Sketching Tom Gill

Art, history, and a creative exploration beyond the frame
of ST Gill's utopian visions of colonial South Australia.

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ABSTRACT

The 1840s paintings of the emigrant artist Samuel Thomas (ST) Gill are frequently used to depict Adelaide's earliest years. ST Gill's works are enduringly popular, and the compositions show a peaceful version of the colonising of South Australia in an era before the advent of photography could provide alternate views. However, *Sketching Tom Gill: Art, history, and a creative exploration beyond the frame of ST Gill's utopian visions of colonial South Australia* posits that these works are studiously composed and highly crafted, and are therefore an unreliable way to view South Australia's colonial history. Utilising the principles of 'blind space' developed by twentieth-century film theorists, this creative nonfiction thesis investigates beyond the frame of Gill's compositions to expose the realities of the early settlement of South Australia; the framework is underscored by issues of violence and dispossession enacted upon First Nations peoples. The work is a critical and creative narrative of facts and fictions that integrates the epistolary form, artworks, written sketches, journal entries, microfictions and historic found objects, collaging them to suggest new compositions and a unique interpretation of Gill's South Australian colonial art archive.

DECLARATION

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint award of this degree.

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I acknowledge the support I have received for my research through the provision of an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

Name: Jennifer Lorraine Molloy

Signature:

Date: 15 January 2024

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I acknowledge the Kaurna, Peramangk, Ngadjuri, Meru, Danggali, Millewa, Ngarrindjeri, Dhirari, Dieri, Andyamathanha, Kuyani, Nukunu and Banggarla peoples, Traditional Custodians of the lands on which this work has been created, and pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

This thesis has been professionally copy-edited by Dr Kerrie Le Lievre in line with the ACGR *Guidelines for editing research theses*.

PREPARATORY NOTE TO THE READER

Dear reader,

The following work employs different narrative modes to investigate the representations of South Australia's colonial history in the 1840s watercolours of the colonial artist ST Gill.

Sketching Tom Gill: Art, history, and a creative exploration beyond the frame of ST Gill's utopian visions of colonial South Australia is guided by postcolonial and decolonial practices in social and academic discourse, and combines the epistolary form, artworks, written sketches, journal entries and historic found objects. The contents reflect an experimental creative journey into art, history and place in South Australia. The thesis is a critical and creative narrative of facts and fictions collaged to suggest new compositions and a unique interpretation of South Australian history and its colonial art archive.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that the following document contains the names and stories of persons who have died.

Figure 0:1: ST Gill (c. 1840s). *N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide, residence of Capt. Watts of Co. Kildare* (wash drawing, 8.4 cm x 10.0 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 4 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134361613/view

PART 1: EXEGESIS

CHAPTER 1

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Emigration from this tax-burdened country is the order of the day, and it well becomes every man, struggling with difficulties here, especially if he have a large family, to think seriously if he cannot find some other country where is trade is brisker, or his labour better paid — where his family is a blessing and not a burden — where he may look forward to have, in a very few years, a little freehold of his own, and in return for the inconveniences and trials (and trials they really are) of a first settlement, have the heartfelt pleasure of seeing himself certain of a comfortable home, improving year by year, and his family well provided for while young, and growing up not to toil through life without profit, as they would here, but becoming farmers and landed proprietors, able to employ others in the turn. These are the just hopes of the emigrant — these are all he wishes for — and these, with judgement and industry, he is sure to gain.

The emigrant's friend, or authentic guide to South Australia, including Sydney; Port Philip, or Australia Felix; New South Wales; Van Dieman's Land; and New Zealand 1974/1848, p. 4.

Journal Day 12: Gawler Place, Rundle Street, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill

c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

Today's sketch is a portrait of a young colonial artist. I have sienna, umber, and rose colours for making clothing, flesh, and skin. I've made unruly curls in dark chestnut brown with a neat side part above a clear forehead. Kind eyes and a trim moustache. Full, soft lips and a shy, ready smile and long fingers, tender and sensitive (Title: *Portrait of a perceptive colonial artist embarking on a career*).

I'm on Rundle Street. You wear a slate-blue frock coat, years old, patched and mended. Pencils, a flask, and brushes bulge in your pockets. You have a small, worn, leather-covered sketchbook in one hand and you let your index finger and thumb worry the corner of one of the pages, back and forth. You wear a vest, snug and buttoned, and a loose cravat, hastily done. Your felt hat is lopsided and stained. It's a favourite.

Fawn riding breeches and long boots, scuffed with age, complete your outfit. There's a hunting crop in your hand, as always. A big Newfoundland dog lies in the sun nearby with one ear cocked, alert to your movements. Behind, a crowd shifts and stirs, occupied with mercantile affairs as noon approaches and the morning's long umber shadows creep close to the buildings.

A proud chestnut horse shifts one back leg and turns her head, ears pricked, nostrils flared. She catches your eye (Title: *Spirited chestnut filly on Rundle Street*).

~~

1. Introduction

This thesis poses the question: what are the assumptions, absences, and silences in ST Gill's utopian visions of colonial South Australia? Gill arrived in Adelaide in 1839, and it is clear from an examination of his early art that he began to question the righteousness of the colonial system and its effects on First Nations peoples during his time there. In analysing Gill's watercolours in a combination of critical review, creative portrait, and colonial found objects, my thesis therefore challenges the belief that South Australia was settled without conflict and brutality toward its Aboriginal peoples.

Samuel Thomas (ST) Gill, the spirited young English emigrant artist, painted some of the earliest pictures of South Australia in the European style. His 1840s Adelaide watercolours are especially well-known and celebrated. For many, these pictures are formative images of South Australia's settler origins and encapsulate the optimistic beginnings of a vibrant new city. Generations of art and history enthusiasts have admired Gill's artworks, not only because they show a remarkable sense of industry and the diversity of the Antipodean landscape, but also because of their emphasis on people working together and the triumph of collective endeavour. Visually, Gill's pictures are analogous with the promotional efforts of the South Australian Colonisation Commission and other means of propaganda designed to encourage desirable forms of emigration to South Australia. *The emigrant's*

friend, or authentic guide to South Australia including Sydney; Port Philip, or Australia Felix; Western Australia, or Swan River Colony; New South Wales; Van Dieman's Land; and New Zealand, published in 1848, is one such promotional publication. It advises potential new settlers about the benefits of emigration and how to choose a colony best suited to their individual circumstance. While other Australian colonies and the more established territories of America and Canada are presented as comparisons, with reference to South Australia the publication enthusiastically promotes the advantages of the agreeable climate for agriculture and health, along with the various appealing scenic and topographical aspects of the countryside and its ports and gulfs. *The emigrant's friend* also explains that land is available through the land allocation system and fervently encourages working-class emigrants to toil diligently in hope of purchasing their own freehold land in the future. A great deal of attention is given to promoting the immense scope, riches, and advantages of the South Australian soil. Although the publication is primarily optimistic, however, it contains a warning:

> One caution we would add, in conclusion of these remarks. Let not the inquirer be led away by false information; companies, ship owners, and others have too often too deep an interest in recommending a Colony, to do so with candour or truth; even Government itself is interested in showing but the favourable side of the question, when that question is the removal of a large mass of discontented poor to a settlement, whose establishment is advantageous to the mother country. Nor yet are the dearness of wages, the quantity of work, or cheapness of provision, a criterion of prosperity, unless these three important things come together and are permanent. Nor yet should the Emigrant be tempted by the cheapness of land alone; in many a district of Australia it takes four acres to keep a sheep, and twenty to feed an ox (*The emigrant's friend* 1974/1848, p. 6).

In contemplating Gill's celebrated colonial works, it is imperative to consider certain facts about South Australia's first years. Gill's artworks depict a place that was entirely new and highly unusual to the emigrants. All of its meteorological conditions and seasons were foreign, including temperature, humidity, and the agrarian seasonal calendar.

ST Gill was just 21 when he arrived in Adelaide, boldly choosing to rent rooms in Gawler Place and advertise himself as open for commissions. This meant living apart from his family. One of the established facts about Gill in his South Australian years is his constant need for funding to pay his rent. He was almost always indigent, and, on occasion, insolvent.

The primary aim of my thesis is to demonstrate that much of ST Gill's best-known commissioned work, created in his early Adelaide years, was created to entice investors and encourage emigration to the South Australian colony. The works were also used to show glorious and accessible pictures of an ideal to an eager audience, and as with any sort of advertising or marketing, Gill was seeking the attention of a target audience and thus used whatever means necessary to style his message. In his

first years in Adelaide, Gill clearly made art to please his patrons, and it is these works that have become the formative images of the city's origins. The works often grace the covers of history books, including contemporary ones. However, in later years, as Gill matured and embraced his new environment and its First Nations peoples, he honed his observational skills and made keen and sometimes satirical comment on the entitled behaviours of emigrants and their mistreatment of the Aboriginal people. Over the course of his full career in South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales, Gill's art demonstrates that he developed great empathy for Australia's Indigenous peoples, and his later works show clear evidence that his belief in the righteousness of the colonial system was severely diminished.

During his four decades in Australia, Gill made hundreds of works. These range from small, quick sketches on rough sheets to grander, intricately composed watercolours, which clearly took much time to plan and execute. The grander works are now held in galleries, museums, and private collections. It is pleasing to speculate that others — perhaps smaller drawings exchanged for accommodation or goods while Gill travelled throughout South Australia — may be yet undiscovered.

As his artistic journey continued after leaving South Australia, Gill's mature art shows that his sense of Antipodean place became ever more authentic, with the wide skies becoming mercurial, the earth more arid, the foliage ever wilder. Gill's gum trees began to change in colour and form, no longer slender nor delicately portrayed in lush, vibrant greens; later works show arid landscapes and gums with withered brown and yellow leaves, many with bare limbs reaching to the sky.

As I was writing this thesis, a text that resonated was TJ Clark's *The sight of death: an experiment in art writing* (2021). Recording daily diary entries in differing styles — long, short, poetry and prose, detailed and otherwise — over a period of six months, Clark scrutinised two seventeenth-century paintings that at the time were positioned together in the Getty Museum. These classic, Baroque works were paired in a space Clark writes of as being a constant and evolving source of inspiration. Recording the changes of natural light in the gallery room, and his own moods and musings, Clark is moved not only by the two works — Nicolas Poussin's 1648 *Landscape with a man killed by a snake* (Figure 1:1) and the slightly later *Landscape with a calm* (Figure 1:2) — but by the potential created for viewers in their being paired. Clark makes numerous observations with reference to colours and compositional elements, noting figures especially, and readers may wonder who the people in the pictures are. To quote Clark (2021, p. 45): 'Why, once seen, do they matter so much?' In the works, Poussin's figures slip in and out of windows and shadows, some allowing fleeting glimpses into age-old mysteries before turning away to hold onto their secrets. In committing to the practice of recording daily responses to ST Gill's artworks in a journal, an excerpt of a poetry entry from Clark's diary titled 'Landscape with a calm' inspires me to approach my own art and writing challenge creatively and to use experimentation in form. Clark's poem of 30 January (2021, p. 40) is prompted by figures within the composition:

> The two women in the windows of the high castle
> Could care less about green. The world comes to them
> Essentially as sound, warmth, a flooding of low energies into oddly shaped receptacles.
> Bagpipe music (finally tolerable). Birch leaves. The smell of stubble fires being doused.
>
> Don't assume that men on galloping horses are in a hurry.
>
> It's the same old story (the stock figure speaks): Goats do not take a lot of managing.
> The dog is underemployed fifty per cent of the time. But there are always sufficient local
> shenanigans for us
> To be on the wrong side of the river when the sun goes down.

Just as Clark employs a measured approach to viewing Poussin's works, allowing time and the changing conditions of light and memory to reveal the stories within, my contemplations of young ST Gill and his artistic process have resulted in a search for greater understanding of colonialism and its frameworks. Where Poussin's moody, classic, exemplar figures emerge from dappled European forests and Baroque shadows into divine light, ST Gill's Adelaide settlers are infused with cheerful South Australian sunshine and a harmony of commerce and conviviality. There is a sense of participation and sharing in something bigger than simply shopping for wares, unpacking goods, and awaiting tall ships. Such is the power of the carefully constructed composition.

TJ Clark spent months making daily diary entries in which he observed the possibilities and painterly nuances of Poussin's compositions. My *Sketching Tom Gill* project, also experimental in its narrative form, pays similar daily attention to many ST Gill paintings and the numerous places Gill visited during his dozen years in South Australia. Various meditations on art and place are explored through small sketches, journal entries and letters written to Gill, many of which contemplate his artistic methods. Over time, the thesis has become an intimate portrait focused on the creation of art.

The use of ekphrasis as a lens through which to examine the effects of colonialism on South Australia's First Nations peoples is central to the aims of my thesis. In 'Ekphrasis and the writing process' (2017, p. 12), Nigel Krauth and Christopher Bowman refer to the use of art and creative methodology as an investigative tool:

> While simply put, ekphrasis is about perceiving something, visualising that something, and conveying that something to others, the perceiving/visualising/re-presenting (*sic*) process involved in ekphrasis provides a territory of investigation where insights into how artists paint, how writers write, how musicians compose, etc. become amplified and potentially accessible.

Figure 1:1 Nicolas Poussin (1648). *Landscape with a man killed by a snake* (oil on canvas, 118.2 cm x 197.8 cm). The National Gallery (London), accessed 27 September 2023, https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/nicolas-poussin-landscape-with-a-man-killed-by-a-snake

Figure 1:2 Nicolas Poussin (1650-1651). *Landscape with a calm* (oil on canvas, 197.0 cm x 131.0 cm). Getty Museum Collection, accessed 27 September 2023, https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/107VSC

Sketching Tom Gill: Art, history, and a creative exploration beyond the frame of ST Gill's utopian visions of colonial South Australia employs ekphrastic tools to examine colonial attitudes and policies. It is designed to be a collage of voices, a narrative of facts and fictions strategically positioned to evaluate the realities of South Australia's early colonial years. In addition to building a portrait of ST Gill and his artistic methodology, it is a collection curated with the intent of revealing some of the less familiar surroundings of his popular images of South Australia. Historic found objects — newspaper articles, artworks and select diary entries of historic figures — are used to explain the strength and power of the colonial position. The material's arrangement also invites the reader to recognise the distinctions between Gill's works and the written historic archive. This interlacing of speculative materials — fiction and non-fiction — opens the thesis, setting a pattern of contrasts that continues throughout.

The following chapters explain my process of investigating Gill's South Australian *oeuvre* and European settler society in early Adelaide, including its impact on Indigenous peoples. The exegesis also explains my creative decision to employ the combination of narrative voices included and my use of an intimate term of address for ST Gill, known throughout the work as 'Tom', to ensure the portrait is an intimate one focused on an exploration of his artistic methodology. This includes speculating on his watercolour and wash techniques, his possible use of studio models, and the close attention he gave to making titles for his works. Gill travelled extensively throughout South Australia, and a consideration of place thus also forms an integral part of my thesis. An important part of my research process has been following in his footsteps in a new and inquisitive exploration of both the city of Adelaide and regional areas of South Australia.

The exegesis also investigates the artifice of carefully constructed imagery and employs the theory of the frame as a structural device, as explicated in Judith Butler's 2016 *Frames of war: when is life grievable?* In addition, the following critical chapters examine ST Gill's creative evolution during his South Australian years and the decades that followed, considering foremost his commitment to recording the realities of the Australian colonial experience through his artworks.

My investigation of ST Gill and the development of his social conscience that is clearly demonstrated in his art has been undertaken alongside a study of three contemporary female Australian artists who use historic found objects in their creative practice. The works of these women, each of whom is of settler descent, demonstrate their commitment to enacting settler responsibilities and advancing reconciliation with Australia's First Nations peoples through art. This commitment aligns with my own in the research and writing of the *Sketching Tom Gill* thesis.

CHAPTER 2

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The aspect of the country is anything but promising, in fact no place upon the earth's surface casts a damp upon the mind more desolating, than the view of his new country to the Emigrant, where he will first see it at the mouth of the Gulf of St. Vincent — but let him not despair, rather hope for better things further on.

The emigrant's friend, or authentic guide to South Australia, including Sydney; Port Philip, or Australia Felix; New South Wales; Van Dieman's Land; and New Zealand 1974/1848, p. 9.

Journal Day 17: Mount Pleasant, Cambrai, Sedan, Towitta, Ngadjuri Country, Meru Country, Danggali Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill

c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

Today I make sketches near Mount Pleasant, Cambrai, Sedan, and Towitta. I travel on dirt tracks to record the sights and sounds of hot summer back-country South Australia. For most of my walk I see only arid areas on either side of the road and occasional small flocks of bedraggled sheep that burrow into scrub shade far from the trail. Most paddocks are bare of trees and pasture, with great dust bowls indenting every gateway. There are sagging fences with rusted wire that glint rust-gold barbs in the afternoon sun. On Pine Hut Road there are miles of dry stone walls that stretch off into the distance. Then I see a single live eucalyptus tree at a parched waterhole close to the road (Title: *Portrait of a lone gum surviving*).

The lone gum stands on one side of the track offering the only shade for miles. It's an aged, thirsty, hurting tree, but its size indicates it has a brave and noble heart. The leaves on one low branch are varied in colour. Most are yellow and crisp. Soon they will drop to the ground and the afternoon wind will spirit them away. Some sprigs fare better and show darker green with tints of orange-gold on their tender little stems, bright as the late afternoon sunshine.

The lone gum has a large trunk, its skin pearl grey and speckled with patches of ochre-red. Some bark hangs from the trunk in strips, while other shreds lie in curls on the ground.

On a small part of the circumference, low enough to touch, there's a great lumpen scar that bulges into the western sun. It warrants a sketch of its own (Title: *Close study of an aged tree scar in the late afternoon*).

~~

2 . Beyond the frame

ST Gill's well-known Adelaide street scenes continue to play a prominent role in the general perception of the origins of South Australia's settler society. In judging these works with a contemporary sensibility, it is therefore critical to consider the importance of framing and composition, and the original purpose of the paintings.

Gill's watercolour *North Terrace, Adelaide, looking south-east from Government House guardhouse* (Figure 2:1) is one of the important works that toured England with the newspaperman James Allen's 1845 lecture series. This was a venture undertaken when Allen combined promotion of the South Australian colony with his return to England for family business. The North Terrace scene is typical of Gill's popular Adelaide paintings and shows a crowd of settlers enjoying an inclusive community in the lively new city. In Gill's many street scenes featuring this sort of style and composition, it can be supposed that Adelaide's copious early settler folk happily departed their homes, boarding houses, or rugged tent and reed hut accommodations and descended on the streets to engage in pleasure outings and business ventures. In the right-hand foreground of the busy North Terrace scene, one fellow stands in the middle of the road, absorbed in the contents of a broadsheet, his avid concentration plausible because in Adelaide's early years newspapers were the primary source of official information regarding shipping, auctions, and land and rental opportunities, as well as news from England and other colonies. Letters to the editor were also a good way to learn about matters of community interest.

Alongside the keen news reader, a young man chases after lively dogs — another key feature of many of Gill's pictures. On the right, and at various other points in the composition, small crowds gather near tidy homes. There are working folk and well-dressed genteel citizens paused in the road, demonstrating an egalitarian approach to both community and composition. In the foreground, a trio of soldiers in the smart red uniform of the British Empire appear to chat among themselves. The guardhouse architecture is prominent, with a soldier holding a weapon upright, and the long line of residential buildings is neatly completed with an illustrious two-storey brick-and-quoin building anchoring the entire scene in a display of weighty settler authority. In an aspect of the composition not typical of Gill's busy street scenes — where it is customary for the folk to direct their attention inward, resulting in the viewer's interest being held within the picture plane also — Gill has chosen to feature, in the foreground, a mounted policeman, turned in the saddle, looking outward over the heads of the soldiers. That Gill also depicts the white horse in the centre of the picture looking in the same direction reinforces the sense that something of great concern is occurring just outside of the frame to the left.

In *Frames of war* (2016, pp. x–xxx) Butler reflects on the frame as a conscious means of controlling how different human lives in the theatre of present-day war are portrayed and therefore valued in contemporary discourse. The most well-known of Gill's Adelaide paintings were taken to England on

Figure 2:1 ST Gill (c. 1845). *North Terrace, Adelaide, looking south-east from Government House guardhouse* (watercolour on paper, 27.4 cm x 39.7 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 26 September 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/north-terrace-adelaide-looking-south-east-from-government-house-guardhouse/24133/

the James Allen tour, and so it is feasible to liken the promotional usage of these works to that of photographs utilised for propaganda as discussed in *Frames of war;* just as the American government and media used the practice of embedding journalists in the Iraq war to limit perspective and maintain a restricted and controlled gaze (Butler 2016, p. 64), so too were Gill's commissioned mid-1840s paintings used to present a favourable representation of South Australia for the purpose of mobilising preferred responses. These included encouraging private investment in the colony and emigration by those who had the resources to own and develop land and businesses. It also included enticing workers who would labour within England's long-established class system, which had been transported to the colonies intact. However, unlike contemporary war in which there are various means to counteract official imagery, such as non-sanctioned photography and video, in the early Adelaide era there were no other artworks with comparable themes and compositions to challenge Gill's Adelaide scenes as true representations of colonial actuality. This was also well before the use of photography for recording history and aiding artists in the drawing of complex, multiple figures became possible and then routine. Speculation that Gill used models to aid in the composition of his elaborate paintings, particularly with regard to the numerous figures depicted, forms one of the foundational aspects of the following creative work.

Twentieth-century French film theorist Pascal Bonitzer coined the term 'blind space' during the period in which he and his contemporaries began to focus on the narrative impact of the on-screen and off-screen spaces in film (Kuhn & Westwell 2012, pp. 180-181). Alice Curry (2010, p. 61) in 'The blind space that lies beyond the frame: Anne Provoost's *Falling* (1997) and John Boyne's *The boy in the striped pyjamas* (2006)' (2010), employs Bonitzer's theory and the recognition of the power inherent in the unseen to argue that it is the role of the two texts' primary protagonists to direct attention toward the out-of-frame so as to return voice and visibility to those forced to subsist beyond the realm of the mainstream. While ST Gill is known to have needed commissions to meet his Adelaide rent payments and continue with his art practice, it can also be supposed that he worked hard to fulfil the James Allen assignment in good humour, filling the Adelaide streets with the sorts of characters that portrayed the new city pleasingly. Nonetheless, in *North Terrace, Adelaide, looking south-east from Government House guardhouse*, it is also conceivable that Gill deliberately positioned the foregrounded turning, mounted figure on the bay horse, along with the central white horse, to deliberately draw the viewer's eye outward, over the heads of the soldiers, beyond the frame and into the unseen. Given Gill's emerging empathy for the circumstances of Aboriginal people, it is plausible that he might have done so because he was alert to the dissembling nature of some of the imagery Allen requested for his lecture tour. Additionally, the reputation of Adelaide's soldiers for deliberately ignoring criminal behaviour

was well-documented. By the time he was working on the Allen commissions, Gill had been in South Australia around five years. He had also travelled regionally, including to Edward John Eyre's station at Moorundie on the River Murray, and so would have observed a great many instances of violence between settlers and Aboriginal people from across the wide demographic of South Australia's new citizens. This would have included some of those in law enforcement.

South Australian newspapers from the 1840s also report many antisocial and criminal incidences which might feasibly be occurring in the off-screen spaces of Gill's harmonious Adelaide compositions. Several describe the negligent conduct of Adelaide's soldiers in the face of violence, ranging from the direct perpetration of brutalities to the clear enjoyment of watching such incidents from the sidelines. Consider a news report of 23 October, 1846, detailed in *The South Australian* (p. 6), which described settlers in the neighbourhood of Wright's Cottages observing a man chasing an Aboriginal girl before seizing her by the hair and striking her savagely as she tried to seek refuge by knocking on doors in the street. The main point of the article is that five soldiers from the 11th Regiment chose to stand by and watch the spectacle rather than interfering to aid the young woman and capture the perpetrator.

Ignoring pleas for help from desperate citizens is but one example of the objectionable behaviour of British soldiers in the streets of Adelaide in the 1840s. Local news describes a citizen's complaint made direct to the newspaper, outlining his own experience of walking at night near a theatre only to have a pair of soldiers rush at him and give him a violent beating (*The South Australian* 1847, 26 March, p. 5). Nor was the brutality of the soldiers limited to citizens. There are also news reports of groups of soldiers assaulting police: in 1846, Private Thomas Reynolds, of the 11th Regiment was brought before court charged with being drunk and assaulting police, described as 'foaming at the mouth like a mad dog' and being found with other soldiers armed with belts, all brandishing them wildly as they cornered a police sergeant (*The South Australian* 1846, 12 May, p. 2). With these behaviours being prevalent in the 1840s, it is reasonable to consider that ST Gill might have used the composition of *North Terrace, Adelaide, looking south-east from Government House guardhouse* to draw attention to the myriad deficiencies of the soldiers that patrolled Adelaide's early streets. Gill's North Terrace soldiers are a self-absorbed trio, deliberately ignorant of whatever is occurring behind them in the unseen space.

Contemporary publications focused on Aboriginal and settler violence during the establishment of South Australia draw on news reports in colonial papers, a great many of which involve law

enforcement's disregard of criminal activities. Brutalities perpetrated on First Nations people on land taken for grazing grew exponentially as their traditional food and water sources diminished due to the large numbers of grazing stock imported to South Australia. The sporting and hunting practices of settlers also contributed to Aboriginal people's loss of food. As the difficulties increased, pastoral properties were often patrolled by armed shepherds and hutkeepers who were not only determined to prevent Indigenous people taking stock for food, but keen to exploit them in other ways. These included the use of Aboriginal women and girls for sexual purposes. As the colony expanded into areas great distances from Adelaide, the violence and lawlessness increased. Foster and Nettelbeck, in *Out of the silence: the history and memory of South Australia's frontier wars* (2012), write of a growing shift in attitude to Aboriginal people during the first decade of settlement and a sense of European entitlement that swelled with the spread of the agricultural industry. As a result, the settlers began to see themselves as the rightful owners and protectors of the colony's commercial future and to view the Aboriginal people as invaders. In the isolated outlying areas of the colony, the legal protections that were supposed to be due to Aboriginal people as new British subjects were easily ignored (Foster & Nettelbeck 2012, p. 79). The paradox of Indigenous and emigrant British inhabitants subsisting together while being virtually at war with one another resulted in the growing culture of violence becoming clandestine, with officials often party to the subterfuge (Foster et al. 2017, p. 3). Alan Pope, writing in *Resistance and retaliation: Aboriginal-European Relations in early colonial South Australia* (1989, p. 105), notes that by 1845 — the year James Allen departed with his promotional pictures — attitudes to the Aboriginal population had so deteriorated that one traveller to the regions boasted of giving flour laced with arsenic to the Aboriginal people along his route. This attitude was also circulated in England via missives from colonists. The following excerpt from a letter originally printed in *The Leicester Chronicle* was sent by Adelaide correspondent Samuel Bakewell to the editor of *The South Australian* and published locally in Adelaide on 7 January, 1845 (p. 3):

> There is an inveterate hatred evinced towards the aborigines by some of the colonists. At the station of an overland proprietor of cattle, some distance from town, the stockmen frequently ride out with their lengthy stock whips, and regularly hunt down all the natives they find within several miles of the hut; sometimes an occasional one is shot — of course *accidentally*. I was once at the station of a settler when three men came in, who were on their way overland to Port Phillip. In the course of their conversation with the hutkeeper, one of them remarked that he had a quantity of flour with him in which was a certain portion of arsenic, which he intended to give to the natives as he went along; and another settler acknowledged that he used to shoot them *to feed his dogs with*.

It should be noted that the correspondent, Bakewell, showed clearly in his letter to the Adelaide editor that he refused to believe that his fellow colonists behaved in this way toward the Aboriginal people and disputed the content of *The Leicester Chronicle* letter. In his own, he stated that he was 'satisfied that these inoffensive but unfortunate beings are treated by the settlers with remarkable humanity' (*The South Australian* 1845, 8 January, p. 3). Notwithstanding Mr Bakewell's optimism, however, it is known that by the time the promotion of South Australia was in full swing, a great many settlers from the regions, whether shepherds, hutkeepers, travellers or otherwise, carried guns, whips and swords, and did not hesitate to use them, often bragging of their brutal conquests. One hutkeeper, Owen Curran, cut off an old Aboriginal man's head after a disturbing local incident and kept it as a prize to hang on display in his hut (Pope 1989, p. 105).

ST Gill's peaceful watercolours of sheep and shepherds made during South Australia's early years give no hint of the rapid and brutal deterioration of settler-Aboriginal relations in the pastoral areas of the colony. Nor do they describe the difficulties of loss of place, food, and traditional lifestyle for Aboriginal people. Rather, they are filled with rolling hills, attractive trees and sheep grazing contentedly. From Gill's *Australian months and seasons* suite of watercolours, circa 1840s, *April* (Figure 2:2) shows a silken vignette of a relaxed shepherd minding a sheep flock with his dog alongside. The composition is made Antipodean and neatly bookended by Gill's typical delicate local flora, and a sheoak tree shelters the shepherd on the left while a grass tree adds interest on the right. Calm sheep graze in the middle ground, conveying a clear sense of the successful blending of ancient English farming practices with the South Australian environment. *Shepherd and sheep near Burra* (Figure 2:3), a monochromatic wash study created in the later years of the 1840s, shows a marked development in Gill's style in the pastoral and shepherd subject, with a greater sense of realism for the rugged bush environment. This is particularly clear with reference to the imposing foreground gum and a detailed painterly technique which demonstrates fidelity to the arid scrub and dry soils of South Australia. In the middle ground there are trees which appear to thirst in the conditions, and the big old gum has twisted, bare lower branches and only trace hints of flimsy foliage above. Yet still the surroundings convey a sense of bucolic peace, and there is no hint in the composition of the savage state of relations between settlers on seized lands and dispossessed Aboriginal people struggling to survive. Instead, numerous sheep graze undisturbed over distant hills as the shepherd watches over them in an untroubled manner. Audiences viewing *Shepherd and sheep near Burr*a are assured of another tranquil, uneventful 1840s day in South Australia's pastoral regions.

Figure 2:2 ST Gill (c.1840s). *April* (*w*atercolour on paper, 21.8 cm x 18.3 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 16 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134358298/view

Figure 2:3 ST Gill (c. 1847). *Shepherd and sheep near Burra* (watercolour on paper, 27.0 cm x 39.6 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 17 September 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/shepherd-and-sheep-near-burra/33405/

There are no First Nations people to be seen in the vibrant composition of *North Terrace, Adelaide, looking south-east from Government House guardhouse*. Likewise, *Rundle Street, Adelaide* (Figure 2:4), a scene jostling with bullock drays, workers, shoppers, and pedestrians, includes no visible Aboriginal people and nor does *King William Street, Adelaide, looking north* (Figure 2:5). However, that is not true of all of Gill's Adelaide scenes. In *Hindley Street, Adelaide, looking west from King William Street* (Figure 2:6), a pair of Aboriginal men stand isolated in the right-hand side foreground, quietly observing all the *bonhomie* of the new society. With the position Gill has allocated them in the composition, they are close to the action in a geographic sense yet distant in terms of acceptance. They do not participate, nor are they invited to. The painting *Bank of South Australia and Legislative Council Room, North Terrace, Adelaide* (Figure 2:7), in which a trio of Indigenous people is set to exit to the left of frame, also positions Aboriginal people as being distant in terms of belonging. In *Sturt's overland expedition leaving Adelaide, 10th August, 1844* (Figure 2:8), there are five Aboriginal people standing at the foreground picket fence near other, primarily working folk, most of whom watch the spectacle of dozens of the well-to-do preparing to accompany the expedition out of town on a jaunt. Three of these Aboriginal people are being spoken to, or monitored, by a policeman.

