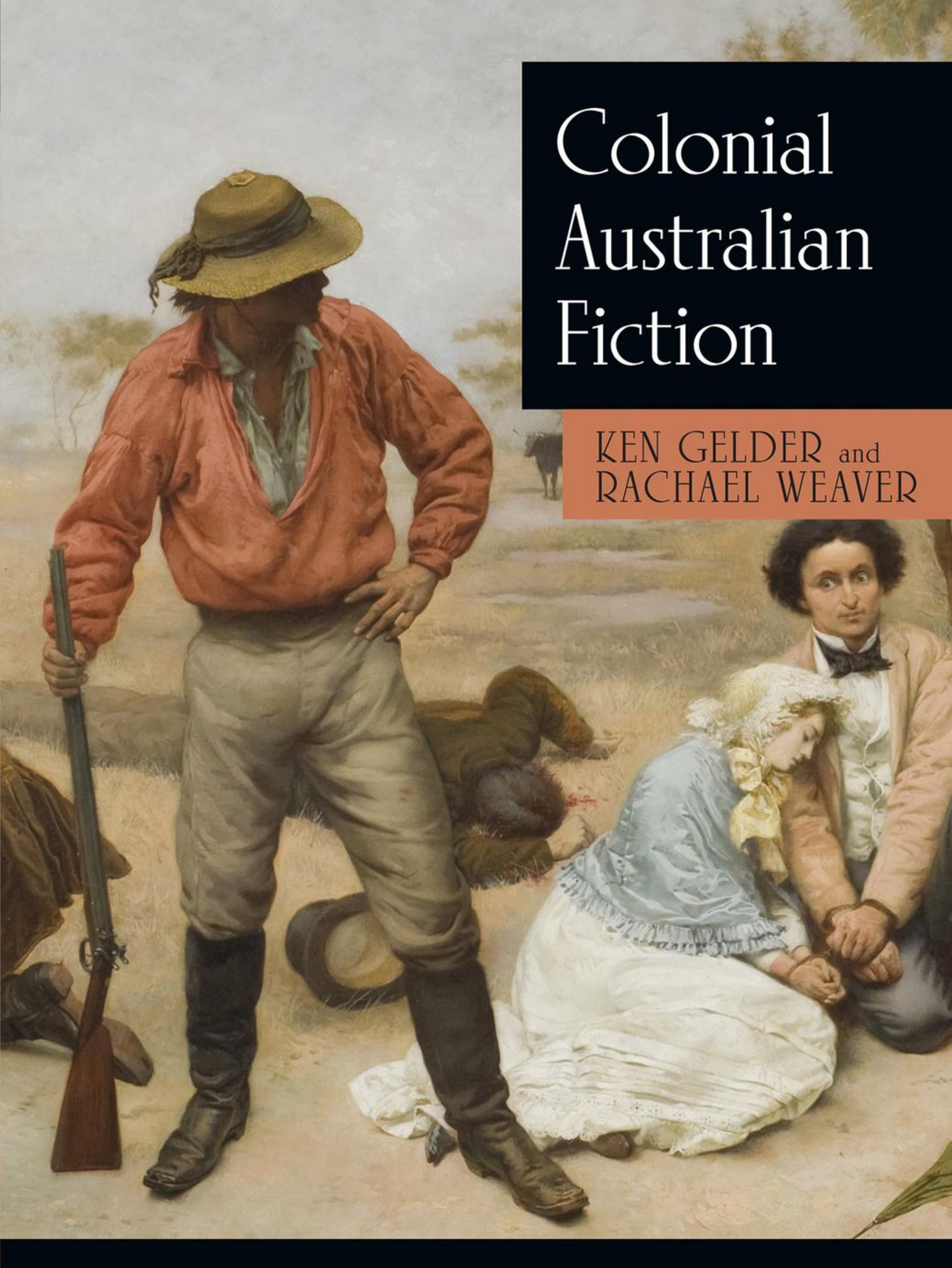

Colonial Australian Fiction

KEN GELDER and
RACHAEL WEAVER

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Colonial Australian Fiction

Character Types, Social Formations and the Colonial Economy

Ken Gelder and Rachael Weaver

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Introduction

The Colonial Economy and the Production of Colonial Character Types

This book is about character types in colonial Australian fiction and their relationship to a rapidly developing colonial economy, which we understand in broad terms as an entire network of transactions and investments to do with land purchase and infrastructure, financial speculation and enterprise, labour, manufacturing and productivity, the accumulation of wealth and the circulation of capital.[1] One of our arguments is that colonial Australia generated a multiplicity of character types, each of which engaged with the economy in a particular way. We can think of character types as models of social identity, or what Elizabeth Fowler calls "social persons".[2] An identity defined by nation or colony provided one obvious way of invoking such a model, deployed in order both to generalise and to stabilise character in social terms: for example, as an "Australian", a "Queenslander", a "Vandemonian" (after Van Diemen's Land), and so on. In colonial Australia, "settler" and "Aboriginal" also provided two definitive categories of social identification, generally understood in opposition to each other, that is, antagonistically. But these *macro* forms of identification in turn accommodated a remarkable range of character types, each of which enunciated a colonial predicament that was unique in so far as it projected the values, dispositions and desires that were specific to it. Nationally identified character types can certainly do this, but they are difficult to sustain; they soon break down into component parts that are animated and put into play, quickly developing traits of their own. Whenever types speak, other types are invariably invoked, and frequently talk back. In colonial Australian fiction, this might happen as much around a camp fire as it does around a dining table or on the street in a city or a country town. And as encounters and exchanges take place, narratives develop that are littered with types and are even driven by types: a new chum's experience, a squatter's story, a hut shepherd's tale, a colonial detective's investigations, the chronicles of an "Australian girl" in the colonies.

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[1] We draw the term "colonial economy" from the work of economic historians such as Philip McMichael, *Settlers and the Agrarian Question: Foundations of Capitalism in Colonial Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Noel Butlin, *Forming a Colonial Economy: Australia 1810–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); and Ian W. McLean, *Why Australia Prospered: The Shifting Sources of Economic Growth* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013). These historians trace a range of phases in Australia's early economic development, from pre-1788 Aboriginal economies to "convict economies", the pastoral economy, the growth of colonial cities and increasing levels of commercial independence.

[2] See Elizabeth Fowler, *Literary Character: The Human Figure in Early English Writing* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 2: "Social persons are models of the person, familiar concepts of the social being that attain currency through common use".

In fact, colonial Australian fiction emerged at the very moment that European literature turned its attention to character types, under the influence of work in disciplines such as ethnology (e.g. James C. Pritchard), physiognomy (Johann Lavatar, Franz Gall) and evolutionary zoology (Carl Linnaeus, Comte de Buffon, Georges Cuvier). In the foreword ("Avant Propos") to his *La Comédie Humaine* – the extraordinarily wide-ranging series of novels and stories he published through the 1830s and early 1840s – Honoré de Balzac made the link between zoological species and character types explicit:

> Does not Society make man, according to the environment in which he lives and acts, into as many different men as there are species in zoology? The differences between a solider, a worker, an administrator, a lawyer, a vagrant, an academic, a statesman, a businessman, a sailor, a poet, a pauper, and a priest are as great, although more difficult to define, than those between the wolf, the lion, the ass, the crow, the shark, the seal, the ewe, etc. Thus, there have always existed, and will always exist, social species just as there have always existed zoological species. If Buffon could produce a magnificent work by attempting to represent in a single book the whole realm of zoology, is there not a work in this genre to complete for the social realm?[3]

The view that a city like Paris – a "social realm" – was full of differentiated human "species" or "types" soon became commonplace. Albert Smith, who had spent time in Paris as a medical student, was an early contributor to *Punch* and went on to become a popular novelist and theatrical entertainer; Charles Dickens and William Thackeray were among his literary acquaintances. He was also the author of a series of light-hearted but detailed "natural histories" of English character types, published in 1847 and 1848: the "gent" ("We trust the day will come . . . when the Gent will be an extinct species"),[4] the "idler upon town", the ballet-girl, and others. Paying tribute to "the unceasing labours of Cuvier, Linnaeus, Buffon . . . and other animal-fanciers on a large scale", Smith used the evocative phrase "social zoology" to describe his studies of the "different varieties of the human race".[5] Later on we shall see Albert Smith mentioned, along with Dickens, in a passage written in Sydney by Frank Fowler in the late 1850s that describes the colonial-born "Australian boy". This is important to note, because Balzac's sense of character-as-species and Smith's notion of "social zoology" – among other prevailing pseudo-scientific ways of configuring literary characters – did indeed travel out to the Australian colonies to influence representations and understandings of colonial life. To give just one brief example from around this time: Thomas McCombie's novel *Adventures of a Colonist* (1845), is subtitled *Godfrey Arabin, the Settler*. But it soon breaks the "settler" down into a series of more specific character types, one of which is the "squatter" (the subject of Chapter 1 of our book). This type is then itself broken down into a variety of "species", and in fact the novel pauses at one point precisely to describe "the numerous samples of the 'squatter' species who crowded about the room".[6] It repeats this colonial version of "social zoology" later on when a party of squatters and settlers come together to tell each other stories:

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[3] Honoré de Balzac, foreword to *The Human Comedy*, in *European Literature from Romanticism to Postmodernism: A Reader in Aesthetic Practice*, ed. Martin Travers (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), 87.

[4] Albert Smith, *The Natural History of the Gent* (London: David Bogue, 1847), 104.

[5] Albert Smith, *The Natural History of the Ballet-Girl* (London: David Bogue, 1847), 7–8. Jo Briggs has argued that Smith's natural histories were directly influenced by Louis Huart's *Physiologie du flâneur*, published in Paris in 1841, a book that has subdivided the figure of the city stroller into various component parts – for example, the *musard* (or "idler"), the *gamin de Paris* (or "Parisian street urchin"), and so on. See Jo Briggs, "Flâneurs, Commodities, and the Working Body in Louis Huart's *Physiologie du flâneur* and Albert Smith's *Natural History of the Idler Upon Town*", in *The Flâneur Abroad: Historical and International Perspectives*, ed. Richard Wrigley (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014).

> The persons assembled were all settlers or squatters, and excellent specimens of the squatting interest. There was the outlandish settler, a rough, half-civilised (in manner) kind of fellow. There was a more dandified settler, whose station was just across the river; and a stock-owner and jobber, who had stations in different parts of the country. (240)

The "outlandish settler", we should note, is momentarily mistaken for another colonial Australian character type, the bushranger – but he distinguishes himself from the latter by sourly noting (rather like Albert Smith on the extinction of the "gent") that "bushranging will soon be out of date" (240).

