that is, his own (organizational and programmatic) constructs. There are basically two types of artist: the *architect* subtype is a builder, craftsman, or tinkerer who likes to 'play' with organizational 'blocks.' He may view his organisation as a workshop for building better structures, both physical and organizational...The *poetic* subtype is less structured and less meticulous but a more cerebral entrepreneur. He may view his agenda as a blank canvas to be filled with a painting of his own conception (Young 1981, 422).

Gramsci's and Schumpeter's views on industrialists and entrepreneurs, as highlighted in the epigraphs to this introduction, indicate the political divisiveness of the terms from at least the 1930s, with the former epitomising the 'industrialist' as a reactionary social force (this is particularly noticeable in the work of Georg Lukacs, Antonio Gramsci and the critical thinkers of the Frankfurt School), while the latter believed him to be the cornerstone of economic change. Neither free-marketeers nor Marxists dispute, however, the entrepreneur's connection with mass production.

J. C. Williamson has been characterised in Australian theatre history as creatively shaping the future of Australia drama.¹ He has also been depicted as a worthy successor to the 'Father of Australian Theatre', George Coppin, and founder of 'the Firm' through which other theatre entrepreneurs, in particular the Tait brothers, were able to continue to mould the destiny of Australian theatre under the name J. C.

¹ A typical example of this is 'J. C. Williamson: Plans for the Future - Drama Here and Abroad' in the *Age*, 5 March 1908.

Introduction
Williamson Ltd up to the late 1970s.\(^2\) Williamson is thus the historical linch-pin between the Australian theatre's 'colonial' past and its 'coming of age' in the twentieth century. As an American, he also embodies the triadic English/American/Australian cultural experience so visible throughout nineteenth- and twentieth-century Australian history. In this respect, Richard Waterhouse's (1990) conclusions in his history of Australian vaudeville also applies to Australian pantomime:

the fact remains that the emerging gap between high and popular culture never became as wide here as it did Europe and the United States. Australian cultural values and institutions were almost all imported from Europe and the United States but the Australian whole did not equal the sum of the European and American parts (142).

It is the 'sum of the parts' that I 'detotalise' from the outset. Following Foucauldian historiography, I want to present the archeological 'fragments' of the Firm's enterprise from the perspective of a 'general' history which resists constructing a 'totalised' account. This is not only because such an account is an impossibility (as any historical source points to a multitude of other facts which are beyond the reach of the historian) but because the most politically provocative aspect of the Firm's work is its paradoxically tenuous domination of the Australian theatre industry.

My reason for choosing to focus on Williamson's pantomime productions is twofold. Firstly, the massive output of productions (both nationally and also in New Zealand and South Africa) in the pre-1914 period necessitates that I limit my study in some way. I will thus be dealing with fifty-seven pantomimes staged by Williamson and some sixty-one productions staged by various other theatre managers between 1879 and 1914. My concentration on Sydney and Melbourne reflects the way in which the company initiated the vast majority of its productions from these two cities, despite its representation as 'Australian' theatre.

Williamson's company produced more pantomimes than any other company during this period. 1891, 1904 and 1905 were the only years the Firm did not put on a pantomime in either capital city. Conversely, in 1896, 1899, 1906, 1907, 1910, 1911 and 1913, it was the only company to stage one. No other manager came

---

\(^2\) For example, Peter Newton's 'The Story of J. C. Williamson and His Firm' in *Masque* (1969) is based on the premise that Williamson took over from 'Coppin the Great'.
anywhere near fifty-seven productions, with Coppin producing only nine pantomimes in this time, William Anderson seven and George Rignold six. In fact, pantomime productions show the comings-and-goings of the Firm's various competitors: Frank Towers (1882), G. B. W. Lewis (1883, though Lewis produced others previously in the late 1870s), Alfred Dampier (1886 and 1891), Frank Smith (1892), Fred Gunther (1893), Alfred Woods (1895), J. & C. McMahon (1897), Miss Ada Juneen (1897), J. F. Sheridan (1902), Tom Perman (1903) and George Willoughby (1913 and 1914).

Other managers staged pantomimes for a period of only three to four consecutive years: F. E. Hiscock (1884 - 1887); George Rignold (1890 - 1894) and George Coppin (1891 - 1895).3 Williamson's ex-partner George Musgrove produced three independently: in 1890 in Sydney during his two year rift with Williamson in 1890/91 and two after his final split with him in 1899, at the Princess Theatre, Melbourne in 1900 and 1901. Harry Rickards staged five productions beginning in 1885, while William Anderson began staging pantomimes from 1904. Anderson had also previously produced a pantomime with Charles Holloway in 1897. The setting up of the Clarke, Meynell, Wrenn and Gunn company in 1908 saw it stage the pantomime Cinderella in Melbourne. Inexplicably, though the company was seriously challenging the supremacy of J. C. Williamson's at this time, it did not stage another pantomime until it amalgamated with the Firm in 1911.

Given the importance of 'localism' in pantomime productions, the theme of my explorations will be the notion of a 'local' pantomime. Australian theatre historians such as Elizabeth Webby, Margaret Williams and Veronica Kelly identify a local tradition of pantomime writing from the mid-1840s. In the light of this, I want to describe how the Firm's employment of arrangers, composers, scene painters and choreographers related to that local tradition. Remarkably, from 1881 onwards, the firm of Williamson, Musgrove and Garner predominantly used English arrangements.

---

3 Eric Irvin (1985) notes that Coppin came out of retirement to stage pantomimes to pay his way out of the financial crisis in the 1890s. He had, of course, produced many pantomimes through his long career as a theatre manager in Sydney and Melbourne but his last pantomime production prior to 1891 had been in 1881 after which he handed over the lease of the Theatre Royal, Melbourne to J. C. Williamson (76).
This, however, requires further qualification because of the way the Firm inventively moved between English 'in-house' authors and the occasional employment of local writers such as Garnet Walch, Arthur Adams and Monty Grover. Furthermore, Williamson himself co-authored four productions, three with English actor, Bert Royle and one with Australian-born author, Bernard Espinassee.

My deliberations are based on pantomime scripts found in the public archives. These have been read as 'performance' rather than 'literary' texts, though I am only too aware of what they cannot record of the pantomime's protean form: the comedian's _ad libbing_, the changes in scenic effects, the back-stage drama between cast and management, the audiences' reception of the amalgam of effects, the managers' business meetings. All of these impacted on the productions and must be searched out from the fragmentary evidence of other contemporary records.

Despite these 'archeological' limitations, it is possible to see something of how the Firm 'unlocalised' the Australian pantomime and altered a local tradition, one most evident in the 1860s and 70s. The second part of Chapter One describes how the process of 'unlocalising' Australian pantomime was inextricably connected to the Firm's framing of 'England and its other' in pantomime scenarios. A term adapted from post-colonial theory, itforegrounds the essential cultural imperialism of the Firm's pantomimes, seen in the way they ontologically divided the 'West' from the 'East'. More importantly, such an 'othering' of the East highlights Australia's scenic absence from the pantomime stage, an indication that it was hardly ever depicted as England's 'other'. Instead, it was thought of as a _terra nullius_, remaining largely unrepresented in post 1880 pantomime productions.

In the third part of the chapter, I will consider how this impacted on the Firm's creation of an 'original' Australian pantomime in Williamson's arrangements of _Djin Djin_ (1895), _Matsa_ (1896) and _Australis_ (1900). A comparison with Garnet Walch's original arrangements, mostly from the 1870s but also including those he wrote for the Firm in 1885 and for Dampier and Coppin in 1891 and 1893

---

4 In particular, of course, Francis Barker's (1985) edition of _Europe and its Other_.

Introduction 15
respectively, shows that Williamson significantly altered the Australian pantomime's 'post-colonial' re-invention of the form.

Chapter Two looks more specifically at the Firm's imperialist aspirations: firstly, in terms of the theatre manager as 'empire-builder' and secondly, in terms of the productions' representation of British militarism. In the first part of the chapter, therefore, I specifically consider Williamson's own domination of the Firm and how that has been reflected in the way imperialist historiography legitimized his domination of the pre-1914 Australian theatre industry. In this respect, he became the hallmark of the Firm's productions. Thus, I wish to move away from the 'biographical' approach which has so far dominated the analysis of Williamson's work, as in Paul Macguire's *The Story of the Australian Theatre* (1948), Hal Porter's *Stars of the Australian Stage and Screen* (1965), Viola Tait's *A Family of Brothers* (1971), Brian Carroll's *Australian Stage Album* (1976), John West's *Theatre in Australia* (1978) and, more recently, Ian Bevan's *The Story of the Theatre Royal* (1993). The most detailed example is Ian Dicker's thesis *An Historical-Critical Study of the Career of James Cassius Williamson and His Contribution to Theatre in Australia* (1970), subsequently published as *A Short Biography of J. C. Williamson* (1974).

Furthermore, I would argue that a Schumpeter-like definition of entrepreneurship has forged a positivist cause-and-effect relationship between Williamson's late nineteenth-century commercial theatre and the present-day Australian theatre industry. This is certainly evident in Ian Dicker's (1970) work which argues for Williamson an entrepreneurial greatness on a par with the English and American theatre managers Augustus Harris and Charles Frohman.

Few Australians or New Zealanders in the latter half of the twentieth century, however, would know very much, if anything at all, beyond the name of the man, J. C. Williamson— the man whose courage, foresight and knowledge bequeathed them so splendid a theatrical inheritance. During his lifetime James Cassius Williamson was honoured with a multiplicity of flattering titles, each more or less accurately descriptive of his position at the forefront of Australian professional theatre. He was referred to variously as 'the Theatrical King of Australia,' 'Theatre's Richest Man,' 'Australia's Augustus Harris,' and 'the Charles Frohman of the Southern Seas' (ix).

Apart from historians, the post-J. C. Williamson firm of J. C. Williamson Ltd has also been instrumental in sponsoring this view of its founder. Viola Tait's *A
Family of Brothers: The Taits and J. C. Williamson, a Theatrical History (1971) describes a continuity of Australian entrepreneurship as the Tait brothers succeed Williamson from the time of J. & N. Tait's amalgamation with J. C. Williamson Ltd in 1920.

Australia has been fortunate in having a succession of enterprising commercial theatrical entrepreneurs who, for over a hundred years, have played an important part in the cultural development of their country. Distance presented no barrier to them in promoting the Arts, despite Australia's isolation from the leading opera houses and theatres of the world, nor did the time and expense involved in transporting artists deter them (Introduction).

Williamson's quest to legitimise himself and his theatre enterprise signals how hegemony primarily dominates through consensual means rather than brute force. Hence, in the second part of the chapter, I seek to make a connection between the manager, the performer and the soldier in the British Imperialist enterprise. In this triadic relationship the Firm participated by reproducing Imperialist rhetoric in pantomime productions.

The free-market/Marxist debate over the value of entrepreneurs is also connected to the continuing debate over the entrepreneur's role in British Imperialist expansion as, for instance, P. L. Payne (1974) and D. H. Aldcroft (1964 in Casson 1990) indicate in their overviews of British entrepreneurship to 1914. There is no doubt that specific individuals (e.g. Cecil Rhodes) played a major political role but, as Raymond Betts points out, there also existed a differentiation between imperialists of the 'blood-red type' and those of the 'business proposition' as revealed in Lord Alfred Milner's 1909 article in the British Empire Review. It was only the 'blood-red type', Milner argued, who should be considered dedicated zealots, invested with historical purpose (Betts 1979, 24-25).

The theatre programme/scripts, theatre reviews and numerous photographs of the company's pantomime productions suggest that the Firm may have been a 'blood-red' business proposition type. To use Edward Said's (1993) term, the 'pleasure of imperialism' in the Firm's pantomimes supported British military campaigns in the Sudan and South Africa and imperial celebrations of Victoria's Jubilee and, of course, Australia's participation in World War 1. The degree of consciousness this entailed is

Introduction
dependent on whether one believes, as Penny Summerfield (1986) does of English Music Hall, that 'uncritical support for the monarch, the Empire and the government of the day was not considered 'political' ' (42) or whether one reads all moves in business as a deliberated strategy.

Notably, the transformation of real political events into fantastic spectacle further highlights the way that exotic and erotic images are inextricably intertwined in spectacular presentations of British and Australian militarism. So I move onto considering the pantomime as a 'spectacle of patriotic women' when I examine how the exotic spectacle of late nineteenth-century productions contributed to the effectiveness of the two 'war-time' pantomimes, at the outset of the Boer War in 1899 with *Little Red Riding Hood*, and the outset of the Great War with the 1914 production of *Cinderella*. Primarily, these demonstrate how the pantomime's use of women and children in spectacle seems to have given both campaigns 'wholesome' support.

It is important not to underestimate the pantomime as a carnivalesque form; after all, it was a vital part of the Christmas festive season. Though the Christmas festival and the pantomime began as separate events in English and Australian social history, their relationship shows the influence on the nineteenth-century theatre industry of the commercial practices of the 'new' Victorian Christmas. Therefore, I want to examine the subversive potential of late nineteenth-century pantomime, with its antecedents in the Italian Commedia dell'Arte, later adapted into the English 'harlequinade'. I will consider the chronology of its evolution as demonstrated by English theatre historians such as David Mayer (1969) through the evolution of its four seminal figures, Pantaloon, the Clown, Harlequin and Columbine.

The assumption that early nineteenth-century pantomime was more counter-hegemonic is mainly based on the anti-patriarchical character of its narrative, as Harlequin and Columbine attempt to escape Pantaloon's despotism. Later, when the Clown comes to match Harlequin's importance in the drama, he does so as a kind of 'Lord of Misrule'. Grimaldi's contribution to the creation of the role of 'Clown Joey'
continues to be featured in the much reduced 'harlequinade' of late nineteenth-century productions.

As Michael Holquist (1990) reminds us, the pivotal point of Bakhtin's theory of carnival is his interconnection between literary genre and a vision of the body. The pantomime's spectacularisation and the use of glamoured and reified bodies on stage in late nineteenth-century productions seem antithetical to Bakhtin's idea of a 'grotesque body' as 'never finished, never completed' (317). There is a noticeable difference, for instance, between what Bakhtin identifies as the eating, drinking, defecating, copulating body, and the 'clean' bodies of the Firm's pantomime. Coincidentally, the elongated fairytale arrangement of this time, influenced by mid nineteenth-century 'fairy extravaganza', seems less anti-patriarchical and anarchic than the early nineteenth-century pantomimes which Mayer describes in Harlequin in his Element (1969).

Instead, the fairy tales used in pantomimes lend their own educative 'mythic' process to creating a feudal and hierarchical world in which 'good' and 'evil' are locked in eternal combat. The festival set up through the staging of the 'traditional Christmas pantomime' might thus be likened to the taming of the Saturnalian spirits, a central feature of Christianity's transformation of pagan rituals. However, still contained within this highly fictional fairytale world is the anarchic clown, and around 1860 the other descendants of 'Clown Joey', the music-hall comedians, 'invaded' the pantomime. Thus we see how in late nineteenth-century arrangements fairytale narratives are continuously disrupted by comic routines and sight gags.

The pantomime is thus a 'grotesque' form which amalgamates any number of 'theatrical borrowings'. In the second part of the chapter, I thus consider the 'subject' of pantomime through the 'grotesque' bodies of its central roles: the pantomime boy and girl and the Dame and her love interest, usually the Pantaloon/father figure of the arrangements. I also consider the role of the Fairy Queen as intermediary. The cross-dressed pantomime boy and Dame signal the metatheatricality of the representation of all characters in the arrangements. They also highlight the 'space of possibility'

Introduction
which, as Garber (1992) argues, emerges because of the way transvestism is fundamental to culture (11). However, I want to argue that patriarchy limits such possibilities; thus the arrangements often 're-arrange' these carnivalesque characters for misogynist and masculinist purposes. The Dame's role in lampooning the New Woman is particularly noteworthy, as is the boy and girl relationship in setting up the ideal couple based on the male/female active/passive binary. The cross-dressed roles thus signal the way the Firm's adherence to a patriarchal ideology subverts subversion and thus turns the pantomime's festive form into what Bakhtin described as a 'limited' carnival.

This might also be explained through Frederic Jameson's (1990) notion that popular culture is based on a 'psychic compromise'. Thus, my consideration of the many re-arrangements of Cinderella and Sinbad, the stories most often staged between 1883 and 1914, shows how the subversive potential of cross-dressing is itself 'contained' within conventional gender terms even while tantalisingly offering the 'boy's' body and those of the ladies of the ballet to the voyeuristic gaze of the spectator. Similarly, the 'anarchic' humour of the Dame and her partner can be both misogynist and racist.

Nonetheless, the sheer size and number of 'festive' productions grow exponentially between 1882 and 1914 through the premiering during the traditional pantomime season of comic opera, operetta, opera bouffe and musical comedy. By the same token, the pantomime and other musical theatre productions are staged at other times throughout the year. The post-Federation period shows that the more the Firm imports these productions, the more 'imported' the local pantomime became. A study of post-1900 pantomime reveals how they were staged by the 'Great Empire of the South', a term used to describe the new nation in Williamson and Espinasse's Australis, but an equally apt term to describe the Firm at this time, as it became the biggest theatrical company of the Southern Hemisphere.

In attempting to continue 'detotalising' a history of such an enterprise, I will describe the post-Federation Firm through the perspective of the theatrical partnerships

Introduction
which seem to have been the foundation of its success. Given that Williamson single-handedly managed theatres in Australia for only four out of the thirty-four years between 1879 and 1913 (i.e. between 1900 and 1904), I am interested in how he has dominated later accounts, with the artistic and business contributions of Maggie Moore, George Musgrove and George Tallis particularly minimised. Moore’s place in the setting up of the company also raises questions of how ‘women’s history’ is recorded.

A ‘patriarchization’ of the theatre industry occurred after 1880 as the husband and wife acting teams, so prevalent earlier, gave way to the ascendency of the ‘actor-manager’ and the ‘speculative manager’. A comparison of Williamson’s relationship with Maggie Moore and with his other business partners thus underlines the ‘natural’ move the actor made between acting and management, while the actress remained predominantly ‘an actress’, with all the incumbent sexism this entailed.

Furthermore, the theatre manager’s straddling of industrial and artistic questions highlights the way in which, de facto, Williamson was ‘manager of culture’ who claimed the right to say what forms of drama were more acceptable. Critics of the Firm, such as the journalist/dramatists of the Lone Hand, Arthur Adams and Leon Brodsky, thought that such a claim had enormous impact on Australia’s access to European ‘new drama’ and on the production of local works. While the Firm produced both types of theatre during this time, their sparseness highlights the manager’s lack of ‘artistic autonomy’ in discriminating between forms.5 Williamson’s experiment in writing the ‘muscular’ Christian drama Parsifal and the comic opera Tapu, like his pantomimes, show his inability to define ‘local’ content or an ‘original’ form in anything but the polemic terms of the Scribean ‘well-made formula’.

Nonetheless, the post-1900 pantomime productions, despite their ‘imported’ appearance, localised content in stridently racist and sexist ways. This can be demonstrated by examining the Firm’s adaptations of one of its key sources for

---

5 Zuidervaart (1991) outlines the ‘aesthetic debate’ between Adorno and Benjamin over the progressive and/or conservative tendency of popular culture. The Firm’s presentation of popular drama raises the same issues with regard to the company’s political intentions.
arrangements at this time, the 'modern' pantomimes of J. Hickory Wood. In particular, Wood's 1907 arrangement of Sinbad for the Theatre Royal, Manchester seems to have been the source of the Firm's 1911 production. The programme/script of the Mancunian production is topical and counter-hegemonic in ways which suggest that it was produced on the 'edge of Empire' (English regional differences in the pantomime form opens up another fascinating topic in the relationship between British imperialism and theatre), while the Australian production demonstrates a blatant Anglophilia.

Hence, what is contested most between 1900 and 1914, in both artistic and industrial terms, is the right to configure and access local theatrical spaces. This is highlighted, for instance, in a debate between Arthur Adams and Claude McKay in the Theatre in 1911, with Adams speaking for the local dramatist and McKay voicing the opinions of the Firm (despite the fact that he claims to be speaking for himself). The Australian actor and dramatist working on the edge of the 'Great Empire of the South' thus confronted the theatre entrepreneur's right to shape the Australian theatres under his control. As Claude McKay notes with reference to the way theatre managers influenced Australian drama, 'someone has to make the selection, and in this case, as in most others, it has always been the person who pays the piper' (1 May, 1911).

Renate Holub argues in Antonio Gramsci: Beyond Marxism and Postmodernism (1992) that the most significant analyses of culture coming from Gramsci, Brecht and the Frankfurt School were created in the face of the political successes of Fascism. Bearing this in mind, Holub's study of Gramsci explores how the specificity of any historical context might be related to 'contemporary' concerns. In a similar fashion, Tony Bennett (1990) rejects what he sees to be the over-determinism of Historical Materialism within Marxist literary/cultural theories and argues that 'left-wing' critics have no choice but to move 'beyond Marxism' in order to pose 'the question of criticism's contemporary political vocation'. Both Holub and
Bennett thus critique Marxist theories in the light of post-structuralism and deconstruction to arrive at their 'post-Marxist' stances.\(^6\)

In contrast, I want to return to the 'idealistic' Marxist critiques of Gramsci and the Frankfurt School to examine how Williamson's entrepreneurship subverted potentially counter-hegemonic elements within English pantomime productions. While I understand that, in a sense, all theories must produce something 'beyond' themselves, I do not believe that the concerns raised by Gramsci, Brecht and the Frankfurt School have exhausted themselves either in theoretical or practical terms. The conjunction of 'entrepreneurs, empires and pantomimes' thus raises the issue that

While power is ubiquitous, as Foucault would have it, equally ubiquitous are unequal relations of power. So the question for Gramsci is not so much, as it is for Foucault, to show that and how power exists, though Gramsci shows that as well. Equally important is why power exists (Holub 1992, 200).

My reading of the theatre entrepreneur's role in shaping popular culture shares the Frankfurt School's 'hopeful' pessimism in believing that critical thinkers 'had not yet conceded defeat' (Holub 1992, 174). In particular, one should never underestimate the entrepreneur's ability to educate audiences with regard to 'what they really want'.

As Tony Bennett (1986) notes, Gramsci's importance to cultural theorists in recent times is in providing a model for viewing popular culture 'as a force-field of relations' which are shaped by 'contradictory pressures and tendencies' (Introduction, x). Similarly, Foucault's concept of 'perpetual spirals of power and pleasure' has also been useful in explaining the 'essential' oppositional nature of power relationships. In the Foucaultian model of culture the double helix-like strands of pleasure and power 'do not cancel or turn back against one another, they seek out, overlap, and reinforce one another. They are linked together by complex mechanisms and devices of excitation and incitement' (Foucault 1976, 48).

Given the oppositional nature of hegemony, then, it is not surprising that Williamson occasionally staged 'new woman' dramas such as Diana of Dobson's and

---

\(^6\) Bennett argued for such a position in *Popular Culture and Social Relations* (1986) where, together with Colin Mercer and Janet Woollacott, he explored a 'Foucaultian' Marxist reading of popular culture different to that offered by the Frankfurt School.
Ibsen's and Shaw's work. However, it is also vital to see how contradictions or 'exception to the rule' were overruled by other happenings in the company. For instance, it is important to note the vital role Minnie Everett and Jennie Brenan played as choreographers and dance teachers from at least 1900, while at the same time the pantomime commodified women's bodies in its imperialist/nationalist processions, dances and tableaux. Likewise, it is important to note the trouble the company took dealing with members of the Australian Chinese community in order to get authentic costumes and 'Lion Dance' masks for various productions of Aladdin. Or how it had to work around the Immigration Restriction Act in order to bring acrobats from Java for its 1900 production of Australis. Indeed, there were no end of contradictions and oppositional forces within the company, not the least amongst its managers, as Williamson's and Musgrove's relationship reveals.

But, as Colin Mercer (1986) reminds us in his analysis of broadsheet newspapers in 'Complicit Pleasures', hegemonic structures are strengthened through structural contradictions, since hegemony gains its power 'silently from a field of meaning' (57). Hence, the presence of these spectacular diversions only reinforced the ideological structuring of the imperialist-inspired narrative showing the protagonist's journey towards wealth and happiness. In other words, I am not arguing that the company was ever monolithic or non-dynamic. Quite the contrary, it was inspiring, attractive and convivially successful in dealing with its competitors and any rival ideology which argued against its crusade to bring the 'best' of world entertainment to Australia. However, the Firm's pantomime productions show the extent to which its theatre managers worked to 'distract' audiences from imperialist and nationalist contestations being fought along race and gender lines in pre-1914 Australia, as outlined by such historians as Beverley Kingston (1988), Stuart Macintyre (1986), Luke Trainor (1994) and Susan Magarey (1993).

The period after 1906 saw the company evolving into the limited liability company of J. C. Williamson Ltd. Its corporate management structure traded on Williamson's name while, according to Nellie Stewart's autobiography (1921),

Introduction
Williamson himself largely stopped managing the Firm's day-to-day business due to his declining health (35). Nonetheless, he continued to shop abroad for the Firm's productions and in that way dictated what should be staged in Australia. His legacy is fittingly recorded in John Landes' panegyric to Williamson in 1933 when he equates the artist and the empire-builder as the hallmarks of the theatre entrepreneur.

Once there was a Man of Vision, with the soul of an artist and the courage of an explorer, who travelled from a far country across the widest ocean in the world to a great lonely land. In that land were gold-seekers with their eyes fixed always on the ground; owners of vast flocks who watched the wool growing into money on the sheep's backs and in the cities keen-eyed men of commerce immured in their counting-houses and immersed in their ledgers. Most of these were splendid men of the true pioneer type, but so intent on piling up gold to be spent on material luxuries, since there were few opportunities at that time for cultivating any of the arts, that they missed the best and most satisfying gifts that life has to offer to humanity. So the man of vision set himself to reveal to the people of the great lonely land some of the things that they had missed in the quest for happiness - the charm and beauty of Romance that flowers in every love-meeting of a man and a maid; the poignant thrill of tragedy, that purifier of the passions, the incisive humour of comedy that shows men and women all their own human faults and foibles depicted for them before their eyes by characters fashioned by the playwright and given the breath of life by skilful players. It is the power of mimetic art - including the art of the theatre - which touches the heart and uplifts the mind of the spectator beyond any other work contrived by the wit of man...The man of vision knew - because he had sensed it himself and had wielded it himself - this wizardry of a dramatic character, portrayed with just that touch of insight (shown in the convincing gesture, the revealing facial expressiveness and the eloquent inflection of the voice) that approaches interpretative genius. He resolved to portray raw human nature with its highest lights and its deepest shadows, with its heroism and its frailty, with its jests and its follies, its laughter and its sobs. And so he took a crude play that he had bought from an old Californian miner, and adapted it with a master hand, and wrote into it a part for the brilliant actress who was his newly-wedded wife, and he set out nearly sixty years ago to found a Temple of Drama in the Great Lonely Land, where civilisation itself was still in the making. The man of vision has passed onward, but the name of James Cassius Williamson abides. Here in this building with which he was associated from the first, all the Arts of the Theatre, Tragedy, Comedy, Drama, Music and the Dance, flowered at his bidding (Landes 1933, 3 - 4).
Chapter 1

'Local, Vocal & Jokal':
'Localising' the Pantomime and Its Implications for 'Original'
Australian Pantomime

1 *Jack the Giant Killer* (1880) expressly written and invented for Coppin, Hennings and Greville with annotations 'local, vocal & jokal' by four different authors, Queen's Theatre, Sydney.
Maud Beatty's pantomime boy costume for the 1901 production of *Djin Djin*, *the Japanese Bogie Man* as pictured in Plate 2, has as her 'breastplate' the Australian flag of the Union Jack and the Southern Cross. Beverley Kingston (1988) claims that 'white settlers looked to the sky rather than the land for the oldest sign of their separation from Europe, and found in the Southern Cross their common symbol' (106). Unintentionally, her remark goes to the heart of the issue of 'localisms' in Australian pantomime productions. In what sense did they enable the genre to be transformed into an 'indigenous' dramatic form? This question is even more relevant to 'original' productions such as *Djin Djin* which consciously allude to having no precedent on the English stage. Indeed, Williamson saw *Djin Djin* as an 'Australian' product to be exported along with other Australian-grown products back to England: 'England was indebted to Australia for beef, mutton and wine and there was no reason why it should not also be indebted to Australia for *Djin Djin*.' (Age, 25 March 1896).

'Localising' Australian pantomimes was achieved in much the same way as Australian playwrights and producers adapted all English theatre in Australia. Richard Fotheringham (1992) noted that late nineteenth-century Australian sporting plays, for instance, were adapted by manipulating 'seven elements of the theatrical sign: three visual elements (stage pictures and "spectacles", visual sensations, and costuming); two aural elements (music, speech dialect); and two narrative elements (characterisation and story construction)' (123). Exceeding all these, however, was the pantomime's amalgam of stage effect denoted by the term 'extravaganza': its array of burlesque comic routines, scenic transformations, moving panorama, spectacular balletic choreography and 'specialty' circus-like acts which often involved animals or 'death-defying' acrobatics. Above all, the genre's protean form, its 're-arrangements', evinced a sense of 'novelty' with each production.

---

2 *The Australian* (23 January 1897) shows Florence Young in the same costume for the original production of *Djin Djin* at the Princess Theatre, Melbourne.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal 27
Veronica Kelly (1988) argues that 'localisms' in Australian pantomimes of the 1870s demonstrated the 'intense topicality of pantomime practice' (3):

A specific literary feature endemic of pantomime allowed its colonisation by Australian reality before any other theatrical form: pantomime was expected to be both local and topical. London ones were localised for the English provinces, and so inevitably for Australian audiences. The writer was thus adapting a text which was itself parasitic on other literature. Sometimes he might write a new treatment of an old story along the general lines laid down by traditional practice. *Australia Felix* goes further in knocking away the support of a familiar plot, while keeping the pantomime conventions and traditions. That even more routine form of localisation was doubly necessary in the Australian colonies was increasingly perceived (13).

However, like Richard Fotheringham (1992), I am ambivalent about whether or not local productions created 'a tradition of indigenous stage utterance' which successfully if slowly established the ascendancy of local authors and created, by the first decade of the twentieth century, an audience which demanded the Australian play 'as a regular part of their theatrical experience rather than as an occasional novelty' (122). Like the Australian sporting play, the original Australian pantomime challenges teleological historical accounts of nineteenth-century theatre history which has a 'National' theatre as the end product of all local efforts to stage 'home-grown' plays on the Australian stage. This is the basis for the historical accounts of Australian pantomime by Margaret Williams (1983) and Paul Richardson (1979 and 1982). Both historians locate the presense of an 'Australian' consciousness in locally written pantomimes from the 1850s on.

Williams (1983) believes that Australian pantomimes were more open in their 'lampooning of public life and figures' than their English counterparts (58). On the other hand, Veronica Kelly (1988) constructs a more 'dialectic' relationship between Australian pantomimes and English culture; they were 'self-consciously celebratory' rather than overtly anti-British and thus, as *Australia Felix* (1873) exemplifies, a critical form which had evolved from a 'quintessential English theatrical entertainment into a recognisably Australian one' (3).

Australian theatre historians generally agree that the localisation of Australian pantomime involved the following elements: firstly, as for the English pantomime, they represented 'real' events within fairytale narratives. As Williams (1983) argues, 'pantomime fantasy and local reality' (62) were interspersed, and, as the 1860s and

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
70s arrangements indicate, topical subject matter was also a fundamental part of the re-
arrangement of the pantomime's internal structure. Each production gave a new
treatment to an old story and/or used pantomime conventions to arrive at an 'original'
narrative. These included European Australian and sometimes also Aboriginal
characters: W. M. Akhurst's *Harlequin Robinson Crusoe, or The Nimble Naiad, The
Lonely Squatter and The Lively Aboriginal* (1868) acting as a watershed for the
establishment of a 'native' pantomime tradition.

While productions contained criticisms of Western notions of individualism
and economic competition, they also celebrated the urban ambience in which the
theatres existed. Margaret Williams (1983) argues, for instance, that Australian
pantomimes 'celebrated the arrival of white settlement on Australian soil' and reflected
'a newly urban society glowing with pride' (73). As an integral part of an urban
Christmas festival, they were also an opportunity to foreground climatic and
geographic differences from the 'mother country'.

Richardson (1979) shows, that while the fantasy world of the pantomime
was thoroughly English, 'the intrusion of local realities into this world created a
particularly colonial sense of absurdity beyond the commedia dell'arte of the traditional
harlequinade' (124). Likewise, local pantomimes of the 1860s and 70s counteracted
hegemonic versions of English history as evident, for instance, in spectacular
processions of English cultural heroes. In Akhurst's *Harlequin Robinson Crusoe*, for
instance, a larrkin King dreams of a procession consisting of Bacon, Chaucer,
Wolsey, Drake and Shakespeare. Richardson (1979) concludes that audiences were
invited 'to rethink their attachments to the mother culture' (214 - 215).