Aboriginal men seated at the feet of settlers is a theme in select Gill paintings. *Hindley Street, Adelaide, looking east* (Figure 2:9) features another busy street scene, and — perhaps to satisfy a growing English insistence on the fairer treatment of First Nations peoples in the colonies — there are two seated at the feet of a pair of rough working men. This shows a sense of congenial participation, and a watercolour of several years later, *The Beehive, corner Rundle and King William Streets, Adelaide* (Figure 2:10), continues this trope, with a lone Aboriginal man seated at the feet of a settler while all around him workers and shoppers in pairs and groups engage with enterprise and each other. It is interesting to note, especially regarding those of Gill's later works which begin to demonstrate an empathy to First Nations people, that he has deliberately added this one small, lone Aboriginal man as a symbolic figure — possibly as a token of unity, or perhaps in sorrowful recognition of an ancient race all too easily engulfed by the industry and scale of the dominion forced upon it.

Judith Butler (2016, p. xix) writes of 'ungrievable lives' — those that cannot be lost or destroyed because they already inhabit a lost and destroyed zone. In ST Gill's harmonious Adelaide scenes, South Australia's First Nations people are routinely positioned at the very perimeter, nudged into the unseen and almost out of frame, while around them great numbers of industrious settlers carry on, seemingly oblivious to them. Clearly, by the time Gill's 1840s pictures were made and used in publicity, South Australia's First Nations people had been relegated to the role of peaceful, marginalised onlookers. This makes these works appear tailor-made for eager English audiences.

In fact, the 1840s were a time of great unrest between First Nations people and the European settlers in Adelaide. Numerous articles in the colonial newspapers reinforce this reality, and many are shown throughout the creative component of my thesis. In creating a work based around the clear differences between what is demonstrated in the colonial newspapers and in the ST Gill pictures used in the promotion of South Australia in James Allen's 1845 English tour, *Sketching Tom Gill* invites the reader to scrutinise Gill's compositions with due regard to the violence, dispossession, and unfair treatment of the Aboriginal people of South Australia.

Figure 2:4 ST Gill (c.1845). *Rundle Street, Adelaide* (watercolour on paper, 27.3 cm x 40.5 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 4 October 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/rundle-street-adelaide/24139/

Figure 2:5 ST Gill (c. 1845). *King William Street, Adelaide, looking north* (watercolour on paper glued to card backing, 28.0 cm x 40.0 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 6 October 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/king-william-street-adelaide-looking-north-1845/24377/

Figure 2:6 ST Gill (c. 1845). *Hindley Street, Adelaide, looking west from King William Street* (watercolour on paper, 27.3 cm x 39.8 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 6 October 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/hindley-street-adelaide-looking-west-from-king-william-street/24135/

Figure 2:7 ST Gill (c. 1845). *Bank of South Australia and Legislative Council Room, North Terrace, Adelaide* (watercolour on paper, glued to linen backing, 27.3 cm x 39.7 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 29 September 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/bank-of-south-australia-and-legislative-council-room-north-terrace-adelaide/24374/

Figure 2:8 ST Gill (c. 1844-1845). *Sturt's overland expedition leaving Adelaide, 10th August, 1844* (watercolour on paper, 41.3 cm x 72.0 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 18 October 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/sturts-overland-expedition-leaving-adelaide-10th-august-1844/24201/

Figure 2:9 ST Gill (c. 1845). *Hindley Street, Adelaide, looking east* (watercolour on paper, 27.5 cm x 39.6 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 4 October 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/hindley-street-adelaide-looking-east/24376/

Figure 2:10 ST Gill (c.1849). *The Beehive, corner King William and Rundle Streets, Adelaide* (watercolour on paper 34.0 cm x 49.5 cm). Experience Adelaide, accessed 12 October 2023, https://www.experienceadelaide.com.au/photo-library/old-buildings-of-adelaide/beehive-corner-king-william-street-1849/

CHAPTER 3

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

A South Australian forest is truly magnificent, although there is not that variety in its trees, and the extent of its surface as in America, nor does it resemble in any manner an Indian scene; in fact everything is peculiar, as Mr. Barron Field says — this is the place where the humblest house is fitted-up with cedar — where fields are fenced with mahogany, and myrtle trees are burnt for fuel — where the swans are black and the eagles are white — where the kangaroo, an animal between the squirrel and the deer, has five claws on its fore paws, and three talons on its hind legs like a bird, and yet hops on its tail — where the mole lays eggs, suckles its young, and has a duck's bill — where there is a bird with a broom in its mouth instead of a tongue — where there is no quadruped with a hoof — where the animals mostly jump instead of run — where the pears are of wood, with the stalk at the broader end — and where the cherry grows with the stone outside.

The emigrant's friend, or authentic guide to South Australia, including Sydney; Port Philip, or Australia Felix; New South Wales; Van Dieman's Land; and New Zealand 1974/1848, p. 7.

Journal Day 21: Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

At Beehive Corner an old man spreads his fingers wide and throws piecrust, shouting at the sky (Title: *Man feeding wild birds in a street*).

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Journal Day 27: Adelaide Parklands, Kaurna Country.

Today's sketch is a study of eucalyptus leaves. On my palette I have turquoise, sage, and sap green. I sit under a parkland gum and paint pairs of elongated shapes along a stem line and then make a single small shoot at the top. I add watery sage to each of the leaves and smudge with my thumb. I let some of the leaves merge together, brushing in water and watching the shapes bleed. When the sun falls, I make careful shadows under each long leaf (Title: *Leaf studies at the end of the day*).

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Journal Day 31: Torrens Weir, River Torrens/Karrawirra Parri, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

At Pirltawardli, below the boating lake and the concrete weir, the river Karrawirra Parri becomes small and natural as of old. Saplings sprout in groups and untidy grasses tip the water's edge. Dead limbs fall from the older gums. A wildflower finds its way through a pile of dry bark and tips its face to the sun. My sketch progresses along the north side of the water (Title: *Small water landscape with blue morning shade and the moving reflections of reeds*).

Last light brings make-believe to the shadows of the golf course. In the purple mauve of dusk, it's easy to imagine the little clay schoolhouse William Cawthorne painted in his diary set among the trees (Title: *Long-ago school in a night forest*).

Nearby the water there is a brass possum sculpture perched on a large boulder. It's a memorial to the first families of Pirltawardli, and the critter's long back is worn dull by the eager stroking, patting touch of children. The sketch of the possum fills my page (Title: *Big possum with curled tailed remembering*).

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3. Artistic license and dark colonial truths

Collaging together historic found objects, colonial art and contemporary creative writing into the *Sketching Tom Gill* thesis has required me to develop a comprehensive understanding of the greater society in which ST Gill lived and worked in South Australia. While it is difficult to establish the exact dates of Gill's earliest pictures conclusively, many of his watercolours believed to have been created in the first years of the 1840s show entirely peaceable scenes featuring hard-working Europeans toiling in a variety of rural and domestic pursuits. These landscapes are charming, and

many of them depict Aboriginal people, albeit compositionally insignificant in scale, appearing to live in the very same manner as they had always done before the Europeans arrived and took vast amounts of land for town homes, roads, parklands, and agricultural ventures. Two watercolours from Gill's *Australian months and seasons* suite demonstrate this inaccurate trope. The pretty watercolour *Winter* (Figure 3:1), with its prominent celebratory hunter, shows three Aboriginal people positioned at a fallen riverside log on the right-hand side, directly at the base of a gum. Although the figures are small and deftly made with Gill's typical fine brushwork, the composition makes it clear that the group is unperturbed by the flurry of hounds and horsemen dashing across the countryside in pursuit of one of their traditional food sources. It is as if the Indigenous people exist in an untouched paradise, no matter what occurs around them. From the same series, the painting *Spring* (Figure 3:2) features two burly settlers engrossed in planting a cottage garden while a pair of Aboriginal people, one standing at ease with a spear, watch men labouring at the stream. They, too, are surrounded and yet unworried, and just as with those pictured in the *Winter* composition, form part of a delusion. These pictures were without doubt agreeable to the colonists, pleasingly conveying the British crown and government's ambition of creating a seamless integration between enlightened settlers and First Nations people in South Australia. It is thus clear that in his first years in Australia, Gill made a strategic choice to picture these divergent groups as being entirely without conflict. As a young artist seeking to establish himself, he would have recognised the wisdom of making paintings that were harmonious and highly desirable to potential customers.

Although there were some Indigenous people who attempted to integrate with the new society, however, Gill would have been acutely aware of the generally fraught state of relations between Aboriginal people and settlers. The Gill family arrived only three years after Proclamation, but by 1839 the early inquisitive, cooperative relations between the Europeans and the Indigenous people had already soured irretrievably. Alan Pope, in *Resistance and retaliation* (1989, pp. 14-15), writes of the swiftness with which the Europeans replaced their original good intentions with an undisguised sense of superiority in civilisation, enlightenment, and firepower. An excerpt from a very early newspaper editorial illustrates the settlers' boast of military prowess:

> The Protection of the colony has not been overlooked. No danger can reasonably be apprehended from the natives, for it is well ascertained that they are a tractable and inoffensive race when treated with kindness. Pains have already been taken to establish a friendly intercourse with them, and they will be treated in every respect with forbearance and consideration. Lord Glenelg has appointed an officer, whose especial duty is indicated by his title, the *Protector of the Aborigines*; and every exertion will be made to cultivate the good-will of the natives, and to improve their social condition. But His Majesty's Ship *Buffalo*,

which proceeds to Australia with the governor and officers, is to remain for a certain time on the station, and a sufficient force, we trust, will be provided by His Majesty's Government, which, with the colonists themselves, organized and trained to the use of arms, may be able to afford whatever protection is necessary (*The South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register* 1836, 18 June, p. 4).

Figure 3:1 ST Gill (c. early 1840s). *Winter* (watercolour on paper, 29.6 cm x 21.8 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 8 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134359656/view

Figure 3:2 ST Gill (c. early 1840s). *Spring* (watercolour on paper, 29.3 cm x 21.8 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 4 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134359133/view

From the time of Gill's arrival, Adelaide was beset with conflicts both large and small that lawmakers and citizens wanted brought before the court. This dissension included the settlers' distress at Aboriginal people refusing to dress in European cast-offs and the Kaurna people cutting down trees in areas the newcomers had reserved as parklands. The Aboriginal people's traditional practices of setting fires to flush out game and taking branches and bark to make shelters also rankled the Europeans, and prompted many to write to the newspapers in complaint. The new Adelaide Gaol

began to fill up with local First Nations people convicted of a variety of offences, many of which were misdemeanours instigated by settlers coercing starving Aboriginal people to carry out petty crimes in exchange for food scraps. Need, such as protection from inclement weather, was another reason Aboriginal people were convicted of crimes and imprisoned. In one example, in 1843, Puyurin, a Kaurna man, was gaoled for 12 months for the theft of a coat (Pope 1989, p. 47). Fear and distrust were rife in Adelaide when the Gill family arrived, and within six months there was a massacre at the Coorong after the brig *Maria* struck a reef off the south-east coast. The wreck of the *Maria* resulted in 26 passengers seeking guidance from local Aboriginal people. The settlers misunderstood the nature of the negotiations somewhere along the journey to Adelaide, and were slaughtered before travel was completed. Gill's family would certainly have read of the police retaliation for the massacres, which resulted in a pair of Aboriginal men being hanged on the Coorong beach, without trial, in a gruesome punitive display. This punishment further alienated South Australia's Aboriginal people and convinced them that the invaders were barbarous (Pope 1989, pp. 62, 66-71).

With the concurrent, disparate themes of the artistic license employed by Gill set against the reality of a darker colonial truth, my construction of the narrative collage for *Sketching Tom Gill* needed to acknowledge the subject matter's opposing elements. Ultimately, tracing the story of ST Gill's early South Australian art means bringing together light and shadow and truths and fictions. There is also a need to consider the realities of a commercial artist's crowd-pleasing approach to creating art for sale, set against the harsh new existence for Aboriginal people. It is the recognition of these conflicts that forms the foundation and creative direction of the elements of my creative work. It is also imperative to ensure that my thesis does not blur the line between the authorial invention which relates to Gill's experience in creating his art, and the colonial facts. In order to tell of the Aboriginal experience, I have therefore used historic found objects — transcribed clippings from 1840s newspapers — strategically juxtaposed with a creative delivery that serves to build a portrait of Gill and his Adelaide environment while simultaneously exploring his possible methods of working. In recognition of postcolonial and decolonial practices, the narrative has been deliberately constructed to not contrive a fictionalised voice for any Aboriginal person, or attempt to tell an Indigenous story of place. In devising the construction of the text, it has also been critical to ensure that there is no opportunity for the reader to suppose that the First Nations experience has been augmented or fictionalised. Instead, it is the historic articles which explain colonial attitudes and policies. Importantly, the newspaper reports are used precisely as found, with no grammatical editing or correcting of the material. In a minority of cases an excerpt has been taken from a larger piece, but only where the original context remains unchanged.

Just as the above criteria form the framework of the narrative, so have the contrasting themes been instrumental in determining the narrative points of view within the creative text of *Sketching Tom Gill*. Given that the historic news reportage is delivered in a factual, third person omniscient voice, my portrait of Gill has been deliberately contrived to take an inverse and supporting position through the epistolary form. The creative components employ the format of journal recordings and letters written to Gill via a first-person narrator, in a conversational tone designed to imagine his artistic process. This is a narrative mode calculated to ensure that the reader understands which parts of the work are in the realm of the imaginary and which are fact. Written sketches and scenes, designed to be contemplative impressions a little like an artist might make with a pencil, accompany these and are delivered in second person narration, a complementary extension of the epistolary delivery. David Lodge, writing in *The art of fiction* (2011, pp. 22-24) notes that the epistolary mode not only has the ability to create a sense of distance, but offers some features not found in the more familiar autobiographic mode, whereby the story is known to the narrator; letters can also recount a continuing process and a questioning, rather like a journal in which the narrator grows and learns along the way. In the case of *Sketching Tom Gill*, this resembles and parallels my research undertaken over years. Lodge (2011) further notes that the epistolary form enables the writer to reveal information in an unobtrusive manner throughout. He references a sample of Michael Frayn's epistolary methodology in *The trick of it* which discloses much about the letter writer and nature of the recipient along with the relationship between them. The paragraph below, an excerpt from a letter delivered in a conversational tone, additionally employs the use of the complementary, second person voice:

> What? Are my underpants aubergine? Of course, they're not aubergine! Don't you know anything about my taste at all? But she may be saying they're aubergine! That's what they do, these people. They embroider, they improve on the truth — they tell lies (Lodge 2011, p. 21).

Jerome Stern, writing in *Making shapely fiction* (2000, p. 183) notes the potential in employing the second person view as a methodology: 'There's an appealing quality to addressing your readers and overtly making them part of your story,' he writes. In the case of *Sketching Tom Gill*, this potential is designed to situate the reader directly in the streets of early Adelaide and Gill's art studio as he creates his iconic street scenes. *Making shapely fiction* (Stern 2000, p. 183) supplies the following example with the short, rhythmic sentences creating a strong sense of the reader being positioned in the room as the narrator describes the scene: 'You stood over the bed. You looked sorrowfully at the sleeping cat, the sleeping dog, the sleeping man'.

Stern (2000, p. 185) further notes that the second person methodology creates the effect of an external character, the 'you' figure, and that because this figure is implicitly 'every person', the mode can evoke a widely shared feeling. He also notes that the capacity of the second person view is at the early origins of artistic exploration and that it offers exciting opportunities for authors.

In exploring the various creative possibilities for the *Sketching Tom Gill* narrative, I determined that the opportunities offered by the epistolary and second person views made these frameworks appealing for a work that seeks to illustrate the contrasts between Gill's South Australian colonial art and some of the hidden realities of life in early Adelaide. The use of the second person voice also positions the reader alongside ST Gill to examine his possible working methodologies for creating complex, crowded landscapes with multiple foreground figures. In addition, the second person viewpoint offers scope to mount a sense of questioning and confrontation relevant to the *Sketching Tom Gill* project, which challenges Gill's colonial art archive. The opening pages of the Kate Jennings novella *Snake* (2011) provide a good example of this perception of confrontation. The repetitive use of the pronoun 'you' imparts an instigative and thought-provoking tone. It also conveys a feeling of memory and reflection:

> You were a taciturn child, skinny, with freckles, and you looked at people with a shy, sideways squint. You had a younger brother who was your opposite: a plump bully. One day your brother — he was ten, you were twelve — whacked his pony with a piece of wire, and the beast bucked, for the moment made as vicious as her master. As your brother fell, his boot snagged in the stirrup, and he was jounced against hard ground from the sheep shed to the house (Jennings 2011, p. 5).

In addition to penning letters, sketches and journal entries, and alternating these with the transcribed historic found articles and colonial artworks, in creating the *Sketching Tom Gill* narrative I have utilised a metafictional device of collating the material into themes and labelling the creative chapters 'envelopes', a process which parallels my research journey. As an example, one envelope contains several of Gill's sketches and wash studies of shepherds in the agricultural regions of South Australia. These, along with the letters, short written sketches and 1840s news articles, illustrate the brutal settler violence unlawfully enacted upon Aboriginal people on land which had been taken by pastoralists for grazing.

ST Gill's years in Adelaide occurred in an era before photography could be used as a reference to assist composition. This has been a primary influence in creating the portrait of Gill in the *Sketching Tom Gill* creative components. Many of Gill's best known works, particularly the

Adelaide scenes, purport to show lively activity and deft, individual portraits of many caught in a single moment of time; the narrative suggests techniques such as the use of models either in a studio situation or *en plein air* with which Gill might conceivably have composed the paintings and expands on Gill's established biography by imagining a group of young friends who volunteer themselves as artist's models for the purpose of enabling him to create complex figurative paintings. Gill's watercolours are small in size and filled with minute, exacting detail of people, clothing, signage, expression, architecture, vehicles, and animals. In creating friends for the young Gill, an overt authorial invention made purely for the purpose of hypothesising his working methods, I consulted several works for the characterisation of individual portraits, and have also found it beneficial to examine contemporary writing in the Australian history genre. This has been especially useful when investigating how present-day authors use description, dialogue, and the parameters of history to create a sense of place and of characters of particular demographics. Gill's lifelong appetite for liquor and his ongoing difficulties with money are well known, and in devising friends for him in the creative work, I determined that unencumbered working-class young people were most suitable. In the promotion of emigration to South Australia in the earliest years, many categories of workers were listed as desirable, including blacksmiths, bricklayers, carpenters, coopers, masons, millers, painters, glaziers, and plasterers. Tailors, tanners, wheelwrights, saddlers, bakers, butchers, shop vendors, and shepherds were also seen as advantageous. Unsupported women could expect to find employment as governesses, house servants, laundry workers, and seamstresses, with most likely finding accommodations with a family requiring services or as a benefit of working in a boarding house (*The emigrant's friend* 1974/1848, p. 14). Learning about the various roles young workers played in Adelaide's settler society became the catalyst for creating suitable companions to assist Gill, within the studio setting, in making complex compositions featuring multiple figures.

Lucy Treloar's 2015 novel *Salt Creek*, set in the Coorong, has been instrumental in teaching me about the domestic systems needed when living in a harsh setting, including the daily trials of animal husbandry. *Salt Creek*, with its emphasis on family relationships and frontier interactions with Aboriginal people and lawmakers, also exposes the weaknesses of the European colonial experiment in South Australia. The novel's strong sense of loss, especially for the First Nations peoples of the Coorong region, also helped to determine the mood for my creative work, which is similarly intent on examining the deficiencies of the European settlement of South Australia. In addition, Treloar's writing style inspired the tone of several elements in my creative work, particularly when evoking the wild places in South Australia. Treloar's (2015, p. 172) description of a grand old Coorong tree is haunting:

> It was a noble tree. Its tips of wet winter growth were green gold and bright as stained glass. And it was so various in its structure; its branches were formed by wind so it seemed they were trying to drag the tree free and flee towards the inland desert that Charles and his father had told of. There was a great scar all down one side where the surface of the trunk had been cut away, and a thick rind of new growth, muscular, bulged about its edges.

I have consulted many texts in order to gain a sense of the domiciliary minutiae of the day-to-day lives of Adelaide's new citizens in the 1840s. A number of these are nineteenth-century works; they include Richard Twopeny's *Town life in Australia*, JW Bull's *Early recollections and experiences of colonial life*, Robert Harrison's *Colonial sketches*, George Blakiston Wilkinson's *South Australia: its advantages and its resources* and *Recollections: Nathaniel Hailes' adventurous life in colonial South Australia*, edited by Allan Peters.

Several contemporary works of historical fiction have also assisted in the preparation of the letters and short pieces in *Sketching Tom Gill*. Hannah Kent's 2021 novel *Devotion* gave me new insight into the tribulations facing emigrant European families battling to make a living in South Australia's earliest outlying villages. Consideration of the hardships of these new-made emigrant environments, as relayed by Kent through dialogue and description, has helped me to imagine ST Gill riding out to regional areas of South Australia to make paintings and sketches of those struggling to make homes and productive gardens in strange soils. Beth Duncan's 2007 biography *Mary Thomas: founding mother* has been instrumental in helping me to better comprehend the intrepid nature of emigrant families prepared to leave behind established homes and businesses and embark on creating new lives in a foreign land. In addition, the independent female characters I created as friends for Gill were inspired by the strength of Mary Thomas and her tenacity in building a foundation in early Adelaide. Duncan's biography has been especially informative in terms of helping me envision the diverse roles of women in the colonial environment and the truly dynamic ways in which they contributed to the building and nurturing of the new society. Catherine Helen Spence's *Clara Morison* (1986/1854) gave me an intimate view of the strict behavioural expectations for the middle and upper classes in settler Adelaide, as well as providing an appreciation of the precarious circumstances of those intrepid young women who emigrated to Adelaide without family or philanthropic support. Spence's novel was also useful in illustrating many of the pedestrian aspects of daily life, and thus helpful in my endeavours to create female friends for ST Gill. Some examples of this include the conventions of nineteenth-century women's behaviour and dress when receiving visitors or leaving the family home for outings, and the protections expected when women walked alone in Adelaide's earliest streets, parklands, and other public spaces.

The Art Gallery of South Australia's monograph on the Chauncey sisters, *Colonial sisters: Martha Berkeley and Theresa Walker* (1994) was informative in its account of Adelaide society in the 1840s. The work has been especially rewarding in enabling me to understand the enormous significance of these important pioneering female artists in the history of South Australia's

colonial art archive. That Martha Berkeley and Theresa Walker worked in different mediums — oil for Berkeley and wax relief for Walker — with both giving the South Australian archive remarkable and unique representations of Adelaide's earliest settlers has provided a valuable resource for my research project. This has been particularly relevant in terms of developing my understanding the representation of society in the new colony. In addition to Jane Hylton's rich text, Martha Berkeley's detailed landscapes and finely executed portraits of some of Adelaide's most prominent and influential citizens have enabled me to better envision the realities of the English class system that underpinned the entire social and civic structure of the new colony.

Audrey Magee's 2022 novel *The colony* greatly facilitated my appreciation of how an artist considers light, mood, and composition in the early planning of a work and this comprehensive understanding has impacted my construction of the portrait of ST Gill at work in Adelaide in both the studio and *en plein air* environments. Magee's use of light, rhythmic language to describe Mr Lloyd's artistic process, including his various musings on titles as works are in development, was inspiring. It is a feature of many of Gill's works that he contrived lengthy, descriptive titles for some pieces, with these most often made in elaborate calligraphy at the base of the paintings. Magee's use of introspection for her central character throughout the artistic process helped me to consider how a painter builds a composition, particularly regarding landscape, and how the addition of a title can be used to enhance other elements of the work. Gill's use of the long explanatory title as a comment on the colonial experiment became more obvious as he developed in his later years. In the final decades of his career, after he left South Australia to work in Victoria and New South Wales, Gill used his work to make clear and forceful comment on the effects of colonisation on Australia's Indigenous peoples. The unambiguous titling of several of these works, prominent in the foreground of the paintings, adds much to Australia's colonial art archive and the present-day interpretation of nineteenth-century history. With these unequivocal statements evident on the face of the artworks, Gill also earns an important position in any present-day examination of colonialism, as well as its art archive.

I have also undertaken a great deal of reading into the French artist Rosa Bonheur to better understand artistic ambition in the avant-gardist environment of the nineteenth century. This research has been especially useful in comprehending an unconventional artist's singular urge to continue to create art in preference to all else, including adhering to tradition. Upon arrival in South Australia, Gill was determined to have his own studio and to pursue art commissions, to the exclusion of accepting any other work. *Rosa Bonheur: the artist's (auto)biography* by Anna Klumpke (2001) and *Art is a tyrant: the unconventional life of Rosa Bonheur* (2020) by Catherine Hewitt are two works which have assisted me in learning about nineteenth-century art practice, gender stereotypes, and the social expectations of

European women in this period of history. Gaining an understanding of these mores has been helpful in further developing female characters to be friends and models for Gill in my creative work and in building a studio environment particular to his struggling financial status.

The *Sketching Tom Gill* creative work follows ST Gill's years in South Australia chronologically and portrays his personal artistic evolution within that timeframe. Gill arrived in Adelaide as a young man of 21 and left a dozen years later for the Victorian goldfields. Within his South Australian period, it is possible to observe a development in style and thought within his artworks. Many of the watercolours progress from a distinctly English sensibility to a clear realisation that South Australia is unique in its landscape and peoples. These factors help to inform the overall narrative arc of the creative component. Creating a studio environment with a Bohemian sensibility for the young Gill proved important, as over time his work in South Australia diverged markedly from traditional conventions in European art. It is because of this clear departure from convention that I drew on my research into the art critic John Ruskin in the creation of some of the journal entries and letters to Gill in the creative work. Ruskin's seminal publication *The elements of drawing* (1971/1857) helped me understand and illustrate the very rigorous approach to landscape art imported to Australia with the European emigrants. In *Sketching Tom Gill*, the first person narrator examines the rigid European approach to drawing natural elements in order to explore the expectations of artists making Antipodean landscapes under the strict protocols of European tradition. These letters help to demonstrate how much Gill diverged from traditional conventions in his work as he grew to empathise with First Nations peoples and their landscapes. In my creative text, the archaic vernacular Ruskin employs to advise on the drawing of the natural world is presented in an italic font, to denote direct quoting of his terms and ideas.

The metafictional strategy of bundling news articles, pictures, journal entries, and letters into creative chapters addressed and labelled as themed envelopes in the creative component is designed to assist the reader in interpreting the fiction and nonfiction items bound together in the collage framework. It also helps to regulate the pace of reading and interpreting the material, some of which is distressing in content. This is particularly relevant to the delivery of the colonial news articles referring to Aboriginal peoples. The process of organising items into envelopes also reflects the daily organisational habits of my research journey and continues my long-held practice of writing letters and addressing them to inspiring historical characters. David Lodge, in *The art of fiction* (2011, p. 207), writes of metafiction deliberately calling attention to what he refers to as compositional procedures that disclose acknowledgment of the artifice, noting especially that certain metafictional techniques offer the ability to 'flatter the reader by treating him or her as an intellectual equal, sophisticated enough not to be thrown by the admission that a work of fiction is a verbal construction rather than a slice of life'. Linda Hutcheon,

in ‘Historiographic metafiction, parody and the intertextuality of history’ (2007, p. 10), notes that even though the past really existed, ‘we can only “know” that past today through its texts, and therein lies its connection to the literary’. Building on Hutcheon’s argument about knowing the past through its texts, I argue that there is a knowing of history through its carefully composed images and a frequent acceptance of truth because of reverence for the artistic process. I argue further that this assumption of knowing is inherently problematical for some works of art, and particularly so with reference to ST Gill’s Adelaide scenes. In the South Australian colonial archive, Gill’s Adelaide works, representing early European history, occupy a different category to the traditional landscape genre, and it is the emotive representation of the building of a new civilisation that ensures their ongoing popularity. It is their creative construction, in an era well before photography, that brings cause to doubt their absolute truth.

Historiographic metafiction, particularly in works with found objects, is an innovative literary category which successfully reframes history so contemporary audiences can assess its relevance in a modern context. In *True history of the Kelly Gang* (2000), Peter Carey utilises an extant historic piece of writing, the ‘Jerilderie Letter’, with the supporting narrative appearing to be made up of letters written by Ned Kelly to a daughter. This narrative framework results in a great deal of empathy from the reader for Australia’s most notorious outlaw, an historic character with the capacity to draw affection and ire both within and outside Carey’s novel. Margaret Atwood’s *Alias Grace* (1996) utilises clippings from nineteenth-century Canadian newspapers to anchor her historiographic fictional exploration to the known facts of an infamous brutal double murder case. Like Carey’s novel, Atwood’s portrait of Grace Marks results in a great deal of empathy from the reader of *Alias Grace*. Similar in their metafictional approach, both works are presented using a narrative structure with found articles that serve to frame the realism of actual life events within highly fictionalised constructs. The line between fact and fiction, of Ned Kelly in the case of Carey’s novel, and Grace Marks in the case of Atwood’s, is made deliberately obscure, with the overall result that the reader, while captivated, is left uncertain of which parts are truth and which are the imagined contrivance of the author.

In contrast, the *Sketching Tom Gill* narrative aims to achieve the inverse objective. Its intention is *not* to create a fictional environment in which the reader is uncertain of where fact and fiction intersect. Rather, it is deliberately structured so that the reader, invested in the truth of the colonial news articles, has cause to doubt the authenticity of the realities of Adelaide’s streets as depicted by ST Gill.

This is also a strategy contrived to allow the voice of the colonial reportage in the newspaper articles to remain the most impactful in the text, without challenge from any other within it. ST Gill's works are highly contrived and mask many of the actualities of life in early Adelaide behind their painterly facades. His South Australian works, particularly the famous street scenes, are still used frequently to illustrate colonial life in contemporary publications, and because of this they imply truth in an age where history in Australian texts is rightfully challenged. The stories of the Aboriginal experience remain untold in the public arena, and the newspaper articles which help to expose the colonial reality have long been relegated to archives.

In the present-day arena of truth-telling, it is First Nations people who are best positioned to articulate the experiences of Aboriginal people upon colonisation. However, there are several multimedia artists of Anglo-Australian descent who choose to use the impact of their art and renown to invite discussion and debate about the false histories taught to Australians in the twentieth century, the impacts of which continue to reverberate today. The utilisation of found objects by Anglo-Australian creatives to instigate conversations about Australia's history and its lineage of buried truths is one method which demonstrates, in graphic fashion, the problematical phenomena of history being presented entirely by select voices. In employing historic found objects and combining them with the authority of their art and acclaim, these artists choose to enact their settler responsibilities with the aim of healing relations in Australia between settlers and First Nations people. In using the power of the historic voices of settler colonials from the newspapers in the creative components of *Sketching Tom Gill*, I have made a commitment to align my own thesis ambitions with this strategy of exposing the hidden truths of South Australian history through the impact of found objects. Case studies of three female visual artists of Anglo-Australian descent, featuring several of their works in this field of exposing colonial truths, follow in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The Sea Coast of South Australia runs obliquely North West, about 1200 miles in apparent extent, although its actual length of Shore is very much greater, in consequence of the numerous inlets, particularly of two large gulfs called Gulf St. Vincent and Spencer's Gulf, and which run far up the country. The whole width of which, from East to West, is about 700 miles, and from North to South about double this; so that the whole extent of Country, called South Australia, is about three times as large as Great Britain and Ireland. Yet it be remarked, that a very large portion of this country is barren, particularly that towards the interior, which also is supposed to want water communication. The following remarks then apply to the Sea Coast only, or at any rate to the part at present inhabited, and this consists of about one-third well-watered barren land — a large portion rocky and mountainous — and the rest a fertile country — beautiful in aspect — highly productive, and healthy in the extreme. Here are no fevers — no periodical dysentery — no consumptions — no asthmas — no coughs — and no agues. Good health is in every countenance.