The zoological mapping of social realms in terms of species and specimens – or types – flowed naturally enough into literary frameworks, providing a pseudo-scientific basis for the production (and recognition) of character. The words *species* and *specimen* are etymologically derived from the Latin *specere*, "to see" or "to look (at)": they are "spectacular" things, soliciting the writer's attention, asking to be apprehended and examined. It was the task of capturing the essence of these types and species that gave literature its ethnographic imperative. Balzac's contemporary, the journalist and critic Jules Janin, had turned to the question of the social type in his book *The American in Paris* (1843), insisting that character could *only* be understood ethnographically: for example, by an urban spectator sufficiently familiar with street life, or by novelists. Here, the type is not a fixed or solid entity but something more fleeting or chimerical. And yet, paradoxically, it is also already fully formed, and properly representative:

> The French writers of the modern school very often use a word, which is quite new, the word *type*. Whoever speaks of *type*, speaks of a complete character, a model man, a curious thing. Paris is full of types, or rather of singular minds, of original characters, out of which a good book might easily be made. The passing stranger is not very ready, in seizing these shadows, these differences, these eccentric singularities. It is necessary to walk the street of the great city, for some time, to be able to trace with a sure hand, one of these brilliant meteors; they appear and disappear, like the cloud or the smoke . . . [7]

For Mary Gluck, Janin's commentary expresses "the unprecedented nature of modernity"; the social realist novel at this time therefore becomes an increasingly inclusive, analytical form, providing space for an emerging and ever-widening array of distinct "social and occupational groups" whose essential nature has to be properly conveyed. Gluck writes:

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[6] Thomas McCombie, *Adventures of a Colonist; or, Godfrey Arabin, the Settler* (London: John & Daniel A. Darling, 1845), 110. All subsequent references are to this edition and appear in parentheses in the text.

[7] Jules Janin, *An American in Paris* (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1843), 162.

"Creating types and classifying them according to social categories represented a kind of modern ethnography, whose purpose was to achieve a comprehensive picture of contemporary humanity".[8] In our book, however, we want to suggest that social types also frustrate this purpose, unravelling the possibility of being "comprehensive" by the sheer fact of their proliferation. The more one focuses on a particular type or species, the more one analyses and dissects it, the more prominent it then becomes – to the extent that it can completely override the aspiration to be all-inclusive. Types can take control of a narrative, determining its priorities and ideological direction. We shall see this happen over and over in the following chapters: for example, in the "squatter novel" or in bushranger fiction, or in narratives about hut shepherds or swagmen or "currency lasses". But types also change, they come and go, they interrupt, they mutate. To return to Janin, above, they "appear and disappear, like the cloud or the smoke": this is another reason why comprehensiveness is difficult to sustain.

Heads of the People

A few years after Balzac and Janin's commentaries on species and types, the Sydney journalist and printer William Baker launched a weekly magazine called *Heads of the People*, with lithographic illustrations by the well-known local portrait painter, William Nicholas. It ran from April 1847 to March 1848: the same years that saw the publication of Albert Smith's English "natural histories". *Heads of the People* was a quasi-literary magazine that, among other things, serialised Charles Dickens' *Dombey and Son* just a few months after that novel's serialisation commenced in England. Its main purpose, however, was to represent or model colonial character types, in a way that combined close ethnographic observation with the literary sketch. "The conductors of this journal", an early editorial announced, "have chosen to depict the heads of the people – and to find them we must look into the classes whose habits and customs and mode of life most extensively influence the prevailing manners of the times".[9] The striking thing about this Sydney weekly is that the various character types it presents to its readers – the mayor, the inspector of nuisances, the night auctioneer, the pieman, the editor's wife – seem to have been selected almost at random, many of them going against the expected sense of what "heads of the people" might conventionally imply, that is, leaders or people of high rank. Baker's weekly took its title – and its project – from a series of sketches published in England in 1840–41, assembled by a network of well-known writers that included Thackeray, Leigh Hunt, William Howitt (who visited Australia in the early 1850s), Richard Brinsley Peake and Douglas Jerrold. The preface to *Heads of the People: or, Portraits of the English* talks initially about national identity, invoking the figure of John Bull. But it soon divides this nationally representative figure into a "family" of character types that continues to multiply: "We here give some thirty of his children: we shall present the world with at least as many more".[10] Again, these types seem almost randomly strung together: "the cockney", "the diner-out", "the young squire", "the sporting gentleman", "the basket-woman", and so on. Some types immediately call up others, expressing small-scale economic or social dependencies: "the debtor and creditor", for example, or "the chaperon and the debutante". There is no overall coherence to these character sketches, however, and no apparent hierarchy of importance. This English *Heads of the People* reads a bit like an anthology, a multi-authored conglomeration of literary sketches of social types who occupy the same time and place but do not necessarily connect to each other. We could draw on the term *parataxis* here to describe the way this mid-nineteenth-century series strings social types together, one after the other, without investing in any sort of comprehensive, unified image of "society". Its social fracturing is in fact what makes it modern: "Parataxis is the dominant mode of postindustrial experience. It is difficult to escape from atomized subject areas, projects, and errands into longer, connected stretches of subjectively meaningful narrative – not to mention life".[11]

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[8] Mary Gluck, *Popular Bohemia: Modernism and Urban Culture in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 93.

[9] "The Night Auctioneer", *Heads of the People: An Illustrated Journal of Literature, Whims, and Oddities*, 8 May 1847, 1.

Baker's Sydney-based *Heads of the People* came in the wake of these English character sketches and took its cue from them, especially in terms of its light satirical mode. But by making its character types emphatically colonial – and, in particular, by situating them in the framework of a fledgling colonial economy – it gave these otherwise atomised settler figures a larger role to play. In her important book *The Economy of Character* (1998), Deirdre Shauna Lynch talks about how readers, by the mid-eighteenth century, increasingly "used characters . . . to renegotiate social relations in their changed, commercialized world".[12] Under its newer ethnological imperative, literature ushered in a range of novel character types, each of which needed to be made "legible" to readers not just in terms of professional/social identity but through a connotative set of dispositions, foibles, sensibilities, habits, strengths and weaknesses, hopes and longings. In fact, it is the very multiplicity of types that made a character's definition and legibility all the more necessary. The categorisation and classification of multiple character types might very well have fractured the social realm, but these things could also work as markers to orient readers and help them adjust to a rapidly transforming modern world. "What changes as the eighteenth century unfolds", Lynch argues, "are the pacts that certain ways of writing character establish . . . with other, adjacent discourses – discourses on the relations that instruct people in how to imagine themselves as participants in a nation or in a marketplace or as leaders or followers of fashion".[13] Baker's *Heads of the People* put readers and character types into a sort of dialogue with each other, orienting/instructing the former and reconfiguring the social status and economic function of the latter. Some of these types might seem peripheral or minor; but we want to suggest that this colonial weekly insisted on their potential as structuring mechanisms in the successful functioning of an emerging colonial social world.

As we have noted, one of the early "heads of the people" this journal singles out for attention is the night auctioneer: "a member of the community", the editorial tells us, "with whom numbers of our Sydney population are on terms of intimate acquaintance".[14]

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10 Preface to *Heads of the People: or, Portraits of the English*, illus. by Kenny Meadows (Philadelphia: Carey & Hart, 1841), vi.

11 Bob Perelman, "Parataxis and Narrative: The New Sentence in Theory and Practice", in *The Ends of Theory*, ed. Jerry Herron et al. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996), 246.

12 Deirdre Shauna Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 4.

13 Lynch, *The Economy of Character*, 11.

14 "The Night Auctioneer", 1.

This character type was usually associated with stolen goods, thieves and criminals, and the night auctions themselves were hidden away, secretive and illicit. Nevertheless, the night auctioneer is given an instrumental role in the fluid circulation of goods through the marketplace. More importantly, he invests those goods with enabling narratives that lend them the legitimacy needed to make transactions possible. "The half-dozen of silver spoons that you brought with you from home", the journal tells us, "are described as the remnant of the family plate of a person of distinction, who is about to proceed to India. The Cashmere shawl and silk dress, which he pronounces unrivalled in the Colony, were the property of a lady remarkable for taste and fashion, who had perished at sea". The night auctioneer's stories make these goods exotic and desirable by putting them into an aristocratic register (with overtones of tragedy) and connecting them to the global/colonial circulation of luxury commodities. He reminds the colony that the goods that flow into it have what Arjun Appadurai had called "social lives" (fictional or otherwise) that lend them new value.[15] In doing so, this otherwise fraudulent, self-interested character type plays out a public, even pastoral role that contributes to the colony's wellbeing:

> Assuredly in the operation of such a system, the night auctioneer is a "head of the people" . . . [He] ought then to be respectable; but a man cannot be respectable whose profession is misrepresented and despised. He cannot in such a position feel his respectability; and it is to this end – the true appreciation of his situation and importance – that we have devoted this article, and as long as the class can boast of such members as the one whose portrait adorns our present pages, we are sure that its pursuits, however at times perverted, must be compatible with every duty of good citizenship.[16]

Instead of being excluded from the colonial social fabric, the night auctioneer is brought back in as a binding, regulatory – and unexpectedly compassionate – force. His role arguably resembles that of the "civic-republican", which Nancy Fraser invokes in her essay "Rethinking the Public Sphere". Engaging with the work of Jurgen Habermas, Fraser offers a sense of the public sphere as a "plurality of competing publics", each "situated in a single 'structured setting' that advantages some and disadvantages others".[17] The night auctioneer in colonial Sydney is folded into this "structured setting", bringing publics together, advantaging some and disadvantaging others as the exchange of goods takes place. But as a minor or marginal character type he is also distanced from all this: he can never fully inhabit the role of "good citizenship". Operating at the illicit, peripheral end of commercial activity, his pastoral role both co-exists and contrasts with the "perverted" nature of his "pursuits". *Heads of the People* therefore asks its readers to entertain contradictory aspects of the colonial economy through this distinctive figure: publicity versus secrecy, legitimacy versus illicitness, fraudulence versus honesty, and the common good versus self-interest.

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[15] Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value", in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 5.

[16] "The Night Auctioneer", 1.

[17] Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy", in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), 125.