Indeed, pantomimes show how 'localisms' foreground the pantomime's
fascination with history itself as it un/consciously played with chronological ordering
and historical causality. Chronology and causality continue to be vital issues in recent
historiographical debates between Marxist and post-structuralist critics such as
Frederic Jameson and Michel Foucault. Robert Young's (1990)*White Mythologies*
sides with Foucaultian historiography against what he sees as Marxism's continuing
over-determination of historical causality. His criticism of Jameson's assimilations of Spinoza's concept of history as 'absent cause', for instance, is based on the view that Jameson's *political unconscious* is nothing less than *telos*.

Acknowledging that a historical analysis will always have to invoke a representation of history rather than history itself, Jameson admits that Marxism cannot ground its argument on such a representation. However he then claims that, whatever the problems of representing it, the reality of history will always be felt in its effects, even if it is only ever accessible obliquely. Invoking Sartre's notion of scarcity, Jameson claims that 'history is what hurts'. In this way history can return as the 'absolute horizon' demonstrated by Marxist criticism - an 'absolute historicism' so absolute that it is not even subject to the effects of history. History is now no longer meaning or even narrative, but a final cause beyond knowledge (101).

In contrast, Young (1990) argues that 'Foucault objects to historicism and Western humanism to the extent that they assume a continuous development, progress, and global totalization' (70). He shares with Mark Poster (1992) the belief that Foucault initiated 'a thematic of discontinuity' which 're-situates the historian's relation to the past, suggests a theoretical re-orientation of the historical discipline and calls for a re-examination of the appropriate topics of historical investigations' (303). Thus, following on from Foucault, Young (1990) attacks the use of chronology in historical writing because it 'gives the illusion that the whole operates by a uniform, continuous progression, a linear series in which each event takes its place' (45).

A 'thematic of discontinuity' might indeed be a useful methodology in explaining how Williamson's post-1882 productions highlight the fragmented 'tradition' of Australian pantomime. Hence, Foucault's concept of a 'general' rather than a 'total' history might be employed to problematize the historical subject and the issues of sexuality and language contained within it.

Total, or elsewhere, global, history assumes a spatio-temporal continuity between all phenomena, and a certain homogeneity between them in so far as they all express the same form of historicity - Althusser's essential section - whereas in general history the problem is precisely to determine the relation between different series: whereas a total history draws everything together according to a single principle, a general history analyses the space of dispersion and heterogeneous temporalities (Young 1990, 78).

However, a methodology based on the 'thematic of discontinuity' might still be in danger of developing its own sense of 'totality': a new 'anti-essentialist' history which, as Jameson (1994) argues, is ultimately based on attacking the Humanist notion of Nature. Such attacks paradoxically create a 'new kind of human essence'.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
This great lesson was surely taught to us more effectively by Sartre than by Heidegger, to whom it would be difficult to attribute any great concern about such matters; it then develops into a whole dialectic - or better still an arrested dialectic - of self versus other, which finds a rich prolongation in Simone de Beauvoir’s feminism on the one hand, and Frantz Fanon’s diagnosis of colonialism and race on the other, until, in Foucault, it reaches a kind of stabilization, not to say reification, which creates new paradoxes in its own right. For if this repressive effect of the affirmation of a natural self is taken to be part of an ideological opposition, then a new question swims into being about the nature of that mysterious other term, the Other itself, which leads us into an interminable play of reflections, an endless house of mirrors and optical illusions, in which the quest for some ultimate radical otherness takes precedence over the rather different Sartrean critique of bourgeoisie normativity. This is why - even though it is proper and even necessary for the great Sartrean attack on the idea of human nature to be renewed and reinvented with every new generation - there seems to be something misguided about slogans such as 'antiessentialism' and 'antifoundationalism,' which imply the conservation of an antinormative bias of philosophical habit into a kind of norm in its own right and a brand-new philosophical position wide open to the objection that it has itself become something of a dogmatic foundation and has come to imply something of a new kind of human essence in its turn (34 - 35).

The philosophical conundrum my critique must confront, therefore, is how to construct an analysis which 'detotalises' the cultural outcomes implicit in a history of the productions, but nonetheless articulates the processes of totalisation in relation to their cultural imperialist values. Regardless, the interpretation of history seems to be THE imperative: whether to homogenise and/or to effect a heterogeneous representation of Reality. Indeed, if 'total' histories, including the pantomime's own subscription to Humanist historiography, are 'a phantasm - in which neither the elements of totalization nor difference can be definitively achieved or dispatched' (Young 1990, 84), then it should be possible to see how 'history' always contains a sense of historical discontinuity.

Margaret Williams (1983) shows this to be the case, for instance, with regard to Louis Esson's work in relation to pre-1914 Australian melodrama. Accordingly, Esson, the 'pioneer player', remained disconnected from his own local theatre history.

On the face of it, the naturalistic drama that begins with Louis Esson's plays in 1911, which is usually regarded as the beginning of a serious Australian drama, bears little or no relation to the spectacular melodrama with which it overlaps for twenty years or so (286).

However, Williams does not exploit the value of this discontinuity but historically reconnects Esson's 'picturesque' Australian settings with those earlier melodramas, for instance, produced by Alfred Dampier. This allows her to reposition him within her 'developmental' thesis on the arrival of a National Theatre. As such,
Esson's work is seen as having to move beyond the limits of nineteenth-century melodrama, which Williams describes as only capable of 'observing and recording' Australian society. It was Esson who then had the onerous task of intellectually 'interpreting' that same society.

What was needed, it seemed, was a dramatist who would not just observe and record, but would also interpret. As it happened, the playwright, 'the intellectual medium who should go between nature and the theatre', was not to be awaited much longer. A year or two later a young playwright had his first play presented by William Moore at his Australian Drama Night at the Turn Verein Hall in Melbourne. The playwright was Esson (288).

The inevitability of a National Theatre secured, Williams posits the earlier productions as undoubtedly popular but not substantial enough to create a distinctive Australian theatre. *Australia on the Popular Stage* in fact alerts us to the propensity of Australian theatre historians to construct historical discontinuities as 'regressive', thus exposing their teleological Humanist underpinnings.

A 'regressive' theme is also noticeable in Veronica Kelly's (1988) view that J. C. Williamson's pantomime productions made it virtually impossible for local writers such as Garnet Walch to continue working in an Australian theatre.

Williamson was always to take care that the pious should not be offended, founding his theatrical fortune on respectability, and more pertinently, on unsentimental financial caution. With a few exceptions, his shows had been proven successful outside Australia before they were risked here; 'human nature' is the same the whole world over, he declared, hence there was no point in seeking out Australian expressions of it. There was no opening in this philosophy for the local Australian writer, and under the rule of the 'Triumvirate' of Williamson, Garner and Musgrove, the Theatre Royal monopoly of the seventies seemed in retrospect like a brief golden age (33).

Her observation touches on one of the most contentious issues of the pre-1914 period, best exemplified by the vociferous arguments of journalist/playwrights such as Arthur H. Adams and Leon Brodsky in the *Lone Hand* after 1907. The debate embroiled industrial issues with nationalist arguments over what constituted an Australian theatre. Leon Brodsky's *Lone Hand* article 'Towards an Australian Drama' (1 June 1908) is arguably one of the most passionate examples of how nationalist and industrial arguments overlapped:

Many of us are almost in despair when we see how little relation the theatre in Australia has to the national life of the country. There is no Australian Dramatist earning his livelihood by writing for the Australian stage... We must begin by making up our minds that nothing can be done through the businessmen who own and control our theatres. Their business is to make money by importing plays.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal 32
Often they import the players and the scenery and other requisites for a theatrical performance. These theatre managers are not concerned with art, or national aspirations, or local talent, though, of course, they all pretend to be intensely patriotic (342).

Given the nationalist marking of the Southern Cross on Prince Eucalyptus's costume, the problematics of describing localism within the Australian pantomime must be concerned with the individual subject as much as the collective experience of the 'new society'. It is the theatre manager's power to artistically and industrially inscribe culture on both which must be further problematised in terms of its heterogenous temporalities and its totalitarian potential. It is to this issue which I now turn in relation to 'the Firm's' local pantomime productions.

My 'overview' specifically fragments the various components which I identify as the building blocks of such an enterprise. This includes its adaptation of the elongated fairytale arrangement of late nineteenth-century English pantomimes, which David Mayer (1969) argues eliminated the 'harlequinade' of earlier productions. Furthermore, I identify who the company used as its pantomime arrangers, music composers, scene painters, costumiers and choreographers. These combined to create what can only questionably be termed 'Australian' productions which by 1906 seemed to be distinctly 'unlocalised' representations of the 'modern' pantomime. Furthermore, these archeological fragments highlight how gender issues were implicated in the construction of the Firm. By the same token, they also expose how Imperialist and Nationalist notions interacted to frame an 'Imperialist' Nationalism which various historians, such as Luke Trainor (1994), believe was the character of Australia's 'Imperial' Federation.

In the second part of the chapter, I argue that the Firm's pantomimes predominantly set up a sense of 'England and its other'. I want to show from the outset that scene painters were as instrumental as the arranger in structuring the productions. I believe, in fact, that they structured, as Edward Said (1993) argues for the nineteenth-century novel, an 'ideological vision' within fairytale arrangements which framed hierarchies in support of an Anglo-Saxon cultural imperialism. This

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal

33
theme will be more fully developed in Chapter Two when I consider the strength of the Firm's representations of British Militarism.

By the same token, the spectacles were 'phantasms' which un/consciously structured a dream-world of infinite possibilities. The importance of ballets and transformation scenes highlight the consciously fictional nature of the genre. While the full scope of this will be considered later in Chapter Three, I want to introduce the theme here in connection with the Firm's pro-Imperialist stance in order to establish that the pantomime's 'localisms' were inextricably connected to its ability to create its fantastic spectacle. This has particular relevance with regard to the Firm's representation of 'Australia' as a geographic and political entity. In particular, the productions' representation of 'England and its other' show both an 'othering' of England itself, in mythic images of 'olde England', and project Australia as a *terra nullius*, a land with only limited exotic appeal for the pantomime's seemingly limitless spectacular representations.

The exceptions to the rule are even more significant in signalling how Australia was predominantly represented in scenarios as a land to be exploited for its material wealth. However, Williamson's original productions between 1895 and 1900 of *Djin Djin*, *Matsa* and *Australis* also provocatively show how the theatre entrepreneur re-shaped the local pantomime tradition of the 1860s and 70s towards a more essentialist view of Nationalism. This was connected with more 'fearful' presentation of Australia confronting the 'demon' Japanese, the 'New Woman' and the anti-Capitalist Australian Socialist.

I will conduct such a review through a comparison with Garnet Walch's arrangements to show that, unlike Williamson, other Australian pantomime writers had been much more prepared to mock their Anglo-Saxon culture and, thus, structure anti-heroic elements in their arrangements. Walch's arrangements were often anti-patriarchal in their presentation of strong women who refused to marry, Good Fairies who were political activists and, conversely, pantomime boys who were quite ineffectual in their roles as protectors of womenkind.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
I want to propose from the outset, therefore, that Williamson's productions did not so much thwart Australian drama's Nationalist intentions but alter the 'post-colonial' possibilities raised in Walch's re-inventions of the form throughout the 1870s and, arguably, still evident in his two arrangements for Alfred Dampier and George Coppin in 1891 and 1893 respectively. I thus define 'originality' as the 'inventiveness' of the local artist in depicting new and more equitable political transformations coming about through the pantomime's festive form.
1.1 Theatre Management and Pantomime Production, 1882 to 1914: 'Detotalising' an Overview of Williamson's Pantomime Arrangements.

The productions recorded in Appendix One, 'Sydney and Melbourne Pantomime Productions 1879 - 1914', describe a generic body of work. Following on from recent 'detotalized' views of history, however, the generic nature of the collection does not assume a linear 'progress' from imported English pantomime to indigenous Australian productions. Rather, it claims that the data can nonetheless be used to describe hegemonic operations within a pre-1914 Australian theatre industry.

As Anna Yeatman (1993) reminds us, our reading of Colonialism has been greatly influenced by the 'emancipatory movements' which now frame a cultural (post-colonial) contestation. Ironically, these now 'allow minority group movements to "stand outside looking in", and to maintain a contradictory position of both dependency on and critical rejection of the status quo' (233). Though Yeatman's article specifically refers to feminist attitudes towards contemporary multicultural politics, its historiographical implications for a post-colonial reading of Williamson's entrepreneurial theatre rest in her observations of the 'shared ethic' which interconnects the oppressor and exploited. Gayatri Spivak (1990) makes a similar observation with regard to her own role as a Western academic in her article 'Poststructuralism, Marginality, Postcoloniality and Value'. Both Spivak and Yeatman warn against a hubristic attitude which privileges present-day 'enlightenment'. Put crudely with regard to my project, my espousing of what Williamson should have done as a theatre manager if only he had not been such a sexist and racist moral degenerate! By contrast, post-colonial theorists have demonstrated that the critic can exploit 'ambivalence' and 'position himself or herself in an equally ambivalent relation to the theoretical method that is being employed, so

---

3 I chose to begin recording productions from 1879 to allow for discussion of events leading up to Williamson, Garner and Musgrove's advent into theatrical management in 1881.
as to disconcert and disorient the reader from the familiar politico-theoretical structures which it seems to promise' (Young 1990, 173). Such an approach allows me to foreground the 'ambivalent' value of historical data and my own political use of it in describing the political contestations within and around the Firm's pantomime productions.

The 'objective facts' which appear in Appendix One thus must limit their own importance even while they show that Williamson was the most prolific producer of pantomime productions between 1882 and 1914. His was the only company which produced pantomimes in both Sydney and Melbourne simultaneously for over twenty years. While these facts reflect the gargantuan size of his 'national' operation, the data also shows that the company's efforts varied at specific times. The company did not produce pantomimes, for instance, around the times of partnership reshuffles in 1891, 1904 and 1905 and seems to have faced its severest competition during the economically depressed times of the 1890s.

Managers and Spectacular Pantomimes

The financial importance of the pantomime production to the economic viability of nineteenth-century theatres, clearly indicated in Michael Booth's Victorian Spectacular Theatre (1981), demonstrates the popularity of the 'traditional Christmas pantomime'. Booth also clearly identifies the central role which nineteenth-century theatre managers played in conceptualising and producing pantomimes, as demonstrated by Augustus Harris at Drury Lane (Booth 1981, 29). Sydney and Melbourne theatre advertisements often carried 'produced under the personal supervision of...' after which the theatre manager's name appeared. Thus, according to its advertisement, Williamson, Garner and Musgrove's 1883 production of Jack and the Beanstalk was under the personal supervision of all three managers.

Similarly, 'behind the scenes' articles specifically highlight Williamson's integral part in the Firm's productions. Writing on Matsu, the Leader of 2 January 1897 argues that he was like a 'great magician'. The article also wrongly states that
pantomime was originally designed for children rather than, as David Mayer makes clear, as an adult entertainment. On this misconstruction of history the Leader rationalises that theatre managers had no choice but to create spectacular productions which appealed to adults.

They have to face an intelligent and critical public, whose appetite for good things has been whetted by the previous achievements, magnificence of scenery, and sumptuous stage costuming and upholstery. Realism is imperative. The story, incidents and characters may be drawn from the misty depths of fabulous history, from the remotest times and corners of the earth - even the supernatural may be called into supplement the swelling theme - but yet realism is strictly insisted upon. The costumes, the weapons of war, the instruments of music, and all that illustrates the habits, religion and pastimes of people coeval with the period treated must be chronologically accurate, and where, as in the case of worlds beyond our sphere, the supposed inhabitants are represented, care must be taken that the very latest ideas thereat are followed. The manager engaged in the operation of evolving from his inner consciousness the form and substance of a Christmas pantomime may be compared to a great magician, who lays all science, art and human knowledge extant under tribute in order to effect his purpose. He is no less like a general organising his forces before entering upon a battle. Everything has to be thought out before hand, from a siege train to the buttons on the private’s tunic. An oversight, however small, may result in disaster, and possibly in defeat. But let us enter more into details, compatibly with the limits of our space. It may be said that no sooner is one pantomime over in connection with a large firm like that of Messrs. Williamson and Musgrove than another for the next Christmas becomes a matter for consideration. Reports and criticisms are received containing particulars of Christmas entertainments in London and New York, and even in Paris and other Continental cities, concerning the Yuletide entertainments, and anything original or ultra sensational is carefully noted for future reference (7).

'Behind the scenes' articles also state that audiences were obviously supportive of Williamson's efforts as on 'any night after Christmas week you will see that the [dress] circle [of the theatre] is filled with grown-ups in evening dress; rows of bald heads and wonderfully fashioned coiffures extend from the orchestra rail way back to the pit wall' (Table Table, 24 December 1906).

The cultural links between English pantomime and the emergence of the mid-nineteenth century 'new' Christmas festival suggest important parallels between the establishment of the 'business of Christmas' and capitalist developments within an English theatre industry. In a commercial sense, the pantomime was an important commodity sold within a Christmas market. As Pimlott (1978) explains, Christmas-time became a time which was 'good for business'. But, he also explains, it would be wrong to underestimate the symbolic and religious importance of the Christmas market and/or the wide-ranging nature of its commodities. This is implied, for instance, in the
happy tidings of 'Good Luck' which pantomimes offered to their audiences such as is evident in the finale of the 1911 *Sinbad* pictured in the frontispiece.

MacDonald and Stapleton (1981) noted that, although an Australian Christmas tradition was slow to emerge, one was clearly present by the 1860s. Williamson's Christmas pantomimes also support their observations that the development of a distinctive 'Australian' Christmas 'seemed to lose its original impetus' in the 1890s 'as artificial holly replaced native wildflowers and the Christmas picnic dinner fell from popularity' (14).

**The 'Only British Native Form'**

The pantomime was manifestly an English/Australian theatrical phenomenon, a dramatic genre which did not feature as importantly in the emerging American theatre. As Charles Kaplan (1984) argues, the pantomime is the 'only native British art form'.

As for British pantomime, it is one of a kind. Having nothing to do with dumb show, it has also drifted a long way from its Greek etymological meaning 'to imitate everything'. To begin with, although it is a speaking pantomime, the British have never been troubled by the oxymoron. It is a mixture of nursery rhyme and fairy tale, with such ingredients as commedia dell'arte figures, sentimental ballads, topical and often satirical reference, elaborate stage sets, patriotic songs and tableaux, leggy young women playing juvenile leads, and male comics playing old ladies, all in plots that display a surreal disregard of logic. To Max Beerbohm, who called it 'the one art-form that has been invented in England,' it was an artist's dream: 'To take a legend that you are fond of, or to invent a legend on your own account, and then to set it forth in poetry and prose, with the arts of music and dancing to adorn it, and with nothing to baulk you of any whim you may choose to indulge in by the way, any irrelevance whatsoever of time or space, so that you are free to celebrate or satirise anything that is happening at this moment in your own city' (Kaplan 1984, 267).

Interestingly, Laurence Senelick's description of 'the brief flowering of pantomime in New York' through the work of 'America's Grimaldi' George L. Fox, shows that Fox's pantomimes at the Olympic were contemporaneous with Williamson's work at Wallack's. Indeed, its pantomime made the Olympic 'the most fashionable amusement spot in the city, its patrons being those who used to visit Wallack's, which house took to pantomime in self defence' (Senelick 1979, 104). There is no evidence that Williamson appeared in American pantomime, though one might conclude that his decision to foreground English/Australian cultural connections

**Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal**
may have been due to his 'English' New York theatrical education. As Allston Brown (1903) and Odell (1931) show, the New York stage to 1874 was dominated by English dramas and comedies. Sheridan and Tom Robertson's works were consistently played at Wallack's while Williamson was part of its stock company. Newspaper interviews in the 1890s reveal that Williamson's decision to import predominantly English productions, including English pantomime, was based on his belief that Australian audiences preferred to see themselves as essentially English and did not generally take to American plays.  

J. C. Williamson's Introduction to Australian Pantomime

It must have been evident to Williamson on his return to Australia in 1879 that the 'traditional Christmas pantomime' was firmly entrenched in the Australian theatrical calendar. In fact, he and Maggie Moore performed 'the babes' in Sam Lazar's *Babes in the Wood* at the Theatre Royal, Sydney that Christmas. The review of the production in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which reprints part of Maggie Moore's description of her evil Uncle, the Baron, reveals that William Edouin's arrangement had been localised by Richmond Thatcher to reflect Nationalist sentiments against the Squattocracy and English Agent-Generals, at that time part of 'a shift in British policy from simply managing the colonies to contemplating complex schemes of imperial government' (Kingston 1988, 238). As Sally, Maggie Moore curses after her Uncle and 'departed foe':

That very worst of men has gone his way  
His sway is over I'm glad to say,  
And here I am with Tommy on my hands,  
A Wanderess after in foreign lands.  
I must get home, however shall I do it!  
I am no squatter - I can't go in for wool or suet.  
Shall I the Ministry join, and with them quarrel,  
And be made Agent-General to a certain moral;  
Shall I say only British coves Australians can teach,  
And get five thousand points to go and see Hicks-Beach;

---

4 This is most interesting given Richard White's conclusions in *Inventing Australia* (1981) that, in Australian political terms, America was tainted by being 'foreign', whereas the Australian colonies were indubitably, impeccably British. White shows that, in the often contradictory comparisons between Australia and America which dominated late nineteenth-century cultural debates, many commentators observed how Australia was "more English than England" even while "America remained the standard of modernity" (50 - 51).
But then if e'er on such a lay I'm sent,
I must account unto the Parliament,
This is not poor Victoria, and by zounds!
I'd have to say how I spent five thousand pounds
(30 December, 1879)

**Fairytale Pantomime Arrangements**

Like English pantomimes, Australian productions were by the 1870s predominantly based on well-known fairytales, the most popular after 1879 being *Cinderella* and *Sinbad*. This was a change from productions in the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century which were mostly based on 'original' narratives. David Mayer's (1969) 'Index of Pantomimes and Other Entertainments', for example, shows the diversity of subjects staged between 1806 - 1836 (389 - 392). Post-1879 Australian productions were all fairytale arrangements: nine productions of *Aladdin*, ten of *Babes in the Woods*, three of *Beauty and the Beast*, twelve of *Cinderella*, eight of *Jack the Giant Killer* and fourteen of *Sinbad*.

Both R. J. Broadbent (1901) and A. E. Wilson (1935) outline how pantomime subjects were 'circulating texts', many 'Eastern' in origin. Thus *Red Riding Hood, Jack and the Beanstalk* and *Cinderella* had Hindi narrative antecedents (Broadbent 1901, 205 - 209). According to Wilson (1935) the 'Arabian Nights' stories for *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, Aladdin* and *Sinbad* were first translated sometime between 1704 and 1717 and the first *Aladdin* was produced by Grimaldi in 1813 (163). *Cinderella* had to wait until 1864 for 'the real pantomime treatment' while 'the most notable of the purely English contributions' were *Dick Whittington and his Cat, Robinson Crusoe, The Babes in the Wood, Robin Hood* (with which the former is often combined), *St George and the Dragon*, *Gulliver's Travels* (now scarcely ever seen), and *Little Goody Two Shoes* (Broadbent 1901, 161). These raise the issue of 'appropriation' of non-western and other folk stories for the pantomime's spectacular purposes.

David Mayer argues that the contraction of pantomime subjects to well-known fairytales assisted in the heightening of the pantomime's use of spectacle,
causing a 'decline' of the form. Such opulent scenes as the finale of 1900 *Cinderella* seen in Plate 3 would seem to prove Mayer's point. Mayer further explains that such a 'decline' was principally due to the 'relaxed theatrical licensing laws, the continued and steady attrition of the harlequinade, the increased concern with scenic effects, the use of the 'principal boy', the introduction of music hall performers, and the particular contributions of J. R. Planché, E. L. Blanchard, and Augustus Harris' (Mayer 1969, 309). These factors contributed to changes in the Regency and early nineteenth-century pantomimes' 'obligatory elements'.

The two most important features of early pantomime arrangements had been the 'opening' and the 'harlequinade'. The 'opening' referred to a fragment of classical mythology such as the marriage of Vulcan and Venus; a well known and highly imaginative literary classic, such as *Don Quixote* or *Gulliver Travels*, Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas*; or the opening might be a wholly original tale with authentically remote or exotically imaginary setting peopled by dwarfs, giants, fairies, good or evil magicians, genii, or kings (Mayer 1969, 23).

The 'harlequinade' took place after these short scenes, and after a 'transformation scene' in which the characters in the opening changed into Harlequin, Columbine, Pantaloon and the Clown.

Intervention by the friendly agent marks the division between the opening and the second section of the pantomime and is a distinct moment within the pantomime: the 'transformation scene'. The transformation scene ordinarily takes place within the first fifth or quarter of the pantomime. In this scene the benevolent agent reproaches the father for his unnatural behaviour toward his daughter and promises the lovers her protection. Frequently the agent may also have reason for demonstrating with the younger man: for allowing the father to take advantage of him or for failing to heed an earlier injunction. To show her regard for the lovers and to facilitate their escape from the obdurate elders, the benevolent agent transforms the young man into Harlequin, generally assigning a knight-errant-like quest that the Harlequin must complete to prove his worth in the eyes of his love and the observing immortals. She further invests the new Harlequin with a magic sword or bat (actually a slapstick), which as long as it remains in his possession gives him power over his adversaries. The daughter is transformed into Columbine and is committed to Harlequin's protection. Other characters will be transformed too, sometimes by the same friendly agent, sometimes by a rival spirit, but the transformations of the comic characters are equally predictable. In the opening, the faces and shoulders of many of the principal performers, especially the old father or king, the rival suitor, the father's comic servant, the court official, or the daughter's duenna, have been masked by their 'big heads,' which have heightened the ludicrous qualities of their characters and which have concealed second identities. Then at each wave of the benevolent agent's wand the characters of the opening are transformed, the big heads are snatched away by stagehands, and the costumes, loosely held, are stripped away to reveal the comic types that populate the 'harlequinade,' the larger portion of the pantomime: the father will reappear as Pantaloon, and the rival suitor as either Clown or Lover (or Dandy Lover). If the rival is reincarnated as Lover, Clown may be created out of the daughter's duenna or mother, the father's servant, a court official, or a member of the rural power structure (Mayer 1969, 28).

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
The anti-authoritarian lovers, Harlequin and Columbine, are then given full scope to resist Pantaloon and so construct the chase-and-escape scenes which ensue. Like his Commedia dell'Arte counterpart, Harlequin is presented as an agile performer of 'tricks'. Similarly, the Clown is given licence to be a kind of 'Lord of Misrule' and present his 'retributive' humour which mercilessly attacked 'figures of authority: magistrates, beadles, justices, squires, or those enforcing the law, at first watchmen and, later, the Metropolitan Police' (Mayer 1969, 61).

Clown had a buoyancy, a barely suppressed impudence and irreverence that encouraged pantomime audiences to share vicariously and willingly condone his seeming impatience with manners, his mocking of class distinctions, his disregard for property, and his absolute disrespect for authority. If Clown had fixed traits, they were all ones that mocked convention and exposed social habits pretending to morality or self-conscious graciousness. He rebelled against stuffiness and tradition and did what others wished to do but never dared. If Clown encountered another's property he would break it if fragile, wear it if portable, paint it or deface it if immovable. If there was a woman, old or young, he would make advances, if there was food he would eat it glutonously; if the food were someone else's he would first steal it. The law held terror for him only when he was in danger of being caught. He was a happy criminal who knew neither shame nor repentance. He was a mimic, a coward; a lazy rascal, an energetic imposter. He humiliated the mighty, the cruel, the pretentious, and the overbearing; and his own encounters with pain and embarrassment were noisy, ludicrous, and brief (47).  

Early nineteenth-century pantomime seemed prepared to expose a chaotic world. Wilson (1946) believed that the pantomime released 'pure animal spirits' and expressed 'the spirit of carnival and of the Saturnalia'(14). It was only in the pantomime's darkest moment (in the 'dark scene') that the benevolent agent re-entered, rescued the lovers and reconciled Pantaloon and Clown with them, thus allowing the pantomime to reach a happy ending. As in Greek satyr plays and in the Commedia dell'Arte scenarios, therefore, the grotesque characters of the pantomime were given a form in which they were allowed to walk the earth in order to be mocked and their dark power ultimately tamed.

The unpublished research papers of Professor Elizabeth Webby suggest that, while very few scripts of early Australian pantomimes exist 6, theatre advertisements in the 1840s and 50s show that scenarios adhered to the 'obligatory elements' which

---

6 According to Webby's research, only one and a half scripts are held in the Mitchell Library, Sydney.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
Mayer describes in English counterparts. For instance, *Harlequin and The Fairy of the Coral Cave or, The Magic Pancake* staged 'in honour of the Queen's Birthday' at the Olympic Theatre in Launceston on 25 and 29 May, 1846 had ten scenes in the customary one third to two thirds division, with the transformation scene occurring at the end of Scene 3. The opening scenes set up the conflict between Geoffreys, the father, and the lovers Lilian and Paris, with the production moving from the fantastic setting of the 'Magic Lake' in the opening to a number of local shopfronts in the Harlequinade. Furthermore, the second last scene is obviously the dark scene, where the lovers are 'overtaken' by events which compel the Fairy Queen to intervene for the last time and bring about the happy ending.

**SCENERY AND INCIDENTS OF THE PANTOMIME**

Scene 1. - The Coral Cave or the Magic Lake - appearance of the Fairy Queen - Paris discovered - the spirit of Good Friday commands an attendant to alleviate the distress of Paris.

Scene 2. - Cottage of Geoffrey Gorgemup - Despair of Paris - appearance of Lilian - orders to make the magic pancake.

Scene 3. - A Forest - Paris benighted - sudden appearance of the Fairy Queen - transformation of characters - now for fun and frolic.

Scene 4. - A Street - the flight and pursuit - ups and downs - Harlequin without joints.

Scene 5. - Exterior of *Nathan's the celebrated dealer of Elizabeth Street* - new way to obtain a suit of clothes - the patriotic six - the honest couple - the police in requisition.

Scene 6. - Exterior of *Benjamin's Emporium, Charles Street* - selling off at cost price - a tight fit - Clown turned tailor.

Scene 7. - Exterior of the Horse and Jockey (Radford's), York Street - Clown turned Jockey - *Figaro* the winner - *Vandyke* too good to be hurt - how to purchase a horse.

Scene 8. - Duchene's the Pawnbroker's, Charles Street - two to one - the clown up the spout - a visit to my father's brother - magic table and disappearance of the supper - Harlequin's leap - two to one he don't come back.

Scene 9. - A street - Harlequin and Columbine overtaken - all in the dumps.

Scene 10. - The Coral Cave - appearance of the Fairy Queen - true love rewarded - peace, concord, and unanimity - and grand and imposing denouement.

Late nineteenth-century English and Australian pantomimes show a new set of 'obligatory elements'. Williamson's productions were characterised by an elongated 'opening', an atrophied Harlequinade and a repositioned and redefined
'dark scene' and 'transformation scene'. The former was transferred to the 'opening', often underground or under the sea. The transformation scene became the scenic finale based on a fantastic theme such as the 'Realms of Happiness' or the 'Birth of the New Year'. It was a scene painter's contrivance which, as Veronica Kelly (1988) describes, 'showcased the stage itself as a star in its own right' (9).

Speaking of its English counterpart, Mayer argues that such changes rendered the pantomime incapable of 'recording the shifting surfaces of daily life' (Mayer 1969, 327). Though he doesn't name the ideological basis of his historical critique, it bears historiographical similarities with the 'pessimism' of the Frankfurt school, in particular with Adorno and Horkheimer's critique of a 'culture industry'. Similarly, Mayer seems to subscribe to Bakhtin's (1984) view that Western culture lost important forms of *parodia sacra* during the High Capitalism of the late nineteenth-century (120).\(^8\) Most notably, Mayer's arguments concerning the loss of the pantomime's political potency shares Adorno's view that:

> The total effect of the culture industry is one of anti-enlightenment, in which, as Horkheimer and I have noted, enlightenment, that is the progressive technical domination of nature, becomes mass deception and is turned into a means for fettering consciousness (1969, 92).

Implicit in Mayer's criticism of the late nineteenth-century 'culture industry' is his structuring of popular and political theatre as oppositional dramatic forms. But Jameson (1990) reminds us that Adorno and Horkheimer's essay did not so much argue that 'culture' and 'industry' were necessarily incompatible, as critique how 'culture' and 'art' were seen as a 'business':

> the Culture Industry, as Adorno and Horkheimer see it, is not art or culture but rather business as such, and indeed a place in which the tendential convergence between monopoly and instrumentalization can be observed more clearly than in other kinds of commodity exchange. Theoretically, indeed, this chapter has the additional significance and interest of an experimental combination of two kinds of analysis often confused with each other but less compatible than is ordinarily supposed: commodification and instrumentalization (108).