The emigrant's friend, or authentic guide to South Australia, including Sydney; Port Philip, or Australia Felix; New South Wales; Van Dieman's Land; and New Zealand 1974/1848, p. 8.

Journal Day 42: Gawler Place, Rundle Street, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill

c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

Today I draft an outline of an eager colonial patron arriving at your rooms. He's the sort of well-to-do fellow who aspires to a commissioned landscape of his new-built Adelaide home. The man wears a fashionable checked coat, a smart hat, and long calfskin leather boots. He carries an elegant

wooden cane with a silver tip fashioned in the shape of a foxhound. He has pale skin, red hair, and a trim moustache, waxed and curled. He lifts his chin and mops at his brow with a linen handkerchief (Title: *Portrait of a customer on a late summer day*).

The patron pauses in the act of entering the studio vestibule, taken by the surrounds. He looks at the pictures on the display easels and the bright gleam of polish on the tray atop the dresser. His lips purse with anticipation at a pitcher of lemon water with a set of tall glasses alongside.

The patron tugs at the bell rope, sending peals of sound into the studio (Title: *Portrait of a man paused in the act of requesting a commission*).

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4. Enacting settler responsibilities and the historic found object

In the October 2022 issue of *Ethnicities,* authors Avril Bell, Rose Yukich, Billie Lythberg, and Christine Woods write of a growing call for decolonisation in Australia, Israel, Canada, and Aotearoa New Zealand. The article, 'Enacting settler responsibilities towards decolonisation', notes that activists working in this area of advocacy must first recognise that progress risks being diminished if all forms of campaigning are regarded as decolonising, and so ensure that they differentiate decolonisation advocacy from advocacy for other issues such as diversity, equality, and inclusion. They write that authentic decolonising projects must necessarily be avant-garde and agitate for a dismantling of the structures that created colonialism, and also that it is not enough to merely strive for equality and fairness (Bell et al. 2022, p. 605). Like other Anglo-Australian creatives working in the field of truth-telling in the history of Australian colonisation, my research and the resulting thesis have the objective of creating greater awareness of the truths of the European settlement of South Australia, and most especially the violence and dispossession enacted on First Nations peoples. In addition to the following chapters, which outline episodes of that violence and dispossession, my thesis utilises select works by ST Gill to scrutinise the myth of the Australian identity as a European settler triumph, particularly as espoused in the popular stories and poems of revered writers like Banjo Paterson, Will Ogilvie, and Henry Lawson. Over the course of his full Australian career, which spanned four decades, Gill paid close attention to the effects of colonisation on Aboriginal peoples. He also began to appreciate their substantial contribution to the building of the nation alongside European settlers. Although Gill came from a family with deep Christian beliefs, many of his later paintings clearly demonstrate that his faith in the colonisation and Christianisation of First Nations peoples was severely diminished.

Bell, Yukich, Lythberg, and Woods (2022) write of the need to understand the true and lasting impacts of settler-colonialism. They discuss the effects of intergenerational trauma and of ongoing repercussions, describing colonising as 'the process of dispossessing sovereign peoples, underpinned by assumptions of religious, civilisational, racial, technological and economic superiority' (Bell et al. 2022, p. 605). The paper also notes the necessity of citizens belonging to colonised countries recognising that the making of homes and agribusiness for settlers necessarily resulted in the forcible seizure of Aboriginal lands and the commandeering of their sovereignty in entirety (Bell et al. 2022, p. 605). The examples of creative activists' visual, digital, and hybrid art discussed below seek to bring about wide-ranging community recognition and to provide support for those Aboriginal people — artists, activists, politicians, sportspeople, and media professionals — who are focused on driving solutions from an Indigenous-centred perspective. While the Anglo-Australian creatives examined in the following pages are of settler descent, Bell et al. (2022, p. 605) acknowledge that there is great opportunity in the activist field for others to contribute to the Indigenous-led activism through exposure and the generation of public debate. My thesis and personal circumstances align with the work of settler activists who use found objects in their creative endeavours to expose the true history of the colonisation of Australia and to invite public debate about history in the advancement of reconciliation.

Melbourne visual artist Helen Johnson uses her large-scale works to challenge the ongoing effects of colonisation while simultaneously working to expose historical untruths. Johnson's canvases are layered, intricate pieces composed of found objects, including reproductions of historic newsprint and colonial texts. She combines these with contemporary techniques such as photography, calligraphy, and collage. In *Seat of power* (Figure 4:1), created in 2016 and representative of the ongoing ties between Britain and Australia, naive line drawings of colonial power brokers jostle in close, posturing across the full breadth of the canvas in frock coats, top hats and breeches, their kitsch costumes adding to the sense of absurdity and overt colonial greed. Behind the figures, layered calligraphic newspaper imagery hint at the history of empire. Certain words are made to stand out boldly, with *Chair, British, Parliament,* and *Australian* particularly prominent. Unframed and flexible in presentation, *Seat of power* is a big statement that rolls down the wall and almost onto the feet of onlookers, and its imagery demonstrating the self-congratulatory behaviour of those who are born to power in a hereditary system is impossible to ignore. *Seat of power*'s male figures are an entitled rabble, cavorting amidst the historic Latin typography to show that they are the most learned and principled of men. The titular Chair — the great central seat strategically positioned to impact the viewer most – is a commanding presence in the work, showing what Johnson describes as the 'sycophantic relationship of Australia to

Britain' (Johnson 2016). Even with its naive representation, it is possible to picture the great carved shape and polish of it, and viewers of *Seat of power* immediately realise that the fawning male figures hold respect for this symbol of democracy while simultaneously feeling free to jig about in front of it in unruly schoolboy fashion. Johnson notes that the Chair is a 'fetishistic production' (Johnson 2016) of the Speaker's Chair given to the Australian House of Representatives by the United Kingdom branch of the Empire Parliamentary Association in 1926. At top left, an image of a laughing donkey tumbles backward, overcome with mirth at the antics below.

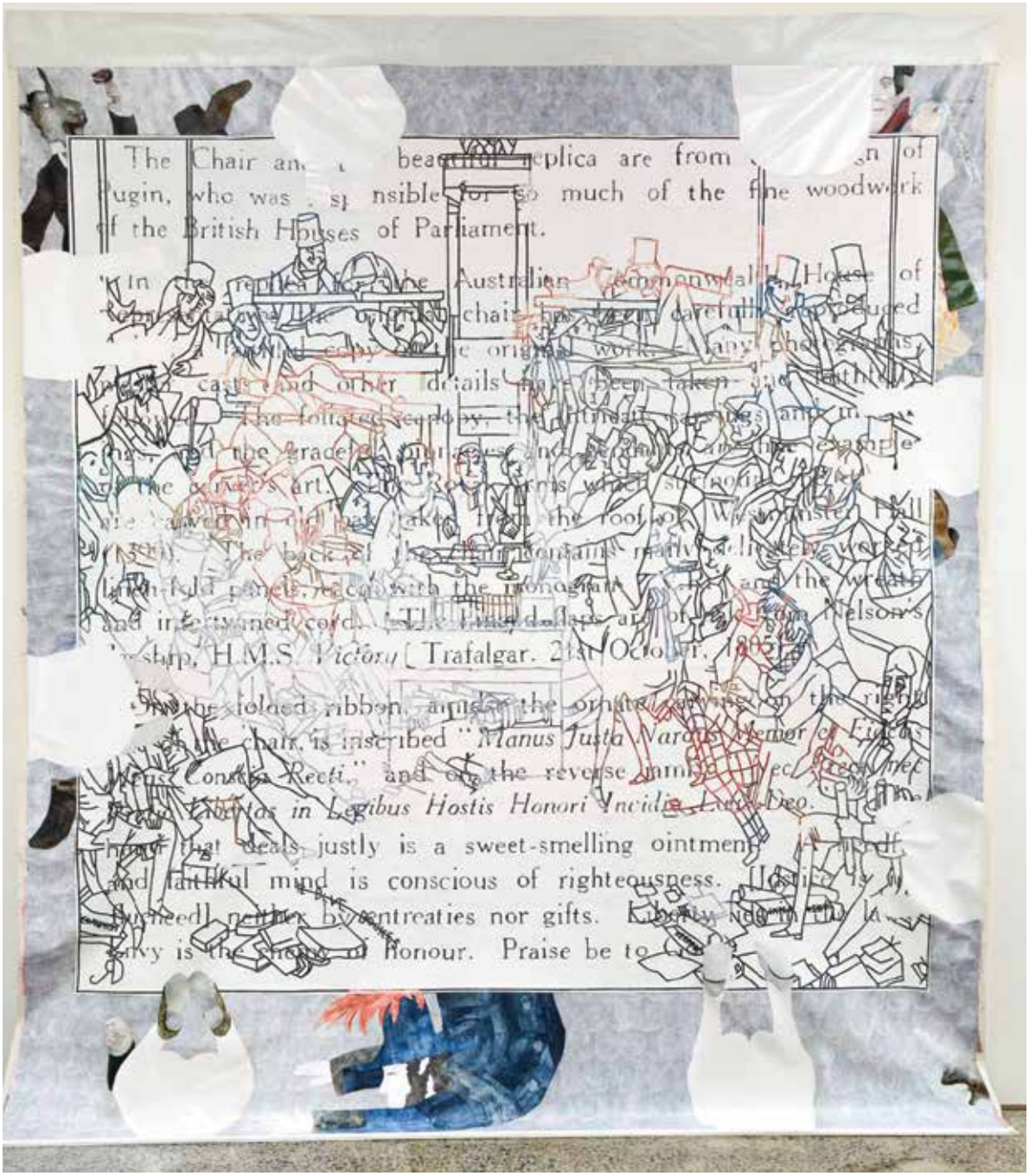

Figure 4:1 Helen Johnson (2016). *Seat of power* (found objects, calligraphy, collage, 393 cm x 325 cm). Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, accessed 27 September 2023, https://www.mca.com.au/artists-works/works/2018.8/

Surrounding the parliamentary mob, rough-cut white plastic forms representative of loose-legged, fat-bottomed figures — perhaps donkeys too — flail over the image in drunken, jocular fashion. Johnson writes that *Seat of power*'s intention is to force an exchange between the viewer and the greedy figures within it, and to create a feeling in the viewer that progresses beyond a simple aesthetic appreciation. Her work also seeks to encourage debate about Australian national identity and the legacies of colonisation (Johnson 2016). The issue of Australian national identity and the myth of iconic white men being the conquerors of the bush form important components of my thesis.

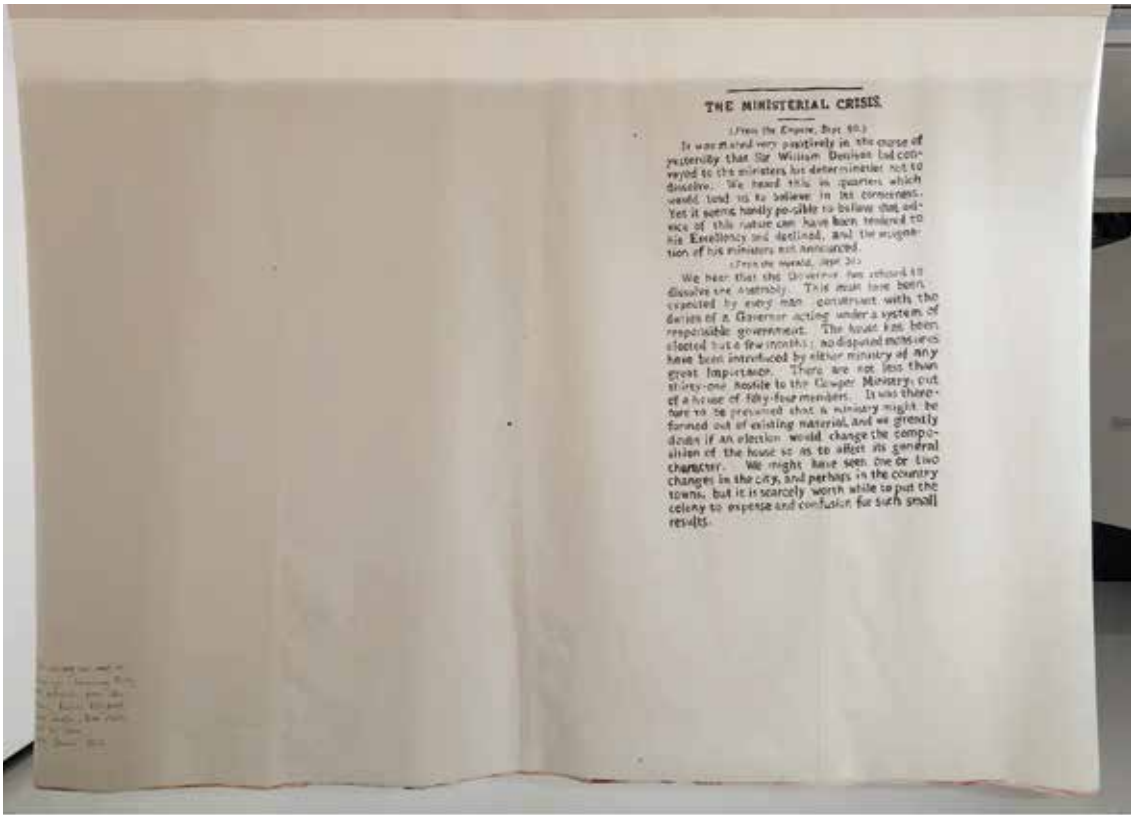

Figure 4:2 Helen Johnson (2021-2022). *Crises* (synthetic polymer paint and pencil on unstretched, double-sided canvas, 301 cm x 419 cm). The Conversation, accessed 14 September 2023, https://theconversation.com/how-artists-judy-watson-and-helen-johnson-are-stripping-back-australias-white-blanket-of-forgetfulness-188721

Helen Johnson's giant work *Crises* (Figure 4:2) uses an Australian historic text to make a powerful comment about the establishment of imported colonial structures that seek to justify the dominance of English white settler men with racist attitudes. *Crises* is an unframed, two-sided canvas that floats in its gallery space, inviting onlookers to walk around its form and peer close, interacting with the confronting imagery from both sides. In the textual component, Johnson has painstakingly reworked the lettering of an archival news article that captures the essence of a new British colony consumed with wealth, land acquisition, and an ancestral class system imported from England. The

copy highlights the privilege of titled men who control everything in the new colony. *Crises* was shown as part of Helen Johnson and Judy Watson's *The red thread of history, loose ends* (2022) exhibition, a show which focused on the impacts of colonisation on First Nations peoples as viewed through the sensibilities of two female Australian creatives. In presenting an archival piece of newsprint faithfully reproduced at immense scale, Johnson demonstrates her outrage at the colonial structures that underpin settler Australian society. Her choice to show an historic text to the contemporary viewer in order to make a personal statement about colonialism and its continuing effects aligns with my own intention in selecting archival texts to use in the creative component of *Sketching Tom Gill*.

Sera Waters is an award-winning South Australian textile artist and academic whose work utilises twentieth-century found objects and the paraphernalia of domestic crafts and kitsch souvenirs to examine the effects of colonialism and the passing of time in our national consciousness. Waters's art routinely evokes a sense of hope, focusing on the ways in which universal handiwork skills, such as embroidery, weaving, and cross-stitch can imagine a coming together of different cultures to make traditions for the future. The works are sculptural in form and serve to examine the many ways in which small, insignificant gestures such as the hackneyed and the everyday use time and repetition to challenge previous values of home-making and domesticity. These varied works remind gallery audiences of how imported colonial practices have been quick to age, and yet can be reworked to engage modern viewers in debates about the untruths in our learned history. Waters writes of her own emigrant ancestors creating complex webs of stories which have passed through generations. She notes that it is the legacies of these family stories, and especially the notion of 'tangles', that she now reinterprets into knotty objects that investigate her own place in the present. In her written pieces, Waters (2012) offers an insight into her personal response to colonialism, particularly in the unique South Australian environment:

> I often imagine the infinite individual moments of time passed here 100, 200 plus years ago, accumulated and compressed atop one another, like layers of earth but consisting of peoples' (and flora and faunas') lived experiences. I like to think there remain standing Eucalypts which witnessed the last two centuries of unimaginable occurrences. Perhaps their roots cling to one another deep underground, holding hands, sharing in what they have seen.

Stumped (together) (Figure 4:3) from 2011-2012, reimagines wood and string into a pair of eucalypts plundered by Europeans, painstakingly recreated in Waters's exhibition in intricate textile form. Complex stitching brings together myriad interlocking panels of pristine, machine-cut wood in

methodical patterns. The tops of the stumps are made flat, burnished and utterly unnatural, evoking a sense of the greed of the colonists quickly seizing and shaping the natural world entirely to serve their own greed and with total disregard for the Indigenous inhabitants. In contrast, the elaborate string weaving below, evocative of the remnants of ancient trees left violated, are made swarthy, secretive, and dark by soil and the elements. Each of the stumps has a multitude of tangled roots that curl and cling to the others, further evoking a sense of entangled stories and past experiences. These are roots that make every attempt to hold fast to the safety of the subsoil. My consideration of my own ancestors, and the roles they might have played in the building of South Australian society and identity, has had great impact on my research, particularly with regards to exploring some of South Australia's most isolated and bushland places close to the River Murray, mid-north, Lake Torrens, and Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park.

Figure 4:3 Sera Waters (2011-2012). *Stumped (together)* (found objects, wood, light, string 150 cm x 65.0 cm). serawaters.com.au, accessed 24 October 2023, https://serawaters.com.au/Stumped-together~180

Fingers and foliage (Figure 4:4), from Waters's 2022 *Future traditions* exhibition, utilises found objects from the mid-twentieth-century Australian souvenir industry. Here, the varnished local wood is fashioned into a naive shape of Australia, with the iconic metal kangaroo and banksia bouquets being stylised images of gaudy Australiana that settler culture made iconic. In *Fingers and foliage*, the found object is augmented with delicate embroidery inset into ovals, the handiwork reminiscent of European feminine crafts imported as part of the colonisation of the new outpost. In this artwork it is clear that female oppression is a part of South Australia's colonisation, and the pale white hand in the right-side panel reaches out from within a sea of foreign wood and exotic flora as if seeking rescue from its patriarchal regime and strictures of colony, class, and gender expectations. These are issues important to the research and frameworks for my own narrative. In building an intimate portrait and speculating about Gill's artistic methodologies, it was critical for me to understand the restrictions placed on women in early Adelaide. In creating female characters to be friends with Gill in my sketches and letters, it was also important to understand the roles, routinely unheralded, women played in building the new emigrant society.

Figure 4:4 Sera Waters (2022). *Fingers and foliage* (found objects, frame, cotton, 40.0 cm x 34.0 cm). serawaters.com.au, accessed 18 October 2023, https://serawaters.com.au/Fingers-and-Foliage~1361

Waters considers old trees important witnesses to colonisation. During a 2018 Perth gallery residency, she stitched new limbs onto a photographic mural of a fallen gum, the public stitching process serving to bring daily attention to the ongoing effects of colonisation on the natural environment and Indigenous peoples. *Limb by limb* (2018) (Figure 4:5), made of a vinyl wallpaper mural and dyed skeins of wool, is a large-scale fallen gum performance piece stitched entirely during the residency. A great deal more than a dead gum, it invites onlookers to understand the long-term, nurturing nature of trees. Inside its textile framework there are inviting burrows indicative of homes and safety for native birds, fauna, and insects. Solemn eyes peer out cautiously, illustrating how the giant tree, over the course of its long life and whether upright or fallen, gives shelter to many. The tangled root pattern implies that this is a tree that has aged gracefully and toppled naturally, and Waters's representation of the majestic old gum makes a stark contrast with the line of dark green European trees in the distance. The rigidity of this background landscape serves to demonstrate the settlers' greedy conquering of the Australian landscape and the many ways in which they changed it to suit themselves. When speaking at the Perth residency, Waters noted that *Limb by limb* was designed to explore the shifts in Australian ecology during the time since European colonisation and that much of her work is about what is not learned in history, and how problematical it is that history is commonly set into a linear narrative and presented by select voices and that her intent is to bring 'its knots and tangles into the open' (Coleman 2018). Waters's emphasis on her family history, with its many entanglements in the growth of settler South Australia, aligns with my own research journey into colonial art and local history, and is particularly relevant to my research practice of writing daily journal responses to my exploration of nature, place, and the uncovering of some of South Australia's hidden histories.

Figure 4:5 Sera Waters (2018). *Limb by limb* (found objects, vinyl wallpaper, skeins of wool, 200 cm x 700 cm). serawaters.com.au, accessed 4 October 2023, https://serawaters.com.au/Limb-by-Limb~660

Australia's multi-award-winning visual and digital artist Joan Ross has spoken a great deal of the strong connections she feels to landscape, both in Australia, where she was raised, and in her native Scotland and of how she feels the best way of communicating with her audience is by combining elements of place with those of relatable present-day living; she is thus always strategic in creating the tensions that these juxtapositions enable (Blom 2016). Ross makes frequent use of historic found objects, with many of these being paintings by revered colonial artists including Joseph Lycett and John Glover. Through the intersection of painterly colonial landscapes and flashy, contemporary elements, Ross examines postcolonial legacies in present-day Australia, and it is the jarring collocation of the garish, hi-vis yellow-green colour which makes her mixed-media, visual art, and digital projects arresting. Ross notes that it was after the September 11 attacks on New York's World Trade Center towers in 2001 that she began to observe a greater use of hi-vis apparel by all manner of emergency, trade, and public workers, primarily men, leaving her with a growing sense of discomfort that men wearing this hi-vis uniform appeared to be able to do anything to the land with impunity. Ross began to view the hi-vis colour as a metaphor for colonisation (Blom 2016). In her works, fences, fields, fashions, pets, furniture, foliage, and boat sails all are suffused with this intrusive colour that interrupts and subverts the work of historic artists. In *The claiming of things* (Figure 4:6), an obtrusive, luminous, yellow-green picket fence cuts rudely through the natural landscape as an elaborately dressed colonial pair stakes a claim on one side of it. The female figure, armed with a spray can, makes ugly graffiti on an ancient rock face in lurid orange and violet, her final flourish a dollar sign. The male figure has a cravat soaked in hi-vis yellow and holds onto a

Figure 4:6 Joan Ross (2012). *The claiming of things* (digital animation video frame). joanross.com.au, accessed 2 October 2023, https://joanross.com.au/The-claiming-of-things

sheep, an enduring symbol of the wealth of those with land and estates. This is a work which illustrates capitalist greed — clearly these two claim the land for themselves and plan to keep everyone else out. The yellow-green pickets, compositionally arresting, form a foreboding border that divides the formerly nurturing and inviting countryside into two distinct parts.

In similar dramatic fashion, Ross's three-panel mural *Warra warra wai* (Figure 4:7) utilises found objects and collaged elements of the farcical to critique the colonial history of New South Wales. *Warra warra wai*, meaning 'We have sung the same songs for millions of years', examines connections to place, both those of First Nations people and those of the European settlers (Ross 2019). In this graphic observation of conflicting cultures, the hi-vis colour symbolises control and is a metaphor for not only colonisation, but also the patriarchal structure of the new society imported from Britain. Large areas are steeped in thick hi-vis sludge. The entire harbour is filled with a yellow-green sea, and a bright foreground sign loudly commands visitors to keep off the grass. Birds are employed in the work to impart an impactful message, being compositionally prominent and in one case headless. This serves to remind viewers of the European settlers' compulsion to kill specimens on sight for their collections with no regard for the environment, species longevity, or the needs of First Nations peoples. At the base of the picture, cannons, the machines of colonial war, burst forth a plump, balloon-like greeting in a glitzy, nonsensical welcome. Here Ross engages with her contemporary viewer and is most effective at conveying the messages around the impacts of colonialism on Aboriginal peoples. In addition to these myriad modern inclusions and a twenty-first-century interpretation of the clash of settler and Indigenous cultures, the background landscape shown in the colonial painting is one that has already been seized, divided, and cultivated in the European tradition. The gardens surrounding the domineering building on the hill are sectioned into a patchwork of orderly shapes

Figure 4:7 Joan Ross (2019). *Warra warra wai* (hand-painted pigment print on three sheets, each panel 98 cm x 108 cm, original painting by Joseph Lycett). Art Gallery of New South Wales, accessed 5 September 2023, https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/222.2019.a-c/

and the European visitors seem set to enjoy the horticultural spectacle in their careful, mannered way. In contrast, the panel with the giant owl shows a group of Aboriginal people, small in scale and compositionally inconsequential, their ancient world suffocated by the great wide ocean of hi-vis sludge weighing down from above. Their time-honoured song, the titular *Warra warra wai*, is made of fragile lettering and seems almost lost in the sky overhead. Ross often remarks that one of her priorities in examining colonialism and its effects on the culture of modern-day Australia is to scrutinise issues of boundaries, ownership, and lack of respect for place and sovereignty (Ross 2019). In frames from her 2015 digital animation *Colonial grab* (Figure 4:8), an English woman, elaborately dressed in hi-vis colouring with a spectacular feathered hat, sits at a polished table intent on making ikebana out of a section of John Glover's trees. These are acts of total disrespect, notes Ross, adding that it is this very entitled sense of possession and greed that best describes how she views the impact of colonialism on First Nations peoples (Ross 2015). Similar discoveries unearthing the willful disregard for the sovereignty and traditional practices of Indigenous peoples in my own research reveal much about the harms inflicted on South Australia's First Nations peoples, and these have aided in forming the creative components and collaging of the elements of *Sketching Tom Gill*.

Like Ross, Waters, and Johnson, ST Gill developed an acute sense of the inequities of settler culture during his years in South Australia. As he matured artistically, he began to focus on social

Figure 4:8 Joan Ross (2015). *Colonial grab* (digital animation video frame with original painting by John Glover). Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia, accessed 14 October 2023, https://www.mca.com.au/artists-works/works/2015.8/

justice themes and conveyed his beliefs in deft commentaries shown via portraits of individuals and groups. Many of these works illustrate the impacts of settler-colonialism on place and the treatment of First Nations peoples. Gill's artworks, particularly in his final Adelaide years, demonstrate that he was a singular artist primarily concerned with recording the human condition, and this sensibility clearly overtakes any notion of creating accomplished pictures in the European tradition. These later works demonstrate a restlessness that leaves us today with a recognition that what Gill wanted above all was to record the passage of progress through social commentary. Many of his works give a sense of being made almost too swiftly and with scant heed paid to rules of tradition and form, perhaps even suggesting that these conventions were irksome to him. My *Sketching Tom Gill* thesis, via the critical and creative components woven together throughout the length of the project, seeks primarily to build a portrait of a free-spirited journeyman artist with a social conscience, most content when making intuitive sketches with a focus on feeling rather than conforming to European tradition.

Gill's later work also demonstrates that he paid great attention to the daily, intimate experiences of Indigenous people and includes satirical works depicting settlers and Aboriginal people interacting in Melbourne. Many of these illustrate the pretentious attitude of Europeans. Sasha Grishin, in *ST Gill and his audiences* (2015b, p. 12) notes that much of Gill's work was produced with a 'definable function in society', and that it was art produced commercially as information and which was circulated to bring awareness to a broad audience. In Gill's busy Adelaide scenes, it is critical to think beyond the immediate appeal of colour and composition, and to examine the various individual portraits and speculate on the diverse range of settlers depicted. Although my creative work hypothesises Gill's use of studio models to refine postures and expression, it is known that he moved often amidst the new society, sketching quickly, and his art demonstrates that this aspect of community interaction was of special interest to him. Adelaide's earliest citizens came from diverse backgrounds and held a variety of opinions on many matters. This is made clear by an examination of the colonial newspapers and the range of contributors who wrote letters and opinion pieces for publication. Many of the colonists were distressed by South Australia's governance, having expected the colony to be enlightened in the matter of relationships with Indigenous peoples, as these matters had been given careful attention in Britain before the colony was declared. In a prescient echo of later generations choosing to enact their settler responsibilities as outlined by Bell, Yukich, Lythberg, and Woods (2022), one settler wrote to the Protector of Aborigines expressing dismay at the Commissioners not fulfilling the Colonisation Commission's commitment to First Nations peoples in South Australia. The correspondent then proposed recompense, as detailed in the letter, which was reprinted in *The Southern Australian* in 1838:

> Sir, — Please receive herewith the sum of £3 16s. 6d., being the interest at the rate of 10 per cent., on one fifth of the purchase money of the town land, purchased by me on the 27th March 1837.
>
> This sum, in accordance with the pledge given by the Colonization Commissioners for this province, and in accordance with the principle therein signified in their first annual report, wherein it is stated they were to receive one-fifth of the lands to constitute a permanent fund for the support and advancement of the natives ; I beg leave to pay the above sum for that purpose, seeing the Commissioners as yet have neither fulfilled their pledge in this respect, to the public, or carried out the moral principle signified. Under these circumstances, it is impossible to let the question rest, and until that be done, I feel it my duty to pay to the proper authorities, for the use of the natives, this yearly rent — the above sum being one and a half years rent, viz. from 27th March, 1837, to 27th instant.
>
> I disclaim this to be either donation, grant, or gift, but a just claim the natives of this district have on me as an occupier of those lands.
>
> A. TENANT (*The Southern Australian* 1838, 15 September, p. 3).

My research into the creative evolution of ST Gill's work over the course of his full Australian career has uncovered parallels with the objectives of the three contemporary female artists outlined above. Gill travelled widely and met many people from all nationalities and backgrounds, and he developed a strong sense of the inequities and destructiveness of the colonial system. Gill arrived in South Australia at a point in his life when he was poised to embark on a new career, and his artworks show that he evolved from following European convention in the fields of drawing, portraiture, and landscape into an egalitarian artist who made paintings of many people and places in South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales. His late-career art demonstrates acute observations of the failings of colonial society, and in particular its impacts on Indigenous peoples. My investigations beyond the frame of the art of ST Gill, along with my study of contemporary artists who work to expose the hidden truths of Australian history, has led to my decision to utilise a combination of critical and creative forms with textual found objects to instigate truth-telling about the development of settler society in South Australia.

Helen Johnson uses the form of collage and the sense of space to confront her viewers with colonial texts, drawings, photography, and opinions. Her work often invites the audience to circle around great loose-hanging canvases and to peer close at historic language. Sera Waters employs twentieth-century found objects stitched and collaged together to examine stories, entanglements, and the passing of time. In performance pieces, she invites public discussion. In smaller gallery works, viewers marvel at the domestic skills perfected by generations of women subjected to colonial

practises and patriarchal systems. Joan Ross collages colonial paintings with garish contemporary culture in two-dimensional art, digital works, and film. Each of these women encourages deep contemplation of Australia's hidden histories and invites debate around the effects of colonialism on Indigenous cultures and present-day societies. In a similar, experimental fashion, the creative components of my thesis are constructed around a framework of envelopes that contain a collage of colonial artworks, texts and my personal creative reactions to history, time, landscape, and culture. In my thesis, I write to the past through the medium of letters, sketches, and journal entries, and bundle my ideas and vignettes into the envelopes. With this framework, I encourage close contemplation of the themes as individual topics and invite my reader to absorb, reflect, and pause before moving on to the contents of the next envelope. This construction of the material is strategically devised to create an environment similar to that of gallery pieces in an exhibition, in which the space to reflect between pieces is critical to understanding the overall intent of the works.

Like Johnson, Waters, and Ross, *Sketching Tom Gill: Art, history, and a creative exploration beyond the frame of ST Gill's utopian visions of colonial South Australia* employs archival, textual found objects as truth-tellers and collages a narrative of facts, fictions, and contrasts to suggest new compositions and a unique interpretation of South Australian history and its colonial art archive. Like the works of Johnson, Waters, and Ross, *Sketching Tom Gill* has the pursuit of reconciliation as its foundation.