The August 1847 issue of *Heads of the People* introduced a Sydney pieman, William Francis King, who by this time was a kind of local celebrity. King's story begins in London where, as the son of a government paymaster, he works at first for a company of stockbrokers and traders and then as a clerk in the Treasury. His circumstances in England look promising; but the journal goes on to note that King's "restless disposition did not allow him to hold long", and in 1829 he leaves for the colonies. He becomes a provincial school master at Bong Bong in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales, and then a children's tutor; later, he wants to return to England but his "unsettled temper" makes this impossible. Finding work as a barman in Sydney, he then – as *Heads of the People* puts it – "commenced performing a series of feats of pedestrianism, in which he seems to have taken great delight":

> One of his earliest feats was walking one thousand six hundred and thirty-four miles in five weeks and four days, out of which period he had only nine days of fair weather. It was at the time of the flood on the Hawkesbury. Some heavy bets were made on this feat; but it did not appear that the poor pieman reaped any advantage beyond his self-gratification at having acquitted himself so well . . . He walked from Sydney to Parramatta and back, twice a day for six consecutive days. He undertook on one occasion to carry a dog, weighing upwards of seventy lbs, from Campbelltown to Sydney, between the hours of half-past twelve at night and twenty minutes to nine the next morning; which he accomplished twenty minutes within the given time. He was backed to carry a live goat, weighing ninety-two lbs, with twelve lbs dead weight besides, from the Old Talbot Inn, on Brickfield Hill, to Mr Nash's, at Parramatta, in seven hours; which he performed, having twelve minutes to spare.[18]

King literally enacts his "restless disposition" in the colonies here, moving relentlessly from place to place, carrying increasingly ludicrous burdens. Transactions happen (through a gambling economy), but nothing productive occurs; on the other hand, King's reputation spreads and he gains self-esteem from "having acquitted himself so well". This is a narrative that transforms colonial failure into a certain sort of heroic achievement. Henry Kingsley mentioned "the immortal 'flying pieman'" in *The Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn* (1859); and in fact, King's remarkable pedestrian feats are remembered even today: "In an age of eccentrics, William King stands out as a true original".[19]

The point at which King becomes a "head of the people", however, is when these walking circuits are put to use as delivery routes, when he becomes a pieman: that is, when this "pass-time" becomes an occupation. Selling hot pies on the street, his voice is now "among the most prominent of the Sydney 'cries'". Street criers in colonial Sydney were themselves notable types, performing a civic function by disseminating information, making public announcements, selling goods, and so on. Anne Doggett has written about town criers in colonial Australian towns and cities along exactly these lines: "Underlying much of the community response to bellmen was the impact of the personalities themselves, with their distinctive public presence and their relationship with the people".[20] The Flying Pieman had already appeared as a character in *Life in Sydney; or, The Ran*

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[18] "The Pieman", *Heads of the People*, 7 August 1847, 1.

[19] Edwin Barnard, "The Ladies' Walking Flying Sporting Pieman, All Hot as Love", in *Emporium: Selling the Dream in Colonial Australia* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2015), 150.

Dan Club (1843), a colonial play modelled on Pierce Egan's immensely popular series of sketches, *Life in London* (1820–22). When he walks onto the stage, surrounded by cheering boys and girls, another character announces, "Why, Jerry, this fellow is by profession a pieman, his voice may be heard all up and down Pitt Street every night singing All Hot".[21] King's occupation turns out to have a regulatory, binding force for the colony. "The piemen are . . . a useful class", *Heads of the People* tells us. Their pies are consumed by "jurors, witnesses and spectators at the Darlinghurst Court House". The editor himself consumes them, and goes on to note how often "the lonely bachelor, on leaving the theatre between 11 and 12 o'clock, [has] paused at the corner of the street, and partaken of these pasties of sweet smelling savour, who might otherwise have gone supperless to his solitary pallet".[22] The pieman helps to reintegrate "solitary" individuals into the social life of the colony here; and he also – linking his pedestrian feats with the delivery of pies – brings continuity to otherwise distant parts of the city. In her 2010 book about Sydney, Delia Falconer invokes this figure in exactly these terms:

> the city has always loved its public "characters", like . . . the "peculiar and vivacious" Flying Pieman, William King, who, top hat decorated with streamers, would sell his home-made pastries to passengers boarding the Parramatta steamer at Circular Quay, then sprint 18 miles overland to sell them the remainder as they disembarked.[23]

It is as if the pieman and his pies are everywhere at once: places of departure and arrival, the courthouse, the theatre, the editor's offices, and so on.

Like the night auctioneer, then, the Sydney pieman was a minor or peripheral colonial character type who nevertheless performed a kind of socially binding civic duty. What was previously a "past-time" of manic proportions – his pedestrianism – now becomes a part of the "structured setting" of Sydney's colonial economy: not central to anything in particular, but no less important to its successful operation. An 1889 article about the history of Parramatta in the *Illustrated Sydney News* fondly remembered King and cast him as fully representative of his social type: "Such . . . pie-vendors were once very familiar sights in the streets of Sydney, but King, who, from his occupation and rapid gait, had received the popular *soubriquet* of 'The Flying Pieman', was far and away the most noted specimen of the whole *genus*".[24] This sense of King as a representative type sits alongside accounts of his eccentricity, just as his role in binding different aspects of the colony together sits alongside his peripheral or minor social status.

It is worth briefly comparing this account of a colonial Sydney pieman to Henry Mayhew's description of street piemen in *London Labour and the London Poor*, a popular and influential series of ethnographic studies of itinerant London street folk that was gathered together as a four-volume publication in 1861. The London piemen, Mayhew notes, "are seldom stationary" – although there are no remarkable feats of pedestrianism worth mentioning.[25] What Mayhew finds most interesting about the piemen are the

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[20] Anne Doggett, "Crying in the Colonies: The Bellmen of Early Australia", *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 14 (2012), 63.

[21] See Richard Fotheringham, ed. *Australian Plays for the Colonial Stage, 1834–1899* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2006), 67.

[22] "The Pieman", 1.

[23] Delia Falconer, *Sydney* (Sydney: NewSouth Books, 2010), 169.

[24] "Parramatta – Past and Present", *Illustrated Sydney News*, 22 August 1889, 17.

everyday details of their trade: what the pies consist of, who the customers are, and what kinds of transactions take place. There is no sense here that London piemen have any kind of larger, socially binding role to play. Quite the opposite, in fact: the growth in "penny pie-shops" meant that street piemen were an endangered species, facing extinction. *London Labour and the London Poor* works by atomising its street folk, subdividing them into discrete units ("Of Street Piemen", "Of Water-Carriers", "Watercress Girl", and so on) that are then minutely analysed as "specimens" or character types. What prevents this ethnographic study from becoming paratactic – an arbitrarily arranged string of microscopic case studies, like the English and Sydney-based *Heads of the People* – is Mayhew's overarching moral perspective, which (however sympathetically) registered itinerant street folk as essentially deviant or degenerate, and perpetually struggling to survive. Daniel Bivona and Roger B. Henkle note that, for Mayhew, the itinerant street folk of London are "a form of waste. They are the tailings of the commodified economy".[26] They have, as these authors put it, very little "range" not only in terms of the local spaces they inhabit but also in terms of their imagination: each character lives "mentally in a labyrinth that resembles the geography of his neighbourhood".[27] In Baker's *Heads of the People*, however, the pieman's pedestrianism massively *increases* his range and expands his economic capacity. He functions not at the tail end of the economy, but in its midst: everyone gets to taste his pies, sometimes more than once in the same day. It is only much later on, in fact, that his career unravelled and came to an end. Charged with being "of unsound mind" in 1860, he was taken to court; but even here, he insisted on the centrality of his role in the colony, telling the judge about "his own especial fitness to heal all the wounds of the state"[28] – as if he really *were* one of the "heads of the people". Sadly, he spent his final years as an inmate in Sydney's Liverpool asylum.

The kinds of micro-ethnographic, quasi-literary studies we find in the English and colonial Australian *Heads of the People* – and in Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* a few years later – can certainly confuse conventional distinctions between characters and actual people. John Frow teases out these distinctions in his book *Character and Person* (2014), a detailed account of the ways in which "social persons" are articulated (and articulate themselves) in literary narratives. What is the ontological relationship between (actual) social persons and literary characters? For Frow, they are in fact analogous and mutually constitutive:

> character is, in certain respects . . . the analogue of "real" persons, conforming more or less closely and more or less fully to the schemata that govern, in any particular society, what it means to be a person and to have a physical body, a moral character, a sense of self, and a capacity for action. I say "in certain respects" because fictional character happens in accordance with the modes of being specified by particular genres; it is of the order of representation rather than of the order of the real.[29]

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[25] Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, vol.1 (New York: Dover Publications, 1968), 195.

[26] Daniel Bivona and Roger B. Henkle, *The Imagination of Class: Masculinity and the Victorian Urban Poor* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006), 13.

[27] Bivona and Henkle, *The Imagination of Class*, 20.

[28] "Central Police Court", *Empire*, 14 June 1860, 3.

[29] John Frow, *Character and Person* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 24–5.

Genre is a key determinant here: it represents social persons *as* characters, but the "mode of being" is always specific to a particular genre's imperatives. In this book we shall look at a number of fictional genres – the squatter novel, colonial detective fiction, the bushranger romance, the hut shepherd's tale, and so on – each of which creates a distinctive set of character types and maps out their relationship to, and position within, a generically defined socio-economic framework. Baker's *Heads of the People* is interesting in this respect because it can indeed look as if it is not generic at all: just a series of arbitrarily strung-together character sketches. One of its editorials tries to defend itself against this charge:

> It has been objected that we have selected our HEADS rather indiscriminately. To this we reply . . . that we cannot undertake to please every one. We invariably make our selections, not only with a view to please our readers generally, but to bring into notice rising talent, and drag from obscurity real merit wherever we find it. Besides, our Head is only given as the type or representative of a class; we cannot, therefore, expect to please any number of persons, and at the same time exactly coincide with the opinions of some fastidious individual, who looks upon himself as a sort of index to the feelings and opinions of the great body of the people, which he estimates by his own.[30]

In this account, the critical, pedantic reader ("some fastidious individual") is created as a social type in order then to be refuted: there are now too many different types in colonial Sydney for any single point of view to dominate. *Heads of the People* therefore ran the opposite risk of being too "indiscriminate". But this is itself a generic determinant. By valuing "rising talent" and making "real merit" visible, the journal emphasised drive, energy and the capacity for even the most peripheral (or illicit) figure to be socially useful. In doing so, it self-consciously inverted prevailing assumptions about the role and nature of its chosen "social persons" – as we have seen with the night auctioneer, for example – and upset taken-for-granted social hierarchies to do with who was important to the Australian colonies, and who wasn't.