Mayer's 'regressive' hypothesis, however, contradictorily includes evidence showing that the spectacle of Planché's fairy extravaganzas and Harris's Drury Lane

---

\(^8\) Bakhtin's overview in "Rabelais in the History of Laughter" argues that the 'disintegration of popular laughter (sic) was practically completed, and marked at the same time the end of the formative phase of the satirical or merely amusing comic literary genres that were to prevail in the nineteenth century' (120).
pantomimes had its antecedents in the earlier nineteenth-century pantomime. Indeed, that early nineteenth-century productions were also constructed according 'to the view that theatre managers and pantomime arrangers calculated to be most popular with their audiences'(8). This is supported by Broadbent's (1901) view that the 'advent of Pantomime, early in the eighteenth century, gave a special fillip to spectacular display, as they were made attractive to audiences through 'new scenery, decorations, and flyings' (180). More recently, Paul Sawyer's research on the pantomime's popularity on the London Stage between 1720 and 1760 argues the same importance for its spectacular effects.

Another important ingredient in pantomime's popularity was its spectacle. There were sudden appearances and disappearances; tables and animals rose; legs were sawed off; characters flew through the air and underwent all sorts of transformations - all this in the 1723-24 season, almost at the very outset of English pantomime's development (Sawyer 1990, 5 - 6).

What is apparent from scenarios of early nineteenth-century Australian productions is that they were, in relative terms, much more prepared to break with the Aristotelian 'unities' of time, place and action. Brent Chesley (1994) observes as much with regard to eighteenth-century English pantomime when he argues that there seems to have been two views of the pantomime's narrative arrangement, depending on whether the observer saw such productions as harmless fun or the 'product of a damaged brain'. Using Thomas Davies' Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick (1780) and Alexander Pope's Dunciad, he observes that:

Davies assumes that Harlequin's adventures follow a plot, and that the trickster performs the transformation of palaces and temples to huts and cottages as part of a comic fable'. In Pope's passage, however, one spectacle follows another without any hint of a plot or purpose. The attitudes of the two authors differ markedly. Davies thinks that pantomimes constitute harmless fun, whereas Pope's profusion of unconnected, senseless transformations betokens chaos. One could assume that Pope strives for this effect because he wishes to make fun of this form of entertainment - the description occurs in The Dunciad; after all - and that he simply wants to make the creations of his enemy appear to be the products of a damaged brain (5.)

Undoubtedly, the contractions of pantomime subjects and the attrition of the harlequinade, which Mayer notes were the key features of late nineteenth-century arrangements, meant that a more linear narrative structure became part of pantomime, as it was of melodrama. This had profound political implications with regards to the pantomime's use of the theatrical space, the construction of its dramatic language and

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
its ideological representation of race and gender. Therefore, the more chronologically ordered the pantomime's narrative became, the more, in historiographical terms, it might be said to have lost its subversive 'deconstructive' and 'detotalising' potential.

Williamson's Theatre Practice

The most extensive statements Williamson made on his theatre practices are in *Life Story* (1913), a compilation of the interviews he gave to *The Bookfellow* in 1907.\(^9\) Besides its biographical information concerning his work in America and his successful advent into the Australian theatre in 1874 with *Struck Oil*, Williamson outlined his thoughts on Australian actors, Australian drama and why 'local drama fails'. The pivotal part of his critique was based on his 'Aristotelian' performance theory, outlining how the theatre needed to create empathy with the audience, that plays should have narrative cohesion and be visually spectacular.

Well, a good play must have heart interest. It must hit the audience below the collar button. And it must have head: it must have a good plot, and not be intellectually below contempt. And in the third place it must admit of an appeal to the eye. Perhaps I should have put these qualities in the reverse order. The audience has first to be pleased through the eye; then it must have the appeal to the heart; and then there should be sufficient plot, sufficient intelligence, to leave a pleasant after-taste in memory (28).

Noel Macainish (1982) described Williamson's 'formula' as one which assured managers and audiences of their 'rights of possession' (50). Accordingly, Williamson's praxis was 'nothing other than dramaturgic perfection'.

In the contemporary theatre of Williamson's time only one direction basically corresponded to this theory, namely that of the French *pièce bien faite*. The world-wide, successful theatre of Eugene Scribe (1791 - 1861), Victorien Sardou (1831 - 1908) and George Feydeau (1862 - 1921) offered everything that J. C. Williamson demanded of a 'good' play. This theatre strove for nothing other than dramaturgic perfection, and its means are of an exclusively technical kind. The authors were manufacturers who, according to contemporary reviews, worked under a dreadful compulsion to produce: the naked dramaturgy, the virtuoso run of the scenes, full of tricks, the need to be ever more striking and compelling because the boulevard-public immediately accustomed itself to the effects and nevertheless wanted to be surprised each time, the resourceful aesthetic apparatus to prevent boredom, all this met the needs of the public with great success (Macainish 1982, 51).

While in historiographical terms *Life Story* offers historians a kind of 'final word' on Williamson theatre practice, Williamson's staging of pantomimes suggests a

---

\(^9\) The introduction states that he "revised every word in proof; and himself reprinted this life-story, in book form, for circulation among his friends" (i)

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal 47
more problematic view of how he achieved dramaturgical success with Australian audiences. Indeed, the Firm did not succeed in its first attempts at producing Australian pantomime in 1882 with Aladdin and Jack and the Beanstalk.

The critic from the Age noted on 22 December 1883 that the Theatre Royal management cannot be congratulated upon the enterprise which they have shown in selecting this year's Christmas pantomime... It is almost a work of supererogation to tell our readers anything about the stage handling of the adventures of Aladdin. As the production featured Maggie Moore as the pantomime boy, this unfavourable notice may have been related to the fact that it was the Age's critic, Alfred Moul, who was assaulted by James Moore, Maggie's brother, for unfavourable comments on his sister Maggie earlier that year.10

The Firm's Pantomime Arrangers

Williamson's pantomime productions demonstrate how he searched for the kinds of drama he believed would succeed with Australian audiences, which predominantly involved 'shopping' for productions overseas. This despite the fact that locally written pantomimes were still being successfully produced in 1879. Four out of a total of ten productions staged in Sydney and Melbourne between 1879 and 1881 were Garnet Walch's arrangements: Babes in the Wood and Sinbad for Coppin at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne; Gulliver; or Harlequin King Lilliput for G. B. W. Lewis at the Bijou Theatre, Melbourne and Dyk Whyttingonne and His Catte for Fred Marshall at the Princess Theatre, Melbourne. Of the other six, Coppin's Sydney production of Jack the Giant Killer was subtitled 'local, vocal and jokal' while other productions by well-known English arrangers such as Wybert Reeve, James Mc Ardle, Frank Green, William Edouin and John Strachan were localised by local writers such as Richard Thatcher and Joe Brown.

Yet the sources of Williamson's pantomimes were predominantly the English arrangers Robert Reece(1882 and 1883), Frank W. Green (1883), T. F. Doyle(1884

10 Reported in March, 1883.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
and 1885) William Wade (1902), H. Saville Clark (1901), Seymour Hicks (1907), J. Hickory Woods (1906 to 1909 and then in 1911 and 1912), J. Hewson (1910) and Frank Dix (1913 and 1914). Note the caption beneath Frank Dix's photograph (Plate 4) taken from the programme/script of *Forty Thieves* which emphasizes his Drury Lane pedigree.

Of the 'home-made' arrangements, four were by Australian-born writers Garnet Walch (1885), Bernard Espinasse (1899 and 1900) and Montague Grover (1903). He also employed Arthur H. Adams (1898) and Toso Taylor (1889, 1893 and 1894) who were long-term residents and well-known local writers. Adams had come from New Zealand and Taylor was English.

Williamson also re-defined the meaning of a 'local' writer when he used English actors he had brought out for other engagements to write some of the company's other arrangements: Alfred Maltby (1886 and 1887), E.W. Royce (1889 and 1890), Frank Emery (1890) and Bert Royle (1892, 1893, 1895 and 1896). Interestingly, none but Maltby seems to have had any previous writing experience in the English theatre. Williamson himself turned pantomime arranger in 1895 when, together with Bert Royle and Bernard Espinasse, he co-authored four productions: three with Royle, *Sinbad, Djin Djin* and *Matsa*, and *Australis* with Espinasse.

**Pantomime Music**

The pantomime's music was also derived mostly from overseas sources. Traditionally, pantomime music 'borrowed' popular tunes and/or from 'high art' forms such as opera, using these satirically. But productions also required 'incidental' music to cover stage business and dance music for 'ballets'. The Australian composer Alfred Hill wrote music for only two of the company's productions: the 1898 production of *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* and the 1903 *Sleeping Beauty*. The music in Williamson's 'original' productions was substantially the work of Leon Caron, with supplementary music by George Pack for *Djin Djin* and *Matsa* and by F. W. Weierter for *Australis* . *Djin Djin* contained thirteen choral pieces, six new songs

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
Photo by Lafayette.

FRANK DIX, the Producer.

Specially Engaged from Drury Lane, London, for this Production.
and three new ballets. \textit{Matsa} was slightly more modest with the same number of new ballets, five new songs and ten choral pieces while by comparison \textit{Australis} only contained three new ballets, five choral pieces and four new songs. For the rest of the time, music was bought mainly from England, often accompanying the stage effects which the Firm had purchased. For example, in the 1884 production of \textit{Cinderella}, W.H. Harrison and Oscar Barrett's music came by way of Williamson, Garner and Musgrove purchasing Drury Lane's 'Procession of Fairy Tales' for that production.

\textbf{Scene painters}

Often, the company would purchase scenic and costume designs as well. On the evidence of the number of productions painted, one would have to say that George Gordon was the most important of the company's pantomime scene painters.\textsuperscript{11} (Plate 5 shows a rare glimpse of Gordon at work; featured in a 'behind the scenes' article on Matsa in the \textit{Leader} of the 2 January 1897.) Coppin's scene painter and partner of the 1870s, John Hennings, also did important work for the Firm during the 1880s. As Eric Irvin (1985) noted, Gordon's initiation to scene-painting was through his father's work for Madame Vestris at the \textit{Olympic}, while Hennings had had his introduction to the theatre in Vienna (116 and 125). Both these painters were also to have considerable influence on the post-1900 period through their tuition of painters such as Phil Goatcher and John Gordon. Gordon and Goatcher's works were often joined with that of W. R. Coleman, George Upward, George Dixon and Leslie Board.

John Gordon described the steps in constructing a theatre setting in the following way in 'Scene-painting in Australia'(1908).

Accompanying the MSS. of a London play come the ground plans and photographs of the scenery. In the case of a local production, the scene painter gets from the author and producer their ideas of the settings and the practicabilities. From these sketches are prepared, which are submitted to the stage-director, who then discusses their constructive details. A few alterations may be made, especially if it is found necessary to vary the production in any way from the original one. A model of each scene is then prepared on a miniature stage on a scale of half-inch to the foot. With toy figures for characters, the

\textsuperscript{11} I am aware that David Hough is currently working on a biography of Phillip Goatcher and that Dr Mimi Colligan is conducting research on John Hennings, but scenepainting remains hugely neglected. One of the last scenepainters trained by J. C. Williamson Ltd, Paul Kathner, has also expressed an interest in research on Australian scenepainting. I record his comment here in the hope that others will encourage him to do so.

\textbf{Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal}
artist next goes through the various situations of the play with the stage-director. He
endeavours to devise artistic groupings of the people and alters the scenes when
necessary. Then the models are handed over to the master mechanist, who constructs
full-sized scenes accordingly, discussing with the artist their mechanical arrangement,
building, and setting. When constructed, the scene is placed in sections on the paint-
frame, and the actual painting begins. But the artist does not experience an
academician’s joy of watching his picture develop upon the canvas before him, for his
canvas is divided into many different sections - backcloths and groundcloths, borders,
‘wings’, and ‘set pieces’ - and he sees the entire composition only in his mind’s eye as he
paints each part of the scene. It is not until the scene is set upon the stage and ‘pulled
together’ - the technical term for harmonising the various parts - that he sees his picture
complete. Even then it is not finished, for the scene must now be ‘dressed’, which
means that flowers must be worked upon their bushes, leaves upon their trees, or maybe
some real lattice-work must give a semblance of realism to a painted porch. Lastly, the
scene is ‘lit’ - a warmer light here, a colder there, till an approximation of the natural
effect in the painter’s eye is attained (112).

Unfortunately, as valuable as Gordon’s overview is, he omits to specify the
theatre manager’s artistic or financial input other than naming him indirectly through
the role of producer and stage director. And what of the treasurer/business manager’s
role, such as that provided for the Firm by George Tallis and G. L. Goodman, in
assessing the productions’ budgets? The profit and loss accounts for Williamson and
Musgrove’s 1890s Sydney and Melbourne pantomimes indicate that scenery usually
amounted to approximately ten percent of the overall cost. For instance, scenery cost
£814.7.3 of a total budget of £9492.16 for the company’s 1892 Little Red Riding
Hood at the Lyceum, Sydney. The relative cheapness of scenery can be accounted
for through the recycling and/or re-adapting of canvases between productions.
Scenery for the 1892 Melbourne production of Forty Thieves, adapted from the 1891
Sydney production, cost a mere £197.18.4 out of a budget of £10,051.16.12
Recycled scenery is certainly evident in the company's scene books which indicate that
certain pieces of scenery were used in more than one production.13 This is further
suggested by the similarity of the types of scenery found in the Firm’s productions.

12 Profit and loss account books are relatively rare in terms of the kind of archival material which
survives from the pre-1900 company. The records I am working from are held at the Performing Arts
Museum, Melbourne. They show the budgets for 1892 - 1897 pantomime productions. Besides the
figures already noted they show that scenery cost £545.13.11 for 1893 Beauty and the Beast;
£447.9.10 for 1894 Cinderella; a surprisingly small £372.15.3 for 1895 Djin Djin; £334.9 for 1896
Matza and £357.7 for 1897 Babes in the Wood.
13 A few J. C. Williamson scene books survive in the hands of scenepainter Paul Kathner in his
Melbourne workshop and several more are with the Performing Arts Museum, Melbourne. These
contain collections of photographs of various productions - mostly post-1907 productions -
spurring the size of the scenic design and sometimes noting how the scenery is recycled through
other productions. For instance, 156 B which was Border for Act 2, Scene 1, no. 1 of JCW Ltd's
1916 Pantomime was later used for ‘covering’ in Oh Oh Delphine. David Hough has also informed
me that some of Phil Goacher's work was still being used in productions in the 1950s and 60s!

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
These basically fell into three types of setting for the pantomime's fairytale narrative purposes - the palatial setting, the 'humble' village/dominic setting and the 'fairy world' setting.

Cost and Size of the Pantomime's Cast and Crew

The greatest cost was wages and salaries which amounted to between fifty to sixty percent of the total budget. In financial terms this would suggest that it was always cheaper to have more spectacular scenery and special effects in pantomimes than to increase wages and salaries. Williamson's belligerence towards Trade Unionism in the theatre, particularly manifest in the court cases the Firm mounted against the Unions between 1910 and 1912, is undoubtedly related to this. It might also offer an economic reason for why the Firm primarily used women and children to create the pantomime's spectacles: they were the cheapest form of labour! The staffing and wages records, for instance, of George Musgrove's 1900 Cinderella show that the division of labour on stage was a ratio of three women to every man, though there were clearly more men employed 'behind the scenes' to produce the pantomime.14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>MALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRINCIPALS</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHORUS LADIES</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BALLET LADIES</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHILDREN - GIRLS</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHILDREN - BOYS</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHORUS - GENTLEMEN</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORCHESTRA</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSICAL CONDUCTOR</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE MANAGER</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALL BOX</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRONT OF HOUSE</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIREFIGHTER</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLICEMAN</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIGHTWATCHMAN</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE DOOR-KEEPERS</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLEANERS</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRESSERS</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WARDROBE</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE HANDS - MECHANIST DEPT</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAS &amp; LIME DEPT</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROPERTY</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUSINESS MANAGER</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFFICE</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAINTROOM</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14 Of further interest is the fact that the harlequinade was still predominantly male. There are also more male principals who were more highly paid.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal 52
| SCENERY & PROPS | 4 |
| HARLEQUINADE | 2 |
| TOTAL | 119 |

As limited as this single record is, it demonstrates that men were the producers of the spectacle, artistically, financially and technically: they were its business managers and its technical staff as set designers, machinists, lighting specialists. They were also its 'directors' of music and stage business. On the other hand, when women worked 'behind the scenes' they worked predominantly in the wardrobe department and as general cleaners. These areas were of course related to women's domestic duties of sewing, cleaning and dressing children.

**The Role of Women in the Firm's Pantomimes**

Nonetheless, the Firm clearly fostered the careers of many women in the Australian theatre: actresses Nellie Stewart, Carrie Moore and Florence Young were some of the most successful Australian pantomime boys up to 1914. (Plates 6 shows Nellie Stewart as Aladdin in 1901, while Plates 7 and 8 show the predominance of girls in the creation of the pantomime spectacle through the combined use of dance and costuming). Wardrobe mistress Emily Nathan had an enormously successful career in the company from 1884 onwards. As Nellie Stewart informs us, she had in fact begun to work for George Musgrove in 1881. (Stewart 1923, 367) Advertisements suggest that she did not design costumes as Comelli or Alias did for Drury Lane productions but that she mostly worked from imported designs. Profit and loss statements for the 1890 productions, however, suggest that the company's expenditure on costumes was similar to what it spent on scenery. It would be fair to assume then that Emily Nathan managed a staff and budget similar to George Gordon, Phil Goatcher and other scene painters.

Female choreographers were also to dominate in the Firm. Male choreographers were only used by the company in the early 1880s when Monsieur

---

15 Nellie Stewart makes this clear when she explains how Emily Nathan, the company's Melbourne based costumer, copied her Cinderella costume from imported designs (Stewart 1923, 105). Another reference to Emily Nathan's working from imported designs is made in The Age, 28 December 1891, with reference to *The Merry Monarch*.  

**Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal** 53
MISS NELLIE STEWART AS ALADDIN.
REHEARSING THE PAMESA DANCE: THE PRETTY SWINGING MOVEMENT THAT ACCOMPANIES THE PRIMROSE SONG.
Massartic and Edward McLean worked together on *Jack and the Beanstalk* in 1882/83. In these early years the 'Triumvirate' also employed Emilia Pasta Moore for its 1884 *Cinderella*. According to Edward Pask (1979), prior to 1899 and the appointment of Australian-born choreographer Minnie Everett, the company went to considerable trouble to import its female choreographers: Marie Reddall (1888 - 1892), Madame Catherine Bartho (1893) and Madame Philipini (1892 - 1899). Australian-born choreographers Minnie Everett and Jennie Brenan had their beginnings in dance through these women. They, in turn, were to become important dance teachers in Sydney and Melbourne (Pask 1979, 93). However, as Pask explains, it was Minnie Everett who was to make the greatest impact on the shaping of dance in the company.

In 1897 Henry Bracy presented his New Comic Opera Company's inaugural season at the Bijou Theatre, Melbourne, opening on 17 April with a sumptuous revival of Millocker's *The Beggar Student*, which included a Grand Polish Mazurka, staged by Minnie Everett, and performed by her and a troupe of fourteen dancers. The season, which ran until 22 May, also included new productions of *The Sultan of Mocha* and Lecocq's *Pepita*. So it was that Minnie Everett made her debut as a choreographer, a role she was to fill for many years within the J. C. Williamson organization. In November 1898 she was commissioned to create the ballets for Sidney Jones' *opera-comique*, *The Geisha*, which the Royal Comic Opera Company aired to Australian audiences on 17 December at the Princess Theatre, Melbourne, with Minnie Everett as *premiere danseuse* of the Royal Ballerinas. The following year, as a result of *The Geisha*'s success, Minnie Everett was appointed the director of the Royal Ballerinas, the first Australian to hold such a position, and in turn she created ballets for *Little Red Riding Hood*, which opened at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, on 26 December 1899 as a 'turn of the century' attraction; it ran for eight weeks before transferring to Melbourne's Princess Theatre on 24 February 1900. Over the following thirty years the credit 'Dances by Miss Minnie Everett' became a familiar line on J. C. Williamson's programmes of attractions in both Australia and New Zealand (Pask 1979, 93).

Everett choreographed most of Williamson's pantomime productions between 1899 and 1914 with the exceptions of Jennie Brenan's choreography for 1906/7 *Mother Goose*, 1909/10 *Aladdin* and 1910/11 *Jack and Jill* and Minnie Hooper's 1907/8 *Humpty Dumpty*. She was also able to boast in the 1920s of being the only female producer of Gilbert and Sullivan operas in the world.

The key positions of the actress, costumier and choreographer in producing spectacular pantomimes raises questions about women's complicity in imperialist representations and, in particular, in the creation of 'the male gaze' through which, Laura Mulvey (1989) hypothesises, patriarchy commands 'pleasure'. Should we
assume that Nellie Stewart, Emily Nathan and Minnie Everett were merely puppets of the company as they performed in, dressed cast members for and positioned women's bodies within the pantomime's mise en scène? In historiographical terms, Margaret Jolly explains that 'colonising women' were like their male counterparts 'colonial actors and authors of myths, fictions and colonial discourses' (Jolly 1993, 103).

The 'Source' of the Triumvirate's Pantomime Successes

Collectively, the roles of pantomime arranger, composer, scene painter, costumier and choreographer ensured that the pantomime was marketed as a local festival. However, they also show how the Firm standardised productions across various Australian capital cities and country centres. For example, Williamson, Musgrove and Garner's first two productions of Aladdin and Jack and the Beanstalk, staged simultaneously at the Theatres Royal, Sydney and Melbourne for Christmas 1882, were swapped over for Christmas 1883 so that Jack and the Beanstalk was staged in Sydney and Aladdin in Melbourne. This signals how the Firm 'universalised' the genre through the theatre entrepreneur's monopolistic tendencies and cultural imperialist notions. The meaning of 'local' was thus framed within contemporary Imperialist and Nationalist discourses within a festive 'saturnalian' Christmas celebration.

Aladdin was billed in both Sydney and Melbourne as 'lately performed with enormous success at the Gaiety Theatre, London'. In fact, it had been staged there the previous Christmas. A playbill of the London production describes it as a 'Burlesque-Drama, in three Acts with music by the Gaiety's musical director Herr Meyer Lutz. Incidental music for the Sydney and Melbourne productions was by the operatic musical conductor Paolo Giorza, resident in Australia since 1872 (Gyger 1990, 29). The Gaiety production only had been minimally altered for the Australian market: Act 1, Scene 2 in the Australian production was changed from 'Market Place in Pekin' to 'A Street in Pekin'; Act 2, Scene 1 was altered from 'The Widow's Back Parlour' to 'The Widow's Home'. The Australian production also added an extra scene in the

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal 55
second act, with Scene 3, 'The Home of the Lamp', seemingly because Scene 2 had been lengthened with the dance of 'The Devil's Revels'.

Perhaps the most noticeable difference between the two productions was that the Gaiety one had been staged together with two one-act farces while the Australian production, more in keeping with pantomime tradition, concluded with a transformation scene and a harlequinade. Indeed, the Triumvirate hired English pantomimist Tom Mathews to devise the harlequinade. The 1882 pantomime in Melbourne was based on Frank W. Green's 1875 arrangement of *Jack and the Beanstalk*, produced at William Holland's Surrey Theatre. Its music was by the English composer W. H. Harrison and its incidental music by the in-house composer, William Rice. Williamson's 1883 Australian version included the Drury Lane clown, Will Simpson. According to the *Lorgnette* of 1 November 1883, Arthur Garner had made contact with the Drury Lane performer earlier that year.

The company's acquisition of the 'best' theatres in Sydney and Melbourne earlier in 1882 seems to have been an important factor in attracting more technically spectacular productions and celebrated English stars to Australia. This meant leasing the Theatre Royal, Melbourne from George Coppin and the Theatre Royal, Sydney from Sam Lazar. Austin Brereton was able to report that, by 1890, Williamson, Garner and Musgrove controlled the Princess Theatre, and the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, the Theatre Royal, Sydney, the Opera House, Brisbane and the Theatre Royal, Adelaide and that through 'the number of theatres at their disposal, and the consequent magnitude of their operations, these gentlemen are enabled to engage more celebrated actors and actresses from abroad than is possible for their brother managers' (*The Theatre* [London], 1 January, 1890). The exchange of productions between Sydney and Melbourne, so evident through the pantomime productions, was

---

16 Though other Gaiety burlesques were produced at other times e.g. in 1882 Jennie Lee produced F. C. Burnand's *BlueBeard* in Melbourne in April. Brough and Boucicault also presented the Gaiety's *Little Jack Shepherd* at Christmas 1886.

17 Surrey Theatre playbill for the first benefit of Frank W. Green held Fisher Library, University of Sydney.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
only one leg of a complex touring network which included both New Zealand and South Africa.

The 1884 Melbourne production of *Cinderella* was an unremarkable arrangement by an English 'provincial' pantomime writer, T. F. Doyle, at that time linked to the Theatre Royal, Manchester. The real highlight of the production was the 'Grand Procession of Fairy and Nursery Stories Invented and Arranged by Augustus Harris' which had been purchased in England by Mr J. C. Williamson and transplanted in its entirety from Drury Lane, London' (*Age*, 23 December 1884). A theatre programme for the Drury Lane production of *Cinderella* in 1883 shows that the spectacle had been staged in Scene 7 of E. L. Blanchard's arrangement. It is curious, then, that Williamson, Garner and Musgrove had bought that spectacle but did not use Blanchard's arrangements. The only Blanchard arrangements staged during these years were G. B. W. Lewis's 1880 production of *Goody Two Shoes* and R.L. Raphael's 1885 *Mother Goose*. Advertisements for *Goody Two Shoes* do not, however, emphasize its Drury Lane pedigree but rather the novelty of the 'burlesque' pantomime and its 'juvenile' cast drawn from Mrs Lewis's dance classes (including Williamson's second wife, Mary Weir).

Accompanying the Melbourne and Sydney productions of *Cinderella* were Frank W. Green's arrangement of *Little Red Riding Hood* and Garnet Walch's *Sleeping Beauty*. In Melbourne, Walch's arrangement received an indifferent review in the *Age* which, noting its patriotic elements, nonetheless claimed that its managers had 'a decided monopoly of the faculty to bore' (28 December 1885). The reviewer conceded, however, that it was a production of 'great splendour', achieved by importing spectacles such as the 'Novel Entertainment by The Raynor Bros, followed by The Royal Zylophonists and The Marvellous Faust Family and the Wonderful Excelsior Ballet'. Sydney's production of *Little Red Riding Hood* included Miss

---

18 Doyle was extremely difficult to trace through English newspapers and the only clue to his contribution to English pantomime writing was in *The Times* (London) which showed in its round-up of provincial theatres that his arrangement of *Dick Whittington* was staged at Christmas 1885 in Manchester (26 December, 1885)
Annie Read's 'Aerial Flights' in which she apparently flew in 'all directions from the stage of the Theatre'. This act had also originated at the Gaiety Theatre, London.

**English Actors as Australian Pantomime Arrangers**

These changes were in place when Alfred Maltby, an actor and minor writer of farcical comedies, came to work for Williamson, Garner and Musgrove in Melbourne in 1886. The *Lorgnette* of 6 October reveals that he was initially hired by the Triumvirate as a member of the 'Royal Comedy Company' for a four-week season at the Bijou Theatre with 'the object of introducing to Australian playgoers Mr. Harry Saint Maur'. Indeed, Harry Saint Maur and Maltby formed the 'Royal Comedy Company' from Charles Wyndham's Criterion Theatre, London. Williamson, Garner and Musgrove gave Maltby the task of adapting Walch's *Sleeping Beauty* for Sydney audiences for Christmas 1886. Maltby also designed some of the costumes which were largely made by Messrs Auguste et Cie, Paris; Mons. Alias, Miss Fisher and Mr Sam May of London. The production also used elaborate and specially designed arms, armour, masks, properties, banners from Drury Lane, Manchester and Birmingham.

Maltby was also the arranger of the Firm's 1886/87 production of *Robinson Crusoe*, starring well-known English comedian William Elton as the Dame. It was co-written with the experienced English stage manager, H. H. Vincent. The Firm publicized the installation of electric light throughout the auditorium, though 'calcium and gas effects' were still used in the production. This signals how pantomimes were usually advertised with an artistic and/or technological 'coup' for their theatre managers. For instance, the coup for the 1887 production of *Robinson Crusoe* was the fact that its music had been 'composed, arranged and scored' by Alfred Cellier who had arrived in Melbourne at Christmas, 1886 to conduct the *Mikado* for the opening of the Princess Theatre.

---

19 John Thomson notes in *The New Zealand Stage* (1993) that his three act farcical comedy *Mixed: The Three Hais*, written with Owen Dove in 1883 was performed in Wellington, 1892 & 1895; his farce *I'm Not Myself at All* in 1895; his one act farce *Borrowed Plumes* in 1897 & 1899.
Despite its star composer, however, the *Age*’s critic denounced the pointlessness of the pantomime.

There is dialogue, of course, and if you want to be very economical of truth you will say that it is full of wit, and point, and verve, and humour. But there is beautiful scenery. You may praise that without any stint, and not be at all economical of truth. If one could see all the pictures without any of the pantomime it would be a blessing (1 January 1887).

E. L. Blanchard’s ‘legs and limelight’ criticism of late nineteenth-century English pantomime was clearly also applicable of Australian productions as critics repeatedly argued that ‘the modern pantomime’ was ‘the triumph of the scene painter, the mechinist and the stage manager’ (*Age*, 22 December, 1885). Thus Maltby’s last ‘Australian’ pantomime *Jack the Giant Killer*, staged in Melbourne in 1887, was noted for its extraordinary scenic effects:

> when the curtain went up, disclosing a charming scene, laid at the South Pole, it was a very good-humoured holiday audience that the actors had to face, in case any of the slips incidental to what was really the first full-dress rehearsal should call for indulgence. The scene is a striking one, very realistic, and when the aurora borealis, which appears in obedience to Sunbeam’s fairy wand, glitters on the icebergs, and lights up the pendant icicles with prismatic hues, the effect is very gorgeous, and there is reason for regret that, owing to the early departure of King Antartic on his sleigh of icebergs, the splendid picture is so soon shut out from view (**Argus**, 24 December 1887).

Another actor-turned-pantomime writer, E. W. Royce, wrote arrangements of *Sinbad* and *Aladdin* in 1888 and 1889. The latter was staged in Melbourne in 1890 as the only pantomime to be produced under the banner of ‘Williamson and Garner’ after George Musgrove left the Triumvirate in March of that year. A veteran actor from the Gaiety Theatre, Royce often appeared, as the London *Era* of 12 August 1899 informs us, in a famous quartet with Edward Terry, Nellie Farren and Kate Vaughan. He had been stricken with illness in 1882 and did not perform again until he came to Australia under Brough and Bouicault’s management in 1886, first appearing in *Turned Up* at the Opera House, Melbourne.

As Edward Pask (1979) tells us, Royce was accompanied by his wife, dancer Marie Reddall (also from the Gaiety), who was employed by the Firm to train its ‘Royal Ballerinas’, headed by Mary Weir. The Royal Ballerinas made their debut in Royce’s 1888 production of *Sinbad* (83). Reddall choreographed all of Royce’s arrangements which included the first ‘Easter’ pantomime staged by the company.
when *Sinbad* was transferred to Sydney on 20 April 1889. The arrival of these Gaiety artists, however, does not seem to be related to Musgrove and Garner's trips to London in 1887 and 1888. Nor was it part of Musgrove's coup of securing Nellie Farren and Fred Leslie for an Australian season. The company seemed to be creating successful productions at this time by maximising the expertise of 'lesser' English theatre professionals.

**Theatrical Spaces**

One might conclude that the 'Triumvirate' of Williamson, Garner and Musgrove survived the adverse criticism of their early efforts at producing pantomime because of such spectacles. Indeed, the company felt confident enough to implement important changes in its Sydney and Melbourne theatres at pantomime time. In 1883 they eliminated the pit area of the Theatre Royal, Sydney 'to ensure greater comfort' to its patrons. They also promised that 'the price of admission to this popular part of the theatre will remain as at present: -3s' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 December 1883). In fact, the price rise came the following year with *Little Red Riding Hood*. Ross Thorne also informs us that electricity was installed in the theatre in the same year (Thorne 1995, 586).

The impetus for these changes was undoubtedly the 1882 New South Wales Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Construction of Theatres, Public Halls, and Other Places of Public Amusement of Concourse. As Ross Thorne (1971) explains, Williamson was required to give evidence before the commission and stated that 'pit people like crowding; they do not enjoy themselves unless they are well packed in'. By way of supporting this he claimed that on Boxing Night 1881 there were 2,330 people in a Sydney theatre built to hold 1,445! (158).²⁰ Limiting the numbers in theatres ensured that the aisle remained clear, but also meant a rise in prices, as stated by the Firm on Boxing Day 1884 at the opening of *Little Red Riding Hood*. The new

---

²⁰ This comment makes me think that Williamson might have already been in active partnership with Arthur Garner in Sydney in December 1881. Although Williamson's name does not appear on the playbills or programme scripts, he was 'around' at the time and involved in the production.
prices were 6s for the dress circle, 4s for the stalls and 3s for the family circle, up from 5s, 3s and 2s respectively. 21

It is well known amongst all interested in theatrical matters that the Annual Christmas Pantomime is the manager's harvest, and this entertainment is anxiously looked forward to as a means of recouping the treasury after the usual dull time prior to the holidays and the inevitable result of the eccentricities of the clerk of the weather. On the present occasion we have endeavoured to outdo all our previous efforts and had determined to retain the usual prices of admission; but on the eve of this great production, upon which all concerned have concentrated their best energies for months past, and over £7000 sterling has been expended, we have received a notification from the authorities limiting the maximum nightly attendance to such an absurdly small number that it is absolutely impossible to obey the law and obtain a return of our outlay (Sydney Morning Herald, 26 December 1884).