CHAPTER 5:

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The heat of summer is not greater in general than in the South of France, or Italy, indeed the climate much resembles these places. The cold of winter is very rarely a frost — snow is wholly unknown — the sea breezes prevail all day, and temper the air to a degree of delightful coolness — a hot wind from the North blows five or six times during the Summer for ten or twelve hours at a time, which scorches vegetation, and distresses the inhabitants: but this trifling inconvenience is all the Colonist has to suffer from the climate. It is truly congenial to English constitutions. South Australia is warmer than this country certainly, but being so near the sea, and intersected by gulfs, creeks, and rivers, the heat is much less oppressive than at Sydney. It particularly also suits the constitution of Children, which is far from being the case with Southern Countries generally.

The emigrant's friend, or authentic guide to South Australia, including Sydney; Port Philip, or Australia Felix; New South Wales; Van Dieman's Land; and New Zealand 1974/1848, p. 8.

Journal Day 23: Gawler Place, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill

c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

I picture your first studio in Gawler Place set out for visitors. There are three rooms. The first is a small vestibule used as a reception area. Here, the front door is left open to the street when you are in attendance and there is a brass bell to ring for attention (Title: *The welcoming artist*). Within this little anteroom, there is a pair of handsome display easels holding finished works that demonstrate your skill at landscape and portraiture. Nearby, a small dresser offers business cards on a tarnished silver tray. Close beside are two upholstered chairs for callers (Title: *The reception of the artist ST Gill*).

Another door leads to your studio. This room, larger than the first, has windows allowing good light. There are several easels and a long workbench piled with books, papers, brushes, and jars. Makeshift racks, filled with workaday objects such as jugs, bowls, and other household articles, line one section of the studio. There are stools scattered and sketches in various stages of completion pinned to walls (Title: *The artist's studio, view 1*).

On the shelves are innumerable things to inspire the art of the still life. Here are the skull of a horse, the chalk-white leg bones of long-dead cattle, two urns, a dull kettle, and a collection of brass lamps (Title: *The artist's studio, view 2*). In one corner of the room stands a folding screen with hooks for donated clothing and hats, used as costumes for models (Title: *The artist's miscellaneous garment collection*). In another corner is a black stove with a box for split wood alongside it, and a weathered chest that serves as a table. A collection of mismatched armchairs is positioned in a conversational group of four where friends sit and warm their hands at the stove. A large threadbare cushion is on the floor nearby (Title: *Interior of cosy studio with companions and sleeping dog*).

A small low doorway tucked behind the stove leads to a windowless boxroom, and it is here you have made up your bunk (Title: *Corner where the artist sleeps*).

~~

5. Not disposed to make voluntary transfer

South Australia's origins were vastly different from those of the other Australian colonies. Edward Gibbon Wakefield, the original promoter of the British settlement of South Australia, argued that land in the new colony should be sold to investors at a price adequate to fund the passage of emigrant workers so that the use of convict labour could be avoided. In 1834, the British parliament agreed to establish the South Australian Colonisation Commission to raise funds for the establishment of a British colony in South Australia. Its support for the plan was conditional upon the sale of preliminary land orders to the amount of £35,000, along with £20,000 for an emergency fund (Prest 2019, pp. 301, 504-505; Hylton 2012, p. 17). In addition to the raising of revenue through land sales, the issue of proprietary and human rights for the Aboriginal peoples of British colonies had become critical for the government. Parliamentarians in the new British government of 1835 included well-known anti-slavery campaigners who lobbied vigorously for their rights (Prest 2019, p. 12).

In addition to documented records, a great deal of what is now known of the earliest Adelaide comes from the South Australian colonial newspapers. This abundance of social, political, and mercantile knowledge is not only found in official reportage, but in the correspondence penned by eager members of the new settler community keen to convey their own ideas, perspectives, and experiences. Letters to the editors of early Adelaide newspapers were routinely published and often, so were important correspondences and reports from officials. Whether to please James Allen, then proprietor of *The South Australian Register*, or as a more general recognition of the importance of newspapers, Gill's *Rundle Street, Adelaide* painting (Figure 5:1), another of the key works that toured England with Allen, features a gentleman, back to the viewer, engrossed in a broadsheet. It is speculated that the figure is based on James Allen, and it is plausible that Gill might have used the motif of settlers engaged in reading news in the street as a deliberate strategy to please his most important patron. It is equally pleasing in the modern-day appreciation of Gill's art to recognise not only the narrative opportunities enabled by the insertion of a reader into a figurative tableau, but also the importance of the epistolary form as one of the leading means by which issues of policy, administration, and social commentary were conveyed through the medium of newspapers. The importance of newspapers in Adelaide society may have inspired Gill to strategically position many such interactions into his compositions; certainly the theme of a citizen reading the news in the street is one of his most often used tropes. Acknowledgment of the pivotal role of newspapers in colonial society has been an important factor in my decision to use news articles to

Figure 5:1 ST Gill (c.1845). *Rundle Street, Adelaide* (*w*atercolour on paper, 27.3 cm x 40.5 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 4 October 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/rundle-street-adelaide/24139/

explain colonial attitudes and policies in both the critical and creative components of *Sketching Tom Gill*. Recognition of their significance in colonial life has also been instrumental in determining the narrative framework of my thesis.

In July of 1840, Charles Sturt, then the Assistant Commissioner of Lands, at the direction of Governor Gawler placed two letters of correspondence in *The South Australian Register* pertaining to the allocation of land sites through the Wakefield System of Colonisation's preliminary land orders scheme (*The South Australian Register* 1840, 25 July, p. 7). Sturt's placement of Official Correspondence into *The South Australian Register* in order to make known the most important particulars regarding the expectations of settlers and the rights of First Nations people, was done in response to a group of owners and representatives of land orders who had written in complaint to Governor Gawler, who was also the Resident Commissioner. In the correspondence, the signatories protested that they were not given preference of choice within certain desirable districts, as these had been removed from public offering in favour of selections made by the Protector of Aborigines for the First Nations people. Sturt's reply to the group, published along with the original missive, explained the Royal Instructions to the Governor and reiterated the intentions of the British Crown. This directive was that the Aboriginal inhabitants were to be protected in the free enjoyment of their possessions, and that they should 'not be disturbed in the enjoyment of lands over which they may possess proprietary rights, and of which they are not disposed to make voluntary transfer' (*The South Australian Register* 1840, 25 July, p. 7). This decree made the origins of the colony of South Australia distinct from those of the convict colonies and marked a new commitment by the colonisers to protect the rights of South Australia's First Nations people. This was a concession made in the final planning of the new colony to appease the very vocal humanitarian and anti-slavery movement in Britain (Prest 2019, p. 12).

While the original intent of the British Crown and colonial administration may have been honourable in the matter of Aboriginal rights in South Australia, the arrival of settlers saw Adelaide's First Nations people, from 1836 onwards, immediately dispossessed of their land. In 1837, amid a flurry of conveyancing, construction, and the already somewhat uneasy establishment of settler/Aboriginal relations, the colonial administration set aside a few acres on the north side of the River Torrens for the Aboriginal people, specifically for the purpose of their Christianisation and induction into the ways of Europeans. This was so they could be made useful to the colony by learning to settle, work, and live in houses. Dresden Missionaries also established a school within what was then called the 'Native Location' and is now known as Pirltawardli (also Piltawodli). The Adelaide missionaries, Clamor Schürmann and Christian Teichelmann, taught Bible studies to the Aboriginal children in the Kaurna

language. They also compiled a dictionary of Kaurna words and oversaw the building of a mud-and-straw schoolhouse. The artist William Anderson Cawthorne made a colour sketch of the schoolhouse in his diary in 1843 (Lockwood, n.d; Amery, n.d). A colour reproduction of his sketch features on a plaque at the Pirltawardli memorial on the banks of the River Torrens/Karrawirra Parri, North Adelaide (Figure 5:2).

Figure 5:2 William Cawthorne (c.1843). *The school house at Piltawodli* (painting taken from the diary of WA Cawthorne). Griffith University online, accessed 12 September 2023, http://missionaries.griffith.edu.au/mission/piltawodli-native-location-1838-1845

By the time ST Gill arrived in December 1839, the natural environment surrounding Adelaide — including its woodlands, giant gums, lush open areas, and pretty waterways — was already irrevocably altered (Locke-Weir 2005, pp. 12-13). While select works of the earliest European artists to arrive in South Australia allow us the closest thing possible to a vision of pre-settler arrival in this style of art, even in these works the sense of place has already been changed by the presence of European figures, boats, and accommodations. John Michael Skipper's *Marina, Holdfast Bay, South Australia* (Figure 5:3) shows a great sweep of rolling coastal hills and wide empty ocean under a big sky. The entire image is unspoilt except for the group of settlers and their dog in the foreground. In Skipper's composition the settler group is made small and insignificant against the spread of a broad, virgin

landscape, yet they already leave something of themselves in the environment. An accomplished 1839 pencil sketch, *Landing of the emigrants at Glenelg* (Figure 5:4), by Governor Hindmarsh's youngest daughter Mary shows close attention to the botany of the foreshore along with a broad sense of place. However, this work too is populated in the middle ground with emigrants and their luggage and small boats, while in the distance three tall ships interrupt the infinite horizon. For a painterly interpretation of Adelaide's eastern hills, Martha Berkeley's *Mount Lofty from the terrace* (Figure 5:5), circa 1840, details a richness of colour and the beauty of untouched landscape. Yet the foreground is cut through with a thick, new-made track and a settler with a bullock dray makes ready to pass. Berkeley might well have constructed her painting to capture the very last of a vanishing world via the figure of an Aboriginal hunter set to exit the composition at the left. He holds his spear aloft, ready to launch, and soon he will follow it out of frame and into the annals of history. It is clear from Berkeley's rich watercolour that the pristine environment has been changed immutably by the actions of the settlers immediately upon arrival, even though they themselves are small in the landscape. The prominent position of the track with the dray ensures that this utopia cannot be seen as a fanciful vision of a precolonial paradise unimpacted by the arrival of Europeans.

Figure 5:3 John Michael Skipper (c. 1836). *Marina, Holdfast Bay, South Australia* (watercolour on paper, 16.5 cm x 21.6 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 2 September 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/marina-holdfast-bay-south-australia/24894/

Figure 5:4 Mary Hindmarsh (1839). *Landing of the emigrants at Glenelg* (pencil on paper, 18.5 cm x 27.5 cm). In Locke-Weir 2005, *Visions of Adelaide 1836-1886*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, p. 15.

Figure 5:5 Martha Maria Snell Berkeley (c. 1840). *Mount Lofty from the terrace* (watercolour on paper, 34.5 cm x 45.0 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 12 September 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/mount-lofty-from-the-terrace-adelaide/24061/

The dispossession of the First Nations peoples meant the forcible invading and stealing of place and the ruination of it by various means. This included the felling of timber for buildings and fences and the uprooting of vast tracts of native flora to make way for roads, accommodations, and agricultural ventures. Passages by FR Nixon, written in 1846 in recollection of a lost beauty, detail how profound the first environmental changes were upon the settlers' arrival and how quickly the Adelaide Plains landscape was altered. Nixon's description is telling, even though the sense of place was already crowded with the rough dwellings of the new arrivals when he first looked upon it:

> The river Torrens itself then wore a very different aspect to what it now does. Then its banks were clothed with a rich carpet of grass and shrubs and were enlivened by a variety of rude cottages of the early settlers. The trees, too, along its margin, had not then felt the devastating effect of the saw and the axe, and were remarkable for their beauty as for the extent of their number. But all is now so altered as not to be longer recognisable. The drooping foliage is gone: the beautiful geraniums are destroyed; the stately gums have disappeared; and in a word, the whole character of this once pretty stream is so transformed, that a person who beheld it in its primitive state would not now believe it to be the same (Wilson & Borrow 1973, p. 93).

ST Gill's first advertisement soliciting for business (Figure 5:6), in *The South Australian Register* on 7 March 1840 (p. 1), was targeted at landowners. The wording showed that he was keen to secure all types of commissions, including portraits, scenes, and likenesses of favourite horses and dogs. Regarding properties and buildings, Gill made special mention that he offered a service suitable for home conveyance, with residences sketched and transferred to paper as required. There are examples of paintings and wash studies of Adelaide's early buildings that might have eventuated from the advertisement, which include residences. *N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide, residence of Capt. Watts of Co. Kildare* (Figure 5:7), circa 1840, is typical of these early works. In a general sense, each of these studies shows architectural detail in the construction, along with some sense of realism in the background trees and figures placed in the street outside the buildings. Many of the works contain a lengthy calligraphic title positioned at the base of the composition in a curve reminiscent of an almanac vignette presentation. This is a familiar trope of Gill's, and often provides a decorative edge to the foreground grass or soil. The circa 1840s *Miss Bathgate's family boarding house, Rundle and Pulteney Streets, South Adelaide east* (Figure 5:8) shows a foreground grassed area, or earthen roadway, and is completed with Gill's distinctive lettering. Just as with Captain Watts's residence, the architecture of Miss Bathgate's house represents a typical English or European double-storey colonial construction with elegant windows, return verandahs, multiple chimneys, and a tidy front picket fence. A hint of shrubbery behind the

S. T. GILL, Artist, &c., late Draftsman and Water Color Painter to the Hubard Pro[illegible] Gallery of London, beg[s] to announce to his friends and the public generally of Adelaide and its vicinity that he has opened rooms in Gawler-place, where for the present he solicits the attendance of such individuals as are desirous of obtaining correct likenesses of themselves, families, or friends. Parties preferring attendance at their residences may be accommodated without additional charge. Correct resemblances of horses, dogs, &c., with local scenery, &c. executed to order. Residences sketched and transferred to paper suited for home conveyance. Orders executed in rotation.

Open daily from eleven till dusk.

Figure 5:6 *The South Australian Register* 1840, 7 March. Accessed 12 August 23, https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/27441257?searchTerm=Gill%2C%20artist%2C%20draftsman

Figure 5:7 ST Gill (c. 1840s). *N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide, residence of Capt. Watts of Co. Kildare* (wash drawing, 8.4 cm x 10.0 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 4 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134361613/view

Figure 5:8 ST Gill (c. early 1840s). *Miss Bathgate's family boarding house, Rundle and Pulteney Streets, south Adelaide east* (wash drawing, 8.7 cm x 12.1 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 4 October 23, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134361933/view

pickets suggests an orderly, manicured garden, and the couple in the foreground are well-dressed in walking attire. In contemplating the narrative of the composition, it is plausible to assume that they are domiciled in the building. While these images can be seen as valuable pieces of early South Australian colonial art, and each adds to the recording of the historical development of the new colony, each one is also another reminder of land which was seized and built upon by the settlers. Each one is further evidence of the dispossession of the Kaurna people.

Larrakia artist and writer Gary Lee, in 'Lying about the landscape' (1997), writes that the tradition of Australian colonial landscape art is about seizing control of the stolen places — of making a creative portrayal of, and aesthetic vindication for the brutality of colonialism. He also argues that the version of Australia shown in nineteenth-century paintings is made entirely European in its compositions, colours, and effects and that the pictures were made to duplicate those of the mother country, to make an 'English country garden of the Antipodes' (Lee 1997, cited in Levitus 1997, p. 105). Lee (1997, cited in Levitus 1997, p. 105) notes also that the paintings were used to make a declaration of the colonial ideal: images of 'the conquered (therefore tamed) land, inhabited by all those hard-working pioneers and settlers, living in the landscape that they, in effect, have "made"'. Lee (1997, cited in

Levitus 1997) argues that the entire colonial landscape art tradition was developed as a means of reinforcing colonial dominance over place, and he questions whether the Australian landscape tradition can have any meaning at all unless it brings with it an acknowledgment of past artifices and of stealing the land in the first instance.

In addition to his many wash studies of early Adelaide residences and commercial buildings, ST Gill painted detailed commissions of several imposing South Australian estates. In these later, grander works, it can be asserted that Gill made a deliberate point of showing that Aboriginal people had been unfairly dispossessed, and that their land was forcibly taken. I propose this argument based on recurring paired motifs in many of these works. There is often a clear division of place into neat sections as a compositional priority, and the symbol of the solid wooden fence as an enforcing, excluding structure is dominant, this last being likely employed to not only delineate boundaries but also illustrate stark divisions between the way the wealthy settlers lived in their new European-style strongholds and the precarious existence of workers and others, most particularly the Aboriginal people who had been cut off from the bounty of their own places. While the new landowners may have preferred to commission a distance aspect of the property in order to boast of its spread, and the fence lines may be true to the perspective shown, the fortifying perimeter fence in the foreground is Gill's most frequently chosen aspect for a property portrait, whether that property is in the city or the rural environs. In several of these works, Aboriginal people are deliberately positioned just outside of a property border, reduced to looking in over fences at places they were once free to roam. Many of the estate portraits relegate the substantial homesteads to the backgrounds, muting them into the softness of distance and making them difficult to distinguish. I argue that Gill used this style of composition as a deliberate artistic device to reduce their importance in favour of a more telling comment on the development of the new society. In *Matthew Moorhouse's, Aboriginal Protector's residence, North Adelaide* (Figure 5:9), circa 1840s, for example, there is a compositional priority placed on the fence erected around the residence, which sits in such a vast garden that the fence disappears out of frame before appearing again to mark out the rear of the property. The prominent Aboriginal people are positioned outside of the fence, with the standing figure appearing to look towards the garden in a benign fashion. This makes the relationship between the new residence on seized land and the First Nations people appear harmonious and suggests that the land was given up willingly.

In *Captain Davison's house "Blakiston" near Mount Barker* (Figure 5:10), created in 1848, the fenced paddocks and carriageway of the property are once again most prominent in the composition. The foreground fences are a very solid construction. Clearly these are perimeter fences made weighty to

reinforce Captain Davison's claim on the landscape, and within it each of the paddocks shows remarkable agricultural grooming. In contrast, the residence is consigned to the background, the substantial two-storey construction almost a part of it in terms of both colour and significance. The most conspicuous feature in the whole work, along with a stand of old gums, is the Aboriginal family resting outside of the border fence as they engage pleasantly with either Captain Davison or perhaps one of his workers. Here, Gill makes a statement about the dispossession of Aboriginal people in this empathetic portrait of a family now obstructed from accessing a substantial area for shelter, food, and water. Gill came from a well-educated, middle-class English family that prioritised learning, religion, and good works, and it is possible to see in his South Australian art that he had empathy for the Aboriginal people along with those lowly workers forced by circumstance to live outside the realm of the wealthy.

Figure 5:9 ST Gill (c. 1840s). *Matthew Moorhouse's, Aboriginal Protector's residence, North Adelaide* (sepia wash drawing, 8.7 cm x 12.1 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 7 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134362571/view

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In *Hill River Station, Clare, South Australia* (Figure 5:11), circa 1846, Gill has chosen a perspective which relegates the substantial new homestead to the veiled haze of the middle ground while prioritising the length and breadth of its fences. The sturdy foreground post-and-rail fence sweeps across the landscape and out of frame to the left and right, implying a vast estate without visible end points. The property owners, well-dressed on their fine horses, move across the foreground at a gallop and the tiny figure of a frail man seems in danger of being mown down. Another of Gill's oft-used motifs, that of the felled tree

Figure 5:10 ST Gill (1848). *Captain Davison's house 'Blakiston' near Mount Barker* (watercolour on paper, 21.3 cm x 33.8 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 31 August 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/captain-davisons-house-blakiston-near-mount-barker/24131/

Figure 5:11 ST Gill (c. 1846). *Hill River Station, Clare, South Australia* (watercolour on paper, 29.7 cm x 47.9 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 8 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-137297103/view

ransacked for its useful spoils and then left to rot, lies in the foreground in a bold, horizontal statement. Clearly, this is a landscape that the newcomers have plundered for their own ends. In building my portrait of Gill in the creative components of *Sketching Tom Gill*, I consider these compositional decisions made by Gill to be deliberate commentary on the Europeans' forcible taking of place with utter disregard for the First Nations peoples of South Australia.

The dispossession of South Australia's Aboriginal people also included the immediate reduction of their traditional food sources. This applied especially to stocks of kangaroo. The Europeans first shot kangaroo and wallaby for their own fare, then later hunted them for the thrill of the sport. These sporting and hunting practices also served to reinforce the power of the new European arrivals, as

Figure 5:12 ST Gill (c. early 1840s). *June* (watercolour on paper, 21.8 cm x 18.3 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 24 September 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134365651/view

clearly they could take the kangaroo by hunting even when it was not on the land that they had seized for themselves. When the settlers could no longer claim to need the kangaroo as sustenance, horse-riders revelled in the excitement of the country hunt and of making a kill for its own sake. Gill made many paintings of the kangaroo hunt in his years in South Australia, and the watercolour *June* (Figure 5:12) from the *Australian months and seasons* suite demonstrates the insertion of the European sporting custom into this new place. The environment in this work has an English sensibility, with riders in formal hunting attire galloping over lush green hills.

In contrast, the wash study *Kangaroo coursing* (Figure 5:13) gives greater exactitude to the South Australian landscape with its native trees, fallen twigs, long dry grasses, and bigger gums. Overall, *Kangaroo coursing* looks like a realistic South Australian bush landscape with plenty of perils underfoot for horse and rider, a far remove from the gentle meadow-like appearance of *June*. Gill's positioning of the middle-ground rider jumping a fallen tree trunk captures the excitement of the chase in the muscular leap of the horse. In the background, the kangaroo, loosely defined, endeavour to escape their pursuers. *Kangaroo coursing*, with its dominant, central rider as the most arresting compositional feature, imparts a powerful sense of settler entitlement, with the flora and fauna his to ravage and ruin at will.

Figure 5:13 ST Gill (c. 1842). *Kangaroo coursing* (wash drawing on paper, 13.6 cm x 20.6 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 24 September 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134374193/view

In addition to the swashbuckling Antipodean hunt being a popular theme for artists, amateur writers in the colony were inspired to render such scenes and see their efforts in print. Many editions of the early Adelaide newspapers detailed the excitement of chasing kangaroo and the prowess of the European horse-riders. The following article, 'The Adelaide Hunt', was published in *The Southern Australian* on Saturday 3 June 1843, and it is clear the author revels in describing the exhilaration of the blood sport in detail:

> … on rising the hill, the kangaroo was turned out of a clump of wattles, and headed right down towards the hounds, one of the hounds seized him by the head and both fell together, the impetus of the kangaroo however shook him clean off … this run, for pace, distance and severe work, is unrivalled, the distance before rising the hills was six miles and this was got over in 20 minutes, the whole distance until the throw up about 15 miles in one hour and 10 minutes. The only thing that makes the run incomplete is, that the kangaroo was not killed, but any true sportsman will be glad that so gallant a fellow got away to afford sport at some future meeting (*The Southern Australian* 1843, 3 June, p. 3).

In *Resistance and retaliation* (1989, p. 5) Alan Pope writes of the colonisers quickly declaring South Australia to be 'waste and unoccupied'. Within a few short years of European arrival, the starvation of Adelaide's Aboriginal people had become entrenched. Locally, however, there was a broad range of views relating to official policies, and some of these were published in the Adelaide newspapers, often in the form of letters. A missive from correspondent 'WB', appearing on 15 May 1839 in *The Southern Australian*, demonstrates that many citizens were disillusioned by the realities of the new colony with regard to the promises made regarding First Nations peoples. This was especially pertinent with the loss of their traditional food sources. WB reiterates the rights of Aboriginal people, strongly asserting that:

> … the Adelaide black man has a claim on us for food, not because we have availed ourselves of the right which we hold in common with himself to pursue and eat all animals which wander in natural freedom, but because we have scared those which were his chief dependence to a distance beyond his reach. The right we contended for was equal, not exclusive — to share the food with which nature presented him, not to banish it, and having, by locating ourselves in large numbers on particular spots, done the latter in reference to the Adelaide tribe of Aborigines, we are, we contend, bound in justice — by which we do not mean law — to provide them with an equivalent until we shall have taught them to obtain it for themselves. Our civilized habits which have deprived the black man of his meal, and garment of skin, enable us to procure food and clothing of other kinds. A portion of these are a debt we owe him and shall continue to owe him until we have made him a participator in our civilization and its fruits (*The Southern Australian* 1839, 15 May, p. 2).

Another correspondent, 'R', wrote to *The Adelaide Chronicle* on 18 February 1840. The writer makes an equivalent plea as shown in the following excerpt:

> Who can bear the salutation 'me very hungry' from men whose ground we are occupying, and to whom the commissioners have been so faithless, having led the British Public to believe that a reservation of one fifth of the land was to be made for them. In other words that they were to steal only four fifths of the country… but of this reservation of partial robbery nothing more has been heard, and the natives are now refused bread unless they work for it (*The Adelaide Chronicle* 1840, 18 February, p. 3).

In addition to South Australia's kangaroo stocks in the early years of settlement, populations of other native animals and birds, including emu, were similarly targeted and reduced. Gill's wash study *Emu stalking* (Figure 5:14), circa 1842, features two armed settlers skulking in the foreground of a wide-open landscape as a mob of emu, legs kicking high and necks thrusting forward, flee for their lives. The picture is made thought-provoking by its circular composition and natural elements that combine to trap the viewer in the moment of the hunt and leave them wondering how many of the emu safely exit the frame. With two determined settlers making ready to fire over a short distance, it can be realistically supposed that several of the emu will be felled.

Gill's increasing empathy for the difficulties facing Australia's First Nations people, as demonstrated in his art over the ensuing years and decades, became even more pronounced when he left South Australia to live and work in Victoria. One of his key later paintings vividly illustrates the cruel practices of the Europeans and their effects on the culture of Aboriginal peoples. In *Kangaroo hunting, the death* (Figure 5:15), the fallen kangaroo is made especially prominent in the narrative by being overturned; this illustrates its utter defencelessness against the greater might of the European hunters. The composition and colouring show that this killing is obviously for sport and not need. Two of the riders are dressed in hunting jackets, and one of the other men is particularly finely attired and appears as unruffled as if taking part in an easy afternoon's caper. In the distant background, as small and insignificant in the composition as they are in the new society, Aboriginal people trudge ahead in quiet observation and reduced hopes. In terms of composition, *Kangaroo hunting, the death* places its greatest emphasis on the domination of the settlers, in sharp contrast to the Aboriginal people and the landscape. Both are reduced to decorative border elements, and this further emphasises the complete superiority of settler culture. The body of the kangaroo, with its head hung low in death, is made even more pathetic and vulnerable by having its pale belly exposed. What was once a staple of the Aboriginal people's traditional lifestyle has become a plaything of the settlers, and in depicting this Gill makes an unequivocal statement about the dispossession of Australia's First Nations peoples.

Figure 5:14 ST Gill (c. 1842). *Emu stalking* (wash drawing on paper, 13.4 cm x 19.7 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 2 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134513045/view

Figure 5:15 ST Gill (c. 1856). *Kangaroo hunting, the death* (lithographed by Allan & Wigley, 47.7 cm x 66.8 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 2 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-138298386/view

Over the course of his four decades in Australia, Gill's artworks transitioned away from pretty landscapes made in the English tradition to become intricate, nuanced paintings which are true to the Antipodean landscape, many of which make critical comment on colonialism. Several of the later works convey complex narratives in the style of *Kangaroo hunting, the death*, explicated above. Issues of the loss of traditional life, food, culture and place, and the callous practices of settlers, are explored by Gill in hundreds of paintings and sketches, and in addition to the placement of elements in the compositions of landscapes and portraits, some of the critique to be observed in Gill's later works takes the form of lengthy explanatory titles. These are usually positioned at the base of the pictures in careful script. It is clear that Gill has thought deeply about labelling these works, and each of the titles, and their meanings, is thus owed due recognition as an important component of his reflections on Australian life.

My research into Gill's South Australian colonial art and the policies and attitudes of the era has led me to prioritise issues of violence against and dispossession of Aboriginal people in the creative components of my thesis. Interweaving newspaper articles which illustrate these themes in the *Sketching Tom Gill* collage alongside my journal entries, sketches and letters to Gill positions my research alongside the *oeuvres* of other Australian creatives of settler descent who seek to invite recognition of past injustices enacted against Australia's First Nations peoples. Like these other creatives, my use of the colonial voice as shown in news articles recognises and respects decolonial and postcolonial practices in creative fields. *Sketching Tom Gill*, collaged and interwoven with its critical and creative components working together, is designed to build on typical portraits of ST Gill and Adelaide as shown in traditional art monographs and biographies. It thus invites readers to explore South Australian history in a unique way and to leave them with the sense that reconciliation with South Australia's Indigenous people is an unfinished journey, and an invitation open to all South Australians.

CHAPTER 6

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

History — Australia has been established as an Emigrant colony since the year 1836, when the first ship-load of Emigrants from England arrived with golden hopes of riches and prosperity — everything, if we might believe the public prints, was bright and prosperous. A scheme of selling the land at a minimum price of £1 per acre was then and is still carried on; not however selling any in a less quantity than a square mile, or 640 English acres. The money thus acquired is devoted by Government to send over useful laborers to till that land — labor being much wanted to ensure success. The first unfortunate Colonists, who had money, thus spent it, without leaving enough to pay for that labor, they could not do without. Seed could not be procured — houses could not be built for want of funds — a famine succeeded — hundreds left the infant Colony, after having lost their all — others were obliged to change their views, and the Government, in some degree to alter its original designs, though not yet so extensively as the prosperity of the Colony demands. The principle of concentration has been entirely abandoned — the sale of land has ceased to be confined to the narrow tract originally laid out in sections — speculators are picking out the best lands, for which they get special surveys in every part of the province — and the people are spreading in all directions, in order to suit themselves to the circumstances of the country — while at the same time, the moral pestilence, which was dreaded so much has been introduced by the influx of emancipated and runaway convicts from New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land.

The emigrant's friend, or authentic guide to South Australia, including Sydney; Port Philip, or Australia Felix; New South Wales; Van Dieman's Land; and New Zealand 1974/1848, p. 10.

Journal Day 25: Hindley Street, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

A crowd gathers on Hindley Street and circles around a man juggling flagons filled with silver stars. When the juggler begins to tire, he lifts one leg and kicks a stool into place without taking his eyes from the bottles. He sits and continues the show without mishap. The crowd titters. Some put money into a hat at his feet before moving away (Title: *The street performer*).

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Journal Day 130: Near Towitta, Meru Country.

Today's painting is of summer sand. I have sienna, umber, ochre, and ivory on the palette. I make my paper damp and work wet on wet. Water and umber bead on the paper. Ochre sends it yellow. The beauty of sand is in the beading (Title: *Low wind dunes on a lonely track*).

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Journal Day 32: Sturt River Linear Park, Warriparri, Coromandel Valley, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

On warm days I make sketches at Warriparri where bush wetlands fill with reeds and birdlife. I see bittern, shelduck, ibis, stilt. Perhaps there is a swan nearby — I hope so, although it is difficult to see clearly in the shadows (Title: *Outline of an elusive black swan hiding in reeds*).

To one side, a little distant, a cluster of tall gums with a heavy canopy throws shade onto unkempt meadow grasses. Here it is easy to picture young brothers, carefree but grief-stricken, riding out together. The two of you are relieved to be back on the trail after a difficult visit to the family home at Coromandel Valley, both thinking as you ride of the loss of your mother so soon after your young sister's death (Title: *Portrait of bereavement, three Gill men in mourning with heads bowed*).

And then I make another picture. Two big working horses with keen riders (positioned foreground) are startled by a sudden loud movement in the wet and dark (positioned background) beyond a stand of trees (Title: *Riders and the shifting dark of Coromandel Valley wetlands*). There's a great splash as a stocky pony jumps from the water. It twitches in fright but then nickers at the sight of the other horses. You and John dismount, drop your reins and untie a rope from the saddle to tether the stray to one of your own (Title: *Leading the lost pony to the livery stable*).