Minor and Eccentric Types

Alex Woloch has investigated the figure of the minor character in his book *The One vs the Many* (2003), which focuses mostly on the work of three nineteenth-century English and French novelists: Jane Austen, Charles Dickens and Honoré de Balzac. The weight of a reader's attention conventionally rests on the protagonist at the expense of the minor or "secondary" characters. But for Woloch, the realist novel during this time gave its minor characters increasing significance; when we get to Dickens, minor figures could even eclipse the protagonist through the sheer force of their dispositions or attributes. "Dickens's minor characters compel intense attention, in-and-of-themselves", Woloch writes, "through the configuration of their personalities and physiognomy, the texture of their speech, and their immediate and direct interaction with the protagonists".[31] Minor characters go in two, contradictory directions: they perpetually run the risk of being "drowned out within the totality of the narrative"; and yet, as Woloch puts it, they have a "strange centrality to so many texts".[32] In other words, they are marginal and disproportionately significant at the same time. They are "engulfed" by an overall narrative that they nevertheless impact upon, often in unexpected, dramatic ways. We shall see exactly this predicament in – for example – our discussion in Chapter 3 of the colonial detective Wilmore in Hume Nisbet's *The Swampers* (1897): a minor character who radically alters the final course of events, even as his role in relation to a larger, critical narrative about the colonial Australian economy remains peripheral.

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[30] Preface, *Heads of the People*, 17 April 1847, n.p.

[31] Alex Woloch, *The One vs the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 127.

Minor characters are literally "eccentric": that is, situated outside the centre of the narrative. For Woloch, their eccentric situations are also a reflection of the increased specialisation of labour roles under industrialisation. A minor character is one kind of embodiment of the division of labour, a principle or phenomenon advocated at least as far back as Adam Smith in *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776). Smith had seen the division of labour – where every worker is dedicated to a single task – as central to the creation of wealth and prosperity at home and abroad. Specialised labour is integral here not only to nation building but also to empire building, tied in Smith's book to colonial trade and the global exchange of goods. For Karl Marx in *Capital* (1867), on the other hand, the production of wealth through the division of labour works instead to alienate the worker from these larger frameworks: "all means for the development of production transform themselves into a means of domination over, and exploitation of, producers; they mutilate the labourer into a fragment of a man . . . "[33] Woloch's account of minor characters seems to draw on both of these accounts, leading him to identify the integrated character on the one hand, and the alienated character on the other. He writes: "Both . . . kinds of minor characters in the nineteenth-century novel – the functional worker and the deviant eccentric – can be structured by, or emerge as a consequence of, the division of labor".[34] Under the influence of Marx in particular, Woloch then reaches this fundamental insight: "*minor characters are the proletariat of the novel*", subordinated and significant at the same time.[35]

But the "deviant eccentric" suggests another identity here, that of the *lumpenproletariat*. This term was used to describe a loosely affiliated collection of types that have no obviously productive role to play in the larger economy (or, in the larger narrative). Perhaps the most famous account of the *lumpenproletariat* in the nineteenth century occurred just a few years after the publication of Baker's *Heads of the People*. Written not long after he moved to London, Karl Marx's account in the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* (1852) of the French *lumpenproletariat*'s participation in Bonaparte's suppression of the 1848 revolution strung together a spectacular litany of "deviant eccentric" minor character types:

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[32] Woloch, *The One vs the Many*, 38, 37.

[33] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1, book 1, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, ed. Frederick Engels, 445: https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Capital-Volume-I.pdf.

[34] Woloch, *The One vs the Many*, 161.

[35] Woloch, *The One vs the Many*, 27.

> Alongside decayed *roués* with dubious means of subsistence and of dubious origin, alongside ruined and adventurous offshoots of the bourgeoisie, were vagabonds, discharged soldiers, discharged jailbirds, escaped galley slaves, swindlers, mountebanks, *lazzaroni*, pickpockets, tricksters, gamblers, *maquereaus*, brothel keepers, porters, *literati*, organ-grinders, ragpickers, knife grinders, tinkers, beggars – in short, the whole indefinite, disintegrated mass, thrown hither and thither, which the French term *la bohème* . . . [36]

Socially and economically, these figures are at once peripheral and central (not least, to Bonaparte's success in quelling the revolution). We find more detailed versions of some of them later on in Mayhew's account of metropolitan street folk and "nomads" in *London Labour and the London Poor* (knife grinders, tinkers, etc.), and in a whole raft of colonial Australian sketches and portraits, including some of those already featured in Baker's *Heads of the People*.

Thomas McCombie's second series of *Australian Sketches* was published in 1861: the same year as Mayhew's work. McCombie was a Scottish emigrant who arrived in Melbourne in 1841, working as a journalist and politician and, for a brief period, a squatter. He wrote an early history of the Victorian colony, as well as two novels. *Australian Sketches* looks in detail at four distinct colonial character types, "The Squatters", "The Gold Diggers", "The Convicts" and "The Aborigines". All of these are integrated into what the opening "Advertisement" (or preface) for the book calls "a very interesting episode in the great epic of Australian Colonisation". Although he could see that "Christian society" brutalised and "degraded" Aboriginal people in the name of "civilisation", McCombie nevertheless bought into a prevailing settler assumption that they would eventually die out. Henry Mayhew's moralising depiction of London's street "nomads" – which notes their "passion . . . for intoxicating fermented liquors", their "delight in warfare and all perilous sports", their "desire for vengeance", the "absence of chastity" among the women, etc.[37] – is precisely echoed in McCombie's account of Aboriginal people who, he tells us, have "no high estimation of female chastity", a "drunken, indolent" nature, a love of "war and the chase", and an obsession with the "duty of avenging" inter-tribal murders.[38] These are certainly familiar racist descriptions. But as we can see, they are also descriptions that draw on an ethnographic vernacular equally applied to character types identified as *lumpenproletarian*. This means that they could be applied to certain settler types, too. It turns out that Mayhew's account of London's street folk's "want of providence in laying up a store for the future", "vague sense of religion" and "utter absence of all appreciation of the mercy of the Divine Spirit" also finds an exact echo in McCombie's description of colonial convicts:

> The men who have been convicts are termed "old hands;" they are mostly rude, rough men, with no moral principle or religious feeling, who have little sympathy for humanity. They do not exhibit much desire to marry and settle, as is usually the case with free

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[36] Cited in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), 479.

[37] Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, 2.

[38] Thomas McCombie, *Australian Sketches: The Gold Discovery, Bush Graves, &c., &c.* (London: Sampson Low, Son & Co., 1861), 156, 155, 157, 158. All subsequent references are to this edition and appear in parentheses in the text.

> emigrants; they spend their wages as soon as they are earned, and seem to have little wish to accumulate money . . . Hardly one of them could be trusted in the vicinity of a public-house; whatever situation of trust he was in he could not resist the temptation to get drunk. (141)

Here, convicts are a type of "social person" represented as the *lumpenproletariat*: a dissolute underclass that doesn't even aspire to the most basic requirements of colonial settlement (accumulation of capital, marriage, settlement, etc.). Gertrude Himmelfarb has perceptively used the term *lumpenproletariat* to talk about Mayhew's study, which (as shown in the subtitle to *London Labour and the London Poor*) had divided London's street folk into those who "*will* work", those who "*cannot* work" and those who "*will* not work": "In fact", she writes, "as Mayhew presented them", London street folk "seem to have been less a class in the Marxist sense than a species in the Darwinian sense".[39] The interplay between *class* and *species* is important to register here, and it is something we shall return to as we continue to discuss colonial Australian character types in this book. In particular, this interplay brings together the economic and the ethnographic in ways that reveal precisely the social aspects of the division of labour that Woloch so strongly identifies with the "minor character".

Labour – in terms of the way it contributed to building the nation – was especially important to McCombie, but there is a paradox here: namely, that in order to *develop* the nation, specialised forms of labour needed to remain fixed or static. In some cases, it can be hard to distinguish the "deviant eccentric" from the "functional worker", as if the *lumpenproletariat* and the *proletariat* can somehow inhabit the same space. McCombie's convicts do indeed work. In spite of everything, they contribute to the "great epic of Australian Colonisation". But the specialisation of their labour holds them in place, both economically and socially: "From their expertise in splitting timber, building, fencing, and, indeed, all pursuits of bush life, and by their remaining single and evincing no disposition to emerge from their social position as menial servants, they are much liked by many squatters and farmers . . . " (141). The convict's *lumpenproletarian* disposition (choosing not to settle or marry, having no social aspirations) is precisely what, in this account, transforms this type into a labouring class or *proletariat*.

When McCombie looks at the gold digger, however, these configurations radically change. *Australian Sketches* was published about ten years after the beginning of the gold rush in Victoria, which had a profound effect on colonial development, releasing capital across the colonies and dramatically increasing the population. Because the gold rush gave so many people the chance to make their fortune quickly – and because the goldfields themselves were thriving, bustling, competitive places – it created unprecedented possibilities for social mobility and transformation.[40] One type could turn into another type almost overnight. Successful gold diggers transcended their *lumpenproletarian* condition through their capacity to generate what Graeme Davison has called "instant cities”[41] – something that McCombie also finds striking, as he describes what happens when gold diggers come to occupy a fresh site:

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[39] Gertrude Himmelfarb, "The Culture of Poverty", in *The Victorian City*, vol. 2, ed. Jim Dyos and Michael Wolff (London: Routledge, 2002), 712.

[40] In his account of this turbulent period in Australian history, David Goodman writes, "If there was one thing that contemporaries agreed upon about the gold rushes, it was that they were a disturbance to the normal order of things": *Gold Seeking: Victoria and California in the 1850s* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), xiv.