'Re-cycling Arrangements' and Monopolisation

The Firm also 'recycled' older arrangements. For instance, Royce adapted his 1889 and 1890 versions of Aladdin from the company's 1882/83 arrangement by Robert Reece. Similarly, spectacles such as George Gordon's panorama of Sinbad's voyage, for Garner's 1881 production of Sinbad, were used again in 1888. The similarity of this 'novel' effect to the one reported in the London Times for Drury Lane's 1882 Sinbad is also noticeable. Indeed, pantomimes show how spectacular theatre is economically and therefore artistically dependent on the repetition of its stage effects to ensure the long-term viability of theatrical producers: Little Red Riding Hood is re-arranged for production in 1892, 1893 and 1899; Cinderella, in 1885, 1889 and in 1890,22 Sinbad in 1889 and 1896; Forty Thieves in 1892 and 1898. Hence, the repetition of stage effects becomes a key component of the Firm's ideological framing of its pre-Federation productions.

This recycling was even more significant because there were few pantomime productions by other managers during the 1880s. G. B. W. Lewis produced one pantomime in 1883; George Rignold and James Allison one in 1884; M. L. Raphael and Alfred Dampier produced one in 1885 and 1886 respectively.23 By 1887

21 1883 programme of Cinderella gives Drury Lane ticket prices as Private Boxes from £1 1s to £5 5s; Stalls, 10s; Grand Circle, 6s; First Circle, 4s; Balcony, 3s; Early Doors, 6d extra; Pit 2s, Early Doors, 6d extra; Gallery, 1s; Upper Gallery, 6d.
22 The 1890 production of Cinderella was staged by Musgrove when he left the Triumvirate in that year.
23 The most consistent producer of pantomimes in these years was F. E. Hiscocks with his presentation of 'Black' pantomimes in his Christmas minstrel shows. In 1882 he produced Black St

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal 61
Williamson, Garner and Musgrove were the only managers to produce a pantomime in both Sydney and Melbourne: this remained the case for 1888 and 1889.

The Firm's monopolisation of the pantomime, however, was short-lived since the 1890s saw the staging of many more productions by a greater number of managers: George Coppin produced five pantomimes between 1891 and 1895, as did George Rignold between 1890 and 1894. There was also a host of managers who produced one-off productions, such as Alfred Dampier in 1891, Frank Smith in 1892, Fred Gunther in 1893, Alfred Woods in 1895 and Harry Rickards in 1897. Nonetheless, the evidence suggests that the Firm was financially stronger than its competitors as it continued to stage simultaneous pantomime productions in Sydney and Melbourne for most of the 1890s - a feat not attempted by any other theatre manager. Furthermore, from 1892 productions were staged in new theatres. Royle's *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* was the first pantomime to be staged at the Princess, Melbourne and Williamson's newly constructed Lyceum Theatre in Sydney opened with Royle's *Little Red Riding Hood*: the change of venue in Sydney was made necessary because fire destroyed the Theatre Royal in June, 1892. The advertisement in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 24 December 1892 announced that:

```
THIS MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE OF AMUSEMENT
will be
Open to the - Public on
MONDAY EVENING NEXT, DECEMBER 26, 1892
under the Management of
Messrs. WILLIAMSON and MUSGROVE
who beg to call attention to the superior advantages
which they present to their patrons: -
THE BEST SIGHTED
THE BEST LIGHTED
THE BEST SEATED
THE BEST VENTILATED

George and the Dragon; in 1884 Black Blue Beard; 1885, Harlequin Black 'Hide Susan and 1886, Black Harlequin. Richard Waterhouse (1990) could find no further information about these during his research on Australian minstrelsy. One assumes that they would have been black-face and the theatre advertisements definitely indicate that they were locally written by various members of the cast. They also seem to have been quite short as they were merely one act in an evening's entertainment - not unlike the original Regency pantomimes.

24 Alec Bagot makes the same observation in regard to the personal fortunes of George Coppin, who, after retiring when he leased the Theatre Royal to Williamson in 1881, returned to the theatre in the 1890s and staged pantomimes between 1891 and 1895 to rescue himself from financial disaster (Bagot 1965, 339). Coppin, of course, was always rescuing himself from financial disaster, as Bagot, notes 'The "Banks crash" of the nineties hit him heavily. Uncalled capital on shares for years drained every surplus pound. The Theatre saved him, especially the pantomimes' (340).
```

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
MOST BEAUTIFULLY-DECORATED THEATRE
in Sydney

Special Attention is called to the
WINTER GARDEN

a luxurious LOUNGE, where visitors to the Dress Circle
and Reserved Stalls may obtain Tea, Coffee, and Ices or
Ladies rest and chat between the acts, and Gentlemen
enjoy the comfort of open-air smoking balconies.

The major attraction of this pantomime season was Robert Courtneidge, then
of the Gaiety, who took the role of the Dame. The arrangement, however, was hardly
a novel one as it was adapted from Frank Green's 1884 Sydney arrangement. Again,
the novelty was in the scenic splendour, this time executed by scene painter Phil
Goatcher, newly arrived from America to work for the company. Little Red Riding
Hood was later transferred to Melbourne in 1893, the year that Williamson and
Musgrove staged Toso Taylor's Beauty and the Beast in Sydney. Taylor had
collaborated with Royce on his 1889 arrangement of Aladdin. He was now working
for the company in his own right, having been a published author since 1885.

Original Arrangements and Company Survival Strategies.

1896 was a turning point for theatre managers. Williamson and Musgrove
were the only managers who produced a pantomime in Sydney and Melbourne that
year. After that, there was a reshuffling of competitors with Harry Rickards, who had
previously staged Garnet Walch's The Babes in 1885, embarking on a more
consistent attempt to present productions through his Variety entertainment business.
He thus staged four productions between 1897 and 1901. William Anderson
presented his first pantomime, together with Charles Holloway, in 1897, but did not
begin to consistently present productions until 1904. There were other sole attempts
by J. and C. McMahon, M. L. Raphael and Ada Juneen. Juneen's 1897 Robinson

---

25 David Hough, presently working on Goatcher's biography, believes that Williamson met up with
Goatcher in San Francisco in the 1870s and was reacquainted with him on his 1890 American theatrical
travels between English, American and Australian theatres.
26 In 1885 he had published an anthology of poems and a novel.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
Mr. J. C. Williamson
The Creator of the Pantomime
*Crusoe* appears to be the only pantomime devised by a woman between 1882 and 1914.  

*Djin Djin* and *Matsa* were both initially staged at the Princess Theatre for Christmas 1895 and 1896 and then transferred to Sydney for the following Easter. Correspondence between Williamson and Musgrove published by Viola Tait (1971) suggests that the late 1890s was a particularly taxing time for Musgrove in obtaining English artists for the company's pantomime productions. His letter of 1897 (Tait does not give a specific date) stating that there were 'over 20 suburban pantomimes' [being performed in London] with salaries for comedians, principal boys and chorus girls at a premium, is particularly noteworthy (66). The coincidence between Musgrove's difficulties and what was apparently the only time the company staged an 'original' Australian pantomime, by Bert Royle and J. C. Williamson himself, cannot be missed. Williamson admitted as much when he addressed the audience at the final night of *Djin Djin* at the Princess, telling them how 'his partner had gone to England to look for a Christmas attraction, but had failed to find anything good enough for the Australian public' (Age, 25 March 1896).

Williamson's first-hand supervision of 1890s productions seems to have ensured the company's economic survival in those most difficult times. Plate 9 underlines how he was regarded during that time as the creative force behind the productions. But it must not be forgotten that Musgrove's attempt to set up a London branch of the company in his staging of *The Belle of New York* was by all reports also very lucrative. However, if the pantomime productions are anything to go by, then it is clear how the goodwill surrounding Williamson's and not Musgrove's name grew in the eyes of the public and within the industry. It was Williamson, for instance, who was on hand to patriotically declare to a Melbourne audience that 'England was indebted to Australia for beef, mutton and wine, and there was no

---

27 Interestingly, she lodged her arrangement for copyright in New South Wales on 16 December 1901 claiming its first performance had been in Queenstown, Tasmania on 29 September 1897. Pantomime writer Francis Myers lodged J. and C. McMahon's 1897 *Dick Whittington* in 1898. However, very few pantomimes seem to be lodged for copyright in either New South Wales or Victoria. Presumably this was because 'the arranger' was paid for the particular work on the basis that 'the arrangement' was, in the final analysis, to remain the property of the theatre manager.
reason why it should not also be indebted to Australia for 'Djin Djin' (Age, 25 March 1896). This comment was reportedly 'greatly appreciated and heartily cheered by the audience. Playing alongside Dampier's The Bush King, Williamson's 'Australian' pantomime thus seemed to provide a distinctive break from English pantomime arrangements in the 1890s climate of growing nationalist sentiment.

Babes in the Wood at the Princess at Easter 1898, and Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves at Her Majesty's, Sydney at Christmas 1898, were the last two pantomimes staged under the partnership of Williamson and Musgrove. They had switched to producing pantomimes at Her Majesty's, after George Rignold had given up his lease of the theatre in 1895, and had staged Sinbad there in 1896. Indeed, at the end of 1899 Williamson made his new headquarters there, gathering together a new company for Bernard Espinasse's Boer War pantomime of Little Red Riding Hood. In the following year Williamson staged his 'Federation' pantomime Australis, authored by himself and Espinasse.

This production was one of two pantomimes Williamson staged while in sole management between 1900 and 1904: the other, Sleeping Beauty arranged by Monty Grover in 1903, was an adaptation of Garnet Walch's 1885 arrangement. Productions were by then under the supervision of Henry Bracy rather than Williamson himself, who during this period spent considerable time abroad.

During this time the Harlequinade finally disappeared from Australian productions. Williamson included a harlequinade in Djin Djin but not in Massa or productions from 1898 onwards. William Anderson, however, continued to stage one in his 1904 production of Sinbad. The other exception is J. C. Williamson Ltd's 1914 Cinderella which no doubt included a harlequinade because of the pantomimist pedigree of its star, Barry Lupino.

28 I have not been able to discover documentation to explain why in 1902 they presented Dick Whittington as a 'combination' production at, of all places, Her Majesty's Melbourne.
The 'Unlocalised' Modern Pantomime.

After two years absence from producing pantomimes in 1904 and 1905, and now in a new business partnership with Tallis and Ramaciotti, 'J. C. Williamson' just as decisively moved away from using Australian pantomime writers. Indeed, Monty Grover was to be the last Australian-born author employed by the Firm until 1934 and the staging of Blue Mountains Melody. If the Firm's pantomime productions reveal how in the pre-1900 period the company was still in the process of sorting out its access to and flow of theatrical imports into Australia, then the post-1900 productions illustrate how importations became streamlined within the company's operations; thus the Australian pantomime became virtually a wholly imported production.

There also seemed to be a concerted effort to link the productions specifically with the grandeur of Drury Lane pantomimes, hence the use of J. Hickory Wood's arrangements of Mother Goose, Humpty Dumpty, Jack and Jill and Aladdin between 1906 and 1910, and again in 1912 and 1913 with Sinbad and Puss in Boots.

The pantomime has been chosen, and the 'book' and music are received from Drury Lane; the costume designs accompany them and are turned over to a staff of costumiers; the scenic models have been made by the 'house' artist, and work on the paint-frame has commenced; a thousand girls have been selected from to form a chorus; a school of children are weaned for the time from maternal authority, and the innumerable details have been placed in the hands of those specially engaged to attend to them. Then comes the rehearsal, which is to link and chain the component parts of the singular production known as a pantomime. Shades of Grimaldi! The word is now a misnomer. Instead, it is a maze of grotesqueries through which strange eerie people wander; impossible creatures, who only approach the real of reality according as the spectator allows his spirit to be drawn into the frolic (Punch, 12 December 1906).

Again, as the 1884 Cinderella demonstrates, this is not to say that Williamson's pantomimes directly mirrored Drury Lane productions. In fact, they do not coincide at all and were most probably versions of J. Hickory Wood's work at the Theatre Royal, Manchester. Certainly his 1907 Mancunian arrangement of Sinbad, for instance, has important similarities to the 1911 Australian production. The other post-1906 authors were the less-known English pantomime writer James J. Hewson and the up-and-coming Drury Lane writer Frank Dix.

29James H. Hewson seems to have been based in Liverpool.
30Frank Dix had written the 'review' Come Over Here for the company in 1913. Dix was a prolific pantomime writer of provincial pantomimes and had in 1910 and 1911 co-author the Drury Lane pantomimes with Arthur Collins, J. Hickory Wood and George Sims.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
supplied the company with their 1910 arrangement of *Jack and the Beanstalk* and Dix the 1914 *Cinderella*.

As A. E. Wilson explained, J. Hickory Wood’s arrangements became the paradigm of the 'modern' pantomime.

I doubt if better pantomimes in modern times have ever been written than those of J. Hickory Wood, and probably no man in his particular line was ever more financially successful. Though he died in 1913, the pantomimes that he wrote especially for Drury Lane are still played every Christmas at many theatres up and down the country. In one year during his lifetime (1911) no fewer than thirty-three of his pantomimes were running simultaneously in England, South Africa and Australia (Wilson 1935, 111).

Interestingly, the *Argus* of 12 January 1907 noted that the pantomime had changed with the advent of J. C. Williamson’s *Mother Goose*.

The entertaining and picturesque pantomime at Her Majesty's Theatre is not quite of the pattern to which we have been accustomed at Christmas time and after. Its classification is rather puzzling even to those well up in dramatic nomenclature. Perhaps, all things considered, it may best be described as 'an amalgam' - a judicious combination of the oddest ingredients of musical comedy, dainty delights from 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', and a sprinkling of pantomime proper.

During this time the 'traditional Christmas pantomime' became more unlocated with regard to the Christmas festival. Through transfer of productions between the two cities, the pantomime initially staged at Her Majesty's, Melbourne at Christmas moved to Her Majesty's Sydney the following Easter. Indeed, the company's post-1906 production cards show that *Mother Goose* was staged almost continuously in some part of Australia and New Zealand for the next two years after the opening night in Melbourne on 22 December 1906.

| MELBOURNE | H.M.T. | 22/12/06 - 18/3/07 |
| SYDNEY    |       | 23/3/07 - 7/6/07  |
| ADELAIDE  | ROYAL | 22/6/07 - 6/7/07  |
| PERTH     | H.M.T. | 13/7/07 - 27/7/07 |
| BROKEN HILL |     | 2/8/07 - 7/8/07  |
| BALLARAT  |       | 9/8/07 - 10/8/07  |
| BRISBANE  | H.M.T. | 15/8/07 - 23/8/07 |
| QLD       |       | 24/8/07 - 26/8/07 |
| NEW ZEALAND |     | 2/9/07 - 13/11/07 |
| MELBOURNE | H.M.T. | 16/3/08 - 20/3/08 |
| VICTORIA  |       | 23/3/08 - 25/3/08 |
| SYDNEY    | H.M.T. | 20/6/08 - 26/6/08 |
| NEW ZEALAND |     | 28/8/08 - 17/10/08 |
| TASMANIA  |       | 26/10/08 - 29/10/08 |

31 The firm began keeping such records in 1906. The touring pattern shown here is recorded for every pantomime production of the post-1906 period.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal 67
The dates show that the 'traditional Christmas pantomime' was by 1906 diffusely spread over many kinds of seasons and not limited to being a 'Yuletide' production. What, for instance, could such a production be signalling in July and August of 1907 in Perth and Broken Hill?

**Competition and Domination**

The company's most successful competitor during these years was Clarke, Meynell, Wrenn and Gunn who also set up an importation business with London agents Denton Milton Bode and MacKenzie Ltd to bring the latest London shows to Australia. Their 1908 production of *Cinderella*, together with other musical productions at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, posed such a serious threat to Williamson's that the Firm began negotiations to buy out the London agents in early 1911. However, in general, competitors were by now very thin on the ground. Musgrove did not seriously challenge Williamson's supremacy in presenting pantomimes after 1901 and his financially disastrous German opera season in 1907 ensured he never again mounted the sort of entrepreneurial theatrical venture so characteristic of him from the 1870s. Interestingly, his 1900 and 1901 pantomimes had been J. Hickory Wood arrangements, suggesting that he may have been the 'innovator' with regard to importing the latest developments in English popular theatre.

It was, in fact, William Anderson who now challenged the Firm's almost total domination of Australian pantomime through his productions in 1904, 1905, 1909 and 1912. This was the state of affairs up to and immediately beyond Williamson's death in July 1913. Indeed, the advertisement for *Forty Thieves* at Christmas 1913 stated that the pantomime production would and could continue to entertain its audience in the same spectacular fashion that it had done during Williamson's life-time.

---

No effort has been spared to make this production compare more than favorably with previous pantomimes produced by the firm, and the Directors confidently anticipate that for splendor, novelty and attractiveness generally it will be recognised as excelling the firm's past achievements in this direction. This pinnacle of perfection has been attained

---

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
by the excellence of the cast, which has been selected from the leading artists of England, America and Australia; the delightful music, including the brilliant settings to the various ballets, the gorgeous costuming and elaborate stage pictures; the novel and attractive ballets, marches and groupings; the quaint and clever dialogue, which abounds in humor; and the inclusion of a crowd of novelties culled from the best obtainable in the Old World (Age, 20 December 1913).

The various sources for Williamson's pantomime production between 1882 and 1914 demonstrate the impossibility of totalising a theory of cultural production of theatre in Australia. Nonetheless, tracing these sources usefully informs us as to their specific 'temporalities' such as the use of local theatrical spaces and who and what affected their staging. This 'archaeological' knowledge effectively exposes the problematics of re-viewing Australian pantomime productions not only, as Jameson's suggests, in a post-structuralist 'hall of mirrors' but because historical sources have only ever been limited representations of the past.
1.2 Representations of 'England and its Other' in Australian Pantomime Scenarios and Stage Settings, 1879 to 1914.

The theatrical and dramatic sources of the Firm’s pantomimes, revealing as they do the enmeshing of topical material into mythical narratives, raise the question of what was the 'real' subject matter of the company's productions. If, as the Argus of 22 December 1885 suggested, late nineteenth-century Australian pantomime was 'a triumph of the scene painter, the machinist and the stage manager', then envisaging the visual effects of the productions should be regarded as the primary way of reviewing their arrangement of fairytale narratives. The litany of complaint by theatre critics, who noted the literary poverty of the pantomimes' narrative arrangements and the brilliance of their scenic effects, certainly suggests as much. Thus the term 'scenario' will be used in this section primarily in a 'visual' narrative sense.

The art of the scene painter, according to one of Williamson's scene painters, John Gordon, was to create the appropriate 'background' and 'atmosphere' for the living action. It was his job to 'give his figures prominence. The quarrel of two human beings would take precedence over Nature's greatest catalysis' (Gordon 1908, 110). The scenarios printed in newspaper advertisements and at the front of programme/scripts suggest that scene painters did much more than assure the appropriate proxemics for the stage action. More crucially, they constructed a narrative in visual terms which positioned a cultural imperialist 'vision' of 'England and its Other'.

The scenarios' overall organisation thus illustrates, as Edward Said (1993) argued for the nineteenth-century English novel, how Western Empires were imaginatively sustained by an 'ideological vision' based on an 'ontological distinction

---

32 This visual evidence comes to us primarily from photographs and/or sketches, in various theatrical newspapers. Occasionally weekly newspapers such as The Leader (Melbourne) or the Melbourne Punch carried feature articles on pantomime productions. Programmes also carried sketches and later, seemingly after 1906, photographs. 'Souvenir programmes' are also an invaluable source of photographic material.

33 Scene painters were invariably male between 1882 and 1914 in the Australian theatre.
between the West and the rest of the world' which assumed the West's supremacy and demarcated the Orient, Africa, India and Australia as non-Western places dominated by Europe. This ontological distinction called forth an ethnography and hence a 'codification of difference and various evolutionary schemes going from primitive to subject races, and finally to superior or civilised peoples'. Such domination of the non-Western world by the West was actively pursued in the belief that Europeans were called to civilise the world - the rhetoric of la mission civilisatrice. So this Imperialist ideology ensured a transformation of the colony into the image of the 'mother country' and an implementation of its cultural hegemony into 'even the minutiae of daily life'; hence this ideological vision had 'scope and authority' and 'great creative power'. Said notes, for instance, that:

the images of Western imperial authority remain - haunting, strangely attractive, compelling; Gordon at Khartoum, fiercely staring down the Sudanese dervishes in G. W. Joy's famous painting, armed only with revolver and sheathed sword; Conrad's Kurtz in the centre of Africa, brilliant, crazed, doomed, brave, rapacious, eloquent; Lawrence of Arabia, at the head of his Arab warriors, living the romance of the desert, inventing guerilla warfare, hobnobbing with princes and statesmen, translating Homer, and trying to hold on to Britain's 'Brown Dominion' (Said 1993, 128 - 133).

Similarly, pantomime scenarios staged between 1879 and 1914 presented heroic quests based on the 'ideological vision' which demarcated the Orient, Africa, India and Australia as places specifically dominated by Britain. Most interestingly, they show this in both a 'colonial' and 'post-colonial' sense: in a 'colonial' sense because Williamson's 'English' scenarios 'unlocalised' the Australian pantomime and caused it to be depicted in terms of 'mythical' English villages (see Plate 10, showing a village setting for one of George Rignold's 1890s pantomimes) and palatial settings, and in a 'post-colonial' sense on the rare occasions when 'Australia' was presented in some way as politically separate from 'Britannia'. The latter will be examined in greater detail in the next section when I compare Williamson's 'original' productions and Garnet Walch's 1870s pantomime arrangements.

What seems most remarkable about Williamson's presentation of 'England and its Other' is, firstly, that the mythical England of the productions is also a kind of 'othering' of the Anglo-Saxon heritage which the pantomimes strove to sentimentally
replicate. The irony is that such representations of an Australian 'Anglo-Saxondom' were very much a fictional invention of 'home'. I want to argue that this is central to the way pantomimes aimed at writing their own version of 'history'. Significantly, however, while England was presented in predominantly idyllic terms, Australia's absence from scenarios in both a geographic and political sense indicates that it remained largely a terra nullius. It would appear, then, that Williamson's pantomime scenarios not only supported the imperialist enterprise in dominating 'chinkies' from Asia and the 'barbaric cannibals' of the Southern Seas, by mythically (and presumably unconsciously) representing the Australian Anglo-Saxon's fear of the 'yellow horde' and of the 'Cannibal Islands', but also emptied 'Australia' of a 'local' meaning.

While European, Oriental and Tropical settings were regularly used in the Firm's productions, 'Australia' was neither a primary geographic home before which pantomime arrangers and scene painters localised the action nor was it thought exotic enough to be presented as England's 'other'. One exception was the 1884 Little Red Riding Hood, when John Hennings painted an Australian scene for the Transformation scene which included 'a thunderstorm with rain, a bush fire, sunrise on an Australian plain, with a change from night to day, 'Govett's Leap and the Fairy Home of the Waratah'. Another was in the Williamson-devised 1900 production of Australis when the opening 'dark' scene of the production was set in the Jenolan Caves.

An interesting debate in the Bulletin's 'Red Page' at the time of Federation, concerning whether or not Australia was geographically primitive and therefore essentially incapable of sustaining a rich culture, suggests that the company's scenic omissions might have been related to a contemporary idea that Australia was largely devoid of spectacular scenic beauty and/or was a place incapable of supporting 'civilization'. Indeed, the writer of the Bulletin article of 16 February 1901 claimed Australia was 'Austerile'.

Are we imagining a vain nation out of mere Eucalyptus and Sentiment? Is an Australian a Manglo-Saxon born or is he an Australian? Has our country the heart to feel the pulse that every man of us should feel with the instinct of the child that blindly and strongly craves for the fullness of the mother's breast? Are we sojourners in a barren

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal 72
land, thin-flanked, small breasted, immature or sex-listless with the greyness of age? Have we pinned the rose of our desire upon an undeveloped virgin or sapless old maid? It is mainly a question of physiography: man must stand of all by Nature's grim intentions or mistakes. Australia has no geographical heart! Where mountain ranges should mark out a centre there is a grim blankness of desert. No great rivers - the arteries of the soil - spring from that endless desolation to vitalise our land. Fringed round our coast are rivers and mountains, cities and people; but the big heart, the fountain-head of vigour - where is it? The race we pickpocketed the land from? They are almost the lowest of humans! When man is born of a soil he does not stand still, but develops or degenerates according to the soil. If our aborigines fell behind other races it was the fault of the soil they sprang from. Where Nature plainly showed that alone and undisturbed - without the terror of hunger-toothed animals - she could not breed a race, can we, with the assistance of an artificial civilisation, succeed? Instead of strong, hot-blooded animals - lions, tigers, leopards - our land breeds some of the oldest and lowest orders of mammals. Weird kangaroos, cold-blooded monotremes, and large unwieldy birds! Why have they not fallen into the line with natural development elsewhere? Was Australia incapable of developing along the lines of evolution? We have had some hundred years for the glimmerings of a national literature - the reflex of our life. We have Gordon and Marcus Clarke, Boake and Lawson. What is their 'note'? Pessimism, pessimism, and again pessimism. The tragedy of desolation, the half-understood, the vividly-expressed horror of a vast, vague, and bloodless land. A young country, a young nation, should have a joyous life, not necessarily sentimental or childish, but strong, clearly conscious of present difficulties, with a thing of hope for the future. Where is the Australian writer whose work is blooded with hope?

The subsequent reaction to these views in letters to the Editor emphasized that not enough time had passed since Anglo-Saxon culture came to the continent for such damning pronouncements. Furthermore, Australia had areas of great geographic beauty and fertility which Anglo-Australians had exploited successfully and which the writer could have equally noted if only he (all assumed the writer was male) would move away from his pessimistic views. Interestingly, all participants in this cultural debate seemed to agree on the complete 'primitiveness' of Aboriginals in a Social Darwinist 'evolutionary' sense. The currency of the ideas expressed in 'Austerile' were still evident, however, long after 1914 in such writings as A. D. Hope's 1939 poem 'Australia' where he strives to change 'her' image as a 'woman beyond her change of life' into that of a prophetess emerging from the misconstructed notion of an Australian cultural desert.

Indeed, Australis is the clearest indication that Williamson himself envisaged Australia in strictly 'colonial' terms. While the pantomime opens in the Jenolan Caves, no other scene in anyway reflects local settings. Theatre critics, for instance, describe how the Sydney of Australis (now complete with North Shore Bridge) looked in fact like Venice, Italy! (Sydney Morning Herald, 27 December 1900). The coinciding of the production with the Commonwealth Inauguration

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
Celebrations was hardly accidental given that Williamson was the Chairman of the Musical Committee for Sydney's official Federation celebrations. The fact that the pantomime staged Australia as still remaining within a British Empire in the year 2000, at the centre of a 'Great Empire of the South', seems a fitting complement to the profusion of jingoistic 'patriotic' spectacles in the company's other productions, before and after 1900. The 'visual' narrative of Australis in moving from Sydney to the City of Zero thus spectacularly showed Australia as effectively emulating Britain's Imperialist enterprise by taking over the South Pole.

Mythologising about the future greatness of Australia was part of two other of the Firm's productions. Williamson and Musgrove's 1894 Cinderella staged the 'Wealth, Produce and Progress of Australia' and J. C. Williamson Ltd's 1913 Forty Thieves staged a 'Vision of Australia' showing the 'Products Of Australia and the Commonwealth States'. Australia was primarily a place to be exploited for its primary and mineral wealth and was thus the 'land of the future'.

The Beautiful and Instructive

* TRANSFORMATION SCENE *

ENTITLED

'WEALTH, PRODUCE, & PROGRESS OF

AUSTRALIA'

(Australia's March of Triumph)

(Designed and Painted by Mr. PHIL. GOATCHER)

PICTURES:

1. 'AUSTRALIA' wanders at first through (a) THE PRIMEVAL FOREST, with its weird, strange forms of fern and tree. From these spring up (b) FAIR FLORAL BEAUTIES.

2. Then arise (a) THE EARLY COLONIAL INDUSTRIES, (b) AGRICULTURAL WEALTH AND WOOL being represented by a sturdy teamster, toiling over a dusty road, beside his dray, laden with THE GOLDEN FLEECE OF AUSTRALIA.

34 Interestingly, the images suggest a vision of Australia similar to that which an objector to the Bulletin's 'Austerile' article voiced under the pseudonym 'Austerville'.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
3. Passing by a heaped-up (a) COMBINATION OF PRODUCE, she opens (b) THE GATES OF GOLDEN WEALTH, inspects (c) THE INTERIOR OF A GOLD MINE, and takes (d) A LOOK AT BALLARAT FROM BLACK HILL.

4. Whence she surveys all THE TREASURES AND WORKS OF ART IN GOLD, and discovers, shining through the grey distance.

5. (a) THE GATES OF THE SILVER ERA, through which she catches (b) A SILVERY VIEW OF THE BARRIER MINE AT BROKEN HILL.

6. Nor does she pause in her Triumphant March until (a) THE PEARL FISHERIES are reached. Here awhile she rests, gazing on (b) THE GOLDEN SPLENDOURS OF THE TROPICAL SEA, on whose warm bosom lie the slumbering fishing boats.

7. And now she turns her eyes to where (a) IN LIQUID DEPTHS the mermaids sing in coral palaces, surrounded by Gardens of anemones, a song of joy at (b) THE BIRTH OF THE PEARL.

8. The journey of The Past accomplished, 'AUSTRALIA' stands on the seashore and tries with hand-shaded eyes to pierce the haze, which hides The Future, and lo! a Glorious Vision rises - rises - rises! until she sees revealed in dazzling light -

   A RADIANT GROUP OF BEAUTIFUL FIGURES,
   ALLEGORICAL OF
   'UNITED AUSTRALIA'
   'United Australia - United and Free!
   Australia for Australians, from sea to sea!
   Stand shoulder to shoulder, let this your watchword be;
   'FREE AND UNITED AUSTRALIA'

The importance of this Transformation Scene for audiences in 1894 in the midst of an economic depression should not be underestimated. Nor should we overlook its teleological account of 'progress' moving towards 'nationhood' and the coming of age of a 'primitive' land thanks to Anglo-Saxon culture. Similarly, the 1913 staging of the 'Vision of Australia' in 1913 Forty Thieves showing 'the products of Australia and the Commonwealth States', which like Goatcher's transformation scene sat antithetically to the turbulent relationship between workers and bosses at the time. 

35

See, see, a vision rare, past compare
As in a dream before our eyes,
A city shines through the ages.
Oh, land of dreams, fair land of peace,
Where love shall reign all triumphant,
Land of the future all hail -
Loud we sing to thee, All hail!
All hail! All hail!

35 In particular, with regard to the inauguration of the 'basic' wage, the 'new' protection and the massive strikes of 1910 - 1912 as Stuart Macintyre, Oxford History of Australia, Vol. 4, 99 - 121 outlines.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal  75
For the most part, however, Australia was only sporadically mentioned in Williamson productions: the 1893 Beauty and the Beast staged a 'Boxing Kangaroo'; Act 3, Scene 2 of Williamson and Musgrove's 1896 Matsa showed the Suez Canal near Port Said from the afterdeck of R. M. S. 'Australia', followed by a scene in Cloudland in which the 'Home of the Queen of air was in sight of Melbourne'; the 1907 Humpty Dumpty included an 'Australian States Ballet'; the company's 1909 Aladdin depicted in Act 2 Scene 12 'The Australian Bush in which was staged an 'Australian Bird Ballet' complete with 'Black Swans, Native Companions, Emus, White Cockatoos, King Parrots and Birds of Paradise, Jackasses, Magpies, Lyre Birds, Parrakeets, Galahs', followed in the next scene by 'Flinders Street Railway Station'.

Post-1882 representations of an Antipodean 'Anglo-Saxonism' in the Firm's pantomime scenarios represented a 'mythical' England juxtaposed with exotic 'oriental' settings where Englishmen enacted their foreign adventures. Hence, they invariably included a journey which involved characters in a pursuit of perfect wedded bliss and unlimited wealth. Theatre reviews often reported that scene painters were called before the curtain to be congratulated for their work, especially in respect to numerous spectacles representing Nature, such as idyllic 'forests', 'seashores' and other watery settings such as 'under the sea' and shipwrecks, likewise flying and fiery effects.

Besides the more 'natural' settings of the forest, productions of Cinderella also included the spectacle of a 'Palace Garden' as in Act 2, Scene 4 of the production in 1914, though gardens were more often featured in association with the exotic palace settings of Aladdin, Beauty and the Beast, Sinbad and Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves. For instance, a scene in the Gardens of the Emperor's Palace in the company's 1889 production of Aladdin, which concluded with 'The Feast Of Lanterns'. Gardens were also sometimes 'illuminated', as in Williamson's 1884 Red Riding Hood.