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Journal Day 36: North Terrace, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

On North Terrace, four schoolgirls skip the length of Government House, east to west. They gather blossoms and sprigs and ripe pink seeds, laughing as one trips and falls to the lawn (Title: *Portrait of a girl with tumbled peppercorn*).

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6. Character of life and spirit

There are several distinguished art monographs, including *ST Gill and his audiences* (2015b) by Sasha Grishin, *ST Gill's Australia* (1981) by Geoffrey Dutton, and Keith Macrae Bowden's *Samuel Thomas Gill: artis*t (1971) that list the established biographic particulars of Samuel Thomas Gill and his earliest family origins in England. Born at Perriton in Devonshire on May 21, 1818, ST Gill was named after his father, Samuel Thomas Gill, a Baptist parson who subsequently became a schoolmaster to better his income. His mother, Winifred, supported her husband, first in the work of the church and then in his schoolmaster role. Lessons were given above the household in a large upstairs space. ST Gill had three brothers and a sister, with the two youngest boys dying of smallpox before the family emigrated to South Australia — a tragedy, notes Bowden (1971, p. 1), from which Winifred never recovered. Dutton (1981) writes that by emigrating at age 21, ST Gill arrived in South Australia at the most opportune age to make a substantial artistic impact. He was extremely talented and had a solid background of technical training in terms of watercolour and other associated art forms, and these practical skills gave him the confidence to quickly come to terms with new landscapes of the colony. Dutton (1981, p. 7) also describes Gill as being poetic, passionate, expressive, and 'of sympathetic temperament, spiced with a humour that could detect the hidden balances of character and occasion'.

As evidenced by his extant teenage sketchbook, ST Gill had a distinct talent for drawing, particularly the human figure. He was especially deft at conveying actions and emotions. He made a great many drawings as a youngster, and was encouraged to seek formal training in art. His father was always enthusiastic, often providing verses for the young boy to illustrate in addition to taking him on many trips to the countryside and encouraging him in the close study of nature. In addition to these excursions and structured lessons in the classics, both older boys were taught to ride well, with ST Gill especially developing a lifelong love for horses. In *Samuel Thomas Gill: artist,* Bowden (1971) notes that throughout his life Gill was almost always seen with a hunting crop in his hand, whether he was alongside a horse or not.

Bowden (1971, pp. 1-2) describes Gill's years in England as taking place during what he refers to as 'the Golden Age of Plymouth art' and notes that Gill was successful in finding early employment at a picture-framer's establishment. This enabled him to closely study the techniques of English masters such as Reynolds, Prout, Eastlake, Haydon, and Northcote. Additionally, Gill was employed for a time at the Hubard Profile Gallery, where he learned the fine skill of cutting silhouette portraits with scissors. He also coloured landscape backgrounds and made profiles in ink.

On December 17, 1839, Gill and his family — mother and sister, both named Winifred, brother John, and father Samuel — arrived at South Australia on the *Caroline*. On the passenger manifest, ST Gill is listed as 'Thos.', the abbreviated form of Thomas. Gill rented rooms in Gawler Place, Adelaide to pursue a career as an artist, and his family, after first living in a little brick house at the corner of Hanson and Gilles Streets, set up a home, postal outlet, schoolhouse, and chapel in Coromandel Valley. Within a year, his mother and sister were both buried in the new West Terrace Cemetery in Adelaide in unmarked graves. The deaths are attributed to an illness similar to typhoid fever (Bowden 1971, pp. 3-4: Grishin 2015b, p. 22).

South Australian colonial newspapers offer a great deal of local information about the early years of European settlement, and have helped me to build a portrait of ST Gill during his time in Adelaide. Numerous articles describe social events, government initiatives, shipping, sales, rentals, church services, and court orders. Letters to editors illustrate the opinions of citizens on civic matters. Over the course of his years in South Australia, Gill was often mentioned in the Adelaide papers, with several of these mentions demonstrating that he had established a solid reputation as a popular and unique artist. Gallery shows were held in several locations during the years that Gill lived in South Australia, and he was a frequent contributor; there were also numerous articles published on the new art in the colony, some of which compare Gill to George French Angas, the son of the wealthy George Fife Angas, founder of the South Australian Company. Family connections gave the young Angas strong financial backing which enabled him to pursue his art practice, nature study, and travels unencumbered by economic concerns (Tregenza 1980, pp. 7-9). This financial situation was diametrically opposed to Gill's. Gill moved studios often and was frequently in arrears with his rent, also occasionally exchanging artworks for basic household goods. Additionally, he was known to enjoy liquor, the ongoing procurement of which added to his monetary woes throughout his life; this aspect of Gill's personality may have contributed to his father's second wife making ST Gill and his younger brother John unwelcome at the Coromandel Valley residence. These personal details have added to my understanding of the small moments in Gill's life and enabled a more personal portrait of Gill based around his studio life and art practice.

Despite Gill's difficult financial position, his art was popular, and a letter to *The South Australian* written by correspondent 'N.R.F.' and appearing in print on 17 June 1845 clearly shows that there were those in the colony who greatly preferred Gill's free-spirited approach and artistic prowess to those of the painstakingly correct Angas:

> The style of Mr Angas's drawings is essentially limited, that is — he adopts the same to all his subjects. If he paints a frying pan, a plate, or a butterfly, he carries the same minute rules, by which he copied them, into his landscapes. Now, all the world know that landscapes, to please, must be drawn with great freedom and spirit, and must possess what artists call 'general effect', and require the whole attention towards this as the grand object; for experience proves that, without it, no matter how beautiful soever the work may be in details, it will be insipid, flat, and unattractive (*The South Australian* 1845, 17 June, p. 3).

These paragraphs show much of the new settlers' appreciation and support of Gill's early art and add to my portrait of him. N.R.F.'s letter goes on to express regret that George French Angas did not seem to have considered sharing space with Gill for an upcoming exhibition:

> As there is an extensive work to be published, it is to be lamented that he did not altogether confine himself to his branch, and that another artist of less celebrity but of real talent — who resides in the colony in comparative obscurity — had not undertaken the landscape part; I allude to Mr Gill. Anyone who can comprehend the nature of a landscape drawing, and who has once seen any of his works, would undoubtedly give him the palm, and feel a desire to see others. For colouring, truth and 'general effect', he undoubtedly stands pre-eminent. He confines himself chiefly, I believe, to that one branch of the art; modestly feeling, perhaps, that it is impossible to excel in all.
>
> To those who have not yet had the pleasure of viewing the drawings of this gentleman, I can only recommend them to visit him. His style is particularly pleasing, and where he does venture composition, as in his groups of figures, he is particularly successful. He is rapid — perhaps too much so — in the execution of his works; but this quickness produces that character of life and spirit which always distinguished his performances, and which is the chief charm about them (*The South Australian* 1845, 17 June, p. 3).

Other news articles illustrate the many ways in which Gill engaged with the community to better establish himself. Some provide local detail on how he participated in the milestones of the colony. These, too, have helped me in developing a sense of his character for the creative components of my *Sketching Tom Gill* thesis:

> We have been favoured by Mr S. T. Gill, artist, with a very neatly executed lithographic print of the Féte, on the Consecration of Christ Church, given by John Adams, Esq. at Prospect House. It makes a very pleasing picture, and in every respect is a most creditable production (*The South Australian* 1849, 25 December, p. 3).

Such enthusiastic appreciation and honest critique of Adelaide's early visual arts make regular appearances in the newspapers of the 1840s, adding much to my ability to understand the creative society in which Gill lived and worked. In advance of a large exhibition planned to feature several artists, for example, Gill is mentioned in *The South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register* on Saturday 23 January, 1847 (p. 2) as being available to receive artworks at his rooms in Leigh Street ahead of the staging of the exhibition in council chambers. The detail in the newspaper enables a fulsome picture of South Australia's earliest professional artists delivering their works to Gill at his studio, whether arriving on foot or by carriage. The London-trained portraitist Martha Berkeley and her sister Theresa Walker are two exemplary female artists who participated in the 1847 exhibition and might well have delivered their works to Gill personally. These small particulars allow ideas and pictures that are beyond the scope of conventional art monographs and biographies to develop. It becomes conceivable to envision studio scenes where paintings are checked off against lists and displayed on easels as these earliest European artists gather to discuss the difficulties of capturing Antipodean colours and southern light. That the newspapers list some details of several contributing artists, and their various personal situations, has also added to my understanding of how difficult it was to maintain a career as a professional artist at the time. Many paintings in the 1847 exhibition were executed by artists considered amateurs while being professionals in a variety of other capacities. This was the case for the paintings entered by JM Skipper, a lawyer, and a 'Mr Jackson', formerly Colonial Secretary. Small details such as these have helped me to better comprehend the creative society that built quickly in early Adelaide and demonstrated how important art was to the general populace.

An extensive review in *The South Australian Register*, appearing on Saturday 13 February, lists many of the pictures from the 1847 exhibition collected by Gill in his Leigh Street rooms. The article provides great insight into the South Australian settlers and their strong cultural links to England and other European powers. While the range of subject matter may have been pleasing to the citizens looking for emotional ties to their homelands in art, however, the author of the article offers brutal critique of several works along with praise for others. It is the tone of the writing in the colonial news articles which has added so much to my perception of Adelaide society and the art scene of the era. Some of the paintings are described as being heavily focused on the importance of military might and reverence for leaders, which serves as a reminder of the imperial culture imported to South Australia with the arrival of the first settlers. The article also illustrates the range of subject matter employed by artists and enjoyed by audiences, and positions Gill as an artist intent on recording what he saw before him rather than adhering to convention and deference to old customs. Regarding works in the exhibition which venerate empire, a painting by JM Skipper, nominated as a work of real genius, fits

the category of reverence for military and empiric power. His *Midnight review, Napoleon's dream* featured the renowned military commander on a phantom horse reviewing the skeletal forms of all who died in his service. Regarding content that combined the old country with the new in its subject matter, a particularly harsh appraisal was given of George French Angas's portrait of Adelaide's departed Governor Grey, with the reviewer pronouncing that the Governor's portrait

> is so vile a thing that we wonder the redoubted warrior did not see it burnt before he left. It has neither make, shape, nor tone in it. We never saw a production of Mr Angas's which pleases us so ill (*The South Australian Register* 1847, 13 February, p. 2).

In a similar tone, and further illustrating how very particular the standards were for traditional European art, a 'Mr Hall' entered paintings which are described as featuring 'trees like cabbages and skies like lobster spawn'. Here it is clear that 'Mr Hall' failed to satisfy in terms of making conventionally pleasing landscapes based on the European manner of depicting trees and skies. It is satisfying to note, however, the admiration expounded for South Australia's earliest female artists, with Theresa Walker's wax models pronounced 'excellent' and Martha Berkeley's portrait paintings favourably remarked upon. Gill's own contribution to this major 1847 exhibition included thirty of the pictures made on an expedition with John Ainsworth Horrocks in the previous year. The review noted that the Gill works were of merit 'so well known' that they needed no further remarking upon (*The South Australian Register* 1847, 13 February, p. 2). As a researcher keen to build a fulsome portrait of Gill and to envision his place within the artistic society of Adelaide, it is gratifying to find that he was a popular member of the local art scene and that he had a sense of fellowship with the other European artists in South Australia, and that he contributed much to the creation of local art exhibitions by making himself available to receive and collate works. These details add background to the better-known particulars outlined in art monographs and provide additional scope for imagining Gill's life within the studio environment.

Gill, as both an artist and agreeable local personality, was already well-known in the colony by the time he joined the Horrocks Expedition to the North-West in 1846. It is clear from newspaper articles that Adelaide readers were excited by exploration in South Australia, and it is certain that the expedition would have still received a great deal of publicity if it had been successful. However, the tragedy of the journey ensured that Gill's diary entries, along with his paintings, formed a particularly important part of the colony's grieving for the loss of Horrocks, an intrepid and popular pastoralist and member of the Adelaide and regional communities. Gill's daily diary entries were printed in full in *The South Australian Gazette* on Saturday 10 October. This has given me a way to experience Gill's written impressions of the surroundings on the Horrocks'

expedition directly, as well as demonstrating his spare style of writing and tone of delivery. These details have added to my perception of Gill's 'voice' and the way in which he viewed his surroundings. In addition to describing the environment and the tribulations of dealing with the expedition's equipment, the diary details the relationships between the expedition members and the ways in which formalities and language were employed in the 1840s. From its beginning, Gill demonstrates conventional deference for his leader and peers, illustrating the manners of the era. The writing also shows a presumption that the Aboriginal members of the crew were subordinate:

> Saturday, 8th August. — Loaded the fire-arms with ball-cartridge, each carrying his own piece. Started at 10 o'clock, after sending back the native, Kelly, to Mr White's for a bag of clothes left behind. Mr Campbell and I went on to look for a pass through the range. We found the plains very swampy to the foot of the hills, and scarcely knew what to think of the best passage we could find through the range. Mr Horrocks must go himself and examine it particularly; returned to camp about half-past 8, wet and rather tired. Killed an emu on our route to the range.
>
> Sunday, 9th. — Moved on about 10 o'clock with five horses in the provision dray and reached the foot of the range. Native Jimmy and I went to the place where the emu lay with dogs; horses returned and took on the second dray; camped together at 4 o'clock; dined on the emu. (*The South Australian Gazette* 1846,10 October, p. 4; also cited in Bowden, 1971, pp. 114-119).

Gill makes several other appearances in the newspapers, some of which are unrelated to art. These provide additional context for and background to his South Australian circumstances. On one occasion in the later part of his time in Adelaide, he is mentioned in *The South Australian Register* as appearing before the magistrate charged with being the owner of a vicious dog which had attacked an Aboriginal woman called Ngungu Ngammin in Leigh Street. The news article sets out the accusation:

> You came galloping down Hindley Street , and the dog running with you; he left the horse's side and flew at that poor woman (*The South Australian Register* 1849, 12 May, p. 4).

While there were witnesses for the defence, the report shows that Gill was acquitted when a poulterer, Mr Harry Fig of Hindley Street, attested that he was near the victim when a dog that he knew well began the attack. Mr Fig confirmed that this was not Gill's Newfoundland, and that he himself knew the owner of the pertinent dog. Though it was proved that Gill was not responsible, the article enables a vivid picture of a particular incident, and a new sense of Hindley Street. This is a viewpoint vastly different from those represented in Gill's famous Adelaide scenes, including those of Hindley Street, where there is always an ambience of unhurried congenial relations among all present. However, the article details a moment in time in the late 1840s, and what remains is the image of an uproar involving

a galloping horse, the snarls of a dog, the screams of a victim, and merchants and customers gathering in dismay — a far remove from Gill's genteel compositions which portray colonial Adelaide's city centre in a limitless palette of sunshine and harmony.

In his final years in Adelaide, Gill made lifelike, witty portraits of several of his fellow citizens, many of whom were of great prominence in the colony. His sitters included Osmond Gilles (Figure 6:1), James Allen, James Hurtle Fisher, Nathaniel Hailes, George Strickland Kingston, Captain John Finnis, and John Ewart (Figure 6:2). The pictures demonstrate Gill's sense of fun and parody, and a consideration of how these pictures are made acerbic by their idiosyncratic titles adds to a deeper understanding of him and how he approached his work. These artworks, too, have helped to create my portrait of Gill in the creative components of the collage interspersed throughout my thesis. The most famous of Gill's portraits of colonists are those in a series collectively called *Heads of the people*. The set was lithographed by Messrs. Penmann and Co., and Gill was greatly lauded in the Adelaide press on their launch to the public in 1849:

> In this new department he is certainly, in our opinion, destined to increase his reputation, as the sketches are executed with great spirit, and some of them are admirable likenesses. In a few the artist has ventured on a touch of satire, with a spice of caricature. It is possible this latter may not be intentional and may be excused on the score of a first effort. We shall hope his next number, in this respect, will be an improvement, but we shall not venture to criticise too strongly, that he may not be provoked to retaliate in kind (*The South Australian* 1849, 25 May, p. 2).

Figure 6:1 (left) ST Gill (1848-1849). *Nothing like OG*. (Osmond Gilles) and **Figure 6:2 (right)** *This comes hopping &c. vide housemaid's letter.* (John Ewart). Images from the *Heads of the people* series (lithography printed by Penman & Co. Adelaide). State Library of NSW, accessed 4 October 2023, https://digital.sl.nsw.gov.au/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=FL9864135&embedded=true&toolbar=false

These small notices and social snippets in Adelaide's early papers have served to ignite my imagination while writing *Sketching Tom Gill*, enabling me to develop a more intimate portrayal of him and his art process than straightforward biographic details on their own would allow. It is the minor details in the news articles that have better facilitated the creation of my written sketches and letters, and helped to show the myriad ways in which an adventurous, enthusiastic, and unencumbered young artist may have spent his South Australian days. This is particularly relevant when picturing Gill exploring the bushland and waterways surrounding Adelaide on his horse, surely at an exhilarating speed and with his dog loping at his side.

On Tuesday 17 November 1840, a little under a year after the Gill family's arrival in Adelaide, a short notice appeared in *The Southern Australian:*

> Found, by Messrs Gill, on the river Sturt, section 863, a Dark Bay Timor Pony, having no shoes, a mark on the thigh on the near side resem (*sic*) and a sore back. The owner may have the same by paying the expenses that may be incurred. Apply at the office of this paper. Nov. 16th. 1840 (*The Southern Australian* 1840, 17 November, p. 4).

These few lines evoke a picture of two young brothers enjoying a jaunt on a late spring day. It can be reasonably assumed that the weather was pleasant in mid-November, and although the location indicated is Coromandel Valley on Samuel Gill's own section, the purpose of the outing is unknown. The picture begins with the discovery of a stray pony, likely found cropping grass in a bushland setting near water. It develops further with an image of one or other of the men looping a rope around the pony's neck and then making a slow journey back along the river to an Adelaide livery stable. Then there is another picture. An officious gentleman at the newspaper office clears his throat and adjusts a monocle, dips a feathered quill into thick black ink, and records the particulars, mulling over the wording of the advertisement for the Gill brothers.

Many such trifling small moments outlined in the colonial newspapers have assisted in enhancing my portrayal of Gill. In my research practice of exploring many of Gill's known locations by walking streets, tracks, and bushlands and recording thoughts and scenes in my daily journal, the act of finding secret places such as the wetlands of Coromandel Valley and the hidden corners of Hindley Street has added much to my sketches and the letters I wrote to Gill. Imagining the intimate moments of a humble artist's life has enabled me to make a sympathetic portrait of him at work in the early Adelaide environment. The articles about art in the newspapers of the 1840s helped to make my portrait of Gill one that is focused entirely on the creation of art, and I resolved to use the informal moments to speculate on Gill's possible methods of working. This has meant a focus on his sketching *en plein air* to absorb the unique ambience of South Australia, and then working in a studio situation to refine loose compositions into complex, refined works of art filled with figurative and architectural detail.

CHAPTER 7

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The agricultural produce of South Australia is decidedly good, and its wheat realizes the highest price; about 25 bushels to the acre is considered a good crop. No regular rotation of crops is observed, the fertility of the soil enabling them to go on growing wheat from year to year. Lime for manure is to be had in considerable quantities. Sales of land are advancing. The number of sheep in the Colony is 1,000,000. A regular demand exists for agricultural and pastoral, as well as mining labor, but the Commissioners send out regularly one vessel per month, averaging 250 Emigrants to each vessel, and that is believed to be an adequate supply. There are very few natives, and these are perfectly harmless. Until lately there were no Irish in the Colony, and very few Scotch; but as many as 4000 Germans, who live mostly together, and although the men are somewhat idle, smoking all day long, yet the women among them are very hardworking and make the best nurses and servants.

The emigrant's friend, or authentic guide to South Australia, including Sydney; Port Philip, or Australia Felix; New South Wales; Van Dieman's Land; and New Zealand 1974/1848, p. 13.

Journal Day 39: Mount Crawford Forest, Kaurna Country, Peramangk Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill

c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

I like to make images of you on horseback exploring the wild parts of South Australia. You walk leisurely and pause often, letting serendipity and happenstance have their way (Title: *Portrait of a curious artist curious places*). Other pictures capture smaller moments. There are close sketches of saplings and scrub twigs and the changing tints of gum leaves in the late afternoon (Title: *Vignettes of Antipodean flora*).

In some pictures you rest, content in the emptiness. You lie for a time (foreground) alongside a small creek, propped on one elbow, smoking your pipe. Nearby, on the low scrub (middle ground), your tobacco pouch, saddle, bridle, and hunting whip are spread out on the ground. The whip coils and then stretches long like a snake (Title: *Studies of possessions in South Australian scrub grass*).

Alongside, your horse (Red) grazes contentedly at meadow grasses and your dog (Jack) snuffles at wet reeds, tail high and alert. There are only these few quiet sounds and those of the bush surrounding. Birds, insects, bush rats, and lizards. The occasional thump, thump, thump of a wallaby tail moving through reeds near the creek (Title: *Portrait of a marsupial near a waterhole*).

After resting, you follow the waterway and find a sheltered place to camp for the night. Sketches, then, by the light of a campfire (Title: *Changing shadows of a bush evening with dog and horse alongside*).

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7. Developing sensitivities and departing South Australia

ST Gill's time in South Australia can be seen as formative in establishing his mature style in the landscape and portrait genres. Many of his artworks from the period 1840-1852 demonstrate a growing appreciation for the unique qualities of the Antipodean environment. In crafting Gill's portrait for the creative components of my thesis, I explored regional areas to better picture the origins of the new emigrant villages and pastoral regions. I trekked through many isolated places in country South Australia. Spending time in townships once seen as remote formed an integral part of my research and creative writing practices. Many of these locations have buildings constructed in the mid-nineteenth-century, and the earliest photographs of these places have helped me to imagine the life of an enthusiastic young artist keen to make artworks in settings that once seemed a long way from Adelaide's city streets. I have made sketches and written letters to Gill in Woodside, Hahndorf, Mount Torrens, Birdwood, Clare, Penwortham, Mount Pleasant, Echunga, Gumeracha, Lobethal, Sedan, Towitta, Cambrai, Sanderston, Eden Valley, Angas Valley, Morgan, Wongulla, Quorn, Hawker, Horrocks Pass, and Keyneton. During these visits, I made it a part of my research practice to seek out stone buildings, churches, graveyards, and the oldest trees I could find. Many of the *Sketching Tom Gill* pieces originated in the shade of ruined stone huts, giant gums, and mature English trees. Like Sera Waters, I regard old gums as colonial witnesses. I regard English trees as the beginning of the colonial system; this makes them witnesses, too.

Consideration of the various distances and routes to Adelaide was also important, and I found that calculating the time it would take for a horse to reach many of these places was instructive. I discovered the easiest way to imagine Gill riding through regional South Australia was to spend my time walking isolated tracks and rough country roads. There is a special quiet place close to my home that has proved good for dwelling in the past for creative purposes. It's in Oakbank, where there is a heritage wire-rope-and-timber suspension footbridge that crosses the Onkaparinga River at a deep bend filled with long reeds, big trees, and thick surrounding scrub. The bridge is not as old as Adelaide, but photographs from the early twentieth century show it and its proximity to the Oakbank racecourse. The foregrounds of these soft black-and-white pictures are filled with fashionably dressed ladies and gentlemen set to enter the racecourse. The photographs and the bridge are a little out of time for *Sketching Tom Gill*, but the location has been conducive for imagining his South Australian experience and has added much to my letters, sketches, and journal entries.

In considering Gill's development as an artist responding to the challenges of the Antipodean landscape, an examination of works created at each end of his South Australian sojourn has also been illustrative. Gill's earliest South Australian landscape paintings demonstrate a clear commitment to the aesthetic of English traditions in a manner that seems deferential. *February* (Figure 7:1), from the *Australian months and seasons* suite, is regarded as the most English of his colonial paintings, and while undated, is thought to have been created in his first Adelaide years. In *February*'s composition, an emigrant farmer in the central foreground and his wife nearby pick grapes from vigorous upright vines, all neatly tended in an enclosed garden. The pair are dressed in a formal English manner, with bright, light-coloured working clothing for the outdoors. The woman's bonnet, along with her position facing away from the viewer, give her a particularly modest appearance and situate her as being of less importance than her husband. This is a reminder of the patriarchal society imported from England. A large basket laden with fruit is positioned at the foot of the dominant male figure. There is a sense that this harvesting task is slow and pleasurable, and a fine way to spend time in the open air — the agreeable weather was an important part of the promotional push to entice more wealthy emigrants and workers to South Australia. In *February* Gill has made the home welcoming with a manicured path that leads through a trellised arbour to a cottage with a slate roof and wide open shutters, details that make the scene charming in the manner of an English country garden painting. Despite the reality of South Australia's typically intense, burning, late summer temperatures, the cottage chimney sends smoke wafting upward. Skies are of utmost importance in this sort of bucolic landscape, and *February*'s sky is made appealing with layers of pink, yellow, and pastel

blue blending gently from the horizon to the heavens. To the right of the cottage, cattle stand in a small field lush with green spring pastures, and the distance beyond appears clement in muted shades of teal and grey, indicating that these faraway lands have already been domesticated by the settlers. There is no hint of the realities of a typical South Australian summer's day, with no dirt, dust, sweat or parched yellow grasses and no wilted vegetation. In one of Gill's standard ornamental treatments, there is decorative foliage at the base of the composition that shows the rich tones of fertile loam, along with a suggestion of native grasses made with fine, curlicue brushwork.

Figure 7:1 ST Gill (c. early 1840s). *February* (watercolour on paper, 21.8 cm x 18.3 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 26 September 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134354667/view

While *February* shows a range of colours and compositional elements not typical of South Australia in the month itself, it cannot be presupposed that Gill painted the picture either *in situ* or specifically during February. Many of his watercolours are known to have been made at other times than might be assumed. In later years, when it became more common for Gill to date his works, it can be observed that he created artworks from sketches made years before. He was also known to create commissioned artwork based on ideas or outlines supplied by others. Finished pieces made for publication from sketches of the explorers Edward John Eyre and Charles Sturt are two such examples. In addition to these considerations, *February* can be viewed as being outside strict European convention, as it depicts a woman engaged in agricultural labour, although this is an occasional theme within the domestic garden, as is shown in the *February* composition.

Jeanette Hoorn, in *Australian pastoral: the making of a white landscape* (2007), notes that the paintings in the *Australian months and seasons* suite are the works of Gill's which show the strongest sense of the Georgic convention, in which scenes forming an agrarian calendar that promoted the merit of hard toil in cultivating Christian values were represented. Hoorn (2017, p. 106) also notes that this tradition of representing God's divine plan through working the soil was also seen as a justification for colonialism, showing that Christian peoples believed that God's intention was that land should be improved through agricultural exertion — and that it was the enlightened Europeans, or at least those with a profound Christian work ethic, who were the most able to bring land to productivity, therefore legitimising the taking of the land and the dispossessing of its former owners.

In contrast to *February*, many of Gill's later South Australian landscapes demonstrate close fidelity to the Antipodean environment. *Prospect House, the seat of JB Graham, Esquire, near Adelaide, South Australia* (Figure 7:2) is a commissioned painting considered to have been made circa 1850, during Gill's final Adelaide years. Here the castle-like dwelling is made small and of little consequence in comparison to the landscape, and the building appears to be almost over-powered by the sky. The most prominent feature of the composition is the large central tree, an accurate representation of a mature gum shown to great effect, with one dead, twisted leafless branch being the most eye-catching of all its limbs. In the foreground and surrounds, the paths are dry, reddish earth, and much of the vegetation is spiky in nature and dull blue grey in colour. In all, the plantings and surrounds convey a sense of struggle and are the very antithesis of the lush English landscape pictures that represent property estates. It is as if Gill deliberately chose to convey a subtle message that the South Australian landscape cannot be fully domesticated, and that attempts to do so merely illustrate the usurpers' disconnection to place.

The gardens in the watercolour *Vale Farm* (Figure 7:3), also circa 1850, display a similar sense of

realism. Here, Gill has represented the garden and mature gums authentically. The foliage is shown withering with rust, fawn, yellow and brown colours and the circular lawn and foreground plantings look sparse and parched. Just as with *Prospect House*, the homestead at *Vale Farm*, while impressive in construction, is made compositionally less significant than the great arid landscape enclosing it. In each of these pictures, the colours and compositional elements illustrate a sense of settlers at conflict with the Antipodean environment. At *Vale Farm*, tools are left standing by an absent worker as the hot sun bakes the earth, while at *Prospect House* a gardener rests on his shovel in the protection of shade. In both compositions, the workers employed to triumph over South Australia's environs for the purpose of making grand estates in the European tradition appear to comprehend that they are battling against nature's elements.

In addition to demonstrating his developing understanding of the realities of the Antipodean environment and its challenges for gardeners, many of the works Gill composed in his final Adelaide years can be viewed as the beginnings of a new direction in his art practice. This is particularly relevant for those pieces which feature the traditional lifestyle practices of the Aboriginal people as a primary focus. The wash drawing *Native stalking emu* (Figure 7:4), circa late 1840s, while simple in theme, conveys a great sense of respect and admiration for the Aboriginal man hunting emu. While the depiction of the surrounding landscape in *Native stalking emu* is realistic, it is the close observation of the central Aboriginal figure that is the most arresting part of the work.

Figure 7:2 ST Gill (c. 1850). *Prospect House, the seat of JB Graham, Esquire, near Adelaide, South Australia* (watercolour, pen and black ink on paper, 40.3 cm x 68.2 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 6 September 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/prospect-house-the-seat-of-jb-graham-esqr-near-adelaide-south-australia/24277/

Here Gill employs his knowledge of anatomy and pays close attention to stance and expression, with the result that the hunter's stalking prowess is crucial to the success of the picture. It is easy to imagine Gill, set a little distant with sketch pad in hand, working silently and in complete awe at the man's skill, perhaps holding his breath as he awaits the final pitch of the hunter's spear.

Figure 7:3 ST Gill (c. 1850) *Vale Farm* (watercolour, mounted on linen, 33.2 cm x 57.3 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 4 October 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/vale-farm/24275/

Figure 7:4 ST Gill (c. 1849) *Native stalking emu* (wash drawing, 15.7 cm x 23.7 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 3 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134367846/view

The watercolour *Going to work* (Figure 7:5) also represents Indigenous people and may have its origins in South Australia, if only in sketch form, as it is attributed to the 1850s. In it, Gill shows an Aboriginal stockman working alongside a European rider, and it is clear from the composition that both are skilled horsemen accustomed to riding out together. With reference to the building of the Australian bush mythology and identity, and in contrast to the standard depictions of the iconic bush rider being a white settler, here Gill shows a fine portrait of an Aboriginal stockman contributing to the establishment of the nation in a way not demonstrated in the popular works of literary figures we have long been taught to revere including Banjo Paterson, Will Ogilvie, and Henry Lawson. Sasha Grishin (2015a), writing in *The conversation*, theorises that Gill came to doubt the Christian doctrines and practices exported from England to Australia and argues that Gill's later works show that he began to respect the way First Nations people lived harmoniously within the environment, with the lands and waters providing for their needs without ruination of landscape. Grishin (2015a) also notes that Gill grew to empathise with the harsh reality of Australia's Indigenous peoples being victimised in their own country.