> A spot may be uninhabited, wild, and dreary but in a few days after it may be transformed into a large city . . . The stranger who reaches a plain in the far bush, which only a short time before was destitute of any sign of civilisation, will find himself in a comfortable city, surrounded by stores, hotels, and theatres. That great civiliser, the newspaper press, is not long behind, and often makes its appearance in a week or two after the great rush has set in for a new digging. It thus happens, that in an incredibly short space of time all the appliances of civilised life are gathered together. (137)

Here, the digger literally paves the way for what Robert Dixon has called “colonial modernity”, “a series of developments in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that linked apparently provincial cultures like those of the Australian colonies into a busy traffic in personnel [and] cultural practices . . . around the English-speaking world”.[42] Diggers here are seen as nation builders; but because they could get so rich so quickly, they could also threaten the colonies’ stability. McCombie writes, “the gold diggers form a gregarious order, containing so many intelligent and spirited members that no Government can trifle with their interests” (129). (We shall see something similar with squatters in Chapter 1.) The successful gold digger also ran the risk of being cast as improvident, just as careless about saving money as McCombie’s convicts. The gold digger’s rapid accumulation of wealth could lead to widespread investment and development, but it also opened the way to the growth of other *lumpenproletarian* classes. As Davison notes: “Instant cities catered to the demand of young, spendthrift men for instant pleasures . . . Melbourne’s thousands of immigrant bachelors, far from home and without the immediate prospect of matrimony, were a ready market for prostitution”.[43] The unsuccessful gold digger, on the other hand, remains permanently *lumpenproletarian*, a parasitical and potentially dangerous figure that continually undercuts the “civilised” aspirations of the ever-expanding goldfields’ economy. “There are numbers of reckless vagabonds”, McCombie remarks, “who infest the purlieus of these busy scenes, and live by plunder” (137).

Colourful sketches of life on the Victorian goldfields were commonplace in the 1850s and 1860s, often focusing on the convergence of different social types and classes and the kinds of tensions and struggles that resulted. The English writer William Howitt spent a couple of years in Australia in the early 1850s, writing about the Victorian goldfields and city life, describing Australian flora and fauna, and offering critiques of broader colonial issues such as land policy and taxes. Howitt’s two-volume *Land, Labour, and Gold* (1855) is full of distinctive character types: shepherds, squatters, bushrangers, horse stealers, speculators, “lady storekeepers”, new chums, “cockatoo settlers”, and many others, including gold diggers. The first volume opens with the excitement of arrival in Melbourne amidst news of the gold rush. An acute observer of street spectacles, Howitt’s attention is immediately captured by the vast numbers of convicts disembarking in Melbourne to head out to the diggings:

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[41] Graeme Davison, “Gold-Rush Melbourne”, in *Gold: Forgotten Histories and Lost Objects of Australia*, ed. Iain McCalman et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 59.

[42] Robert Dixon, *Photography, Early Cinema, and Colonial Modernity: Frank Hurley’s Synchronised Lecture Entertainments* (London: Anthem Press, 2011), xxix.

[43] Davison, “Gold-Rush Melbourne”, 58.

> The old lags, another name for convicts, are flocking over from Sydney and Van Diemen's Land by thousands, – there is no exaggeration in the word. And what subjects they would afford the sketcher! Yesterday as we went down to the ship, the steamers were coming in from those colonies. They were densely packed in the deck of the steamer, as you have seen Irish emigrants on the decks of vessels setting sail from Liverpool for America. What men! and what costumes! Huge burley fellows with broad, battered straw or cabbage-tree hats, huge beards, loose blue shirts, and trowsers yellow with clay and earth, many of them showing that they had already been digging in Sydney, where there is much gold, but according to fame, not so abundant or so pure as in this colony; almost every man had a gun, or pistols in his belt, and a huge dog, half hound half mastiff, led by a chain. Each had his bundle, containing his sacking to sleep upon, his blanket and such slight change of linen as these diggers carry. They had, besides, their spades and picks tied together; and thus they marched up the country, bearing with them all they want, and lying out under the trees.
>
> Every day this scene is repeated; thousands follow upon thousands in the same style, and take the road at once towards the Diggings.[44]

Here, the convict-as-digger is a spectacular but threatening figure who – far from being an agent for some sort of colonial modernity – is instead a kind of throwback to the earliest stages of colonial settlement. Every "old lag" looks exactly the same; as "thousands upon thousands" of them "flock" together, the character type not only multiplies but also literally grows in stature ("Huge burley fellows . . . huge beards . . . a huge dog . . . "). Howitt's sketch lends the convict-as-digger a visceral force, casting this figure as powerful, self-sufficient and driven.

Clara Morison, Settlers and Diggers

In colonial Australian crime and adventure fiction, *lumpenproletarian* inhabitants of the goldfields invested these spaces with a villainous energy, and the convict-as-digger was a stock example. The detective stories in James Skipp Borlase's *The Night Fossickers* (1867) are full of ex-convicts and other "ruffians" and "scoundrels" on the goldfields, all of whom disrupt any attempt to regulate and police this vibrant economic and social realm. The first story in this collection, "The Shepherd's Hut", turns the threatening potential of Howitt's convict-as-digger into something sensational and explicitly criminal: "throughout the country round prowling ruffians – escaped convicts from Sydney or Van Diemen's Land – were ever ready to waylay and murder the wandering digger for the sake of the gold they expected to find on his person".[45] In the title story, the larger-than-life villain Spider-legged Ned, who works on the goldfields, turns out to be an escaped convict, the revelation of which helps to justify his trial and execution. Benjamin Farjeon arrived at the Victorian goldfields in 1854; he migrated to New Zealand in 1861 to join the Otago gold rush, and returned to England in 1867, a successful journalist and author. His story "In Australian Wilds", published in Melbourne's weekly *Leader* in October 1870, introduces an ex-convict, Lilly Trott, who gives a vibrant account of criminal activity on the goldfields. To become a digger is a radically transformative process, where one character type evolves or emerges out of another, quite different one. The disposition of ex-convicts might very well be organically suited to life as a digger; but in the following passage we find that even antithetical types can metamorphose in the goldfields setting to become (from the perspective of what they once were) unrecognisable:

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[44] William Howitt, *Land, Labour, and Gold: Two Years in Victoria: with Visits to Sydney and Van Diemen's Land* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 21.

[45] James Skipp Borlase, *The Night Fossickers, and Other Australian Tales of Peril and Adventure* (London: Frederick Warne & Co., 1867), 3.

> You see, it was so easy for a man to lose himself. Take a clerk out of a city office, sprucely dressed, and with a nicely trimmed moustache; send him on to the gold-fields, and let him grow his beard and dress himself in moleskin trousers and Scotch twill shirt; let him work for a few weeks at the bottom of a twenty-foot shaft, or stand at the windlass all the day with his sleeves tucked up to his shoulders, with a black cutty pipe in his mouth and an old billycock on his head, and the sun blazing down upon him and browning every bit of flesh it could get at – why, in six months his own wife wouldn't know him![46]

Around the time of Farjeon's story, the journalist and (failed) prospector William Withers was creating a sense of the goldfields as an "exclusively masculine domain"; but as Claire Wright has noted, "women were there too, and . . . their stories are just as . . . vibrant as the stories of the men".[47] Ellen Clacy sailed from London to the Victorian goldfields with her brother in 1852, the same year as William Howitt. Her account of her experiences there, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold Diggings of Australia*, was published in 1853 and presents among other things a detailed understanding of the goldfields' micro-economics. In fact, for Clacy it is small business owners – and this is where the division of labour is most visible – who prosper most of all: "It is not only the diggers", she writes, "who make money at the Gold Fields. Carters, carpenters, storemen, wheelwrights, butchers, shoemakers, &c., usually in the long run make a fortune quicker than the diggers themselves, and certainly with less hard work or risk of life".[48] This distinction between specialised forms of respectable labour and the riskier practice of prospecting is one we often see in colonial accounts of the goldfields. It connects to a prevailing perspective on the question of colonial prosperity that is caught up with the problem of wanting wealth accumulation to happen but not so quickly that it distorts or destabilises social norms. In Clacy's account – as we saw with McCombie – there is also always a *lumpenproletarian* component that threatens social and economic security:

> Many – perhaps, nine-tenths – of the diggers are honest industrious men, desirous of getting a little there as a stepping-stone to independence elsewhere; but the other tenth is composed of outcasts and transports – the refuse of Van Diemen's Land – men of the

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[46] B.J. Farjeon, "In Australian Wilds", in *The Anthology of Colonial Australian Crime Fiction*, ed. Ken Gelder and Rachael Weaver (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2008), 88.

[47] Claire Wright, *The Forgotten Rebels of Eureka* (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2013), i, iii.

[48] Ellen Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold Diggings in Australia in 1852–53* (1853; Auckland: The Floating Press, 2010), 69.

> most depraved and abandoned characters, who have sought and gained the lowest abyss of crime, and who would a short time ago have expiated their crimes on a scaffold. They generally work or rob for a space, and when well stocked with gold, retire to Melbourne for a month or so, living in drunkenness and debauchery . . . There is more drinking and rioting at the diggings than elsewhere, the privacy and risk gives the obtaining it an excitement which the diggers enjoy as much as the spirit itself.[49]

The association of rapid wealth accumulation, "drinking and rioting" and "risk" made the colonial goldfields an especially unstable place. Government policies prohibiting diggers from purchasing land and insisting on licence fee payments – along with heavy-handed policing – fostered a prolonged period of civil disobedience that culminated in the Eureka rebellion at Ballarat in 1854. Catherine Helen Spence's novel *Clara Morison: A Tale of South Australia During the Gold Fever*, was published in the same year. Spence's family had emigrated from Scotland to South Australia in 1839, when she was fourteen. A much-admired social and political reformer later on, Spence invested heavily in the utopian potential of South Australia, as a colony without a history of convictism and where land purchase was highly regulated. In her autobiography, Spence writes about her hope for "a new community where land, labour and capital work harmoniously together":[50] an aspiration that puts her at odds with the turbulence of life on the goldfields in colonial Victoria and New South Wales.