Water effects were another source of scenic amazement for audiences, as in the panorama by George Gordon for Williamson, Garner and Musgrove's 1888

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
production Sinbad, showing the hero on the whale's back. This was followed by another scenic marvel showing Sinbad being led by a bird to the 'Gloomy Glen of the Rocty Roc'. The drawing in the programme/script suggests that a flying effect was involved. The same two 'water' and 'aerial' effects were presented in J. C. Williamson Ltd's 1911 Sinbad.

Perhaps the most spectacular water effect of any production was the flooding scenes in the 1896 production of Matsa when, in Act 3 Scene 2, the audience was presented with 'The Rising of the Nile'. The Leader (Melbourne) of 2 January 1897 described the 'mechanical effect' of the gradual sinking of the pyramids of Ancient Memphis under the rising waters of the Nile as 'strikingly ingenious'.

Everything is done in full view of the audience. Matsa's priestess are seen dancing in fire; suddenly the waters break into the temple and they are overwhelmed. Then the massive temple sinks bit by bit, and the Nile rises higher and higher until presently the stage looks like a vast extent of water shimmering under a full round moon. This was Mr G. Gordon's chef-d'oeuvre, and as the curtain went down amidst thunders of applause he came forward and bowed his acknowledgements.

As Plate 11 shows, Matsa also included a 'Sensational Aerial Ballet' thus containing within one production fire, water and aerial spectacles. The company was to repeat the flooding effect in its 1907 production of Humpty Dumpty when, in Act 1, Scene 6, audiences were presented with life under the sea in series of tableaux and a 'Grand Coral Ballet'. Even more spectacularly, the scene involved a diving bell which filled up with water. The company's typed script shows the intricacies of executing the effect, complete with an interesting note concerning how the effect was done in Bristol. Coppin had produced similar spectacles in his 1893 Sinbad, in Act 1 Scene 3, where the Good Ship 'Rose Attar' was involved in a shipwreck, and in Scene 4, where 'Under the sea' included a Submarine Ballet by 'Water Nymphs in the Mermaid's Ballroom'. Likewise, in William Anderson's 1909 and 1914 productions of Sinbad, audiences saw staged in Act 2, Scene 1 'A Hundred Fathoms Deep - The Forest Underneath the Sea' and in Scene 2 'The Watery Home of Neptune' and 'The Sea Nymph Ballet'.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
Apart from the fire spectacle of Matsa, perhaps the most spectacular fire scene of all was in the 1895 production of Djin Djin, which staged as a finale to Act 2 'The Earthquake terminating with the Eruption of Fuji San'. The Age reported that:

As a piece of realism it would be difficult to find anything on the stage to surpass the destruction of the haunted temple by earthquake. The masonry comes tumbling down with a terrific crash, the illusion of massive stonework being admirably conveyed, while at the rear Mount Fuji San bursts into a lurid eruption (27 December 1895).

Williamson and Musgrove informed audiences viewing Djin Djin that the dazzling electric effects in the production were courtesy of George Musgrove having secured in England at enormous cost 'the special lamps and machines manufactured by Messrs S. H. Heyward of Manchester.' The importance of these innovations was clearly appreciated by scene painters, as John Gordon (1908) noted, that 'electricity alone has done a great deal towards revolutionising scenic art. Invention has provided us with better methods, and the artist of to-day would be of little service who fitted his stage in the old way, with grooves at each entrance, in which to run his pieces of scenery.' (113) This undoubtedly referred to the use of 'flies' to rise and lower stage scenery by means of ropes and pulleys as opposed to the slides and grooves of early theatres.  

Indeed, the technology involved in the presentation of these spectacular scenic effects gives rise to an extraordinary irony. At a time of profound industrial and technological change, the pantomime was chiefly depicting a pre-industrialised world of villages, cottages, old mills, the market places of subsistence farmers and country fairgrounds. These pre-industrial settings were set alongside 'primitive' oriental towns and 'cannibalistic' tropical islands. This is indicated by Plate 10 from the A. J. Perier collection and other pictorial evidence in J. C. Williamson's scene books. In a further irony, these scenes were re-worked in favour of what Allardyce Nicol and Michael Booth identified as the Victorian theatres' 'doctrine of realism' (Booth 1991, 74). As a result, fantastic settings gave rise to 'realistic' spectacular

---

36 An explanation of these technological changes is given in Sydney Stage Employees Association Annual, 1910, pp29 - 31.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal 78
staging effects such as the aforementioned flooding of the Nile and the eruption of Mt. Fuji.

'Village' settings were present in all productions of *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Cinderella*, *Babes in the Wood*, and *Dick Whittington*. These productions also included various representations of cottages, schoolrooms, kindergartens, nurseries and kitchens. Juxtaposed to these more humble settings were various castles, palaces and Baronial lodges - for instance, the Giant's castle in *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *Jack the Giant Killer*; the Baron's Hunting Lodge in *Red Riding Hood* and the Royal Palace in *Cinderella*. In the overwhelming number of cases, these locations were presented as essentially 'fictional' - the 'Village of Arcadee' or the 'Happy Village of Maybush'. Their 'real' importance was in suggesting the class division which the pantomime boy and girl needed to surmount before finding 'true love' and wedded bliss within the palatial settings of the production.

Specific English locations were equally fictitious, depicted according to the 'legendary' needs of various fairy tale subjects, as was the case of representations of 'Sherwood' and 'Nottingham' when the Robin Hood legend was incorporated into *Babes in the Wood* in Rignold's 1891, Coppin's 1892 and Williamson and Musgrove's 1897 productions. 'Olde' London, together with Highgate Hill and Old Wapping, was likewise featured in various productions of *Dick Whittington*, and the Port of Hull in *Robinson Crusoe*. The relatively small number of specific locations, however, should not prevent us from noting that, as the Perier photograph of the village in Rignold's *Jack the Giant Killer* clearly shows, both architecturally and in natural settings, Australian audiences viewed depictions of European locations.

Similarly, *The Times* (London) description of E. L. Blanchard and Augustus Harris' 1881 arrangement of *Robinson Crusoe* reported that 'Olde London' is presented as 'picturesque' rather than as a modern metropolis. Furthermore, the procession of City Companies suggested the pageantry of medieval guilds rather than

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
the then industrialised port city of London, 1881\textsuperscript{37} \textit{(The Times} [London], 27 December 1881). The depiction of a mythical 'Olde' London structures an important context in which the pantomime deflects political satire into a fascination with 'orientalism' indicated through the reproduction of exotic non-English settings and bizarre foreign characters. This is further evident in theatre advertisements and reviews of pantomimes in the London \textit{Times} of Christmas 1880 and 1881. In 1880 the Gaiety Theatre staged \textit{The Forty Thieves}; the Marylebone staged \textit{Sindbad the Sailor, or Harlequin Old Man and the Sea}; the Crystal Palace \textit{Aladdin, or the Wonderful Scamp}. In 1881 Sadler's Wells produced another version of 'the Eastern romance' of \textit{Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves} and the Gaiety another version of \textit{Aladdin}. Describing 'Chinamen and China women' in the Crystal Palace's version of \textit{Aladdin} the \textit{Times} \textquote{theatre critic reported that they wore:

\begin{quote}
large papier-mâché masks, the mouths of which curl into broader grins from China that have yet been seen. It has a grotesque effect when a 'kiss' song is sung, like that which Miss Cameron used to sing at the Folly and the masked Celestials raise their hands to their great parted lips underneath their whimsically staring eyes, and go through the form of kissing. When their Sovereign is about to address them, they all begin to talk Chinese; and their theory of the Chinese language is peculiar and interesting. The way they represent Chinese conversation is by all repeating very rapidly the monosyllable 'Chow' (\textit{The Times} [London], 25 December 1880, 8).
\end{quote}

In Covent Garden's \textit{Little Bo-Peep, Little Boy Blue, and the Little Old Woman that Lived in a Shoe}, the lampooning of foreigners even extended to Australians when the wolf announced to his wife and hungry cubs that 'instead of a sheep he has brought home some nice Australian mutton'. This apparently caused a howl from the Lupestiferods and a remark from the enraged monster 'which it is to be hoped will not reach the ears of any of our fellow country men at present home from the colonies - I thought as much - no true-born British cub/ Could ever stomach any foreign grub' \textit{(The Times} [London], 27 December 1881, 3). The pantomime's comic effects highlight the fact that it had turned its 'retributive comedy' onto subjects which arrangers and managers considered racially 'grotesque'.

\textsuperscript{37}In all probability the companies paid for the advertisements from the stage as was the case in early nineteenth-century use of 'shop front' advertisements in the harlequinade's local setting.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
Similarly, oriental and tropical settings and the 'idyllic/mythical' English ones in the Firm's productions maintained class divisions and racial and gender inequalities. Productions of *Aladdin*, *Sinbad* and *Ali Baba* were thus structured around the juxtapositioning of the humble village (instead of a village the oriental scenarios used 'a street'), with its cottages and various lowly domestic settings, such as the Dame's laundry in *Aladdin*, with the opulence of imperial palaces. Such juxtapositioning expressed the desired class mobility of the 'rising' middle-class. From the outset Williamson, Garner and Musgrove's productions represent a strict hierarchy even while showing that ambitious characters could find a way around class divisions. For example, both the 'English' scenario of *Little Red Riding Hood* and the 'oriental' *Aladdin* were staged through contrasted presentations of the Baronial Hunting Lodge, Baron's Banqueting Hall, the Court of the Emperor of China and Aladdin's Palace with the more humble settings of the Village of Happywell, Dame's school and cottage, and the Peking street and the Widow's home.

Furthermore, representations of the 'fairy world', most notably in the opening 'dark' scenes, were organised around the moral confrontation of good and evil founded on the question of who had the right to wealth and happiness: 'The Wolf's Lair' in *Red Riding Hood* showed the confrontation of the Goblin Wolf and the Good Fairy Irradianta and 'A view of China (the Willow Plate)' in *Aladdin* showed the Genius of the Lamp and the Slave of the Ring confronting the evil magician Abanazar. Pro forma, the 'fairy world' was usually presented as an extension of the 'natural' world: evil settings were frequently represented by such 'dark' places as the toadstool swamp, the spider's web, or 'the home of deadly nightshade'; benign settings by 'cloudland', 'glow-worm dell' or 'the bower of Fairy Crystal'. Such settings were also used to present the most exotic ballets while palatial settings such as a Baron's Banqueting Hall or Aladdin's Palace featured 'specialty' acts. Remarkably, patriotic displays could fall into either category, which in itself illustrates how inextricably 'eroticism' and 'patriotism' were woven into the pantomime production.
The 'fairy world' and the 'real world' of villages and palaces were narratively connected through the role of the 'good' fairy whose job it was to move between them and assist the pantomime boy and girl to find personal happiness. This was undoubtedly derived from the benevolent agent's earlier practice of bringing about the scene of final reconciliation when she would transport Pantaloon, Harlequin and Columbine to 'an exotic temple or palace where the lovers share an apotheosis with their patron' (Mayer 1969, 31). The difference was that earlier arrangements saw the good fairy's role as primarily one of saving the young lovers from the patriarch's despotism. In the late nineteenth century, scenarios rearranged her role to include the pantomime boy's quest for riches. Thus we see Aladdin and Sinbad moving through 'the valley of jewels', Ali Baba in the 'cave of jewels', and Robinson Crusoe on his sea adventure in search of his fortune. In this sense Ali Baba, Sinbad and Aladdin do not represent a specific race as much as 'boys' on an initiatory quest. While the significance of their cross-dressed role will be more fully discussed in Chapter three, it is important to emphasize from the outset the structure and outcome of the journey which the 'boy' embarked on.

Theatre reviews of English pantomimes also suggest that it was the role of the Good Fairy to assist the hero to dominate 'orientals'. For instance, a review of the Grecian Theatre's production of King Frolic or, the Coral Tree, the Golden Key, and the Naughty Boy who was Wrecked at Sea described how it was the good fairy's (Fairy Sunbeam's) role to ensure that wealth went to the worthy hero Jack. By contrast, the foreign leader Mustapho was depicted as someone who could not be trusted with power.

The scenery was divided into nine grand tableaux, the first scene opening with a representation of the North Pole, which Zero (Mr A. Syme) and his attendant powers are endeavouring to protect from discovery, notwithstanding which Jack, an English sailor (Miss M. Loftus), sole survivor of a ship wrecked among the icebergs, succeeds in planting the Union Jack on the North Pole. The iceberg melts and discovers a Fairy Sunbeam (Miss M. Inch), who in gratitude for her release, guides Jack to the land of Fruits and Flowers, which is revealed in the second tableau, and a magnificent floral ballet follows. Jack, through Sunbeam, becomes possessed of a salve which, rubbed on the eyes of any sleepers, will cause them to fall in love with the first person they see when they awake and this salve having been rubbed into the eyes of Gazelle (Madame du Maurier), the daughter of Ali Ben Dosey, an Eastern merchant (Mr H. Parker) causes her to fall in love with Jack, while Mustapho Boko, the Naughty Boy (Mr H. Campbell) loses his heart to the same young lady. Ali Ben Dosey is thrown into a
terrible anxiety at the loss of his daughter, Gazelle, but on Jack bringing her safely back he is made partner by her father. Captain Kudos, a Greek Pirate (Mr H. Monkhouse) in the employ of Ali Ben Dosey, appears upon the stage and produces a bottle found at sea in which were enclosed two papers, one showing how the wicked brother of King Frolic of the Golden Isles had stolen a treasure key and hidden it upon a coral island, while the second described the place where the golden key was to be found. King Frolic (Mr George Sennett) has offered half his kingdom for the key, and several characters start in search of it. Captain Kudos, in order to get possession of the key, designably wrecks the ship on which so many have embarked, but by various modes of escape the voyagers arrive at the Coral Island. Jack is ultimately successful in the struggle for the possession of the golden key, and starts for the Court of King Frolic, followed by many of his former companions. King Frolic, unable to secure access to his treasure, finds himself in a state bordering upon impecuniosity, and having resolved to abdicate determines to set upon the throne the first stranger he meets, who chances to be Mustapho, who has fallen asleep at the gates of the city, in a ragged condition; but scarcely has he been removed to the king's palace and placed upon a couch than Jack arrives with the key of the treasure, and the king determines to have some fun at the expense of Mustapho. The Palace of the Golden Key proves one of the most magnificent tableaux. Mustapho, imagining himself suddenly exalted to royalty, bears himself in so tyrannical a manner as to order his old companions, as they arrive for execution, and to prevent himself and the entire Court being put to death King Frolic has to reveal his true position, and compels the would be tyrant to wed Fatima, a maid of all work and a slighted beauty, by way of punishment. The result of the multitude of complications is that Jack marries Gazelle, and receives with her half of the kingdom. The disappointed treasure-seekers are consoled with court appointments, and after an amusing scene in the Blue Chamber, where an endeavour is made to make matters all right again, Mustapho and Fatima succeed in recovering the favour of the king, and the Frozen Fairy, who has conducted Jack to fortune, devises a holiday trip to Fairyland, thus leading up to the Grand Transformation (The Times [London], 25 December 1880).

Similarly, in Williamson's scenarios foreign rulers are presented as foolish 'kings' who deserve to lose their fortunes to young pantomime boys. While there is some evidence that the company's early productions at times satirised this acquisition of riches, as in the 1884 Red Riding Hood when Mother Shipton declared that 'Knights, now-a-days spring from plebian men, possessing cash, they thus meet with requittal, to England go and come back with a title', from the late 1880s there does not appear to be any questioning of this pursuit of materialistic gain.

Williamson's productions thus seem to be based on individual ambition rather than a 'socialist' collective approach, defining social relationships predominantly in 'personal' rather than 'political' terms. For instance, Frank Green's arrangement of Little Red Riding Hood, which the company adapted for its 1884 production, seems to clearly fashion Boy Blue as a revolutionary leader who encourages the villagers to rise up against the Baron. But when the 'revolution' comes and the villagers join together to sing the air of 'Emancipation Day', the Australian production changed the lyrics to champion the ambitions of 'each man in his patient way'.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal 83
Baron: I am a gentleman of station
     and of high degree.
Boy Blue: That you are one of ostentation,
     's very plain to me.
Lucy: But this carking's wrong: I say let live
     Each man his patient way.
Chorus: With banner waving high,
     Proudly floating toward the sky.
     Let us exclaim 'with us 'tis c'est la paix!''
     If we'll only stop to think, arm-in-arm we'll fondly link
     And thus all live each man his patient way.

Criticisms of pantomime's literary merits illustrate how the apolitical visual splendour of the pantomime settings ensured that Imperialism's 'ideological vision' was well-constructed. The greater the 'literary' failure the better the scenery, as the Firm's 1887 production of Robinson Crusoe or, Harlequin Friday, and the King of the Cannibal Islands by Tosio Taylor and H. H. Vincent illustrates. Critics described it as a 'depressing pantomime'.

There is a principal fairy, embodied by Miss Julia Simmons with indifferent success, and there are a great many subordinate fairies, some of them with short feathery tails, at which the boys in the gallery laugh a good deal, and some of them with no tails at all, and with nothing else in the way of costume to speak of. Also there are demons of little account. And there is a donkey played by Mr. Charles Matthews, who goes through some feats on a kind of platform, and sets one wondering what they are intended for. Moreover, there are several armies, all the warriors in which wear resplendent costumes and many of whom have apparently only recently been weaned. There is a school, too, the pupils in which sing, and this singing is about the best of all the music in the piece, and you wonder when you hear it why there is not more of it. Finally there is a real dog, a real goat, and a real parrot, and some unreal monkeys, alligators, and kangaroos. This curious mixture is understood to make the pantomime of 'Robinson Crusoe' (Argus, 1 January 1898).

But the critic was equally adamant that 'there is beautiful scenery. You may praise that without any stint, and not be at all economical of truth.' Therefore, what continues to create an impression are the stage pictures and, in this respect, Defoe's 'prototypical modern realistic novel', to use Said's term, is truthfully realised in ideological terms as the story of an 'European who creates a fiefdom for himself on a distant non-European island' (Said 1993, xiii).

Sketches in the programme /script (Plates 12, 13 and 14) illustrate Crusoe's journey from England to the 'Cannibal Islands' (a term referring to the islands of the South Pacific including New Zealand). The sketch of the port (complete with sailing ship) shows men gathered around pretty Polly, the sweetheart whom Crusoe promises to be true to when he is in 'foreign parts'. The second sketch is of the tropical setting

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Johal

84
of the Island of Juan Fernandez complete with monkeys and Crusoe's straw hut. Friday is shown cowering behind Crusoe who is pointing a gun at a monkey. Interestingly, 'monkey' was a term sometimes used derisively to describe Chinese and Japanese. The third sketch is of an Arabian/Indian setting with a huge procession of women watched by men with grotesque faces. The presence of elephants adds to the scene's exotic effect. The paraders, however, are distinctly European and appear to be the 'Royal Troupe of Ballerinas' referred to in the script. Most curiously, right at the back of the procession comes the 'troupe' of kangaroos referred to in the Argus's review. The love of Empire is thus structurally intertwined with a racism which characterises all non-Europeans as 'uncivilised' and conquered. Australia, however, largely remained a terra nullius throughout this production except for the kangaroos on parade in King Kockatoo's palace!

**ACT 1**

Scene 1. - THE STORM KING'S LAIR - NIGHT (A.R.TIST)

Scene 2. - MRS CRUSOE'S SCHOOL (BRUNTON)

Scene 3. - THE PORT OF HULL - NIGHT (BRUNTON)

Scene 4. - STORM KING'S WORKSHOP

Scene 5. - WRECK OF CRUSOE

Scene 6. - THE RAFT TABLEAU

**ACT 2**

Scene 1. - CRUSOE'S HUT (BRUNTON)

Scene 2. - THE SEASHORE (HENNINGS)

Scene 3. - THE ISLAND OF JUAN FERNANDEZ (BRUNTON)

**ACT 3**

Scene 1. - PALACE OF KING KOCKATOO (HENNINGS)

Scene 2. - THE ROYAL CANNIBAL OVENS (BRUNTON)

While the text adds Scenes 4 and 5 in Act 1 (but does not specify the artist), it does not divide Act 3 into two scenes, suggesting more accurately where the scene changes would have taken place. In other words, while scene changes were clearly needed to show the shipwreck and the fact that Crusoe had survived it, the 'cannibal

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
'Ovens' were most probably merely wheeled on into The Never-to-be-forgotten Reception Room, in the Ever-to-be-remembered Palace of the Greatest of Cannibal Monarchs, King Kockatoo'. Both the theatre advertisement and the script print the joke that Act 1, Scene 1 was painted by 'A.R. Tist'. One can only speculate that this scene had been painted by many painters over the years.

What then was the audience participating in when it watched the pantomime? If, as Eric Bentley (1964) suggests, nineteenth-century melodrama is 'the Naturalism of the dream world' (205), then pantomime might be seen as an attempt to construct the substance of 'the dream'. While I discuss this issue in greater detail in Chapter three when I consider the importance of the fairytale to the pantomime, in broad terms was the audience 'dreaming up' a kind of festive anarchy of the imagination where an infinity of possibilities existed? Williamson's pantomimes suggest that 'anything is possible' for the ambitious and enterprising individual. Indeed, the pantomimes seemed to allow individuals to legitimately act out their hedonistic desires for unlimited wealth and perfect happiness.

Or, is the audience participating in a 'daydreaming' - a more wilful escape into a 'better' version of reality than the one around it? This is enacted on stage as a fulfilment of what is believed to be a 'romantic moment', or as a ridiculing of enemies, or as a solving of the 'obstacles' of life such as the search for economic and emotional security. From this viewpoint, Williamson's pantomimes might be read as an entertaining version of 'how to survive' in a difficult and frequently violent world. This would be more in keeping with the 'threat and survive' function which Veronica Kelly (1988) describes in the 'Tom and Jerry' presentations of earlier pantomimes (6).

If 'hedonism' is joined with a sense of 'survival' we may have an even more potent configuration: productions which might have inspired individual audience members to keep moving on in their struggle to survive everyday calamities with a sense of cultural arrogance. Unfortunately, it is impossible to know who applauded the 'ideological vision' of the Firm's productions the loudest. On the little evidence we have, we can only speculate that pantomime seemed to be catering more and more
to the 'middle-class', that ethnically it was by 1880 predominantly Anglo-Australian and that men, women and children all frequented the performances in substantial numbers. Recognition of possible 'Australian-born' female imperialists is therefore just as important as speculating on the presence of racist males.

The 1887 production of *Robinson Crusoe* celebrated one hundred years of European settlement in Australia. Coincidentally it was also Queen Victoria's Jubilee year. Both events are frequently referred to in the script but perhaps never as passionately as in Tosso Taylor's song 'Australia'.

May hearts firm and steady  
And loyal and ready  
May men who are faithful and true;  
For ever be found to gather around  
The cause of the Red, White, and Blue.  
Our fathers fought the foe  
For old England long ago,  
For England's fame and honour,  
We would gladly fight or fall;  
We love Old England well,  
But still the truth to tell  
We love the bright and Sunny South  
The best of all.

Chorus:  
Then heart to heart and hand to hand  
Beneath the Southern Cross we stand;  
Then shout - 'God Bless our native land'  
Australia! Australia!

We care not for Russians,  
For French, or for Prussians,  
So let all invaders beware;  
We know how to fight  
For home or for right.  
So let them come on if they dare  
From station, mine, and town,  
They will come pouring down,  
The miners and the diggers  
Will our mighty army swell;  
And every boy and man  
Will do the best he can  
To save the bright and Sunny South  
They love so well.

The relationship between such patriotic words and the collage of images around them was in fact the substance of the pantomime's spectacular ability to re-write history in sentimental terms by eliminating troublesome 'historical' facts. What foes did 'our convict fathers' fight against for 'old' England? When would the Prussians be likely to invade Australia? On the other hand, pantomime had always

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal  

87
been, according to David Mayer, an 'imperfect mirror' of reality and a dramatic form which, as Veronica Kelly (1988) points out, showed 'the triumph of rhyme over reason' (12). Indeed, the visual collage illustrates the spectacular paradox on which the British Imperialist enterprise was based, by revealing both the tenuousness and powerfulness of its supremist assumptions. Tenuous in the sense that the pantomime brought together elements which could 'in reality' exist together only under enormous tension and brutal conflict and powerful in the sense that it shows how productions were able to metaphorically usurp the notion of 'a journey' - a seemingly timeless narrative device - and transform it into a symbol of a conquest of other cultures. The final section of the chapter will consider whether or not this formulation of the genre was 'inevitable' in pre-Federation Australia or whether pantomime could have in anyway instituted a 'post-colonial' vision for the 'Birth of a Nation'.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
1.3 An Original Australian Pantomime

As Veronica Kelly (1988) argues in her introduction to Walch's *Australia Felix*, Williamson's productions were significantly different from Australian pantomimes of the 1860s and 70s. Unlike Williamson's arrangements, *Felix* had been consciously 'arranged' around local political issues:

by looking more deeply below the verbal surface of the initially unfamiliar topical jokes, one can discern in *Australia Felix* the basic conflicts of an emergent colonial society... The real themes underpinning Walch's fable, emerging as throwaway jokes whose importance could easily be overlooked, are the failures of the Land Acts; the Education Act of 1872; and the clash between capital and labour which resulted in such diverse phenomena as the Eight-hour Movement, the kidnapping of Pacific Islanders for forced labour and the anti-Chinese miners' riot at Clunes. Furthermore, all of these events or issues symptomatic of contradictions within the underlying economic and social structure of colonial Victoria can themselves be seen as expressions of various Utopian social visions: land for all in an yeomen society; free and secular education breeding an enlightened 'Young Australia'; harmony between master and man in the 'Working Man's Paradise.' If these projects were compromised or problematical offstage, onstage they retained their visionary popular enchantment - pantomime would see to that (3).

The issue of the Firm's support for Australian drama did not seriously confront Williamson until the 1890s, as part of the nationalist-inspired Australian labour movement. The *Lorgette* reported on many related nationalist issues during this time: on 'imported talent', the forming of an actors' and musicians' union, work conditions in theatres including the question of child labour. The articles were often militant in tone. For instance, 'Colonial Talent' began:

There is not greater proof of the disgraceful - we had almost said, criminal - neglect and indifference with which Australian talent is regarded in Australia, than the utter and contemptuous non-recognition thereatempt displayed by the Australian press. Let a book, a musician, an actor, an anything or anybody, which has made its, his, or her reputation in London, and we immediately grovel, or if we don't exactly grovel, we throw our caps in the air with shouts of loud acclaim, while the press plies on column after column of panegyric, and uses up *Roget's Thesaurus* in search of new laudatory expressions, while the colonial article, no matter how good, is practically left out in the cold (16 August 1890, 4).

Given the theatrical convention of localising the pantomime, it was inevitable that it should become imbroiled in the dispute with theatre managers over their support for the local drama. However, there does not seem to have been a Nationalist motivation for Williamson's employment of Walch to write the Triumvirate's 1885 Christmas pantomime of *Sleeping Beauty*. What is more, unlike later playwright-

---

38 Veronica Kelly incorrectly states that the only pantomime Walch wrote for Williamson was *Sinbad the Sailor* in 1893. Walch wrote that arrangement for George Coppin when Coppin returned
journalists such as Arthur H. Adams, Walch seems not to have had a belligerent attitude towards Williamson's importance in the Australian theatre industry at that time. *The Williamsonsons: Being a Brief Account of the Career of Mr & Mrs Williamson together with Facts and Figures Relating to the Firm of Williamson, Garner and Musgrove* was, for instance, a biographical account of Williamson and Maggie Moore's advent into the Australian theatre and the Firm's contribution to the local industry. Yet, the 1885 production was both the first and last that Walch wrote for the Firm, though Veronica Kelly suggests this may have had as much to do with his financial difficulties and, therefore, his need to leave Australia and work in Mauritius, with Williamson's overlooking of his importance as a writer.

Indeed, after this time Walch only wrote three other arrangements for more 'old fashioned' (Veronica Kelly's term) theatre managers: another in 1885 for Harry Rickards, *The Babes in the Wood; Jack the Giant Killer* for Alfred Dampier in 1891 and *Sinbad the Sailor* for George Coppin in 1893. Walch and Williamson died only months apart (Walch in January and Williamson in July, 1913) but while fulsome eulogies greeted the entrepreneur's death, Veronica Kelly (1988) noted that:

Sadly, on the very day when Walch's funeral was announced, 'Ixion' wrote in the *Argus* a fictional account of an 'Old Time Pantomime', where the writers he mentions as typifying the 1870s are Clarke, Akhurst and Carrington - of the most prolific Australian pantomime writer of the time there is no word (59).

If, as Peggy Phelan (1993) argues, 'representation appeases a deep psychic impulse (sic) which erases the subject's own blankness and blindness' (15), Ixion's forgetting of Walch's contribution to the Australian pantomime denotes the kind of cultural de-valuing which had its psychic roots within the pre-1914 Australian theatre industry, so influenced by Williamson. Historiographically, it also exposes the changing role of 'blindspots' over time. If in 1913 Walch had been forgotten, how is it that he now is remembered? Phelan gives us one possible answer via Lacanian theory's overturning of the notion of a 'continuous' history, replacing it with a 'series of frames'.

from retirement to produce pantomimes at his old theatre, the Theatre Royal, Melbourne between 1891 and 1895.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
One of the functions of the Symbolic is to turn back, to speak of 'original moments.' Lacan's Mirror Stage explains the Symbolic, but within the terms established by the Symbolic. (Insofar as the Imaginary is the Symbolic's Other, this framing is inevitable). The story of origin that Lacan tells must be understood not so much as an empirical moment in the subject's 'continuous' history, but more like a series of frames in Piper's Corned. The window which frames the video monitor, for example, doubles it so that the spectator can 'forget' it and maintain the illusion that Piper is (or once was) there. Fort. Da. The Imaginary doubles the fantasy of the Symbolic and keeps the subject desiring its return. The substitutive economy of the Symbolic is itself a substitute for the relations which prevailed in the Imaginary (1993, 23).

Hayden White (1978) argues that historicism's equating of 'truth' with 'fact' since the nineteenth century has ignored the 'poetics' of Classical and Renaissance rhetoricians who saw historical truth as a 'combination of fact and the conceptual matrix within which it was appropriately located in discourse. The imagination no less than the reason had to be engaged in any adequate representation of the truth; and this meant that the techniques of fiction-making were as necessary to the composition of a historical discourse as erudition might be' (123).

Walch's 1878 arrangement of Jack the Giant Killer and His Doughty Deeds had as its Demon and Good Fairy the Demon Fact and the Fairy Fancy. The opening scene sees them locked into a battle over whether or not to free the Giants. Demon Fact wants them restrained and, as a representative of 'Modern Fact', sees his role as guarding harmless citizens against their boisterous ways. Fairy Fancy wants freedom for 'her pets'. The fight seems irreconcilable until 'Fair Play' steps in and arbitrates on the side of Fancy to free the Giants for the purpose of staging the pantomime. Uncannily, Walch's pantomime's self-reflexive fascination with historical fact and narrative fiction-making opens up what Peggy Phelan (1993) terms 'the 'not-all' of vision'(18). Similarly, Walch's use of 'Fair Play' as arbitrator begs the question of how blindspots and visibility are historiographically related to political and ethical frameworks.

If, as John West (1978) contends, Williamson's success was largely based on the fact that he was 'a real man of the theatre', then his co-authoring of plays must be considered primary evidence of his theatre praxis. Besides Struck Oil, Williamson has been given credit for co-writing three pantomimes with Bert Royle, namely Djin

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal

91
Djin (1895), Matsu (1896) and Sinbad (1896); one pantomime with Bernard Espinassee, Australis (1900) and one musical comedy with Arthur H. Adams (music by Alfred Hill), Tapu (1904). This does not represent a huge amount of writing over a thirty-four year career in the Australian theatre given that Drury Lane theatre managers Augustus Harris and Arthur Collins claimed to have co-authored all Drury Lane pantomime productions and numerous melodramas throughout their respective years of management at the Theatre Royal.

Indeed, according to A. E. Wilson, E. L. Blanchard continuously lamented that his pantomime productions owed more to Harris' stage directions than to his own authorship. Speaking specifically of the 1882 and 1885 productions of Sinbad and Aladdin, Wilson (1935) noted how Harris' 'legs and limelight' pantomimes overturned Blanchard's more subtle arrangements.

Poor Blanchard! It was the overthrow of everything he loved, the installation of everything he detested. It was the twilight of this genial author whose books since the Harris regime had been so ruthlessly and heartlessly treated. No doubt the great impresario regarded him as something of an incubus, and he handed over the books to be amended by Harry Nichollis (1935, 191).

Garnet Walsh's (1875) On the Cards; or, A Motley Pack alerts us to the fact that pantomime arrangers were similarly treated in the Australian theatre.