Figure 7:5 ST Gill (c. 1850s). *Going to work* (watercolour on paper, 24.9 cm x 33.4 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 18 September 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134377067/view

The theme of settler and Aboriginal stockmen working together is expanded upon in the 'ghost' works (i.e., pictures not directly attributed) that Gill made for the entrepreneurial surgeon Dr John Thomas Doyle in 1862-1863. Gill was commissioned to realise the loose ideas of Doyle, an amateur artistic patron who was also well-known as an eminent anatomist and popular lecturer, and who had a fierce commitment to self-promotion. Doyle's plan was to show the development of the Australian identity, and he and Gill worked together on pieces to be lithographed for the publication *JT Doyle's sketches in Australia*. One of these pictures, *Homeward bound* (Figure 7:6), is similar in theme to *Going to work,* with an Aboriginal stockman, albeit smaller in scale, working alongside a settler to move a mob of cattle. Another watercolour, *The squatter's tiger* (Figure 7:7), clearly shows the superior skills of the Aboriginal stock rider through his adept control of not one but two galloping horses. Grishin, examining the works from *JT Doyle's sketches in Australia* in *ST Gill and his audiences* (2015b), writes that Doyle's most oft-used performance stratagem was to play-act as a visitor to Australia who delivered witty commentary on all manner of things that he saw. Grishin notes too that Gill's works for Doyle were visually analogous to this theme. He writes that the *JT Doyle's sketches in Australia* suite of paintings, while published under Doyle's name rather than Gill's as part of their agreement, are clearly Gill's work. He adds that there are a great many clues in the pictures themselves, even if the signatures are somewhat obscure, with the initials 'STG' often broken up and appearing in different places across the composition — for example, the prominent letter 'G' branded onto the shoulders of both horses in *The squatter's tiger* (Grishin 2015b, pp. 136-140).

Figure 7:6 ST Gill (c. 1862-1863) *Homeward bound* (watercolour, pen and ink, 17.7 cm x 25.6 cm). State Library of NSW, accessed 24 October 23, https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/collection-items/dr-doyles-sketch-book-john-thomas-doyle-samuel-thomas-gill-p21

In many of the pictures from *JT Doyle's sketches in Australia*, Gill makes unambiguous comment on the destruction of the First Nations peoples' cultures in Australia. It is clear in the compositions that he protests their oppression and is willing to use his art to depict it irrefutably. The paired works *Squatter of NSW, monarch of all he surveys, 1788* (Figure 7:8) and *Squatter of NSW, monarch of more than all he surveys, 1863* (Figure 7:9) form an overt critique of the greed of the European settlers and their compunction to seize more and more land for themselves. In the first (*Monarch of all he surveys, 1788*), a central Aboriginal figure, looking somewhat bemused with the realities of the 1788 invasion, sits atop a hillock, his traditional tools and other proofs of his accord with his country surrounding him on the ground. Here is a man shown to be intrinsically at ease in his natural environment. This picture, in composition, colouring, and ambience, is clearly one of belonging. In contrast, the squatter figure in *Monarch of more than all he surveys, 1863* appears out of place, comically obese in his tight-fitting, patterned clothing that jars with the natural environs. An Aboriginal stockman seated at the squatter's feet is shown to be oppressed. His riding-spurs are attached on bare feet, and he sits in a supplicant manner. Clearly, this avaricious, overweight squatter has taken the best of the land for himself and has no notion of sharing. There are also more clues to Gill's opinion on the state of settler and Aboriginal relations in the title, and to observe the paired works begs the question from the viewer: why does this European emigrant, already so gluttonous, need to claim more than what he can survey?

Figure 7:7 ST Gill (c. 1862-1863) *The Squatter's tiger* (watercolour, pen and ink, 20.2 cm x 28.9 cm). State Library of NSW, accessed 18 October 2023, https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/nQR2plX1/lGLZ-68pQmKePV

Figure 7:8 ST Gill (c. 1862-1863). *Squatter of NSW, monarch of all he surveys, 1788* (watercolour, ink and pencil, 26.7-27.1 cm (irregular) x 35.1 cm). State Library of NSW, accessed 12 October 2023, https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/nQR2pIX1/wJPrx6vpvLA42

Figure 7:9 ST Gill (c. 1862-1863) *Monarch of more than all he surveys, 1863* (watercolour, pencil and ink, 26.6-26.9 cm (irregular) x 35.3 cm). State Library of NSW, accessed 12 October 2023, https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/nQR2pIX1/yJLjJBZxMPANA

In another work of keen social commentary from *JT Doyle's sketches in Australia*, Gill displays an undisguised sense of empathy for another marginalised group. In the watercolour *Might versus right* (Figure 7:10), Gill depicts a disputed claim and subsequent violent conflict between European and Chinese diggers on the goldfield. In a theme rarely explored in colonial art, Gill shows the abhorrent behaviour of a group of aggressive European miners. One pulls at the pigtail of the Chinese miner as another jeers and yet more settlers relish watching the torment. In contrast, the Chinese men are distressed in every aspect of their countenances, and they duck and weave, dodging blows from another violent European man. Once more, Gill's prominent title, *Might versus right*, in his typical careful script demonstrates where his sympathies lie, and this adds to the force of the message of the work. Here, Gill criticises both the colonial system and the racist violence perpetuated by white European colonists who routinely and brutally seized every part of the land, and its spoils, for themselves.

In the late 1850s, Gill made paintings and lithographs which focused openly on violent hostilities between Europeans and Aboriginal people. The vengeful actions of settlers in the bushland and agricultural regions of the Australian colonies became a recurring theme in these works, reflecting the content of the newspapers of the time. In 'ST Gill's "Avengers", the Gill-Clark-Mason-Atkinson connection', (1996) Elizabeth Lawson notes that Gill is generally known for pictures that contain 'sharp satire at white expense' (p. 1), and that his portrayals of Aboriginal life and their difficulties since European colonisation are usually humorous and empathetic. The various works

Figure 7:10 ST Gill (c. 1862-1863) *Might versus right* (watercolour, pencil and ink, 26.8-27.0 cm (irregular) x 36.6 cm). State Library of NSW, accessed 25 October 2023, https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/nQR2plX1/l3jaq4EWlJNMq

titled *The avengers* are a marked remove from Gill's usual cheerful depictions of fellowship between Aboriginal people and settlers. While there are different versions of *The avengers*, all are similar in composition, placing armed white settlers in the foreground, poised in the moment before making a retributive attack against peaceful Aboriginal people at a distant camp. Each version of *The avengers* utilises the same elements, and it is clear Gill has chosen to portray the First Nations people as being morally superior to the vindictive Europeans. Given his history of empathetic depictions of First Nations peoples, the various versions of *The avengers* clearly demonstrate that Gill did not want to show graphically realistic acts of violence against them. All versions illustrate a moment in time in which the gunfire, along with the viewer's perspective, is held at at a critical point of the drama just before blood is shed. In this way, Gill confers the moral right on the Indigenous people in each of the compositions.

The first known version of *The avengers* (Figure 7:11) was made circa 1857 when Gill was working in Sydney at a George Street studio. Always eager to accept commissions, Gill was tasked to create a book cover for Louisa Atkinson, a young Australian-born journalist, amateur watercolourist, botanist, and novelist. In undertaking a commissioned work that portrays violence about to be enacted upon Aboriginal people, Gill directly illustrates a precise scene from Atkinson's second novel, *Cowanda: the veteran's grant*, published in 1859.

The scene in *Cowanda* describes the punitive intent of Superintendent Blackmore and several stockmen upon finding a local shepherd speared to death. In the work, it is obvious that Atkinson felt an empathy for the Aboriginal people. This was particularly so in the matter of them taking the occasional sheep because their traditional food sources had been decimated by the Europeans. Atkinson (1995/1859, p. 9) describes the retributive expedition and positions the vigilante group in the foreground, hiding behind the trees:

> Blackmore swore he would teach the black-fellows a lesson; and now, in the dark silent night, with the stars gleaming from heaven above upon them, they were securing their horses to the stems of a cluster of oaks, and trembling in their guilt-stricken hearts, as the wind sighed mournfully through the wiry foliage, as if Nature bewailed her to witness the strife. Their guns were loaded with a deadly charge, and in silence they crept along the bank of the creek, in the shadow cast by the trees which margined it.
>
> Already the smoke from the fires at the native encampment rose up before them, and the clatter of light-hearted gossip broke the stillness.
>
> Some large trees, the roots of which had been left bare by some previous inundation, reared themselves in a rugged wall between the avengers and their prey. On hands and knees Blackmore wound his way up the drift-tangled elevation, drawing his gun after him, and closely followed by his companions.

Atkinson's text also describes the joy and camaraderie of the Aboriginal camp, in contrast with the acrimonious attitude of the settlers. The campfire scene features a young mother with her baby in her arms, the 'downy cheek pillowed upon her bosom, in utter trustfulness' (Atkinson 1995/1859, p. 9). The narrative then describes Blackmore's gun discharging accidentally when he trips on a tree root in the dark, with the result that he shoots one of his fellow stockmen. The confusion which follows allows the Aboriginal people to flee the encampment and escape without harm.

Figure 7:11 ST Gill (c. 1859). Cover illustration of *Cowanda: the veteran's grant* (size and materials of original artwork unknown). *The La Trobe Journal*, accessed 24 October 23, http://latrobejournal.slv.vic.gov.au/latrobejournal/issue/latrobe-57/latrobe-57-007.html

Just as Atkinson's novel positions the drama at a point which allows the Aboriginal families to escape unscathed, in every subsequent version of *The avengers* Gill does likewise, composing the scene in a way that gives the moral right to the peaceful, distant Aboriginal people. In 1859, Gill made a similarly themed work (Figure 7:12) for the text *Rambles at the Antipodes: a series of sketches of Moreton Bay, New Zealand, the Murray River and South Australia, and the overland route*. This book promotes the inclusion of 'Twelve tinted lithographs, illustrative of Australian life, by ST Gill' on its opening pages. Thereafter, the basic composition of *The avengers* was a theme to which he returned over multiple times over ensuing decades. In each successive work, the vengeful settlers fill the foreground and the Aboriginal people retreat further into their country. In one finely detailed, painterly version (Figure 7:13), the light of the Aboriginal people's distant campfire glows ethereally, intrinsically linking the Indigenous people with the natural world. The lighting makes it seem as if the First Nations people are favoured by a divine presence. This further assigns them all moral right and distances them even more from the unprincipled actions of the armed settlers, and the notion of Christianity and colonialism being enlightened, civilising forces.

Figure 7:12 ST Gill (c. 1859). *The avengers* (tinted lithograph). In Wilson 1859, *Rambles at the Antipodes: a series of sketches of Moreton Bay, New Zealand, The Murray River and South Australia, and the overland route*, WH Smith & Son, London, p. 40.

In his later years, Gill made other paintings and sketches representing the theme of Europeans engaged in direct conflict with First Nations peoples. Like *The avengers*, these works do not illustrate acts of violence, but position the combatants at a point where viewers are able to best assess the moral perspective of the engagement. In *Horrocks's first interview with hostile blacks N. west of Spencers Gulf* (Figure 7:14), made in 1868, more than two decades after the actual event, Gill pictures his deceased friend engaged in discussion with local Aboriginal people on the ill-fated 1846 'Expedition to the North-West'. In contrast to the various *Avengers* works, *Horrocks's first interview with hostile blacks N. west of Spencers Gulf* gives the Aboriginal people power and agency of their own and positions the viewer to better understand their indefeasible right to their lands. It is clear from the painting that Gill's sense of what is right in principle had strengthened over the years since he left South Australia, as in *Horrocks's first interview with hostile blacks N. west of Spencers Gulf*, he challenges the notion, set out in early newspaper articles and promotional pamphlets such as *The emigrant's friend, or authentic guide to South Australia, including Sydney; Port Philip, or Australia Felix; New South Wales; Van Dieman's Land; and New Zealand* (1974/1848), that the European settlement was entirely peaceful and not only unresisted by the Aboriginal inhabitants but welcomed by them as harmless, simpleminded people.

Figure 7:13 ST Gill (c. 1869). *The avengers* (watercolour with scratching out and gum arabic over pencil, 37.8 cm x 62.0 cm). National Gallery of Victoria, accessed 18 September 2023, https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/27184/

In two other works from the *JT Doyle's sketches in Australia* publication, *Poor harmless natives* (Figure 7:15) and *Attack on store dray* (Figure 7:16), Gill shows Aboriginal people acting in proactive protection of their land, water, and food sources. These pictures reinforce local colonial news articles which detail ongoing violence between settlers and Indigenous people, many of which feature throughout the creative component of my thesis. These two works counter the mistruths that the colonising of Australia was a peaceful undertaking, a summation that includes the South Australian experience. In myriad works created over nearly four decades after leaving South Australia, Gill committed himself to enacting his settler responsibilities in his own way, making numerous paintings and sketches to illustrate the harsh truths about the European settlement of the Australian colonies.

The final chapter of my exegesis explains the various components of my research and detail how I combined them to create the fiction and nonfiction collage of pictures, news articles, diary entries, and creative writing elements that make up the full *Sketching Tom Gill: Art, history, and a creative exploration beyond the frame of ST Gill's utopian visions of colonial South Australia* thesis. My research program, which included daily recording in a journal and much traveling across Adelaide and South Australia, has enabled me to engage closely with the early colonial art of

Figure 7:14 ST Gill (c. 1868). *Horrocks's first interview with hostile blacks N. west of Spencers Gulf* (watercolour, 24.6 cm x 34.7 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 12 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134370990/view

ST Gill, the history of the settlement of South Australia, and the origins of Adelaide. The journal entries and travel to pertinent sites resulted in the writing of many sketches and letters to Gill, which were designed to investigate the depiction of landscapes, peoples, and the South Australian history represented in his art. The final chapter also explains how *Sketching Tom Gill: Art, history, and a creative exploration beyond the frame of ST Gill's utopian visions of colonial South Australia* works as an experiment in creative writing about art and history, and that it intends to challenge the reader to recognise the contrasts and distinctions between ST Gill's South Australian art and colonial news articles. My thesis invites the reader to view the settlement of South Australia in a new and unique way.

Figure 7:15 ST Gill (c. 1862-1863). *Poor harmless natives* (watercolour, 27.0 cm x 35.0 cm). State Library of NSW, accessed 12 October 2023, https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/nQR2plX1/rJGl6zK0al27N

Figure 7:16 ST Gill (c. 1862-1863). *Attack on store dray* (colour lithograph, 17.6 cm x 25.0 cm). State Library of NSW, accessed 12 October 2023, https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/nQR2plX1/rJGl6zK0al27N

CHAPTER 8

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

In all Colonies, the want of Artizans and Mechanics depends entirely on its progress and prosperity. An infant Colony requires only country carpenters, wheelrights, blacksmiths, and a few other trades, but as a population increases, other trades become necessary; another thing to is to be remembered, that Colonists mostly bring out with them a good outfit of clothing, &c., and that articles of almost every description are purchase-able ready-made, and brought from England or America. Thus, the employment of tradesmen will always be limited. As to South Australia, there is room now for very numerous arts, it having got over, it is to be hoped, its infant difficulties. Comfort, and even luxury, begin to require very numerous persons, before useless. Emigrants of this class have the greatest uncertainty attending their employment; agricultural labourers, domestic servants, and miners, may arrive in any number, with certainty of good wages; but the employment of mechanics, in their respective trades, must depend upon the relative number of them and other Colonists. A Colony therefore may be soon over-stocked, even the most useful of them.

The emigrant's friend, or authentic guide to South Australia, including Sydney; Port Philip, or Australia Felix; New South Wales; Van Dieman's Land; and New Zealand 1974/1848, p. 14.

Journal Day 46: Beehive Corner, Rundle Mall, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill

c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

I sit at the corner of Rundle and King William Streets and picture your friends in the crowd of the *Beehive* painting (Figure 8:1). I imagine they like to window-shop, to linger outside the tailor's emporium as they dream of choosing from exotic bolts of fabric. Or as they consider new pens and parchments

at Wiggs. Perhaps they like to watch drays being unloaded, or to rest against brick walls warmed by the sun (Title: *Various studies of the artist's companions on Rundle Street*).

I've made portraits of your friends. Somewhere in the *Beehive* scene is George, a young man close to your own age. He's a good friend, a mason and heavy-set, hardworking, and affable. He rents a small room near Gawler Place, convenient for dropping in for a natter at the end of the day (Title: *Portrait of George at the studio warming his hands by the fire*).

I've invented another friend called Peter. He is learned and holds a clerk's position in an accounting firm. He lives at a good boarding house and arrives at your studio in the evening after tabulating figures in an office with tall windows, polished desks, leather chairs, and a fusty atmosphere. Peter is dapper and fastidious, careful with his attire and surroundings. He rinses glasses and tin mugs at the studio and makes tea or pours whiskey, all the while enquiring about things you've seen in your travels and the sketches you've made along the way (Title: *Peter tidying studio shelves for a disorganised artist*).

I've also fabricated a fine young friend called Patience. She is freckled and pretty and works as a seamstress at her accommodations to help pay her way. And her lodgings? Another boarding house, near your rooms. When she visits the studio, Patience likes most to sit a little apart and make herself useful (Title: *Patience mending costumes in the last light of the afternoon*).

My best-loved invention is a spirited girl I've called Nell. How best to describe her? Nell is older than the others, and well-educated. I imagine her, smart and vivacious, working in the mornings as a governess of small children in exchange for a good room at a private home. Nell is a favourite model for the poses you need to complete your works, being slender and straight like a man and bold enough to dress as one within the safety of the studio, among friends (Title: *Portraits of Nell as a fearless artist's model in varied attire*).

~~

Figure 8:1 ST Gill (c.1849). *The Beehive, corner King William and Rundle Streets, Adelaide* (watercolour on paper 34.0 cm x 49.5 cm). Experience Adelaide, accessed 12 October 2023, https://www.experienceadelaide.com.au/photo-library/old-buildings-of-adelaide/beehive-corner-king-william-street-1849/

8. The creative work: *Sketching Tom Gill*

The creative component of *Sketching Tom Gill: Art, history, and a creative exploration beyond the frame of ST Gill's utopian visions of colonial South Australia* which follows this chapter maintains the composite collage framework of facts and fictions that opened the critical section and has continued throughout each chapter of this exegesis. The insertion of the found objects in between elements of my contemporary creative writing is designed to inspire the reader to focus on the contrasts between Gill's harmonious Adelaide paintings and the darker truths of colonial attitudes and policies as graphically demonstrated in the following selection of historic news articles.

In choosing news items from the nineteenth-century archives, I have adhered to postcolonial and decolonial practises in the creative arts which utilise archival found objects to illustrate the perspectives of the 1840s to a present-day audience. This methodology allows the reader of *Sketching Tom Gill* to view the European settlement of South Australia and its effects on First Nations peoples without the author fictionalising the experiences of Aboriginal people or attempting to speak for them.

The creative components in the following work divide the various topics into the framework of 'envelopes', as explained in preceding chapters. Envelope cover sheets list the inclusions, including the specific ST Gill artworks used to illustrate their themes.

As also discussed in Chapter 7 above, the creative work has been directly inspired by the places ST Gill travelled to during his South Australian years. The content in the upcoming sections adheres to Gill's chronological South Australian progression from 1839 to 1852. Many drafts of my creative pieces were written *in situ* to contemplate place, history, and the likely methodologies employed in the creation of Gill's art. Experimentation with watercolour painting and drawing techniques formed an integral part of the following creative elements. To better understand the tribulations of European explorers traversing remote regions in inhospitable conditions, I travelled to Lake Torrens and then to the border of north-eastern South Australia and New South Wales to get close to the Depot Glen burial site of James Poole, Charles Sturt's second in command. In recognition of this geographical journey, and as an ongoing commitment to investigating ST Gill's work beyond Adelaide, each journal entry in the thesis, chosen from hundreds made during in the research program, is titled with a numeric integer and a general location. Some of these have been reordered in the final thesis. The journal headings also include the names of the relevant Aboriginal Country for each entry, sourced from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies website (www.aiatsis.gov.au), and I offer my respects to the Elders, past, present, and emerging, of these many South Australian locations. Most of the creative elements in the following chapters take the form of epistles addressed to ST Gill via Adelaide's earliest Post Office: *N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide* (Figure 8:2).

Many of my creative writing pieces have titles inserted within the text in brackets. These titles are fictional musings and reflect my research practise of using titles to add detail to scenes described and pictures drawn. This methodology also recognises the importance of meaningful titles to Gill, as discussed in earlier chapters of this exegesis. While some of my letters, sketches, and journal entries are used to build on the portrait of ST Gill begun in the preceding critical chapters, most of the entries in the creative work following are composed in direct response to specific paintings and drawing of his, and these illustrations are marked with 'Figure' numbers that direct the reader to the artworks. Within the text of the full thesis, the proper titles of Gill's pieces are presented in italic font in the Harvard UofA referencing style. To aid the reader, I have used markedly different typographic styles to clarify which parts of the collage are archival newsprint (serif font with colour screen background) and which are contemporary writing (sans serif font). With reference to articles sourced via the Trove National Library of Australia search engine (www.trove.nla.gov.au), the page numbers for historic texts are the ones nominated by Trove.

In some instances, South Australia's early colonial newspapers reprinted articles from other mastheads. To explicate for the reader, I have assigned references as they appear on the header of the Trove search engine and page numbers likewise. The found articles have been faithfully transcribed and include all original grammatical nuances, oddities, and errors. The headlines of the news articles are used verbatim, as is the content, even when they appear patronising or racist by contemporary standards. The titles used for Gill's artworks are similarly the original titles, often as designated by the holding museum, even when the language in them does not conform to modern-day standards. I have remarked in the critical chapters of the importance of Gill's use of lengthy titles when labelling his drawings and paintings, but some works do not include written titles and so in these cases I have retained the holding museum's given title. Gill's works have been digitised and sourced through galleries and museums, and this has greatly helped me to locate the works presented in this thesis. Finally, in my research I have used news articles extensively as important elements of my collage because the language used in them illustrates the European attitudes of the time in a manner no fictionalising of people or events can match.

Figure 8:2: ST Gill (c. 1840s). *N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide, residence of Capt. Watts of Co. Kildare* (wash drawing, 8.4 cm x 10.0 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 4 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134361613/view

In addition to the creative decisions made in the construction of the thesis and outlined in previous chapters, I made the decision to write directly to Gill, using an informal address (the moniker 'Tom') in order to create an intimate portrait of an artist at work. This choice reflects the likelihood that this is how Gill was addressed in his family, as he was listed on the passenger manifest of his emigrant ship as 'Thos.', the shortened form of Thomas. In planning for my portrait of Gill to be made up of small moments and the minutiae of his art practice, I recalled biographer Robert Crawford's decision, in *Young Eliot: from St Louis to The waste land* (2015), to refer to TS Eliot as 'Tom'. Crawford (2015, p. 11) thus opens his work by signalling that it is a nuanced portrait that positions Eliot beyond the scale of his fame. In my creative work, a similar sense of informality and intimacy developed contemporaneously with my speculation that Gill's artistic process utilised figure models to aid in the composition of his highly intricate paintings, particularly those grand works involving crowd scenes and numerous figures in the foreground of the picture plane. This led directly to my creating a group of friends of around Gill's own age whom I could use in the narrative to illustrate his possible artistic process.

The explorers Charles Sturt and Edward John Eyre, important figures in the European exploration of South Australia and commissioners of works by Gill for various publications, are introduced in the creative work through the reproduction of letters and journal entries. Gill's own 'voice', sourced from his diary entries of the 1846 Horrocks exploration, explains how he cared for Horrocks after the shooting accident which ultimately took Horrocks's life on the ill-fated 'Expedition to the North-West'. In the following creative chapters, Gill's diary entries are referenced to the art monograph *Samuel Thomas Gill: artist,* written by Keith Macrae Bowden (1971), as these are transcribed from the newspaper edition and are thus both easier for the reader to source and clearer to read. Newspapers of the colonial era, even when carefully scanned for digital storage, are difficult to read because of historic printing processes.

My letters, sketches and journal entries are presented throughout the thesis in the form of a first person narrative voice. This presentation closely aligns with my personal journey in researching, writing, curating, and collaging *Sketching Tom Gill* in its critical and creative components. The contemplation of place, in the present and past, and of how an artist views a landscape, form important components of the letters and sketches. My research, undertaken over years, took different forms, and experiencing the challenges facing an artist formed an important component of my project. Many of the written sketches illustrate my own efforts to come to terms with the European manner of making rigorous compositions following the strict conventions of the nineteenth century. To better understand these strictures, I imagined the art critic John Ruskin as my instructor and studied his

writings to illustrate the expectations of landscapes made in the European manner. The writings and ideas are taken from his work *The elements of drawing* (1971/1857) and referenced in the narrative. As researcher, creative writer, artist, and narrator, I bring to my thesis a South Australian country background, a love of wild and remote places, and decades of experience as a commercial designer and illustrator who appreciates the practicalities of making work for customers. I also bring an appreciation of many styles of figurative and representational art. My earliest amusements with a picture book in my small South Australian outback town began with composing imaginary play based on the pictures of Geoffrey Dutton's *Paintings of ST Gill*, published by Rigby, Adelaide in 1962. This was the first book with pictures that I remember in my family home, and it has remained a favourite.

In endeavouring to understand Gill's artistic techniques, and the challenges he experienced in arid conditions, I experimented with various tools and procedures. These included learning about painting and drawing mediums, and how to mix waterolours and backgrounds on the palette and on damp rag papers. One critical tool in the methodology of an artist who uses multiple figures in compositions is the use of models for figure drawing and refinements of posture, character, and expression. In writing the creative elements of *Sketching Tom Gill*, I considered the invention of friends for Gill to be an intrinsic part of the artistic methodology and equipment of his studio, alongside sketchbooks, easels, palettes, paints, and papers. Traditional fiction often invites the reader to follow a narrative arc and invest in fictional characters. *Sketching Tom Gill* uses both fictional and historic characters as background compositional elements, relayed via sketches and microfictions, in the creation of Gill's artworks, and invites the reader to join me, as first person narrator, on my personal journey to uncover the hidden truths about South Australian history. It is my research journey, analogous to Gill's own South Australian one, that forms the narrative arc in *Sketching Tom Gill*.

In the early 1850s, ST Gill left South Australia for the Victorian goldfields and created many candid and authentic pictures of the day-to-day lives of those who clamoured to make quick wealth from digging in the soil with rudimentary equipment. One of the most famous of his pictures of the goldfields, *Diggers on way to Bendigo* (Figure 8:3), became an iconic picture that told a story of 'everyman on the way to this Australian El Dorado' (Grishin 2015b, p. 78). Gill's works illustrating life on the goldfields were immediately popular and made him a household name in Victoria and New South Wales during the second half of the nineteenth century. The closing chapters of my creative work recognise that Gill's South Australian journey had come to an end by the time a great proportion of South Australia's labouring men, and speculators, had left to become either fossickers or transient workers following the gold rush fever to Victoria (Pike 1967, pp. 444-446). My final letters, journal

entries and sketches focus on the conclusion of Gill's time in South Australia. In these last pieces, I pack away the investigative, artistic, and creative tools employed in my search through history and place in colonial South Australia and consider how Gill used many of his subsequent works to make unambiguous comment on the destructiveness of the colonial system for Australia's Indigenous peoples. At the end of my thesis, I leave the reader to contemplate where Australia's relationship with First Nations peoples rests today.

TJ Clark closes *The sight of death: an experiment in art writing* (2021) with a description of Nicolas Poussin's *Landscape with a man killed by a snake* hanging in an outlying, ill-lit section of London's National Gallery. Clark writes of the vast numbers of visitors who bustle through the space toward the gallery's back exit, and of how few give the great work even the most cursory of glances. He writes again of the mysterious figures in *Landscape with a man killed by a snake*, and of how they 'seem mainly now to be fending off the absurdity of their surroundings, shrinking back underneath the gray varnish in hopes of not being seen' (Clark 2021, p. 242). *The sight of death* ends with an amalgam of regret and optimism. Clark notes that *Landscape with a man killed by a snake* has always spent long periods being overlooked and yet always emerges once again to give new viewers insight into a grand Baroque work that says much about a time in history and the lives of those who lived within it. He

Figure 8:3 ST Gill (1852). *Diggers on way to Bendigo* (lithographed and published by Macartney & Galbraith). National Library of Australia, accessed 16 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-148462919/view

writes of his hopes that the great painting, like others of similar majesty, can still do much to benefit civilisations and those who take the time to contemplate the wonders of art.

Sketching Tom Gill: Art, history, and a creative exploration beyond the frame of ST Gill's utopian visions of colonial South Australia invites readers to consider South Australia's European settlement in a new way, and to embark on a path of truth-telling and reconciliation with South Australia's Aboriginal people. The following creative work, a journey of a researcher and narrator with its collage of fictions and nonfictions, artworks and archival textual found objects, endeavours to join the reconciliation movement. At its close, it represents an unfinished journey, and this is what separates it from more traditional creative fiction works.

PART 2: CREATIVE

Sketching Tom Gill

CHAPTER 9

Envelope labelled:

As preliminary holders we were entitled to make our choice of selections.

Contains:

- Letters, journal entries and sketches addressed to ST Gill.
- Clippings of newspaper articles.

ST Gill artwork:

- *Captain Butler's new house, South Adelaide.*

ADVERTISEMENT

S. T. Gill, Artist, &c., late Draftsman and Water Color Painter to the Hubard Profile Gallery of London, begs to announce to his friends and the public generally of Adelaide and its vicinity that he has opened rooms in Gawler-place, where for the present he solicits the attendance of such individuals as are desirous of obtaining correct likenesses of themselves, families, or friends. Parties preferring attendance at their residences may be accommodated without additional charge. Correct resemblances of horses, dogs, &c., with local scenery, &c., executed to order. Residences sketched and transferred to paper suited for home conveyance. Orders executed in rotation. Open daily from eleven till dusk.

The South Australian Register 1840, 7 March, p. 1.

Journal Day 101: North Terrace, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

In fine weather, I sit on a North Terrace bench and imagine Adelaide's beginnings. I picture the countless footsteps that have trodden the soil before mine and wonder how the landscape must have looked, thick with gums and the sun bright on native grasses. I imagine the flurry of building projects and the felling of trees and the slog of making tracks in the dust. I hear the hammer of pickets and tradesmen spitting in dirt. I hear the claims, counter-claims, and umbrage of men.

You receive commissions and welcome opportunities to make portraits of houses and estates in the hills. Keen to oblige, you sketch some just as they are, bright and self-conscious in their rough-hewn plots, while others you draw as their new owners envision they will be later when they settle in. At your studio reception, you greet customers and enthusiastically outline pictures yet to be painted and the ease of

creating gardens yet to grow that will spill over fences awaiting construction. You describe the beauty of fully grown bushes in gardens yet to be dug and clusters of ripe fruit on trees recently planted. And all with brightly painted gates swung wide open in welcome. It's simply a matter of listening to your customers and making paintings to suit.

~~

NATIVE RIGHTS OF PROPERTY
OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE

As the following correspondence embraces the principles and circumstances of permanent general importance, the Governor and Resident Commissioner directs that it may be inserted in the Gazette for public information.
By His Excellency's command, CHAS. STURT, Assistant Commissioner.

SIR — We, the undersigned owners or representatives of owners of preliminary land orders, beg to represent to you, that we and our constituents reserved our choice of certain sections of country land in various districts of the province, under the full confidence that, as preliminary holders, we were entitled to make our selections, in preference to all persons whatever. We have, however, learned with much surprise and regret, several sections have been withdrawn from public choice in Districts D and F, in favour of the aboriginal inhabitants. As this measure interferes with what we considered our rights and those of our constituents, and is inconsistent in our opinion, with the condition on which those land orders were obtained in England, we beg leave very respectfully to submit to your consideration our sentiments on this subject, and to express our hope that you will see meet to annul the choices made by the Protector of the Aborigines, and give orders that the selections to be made by him shall be postponed till after the preliminary orders shall have exercised their right of selection in the several reserved districts.

We have, &c.,
David McLaren, Manager of S. A. Company
H. Nixon, John Allan, Robert Gouger, J.H. Fisher,
John Morphett, Frederick Jones.