The emigrant journalist Frederick Sinnett, one of the founders of Melbourne *Punch*, thought that *Clara Morison* was "decidedly the best Australian novel that we have met with".[51] In an essay titled "The Fiction Fields of Australia" (1856) – the earliest example of an extended work of colonial literary criticism – Sinnett especially valued the novel's tendency to downplay "local colouring". Local fiction, he argued, should not be overburdened with ethnographic description:

> If Australian characteristics are too abundant – if blackfellows, kangaroos, emus, stringy barks, gums, and wattles, and any quantity of other things illustrative of the ethnology, zoology, and botany, of the country are crowded together, a greater amount of detailed information may be conveyed upon a given number of square inches of canvas than would otherwise be possible, but the picture loses character proportionately as a work of art.[52]

Sinnett wants to say that *Clara Morison* comes close to achieving the aspirations of a national literature precisely (and paradoxically) because it limits its use of local "characteristics": "The story is thoroughly Australian, but at the same time is not a deliberate attempt to describe the peculiar 'manners and customs' of the Australians".[53] But is Spence's novel really so free from ethnographic imperatives? In fact, *Clara Morison* is not "thoroughly Australian" at all; its frame of reference is adamantly *South* Australian, and it is from this particular colonial perspective that different character types are registered and organised. The central binary in this novel is a stark distinction between the colonies of South Australia and Victoria, which is then chiefly understood as a distinction between two colonial character types: settlers and diggers. The preface to the novel makes it clear which type it prefers:

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[49] Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold Diggings*, 72.

[50] Cited in Susan Magarey, *Unbridling the Tongues of Women: A Biography of Catherine Helen Spence*, rev. ed. (Adelaide: University of Adelaide Press, 2010), 28.

[51] Frederick Sinnett, "The Fiction Fields of Australia", *Illustrated Journal of Australasia*, November 1856, 199.

[52] Sinnett, "The Fiction Fields of Australia", 199.

[53] Sinnett, "The Fiction Fields of Australia", 200.

> The South Australian settlers were remarkable for their good fortune – it may be added for their sobriety, and for the good example they set to the rest of the diggers. A few months, in many cases a few weeks, sufficed to gratify their desires. None of them took kindly to Victoria, or thought of making a permanent abode there. They remembered, too, that warm hearts were beating for them in their own loved and beautiful province . . . many a green valley, and vine-clad cottage, bore witness to the welcoming back . . . of wanderers laden with their golden spoil.[54]

In Spence's novel, "South Australian settlers" never settle in Victoria. But as the South Australian economy stagnates, many of that colony's young men do indeed set off to the Victorian goldfields to earn money. The goldfields themselves are distanced from the novel, spatially, socially and morally. Even as local opportunities for work become scarce, Mrs Handy advises her husband not to go prospecting: "You know that most of the diggers are old convicts", she warns him (vol. 1, 152). More and more settlers leave South Australia for the goldfields, however, and as they depart, Adelaide seems to regress, as if it is returning to the earliest stages of colonisation: "The chief streets are still full of a most unsettled-looking population", Anne Elliot complains, "but the outskirts of Adelaide are greatly thinned . . . " (vol. 1, 222). Her sister Margaret worries that the gold rush will destabilise the local economy by artificially inflating it, with the virtues of respectable labour overturned by the short-sighted priorities of fortune-hunting: "I am grieved that gold has been found in these colonies . . . We were avaricious enough before the discovery, and I fear it will only feed the restless desire of our population to make money as easily as possible – we meet with so many men who think it quite a virtue to be worldly-minded" (vol. 2, 207–08). Life on the Victorian goldfields is reported at a distance through a series of letters written by, among others, Margaret's brother Gilbert. "We cannot make a home in this sort of vagabond life at the gold diggings", he complains, before going on to represent the social world of the goldfields ethnographically, as a "nomadic system" (vol. 2, 47, 48).

Clara Morison is an early South Australian novel that values social respectability and responsibility, and keeps its characters' aspirations tastefully modest. It ideologically invests in settlement, with all its bourgeois connotations of achievement, stability and comfort. When Gilbert and the other prospectors finally return to South Australia, a chapter heading announces with some relief: "The Diggers Settle Down". In *Clara Morison*, domesticity and homeliness literally triumph: the "nomadic system" of the goldfields is refuted, and the diggers who had left their families return to South Australia to become settlers all over again.

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[54] Catherine Helen Spence, *Clara Morison: A Tale of South Australia During the Gold Fever*, vol. 1 (London: John W. Parker & Son, 1854), v. All subsequent references are to this edition and appear in parentheses in the text.

New Chums and the Colonial-Born

By the 1840s, it was already a matter of routine for commentators to subdivide colonial populations ethnographically in terms of their capacity to work and contribute effectively to the development of an often-unforgiving local economy. New arrivals or “new chums” were by this time distinguished from native-born colonials; not yet assimilated, they remained conspicuous and even spectacular, a source of mirth but also a means by which colonial priorities can be scrutinised and arranged. This character type was one of the subjects of the anonymous writer “Crayon’s” “Sketches in Sydney” series, published in the *Australasian Chronicle* in the early months of 1840. “The New Chum (for that is his title) comes ashore in the evening”, he writes; “poor devil, he little knows the pleasures that await him . . . ”.[55] The romance of arrival is soon dismantled by the hard realities of Sydney life: “All the golden dreams of happiness which have lured him from his home vanish the very moment he seeks for a situation”. Unable to find a job, it dawns on the new chum that he is already redundant. Perhaps recalling the figure of the city clerk who becomes a digger in Farjeon’s story, the realisation utterly transforms him: “The first face he sees in the morning (his own in the glass) very much astonishes him – he has indeed forgotten ‘what manner of man he was’, and is endeavouring to find out what kind of being he is”.[56] The writer and journalist Horace Earle was another English visitor to the Victorian goldfields in the 1850s. In his story “The Hurricane; or, False Friends”, from *Ups and Downs; or, Incidents of Australian Life* (1861), a new chum is cast as typically naïve and optimistic in order to play out a narrative of economic disillusionment at the diggings: “‘New chums’ are ever sanguine, and invariably feel almost heart-broken at the first goldless hole; being filled with the idea that out of every one something more valuable than earth is sure to be extracted. They are soon, however, undeceived . . .”[57]

The new chum can also be found in the writings of Frank Fowler, an English journalist who arrived in Sydney in 1855. During his short time in the colonies, Fowler edited a literary journal, the *Month*, joined the Stenhouse circle (a literary group that included Charles Harpur, Henry Kendall and John Sheridan Moore), and gave public lectures on writers such as Douglas Jerrold and topics that included literary portraiture. Ann-Mari Jordens wryly describes Fowler as “a loveable young enthusiast with a sometimes unfortunate talent for self-publicity”.[58] His lively impressions of Australia, *Southern Lights and Shadows* (1859), gave a “new chum’s” perspective on the highs and lows of colonial life, greatly offending local sensibilities. Fowler was well aware of colonial disdain for the new chum, which he saw as more exaggerated in Sydney than in Melbourne: “the battle of ‘old-handism’ against ‘new-chumism’”, he writes, “is not everlastingly waging in Victoria as it is in New South Wales, where the natives are more intolerant and intolerable than the Bowery boys of America”.[59] Even so, Fowler subscribed to the prevailing sense that new chums (many of whom – as he did – stayed only briefly in Australia) were the complete opposite of what became known as the colonial "native-born". Here is Fowler on the "colonial young-stock", that is, on native-born colonials as an emergent character type:

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[55] “Crayon”, “Sketches in Sydney, No.VI: The New Chum”, *Australasian Chronicle*, 11 February 1840, 2.

[56] “Crayon”, “The New Chum”, 2.

[57] Horace Earle, “The Hurricane; or, False Friends”, in *Ups and Downs; or, Incidents of Australian Life* (London: A.W. Bennett, 1861), 342.

[58] Ann-Mari Jordens, *The Stenhouse Circle: Literary Life in Mid-Nineteenth Century Sydney* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1979), 54.

[59] Frank Fowler, *Southern Lights and Shadows* (1859; Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1975), 15.

> The Australian boy is a slim, dark-eyed, olive-complexioned young rascal . . . and systematically insolent to all servant girls, policemen, and new-chums. His hair is shiny with grease, as are the knees of his breeches and the elbows of his jacket. He wears a cabbage-tree hat, with a dissipated wisp of black ribbon dangling behind, and loves to walk meditatively with his hands in his pockets, and, if cigarless, to chew a bit of straw in the extreme corner of his mouth. His face is soft, bloomless, and pasty, and you fancy if you touched his cheek you would leave the stamp of your finger behind . . . He is christened . . . a gumsucker and a cornstalk. He can fight like an Irishman or a Bashi-Bazouk; otherwise he is orientally indolent, and will swear with a quiet gusto if you push against him in the street, or request him politely to move on. Lazy as he is though, he is out in the world at ten years of age, earning good wages, and is a perfect little man, learned in all the ways and by-ways of life at twelve or thirteen. Dickens and Albert Smith have given high celebrity to the genuine cockney youth, though for shrewdness, effrontery, and mannish affectation, your London gamin pales into utter respectability before the young Australian.[60]

In this fascinating passage, new chums are one target among several others for the young colonial, who is already typologically divided: a "gumsucker" in Victoria, and a "cornstalk" in New South Wales. The character type is given a specific incarnation, not just a style of dress but also a set of mannerisms and an attitude. He has such a distinctive "complexion" that Fowler imagines for a moment touching his face and leaving an imprint. It seems as if this emergent type is still not quite fully formed, or is still literally impressionable. The Australian boy is at once "lazy" and industrious, volatile but capable of "earning good wages" even at such an early age. In this sense, he recalls our reading of Thomas McCombie's account of ex-convicts above: *lumpenproletarian* and *proletarian* at the same time. Fowler in fact claims a special rogue status for this emerging colonial type, who is both more calculating and more spectacular than his London counterparts.

We find the figure of the colonial-born distinguished from emigrant settler types early on. Peter Cunningham was a ship's surgeon who became a squatter in New South Wales in the late 1820s. In *Two Years in New South Wales* (1827), a series of sketches of early colonial life, he is already defining these types against each other: "Our colonial-born brethren are best known here by the name of *Currency*, in contradistinction to *Sterling*, or those born in the mother-country" – the former "bearing also the name of *corn stalks* (Indian corn), from the way in which they shoot up. This is the first grand division".[61] By the second half of the nineteenth century the colonies saw an increased ideological investment in the colonial-born Australian, whose vigour and motivation seemed to promise a prosperous future for the nation-to-come. The word *native* was soon appropriated as a substitute for *colonial-born*: the most visible manifestation of this, the Australian Natives' Association, was established in Melbourne in 1871. Restricting its membership to those born in the colonies, it became “a vociferous advocate for federation of the Australian colonies, a strong federal government, economic protectionism, and the White Australia immigration policy”.[62] In her account of the Australian Natives’ Association, the historian Helen Irving writes: “To be native was a matter of pride, above all in the years leading to Australian Federation. To be native was to be young and free, with new ideas and lots of energy . . . All of this meant white. The Natives were White”.[63] The shift in designation from colonial-born to native-born was, of course, an attempt to further legitimise non-Aboriginal settlement. It also routinely privileged this type over emigrant settlers, as an ideal embodiment of proletarian virtues, a model worker devoted to colonial development. The English novelist Anthony Trollope arrived in Australia in the same year that the Australian Natives’ Association was established, giving his impressions of these colonial types in *Australia and New Zealand* (1873). “I have no doubt whatever”, he remarked, “that the born colonist is superior to the emigrant colonist, – any more than I have that the emigrant is superior to his weaker brother whom he leaves behind him [sic]. The best of our workmen go from us, and produce a race superior to themselves”.[64] In terms of his capacity to labour, the “colonial-born” outstrips his British counterpart – although in doing so (and consistent with the appropriation of the term *native*), his identity shifts to one determined by “race” rather than class.