The rehearsal, comic scenes included, has been over some time, the manager, principals, ballet, &c, have left. The scenic artist is smoking a final pipe at his hotel, in the half-studio, half-bedroom, where the original sketches of his best scenes have been thought out. The author, utterly crushed beneath the weight of mal-pronunciations, undelivered points, and rudely-inserted vulgarities, but with an embryo idea of 'working in' the accident in the plot of the New Year's story he is writing for the Weekly Clarion, has reached home in a limp condition (14).

The Leader's article 'The Making of a Pantomime' (2 January, 1897) establishes that Williamson's original arrangements were conceptually his and that Royle was called in as the 'versifier'.

When an original pantomime like that of Matsu has to be written and produced it becomes a herculean task, occupying months in constant study and application. Take, for instance, the various stages of work from incipiency till, like a glorious vision, it bursts upon the astonished gaze of the first night's audience. The manager having mastered his material, calls in the assistance of his versifier, who converts into neat doggerel the ideas communicated for the purpose. The act and scenes, and characters are duly arranged, the songs and dances agreed upon, and the general scope well defined. The 'poet' being properly inspired, proceeds to give dramatic expression, form and local colouring to his work. Formerly the literary department of a pantomime was regarded as of primary importance. Nowadays the book of the words is merely the ground work or frame on which stands the general superstructure. As the libretto advances and the various details are developed the

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal

92
subsidiary forces are put in requisition simultaneously. The responsible artists representing every branch of the establishment are consulted, their opinions ascertained, and instructions given so as to produce one harmonious whole (6).

Theatre reviews of Williamson's original productions suggest that the productions heralded a new form of Australian pantomime without reference to the fact that pre-1882 Australian pantomimes had also been regarded as significantly 'original'. For example, the Age's theatre critic termed Djin Djin a new play for 'a New age' and argued that Williamson differed from other managers in breaking away from

the rather absurd, not to say hackneyed, custom of choosing the old, old nursery stories as the basis of their Christmas entertainments. It is also true that the Sinbads, and Dick Whittingtons and Cinderellas ceased from troubling, and the witless jokes of the harlequinade were given a long long rest. This is a New age, and evidences are not wanting that we have among us New children as well as New women. The infantile wit and puerile gagging of the old school pantomime are not strong enough meat for modern youngsters. They like to take their pleasures with their parents, and to feel that what pleases their youthful fancies pleases in an equal degree the grown up people around them. Djin Djin is calculated to fulfill in the happiest degree this condition. While happily ignoring the childish grotesqueries of the Mother Goose order, it retains a simplicity of dialogue and story which can easily 'be understood' of the smallest child, and at the same time achieves such perfection in scenic presentation and a much nearer approximation to sensible plot as will render it thoroughly enjoyable to the most exigent adult. If managers continue to travel along this road we shall have a new epoch in pantomime - an epoch of beauty, refinement, and if not exactly of wit, at least of pleasant foolish and coherence.

39 Bert Royle was representative of the band of English performers with no previously pantomime-writing experience in England who wrote for the Firm. The Australian Dictionary of Biography notes that he arrived circa 1890 with the English Opera Company as a baritone and left for New Zealand to manage Williamson's theatres there in 1899. Bert Royle wrote six pantomimes in total, five for the Firm and one for Alfred Woods. Bernard Espinasse, who co-authored Australis with Williamson, was among an even more select band of Australian-born writers. Eric Irvin's (1985) Australian Dictionary for the Theatre records that Espinasse's first known play was an one-act drama, In the Dark, performed in August 1893 at the Richmond Town Hall, Melbourne. He also wrote an one-act opera, with music by E. P. Truman, staged at the Paddington Town Hall, Sydney in October 1896. Her Good Name, another one-act drama, was staged on 6 August, 1898 at Her Majesty's Sydney and in May 1899 he co-authored with George Rignold a version of The Three Musketeers. This ran for 26 performances. In 1899 he wrote Little Red Riding Hood for Williamson and subsequently adapted Wilson Barrett's The Christian and the five-act military drama of Youth for the theatre manager during 1900. He seems to have left for England in 1901. His last play in Australia prior to his return in 1911 was The Ivy Leaf, staged at the Palace Theatre Sydney on 27 April 1901. Irvin notes that he had one play staged in London, Her Good Name, at the Imperial in April 1902 for six performances. Espinasse's return to Australia with England's Hope at William Anderson's Kings Theatre is noteworthy because the reviews of that production serve to underline the fact that the playwright shared Williamson's anglophile sentiments. The Bulletin, never baulking at the chance for a quick quip, for instance, duly noted on 11 January 1912 that:

This is the third week of "England's Hope". The advertisement declares that "He is a callous man who could witness unmoved a play that possesses so much true patriotism as this". There the present notice begs to conclude with the first verse of Rule Britannia which may be taken as read.

For the rest of the time Espinasse, like other nineteenth-century playwrights, worked as a journalist from at least as early as 1887. His work appears, for instance, in Garnet Welch's edition of The Victorian Jubilee Book in Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Victoria's Accession to the Throne.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
So that in every respect this breaking away from Christmas traditions, this happy co-operation of mind and money, and the application of thoughtful and artistic methods to pantomime is to be cordially welcomed (27 December 1895).

Similar observations were made of *Matsa* and *Australis*. The *Leader* described *Matsa*, for instance, as 'the precursor, no less than *Djin Djin*, of a new form of entertainment of the antipodes, embracing as it does almost every form of attraction peculiar to the lyric and dramatic stage' (2 January 1897, 7). The *Sydney Morning Herald* 's advertisement for *Australis* on 8 December 1900 described it as a 'home-made production'.

MR WILLIAMSON, encouraged by the success attendant upon the production of 'DIN DJIN' and 'MATSA' has decided to present once more a distinctly home-made production... with a view of presenting a novel and attractive entertainment suitable to the time, and worthy of the great occasion offered by the coming inauguration of THE COMMONWEALTH.

However, critics also pointed out that Williamson's original works were largely devoid of satirical wit. With regard to *Djin Djin*, the *Age* noted that:

One of the ablest critics of the English stage, Mr. William Archer, a year or two ago expressed his opinion that the 'ideal pantomime should charm the senses, stimulate the imagination and satisfy the intelligence. It should be an enchanting fairy tale to the young, to the old a witty, graceful genially satiric phantasmaria.' It would certainly seem that Mr. Williamson is travelling in the direction of Mr. Archer's ideal. There has been a happy co-operation of artist, stage manager, musician and verse writer in this new pantomime, and the 'book' - an unusually handsome and well printed volume by the way - would bear favourable comparison with any produced by such experienced English pantomime writers as Horace Lennard, Wilton Jones and Oscar Barrett. But what is still wanted in all pantomimes in the refining touch of the literary artist and masterly satiric verse maker. Wit is too often sacrificed for a trick phrase, which sometimes approaches rather closely to vulgarity, and although a laugh is obtained, it is occasionally at the expense of good taste (27 December 1895).

In typical fashion, the *Bulletin* 's theatre critic pointed out *Australis* 's lack of comic treatment of its political subject matter.

The pantomime at Her Majesty's Sydney has now explained for a good many weeks how people are going to look and behave one hundred years hence, and it is still explaining profitably though the writer seems slightly hampered by the feeling that Federation is too holy a thing to be treated in a frivolous spirit. Probably this religious sentiment is also responsible for the slightly funereal ring in the opening music of each act (26 January, 1901).

Comparisons between Walch's and Williamson's original arrangements beg the question as to whether pantomime ever had the specific satirical political focus of 'agit-prop' theatre. By the same token, were 'localisms', like the 'leader comment' in popular newspapers, highlighting both globally important topical issues and those of

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal  

94
limited significance? As Colin Mercer (1986) explains, either kind can be seen to operate 'silently from elsewhere in the field of meaning':

from the grammar of sexuality, entertainment, action, intrigue, horror and revelation which provide its points of 'capture', the terms of its contract - points of condensation of meaning, points of multi-layered and sedimented resilience and pleasure. Nowhere more evidently than in the popular newspaper is it true that "discourse produces within one domain of thought another domain of thought as if this other domain had already been introduced". The subject is held vicariously within this field of meaning' (Mercer 1986, 57).\(^{40}\)

Furthermore, what happens to political material when treated either in the light of Williamson's apolitical belief that 'people go to the theatre as a distraction' (Williamson 1913, 28) or by someone who saw himself, as Walch did, as a local artist? Indeed, what kind of theatre brings about what kind of social change? Ironically, Walch's original arrangements seem less patriotic than Williamson's, though neither were they anti-British. While the allegorical unity of Australia Felix (and Trookulentos as its antecedent) has been identified as a predecessor of a National theatre, it was a unique work even amongst Walch's pantomimes. Kelly, for instance, noted that James Neild saw it as such: 'the allegorical character is well preserved and thus there is a certain quality of poetry not always to be found in this class of dramatic composition' (Australasian, 27 December 1873, 819). Walch's other original arrangements only carry parts of Felix's elaborate vision of a 'mirthful' Antipodean world.

*True-Blue Beard* (1872), for instance, places most of its Antipodean revisionings in its prologue, set in 'The Shades Cavern and Unlicenced Spirits Vault; kept by Larrikinos, the Demon of Discord'. As their opening remarks testify, Larrikinos and his Imps are nationalists:

Larr.  

Ho! stop the ball, these lively double shuffles  
Afflict our bosom with no end of ruffles;  
They raise our choler, may drag cuffs that hurt out;  
In fact, they rather 'get' our royal 'shirt out.'  
We speak Australian slang, 'tis rough but ready.

All.  

Advance Australia!

\(^{40}\) In respect to this, Mercer draws on Foucault's concept of 'perpetual spirals of power and pleasure' from *History of Sexuality* (1976) and Jameson's focus on wish-fulfillment and desire in *The Political Unconscious* (1981).
However, these hard-drinking 'loafers' are also represented anti-heroically through their loafish ways which the good fairy Alphabeta, 'a new Australian edition of "Fairy Knowab"' must combat. An energetic crusader for social reform, she sets out to prevent Larrikinos from assisting Blue Beard in marrying and murdering his twelfth wife. Disguising herself and her fairies as witches, she infiltrates Larrikinos' vault and shows herself to be a powerful political activist:

1st W. His erring wand has wandered to my clutch,  
And in that bowl he's had a drop too much'  
Now, oracle, obey this potent spell;  
Let Bluebeard have his answer - come - do tell!

(Waves wand - Moaning of wind - Everything in scene becomes animated - Thunder - Lightning - The eyes and mouth of rocky figures move - Mouth of large face at back opens and speaks).

Voice. The life of Bluebeard shall in danger be  
From his twelfth wife's curiosity!

Larr. (Appearing in bowl) Nonsense. Tell Bluebeard never to despund

1st W. Ha! you for(k) got, you spoon, an'ife the wand  
I am no witch, old boy, although bewitching (throws off disguise)

Larr. The Fairy! (suddenly recovering himself), fairy well;  
Pray go on pitching

Alpha. Pitching it will be - pitching into you,  
And also into him, the changeless hue  
Of all whose actions, like his beard, is blue.

Larr. You hussy! I defy you - there!

Alpha. (Striking him) And there!

(Music - All Fairies throw off cloaks and chase the Imps, who together with Larrikinos and bowl, disappear)

Well done, my dears, my very clever witches,  
Instead of skirts, we ought to wear the br- 

(Suddenly recollects, then, after looking at Fairies, who cast modest glances at their boots, pretends to see mosquito on hand - hits it and scratches hand - concluding word thus-)

Your skill in arms thus shown, your mistress begs  
That you'll extend the favour to your legs.  
(Execunt Fairies)

And now a hurried word of explanation,  
The power I use is that of education.  
'Twas I suggested, from first clause to last,  
The new Victorian Bill that lately passed;  
My will by force must sometimes be displayed,  
Willerforce Stephen I've my agent made.  
For common sense he second is to none,  
Like me, he knows the style in which it's done.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
Indeed, *True-Blue Beard* alerts us to the fact that Walch's pantomimes were predominantly unsentimental and at the time decidedly anti-romantic. As such, he moves even beyond the anti-patriarchal stance of the Commedia scenarios and highlights the problem of pairing lovers within the fairytale narrative formula: like Beauty, his heroines often marry the Beast. Fatima, for instance, marries Abomelique, *alias* Bluebeard in *True-Blue Beard*. In *Hey Diddle-Diddle* the Princess is pursued by two spendthrift lads, Blondo and Bruno, whose parents have thrown them out of home to learn to manage their lives. In a scenario reminiscent of the twins in *Twelfth Night*, Walch plays with mistaken identity in a highly complex plot which is only resolved when the more worthy Blondo commands the cow to jump over the moon! Significantly, Walch's unsentimental subversion of the fairytale narrative is still apparent in his last pantomime, *Sinbad the Sailor; Little Jack Horner and the Old Man of the Sea*. The Princess, who has married the evil Vizier, fakes her death in a Juliet-like pact with Sinbad and then proceeds, under the new Shiel's Divorce Act, to divorce her husband.

Arguably, the most conventional treatment of a fairytale narrative comes in Walch's 1877 *Sleeping Beauty* which characterizes the pantomime boy and girl as smitten by the fateful attraction of 'true lovers'. This version seems to have been adapted for Walch's 1885 arrangement for Williamson, Musgrove and Garner. Interestingly, the *Sleeping Beauty* arrangements are also the only ones to feature hag-like witches as demons: Hagrimosa in the 1877 and Maligna in the 1885. These are depicted as revengeful spinsters who set out to destroy the joys of marital bliss and child-bearing.

As the 'Ice Witch', Hagrimosa is also represented as the 'unnatural' version of Father Winter in an Antipodean summer. However, she is also an anti-imperialist who mocks territorial claims by British and other European powers:

```
Hag. Thanks for your trouble, my attendant imps.
      Of warmth or comfort still I get no glimpse.
The blood yet freezes in my ancient veins,
Icy as glazier, spite of all your pains.
I am the Ice Witch, those who dare to scoff
At my command - why, soon I switch 'em off.
```

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
I throw cold water on each mortal scheme;  
My presence a wet blanket still doth seem.  
I am sworn foe to love and grace and beauty;  
To foil my fairy sisters is my duty.  
What are their latest movements? Stop your capers,  
And let me have my usual morning papers.

Imps. Here is the Argus, comes, with news a host;  
The Telegraph, of news try which has most.

Hag. 'The British heroes couldn't reach the pole!'  
My icy terrors daunted every soul.  
My frozen kingdom they'd turn topsy turvy,  
But got a cold reception - very scurvy.  
The rugged Russian bear that Poland stole,  
Was the first reached, or over-reached the Pole.  
He thought to crib poor Turkey would be an easy job,  
But the 'sick man' turned a Jack up and scored one for his nob.

These supernatural female characters are part of a number of strong women present throughout Walch's arrangements. For example, in his 1874 arrangement, Adamanta, The Proud Princess of Profusia, the pantomime girl, who gives the pantomime its title, is proudly independent and refuses to marry her suitors, but instead enjoys decapitating them by the half-dozen. Her decision to marry the 'Pilgrim of Love' comes only minutes before his execution and she struggles against succumbing to love to the very end. It is only when she sees the Pilgrim would rather die than escape with the flirtatious maid 'Flirtina', that she very reluctantly begins to have a change of heart.

I've heard enough most maiden's hearts to soften.  
With that vile jade he has refused to fly.  
Sooner than give me up he says he'll die.  
Why not relent - and yet my pride won't let me.  
He breathes my name - you stupid boy forget me.  
Shall I give way? I'm half inclined to now -

While the contrast between Adamanta and Flirtina is still noticeably based on patriarchal notions of the 'madonna' and the 'whore', nonetheless Walch shows Adamanta repudiating Venus's intervention to succumb to marriage. She remains 'tortured' to the end. When she does relent, the pro-forma happy ending seems consciously overdone and extraordinarily brief. Adamanta was the blueprint for Walch's 1875 arrangement of Beauty and the Beast which showed another pantomime girl with an equally hostile attitude towards marriage. The dialogue between Beauty and her mother is taken directly from the earlier production:

Q Ro: My Child -  
Beauty: Oh bother (pointing to Count A)

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal 98
what does he want here.

Your royal father, Miss, is drawing near.

And his first question will be, 'Has my dear

Made up her mind to wed?'

Precisely so.

My answer then is simply (they draw near

her) N.O. - No!

(They turn away disgusted)

Not e'en to be a Queen, and wear a crown -

Marry, come up!

'Marry'- that won't go down.

Angelic Princess, girls were made for wedlock;

Or in the world ther'd be a social deadlock.

What! I endure the matrimonial yoke?

Never!

The frequency of Amazon guards' 'March and Evolutions' is a further
demonstration of women's power in Walch's arrangements. However, was it merely
for sensational effect or was Walch an advocate of women's rights? Certainly, his use
of cross-dressing shows him to be more prepared than Williamson to play with
gender. For instance, not all Dames were 'hags' such as Hagrimosa and Maligna.
The pantomime boy's mother in various arrangements, regardless of whether or not a
father was present, was usually a Dame who, like the Missus in Australia Felix,
played a sympathetic role. The pantomime girl usually had conventionally dressed
parents who, in keeping with tradition, included a tyrannical 'Pantaloons' father.
However, Walch also played with the idea of corrupt mothers. For example, in Hey
Diddle-Diddle the Queen has a compromising relationship with the Court Physician.
He also mocked the 'suffering mother' - 'Oh, who would be a mother!' - who had to
put up with recalcitrant sons and wilful daughters. Adamanta's and Beauty's mothers
are among these, as is Jack's mother from the 1878 Jack the Giant Killer. One
outstanding feature of Walch's pantomime arrangements, therefore, is the continuous
if varied presence of the mother. By contrast, she is noticeably absent from
Williamson's original arrangements. The full implications of this will be further
considered in both Chapter Two and Three in light of Williamson's support of the
British imperialist enterprise and in terms of the pantomime's adaptation of fairytale
narratives.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
This strong female presence is coupled with the pantomime boy's anti-heroism. Like Felix in the gambling scene in which he loses the cricket bat and game for Australia, all of Walch's pantomime boys are characterised as heroes who are more well-meaning than effective. For instance, Selim's attempt to save Fatima from Bluebeard fails. The unattainability of 'perfect love' seems to have been consciously critiqued through Walch's representation of an 'ideal' boy. No more so than with the most ideal among them, 'the Pilgrim of Love' in *Adarnanta* and in *Beauty and the Beast*. Identified as a 'new chum', the inference can be drawn that his overtly romantic notions belong to another world. Ironically, as he is a 'pilgrim', the audience is also invited to conclude that it is only in the new world that his destiny will be fulfilled.

Walch's most heroic boys appear in *Sleeping Beauty* and *Jack the Giant Killer* arrangements. Florimond in Walch's 1877 *Sleeping Beauty* is particularly courageous in the face of Hagrimosa's plans to thwart love. But even in these arrangements Walch does not abandon his anti-romantic subversion of the fairytale plot. Thus, the magical power the Fairy of Love, Amanda, gives Florimond in order that he might marry the Royal princess is immediately undercut when he is introduced to her - in the arms of her Nurse as a one day old baby! Furthermore, the dialogue between the Fairy and the would-be prince contains constant reminders that love is nothing but problematic:

Enter Florimond

Flor. Ah! here's a proper spot. Like Jacky Horner,
I'll eat my pie in quiet in the corner.
Ah! who is this? A beggar woman, eh?

Aman. Give me to eat. I'm starved. Have pity, pray.

Flor. Here, take this tart, I've eaten lots to-day.
Aman. I wouldn't rob you -
Flor. Take it - don't be shy;
I really couldn't eat another pie.
Besides, there's plenty more where that came from.
Sit down - I'll go and get you some old Tom.

Aman. No, thanks. I'm better now, thanks to that bit
Of mince pie -

Flor. Oh! you needn't mince-ion it.

Aman. He'll do. Oh! generous youth, I would repay
Your charity. What can I give you? Say!

Flor. No thanks, I beg. Besides, you're weak and old,
And could do nothing.

Aman. By the power I hold,
I can bestow whatever you may ask; 
To gratify your whims shall be my task.
You're fond of mince pies - hither I'll have whirled
All the mince pies there may be in the world.

Flor. Nay, I've a soul that upward fain would rise
Superior to such nourishment as pies.
I crave the food all other food above!

Aman. What can that be?

Flor. It is the food of Love.

Aman. Music's the food of love, they say. Though nice,
That food, and cheap, 'taint filling at the price.
Love cannot live on air, however sweet,
The airs of music aren't substantial meat.

Flor. In love we live on looks, smiles, ardent glances.

Aman. Then that you very often starve the chance is.

Flor. For love, I'd leave a palace for a cottage.

Aman. You'd soon find out the mess - a mess of pottage.

Flor. I'd hail Love's messenger sent from above.

Aman. I am Love's fairy - I'm the Star of Love!
When I shine out each love-lorn youthful spark
Delights to see me winking through the dark.
Fond lovers feast their eyes on me. Their ears
I oft enchant with music of the spheres.
Hearts burn with grateful odour from above
When tried and tested in the fire of love.

Aman. And now for your request, my power to prove.

Flor. Well, I should like to try this Food of Love.

Aman. You shall - all in good time, Your love to bless,
As a king's son you'll wed a fair princess.

Flor. A Princess! I - a page! Can this be true.

Aman. Your past and future I'll reveal to you.
A page you are - torn from a royal book,
In which, some day, you'll be allowed to look.
Meanwhile, in token of Love's power and truth,
Accept this ring - it gives eternal youth.
Retain this precious symbol on your finger -
You'll never grow old till to your feet I bring her.
A lovely princess.

Flor. But who is she? Say, Where can I find her? Do not run away.

Amanda vanishes.

How - vanished into air! Can such things be?
This ring upon my finger? Well, I'll see
What love is made of - till her words prove sooth.
I can't grow old - I have perennial youth.
Who can my princess be? Hello, I may be
The newest princess, eh! The Royal baby!

Enter Mrs. O'Gamp, with baby.

Nor is 'Young Australia' of Australia Felix a common type of pantomime boy in Walch's original arrangements. After 1873, he is only named as such again in the second scene of the prologue of 1875 Hey Diddle-Diddle, set in 'Australia - New Year's Morning' to counteract the European characters of the first scene, set in 'The Ice-King's Home' somewhere near the North Pole. Thus, Scene 1 contained characters such as Father Christmas, Father Time, Glacis, Zero and Polaris while the
one set in Australia contained Young Australia, Young Victoria, the Wicked Squatter and 'Ye Typical Loafer'. Young Australia was portrayed as a whipper-snapper in both the Melbourne and Sydney productions, while the other Australian characters were omitted in Sydney altogether.

The Melbourne production attempted to frame the pantomime in a consciously Nationalist way.

Enter Ye Wicked Squatter.

W. Squ. As older lands, if legends be veracious,
Have ogres at whose names kids cry ogr-cious,
So has Australia - for in me behold
The type of all that's naughty bad and bold,
A deep-dyed Villain - I'm a wicked squatter
Of every foul and evil thing the plotter,
With dummy cat's-paws working in my pay,
My greedy grasp grips acres day by day,
The vital marrow of the land I suck,
Its bones, pro b hated publico I chuck,
These, of my attributes, are just a few,
Stump speakers say so, and it must be true,
But soft! the fair Victoria in distress,
She who I must, I shall, I will possess!

(Retires)

Enter Victoria.

Vic. To bad to treat me thus - I only asked
A paltry million, and I'm taxed and tasked
By all my guardians - with their views upon it,
They like to meddle, even to a bonnet,
But I'll not be dictated to - we'll see,
I'll leave their roof.

W. Squ. (Coming forward) Do, dear - and fly with me,
Of their Protection you have had too much,
I'm a Free Trader, and will act as such.

Vic. More free than welcome - prythee stand aside.

W. Squ. Not till you vow that you will be my bride.

Vic. I'd rather not.

W. Squ. Come! don't misunderstand me.

Vic. I love you madly!

W. Squ. Ruffian, hal'un and me!

Vic. Your screams avail not - there's not help protective!

W. Squ. Excuse me.

Loafer You are!

W. Squ. Thou art!

Loafer A Vagabond!

W. Squ. Sundowner! larrikin! and damper loafer.

Loafer I made a shake-down on you grassy sofa.

W. Squ. So far - so good - go father and fare - Bah!

Loafer Allow me to return the greeting - Yah!

W. Squ. Yes! loafer'born and loafer bred, I see!

Loafer And so I'll cut you - You too low for me (going)

Loafer Not to-day, baker! Being loafer true,
As light weight champion - I'll roll into you.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal

102
W. Squ.    Is your name Christie?
Loafer    No. Is your name Hicken?
W. Squ.    P'rops its Tom Tough.
Loafer    Old cock! you seem no chicken.
W. Squ.    Come on!
Loafer    I'm there!
W. Squ.    I'll crack your saucy crown.
Loafer    Will you! indeed - then one-two-three; sit down!
Xmas    Hold! for your lives!
W. Squ.    For this relief much thanks.
Loafer    Let me get at him just for two more spansks.
W. Squ.    I wish I had him in some quiet pub.
Xmas    Gents both, this place is not the Melbourne Club.
        Instead of fighting thus my warlike friends,
        You in our plot shall serve more useful ends.
        (To W. Squ.) You, like a scarecrow,
        Got it hot this time.
Xmas    Shall warn good children from the paths of crime.
        Plain as New Gov'ment House, or Scots Church steeple.
        You'll prove e'en vagabonds are useful people.
        (To Vic.) You, miss, shall help us -
Loafer    And these other parties
All    We are! We are!
Xmas    Now Chorus! Right away!
        The Drop! The Overture! And then - The Play!!

This scene is not connected to the rest of the play, though Bruno and Blondo can be seen as variations on the 'Loafer' type. Furthermore, like the Missus and Old Australia in *Australia Felix*, Blondo and Bruno's parents, Gaffer and Gammer, are Irish and illustrate Walsh's consistent interest in portraying the Irish in Australian society. Pantomime girls often have Irish 'Dame' Nurses: Lady Bridget in *Adamanta*, Mrs Sairey O'Gamp in 1877 *Sleeping Beauty* and Mrs Harris in the 1885 arrangement of the same title. Undoubtedly based on the comic stage Irishman, these are represented as jocular yet resourceful servants who appear to be versions of the *zanni* characters of the Commedia scenarios. The Dame Nurse's interplay with other servants generally exposes both her own sharp tongue and, simultaneously, any corruption within the household. Thus, in 1877 *Sleeping Beauty*, Mrs O'Gamp calls Hagrimosa an 'ould shark' and exposes the fact that the Witch had arrived with malicious intention towards her newborn ward. Remarkably, the sole Irish character in Williamson's original arrangements is Mrs McLonely in *Matsa*. Europeans are

---

41 As Paul Richardson (1979) outlines, 'the harsh reality of the Australian Christmas season' is also seen in the characterisation of figures such as King Flambeau, the fire King in T. Carrington and J. Eville's 1874 adaptation of John Strachan's *Humpty Dumpty*. In that arrangement the demons 'demanding of more heat is the comic fact of Australia juxtaposed to the more refined and civilised good fairy who attempts to maintain, in the European sense, the true spirit of Christmas even in the antipodes' (127 - 128).
invariably Anglo-Saxon which in itself again suggests Williamson's unpreparedness to satirise the 'English type'. By contrast, Walch's arrangements continously lampoon the 'New Chum' such as the character of the 'Pilgrim of Love' or legendary figures such as King Arthur, with King Arthur the Good in his 1878 Jack, the Giant Killer.

Ironically, the most nationalistic of all Walch's arrangements appears to be his 1885 arrangement of Sleeping Beauty for the Firm. While a script does not seem to have survived, both theatre advertisements of the production and Alfred Maltby's 1886 adaptation for the Theatre Royal, Sydney show the plot revolved around Prince Austral whose love for Beauty is thwarted by the anti-Australian prejudice of Beauty's father, 'King Downidumps, a middle-aged Monarch of dyspeptic ideas'. Moreover, Beauty chooses Austral over the 'Seven Champions of Christendom', the princes of England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, France, Italy and Spain. Walch adapts figures found in early English pantomimes based on Saint George and the Dragon towards an nationalist end when Beauty elopes with the Australian prince. As an important legend of English Mummer plays, Saint George and the Seven Champions of Christendom underscores the fact that English and Australian pantomimes, like the English folk plays, construct the 'East' as the inimical 'other'.

What is of particular interest is that the familiar elements of the St. George story are previous conquests which are used as the basis for an opening boast that will lead, finally, to a man-to-man combat...Following the boast comes the arrival of the antagonist who is often referred to as the Turkish Knight or some corruption...He arrives with a counter-boast or an announcement of his desire to fight the protagonist which leads to a direct challenge, answered by a counter-challenge. The antagonists square off and the direct combat begins (Brody 1969, 49).

Sleeping Beauty's Fairy Queen is also characterised in nationalistic terms and, therefore, unlike Walch's 1877 arrangement, she is no longer the Fairy of Love but 'Progressa'. Beauty's other six godmothers, Bellissima, Elegantia, Speciosa, Iocunda, Chrysola, Sapientia - the Fairies of Beauty, Grace, Virtue, Wit, Wealth and Wisdom - are changed to Minerella, Farina, Saccharina, Waibena, Pomona and Occidenta, with Progressa, the Seven Sisters of Australasia.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
Williamson's support for British Imperialism was more stridently jingoistic: his arrangements show bold Australians fighting Japanese demons in *Djin Djin*, enterprising entrepreneurs in Egypt in *Matsa* and worthy custodians of the 'Great Empire of the South' in *Australis*. Remarkably, this became more noticeable as Australian Federation drew closer. Hence *Australis* and the 1901 production of *Djin Djin* (staged sequentially) were even more stridently patriotic than earlier productions of *Djin Djin* and *Matsa*.

There is no evidence that Williamson's productions ever entertained the idea of an 'aboriginal' Australian culture. There is, however, some sparse acknowledgement of Aboriginal culture in Walch's arrangements. Both *Trookulentos* and the 1878 *Jack the Giant Killer* contained a 'Corroboree Chorus'. Its presentation in a 'War Song' based on G. H. MacDermott's patriotic ballad 'I Don't Want To Fight, But By Jingo If I Do', however, shows that perhaps Walch's sense of 'originality' hardly approached a concept of 'aboriginality':

**Jack:** And when once I draw my sword my way to victory I'll forge,  
With the battle cry of Britons, old England and St. George.  
For I do want to fight and by jingo when I do,  
I've got the pluck, I've got the nerve, I've got muscle too.  
I've fought a few before, and what I say is true.  
The giants shall enjoy a thorough thrashing.

**CORROBBEREE CHORUS**

The giant's plot we'll addle,  
Yah!

Make them all skedaddle,  
Yah!

Our gallant Jack  
We'll drive them back,  
For he's the giant kill-ah!  
Then let's away,  
Yes, away, Yah!  
On to the fray, Yah!

So we'll march along,

---

42 It is virtually impossible to determine the focus of the 1896 *Sinbad* as I have not been able to find a libretto for that production though the theatre advertisement in the *Sydney Morning Herald* for 25 December 1896 strongly hints at the possibility that it was an adaptation of E. W. Royce's 1888/89 adaptation of *Sinbad the Sailor* or *Tinbad the Tailor*, and the *Wicked Ogres, the Good Fairy and the Little Old Man of the Sea*.

43 The 1895 Melbourne prompt copy of *Djin Djin* I obtained from the Australian National Library was also the prompt copy of the 1901 Sydney production. The changes made are noticeable through different handwriting in the text which is luckily consistent so that it is possible to see which hand worked on which production.

44 The actual spelling used in Walch's pantomime text (18).
And sing our song
Of Yah, Yah!
Yah, Yah!

Unlike Walch's arrangements, Williamson's original productions featured a highly formulated three-act structure which set up a celebration of imperialist conquests. Therefore, though *Djin Djin*, *Matsa* and *Australis* varied in the number of scenes they contained - ten, eight and six respectively - they repeated a distinctive narrative pattern. They all began with the 'dark' scene which outlined the moral conflict of the production. *Djin Djin* begins in the Shrine of Soothsayers where young Princess Iris's horoscope is read in order to create the need for Young Australia, Prince Eucalyptus, to rescue her from certain death. *Matsa* is set in the Tomb of Kings where Mummies in sarcophaguses awake to perform their annual duty of planning how to sacrifice a young maiden so that the Queen of Fire can live on for another year. In *Australis*, the subterranean grotto of Alabaster Columns in the Jenolan Caves comes alive after one hundred years when Azeemath, Wizard of the South Pole, awakens some important Australian citizens. They, in turn, awaken Dione, Queen of the Pole, so that Azeemath might finally marry her and reign with her eternally in the South Pole's city of Zero. Walch's opening scenes are less predictably placed: *Beauty and the Beast* 's is set on the 'Roofs of Houses Near the General Post Office'. The arrangement of *Sleeping Beauty* which Walch wrote for the Firm in 1885 opens in 'Cloudland. Under the Southern Cross'. These 'celestial' settings suggest a deliberate overturning of the usual subterranean 'dark' opening scene.