The South Australian Register 1840, 25 July, p. 7.

Figure 9:1 ST Gill (c.1840s). *Captain Butler's new house, South Adelaide* (sepia wash on paper, 9.2 cm x 13.1 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 26 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134362737/view

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Journal Day 109: East Terrace, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill

c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

One sunny weekend afternoon you take a walk with friends to the site of a commission. The work is for Captain Butler and will be a house portrait contracted for sending home to England. I imagine you all — George, Nell, Peter, Patience, and Jack too — resting under a stand of eucalypts near Captain Butler's new home south of the river (Title: *Portrait of friends watching a commission take shape*).

You begin work, moving around the Butler house to consider different outlooks. You check perspective

and test vanishing points. Peter leans against a tree and reads aloud from a newspaper. In every edition he looks for statistics about the growth of the colony. “It seems there are now more than eight hundred brick and stone houses in Adelaide,” he says. “So thanks to George for playing his part in building all those walls, and Tom for sketching them, as many as he can. And listen to this? Even though more and more people are arriving on all the ships coming in, sheep are outnumbering us now by more than ten to one.”

Patience sits nearby. She has set aside a small basket of mending, wishing she had left it at home so as not to feel obliged to pick up needle and thread. The afternoon is for daydreaming and gazing at distant hills, not at fallen stitches in her lap. “Sheep?” she says. “I can see ten from here.” She points to a group of little huts on a rise to the west. “I can count three pigs at one of those huts.”

Peter, frowning, consults the article. “It says here that there are three thousand six hundred pigs in the colony.” He looks at Patience. “I wonder how they know?”

“Pigs and sheep make dull news,” Nell says. She turns, tosses a gum sprig at Peter, and laughs at the face he makes. “Please read the auction listings instead. I do like to hear those. It’s rather fun to imagine having money to bid at a sale.”

Peter turns through pages until he finds the advertisement section. “What about Dunlop cheeses, in tins? There are dozens of them to be sold in one lot. Now look… here is sugar candy listed, and white wine vinegar. And there is a large lot of zinc piping and a handsome sofa. All for auction midday Wednesday.”

“That’s a little better,” says Nell. “I rather like the idea of bidding for tins of cheese.”

You move about, squinting and holding your fingers square to make imaginary frames around potential scenes. You judge the impact of trees on possible compositions, and the way the afternoon sun falls on Captain Butler’s fine new roof-top and the shadows it makes around the outbuildings. You’ve been commissioned to provide one finished version of the home but have assured Captain Butler he will have different views to choose from before the final work is undertaken. At first, you think a scene showing the house’s frontage with its stylish peaked portico would present the home at its best. When you move to the right, though, you imagine that a variation showing partial front and side views together may be the most impressive. That would allow a little more garden to show at the sides, along with some sizeable gum trees. The corner position would also allow for more points of interest in the street, and a

loose outline of Captain Butler's carriage on the road would be a welcome inclusion, particularly as he intends to send the picture home.

Nell stands up quickly, brushing dry leaves from the hem of her skirt. "I wonder just how long it would take us to eat all those tins of cheese," she says.

~~

Journal Day 112: Botanic Garden, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

Botanic Garden. Summer House. Palm House. The Wollemi pine and reflections of light on the conservatory. Waterwise, wheelhouse, cycad, deadhouse. The dry of natives and the quick turn of pencil (2B) on rag paper; shadows of colonial men that slip through lines of dark trees before fading back into nothing (5B). The beauty of painting Moreton Bay shadows on a hot summer day, thick limbs with twig fingers linked overhead. On the palette, green and umber and indigo blue. For gloom there are charcoal and violet and black. For dapples of overhead sunlight in the afternoon, yellow, rose, white, and water.

~~

Journal Day 123: East Terrace, South Terrace, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

I make a drawing of Nell in the early morning. She wears a serviceable blue-grey work dress and a pleated wrapper. I draw pagoda sleeves and a standing collar. I work hard on the drape of fabric and the way it flares out from the waist, and add dull grey shadows in the folds. The morning is chilly. When my drawing is complete, a young woman hurries past in dark pants and black boots with tight laces and thick tread. She has a woolen scarf in a bright pattern with birds. She glances at me and then bends her head against the cold. I give Nell a scarf, pick up my paintbrush and colour it scarlet red. It sings against the drab blue grey of her dress. I like to think Nell would have been so bold.

~~

Journal Day 138: Gawler Place, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

Captain Butler calls at the studio to see the early sketches of his new-built house (Figure 9:1). In expectation, you've tidied the reception and put three sketches on the display easel. You've put significant detail into the one you favour the most, the corner view. It shows the front of the house with the portico and shutters, while behind, the rear of the building extends well across the picture plane, making the property look extensive. You've improvised with the garden, too, anticipating that Captain Butler will approve the fictional additions. And you hope that he will like the carriage, modelled on his own, shown moving down the street and merging into the background.

Captain Butler steps close and peers at all three sketches. Pleasingly, he seems to appreciate the corner view the most. "I like the aspect and garden detail in this one," he says, tapping his fingers against the easel. "You have captured the way the garden will look when the plantings are better established. I think it looks an inviting home. Which is exactly what I've been hoping for."

You point out how more detail can be added to enhance the portrait, indicating the junction of the two fence lines. "Extra shadow applied to this area will add depth to the overall and bring the viewer's eye back to the centre. And detail in the foliage will help to illustrate how fertile the soil is. Transparent colour will work well. I suggest a blend of English greens for the grasses in the foreground, with local hues scattered in between. I can use some of the dry summer shades that the plants here show so readily. I could add wildflowers as well."

Captain Butler nods and then waves his fingers at the middle ground. "I plan to send this painting to my mother for a gift," he says finally. "Could you place a suggestion of her likeness right in the front, as if she were making her way to the side gate, for a visit?" He turns to catch your eye. "Perhaps with a basket? She likes to shop at the markets in the village where she lives. My mother is nervous of sea travel and will never be able to manage the journey. She would be delighted by the notion of being

included at our Adelaide home. Might that work, Gill? My mother is a gentle lady who lives simply. She enjoys walking to undertake her errands."

So it is resolved. In the final Butler house portrait, Nell, dressed in walking attire, has posed as Captain Butler's mother and the painting has a welcoming foreground. And you have thought of another nicety, added in just at the last: the captain himself, a small silhouette, stands on the street outside his home, waiting for a special visitor to arrive.

~~

Journal Day 141: Angas Street, Gilles Street, East Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

Angas Street. Gilles Street. White picket fences. Stone walls and climbing roses. Brick pedestals. Petals with water and blush. Mr Lincoln, Just Joey, Blue Moon, Camp David, Gold Bunny, Peace: roses that climb and play over pickets, petals that peek at the light. Carmine and scarlet. Splashes of sun and dapples on leaf.

Make mid tones. Brush thin lines. Make bold lines. Round, flat, filbert, wedge. Blur pencil. Beading and spilling and runnels of water. Take care. Throw colour. Stems and pricks and thorns. The sun is moving. The shadows retreat. Slim pickets take on new beauty in the late afternoon.

~~

Journal Day 150: Rundle Mall, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

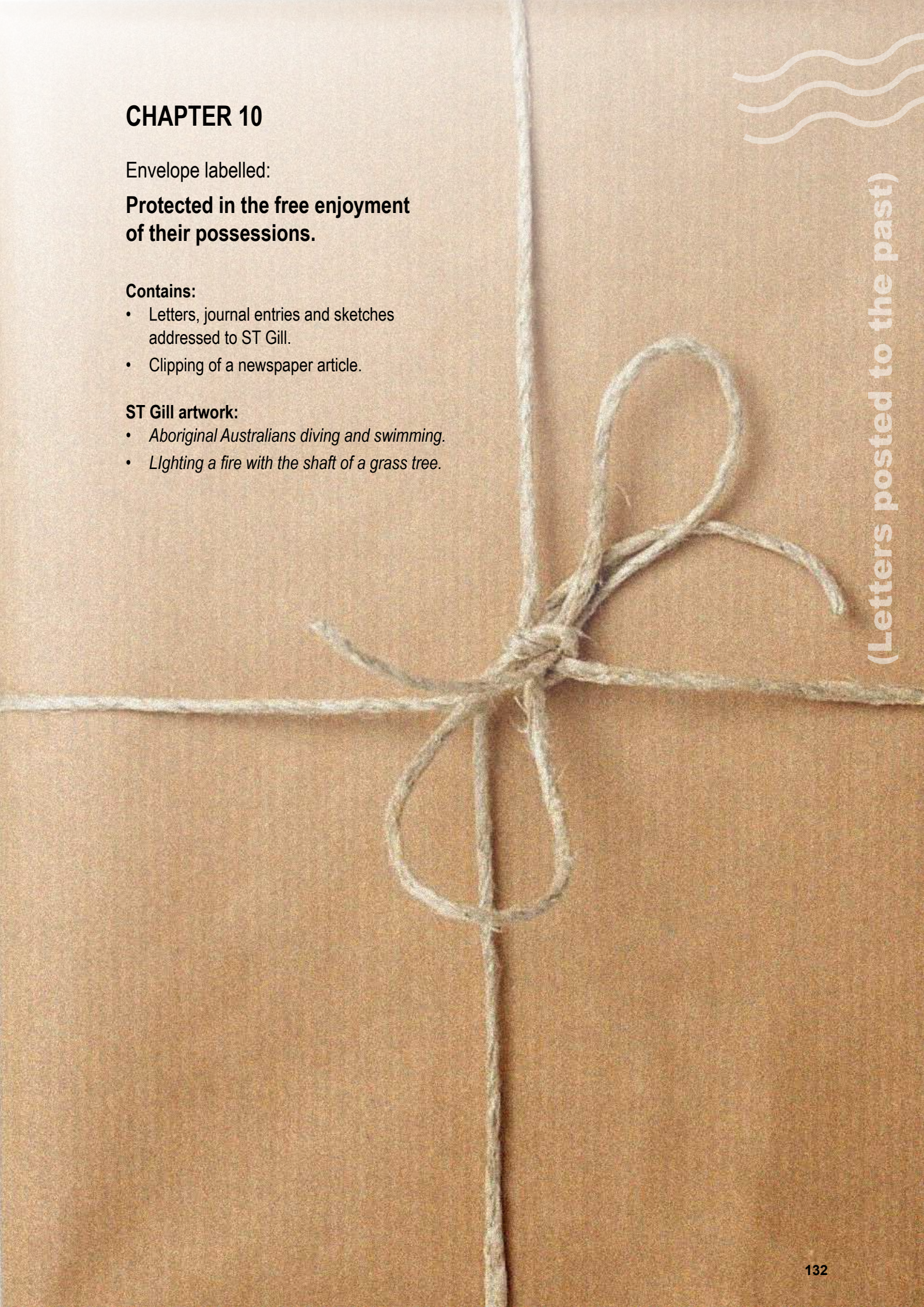
One late afternoon, you sit in the Cornwall Hotel on Rundle Street with Peter and George. The three of you have secured a small table in a corner and pooled your funds. Peter sorts coins and totals them, but it seems meals of parrot pie and mash for all three of you are out of reach. You consider sharing two

pieces among the three of you, but then you have an idea. You approach the licensee, Henry Dent, pulling him aside to propose that you make a sketch of the bustling interior in exchange for three serves of pie and a jug of ale to wash them down with. To reinforce your offer, you show Dent drawings you made earlier in the day. There's an exterior of a store with the proprietor cleaning windows, the interior of a saddlery with a close-up of a harness, and a dog and a child running in the road. A wash drawing with a boisterous crowd in the front room of a busy tavern, you tell Mr Dent, is exactly the sort of challenge you feel inspired to meet (Title: *Portrait of an artist making a business proposition*).

After a glance at the customers, Dent agrees (Title: *A business deal is struck between gentlemen*). You position yourself in a corner to observe the bustle. There are working lads in slouch hats, some holding tankards of ale and some yet to be served. An old man is slumped under a table, hat over his eyes, a pipe burning in his fingers. A pair of bearded men near the door look as if they are ready to break into a fight.

You make a pleasing composition. In the foreground, three rugged men stand waiting for service, while behind, at a group of tables near the wall, six others are seated, talking earnestly. You capture the last pearly light of the afternoon spilling through the window onto their faces, the intricate shading lighting up their animated features pleasingly (Title: *Tavern patrons lit with silvery light on an overcast day*).

~~



CHAPTER 10

Envelope labelled:

Protected in the free enjoyment of their possessions.

Contains:

- Letters, journal entries and sketches addressed to ST Gill.
- Clipping of a newspaper article.

ST Gill artwork:

- *Aboriginal Australians diving and swimming.*
- *LIghting a fire with the shaft of a grass tree.*

(Letters posted to the past)

NATIVE RIGHTS OF PROPERTY: OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE

As the following correspondence embraces the principles and circumstances of permanent general importance, the Governor and Resident Commissioner directs that it may be inserted in the Gazette for public information.
By His Excellency's command, CHAS. STURT, Assistant Commissioner.

Land Office, July 13th, 1840:
GENTLEMEN — Having laid your letter of the 9th instant before the Governor and Resident Commissioner, I am directed by his Excellency to say, in reply, that it is to him a matter of deep surprise that persons of intelligence, like yourselves who also, as preliminary purchasers, are well acquainted with the history of the establishment of the colony, should consider any rights which any Europeans possess to the lands of the province, as preliminary to those of the aboriginal inhabitants. Those natural indefeasible rights which, as his Excellency conceives, are vested in them as their birth right, have been confirmed to them by the Royal Instructions to the Governor, and by the Commissioners' instructions to the Resident Commissioner. Under these it is that his Excellency has acted in the case to which your letter refers. The Royal instructions command that they shall be protected in the free enjoyment of their possessions; that injustice and violence towards them shall be prevented; that all measures which may appear to be necessary shall be taken for their advancement in civilization, and the Commissioners' instructions direct that they shall not be disturbed in the enjoyment of lands over which they may possess proprietary rights, and of which they are not disposed to make voluntary transfer.
Chas. Sturt, Assistant Commissioner.

The South Australian Register 1840, Saturday 25 July, p. 7.

Journal Day 172: Possum Park/Pirltawardli, North Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

One fine afternoon, Christian Teichelmann, a Dresden missionary, comes to sit by the river, curious to see your work. He's been walking nearby through the location set aside for Aboriginal people, threading

his way past wurlies and campfires with a book in hand, making occasional notes with a pencil.

He watches you for a time. “Will you paint a picture of a wurlie for me?” he asks finally. He points through the trees to three clustered together. The group share a campfire, and there are four women sitting cross-legged on the ground close by, each grinding seeds into a curve of bark. Boys climb a tree nearby, straddling high branches one after the other before leaping to the ground, each landing nimbly time after time. “I would like to show the children a picture.”

You turn to a new page of your sketchbook, then pick up a brush, dip it in water and load it with sepia from the palette. First, an outline of a humpy shape with an open doorway, then loose strokes to indicate an exterior of bark and leaves. Another dip of the brush with green to make a forest background, swift strokes to indicate trees and small dark climbing figures, then dry brush scumble for overhead foliage. Finally, sweeps of charcoal and umber to layer depth onto the wurlie, and to make a dark doorway and hints of an interior. You smudge with your thumb, smoothing the curved shapes, then tear the picture from the book and hand it to Teichelmann.

He considers it, smiling, and thanks you earnestly. “We are proud of the work we do here, Clamor and I. We’ve taught the children hymns to sing in their own language. They have beautiful voices. I am making a list of their words, as many as I can.”

You nod in return. “It’s fine work.”

“Plenty want to fence them in,” Teichelmann says, standing. “Others want to move them to another place. A distant home, far from here. But I want the children to stay by the river.”

You shuffle pages until you find a study from earlier in the afternoon. It shows a wallaby group at the pond in the heat of the day. There are silhouettes of older animals alongside realistic joeys picked out with grey fur and soft white highlights for hind legs and relaxed tails. You hand it to Teichelmann. “Perhaps the children will like this one. You are welcome to it.”

Teichelmann inclines his head. “May God bless us all in this new land.”

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Journal Day 194: Adelaide Parklands, Kaurna Country.

Six women stop to talk under the gum trees near the river. They let their dogs run free and a dozen terriers give chase to a golf ball on the course near Victoria Drive. The golfers swing and shout but the women and dogs pay no attention (Title: *Sunny day on the green with loose running dogs*).

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Figure 10:1 ST Gill (c. 1840s). *Aboriginal Australians diving and swimming* (also called *Native diving into a pool* and attributed to c.1850) (watercolour on paper, 9.1 cm x 10.7 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 12 October 2023, https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/catalog/458288

Journal Day 203: Torrens Weir, River Torrens/Karrawirra Parri, North Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill

c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

I imagine three boys playing at the river ponds (Figure 10:1). They dive like ducks with their bare bottoms high and feet flapping. One emerges triumphant with a fish gripped in his fingers. The others squeal and the fish wriggles and drops into the water. The boy dives again and again but emerges

empty-handed. The boys take turns scrambling onto boulders on a hillock, each leaping into the deepest part of the pond making splashes of silver and light, water showering high onto the banks and soaking the grasses alongside.

One boy stands poised at the top of the rocks. You have a background waiting for just such a moment. Distant reeds made dark and swiftly, rocks with splits and echoes, the water stained with blue violet grey. And then he shouts and makes a dive and you capture it cleanly almost as quickly as he arcs through the sky. His fingers point, his knees are bent, and there's a flash of reflection the instant before he splits the water.

Then there's calling and drubbing and splashing and for you, nimble brushwork, fingers twirling leafage into the foreground alongside water splatter on rocks. A hint of distant trees and then damp, more damp and a pale hint of blue for the sky. In the background, the boys play in the sun.

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Journal Day 205: Torrens Weir, River Torrens/Karrawirra Parri, North Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

I imagine that mastering the way the water moves takes work. Most days, you sit by the river with a palette of sap, cerulean, umber, rose, violet, sepia, and a dirty ochre yellow. Reflections are critical and you work instinctively, picking up pure colour and making spontaneous movements, spreading shapes quickly on damp paper. In between nature studies — a spray of leaves, moss-covered rock, thin broken reeds bent into the shallows — you gaze at the water for long periods, learning the blends that capture the way sunlight hits a flat surface and how best to show the joy of ripples made with the slip of a fish or waterfowl diving deep (Title: *Antipodean water studies*).

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Journal Day 209: Possum Park/Pirltawardli, North Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

Clamor Schürmann sits against the wall of the Pirltawardli schoolhouse in the last shade of the morning. He remembers making clay by the river under a beating sun. He thinks of teaching the gospel of forgiveness through God's love. He picks up a twig and draws a stick figure of the Apostle Paul in the dirt. The mouth makes a flat line. Schürmann adds long robes and wonders if the Apostle was vulnerable to heatstroke. He draws the outline of a Lutheran church around the stick figure to protect him from the sun.

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Journal Day 211: Oakbank, Peramangk Country.

Making fire with the tip of the grass tree (Figure 10:2). Spinning, spindle and stem. Finally, a small orange spark. Dry tinder. A whisper of smoke, blue-grey and curling and catching in the wind.

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Figure 10:2 ST Gill (c. 1840s). *Lighting a fire with the shaft of a grass tree* (also called *Natives lighting a fire with the shaft of a grass tree* and attributed to c. 1850) (watercolour on paper, 8.9 cm x 10.8 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 12 October 2023, https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/catalog/458252

Journal Day 219: Gawler Place, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

Colouring skin 1: For pale skin, begin with a diluted sienna and rose mix and then add layers of watery ochre white. Add weak madder for depth. Layer thin stains of mauve and magenta to make skin touched by the sun and reddened by work.

Colouring skin 2: For dark skin, think of the shades underneath. Violet, blue, magenta. Add hints of umber and sienna. For medium skin, finish with sienna one thin stain at a time. For the darkest skin, build translucent umber at the last, as many layers as needed.

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Journal Day 213: George Street, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

Here is the far end of a lane and a rough track cracked, split, broken by hooves and the grind of wheels. Muck runs down to the water with rubbish shifting and twisting in the wind and the dregs of the day collected. One tumbleweed, then another; a page of a newspaper, shredded; a tear of cloth; an empty bottle. It rolls and spins, bouncing past broken window glass, past cattle dung and dog wet staining the dust, and comes to rest against a tree at the river's edge. That's where you draw it. A lone green bottle lying in roots at the base of a gum.

Nell scratches Jack's ears and looks at the drawing. "That looks pretty, especially the way the sun hits the green glass and the lettering on the side of the bottle. But will anyone want to buy a picture of rubbish lying by a tree?"

You squint at the drawing. "Not all pictures are for buying." You take the paper, tear it from the book and hold it aloft, watching it flutter in your fingers. "I like the way the bottle had a voyage all of its own and then it ended right here alongside us."

You let the sketch go, watch as it flicks, turns, catches the wind. “See this, Nell? Where will this paper end its journey? In someone’s house? In a river, where it will float and then disintegrate over time? In a campfire? In a bird’s nest? Perhaps a pig will find it in a trough, days from now, and eat it, not caring at all that it was once a blank sheet of paper in a book brought out from Plymouth. Or that I drew a Yorkshire bottle far from home lying at the foot of an ancient tree.”

~~

Journal Day 214: Adelaide Parklands, Kaurna Country.

Early mornings you walk deserted streets and study the colours of the sunrise, pausing to watch as they dapple the skin of saplings and glance bright off the wheel of a water cart.

One morning, an old man sweeps the steps of the Auction Mart as you walk by. He waves and turns his face to the sun. “Aye, if I could bottle it and send it back to Scotland,” he says, “I could make my fortune sure enough.”

You think of a new Adelaide streetscape unfinished on the easel, with a cloudless sky and a road in the foreground with pocks, wheel ruts and dust. You decide that you will flood the painting with sunshine made with cadmium, yellow, and ochre. And shadows made long and elegant and umber.

“I’ve found that capturing the sun takes practice,” you say to the old man. “But it will be worth it in the end.” (Title: *Flood the painting with sunshine*).

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CHAPTER 11

Envelope labelled:

Cobbler, Matilda, and Mountain Maid.

Contains:

- Letters, journal entries and sketches addressed to ST Gill.
- Clipping of a newspaper article.

ST Gill artwork:

- *A race meeting at Adelaide.*
- *Adelaide race course,'45.*

Martha Maria Snell Berkeley artwork:

- *North Terrace, view taken looking east s east.*

THE RACES

(To the Editors of The Register)
Gentlemen—On my arrival from the interior, I expected to gain some information from your valuable paper respecting the ensuing races; and considering the advantages expected to be derived from a daily paper, I certainly, with many others, felt disappointed in having been obliged to make my own enquiries. In all Colonies, the improvement in the breed of horses is of much importance; and this Colony is so far advanced, that we feel surprised that so little attention should have been paid to it. But I trust from the manner in which the races this year seem to be patronized they will have a beneficial tendency. If the information I have obtained will be interesting to your readers, it is at your service.

As far as the entries at present are made, namely for the Town Plate, Produce Stakes and Hurdle Race; three will come to the post for the Town Plate, namely Cobbler, Matilda and Mountain Maid. Cobbler, the favourite, even against the field, and although he has so often proved victorious, will, I think, from the appearance of Matilda, with the twenty-one pounds in her favour, find her a dangerous customer. The Mountain Maid has risen in the estimation of her friends within the last few days, but I should say has little chance of winning; indeed, it is hardly fair to run an untried mare like her, at even weights, against a horse that for the last four years, has beaten everything he has run against in the Colony.

The South Australian Register 1844, Friday 27 December, p. 3.

Journal Day 221: Oakbank Racecourse, Peramangk Country.

Painting thoroughbred horses begins with sienna. Add red bay, ochre, buckskin, and dun. Chestnut horses start with orange and fire; add cadmium, madder, and flame, particularly for horses at the gallop. For grey horses, brush with lean ivory and turn cool with hints of blue. Add gunmetal to dapple then smear and smudge the skin. Silver, smoke, chalk, milk. Be wary of white, even at its weakest.

For tails, begin as slowly and carefully as if making ripples in a stream. For dark hair, add highlights with phthalo, violet, and cyan. For chestnut, use copper, gold, and a dash of daring (Title: *Sunrise paint palette for Oakbank racehorses*).

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Figure 11:1 Martha Maria Snell Berkeley (c. 1839). *North Terrace, view taken looking east s east* (watercolour on paper, 34.2 cm x 45.0 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 24 October 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/north-terrace-view-taken-looking-east-s-east/24060/#gallery

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Journal Day 228: North Terrace, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

Martha Berkeley's horses trot the length of North Terrace, ears forward, legs stepping high (Figure 11:1). I like the grey with his well-brushed mane. The brown carries his tail well. Martha Berkeley's gum trees are graceful, made with delicate brushwork. I picture Martha Berkeley's paintbrushes standing in tidy jars with fine points styled to perfection.

Martha Berkeley's ponies are fat in body and sweet of face. They have pricked ears and carry their tiny plump riders through forests and over bridges. One little girl sits side-saddle with her velvet riding-skirt layered over her pony's rump. Soon she will leave him behind and gallop a tall thoroughbred through bushland thick with ridges and saplings and danger.

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Figure 11:2 ST Gill (c. 1845). *Adelaide race course, '45* (wash on paper, 11.7 cm x 20.1 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 17 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134366454/view

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Journal Day 230: Victoria Park Racecourse, Pakapakanthi, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

On race day you arrive at the track early with Nell, Peter, Patience, and George, determined to have backgrounds ready for when the crowds flood in. You propose to make sketches of the mounts and punters for reference back in the studio. There will be gentlemen owners with horses at the mounting yards and excitable folk trackside with flasks in hand. You'll outline jockeys in bright silks and police and soldiers in uniform. You have a plan to compose a big studio painting, one you hope will be popular enough to sell to a collector as a memory of the event. You've even pictured yourself making the sale. Perhaps a rich gentleman will come to the studio and examine the finished work, enjoying anew the thrill of racing at the Adelaide meet (Title: *Wealthy patron recalling horse-racing in the dust*). You have the final composition in mind, picturing a foreground filled with folks shouting, children hawking wares, gamblers hollering, and dogs hurtling underfoot.

As well as backgrounds made ready with hills and tents and flags, you make dozens of sketches of horses. Some stand in pairs and groups; others rest with reins looped over their heads. Fillies snort and geldings paw anxiously at the ground. Thoroughbreds baulk at fallen strips of orange peel. A grey mare tosses her head and sidesteps a small child scrabbling for a pie crust dropped in the dust.

You sketch numerous studies of people. Here's a sulky groom holding a coat and a jockey tricking a punter. There, a well-dressed young woman totters on unsteady feet. As always, you dash off notes for later. *Drunk fellow drops a flagon and then scrambles to lick up the contents*; *Sullen urchin boy kicks the wheel of a phaeton*; *Policeman trusted to hold a flighty mare mounts up to get a better view of the race*.

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Journal Day 239: Gawler Place, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

I like to think of you sketching horse bones, laying out a full skeleton on the floor of the studio. You examine the surfaces with a glass and peer close at pocks and curves turned chalky with age. Femur, patella, tibia, fibula, hock. The cannon, the sesamoid, the pasterns. And the little coffin bone, right in the hoof, a tiny scrap of shape and life, enabling the horse to take flight. I imagine you down on your knees, positioning the skeleton as if the horse is in action, setting the leg bones just as if the horse were springing from one diagonal pair of hooves to the other with each stride of the trot.

I envision you drawing the horse skull, paying close attention to the maxilla, the mandible, and the eye-sockets. Drawing the head as if it throbs with life and taking special care with the muscles that make the drinking, chewing, whinnying actions of the jaw. You capture the softness of the eye and the way the muzzle whiskers sense and twitch and touch.

I imagine you, whiskey glass in hand, walking around your skeletal horse as night falls, thinking of the way the wide open spaces of fields and bushlands look through the set of an eager horse's ears.

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Figure 11:3 ST Gill (c. 1840s). *Race meeting at Adelaide* (watercolour on paper, 19.5 cm x 30.0 cm). Experience Adelaide, accessed 12 October 2023, https://www.experienceadelaide.com.au/notable-locations/victoria-park-kaurna-culture/

Journal Day 253: Gawler Place, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill

c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

At dusk you light candles and lamps and spread sketches wide on benches and tables. Peter, George, and Nell are in the studio to assist in finishing the Adelaide race-day composition (Figure 11:2). Costumes are tried on and discarded while whiskey glasses are filled and then filled again. Fire glows red in the stove and Jack sleeps on his back with paws in the air and nose twitching. Nell and George strike poses, boisterously reliving the events of race day and of their attempt to sneak into the grandstand. They laugh at the memory of being removed by red-faced policemen in unkempt uniforms (Title: *Nell and George in failed disguise*).

You move through the studio and shuffle papers, muttering about horizon lines and the antics of punters. You frown at your studies and wonder which will work best in the composition. You consider the foreground, remembering a day of contrasts, with ladies and gentlemen, abstainers and drunkards, and all crowded together at track's edge, jostling for a view. But will it work as a composition? Will anyone believe it?

You've pinned the background sketch to an easel and put work into the sky. Clouds are filled in and the main grandstand has shadows smudged in place. You've added distant hills and used rough marks for trees and valleys. A line of scumbled pencil in the middle ground shows the size of the crowd. There are sketches of horses tacked to the background. Outlines of thoroughbreds stand side by side while their riders converse, heads bent together. A gentleman in a top hat leans out of the saddle as his horse stretches to rub at a knee. On the right, a beautifully upholstered spring cart rolls out of frame (Title: *Assorted small horse studies for use in a large scene*).

You ponder the empty foreground and wonder whether to feature the bawdiness of the day's events, or fill the front with ladies and gentlemen dressed in Victorian fashion. You play with different combinations of figures, clipping and moving people from left to right then back again. You cut groups apart and reposition them, your standard process of determining the best composition (Title: *Crowd movement studies before comitting to a final composition*).

Then all at once, Nell says, "Tom? How does this look? Could we be the foreground, do you think?" She's dressed in trousers and a shirt, and she seizes George by the shoulder, forcing him off balance as she sags into him. She's struck the pose exactly like one of your sketches of one drunk toppling into another to stop himself from falling.

George recovers, instinctively putting all his weight onto one knee to brace himself. Peter, now dressed in work wear too, guffaws loudly and moves in alongside them. He grabs a flagon and swings it wildly. Then he looks back at the drawing and leans a little more on his right leg, putting his left hand in his pocket and holding the flagon to his lips. For effect, he gargles and Nell hoots with laughter, leaning even more heavily into George (Figure 11:3, detail).

Sitting on a stool opposite, you slap one hand hard against your knee. "That's it. Well done! George, could you put your left arm up high? Higher? Yes, that's about right. I saw a fellow like that today, trying to hold up his friend. Or perhaps he was hailing someone behind me? No matter, it's authentic. So, then, hold it right there, all of you. I think we have our foreground. Just give me time to get the clothing details right. Especially the patterns on those big work shirts."

“But what about the gentlemen who might have bought your painting?” Nell slurs, as if drunk. “Would a gentleman want a picture with us in the foreground? Will anyone want to hang it on a wall?”

“Aye, someone will want to hang it on a wall,” says George. “There’s nowt wrong with the likes of us in a picture. Didn’t you hear what Tom said? We’re authentic, we are.”

“This looks exactly as it should,” you say, squinting to measure the correct proportions for figures. “Someone will want to buy this picture given that things are going to look exactly as they did this afternoon.”

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Figure 11:3 (detail) ST Gill (c. 1840s). *Race meeting at Adelaide* (watercolour on paper, 19.5 cm x 30.0 cm). Experience Adelaide, accessed 12 October 2023, https://www.experienceadelaide.com.au/notable-locations/victoria-park-kaurna-culture/

Journal Day 240: Victoria Park Racecourse, Pakapakanthi, Kaurna Country.