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[60] Fowler, *Southern Lights and Shadows*, 22–3.

[61] Peter Cunningham, *Two Years in New South Wales; A Series of Letters, Comprising Sketches of the Actual State of Society in that Colony; of Its Peculiar Advantages to Emigrants; of Its Topography, Natural History, &c., &c.*, vol.1 (London: Henry Colburn, 1827), 53, 116.

The colonial- or native-born may, of course, seem like a major character type, not a minor one. But even this figure could unravel into subordinate components. Godfrey Mundy took up a military post in Sydney in 1846 and stayed there for five years. His chronicle of colonial life, *Our Antipodes* (1853), gives the colonial-born a much bleaker future, as if this character type begins to degenerate almost as soon as it emerges: “Many of the Cornstalks, or Colonial-born men, are tall and large-boned, but the majority of those attaining a standard above the middle height are spare, hollow chested, and have a certain weather-worn and time-worn look beyond their years”.[65] This characterisation of the native-born young man as at once an embodiment of colonial vitality and a sign of deterioration-to-come persisted through the second half of the nineteenth century. Richard Twopeny was a journalist, entrepreneur and “colonial showman”,[66] who helped to organise some important international exhibitions in Melbourne, Sydney, Christchurch, Calcutta and Paris. Peter H. Hoffenberg has noted the important role these exhibitions played in the promotion of colonial achievement in terms of cultural development as well as trade: “remaking the popular image of Australia created by novelists and journalists, among others”, they were designed “to illustrate the ‘progress’ of the colonies and thus their suitability for new capital, emigrants, and self-government”.[67] Twopeny’s *Town Life in Australia* (1883) was a lively series of sketches of colonial cultural practices that worked according to the same logic; that is, it presents aspects of colonial life as “exhibits” around which it then builds a commentary outlining future prospects and opportunities. In a section on "Young Australia", Twopeny divides young working men into three types: "old chums, new chums, and colonials".[68] Old chums, he writes, "are, on the whole, the best":

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[62] Angela Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune in London: Australian Women, Colonialism, and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 98.

[63] Helen Irving, *To Constitute a Nation: A Cultural History of Australia’s Constitution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 124.

[64] Anthony Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand* (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1873), 129.

[65] Godfrey Charles Mundy, *Our Antipodes: or, Residence and Rambles in the Australasian Colonies*, vol. 1 (London: Richard Bentley, 1852), 50.

[66] Peter H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian, and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 137.

[67] Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display*, 139.

> For the most part they began life with a superabundance of animal spirits, and a love of adventure, which have been toned down by a practical experience of the hardships they dreamed of. They certainly drink most and swear most of the three sections, but with all their failings there are few men who can do a harder day's work than they. Barring pure misfortune, there is always some good reason for their still remaining in the class they sprang from.[69]

The "old chum" here is *proletarian* – still locked into a class that defines him – but he also displays *lumpenproletarian* characteristics: drinking, swearing, and "a superabundance of animal spirits". By the time we get to the colonial-born, however, these traits have become much less stable. The "thoroughbred colonial", as Twopeny puts it, is "the best workman when he chooses". But he can also be "as brutal as Coupeau" – the reference here is to a roof builder in Émile Zola's naturalistic novel *L'Assommoir* (1877), who degenerates into alcoholism and domestic violence – "and, except from a muscular point of view, he is often by no means a promising specimen of colonisation". Twopeny goes on to suggest that "thoroughbred colonial[s]" are unstable enough to mutate into a different type altogether, larrikins: "roughs of the worst description, insulting and often robbing people in Melbourne itself, and moving about in gangs with whose united force the police is powerless to cope".[70] The larrikin was the complete opposite of what one might have expected the "thoroughbred colonial" to become, a *lumpenproletarian* colonial criminal type that by the 1880s "was caught up in a moral panic about out-of-control adolescents who gathered in loosely composed street gangs known as 'pushes'".[71] Once again, it seems as if – to recall Woloch's distinction – the "functional worker" and the "deviant eccentric" are never far away from each other.

There is certainly a stark Hogarthian irony in showing (or anticipating) the degeneration of a character type that is supposed to stand for colonial "progress". A readily available narrative along these lines takes hold in the colonies and is soon reproduced, rapidly proliferating. Edward Oxford arrived in Melbourne in 1868 with a notorious history: twenty-eight years earlier, he had attempted to assassinate Queen Victoria. Finally released from a criminal asylum, Oxford was expelled to the colonies. Changing his name (significantly enough) to John Freeman, he began to chronicle life in Melbourne's slums for the *Argus* newspaper, collecting his various sketches in *Lights and Shadows of Melbourne Life* (1888). The title of this book clearly recalls Fowler's earlier *Southern Lights and Shadows*. As Jenny Sinclair notes, it also echoes James Payn's *Lights and Shadows of London Life* (1867) and James Dabney McCabe's *Lights and Shadows of New York Life* (1872) – as if "seeing darkness and light as part of the same thing" was a familiar ethnographic way of representing large cities across the Western world.[72] Perhaps more than any other example of colonial Australian "social zoology", Freeman's book – with its chapters on "costermongers", "match-sellers", "fish-hawkers", "watercress men" and so on – was conspicuously influenced by Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor*. But it also took the opportunity to think about a colonial future, turning to the figure of the colonial young man. "Like that of all young countries", he writes, "our native youth display a considerable amount of animal spirits"[73] – precisely echoing (or perhaps plagiarising) Twopeny's "superabundance of animal spirits". Just like Twopeny, Freeman saw the exuberance of colonial youth as both an advantage – since they become independent etc. – and a liability:

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[68] R.E.N. Twopeny, *Town Life in Australia* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 97.

[69] Twopeny, *Town Life in Australia*, 97.

[70] Twopeny, *Town Life in Australia,* 98.

[71] Melissa Bellanta, *Larrikins: A History* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2012), xiv.

[72] Jenny Sinclair, *A Walking Shadow: The Remarkable Double Life of Edward Oxford* (Melbourne: Arcade Publications, 2012), 129.

> The liveliness of a certain section of our boys takes the form of what is called "larrikinism" . . . Cowardly and treacherous as wolves [they] . . . require the confidence inspired by numbers before they can muster up sufficient courage to commence operations. Then, twenty or thirty, armed with road metal, will attack a solitary policeman; or three or four assault a decrepit old man or defenceless woman.[74]

Freeman and Towpeny's accounts of larrikins come relatively late in the day; E.E. Morris' *Austral English* (1898) in fact traces the earliest use of the term in print culture to local newspaper reports in February 1870.[75] In a column published in the *Australasian* just one month later, the colonial author, editor and satirist Marcus Clarke was already imagining the sensibility of this social type: "[t]he larrikin lives, he has an entity of his own, and he doesn't care a fig for you or anybody else. Why should he?"[76] Perhaps more than most colonial writers, Clarke was influenced by Balzac – "The life of Paris", he wrote in 1872, "is embalmed in the works of Balzac"[77] – and also Charles Dickens. In a long essay on Dickens that appeared in the *Argus* in July 1870, Clarke admired the novelist's ability to "sketch modern manners" and relished the exuberance of his minor characters. Clarke wrote novels, stories, plays and so on; but he also chronicled colonial metropolitan life – its lights and shadows – and imaginatively represented a remarkable variety of colonial character types. His weekly columns for the *Australasian* were collected and published in 1869 under the title *The Peripatetic Philosopher*, in which he self-consciously cast himself as an urban itinerant in Melbourne, a *flâneur*.[78] Mary L. Shannon has noted that Clarke's metropolitan character sketches were influenced by Dickens, Douglas Jerrold and Henry Mayhew; but she also suggests that Clarke developed a mocking, humorous relationship to those ethnographic literary traditions as a way of expressing both his geographical and generational distance from them.[79]

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[73] John Freeman, *Lights and Shadows of Melbourne Life* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1888), 12.

[74] Freeman, *Lights and Shadows of Melbourne Life*, 12–13.

[75] Morris quotes an article in the *Age*, 17 February 1870, that describes a "youngster of the rowdy class, commonly termed 'larrikins', who have been amusing themselves, in company with some twenty others of similar tastes, by insulting every person who passed them": see E.E. Morris, *Austral English: An Australasian Dictionary of Words, Phrases and Usages* (1898; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 260.

[76] Marcus Clarke, "The Peripatetic Philosopher", *Australasian*, 19 March 1870, 17.

[77] Marcus Clarke, "Of French Novels", in *A Colonial City: High and Low Life: Selected Journalism of Marcus Clarke*, ed. L.T. Hergenhan (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1972), 292.

[78] For a critical discussion of Clarke's role as colonial *flâneur* in relation to metropolitan "low life", see Andrew McCann, *Marcus Clarke's Bohemia: Literature and Modernity in Colonial Melbourne* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004), 68–9.