Act 1, Scene 2 of Williamson's arrangements invariably contain a huge crowd scene - a street in *Djin Djin*, a bazaar in *Matsa* and a quay in *Australis*. In these were staged operatic choral numbers. In *Djin Djin*, for instance, Leon Caron composed a 'Jap Song' for a procession and chorus which the prompt copy shows included five acrobats (the Banvards). In *Matsa*'s 'Grand Bazaar in Cairo' the scene begins with 'merchants at the doors of their shops, &c. - Europeans passing, followed by Donkey-boys'. George Pack, Leon Caron's musical collaborator for *Djin Djin* and *Matsa*, wrote for this occasion:

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
Hoorah! for the streets of Cairo - Hoorah! for the good old town
Where, as the British tourist says, they always take you down.

All nations here, in gay array,
Their trades are plying all the day,
And in their Oriental way
They shout and never tire, oh!
From morning till night you hear the cry
Of merchants who will sell or die,
For there's not a thing you cannot buy
In the good old streets of Cairo.

The song was then divided up into various verses for 'Nautch Dancers', 'Fat Turks', 'Little Fan Girls', 'Moorish Women', 'Donkey Boys' and an 'Officers' Chorus' of the Khedive's guard. Using stereotypical 'Eastern' characters, the scene illustrates an imperialist ideological vision of tourists in a primitive land. The Bazaar was later transformed into 'Ancient Memphis' complete with the 'Triumphal Entry of Ramases III' including a 'Grand Procession of Ancient Egyptian Warriors, Princes, Priests of Isis and Osiris, and Barbarian Captives'.

Act 1, Scene 2 of Australis was set at Circular Quay (comically referred to as 'Semi-Circular Quay') on New Year's Day celebration of 100 years of Australian federation in the year 2000, with the Australian populace represented by Artisans, Vendors, Flower Girls and a chorus of Mayors of the city. Plate 15 shows how Sydney 1900 had, in fact, decorated buildings along Circular Quay during the then Commonwealth Celebrations. The prompt shows the crowd was continually rearranged as the different verses were sung and that each verse was building up towards the arrival on stage of the Boss.45 The assembly of Sydney citizens ended with:

Let the loud Hosannas sound,
Let the toast go gaily round,
To the day we celebrate,
To the Union of the State,
To the Isle we Federate,
Let the loud Hosanna sound!

And the chorus that we sing,
It shall make the welkin ring,
With the plaudits long and loud
Of a Patriotic crowd
To the man of who we're proud
TO THE BOSS, AUSTRALIA'S KING

45 The prompt copy for Australis is held at the Performing Arts Museum, Melbourne.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
The crowd was then rearranged again for the Boss's parodic song, showing that Australia has taken a radical turn, abandoned the British monarchy and put in place its own 'king', a Union Boss. The second verse satirised his working class origins as a class which does anything but work. Australia, the working man's paradise, was the place where 'ev'ry mother's son was working, all except the working man'. Socialism was named in the third and last verse as having abolished 'empty titles' but the egalitarianism which this should have brought remained 'untried' and one, which it will be remembered, imprisoned the spirits in the Jenolan Caves.

On a socialistic basis
That has never yet been tried,
We've abolished empty titles,
And we disapprove of 'side'
It's the democratic lesson,
And we'll teach it if we can:
Ev'ry man is just the equal
Of his fellow brother man.

The prompt copy shows that the crowd helped the parodying of the Boss throughout the song by overstylising the gestures commonly found in musical comedy numbers. So, for instance, at the refrain of 'And I was the Boss...' the crowd performed the following:

At the Chorus of he was the Boss, the chorus take 3 steps down stage pointing at Boss, then dance back to places. And at Boss of the shift that did no work, they all bob up and down till the last line but one then stop. Each verse the same till the last, then at he was the Boss, they all give a loud shout.

Walch's arrangements did not have anything near the size of the spectacles found in Act 1, Scene 2 of Williamson's arrangements, except possibly in their 'Amazonian Marches'. *Australia Felix*, for example, includes the 'March of the Juvenile Cricketers to represent All-England, followed by Ladies of the Ballet, as Australia's Champion Team'. While there were many songs, Walch's arrangements rarely contained more than one ballet, though children were clearly part of the productions, as they were in Williamson's.

The New South Wales Colonial Secretary's Papers show that the names of thirty-one children appearing in *Australis* were supplied to the Inspector of Theatres
on 24 December 1900 by Williamson's business manager, George Goodman. The production was affected by new legislation covering child labour laws. Licences were now required under the Children's Protection Act Amendment Act, 1900, and seemingly each production was assessed on its own merits as the theatre had to reapply for new licences when the children were used for the 1901 production of *Djin Djin*. The new law was alluded to as unnecessary by the parents of the children to the Inspector of Police. Parents seemingly sided with Williamson on the question of the undue restrictions the Act placed on theatre managers. For instance, ten year old Charles M Smith's father wrote:

13 Mary Ann St,
Moore Park,
Surry Hills.

Mr Williamson.

Dear Sir,

I wish my son to work in your panto this year as I don't understand those permits. Will you please try and get one for him. Someone will meet him every night.

Name: Charles M. Smith
Age: 10 years

Yours truly, W. Smith
Dec 19 1900.

The issue of child labour in the theatre had been controversial for a number of years. For instance, the *Lognette* reported on 3 May 1890 that both the Triumvirate and Alfred Dampier were prosecuted for using under-age children. They were being charged under Section 79 of the Neglected Children's Act for employing a child under

---

46 The list consisted of the following names together with their respective ages and addresses: May B. Bradley (15) 183 William St; Elsie Wilson (15 yrs 1 mths) 32 Riley St; Edith Massey (8) 11 Hill Street, Surrey Hills; Ethel M. Murdoch (12 yrs, 11 mths) 12 Railway Place; Lillie H. Halyday (12 yrs 4 mths) 20 John Street Balmain; Hazel R. Burton (10 yrs 7 mths) Glenview Street; Ivy C. Borthwick (12 yrs 11 mths) 61 Baroom Avenue; Maude Williams (9 yrs 11 mths) 12 Brisbane St; Olive P. Booth (7) Penkivil St, Bondi; Annie Laurie (12) 66 Brougham St; Kate Gill (12) 235 Victoria St; Stella E. Tate (15) 39 Taylor St; Edith R. Maxwell (13 yrs 2 mths) 51 Parramatta Road; Eva Ingersole (13 yrs 2 mths) 78 Giebe Pt, Rd; Rosie Ward (13 yrs 11 mths) 37 Davis St; Lillie Ward (9) 37 Davis St; Edith A. Lorking (15 yrs 11 mths) 45 Lansdown St; Goldie Mary Collins (11) 23 Jamison St; Pauline Williamson (15 yrs 11 mths) 29 Reservoir St; Violet Williamson (13 yrs 11 mths) 29 Reservoir St; Clyde Cook (12) 62 Albion St; Elsie M. Carr (13) 127 Regent St; Olive V. Carr (7 yrs 6 mths) 127 Regent St; Agnes F. Wilson (15 yrs 1 mth) 75 Cowper St, Glebe; Elizabeth M. McLean (12) 42 Pt Piper Road; Decima T. McLean (7) 42 Pt Piper Road; Edward C. McLean (9) 42 Pt Piper Road; Charles Tagg (12) 39 Richard St, Newton; Alfred G. Bennett (7) 21 Bloomfield St; Charles M. Smith (9) 13 Mary Ann Street; William Mould (9) 138 Crown St.
ten during prohibited hours. The Firm had used 'Baby Nicholls' for A Man's Shadow and Dampier had used Ada Lamard in Robbery Under Arms. Williamson, Musgrove and Garner attempted to defend themselves by proving the children were unpaid, were receiving tuition for one hour's rehearsal and performing fifteen minutes per night. The child, Violet Ashton, only worked three months a year, the rest of the time she attended a private school in Collingwood. Dampier, on the other hand, claimed that his super-master had made the mistake in employing the child at 6s per week, which, of course, the accused denied and counter-claimed that he had done so under Dampier's instruction. The Bench imposed a fine of 20s on the managements of both the Theatre Royal and the Alexandra.

Williamson's arrangements contained numerous choral pieces, in which children appeared. This reached a climax at the end of Act 2 where a kind of exorcism of the production's projected evil occurred. Hence, in Djin Djin audiences witnessed the destruction of the demon's haunted temple by earthquake and the subsequent volcanic eruption of Mt Fugi. In Matsa, the power of the Queen of Fire was destroyed by the flooding of Nile and, in Australis, a whirlpool was staged in which Azeemath's plan to destroy Dione was thwarted.

These scenes of spectacular realism were juxtaposed with ballets which, unfortunately, are insufficiently described in theatre reviews. The choreography for Djin Djin and Matsa was the work of Madame Rosalie Phillipini. Edward Pask noted that she had arrived in 1893 to direct Williamson and Musgrove's Royal Ballerinas and was to initiate a 'classical revival' through Williamson's importation of the Grand Italian Opera Company. Madame Phillipini also choreographed ballets for several other of the Firm's pantomimes between 1893 and 1899. Her position as director of the Royal Ballerinas was then taken by the Australian-born Minnie Everett who had previously been a premiere danseuse for the company: it was she who choreographed the ballets for Australis (Pask 1979, 85 - 91).

One of the rare photographic views we have of a pantomime ballet is from the Perier Collection, showing the 'Fire Ballet' from George Rignold's 1894 The House
That Jack Built. (Plate 16) Phillipini's ballet of that name in Act 2, Scene 3 of Matsa therefore came two years after what was billed in the theatre advertisement for Rignold's pantomime as the first appearance of 'the most marvellous effect of the age' (Sydney Morning Herald, 26 December, 1894). The choreographer was Rosalie Duvalli who, together with her sister Heloise, had contributed to the choreography of Sydney and Melbourne pantomime ballets since the early 1870s. Interestingly, Coppin used the Fire ballet in his 1895 Santa Claus, The House that Jack Built and the Historical Giant Killer under special licence from Rignold: it was arranged in that production by another long-time choreographer working in Sydney and Melbourne theatres, Emilia Pasta Moore. The theatre advertisement for the pantomime in the Lorgnette reported that:

MR GEO. RIGNOLD having Invented, Patented, and Worked Out with Immense Success a Sensational Stage effect, known as THE FIRE BALLET has licensed its production - under arrangement - upon the present occasion. This Wonderful Spectacle is a Realistic Illustration of LIVING CREMATION (26 December 1895).

Perier's photograph of the 1894 Sydney version of the dance reflects the symmetrical positioning of bodies around the premiere danseuse who is standing on the shoulders of another dancer. The company of twenty also appears to have been divided between beautiful coryphee and demon-like beings: two distinctly masculine figures stand on either side of the stage, downstage left and right. The blurred quality of the photograph suggests it might have been taken while the dance was in motion. However, there do not appear to be flames on stage. The ballet's place in the narrative arrangement of pantomime is extraordinarily hard to judge, though it is highly likely that they operated like the 'dream ballets' and the 'wish ballets' which Jane Feuer (1982) describes as part of the Hollywood musical (74).

All Williamson's original arrangements contained 'Variety Entertainment'. This invariably occurred in Act 3, Scene 1 and in Djin Djin and Australis was part of a court setting where entertainment was offered for the amusement of the nobility. Matsa was slightly different in that it staged the 'specialities' on board RMS Australia as part of the ship's entertainment during a Fancy Costume Ball. The acts were all

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal 111
circus-like. Unlike the ballets, these were sometimes reported in great detail in reviews. For instance, Matsa's speciality was Mr Leoni Clarke 'The Cat King'.

Cats, rats, canaries, and monkeys go through an astonishing gymnastic performance under the persuasion of this gentleman. The cats, besides walking the tight rope, will step gingerly among their natural prey without showing tooth or claw: rats will ensnare themselves in miniature railway carriages and ride at furious pace to perdition in the shape of a general smash; and monkeys will swarm to the top of the proscenium and make a descent by parachute quite in the manner of Professor Baldwin and his imitators. This entertainment was saved as a bonne bouche to the end of the performance, and created all the astonishment expected from it (Argus, 28 December 1896).

'European', 'Eastern' or 'Australian' seem to be homogenised in Williamson's productions through the spectacular effects of the production: the 'illuminated' cities of Nagasaki and Sydney at the end of Act 1 of their respective productions, for instance, become awesome because of the theatre manager's 'magical' mastery of the theatrical space as, indeed, the illuminated buildings of Sydney during the Federation celebrations signalled that an 'Anglo-Saxonism' had come of age in Terra Australis.

Djin Djin seems to have been an adaptation of Walch's 1885 Sleeping Beauty. Both pantomimes revolve around an impending 'coming of age' birthday on which the Princess chooses a husband. In both cases this involves an Australian hero: in Sleeping Beauty, Prince Austral, and in Djin Djin, Prince Eucalyptus. Most significantly, in both arrangements the Princesses choose their Australian Prince from a parade of foreign princes: in the 1885 scenario these were referred to as the 'Seven Champions of Christendom'. While in Djin Djin they are not identified as such, they are nonetheless named as Saint George, Saint Andrew, Prince O'Toole, Count Bonivant, Prince Polenta, thus clearly indicating that they represent the European powers of England, Scotland, Ireland, France and Italy.47

However, Williamson's arrangement was set in the Orient while Walch's was set at 'home' in England.48 As a result, the productions contain very different demons. Maligna in Sleeping Beauty represents an 'othering' within a European setting while DjinDjin's 'Japanese Bogie man' represents a division between East and

---

47 Inexplicably, the 1895 production of Djin Djin omitted Wales while the 1901 included him.
48 Prince Austral is described as an 'absentee'.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
West. Some references to the Orient can be found in *Sleeping Beauty*, such as in Act 1, Scene 4 when Prince Austral tells the King that he visited 'Burmah' where he obtained the performing Elephant he subsequently presents to the Princess. Thus, the Orient also suggests a sense of exotica in Walch's arrangements.

*Djin Djin*’s Japanese setting was something pre-1914 English and Australian theatre managers had long used to good effect, as the following review of the pantomime reveals:

Sir Edwin Arnold in poetry, Pierre Loti in fiction, Henry Norman in works of travel, W. S. Gilbert in comic opera, and innumerable others in song have from time to time told us a great deal about Japan, and as recent events have somewhat stimulated our interest in this picturesque country, it is but fitting that we should welcome any further information that we can get concerning its customs and scenery. This Messrs. J. C. Williamson and Bert Royle are supposed to supply us with in their 'new, original, comical, spectacular,' pantomime last night at the Princess’s Theatre to a house crowded to excess in every part and under circumstances which augur a happy and most successful run for the piece. We say we are 'supposed' to get the information, because its reliability is somewhat doubtful, but as the authors have taken the wise precaution to call their joint effort 'a fairy tale of old Japan,' no one, we suspect, will arise to question the accuracy of the peculiar proceedings which we are expected to believe took place in Japan in the 'yellow yesterdays of time.' Of course Japan as the ground work of a stage production is not altogether a new field, but its potentialities for scenic and dressing purposes, to say nothing of the fun to be extracted from its quaint customs, have by no means been exhausted. The Mikado is, and perhaps always will remain, the standard stage work on the land of the chrysanthemum, but that there is a great deal more theatrical gold in the country than Mr. Gilbert has discovered is evidenced by the fact that the Princess’s management have discarded the ready made themes of the past century for their Christmas productions, and gone to this delightful land for an entirely fresh story and novel setting, and also by the fact that Mr. George Edwardes is preparing his new London musical comedy on Japanese lines. Perhaps when Turkey and Venezuela have sufficiently distinguished themselves as warlike nations they will meet with their due share of theatrical attention *(Age, 27 December 1895)*.

Most importantly, the review reveals Australian perceptions of Japan as a warrior nation. As Humphrey McQueen *(1986)* noted:

No issue produced more concern or tension for Australasians than the rise of Japan as an industrial-military power. Despite abortive attempts in 1876 by a conservative South Australian government to colonise the Northern Territory with indentured Japanese labourers, most Australians were probably unaware of the presence of Japanese in Australia until a group of divers drew the winning horse in Tattersalls Melbourne Cup sweep in 1891. Ten years later, the Japanese occupied the major place in Commonwealth debates surrounding the White Australia policy *(59)*.

Referring to the Japanese naval victory over China in 1894, the Brisbane *Courier* in November 1895 reported that: 'were Japan to turn her naval arm against what lies in Australian waters, we should go down against her.'

---

49 Reference found in Humphrey McQueen *(1986, 59)*.
seen at the time as Britain's ally. According to Humphrey McQueen, it was not until
the Japanese destruction of the Russian fleet in 1905 that Australians panicked, and
that the fact that she was Britain's ally caused friction between Australia and England
(60).

Williamson and Musgrove's 1895 and Williamson's 1901 productions of
_Djin Djin_ record Australia's growing preoccupation with the Japanese during this
period. The fact that the 1895 production stopped short of the blatant paranoia of
Randolph Bedford's 1909 _White Australia_ suggests that in a socio-political sense
Australia had still not fully formulated a 'White Australia' policy and that it was neither
static nor inevitable. As John Rickard (1993) argues, therefore, while racism was a
part of the British heritage, the White Australia policy 'revealed a new and nasty
stridency'.

Yet it was a cause which could evoke emotional commitment and even idealism. As
the international climate became more unstable, and as Australia as an isolated European
outpost seemed more vulnerable, a White Australia acquired the aura of an antipodean
sanctuary. British insecurity at this time was reflected in fantasies, except that they
were racial nightmares as well. In 1909 Randolph Bedford's _White Australia_, billed as 'a
powerful patriotic play', adapted the conventions of melodrama to an extravagant tale of
Japanese espionage and invasion. Bedford pointed an accusing finger at the degeneracy
in our midst, represented by Cedric, the traitorous nephew of a Northern Territory
squatter, and Pawpaw Sal, a white woman who had apparently succumbed to the tropics.
The drama climaxed with the destruction of the Japanese fleet in Sydney Harbour by the
assault of an airship designed by the squatter hero. For its audience the improbabilities
lay more in the mechanics of the plot than in the prospect of Japanese invasion. Whilst
the fear of China had been one of Asian 'hordes' submerging an Anglo-Celtic culture by
sheer force of numbers, the Japanese threat was perceived as a military one, all the more
immediate for Japan having recently graduated as a world power on a par with the
European nations. Would not Japan imitate Europe in Imperial pretensions as well?
Instead of whites colonising other races, there was now the nightmare possibility of the
process being reversed. It was a matter of acute embarrassment that Japan was an ally of
Britain's. In instituting White Australia immigration policy it had been necessary, out
of imperial tact, to follow the Natal practice of using an arbitrary dictation test, to
maintain the pretence that race was not at issue. At the outset of the Great War the
sleazy Truth lamented.

_The war drums beat! The scene is changed! The brown man is a brother!_
_Alas, for dear Australia White! The Japs are pals of Mother_ (40 - 41).

Walch's arrangements are noticeably less concerned with the 'Eastern
Question' than Williamson's. The corollary to this is that Walch seems more prepared
to mock Australia's European legacy. In _True-Blue Beard_, for instance, while
Abomelique is undoubtedly a 'Pasha of many Tales', he has a European equivalent in
Fatima's Pantaloone-like father, Spratsadeen. Similarly, the 'Great A1, King of
Profusia' in _Adamanta_, 'King Glorio the Millionth' in _Beauty and the Beast_ and

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal

114
'King Glorioso, a very unconstitutional monarch' are further examples of Walch's more mocking approach to patriarchal power. Therefore, unlike Williamson's use of the Orient or the Tropics, exotic settings are presented by Walch as places which Europeans visit but do not necessarily appropriate. Thus, Walch stops short of Williamson's mockery of the 'East' in *Djin Djin* and *Matsa* and his appropriation of the South Pole in *Australis* in order to set up the 'Great Empire of the South'.

The racist allusions to monkeys, based on Social Darwinist theories, in Williamson's *Djin Djin* and Walch's *Beauty and the Beast* shows the difference most clearly. While Act 2, Scene 3 of Walch's arrangement directly alludes to 'Monkey Land' as a place which would explain Darwinian theory, the scene uses the 'primitiveness' of the apes to show up the stupidity of the King and his court. The King's egotistical allusions to himself as another Henry V further underline this. The monkey's stealing of all the King and Queen's paraphernalia thus mocks the powerful pretensions of Royalty itself:

*(Monkey music re-commences. A monkey comes on and throws a cocoa nut at the King, who wakes.)*

**King:** Bother the skeptics - there, they've spoilt my snooze; I'll have a sandwich, and just read the news.

*(He seats himself in centre of stage, opens carpet-bag and takes out various articles of clothing, eatables, newspapers, a flask, snuff-box, &c. He commences eating, monkeys steal on at back, and seat themselves in a row behind him. Monkeys have on the stolen articles of clothing. They imitate every action. He takes out several books and puts all but one down behind him. He opens last book and turns over the leaves - monkeys do the same with other books. He takes a pinch of snuff and lays box down. Monkey steals it - takes a pinch and sneezes - King looks R, they all look R - he looks L, they all look L - at last he sees them, and starts up - they make off with everything.)*

**King:** Hi - murder - thieves.
**Queen:** *(starting up)* Police! - oh! goodness gracious.
**King:** My books!
**Queen:** My bonnet!
**Mess:** Oh! the beast's audacious!

*(They make frantic efforts to recover their property, which the Monkeys have been sharing amongst them: but monkeys dance round them.)*

**COMIC TABLEAU**

---

50This scene is also noticeably similar to Act 2, Scene 2 of *Australia Felix* in which Old Australia and the Missus are caught up in the Monkeys' 'monkeying' around.

**Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal**
By contrast, Act 2, Scene 5 of *Djin Djin* shows much more belligerent apes who arrive on the scene to fight the demons at Djin Djin's haunted temple. Here the monkeys represent the kind of primitive aggression of a less civilised warrior nation and in no way are the European Australians regarded as anti-heroes in the manner of Walch's arrangements. Thus, Williamson's original pantomime presented Tom Wallaby, his Australian larrikin, making a mockery of foreign powers and criticising Prince Eucalyptus's need to go to 'Japan to find a missus' and for being 'so pally' with foreign powers. Wallaby thus contradictarily supports British militarism while mocking the Samurai warrior. This is evident from the outset in Act 1 when Wallaby puts on a Samurai warrior's suit:

Tom W. Is anyone about?

(Enters, in Japanese armour)

This is what I call mean;
 Won't someone help me out of this machine?
 Well, this is hard; I can't find anyone.
 I shall be choked if this is not undone.
 It don't fit, but the villains jammed me in.
 Here! I'm no softgoods, to be packed in tin.

The joke obviously revolves around the fact that as an Anglo-Saxon he is physically too large for the armoured suit and so appears like a 'potted meat affair' in a 'raw-lobster-costume'. The love play which ensues between him and Dede, maid to Princess Iris, is a 'comedy of errors' as Dede pretends to not know that it is the Australian inside the suit. In due course, however, Tom Wallaby usurps the place of the Samurai and wins the affection and approval of the Japanese lady. Nonetheless, the armour also serves as a reminder that Japan contains inherent dangers for the Australian prince.

There are further examples of the mocking of Japanese customs throughout the arrangement. For instance, when the Daimio enters in Act 1, Scene 3, his comic song allows him to represent his own barbarity and his consciousness that more civilised European customs of love and courtship exist.

Daimio. Right welcome to my humble court
 There's hardly need to say
 My daughter's love is to be bought
 Not simply thrown away

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
Who offers the highest rank
Backed up, you understand,
With cash enough to buy a bank,
He wins my daughter's hand.

Chorus.
That's a way that we have in Japan,
And I think it an excellent plan,
Tho' in Europe, I'm told,
They don't marry for gold,
It's a way that we have in Japan.

Even assuming that, in the satirical tradition of Gilbert and Sullivan, Royle and Williamson intended the song to be a tongue-in-cheek portrayal of the fact that in Europe 'they don't marry for gold', Tom's subsequent abuse of the Daimio deflects the satire away from Europeans. He tells him to 'talk sense' and threatens to punch him on the nose for his despotic ways. The Melbourne prompt copy shows that Tom Wallaby sat on the Daimio's lap and proceeded to ridicule him for chastising his spinster sister:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tom W.</th>
<th>You're no gentleman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daimio</td>
<td>What sir do you know who I am?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom W.</td>
<td>No and I don't want to!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daimio</td>
<td>I am the Daimio!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom W.</td>
<td>Damn who?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daimio</td>
<td>How dare you speak like that to the Daimio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom W.</td>
<td>Well if you're the Daimio you had better go and look after your training for the Grand National.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This incident heralds the arrival of the 'egalitarian' Prince Eucalyptus and his self-announcement that:

...nought but myself I bring.
No crown or sceptre, just a wedding-ring.
I have no throne to offer for your hand,
All are as free as kings in my fair land.

The Princess reciprocates by confirming that 'Nature's own princes are the best of all'. The 1895 prompt copy shows that each of the European suitors (picture in Plate 17), including Prince Eucalyptus, were preceded by a child bearing a national banner who then performed a national dance.

The comparison set up in Djin Djin between East and West suggests that the Japanese are bound by unreasonable conventions which cause them to remain in a primitive world ruled by astrologers and demons. Such an impression of 'old Japan' is thus contrasted with a 'new' progressive Australian society. Indeed, as Beverley

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
GROUP FROM THE PRINCESS'S PANTOMIME.

(PHOTOGRAPHED BY FALMA AND CO., 119 MELBOURNE STREET, MELBOURNE.)
Kingston (1988) explains, such a notion of the new versus the old seems to have been the keynote of late nineteenth-century Australian egalitarianism.

In fact the egalitarianism of the late nineteenth century was merely a frame work of economic opportunities within which individuals and groups manoeuvred to assert traditional forms of authority or to invent new ones. Those who fell outside the economic structure or were excluded by sex or colour were irrelevant to the rhetoric of egalitarianism. Even so, colonial society was more open than the British society implicit in comparisons. Contemporaries frequently noted the absence of an upper class when trying to explain this openness. Yet it may not have been the absence of that class so much as the weakness of traditional institutions, or even the absence of tradition itself, which encouraged a sense of egalitarianism (278).

Most tellingly, Prince Eucalyptus' Japanese expedition for a Japanese bride is associated in the production with the military exploits of British militarists such as Major-General Edward Hutton. Hutton was the New South Wales Commandant from 1893 who primarily attempted to forge a federation of the colonies via the issue of federal defence. As Luke Trainor (1994) explains, he was an over-eager imperialist, influenced by the lectures of the Cambridge historian, Seeley, by the plans of George Clarke at the CDC and by Australian federal defence aspirations of Howard Vincent, a prominent imperial federationist, and other members of the so-called Military Party in the House of Commons... In New South Wales Hutton pressed ahead with plans for a conference of commandants in 1894 which recommended, as had Edwards in 1889, a scheme for what was termed federal defence, that is a council with representatives from the various colonies, co-ordinating the military efforts of all Australia (103 - 104).

The defeat of China by Japan in 1894 provided Hutton with the occasion to press his scheme on Premier Reid. At the end of 1895, and thus at the time when the pantomime was being performed, Reid brought Hutton's plan before the colonial governments and eventually to an intercolonial meeting on defence in 1896. The scheme failed despite Reid's recommendations for a number of reasons, primarily because the military advantages of a co-ordinated defence of Australia, with the further prospect of joint action with British forces abroad in imperial defence, dominated considerations of democratic control. That trend was compounded by the lack of recognition of the nature of colonial self-government among senior military personnel. An officer such as Hutton, in the employment of the colonial government and resident in Australia for three years before federation, and after, should have recognised this; but he was a pushy person with a taste for self-advertisement and a belief in manipulating politicians. (Trainor 1994, 148)

The significance of the Prince's alignment with Major-General Hutton should not be overlooked as an indication of Williamson's political vision for the coming Australian federation. The patriotic song which concluded Act I suggested a military

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
solution to Australia's fears of the Japanese 'bogieman'. Perhaps most remarkably of all, the Prince was supported in the song by the two Japanese Princesses, Iris and Okiama, who together called for an Australian navy. This capturing of the Japanese women's support for the need to address Japan's growing naval strength would seem absurd were it not for the seriousness with which Williamson and Royle apparently dealt with specific elements of the issue for Melbourne and Sydney audiences. The result was entirely different lyrics for the two productions. The Melbourne finale for Act I thus had the following lyrics:

Prince E.  
If on the Sunbeam we could sail, Victoria! Victoria!  
Our expedition could not fail, Victoria! Victoria!  
Around the world, tho' tempests blew,  
Her noble commander brought her to.

Chorus  
Victoria! Victoria! Tiddy, widdy, wing, pom, pom.

Princess I.  
Tho' we cannot go on the briny wave, Victoria! Victoria!  
Imagine you're tars on a finer brave, Victoria! Victoria!  
You must all be bold and do your best:  
Shouting, as you dance on the Demon's chest,

Chorus  
Victoria! Victoria! Tiddy, widdy, wing, pom, pom.

Okiama  
It seems the proper thing to shout, Victoria! Victoria!  
Tho' I don't know what it's all about, Victoria! Victoria!  
I can't make out the meaning quite,  
But still I suppose it is all right.

Chorus  
Victoria! Victoria! Tiddy, widdy, wing, pom, pom.

Tom W.  
Of course, you don't know much about, Victoria! Victoria!  
Or if you did, you'd gaily shout, Victoria! Victoria!  
Beneath the southern cross it lies,  
And on it you'll find there are no flies.

Chorus  
Victoria! Victoria! Tiddy, widdy, wing, pom, pom.

In the Sydney production the following March, 'Victoria' was replaced by 'Australia'. The song indicated an even more strident battle cry in support of the brave Sydney Volunteers.

Prince E.  
And this all be our battle cry, Australia! Australia!  
Before it every foe will fly, Australia! Australia!  
Altho' you all are Japs by birth,  
I know you will shout for all you're worth,  
Australia! Australia! Tiddy widdy wing pom pom.

Princess I.  
If you're afraid, conceal your fears.  
Australia! Australia!  
Be brave as Sydney Volunteers,  
Australia! Australia!  
Know our men will do their best.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
Shouting as they dance on the Demon's chest,
Australia! Australia! Tiddy widdy wing pom pom.

_Okiama_

It seems the proper thing to shout
Australia! Australia!
Tho', I don't know what it's all about,
Australia! Australia!
The reason why I don't know quite,
But still I suppose it is all right,
Australia! Australia! Tiddy widdy wing pom pom.

_Tom W._

Of course you don't know much about Australia! Australia!
Or you'd go there at once no doubt, Australia! Australia!
Beneath the Southern Cross it lies,
And on it you'll find there are no flies,
Australia! Australia! Tiddy widdy wing pom pom.

This kind of strident patriotic song is far less prevalent in Walch's original arrangements. Similarly, Williamson and Royle's more patriotic sentiments in _Djin_

_Djin_ seem related to the nature of the relationship between pantomime boy and girl. The pantomime girls of Williamson's arrangements were never openly rebellious towards their parents as were Walch's Adamanta or Beauty. Instead, in _Djin Djin_, the pantomime girl's young sister Cheekee enacted the 'naughty' girl:

They call me Cheekee, so I am;
The Vizier gets so cross,
He puts on such a lot of jam,
And tries to be the boss;
But when he orders me about,
I let him know who's who;
I get a safe way off, and shout
'You're not Lord Brassey,' pooh.

Refrain:
Pooh! pooh! Who are you?
Run away and play;
I'm going to do it if I like,
No matter what you say;
I'm sorry if you've got the spike,
You look so queer, you do;
I'll have my fun; so take a run;
Pooh! who's afraid of you!

However, she is ultimately controlled by the Vizier through threats of punishment from her father for her insolence. Thus, Williamson and Royle seem to thwart and marginalise the stronger younger sister and position the sweet, placid Princess Iris as the pantomime's ideal female. 'Cheekee' ultimately represented an illegitimate figure rather than one who was 'coming of age' as in Walch's arrangements. Furthermore, in an ironic contrast to Walch's 'Irish' Nurses, Williamson's Dame supported female passivity. The Melbourne prompt copy, for

_Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal_
instance, has her surrounded by a chorus of twenty-four (presumably twelve cross-dressed chorus 'gents'), all carrying samisens, in her first solo 'She's A Fairy' which comically enacted the impossibility of a man passing as the 'ideal' woman. Thus, as an ugly woman, she represented another aberration from the ideal. As such, she became the Demon's punishment as he was forced to marry her in the end. Taken collectively, the roles of Princess Iris, Cheekee and the Dame Okiama serve to highlight how Williamson's original arrangements were politically reactionary in their representation of the changing nature of women's power in the 1890s. This is highly significant given that the mid-1890s were crucial years for women's suffrage in Australia and New Zealand with South Australia having already given women the vote in 1894.

References are made to the 'Women's Question' in pantomime songs. The New Woman was highlighted in 'So and So and Such and Such' by comedians Bill Elton and John Coleman in the roles of Tom Wallaby and the Dame Okiama. Undoubtedly a show stopper, the prompt copy recorded no less than sixteen different verses, with three distinctive styles of handwriting suggesting that different verses were penned for different productions. The song provocatively decried the coming of the New Woman and her loss of 'modesty'. In particular, it criticised her desire to wear comfortable men's clothes instead of the clothes of the 'exquisite slave'.