Clarke's sketches of social types were also distinctively literary. He dramatised types in order to illuminate their key characteristics; he created scenes in which they participate; he described their "customs and manners", their costumes, their attitudes and aspirations; and significantly, he often gave them a name. L.T. Hergenhan has commented on Clarke's "vivid thumb-nail sketches of typical figures or groups of the time, in which he is able to isolate colonial characteristics – the parochial committee-man, share brokers, carmen (cabmen), colonial youth, politicians, squatters old and new . . . the working man, Victorian ladies, 'willing boys'", and so on.[80] In "The Working Man from His Own Point of View" (1870), Clarke ventriloquises the voice of a Melbourne worker he calls John Strong ("I ain't a swell. I don't pretend to be"). Strong's complaint is that Australian working men are routinely patronised by colonial intelligentsia: "We are sick of it", he tells us.[81] Clarke sympathetically inhabits the personas of some colonial character types, but distances himself from others: In "New Chums" (1868–69), he removes himself from a social type with which he had once identified, having emigrated to Australia just a few years earlier, in 1863. "I have been pent up in the society of new chums", he writes; "Not that I object to new chums as a body, because every man . . . must come here as a new chum some time or other".[82] Through the fictional character of Guy de Vere (the name is taken from Edgar Allan Poe's 1830 poem, "Lenore"), Clarke then creates a comical, exaggerated stereotype of an indolent, privileged and over-educated new chum who finds the colonies distasteful and cannot wait to return home: "On leaving for England, he remarked that Melbourne was not the place for an idle man, and that he should never again come farther south than the Mediterranean".[83] But what about the new chum who – like Clarke – never leaves? The paradox for Clarke is that the new chum who remains in the colonies also "disappears mysteriously": "As soon as one comes to know them by sight, they vanish from view altogether".[84] Clarke's account of the new chum precisely recalls Jules Janin's description, cited above, of Parisian social types as "brilliant meteors" that "appear and disappear, like the cloud or the smoke". The new chum is given a spectacular rise-and-fall narrative trajectory, visible at one moment, fading away in the next:

> Sometimes the gorgeous butterfly of Collins-street comes to unutterable grief. His cheap finery wears out. Messers. Moses' garments wax rusty, and the gilt wears off his Brummagem jewellery. He falls, and his fall is great. One fine day he disappears, and men shake their heads for a day or two . . . The haunters of the Café and Varieties miss a familiar face, and one asks, "What has become of young New Chum; I haven't seen him lately?" But the question is never satisfactorily answered, and I ask in vain – What becomes of all these young men?[85]

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79 Mary L. Shannon, *Dickens, Reynolds, and Mayhew on Wellington Street: The Print Culture of a Victorian Street* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2015), 200–2. For a general discussion of Clarke's European literary influences and their relationship to the "modernity of colonialism", see McCann, *Marcus Clarke's Bohemia*, 1–20.

[80] L.T. Hergenhan, introduction to *A Colonial* City, xxviii.

[81] Marcus Clarke, "The Working Man from His Own Point of View", *A Colonial City*, 79, 85.

[82] Marcus Clarke, "New Chums", *A Colonial City*, 40.

[83] Clarke, "New Chums", 41.

[84] Clarke, "New Chums", 42.

[85] Clarke, "New Chums", 44.

Much of the investment in colonial character types was precisely to do with what kind of future they had, and what kind of role they might have played in the colonies' development: productive, parasitical, and so on. The reporting of a character type's disappearance meant thinking about what would take its place, what would come next. The "Coming Man" emerged as an available "imperial myth" towards the end of the nineteenth century, an embodiment of the view that "the development of an active, competent colonial type" would "reinvigorate" the empire.[86] We have seen this already with Trollope's view of the colonial-born working man's ability to produce a "race superior" to the English. But the kind of emergence-and-decline narrative Clarke attributed to the new chum persisted alongside this view, and continually unravelled it. The novelist Rolf Boldrewood" gave us exactly this narrative in an article titled "Lapsed Gentlefolk", published in the *Australasian* in 1889. Lapsed gentlefolk are a social type, a version of the new chum; but instead of "disappearing mysteriously", they find themselves dispersed into an assortment of *proletarian* and *lumpenproletarian* colonial occupations:

> Ah, me! Who has not known and pitied them in this land of ours? The workman's paradise! Yet all too well adapted for converting the gently-nurtured waif into the resigned labourer, the homeless vagrant. The gradations through which, slowly, invisibly, but none the less surely, drifts to lower levels the luckless gentleman adventurer are fraught with a melancholy interest. How strange it seems to realise that of the hundreds of well-dressed, well-educated, high-hearted youngsters, fresh from pleasant homes, who every season land on our shores a certain proportion will in a few years of colonial experience (save the mark!) be transformed into misanthropic shepherds, shabby tramps, or reckless rouseabouts.[87]

This passage is different to Clarke's account above of the "working man" John Strong; rather than inhabiting the type and making it "speak", Boldrewood instead observes from a distance. Chronicling the slow decline (by "gradations") of educated emigrant gentlemen makes the novelist-ethnographer feel a kind of "melancholy" for what-might-have-been. On the other hand, the "transformation" of this kind of new chum into a range of debased, minor character types (shepherds, tramps, rouseabouts) also works to populate the colonial Australian fictional landscape.

In 1877, Clarke published a short booklet titled *The Future Australian Race*. "There has been much vaguely talked and written about the Coming Man", it begins – after which, it spirals off into an eccentric meditation on the physiognomic characteristics of different races in classical history. Clarke soon turns to English portraits of aristocratic and courtly figures across the centuries in order to trace developments in facial features. The eighteenth century is of particular importance here because it explicitly connected portraiture – and caricature – with physiognomy as an emerging field of scientific research: "[Thomas] Gainsborough, [Joshua] Reynolds, and [Thomas] Lawrence have reproduced our ancestors in their habits as they lived; Hogarth, [Thomas] Rowlandson, and [James] Gillray have taught us how to recognise them, Lavatar how to talk with them".[88] The face itself becomes an important indicator of type for Clarke, and he touches promiscuously on a number of them: national ("an English face"), regional ("an Oriental face"), historical ("an Elizabethan face"), religious ("a Puritan face"), and fashionable ("a face for hair powder"). All this leads Clarke finally to talk about "an Australian face, and what that face might be like" (10).

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[86] Ailise Bulfin, "Guy Boothby's 'Bid for Fortune': Constructing an Anglo-Australian Colonial Identity for the *Fin-de-Siècle* London Literary Marketplace", in *Changing the Victorian Subject*, ed. Maggie Tonkin et al. (Adelaide: University of Adelaide Press, 2014), 168. See also Robert Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure: Race, Gender and Nation in Anglo-Australian Popular Fiction, 1875–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 147.

[87] Rolf Boldrewood, "Lapsed Gentlefolk", *Australasian*, 13 July 1889, 37.

It looks for a moment as if Clarke is reproducing the prevailing positive image of the "Coming Man": "Already there existed in the Australians much sturdy Anglo-Saxon stuff . . . It is only reasonable to expect that the children of such parents, transplanted to another atmosphere, dieted upon new foods, and restrained in their prime of life from sensual excess, should be at least *remarkable*" (15). Here, even convicts shed their *lumpenproletarian* characteristics to become "men of great courage, great strength, great powers of brain . . . [with] astonishing talents for mechanics and the fine arts" (15). But as Clarke's satire becomes increasingly overt, the figure of the coming Australian begins to unravel. A clichéd, throwaway remark about the young male colonial-born – "The boys will be tall and slender – like cornstalks" – gives way to a list of degenerative features and qualities that lead to a series of idiosyncratic generalisations about the national type: "It will be rare to find girls with white and sound teeth . . . Bad teeth mean bad digestion, and bad digestion means melancholy. The Australians will be a fretful, clever, perverse, irritable race" (20). Clarke assembles the characteristics of the "Coming Man" in order to expose the sheer impossibility of such a figure. It is as if a national type is unable to sustain itself: to glimpse its future is inevitably to predict its bitter end:

> The [Australian] will be a square-headed, masterful man, with full temples, plenty of beard, a keen eye, a stern and yet sensual mouth. His teeth will be bad, and his lungs good. He will suffer from liver disease, and become prematurely bald; average duration of life in the unmarried, fifty-nine; in the married, sixty-five and a decimal. (22)

In our book, we shall see many examples of character types assembling and disassembling; in the light of this, we shall also see just how difficult it is to maintain any coherent sense of a definitive or representative *national* type. Colonial Australian fiction is always about the interplay between major and minor character types. When this interplay happens, minor characters can radically extend their influence and the expected trajectories of major characters can be disturbed in interesting, ideologically loaded ways. In Chapter 1, for example, we will find squatters at loggerheads with shepherds and free selectors, and under siege from bushrangers and disgruntled bush workers; as all this unfolds, the squatter novel struggles to maintain this particular character type's socially (and financially) elevated position. In Chapter 2, the bushranger seems to occupy the centre and the periphery simultaneously, a character type that can seem at times to dominate the colonies even as he continually confronts the possibility of his own extinction. In Chapter 3, we chart the influence of colonial detectives on crime and social regulation as they encounter a wide range of antagonistic character types – including, in some cases, the police. In Chapter 4, we look into the fortunes and misfortunes of the hut shepherd and the swagman; and we examine devious figures like the larrikin and the metropolitan dandy, both of whom are able to turn the colonial economy to their advantage. Finally, in Chapter 5, we see that the Australian girl is caught between a variety of suitors and opportunities, with a future that is precariously positioned between success and failure. What Thomas McCombie had called the "great epic of Australian Colonisation" turns out at the same time to be a whirl of micro-narratives, each of which prioritises certain character types over others – giving us narrative trajectories that can either underwrite or challenge the ongoing project of colonial nation-building.

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[88] Marcus Clarke, *The Future Australian Race* (Melbourne: A.H. Massina & Co., 1877), 10. All subsequent references are to this edition and appear in parentheses in the text.

SYDNEY STUDIES IN AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE

Over the course of the nineteenth century a remarkable array of types appeared – and disappeared – in Australian literature: the swagman, the larrikin, the colonial detective, the bushranger, the "currency lass", the squatter, and more. Some had a powerful influence on the colonies' developing sense of identity; others were more ephemeral. But all had a role to play in shaping and reflecting the social and economic circumstances of life in the colonies.

In *Colonial Australian Fiction: Character Types, Social Formations and the Colonial Economy*, Ken Gelder and Rachael Weaver explore the genres in which these characters flourished: the squatter novel, the bushranger adventure, colonial detective stories, the swagman's yarn, the Australian girl's romance. Authors as diverse as Catherine Helen Spence, Rosa Praed, Henry Kingsley, Anthony Trollope, Henry Lawson, Miles Franklin, Barbara Baynton, Rolf Boldrewood, Mary Fortune and Marcus Clarke were fascinated by colonial character types and brought them vibrantly to life.

As this book shows, colonial Australian character types are fluid, contradictory and often unpredictable. When we look closely, they have the potential to challenge our assumptions about fiction, genre and national identity.

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