The New Woman is a product of the nineteenth century,
With divided skirts and 'So and So' and 'Such and Such',
The ladies of to-day I think have lost their modesty,
With their Ibsen and their 'So and So' and 'Such and Such'
Of course to pose in man's attire they think is very rich,
They try to copy man when they should stop at home and stitch,
To tell the simple truth I often wonder which is which,
They're so much like 'So and So' and 'Such and Such'.

The verse on women's suffrage also suggested that women in power might yet prove to be more tyrannical than men.

Now woman's got the suffrage, she holds poor man in awe
And don't she give him so and so and such and such.
New Zealand's now a heaven for the average ma-in-law
And man will find it so and so and such and such.
Yes the women have determined for once to put an end

---

51 W. S. Percy's scrapbook in the Performing Arts Museum, Melbourne shows that the South African production had different lyrics again.
To weak and wicked husbands who go out upon the bend
And who stammer, ae ai darling, only been to see a friend
When you've had a little so and so and such and such.
A little slow and slow, slutch and slutch,
She'll say you brute, you know that you've had too much
When a man talks that way, what the dickens can you say
Men you've had a little slow and slow and slutch and slutch.

In Matsa, George Lauri (Colonel Boomley) sang 'Some Things Are Better
Left Unsaid' in which the following verse appeared:

The fin-de-siecle maiden, is a subject much discussed -
Do you want to hear the rest, or shall I stop?
I hate to talk about her, but in songs like this I must -
Do you want to hear the rest, or shall I stop?
On bicycle you see her, and you know her at a glance,
Already she's discarded skirts, and wears what she calls pants.
How will she dress next year, if she continues to advance -
Do you want to hear the rest, or shall I stop?

There does not seem to be the same satiric focus on the New Woman in
Australis though comedian Little Gulliver sang the topical song 'Love, Marriage and
Divorce'. However, she was not mentioned in the music hall song 'Fol de ' sung by
the Dame, the Boss and Oldest Inhabitant. Instead, with Australis set in the year
2001, the pantomime projected as an absurdity the possibility that wives would one
day accompany their husbands on military adventures. Thus Mrs Tommy Truck, who
arrives in Australia with her husband and 'British tar' Tommy Truck as a crew
member of an 'electric flying ship' Australis, was now part of a 'flying navy'.

Williamson seems to deny the legitimacy of the forthright Australian
'Currency Lass' in his original arrangements. Instead, Djin Djin, for instance,
represented 'Japanese' women in the same vein as comic operas such as The Geisha.
First staged in April 1896 at Daly's Theatre, London under the management of George
Edwards this ran for seven hundred and sixty performances before closing in May,
1898. Edward Pask (1979) informs us that Williamson and Musgrove staged the
play in the Princess Theatre at Christmas 1898. Remarkably, its programme notes on
the Geisha girl might be retrospectively describing the role of Princess Iris in Djin
Djin.

The New Eastern Problem! Yes, it confronts every traveller who has once breathed
the perfume of the purple wisteria, and heard the tink-a-tinkle of the samisens in a

52 The season is outlined in Kurt Ganzl's The British Musical Theatre (1986, 619).

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal 122
tea-house of old Japan. It oppresses him when he gazes at the snowy cone of Fugi, and it haunts his thoughts as he looks back upon toiling and moiling humanity in the drab prosaic cities of Europe, America, or Australia, where there are no small houses built of brightly coloured paper, no hillsides dotted at night with spots of fire by a thousand flickering lanterns, and no dark-eyed brownies fashioned more daintily than their own silver idols, and inscrutable as the destiny of their mysterious fatherland. The Eastern Problem for the traveller in Japan is full of interest. The longer he stays the more perplexing, more alluring, and more fascinating it becomes. In a word, for the European visitor who goes to Japan anxious to study it on the spot, the true Eastern Problem is - the Womenkind. There they sit in the kimonos looking out upon the world with a deep-seated conviction that it is a very pleasant world to look upon, that the clatter of the tea cups has a soothing effect, that the scent of the wisteria suggests delightful dreams. They are unvexed by any theological doubts. If they ever pray for anything, it is for the arrival of a British Man of War. For the British man-of-warsman, in the intervals of taking up all the eligible vacant allotments on the face of the globe, has his periods of relaxation and the British officer is never more truly rejoiced that he belongs to that mighty earth-conquering force - the British Navy, than when his ship is ordered to join the squadron in the Far East.53

In a very similar way, Princess Iris awaits her Australian Prince. Pantomime boy, Florence Young, played on the 'Geisha' image in her delivery of the popular song 'Ouchi San':

They call her the belle of Japan, of Japan;  
Her name it is Ouchi San, yucha San;  
Such tenderness lies in her soft almond eyes  
I tell you she's just Ichiban.

Chorus:  
I care not what others may say  
I'm in love with Ouchi San  
Ichiban - In Japan  
I'm in love with Ouchi San.

Perhaps she's too thick at the waist, the waist  
You see she has never been laced, been laced  
But her figure divine would a vision outshine  
And she dresses in exquisite taste.

She plays on the soft Samisen, Samisen  
She sings me a song now and then, now and then  
And smiling will say as I bid her 'Good day'  
'Sayonara' and please come again.

You may call this a Japanese craze, a craze  
You may say a weak mind it displays, displays  
But go to Japan and see Ouchi San  
And you'll have it the rest of your days.

As the song also suggests, the exotic beauty of 'Womenkind' is made commensurate with that of Japan itself. Act 1, Scene 2 'A Street in Nagasaki' was thus revealed through a spectacular procession with some forty-five chorus members

53 Programme in Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
and supernumeries. The Melbourne prompt copy listed the order of entrance for the procession as follows:

1st  8 boys (chorus ladies)
2nd  5 acrobats
3rd  Super Lantern Banner
4th  Red Banner
5th  2 Chorus Gents Lantern
6th  Super Dragon
7th  6 Chorus Ladies
8th  2 Supers & girls in Kago
9th  Super Lantern
10th Super Lantern
11th Super Lantern
12th 6 Ballet Ladies

As the above exit enter:
1st  Super with lady in rickshaw
2nd  Super with Dragon
3rd  8 Ballet Ladies

Japan was replaced in 1896 by the equally exotic setting of Egypt for Matsa whose antecedents were undoubtedly the pantomime arrangements of Aladdin and Sinbad. However, these narratives were significantly altered by the fact that the pantomime boy of Matsa was not the invariably low-born characters of Aladdin or Sinbad. Instead Simbal was an Arabian Prince with his own contingent of guards to save the Arabian Princess Zelica from her father's decree that she must go to the 'Sultan's harem in Constantinople'. Furthermore, the narrative was not about the finding of a magic lamp but about overcoming the ancient Queen of Fire's desire to live forever by annually sacrificing a young Arabian Princess.

As tourists, the European characters were also made consciously separate from the 'natives'. These included an Australian entrepreneur and his assistant (Colonel Boomley and Cashup), an American heiress (Kate Truelove) and an Irish Spinster (Mrs McLonely). The latter was based on the traditional Dame character but was not cross-dressed. The tourists find themselves caught up in Egyptian affairs and their sympathies for Simbal and Zelica suggest that modern Egyptians might be capable of civilised behaviour. Thus, the denouement shows Simbal and Zelica on board 'R.M.S. Australia' with other tourists, having together with them destroyed Matsa. Comparisons were thus drawn between the barbarity of the past and the
enlightened present but, more so, between the barbarity of the East with the enlightened West. It is this 'ontological' difference which Said (1993) outlines in *Culture and Imperialism* which I referred to earlier in the chapter.

*Matsa* 's use of tourists and Egyptian nobility minimizes any sense of a class struggle which was undoubtedly part of the economic crisis of the 1890s. By contrast, Walch's *Jack the Giant Killer*, written for Dampier's Alexandra Theatre in 1891, shows Jack to be an anti-capitalist: in the opening scene he is seen giving away the last of his money. This is juxtaposed with his mother's dealings with 'broker's men' who have come to take away the family's furniture. Furthermore, the Dame is also facing the fact that all her servants are on strike. Jack's humanitarianism is thus juxtaposed to surviving within a capitalist economy.

This is done in a highly self-reflexive manner which suggests that the theatre itself is a paradoxical space with the ability to make all things possible while remaining only ambivalently instrumental in real political terms. Jack's fetching of monies from the 'Prompt' to pay for his mother's debts is a highly attractive option in the context of the economic crisis in which the production was staged, yet it offered no 'real' solution to the immediate problem. This is made even more poignant through the joke Jack shares with the audience, that the money comes from a future budget surplus. The ultimate escape from financial trouble is 'the bottle' which Jack administers to his distressed mother - an option many no doubt took in that dire economic climate.

(Enter two typical broker's men. As one of them seizes fearful portrait of Dame's late husband, she stops him).

Dame
Drop it, you brute; isn't your spite contented
Without the portrait of my late lamented.
See what a grace was seated on his brow,
And such a beak you don't twig often now!
Sold up - oh fearful sell; my wits take flight;
Wouldn't I warm yet though, if I were right!
Oh dear! oh dear! (weeps ) and likewise - Ha! Ha! Ha! (laughs )

Dolly Daisy- Dimple
She quite hysterical.

Dame
You're right, I am!

Jack (without )
Thanks, friends, for having come with me thus far;
Here's all my cash! Pray share it *(cheers*), and ta ta!
*(He enters )* Give me joy mother, I have won the prize!
Each rifle-shot a hit, and all bulls-eyes.

Dame
Hits! Rifles! Bulls-eyes! when right well I know
Sheeps eyes at misses come from such a beau!

Jack
Hallo, Mamma! Just hold her, two or three of you;

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
Fit yet unfitting conduct this I see of you.
Whatever is the rumpus all about!

Dolly Daisy-Dimple
Please, sir, the brokers.

Jack
I'll soon chuck them out!

(Assumes fighting attitude) How will you have it?
(Prompter seen to gesticulate) Eh! a jiffy hold.
(Goes towards Prompter wonderingly) Not in my part?
Oh! (Takes bag from Prompter; returns to Brokers)
Here is the sum twice told.
Blush not to take; every coin is blessed
By coming from 'oor Jimmy's' Treasury Chest,
And don't smile either, for it is - Hooray!
Part of the surplus we're to have some day.
(Giving spirits) There! Now you're better, mater; aren't you?

Dame
Lor - how you do remind me of your father;
He knew a drop of good stuff.

Jack
So do you.

Dame
My favourite, I declare, the Galley brew.

Jack
(To Broker's -men) Return those chattels to the O.P. side.
While I enjoy a warble and a glide.

(Song and dance)

Social conflict in Williamson's original pantomimes is not between the 'haves and the have-nots' but between individuals and their respective resourcefulness in accruing wealth in a market with limited resources. This gives rise to a rather contradictory mixture of democratic liberalism and Social Darwinism. Hence, in Act 1, Scene 2 of Matsa, Kate Truelove and Colonel Boomley dispute the merits of American democracy:

(Enter Kate Truelove)

| K.T. | What a remarkable way your man has of going about. |
| Boom. | Yes, original isn't it? everything about me is original. |
| K.T. | What do you think? They've gone and ordered donkeys for the Pyramids. |
| Boom. | That's very thoughtful, I'm sure. |
| K.T. | I don't want them; I object to riding donkeys. |
| Boom. | Why you're not married, are you? |
| K.T. | What's that got to do with it? |
| Boom. | Those so joined together - let no man put ass-under. |
| K.T. | I don't care, I'm going on my bike. |
| Boom. | The idea of an American lady going through the land of the Pharaohs on a bicycle. It's ridiculous. |
| K.T. | By the way, does that young Egyptian officer go with us? |
| Boom. | Prince Simbal? |
| K.T. | Yes; they tell me's he's a real descendant of the ancient Egyptian kings. |
| Boom. | You democrats are always running after blue blood. Come, isn't a plain colonel good enough for you? |
| K.T. | Not if he's too plain. |
| Boom. (aside) | I wonder if she meant that for a jar. |
| K.T. | Everyone's a colonel in America - unless he's a general. |
| Boom. | Oh! do not spurn me. |
Let all these empty, titled fellows go.

K.T.
It's not my fault if they admire me so.

Boom.
It's not you, it's your dollars.

K.T.
That's immense;
If they love dollars, that just shows their sense (cents).

DUET.

Boom.
You girls with dollars in the bank,
All go for gentlemen of rank,
Just like the democratic Yank
Of your eccentric nation.

K.T.
You'll find we're cute and full of go;
You bet your life we're far from slow,
And quite a thing or two we know
Of man's dissimulation.

Refrain: We(you) have studied every science,
Adaptation and appliance,
And there isn't any other girl on earth
Who possesses half the learning
Or for rank has such a yearning
As the highly-rated, animated,
Cultivated, elevated,
Celebrated, up-to-dated girl of Yankee birth.

Boom.
They know the latest spicy case,
Can tip you 'certs' for every race;
Chock full of wit and life and grace,
At least that's my impression.

K.T.
You can't fool us, our hearts are proof
Against the many game of spoof;
We know you love us - for the 'oof'
To use a slang expression.

Refrain.
(Repeat)

The dialogue which connects images of the American heiress with the New Woman on her bicycle seems to ultimately scorn all new societies' endeavours to be egalitarian. Interestingly, the Australian Colonel Boomley indirectly sides against American attitudes even though he too hankers for Kate Truelove's immense wealth. Thus, unlike the vital way that the 1890s crisis is the main subject of Walch's *Jack the Giant Killer*, Colonel Boomley and his sidekick Cashup are the only references in any of Williamson's original pantomimes to the 1890s Depression. Portrayed as a man of unlimited schemes and dreams, Boomley introduces himself through a monologue and song which identify him as an indomitable entrepreneur.

(Cries of Backsheat! heard, and BOOMLEY enters on bicycle beset by donkey boys.)

Boom. Hi, there! Out of the way! (Dismounts)

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
Donkey Boys. Backsheesh!

Boom.

Get out of this. Here, take my bike to the hotel, and here's a halfpenny for you. (Exit donkey boys with bike) Well, this is slow. You don't get me on any more Cook's excursions, there's nothing in it. I haven't even sold a share in the 'Flying Bicycle Co.' Splendid machines. I don't ride 'em myself, but they're all right. I'm wasting time here, tho'.

SONG.

I'm upon the Stock Exchange,
Full of tips and stocks and shares,
Always open to arrange
Schemes to make you millionaires.
I do well; those things I've boomed
Don't all turn out as they ought;
Clients have at times been doomed
To the gay insolvents' court.

REFRAIN.

And there are more to follow - more to follow,
Booms go bung, as I have found,
Men pay sixpence in the pound;
I've seen, with sorrow, clients broke and gone,
There are more and more, and more and more, I fear, to follow on.

I have had misfortunes, too.
Sometimes trouble comes in lumps;
And at present things look blue.
On my chest Dame Fortune jumps.
Little bills I left unpaid
When I crossed the angry foam
Come in piles, with queries made
As to when I shall be home.

REFRAIN.

And there are more to follow - more to follow.
Men will have their own sweet wills;
Tho' I wrote up 'Post no bills'
Outside my office, still they sent them on;
There are more and more, and more and more, and more to follow on.

This is not representative of other productions at this time. There were, for instance, many productions which allegorised the 1890s crisis such as Rignold's 1890 Dick Whittington with its demon King Rat and his cohorts, Vice and Idleness. To counter this dark force, arranger Frank Ayrton created Fairy Silverstone and her assistants Truth and Industry. Garnet Walch's Jack the the Giant Killer had as its demons 'The Ogre (Vice-Chairman of the Board of Evil Works)' and 'Gorgibuster and Blunderbore (two gigantic Swindlers)'. Most uniquely, Walch's arrangement also dealt with labour unrest and the impossibility of bringing to justice the real swindlers and speculators.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal
Rather than greedily demonic, the entrepreneur of Williamson and Royle's *Matsa*, played by star comedian George Lauri, was presented as comically benign in his pursuit of 'true love', the American heiress Miss Truelove. His acrobatic sidekick and straightman, Cashup, worked with him in his schemes to capture the heiress's heart and Bank account.

Boom. Where's that man of mine? *(Produces small pocket gong and strikes it)* That's my patent pocket gong - the shares don't go very well as yet, but it's bound to boom. *(Strikes it again)*

   *(Enter CASHUP Head over heels)*

Cashup. Did you ring, sir!

Boom. Yes, of course I did. *(Aside)* Isn't he a beauty? I took him out of a circus; he's one of the Bounding Brothers of Bouverie Street.

Cashup. Where are the rest of the tourist party?

Boom. In a mosque up the street, sir - the mosque of Al Azhar.

Cashup. Al has how much? Where's that American heiress - Miss Truelove?

Cashup. With the others, sir.

Boom. Have you made those inquiries for me?

Cashup. Certainly, sir!

Boom. And she's really an heiress?

Cashup. *Made of* stuff, sir.

Boom. And what do you think of my chances, Cashup?

Cashup. Six to four on, sir.

Boom. Well, it doesn't look like a win by to-morrow - we're off back to Australia.

Cashup. Certainly, sir!

Boom. I can't float anything here; I suppose it's because the Nile isn't in flood.

Cashup. Most likely, sir.


Moreover, their scheme is favourably compared to the Fire Queen Matsa's elaborate plan to kidnap the Princess Zelica. Played by the beautiful May Pollard, the photograph of Matsa in the programme/script (Plate 18 is a photograph of that production held in the Pollard Papers) reveals a bejewelled Salome-like character.

She is brought on reclining on a car. When she stands up her white satin robe is seen to be cut up on one side and held at the waist by a jewelled ceinture, a jewelled pendant from which adorns the front of her skirt. The bodice glitters with jewelled trimming at the neck and white 'angel's wing' sleeves fall from the shoulders *(Leader, 2 January 1897)*.

A surprising description of a white rather than red-dressed Queen of Fire, she is portrayed, like Hagrimosa and Maligna of Walch's pantomimes, as a decidedly bewitching woman who has the power to alter the progress of the human race itself.

*Matsa.* Tremble! vile mortals; tho' you know me not
   Take the maiden away to my Temple of Flame *(bus)*

*Zelica.* Save me, Simba! *(Sim. tries to move, but cannot)*

*Matsa.* Too late! Call no more on his name.

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal 129
Matsa, the mighty Queen of Fire am I;
Born of the sacred flames, I cannot die.
Tho' now forgotten by the sons of men,
My sacrifice you mortals dare to stay;
So you must learn that Matsa's royal sway.
For good or ill is mighty now as then.

You have eaten the apples of 'Isis the Great,'
Now hear, wretched mortals, your well-deserved fate.
Your lives are put back, for the past shall awake.
Ye gods long forgotten you forces unite,
Let Memphis return in its grandeur and might!
(Pentateu and others repeat) Ye gods of the past, all your forces unite.
Let Memphis return in its grandeur and might!

(Change to Memphis, 3000 years ago)

In opposition to the Queen of Fire, Aetheria Queen of Air (dressed in 'a frock of pale blue muslin') is portrayed from the outset as protectress of the modern 'Arabian' woman. Matsa's eternal failure to find a mate is further contrasted to Zelica and Simbal's courtship and other love matches amongst the tourist group. Therefore, while Walch's arrangements portrayed a variety of strong women they do not show the same preoccupation with women's political issues as Williamson and Royle's do.

Nor did they suggest, like Matsa, that women possessed a primeval power which required controlling. Significantly, Matsa's ashes are used to break the spell over Zelica and transport the modern Egyptians and the Western tourists to 'Cloudland, Home of the Queen of Air, (in sight of Melbourne)' in the final scene of the production. This scene opens with a 'Flying Ballet' after which 'floating' cast members comment on the skimpiness of the ballerina's costumes as if commenting on the modern girl:

Mrs Mc. Look at those girls - well; aren't they flighty things.
Boom. They can't be angels; see, they've got no wings.
Mrs Mc. The hussies! Flopping about like that without any clothes on.

Their disapproval was, of course, only feigned; the Argus of 28 December 1896 reported the tremendous applause which greeted the Ballet. Therefore, while critical of the coming of the New Woman, Williamson's original production paradoxically employed the relatively liberated ways of actresses to illustrate that change was inevitable yet perhaps simultaneously regrettable.
This theme was again taken up in *Australis* as Williamson and his new co-author Bernard Espinasse developed a comparison between a present-day and a future Australian society. As in *Matsa*, Act 1 Scene 1 showed the awakening of dormant spirits (Omen, Petrifal, Aphorim and Symbolis) and the Queen of the South Pole (Dione) from their sleep. Interestingly, Williamson and Espinasse combined the roles of Fairy Queen and pantomime girl in Dione, Queen of the Pole. As the pantomime girl, she is destined to fall in love with the pantomime boy, Valentine. Their romance serves a similar purpose to that of the lovers in *Matsa* in setting up a comparison between older and new societies. Remarkably, however, *Australis* proposes that the 'older' Australian society of 1901 is preferable to the production's setting of 2001.

The politically conservative nature of *Australis* significantly altered many of the pantomime conventions. For instance, the wizard Azeemath is a rather tame demon whose only crime seems to be a desire to marry Dione and reign over a South Pole and to thus maintain it as a peaceful land. Neither are his companions characterised as demons but rather as symbolic personae, Omen, Petrifal, Symbolis and Aphorim, who offer a political message to future Australian generations. Indeed, the chorus of awakened spirits tell how they 'all were honest men' who had been imprisoned by the State. The implication seems to be that the State which imprisoned them in 1900 was far worse than the Wizard-dominated cave in which they now find themselves. What then was so terrible about Azeemath marrying Dione and reigning over a peaceful kingdom at the South Pole?

A possible answer rests in the scene immediately following Azeemath's reawakening of Dione which sees the arrival of maidens at the Cave's magic pool: bathers who fall in love with the first person that comes into their view. This happens when young English warriors arrive at the pool. Similarly, Dione sees a vision of the pantomime boy and leader of the young warriors, Valentine, and immediately falls in love with him. Thus the audience views an Antipodean Queen and Australian maidens

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal 131
falling in love with English lords. These romances are given their full political purpose at the end of the production when Valentine confronts Azeemath with:

Azeemath! As we stand here it is a Union of Nations! Mine lies beyond the seas, a sea-girt isle, green with memories of ages. I speak of England. By her side to-day stands the new Queen, who to the old Queen stretched out her hand in the hour of need! Come between us if you can!

Azeemath's most diabolical characteristic is the fact that he is not English. Furthermore, his desire to reign over the City of Zero with Dione is in opposition to the British Imperialist enterprise. Thus, in creating heroes out of the English warriors, Williamson and Espinasse demonised the 'pacificist' Azeemath. As Beverley Kingston (1988) noted, at the time of the Boer War (and therefore Australis), 'pacificism, conscientious objection, or pro-Boer sympathies became synonymous with anti-British sentiments' (307).

By 1900 the South Pole had taken on even more significance through the fact that in 1899 an Australian scientific party had led an expedition and spent the winter on the Antarctic mainland. The event was widely reported in Sydney and Melbourne newspapers. R. A. Swan (1961) describes in Australia in the Antarctic how Australian scientists saw the finding of the Antarctic mainland and the South Pole in nationalist terms, indeed as Australia's duty in fulfilling its part in the Empire. Swan also points out that two Australian novels published in 1888 and 1893 depict the South Pole as having 'a fertile, temperate land inhabited by a race of humans' which existed past the ice barrier and had the 'charms of a Shangri-la'. The co-incidence of Australis depicting in Acts 2 and 3 British-Australians overcoming Antarctic icebergs to arrive at the temperate zone of the City of Zero cannot be missed.

The pantomime was therefore set to enact the defeat of a 'indigenous' demon by British-Australians. Its romantic theme was aligned with the popular belief in British Imperialism as a 'civilising process'. Consequently, its discourse on

---

54 The programme names them as Lord Charteris, Viscount Tottenham, Captain Cavendish, Sir Melton Gower, Lord Arundel, Sir Phillip Chandos, Hon. Willoughby Trevor and Lord Herbert Spoffington.

55 The two novels were Christopher Spotswood's Voyage to the South Pole (1888) and G. McIver's Neuroomia; a new Continent (1893).

political power was structured around the idea of a morally and racially 'legitimate' monarch as opposed to the unworthy Azeemath. This had specifically adverse implications for the way the audience was asked to view the head of the Australian nation, a character based on a labour leader with obvious trade union connections, called The Boss, and by implication, what might become of Australia under socialist rule.

Indeed, the Boss informs audiences that Federation inaugurated an 'era of peace' which brought with it an international reproach:

There it is again! The old reproach. Federation inaugurated the era of peace. This is the one hundredth anniversary of Australian Union, and we haven't had a fight since! After the border duties were adjusted, tariffs settled, and woman's suffrage introduced, there was nothing left to quarrel about - except the site for the federal capital! And so every morning regularly they throw it in our teeth that we don't fight. I ask you, can we stand this any longer?

The likelihood is that contemporary audiences would have known he was putting forward the anti-militarist views of some of the 'radical' nationalists though Humphrey McQueen(1986) has argued it is a mistake to view all 'radical' nationalists as also anti-imperialists (10). Later in the scene the Boss is shown returning to the proper course of action by calling up an Australian army. But in this now socialist Australia of 2001, the Boss can only call on the 'Push Brigade': Australia's hope for military glory would be impossible under socialism which could offer only the thuggery of 'push' gangs of the Sydney Rocks! Indeed, their ability to be a 'real' army is questioned by the Boss himself when he calls them degenerates for not knowing who to fight: the Boss ironically informs them that this was not the case with the inhabitants of Sydney in 1900. A further irony was added visually since the Push Brigade were the corps de ballet who, the Bulletin's critic observed, demonstrated that 'the Push' was 'to grow a good deal more ladylike and much less violent during the next hundred years' (26 January 1901).

By Act 3 the Boss is ready to lead Australia to become the Great Empire of the South:

Boss: ...Since Federation Day, ship-loads have been flocking into us from all parts of the world. So we're going to expand. The North is full up, so we've come South. We propose to take in the South Pole as well. Will you join?

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal

133
All: Yes.

Boss: Then from this moment this territory becomes part of the Great Empire of the South. One Nation stretching from the Pacific Ocean to the confines of the Antarctic Sea. One People, One Destiny and One Flag!

In keeping with the character of the demon, Azeemath makes his final reappearance just as Dione is about to marry her hero. Interestingly, Valentine fails to stop the Wizard's advances, at which point the Boss comes up with the ultimate weapon which will destroy the demon's power forever: as Australia has a new Factories Act, Azeemath is prohibited from working after sunset.

Boss: Well, as you're in the Demon line of business you won't be able to do any deeds of darkness, because they'll be after hours, and you'll be run in and fined.

Williamson and Espinassee, therefore, sound their final warning concerning socialism on the effect of unionised labour on the theatre itself since, by implication, if Wizards are unable to work at night then neither are the actors who play them! Williamson's hostility towards unionised labour in the theatre was well known in the industry as the High Court actions the company brought in 1910 were to testify. I shall outline these in greater detail in Chapter Four.

As a cautionary tale, Australia has a most fitting finale as scenic designer John Gordon creates the transformation scene of 'The Birth of Australia'. The Sydney Morning Herald described the 'birth' as:

first hidden by a screen of beautiful white grapes and then disclosed amidst richly glowing waratahs. Behind, revolving wheels of light threw into prominence the figure of Phaeton, that over-daring charioteer who drove the horses of the sun (Sydney Morning Herald, 27 December 1900).

The reference to Phaeton strongly suggests that Williamson was seriously concerned with projecting a political vision for Australia while simultaneously expressing his own fears over the advent of a Socialist Age. Australia also shows that Australia's 'open society' was paradoxically 'maintained by various forms of exclusion' (Kingston 1988, 290). Williamson's excluding of Aborigines was thus successfully masked when the indigenous peoples of the South Pole willingly acquiesced to Anglo-Australian domination of their City of Zero. Similarly, as Plates 19 and 20 show, the 1900 Commonwealth Celebrations depicted Sydney in purely

Chapter 1: Local, Vocal and Jokal 134
eurocentric terms: Government House was illuminated in a similar fashion to the 'Grand Illumination of the North Shore Bridge' in Australis, and the streets of Sydney were decorated in the motifs and colours of various European powers, as Pitt Street was with its 'French Arch'.

To varying degrees, Walch's and Williamson's original arrangements were imbued with a theory of performance which is in keeping with much of Western theatre. The photograph of Maud Beatty represents how the pantomime itself was founded on metaphors based on the inequality of 'his' and 'her' power. As Peggy Phelan (1993) describes, Western theatre is

based upon and stimulated by the inequality between performer and spectator - and by the (potential) domination of the silent spectator. That this model of desire is apparently so compatible with (traditional accounts of) 'male' desire is no accident. But more centrally this account of desire between speaker/performer and listener/spectator reveals how dependent these positions are upon visibility and a coherent point of view. A visible and easily located point of view provides the spectator with a stable point upon which to turn on the machinery of projection, identification, and (inevitable) objectification (163).

Williamson's original pantomimes seem also to be based on the 'defeat of fear'. According to Bakhtin (1984), such works 'presented in a droll and monstrous form, the symbols of power and violence turned inside out, the comic images of death and bodies gaily rent asunder' (91). Djin Djin's fear of the Japanese bogieman, Matsa's fear of the New Woman and Australis's fear of the coming of a Socialist Age thus seem to be acts of official culture which worked towards creating a sense of social stability.

On the other hand, while Walch's original pantomimes read as no more 'original' than Williamson's they were considerably more 'inventive'. As a 'versifier' and arranger, Walch's concern seems not to have been directed towards verifying the existence of an 'Australian type' but to a continual re-arrangement of received convention. Ironically, Williamson remained critical of local drama to the end because of its failure to 'crystallise' a 'type'.

Certainly an Australian play could be made like In Missouri, but not so well, because in Australia the types have not crystallised yet. American has been longer settled, and the Dutchman, the Negro, the Yankee, the Irishman, have all become well-known types of national life. In Australia it is not so, to the same extent (Life Story, 28).
As a result, *Life Sory* offers some remarkable advice to would-be Australian playwrights, none more so than

start from human emotions, human instincts, and base your plot on them, and only when you’re sure you have the play, and the interest of the play, and the construction of the play, go on to the language. In real living drama the language is the last thing to think about (31).

While Williamson was undoubtedly concerned with local issues, his productions were judged as lacking ‘wit’; it is Walch’s ‘wordplay’ which historically preserves for us his ability to play conceptually with local issues and through it that we see how fairytale arrangements took on political edge. As the following scene from 1878 *Jack, the Giant Killer* demonstrates, the knight-errant role is satirised to show the difficulty of finding ‘real’ political solutions.

King: And now Sir, your reward.
Princess: Oh! give him me.
King: Ha, hem, let me see,
To gain her hand, perform some further feat.
Jack: With pleasure, for my ardour’s at white heat,
’Tis like a horse shoe on the anvil set.
King: An vil you do it?
Jack: Yes, of course, you bet.
But name the deed.
Dame: Reform the constitution.
Lancelot: Sweeten the Yarra from its foul pollution,
King: Settle the dock dispute by arbitration,
Lancelot: Reconcile squatters to their land taxation,
Dame: Make Nimmo tight with whisky
Jack: Well I’ll try,
Hop: And at his own expense: how’s that for high?
Princess: Oh no! not that sweet Jack, don’t be a goose.
King: Such feats, though daring, are but little use.
Now, I’ve a test for you, with your compliance,
Just set to work and rid the land of giants,
They’re a big nuisance and their raids Titanic,
Have in the money market caused a panic,
Unsafe each hearth, the prospect daily bluer it is,
They play the very duce with *Home securities*,
Our new Nine Million Loan is nearly undone,
We’ll have to set Ambassadors to London.
King: To London! don’t you go! no Berry tricks,
No flirting with that damsel Polly Tics,
Give me true patriots who contented stay
And spend their money where they get their pay.
Jack: I’m ready sire, for aught from pitch and toss,
To giant-slaughter - trot ’em out old hoss,
Terrible! Monster! I’ll soon find your track,
Jack’s on the war path!

If the quip that all it takes to be a ‘true patriot’ is to spend money where one gets paid is any indication, then Walch’s definition of patriotism was decidedly less
essentialist than Williamson's who, by contrast, believed that 'a man should never deny his mother country' (Life Story, 11). Accordingly, Williamson could never call himself an 'Australian'. 'I'm still an American' he again reiterates at the end of Life-story (37). Such a profound belief undoubtedly affected his own historical understanding of the amalgam of the 'local, vocal and jokal' elements of the Australian pantomime. Walch's original arrangements may not so much have set a precedent for a 'National Theatre' but for a 'post-colonial' one in which Nationalism is seen as a 'white mythology'. Indeed, one might see them as structuring a discourse similar to Homi Bhaba's (1990) notion of the 'locality of culture':

This locality is more around temporality than about historicity: a form of living that is more complex than 'community'; more symbolic than 'society'; more connotative than 'country'; less patriotic than patrie; more rhetorical than the reason of state; more mythological than ideology; less homogeneous than hegemony; less centred than the citizen, more collective than 'the subject'; more psychic than civility; more hybrid in the articulation of cultural differences and identifications - gender, race or class - than can be represented in any hierarchical or binary structuring of social antagonism (292).