Victoria Park Racecourse is dry under the late Feburary sun. Summer’s yellow grasses have been fiercely trimmed. Thick gums with shredded ochre-red bark surround the edges. I picture ladies in dark dresses with balloon sleeves and tightly fitted waists holding parasols aloft. When the horses gallop past, the ladies hold linen handerkerchiefs to their faces and the parasols fill up with grit.

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CHAPTER 12

Envelope labelled:

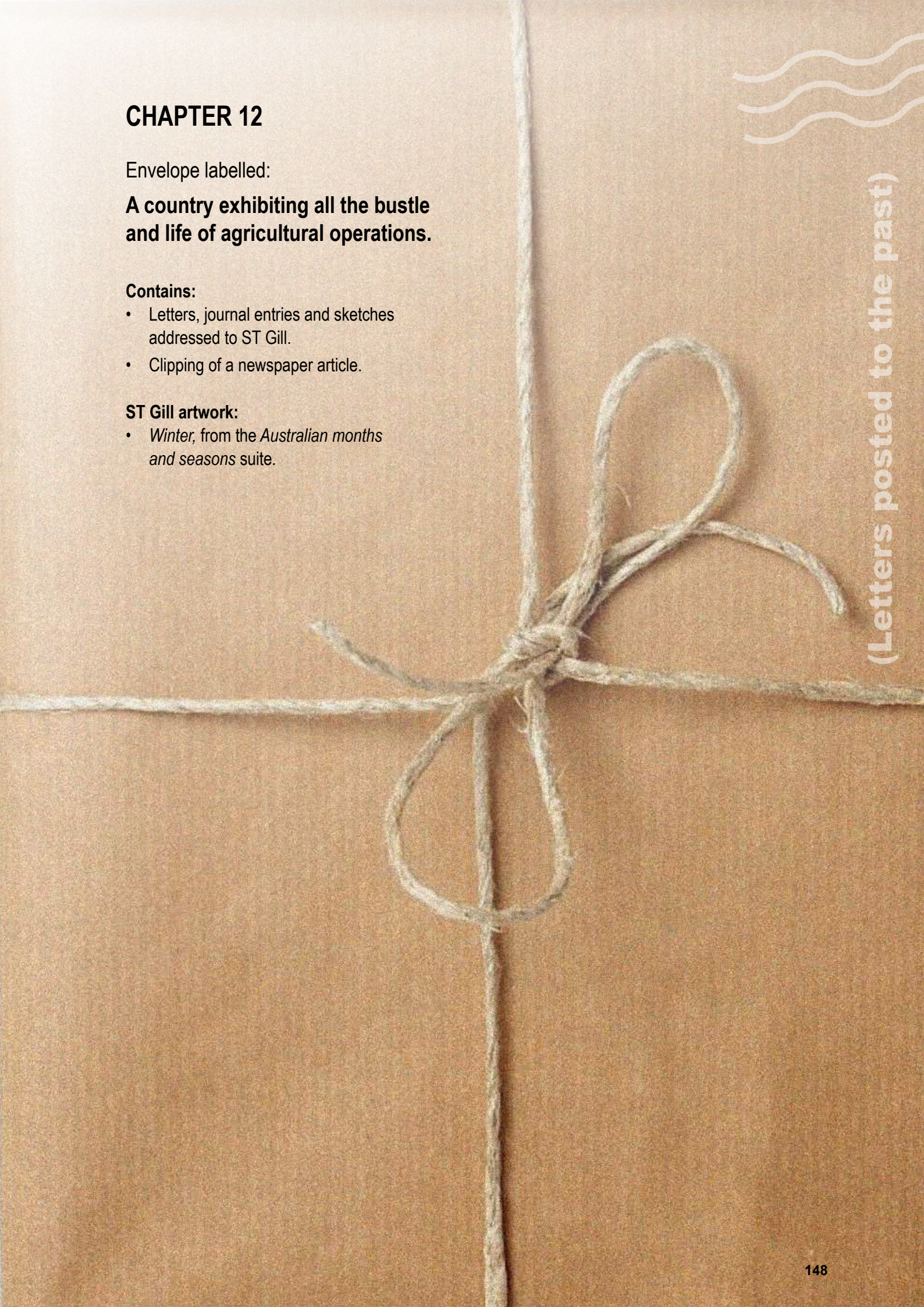
A country exhibiting all the bustle and life of agricultural operations.

Contains:

- Letters, journal entries and sketches addressed to ST Gill.
- Clipping of a newspaper article.

ST Gill artwork:

- *Winter,* from the *Australian months and seasons* suite.



(Letters posted to the past)

PROGRESS OF THE COLONY – FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1840

It was remarked to us the other day by a gentleman recently returned to the province from England, that the amazing increase in the population and appearance of Adelaide did not surprise him so much as the progress that had been made in the settlement of the country surrounding it. During a single day's ride to visit a section selected by him at a distance of twenty miles from town, he no longer traversed the unoccupied desert of eighteen months ago, but was conducted to his property by well-defined roads, and through a country exhibiting all the bustle and life of agricultural operations. At that period the surveyed lands were scarcely opened for settlers, and population in the interior, save here and there the solitary sheep-station of an adventurous bushman, there was none. Now, substantial farmhouses on all sides, completed or in progress were passed – hundreds of acres under healthy and thriving crops — scores of ploughs preparing for future cultivation — fencing proceeding with vigour and activity — in many places, the selected spots of the incipient village, the blacksmith's anvil is heard ringing merrily " from morn to dewy eve" — the woodcutter, the sawyer, the carpenter, the wheelwright, the bricklayer, scarcely knowing which way to turn to accomplish the tasks before them — flocks and herds grazing in all directions, and showing by their sleek and well-rounded sides the admirable quality of the natural herbage upon which they were luxuriating — the whole elements, in short, of colonial and national prosperity might be observed in full and healthy work; and comfort, happiness, and independence in the fair way of being secured to hundreds of families, who, with the application of the same or greater energies, might have struggled in England throughout life, and found in the end, perhaps, the reward of industry and perseverance to be but the parish pittance and the pauper's grave.

The South Australian Record and Australasian and South African Chronicle 1840, 21 November, p. 9.

Journal Day 269: Oakbank, Peramangk Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

Whenever I see the sort of sky that calls out to be painted (picture cerulean, cyan, and clouds that look as if they have been swept high with a wide brush), I like to think of all the different journeys you made to properties close to Adelaide. I picture paddocks of ripe crops, vegetables sown in gardens and long lines of stringybark fences containing sheep and cattle overlanded from New South Wales. I imagine you made many rural artworks in the hope of making quick sales. Perhaps all those folk sending letters home were keen to buy paintings to illustrate their farming pursuits, to boast of their fortune in the new world (Title: *Eager artist sells pleasing scenes with bountiful crops and glossy farm animals*).

Here's a scene I like to make. I've based it on your work *Winter* (Figure 12:1). On a fine day, you sit on high ground near a stream with your sketchbook in your lap. You make sky studies and draft backgrounds as Red grazes alongside and Jack snoozes at your feet. Suddenly, you're alerted to the thunder of hooves. Moments later you catch the baying of hounds and the crack of whips, and you see faraway riders with their heads bent to the gallop. You sit up straighter, shuffle papers and take up a background. Now, filled with anticipation, you hope the horses will pass close by. You wait, pencil poised, eyes strained to the path you think the hunt will take (Title: *Portrait of an artist anticipating a foreground*).

The scene you expect to see is one you know well from the English countryside — the quick flash of fine-bred horses and the taking of fences, the blur of red jackets and hounds out in front as other riders, lower-ranked with dark coats, trail behind. As you listen, wondering about the speed at which you might see the horses gallop through your scene, you touch your thumb to your mouth and add smudges to suggest speed. Then all at once, the riders are upon you and your pencil moves instinctively, fingers flying as horses pass through the middle ground. Suddenly a rider near you slows, swings his horse's head and shouts with excitement. He's the master, dazzling in red, and he raises his hat before galloping through the water and disappearing over the next rise (Title: *Quick studies of the hunt master at speed*). Other riders follow, splashing through the water and spreading wide across hillsides, urging their horses on to match the pace of the hounds.

Figure 12:1 ST Gill (c. 1840s). *Winter* (watercolour on paper, 29.6 x 21.8 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 13 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134359656/view

You're left with scant outlines, rising excitement, and a new idea. But now you can take time to construct the composition properly. You lead Red a little way forward and drop his reins, then retreat to your position and moisten the end of your pencil.

Red turns to watch the last riders disappear over the faraway hill. You have a composition, and settle in to add detail where you can, your pencil finally slowing to find its way.

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Journal Day 274: Gawler Place, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill

c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

Nell sits astride a wooden barrel George and Peter have tipped on its side and mounted on a pair of low stools. She wears jodhpurs, boots, and a tailored tweed jacket, the closest thing she can find to a hunting coat. She has a riding cap and pretends to hold reins in her right hand.

You work to recreate the hunt scene from earlier in the day, approximating the pose made when the master reined up sharp in front of you. Nell sits upright, shoulders back, shouting out 'tally ho' whenever she catches your eye (Title: *Studies of Nell as an expressive equestrienne astride a barrel in the studio*).

George leans on a counter beside Nell and stands ready with other props. There's a brass-handled whip, a black coat buttoned over a chair, and an old brushy fox tail that an unknown benefactor left at the studio door one night.

You stand at the easel making drafts of Nell's pose, concentrating on the set of her shoulders, the reach of her bridle fingers and the lift of her chin. You pause often to check the new sketches against the best pose you made of Red standing in the field as he stretched to watch the last horses gallop out of sight.

Just as you instruct Nell to pull off her riding hat and hold it aloft as the master did, Patience bursts into the studio with her mending basket. She huffs as she hoists it onto a table. “I have something, Tom,” she says breathlessly. “Can you imagine the luck? A real hunting jacket for you to draw from. It’s one of the red ones the gentlemen wear, just come in for mending earlier today. There was a rip in the lining on the inside.” She holds up the coat and looks around, noticing Nell astride the barrel, George swinging the fox tail, and Peter sorting a jumble of horse sketches into orderly lines.

George sets the fox tail down and looks at Patience with admiration. “What a stroke of luck!” He glances up, sees Nell’s eyes lit up with interest and so holds out his hand to help her dismount.

“Very lucky indeed,” says Nell, moving in close to examine the garment. “How perfect for Tom to take the shape and colour from. What a glorious shade of red.”

“We oughtn’t to call it red, though, ought we?” says Patience. She turns the coat front to back, showing the styling and stitching. “It’s called a hunting pink, isn’t it? The woman who brought it in said it. It’s worsted, Mrs. Appleby says, and nicely made. Oh, the feel of the fabric! We were all admiring it in the mending room. Then Mrs. Appleby checked over my work and said I’m to have it back by tomorrow. She said you can do your drawing though, Tom, if you’re careful. I promised you would be.”

You look closely at the fabric. “I’ll need to mix scarlet with some brighter red tones to make the proper shade.”

Nell takes the jacket from Patience and holds it carefully, noting the tailoring at the waist, the design of the lapels, the intricate stitching at the collar. She looks at Patience. “May I try it on?”

Patience nods, and so Nell takes the coat behind the model’s screen, calling out her enthusiasm as she checks the fit in the mirror. When she reappears, she turns a full circle, showing how the jacket fits her tall frame. You wait at the easel, blank pages ready and pencils sharpened. “Nell? Before you get back up on the barrel, I’d like to do some drawings that concentrate on the jacket. I’ll do studies and then fill some in with patches to make sure I can blend the right sort of shades to make it look real.”

Nell stands in front of the barrel, striking different positions as you call for them. She tries a new pose with one hand high, then another with her hip and leg pushed out dramatically.

After a while, she catches your eye. “Are you ready to see me sit as a rider again?” She strokes the

jacket's fabric and wonders about its owner and all the places it must have been, picturing a London tailor and the garment folded carefully in a trunk on its long sea journey.

You look at your sketches, push them about and hold the preferred ones next to the horse studies and the earlier ones made with Nell as a rider. You wonder if the master could be leaning to the gallop as he prepares to take the water? Or if you might show the moment he wheeled his horse up in front of you.

And then you have a new idea. "Nell, can we try some standing poses with a little more expression now that we have the jacket? Look victorious, can you? Hold your whip and the brush tail aloft in a sort of salute. George, do you have the old fox tail close by — "

" — Aye," says George, handing Nell the brush tail first. "I reckon you'll swing the tail in the air. It will look quite the picture."

"Quite!" says Nell. "This is the moment for this scrubby old brush to finally take its place in one of Tom's paintings."

"Aye," says George. "I knew its day would come."

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Journal Day 287: Victoria Square/Tarntanyangga, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

Eight white police horses walk in a line down King William Street. The horses have clear curved shields to protect their eyes. They have long white forelocks and grey muzzles. Thirty-two metal horseshoes make loud ringing sounds on the hard surface of the road. Afternoon shadows from buildings cut through the sun and the horses pass from dark into light. When they reach Tarntanyangga, four of the horses form a circle on a patch of grass behind the Charles Sturt statue and four turn right down Franklin Street, sixteen metal horseshoes ringing on the road.

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Journal Day 294: Gawler Place, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

Patience, Nell, and George look at the hunt scene *Winter* (Figure 12:1) that's pinned to the easel. It's near complete, with most of the painting fully coloured. The sky is finished in blue and grey, the hills with green,

the little stream made fluid and pretty with reflections of grasses and reeds. George laughs. “Well, Tom! I didn’t think you would pick that pose for the final view,” he says. “Not the one where Nell holds the fox tail up and kicks her leg out to show off the jacket. Aye, look at that brush! She’s even swinging it up in the air.”

“You’ve wanted that dirty old tail in a picture for months, George,” Nell says. “Now you can finally rest. We can put it back on its hook and forget all about it.”

“Aye, but I won’t forget it. What a strange thing to find at the studio door on an icy morning,” says George. “It’s so old and shabby it looks as if someone brought it out from England and then changed their mind about keeping it. I think of it as a great mystery.”

Patience peers at the colours in the painting. She points to the horse. “That’s Red,” she says. “It looks just like him. But you’ve made him a grey horse. Why not a pretty chestnut, with all his own colours?”

You tap your pencil on the painting and explain about contrast. “I wanted to make the colours of the grass and sky stand out. Having a strong white figure next to the winter grass will make all the different greens seem lush. Besides, the master of the hunt had a grey, and I started out to paint a portrait of him. I still hope he might like to buy the painting if he should happen to hear about it. So, I’ve tried to recall his features as best I can.”

“It doesn’t look like Nell,” says George. “Not in the face.”

Nell squints at the blank area in front of the stream. She notices that it lacks flowers and flourishes, like those you often put in at the end. “Is this section finished, Tom? Are you planning to add fancy leaves and things?”

“I could add in something at the bottom of the picture. What do you think I should do?”

“I like it very much. It looks like home,” says Patience. “It looks lovely, and just as if it has rained and made the grass and sky look all bright and new and fresh again.”

“Aye, it does look like home,” says George. “Bright and fresh. Well done, Tom.”

“But should it?” says Nell after a moment. “Shouldn’t it look like right here and now? Isn’t that the point?” (Title: *It looks just like home*).

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Journal Day 312: Angas Street, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

I imagine George Fife Angas turning his back on Rundle Street, mopping his brow, and squinting at the distant blue hills. He envisions wide roadways leading to faraway places and pictures a time when all the bushland gums have been removed and English trees take their place. Oak, elm, beech, alder. On sunny mornings he looks up and longs for the bright green colours of summer (Title: *An English man reworking a landscape to suit himself*).

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Journal Day 314: Oakbank, Peramangk Country.

The yucca. You might think, at first glance, that it's an ugly thing, and that it's odd the way its trunk can lie down along the ground, recumbent, as if collapsed or weary. Or perhaps that long years and circumstance have forced it to grow that way, with the damp and the dry, the slump and sag of the earth beneath, the shade overhead, and the filtering of the sun. Or that fire has left it so pitched, blackened, charcoaled and crumbled. You might think that it looks unworldly with its thickening trunk that stacks and stacks upon itself and gets sticky with resin, and that it becomes more and more dark-skinned and ridged with age.

But then you might find yourself becoming enthralled at its crown of long, thinning, grass-like leaves, particularly where the sun hits the circle of tips, turning them into a wreath of light and shimmer. And then you might feel your fingers tightening, as if to a brush, imagining picking up rich dark sage and flaxen colours and making each elongated frond. First green at the base; then, as you turn the brush from wedge to fine and stroke the length of it, sienna and honey, careful and curling, with a flick at the end. And doing this over and over around the full circle of the crown, making every individual leaf, with all the dips and falls and curls and wonder.

Nell moves closer, uses her index finger to raise the tip of a single long leaf turned golden at the point. "This might make a good foreground for the hunting picture," she says. "It has a strange earthiness and seems like it really belongs here. And nowhere else, but here."

You take the end of a frond, curl it round your finger and make a loop. "Do you think I can change my English scene to a southern Australian one? Do you think I should?" (Figure 12:1, detail).

"I think you can," says Nell. "I think you should." (Title: *Nell and the crown of long, thinning, grass-like leaves*).

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Figure 12:1 (detail) ST Gill (c. 1840s). *Winter* (watercolour on paper, 29.6 x 21.8 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 13 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134359656/view

CHAPTER 13

Envelope labelled:

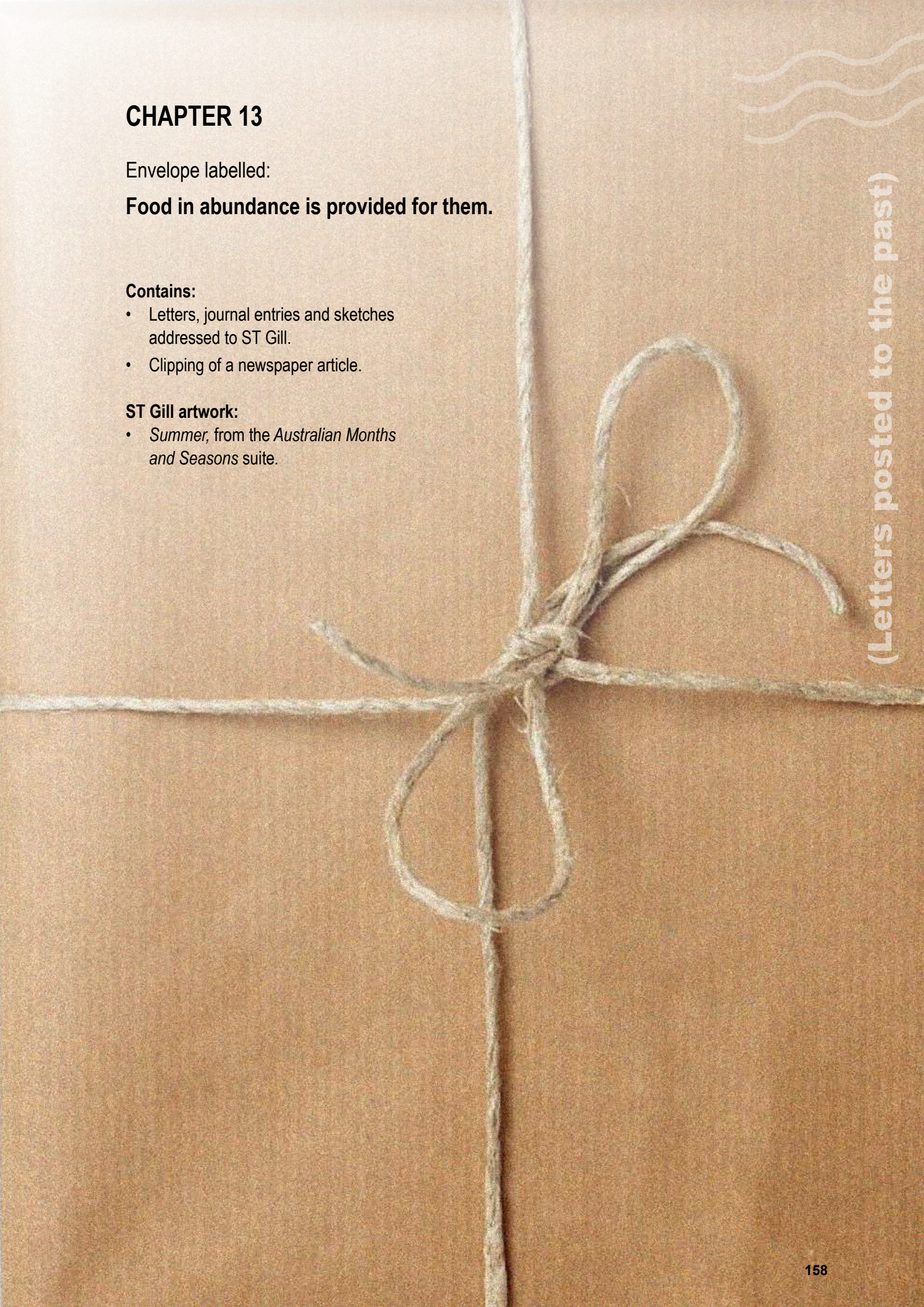
Food in abundance is provided for them.

Contains:

- Letters, journal entries and sketches addressed to ST Gill.
- Clipping of a newspaper article.

ST Gill artwork:

- *Summer,* from the *Australian Months and Seasons* suite.



THE NATIVES

Since the terrible example made in May last, by the execution of two blacks convicted of murdering the shepherds of Messrs Gilles and Hallett, the natives generally have conducted themselves in the peaceable and orderly manner, so much so, as to have dispelled, in the minds even of the most timid, all apprehensions of future danger from that source. Indeed, the settlers who are now spreading over the country in all directions from Adelaide, rarely see the natives at all; and, in places to which they occasionally approach, what we hold the prudent course has been adopted, and their visits discouraged. At the native location in Adelaide, food in abundance is provided for them, and as it is clear the that position of the colonists is to render them dependent, as far as possible, on their protection, we would deprecate in all cases, as injurious to the real welfare of these poor people, the indiscriminate supply of food given to them by the inhabitants. It is in all cases most mistaken charity; and is destructive of one of the most important principles on which Mr. Moorhouse depends for effecting any good among them— namely, a certain amount of labour for food. Naturally indolent, the natives will not, of course, work if their hunger is supplied at the mere trouble of asking or begging for it.

We saw at the native location the other day, one of the strongest and idlest blacks, well known as Tam O'Shanter, with a large quantity of rice which he had just collected in town. To hope the fellow would work while it lasted was out of the question; and Mr Moorhouse we believe, complains with reason that it is by similar proceedings that his power of the natives is weakened. In short, the system of casually employing the natives at all is the very worst and most injudicious that could be permitted; and the sooner the colonists agree to abandon it — to discountenance every instance of begging and to throw them, in short, exclusively on the Protector for sustenance, the sooner can we expect any of those beneficial results to arise from the humane and philanthropic provisions which have been made for their civilisation.

The South Australian Register 1839, Saturday 26 October, p. 4.

Journal Day 326: Oakbank, Peramangk Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill

c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

I've learned that wheat types sound rather like colours on a paint palette. There's golden-ear, Kentish yellow, Burwell red, egg shell, bearded, edge wheat, Essex dun, velvet ear, Georgian, and white and red Essex, to name just some. I've learned, too, that all wheat is considered either white or red. Also that it can be fine or coarse, and that there are weights to be pondered. There's the nature of the soil to be deliberated, and the amount of loam or peaty types that can occur in a field all at once. And the elements contribute — particularly whether there is a long wet or an extended dry in the growing season.

It all sets me to considering the mixing of watercolour on the palette. There's the selection of base tones, the merging and blending, the thinning with water or the strengthening to make a colour denser or to change its hue. And the need to anticipate what might happen with any of these measures, and then weave magic, on impulse or if an opportunity arises — or whether, on any given day, magic will be absent and the strain of the whole endeavour shows in the finish and taints everything about the picture (Title: *Portrait of an Antipodean artist struggling with damp, colour, and the heat of the southern sun*).

I like to think of you mulling over all the natural beauty of a wheat-sheaf in the field. Or in the studio, after an outing making studies and collecting samples, observing the thick bunched form of a sheaf and how it looks at a distance, one of dozens, all seemingly alike. I especially like to imagine you closely studying a lone sheaf as an individual object of art. Composing and drafting, deciding whether to show it lying horizontal with a focus on the stems, or whether to take it and position it upright. To let it stand on its own and draw the stalks spread at the base for balance and the long, golden heads curved to catch the light. Perhaps you might try styling them, as individuals, like blooms in a vase. Or turn a perfectly formed sheaf into a still life with apples and pears and sunbeams spilling over everything (Title: *Still life with wheat in golden afternoon light*).

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Journal Day 331: Mount Pleasant, Cambrai, Sedan, Towitta, Ngadjuri Country, Meru Country, Danggali Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

Today I will paint in the rigorous manner of a nineteenth-century European artist. My subject is a stone. I have chosen John Ruskin as my teacher. On my palette, I have slate, sienna, ochre, umber, sallow rose, chalk-white, and a pallid sap green (Title: *Carefully considered palette for colonial stone studies*).

I set a single stone on pale sand alongside a summer creek. I chose the stone after turning dozens of others over in my fingers and rejecting each for one reason or another. My stone is small enough to fit in the curve of my palm and it has mostly smooth surfaces, although one side has a rough slit and an indentation as big as my thumbprint. I position the stone so that the slit will be a feature on the upper right-hand side (Title: *Ruskin advises choosing a point of interest*).

My background is clear of leaves and twigs and set well forward of the nearest tree. It is late in the day, and I have arranged my position (artist's stool, foreground) so that the falling sun and the shadow of my pencil do not interfere with my work on the paper. I have placed my stone (positioned middle ground) so that it has only ordinary light and the late Towitta sun does not redden its surfaces (Title: *Ruskin recommends positioning the subject matter for success*).

I draw the stone completely, one attempt after another until it is perfect in form. I determine to draw it *rightly*, recalling Ruskin, and his conviction that if I can draw a stone *rightly*, every other challenge in art is also within my reach (Title: *Drawing an Antipodean stone correctly no matter how long it takes*).

I continue to examine the height and breadth and curves of my stone. I study its pocks and dips and the range of grey, pink, and fawn tones that speckle the surface. I hold it close to my eye and rotate it, wondering where it has been and how many years it has spent between the large gums in the

waterway. My stone has come from the far side of the creek. The creek-bed is cracked and so dry that it is difficult to imagine seasonal waters quenching the thirst of the stone and every other pebble and tree root nearby.

Ruskin assures me that if I can represent *roundness*, everything in drawing will become straightforward. He warns me that if I cannot represent it *truly*, everything else I attempt will be of little use. Nature, Ruskin says, is made up of *roundnesses*, and I picture the rumps of horses, the curved cheeks of cattle, the circular shapes of cumulous clouds and the hooplike bulges of leaves and buds on the saplings near the creek where I live.

I set the stone back on the sand and play with the word '*roundnesses*', rolling the sounds over my tongue. The stone casts a weak shadow on the sand (slate, sap green, and water). I use my pencil (4B) to shade every one of its curves with accuracy, to capture the fullness of the shape. And then I take a fine brush and wash in the pink-grey tints and speckles (Title: *Portrait of a creek stone complete in its roundness*).

When the sun falls below the gum line and the shadows lengthen (umber, slate, sap, and water), I return the stone to its home at the side of the creek.

(Ruskin 1971/1857, pp. 49-50).

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Journal Day 334: Oakbank, Peramangk Country.

I lie on my side in a grassy paddock, looking at the sky between the boughs of a gum, just as Ruskin advises for making a blended sky study. It's near twilight and I have white paper and thick soft pencils (4B, 5B). My exercise is to *gradate* my small section of white paper as evenly — as *tenderly*, as Ruskin puts it — as the section of sky between the tree limbs. I make a long, triangular shape to match the branches and watch as the sky changes from sunset to dusk. Ruskin tells me that all great painters are most fond of the effect of light which is got by the *gleaming of the white paper between the black lines*. I determine to work *tenderness* and *gleaming* into my twilight, one pale stroke of the pencil at a time.

(Ruskin 1971/1857, p. 85).

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Figure 13:1 ST Gill (c. 1840s). *Summer* (watercolour on paper, 29.3 x 21.8 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 24 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134359859/view

Journal Day 337: Gawler Place, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

Nell stands at a workbench, looking through wheat scene drawings made to prepare for a summer farming scene you hope will make a sale — one that is glorious in colour, steeped yellow with sunshine and filled with cheerful workers. She moves aside to examine figure studies, pointing at several that show a stocky farmer with a clutch of wheat in his left hand and a sickle in his right (Figure 13:1).
"Is it an accident," she says, "that your harvester looks like George? I recognise the hat he's wearing. Patience will know it. She's mended the brim more than once."

You stand alongside Nell and look at the sketches. The harvester studies were made for the middle ground where the standing ripe wheat will fade into emerald hills and a pastel sky. "It's no accident. George does look like a wheat harvester. There's so much strength about him. I'm sure he could get rural work, if he wanted to make a change from building stone walls and carving gravestones."

George sits on a stool unknotting a length of rope found discarded at a work site, certain it will be useful if he can untangle it. "There's nowt hope of that," he says loudly. "I like to work with stone. Each wall and every new carving is a good solid structure made to last. Aye, and this whole place could do with more of that." He looks over to the studies and grunts, recalling the time spent stretching his arms forward while you worked at your easel taking the measure of things.

"You've done plenty of sketches of George's legs," Nell says, holding up another drawing.

You hold the drawing and examine it, pleased with the way the colours and shadows work together to show strength in the posture. "This one shows way the fabric creases when the knee muscles work. I want to capture the material and the way the legs tense all the way down to the ankles."

Nell takes the drawing and tips it toward the light. "It's a fine study of hard-working legs," she says.

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Journal Day 364: Oakbank, Peramangk Country.

When painting fire, you look for outlines and try to picture familiar shapes to anchor the smoke. You consider if there is solidity to its form, or whether it is lightweight and flat. You frame the smoke within the horizon and watch to see whether it will dissipate, or roll low, thickening and churning in on itself, becoming lit from below. You play with cadmium and orange and touches of ash, a hue that threatens to dull everything on the page. You capture stillness with light strokes. Or push hard, bold and bravura, to make it seem as if the smoke billows from within.

Whatever the nature of the bushfire — dense, wispy, menacing, benign — you look up often and stare at the sky, wondering at the contrast between the easy blue of summer and the gunmetal threat of danger (Title: *Antipodean fire and smoke studies*).

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Journal Day 378: Gawler Place, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist S.T. Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

Patience looks at the final wheat-harvesting scene pinned to the easel (Figure 13:1). She traces her thumb around the edges of the paper, letting her fingertips linger over the parts where the pale tree canopy bleeds upward into blue. She smiles at the cut melon, recalling the number of times you mixed rind and flesh tones on the palette to perfect the skin stripes wrapping around curves. Then she frowns. “It was such a pretty blue sky when you first made it. Why did you put the smoke across it? It’s ugly. Doesn’t it spoil the feeling of summer in the picture?”

You stand alongside the easel. You’re pleased with the way the yellow colours of the wheat blend seamlessly into the teal-grey tones of the hills. “Because it was there,” you say finally. “Two strange pillars in the bright of a summer afternoon. I thought they looked like giant buttresses, or perhaps a stairway, linking us here on earth with the heavens.”

Patience sniffs. “It’s still a pretty picture. It just looks curious, is all.”

You pick up a fine brush and let it hover over one of the columns of smoke, remembering the making of it. The curl of every brushstroke and the whispers of white laid over at the finish. You think of the heat of the afternoon and the smudge of the horizon, the stench of burning and the snap of stubble. You wonder if you will ever again see such a volume of smoke on a summer horizon and witness the buttresses making a pathway to heaven. You look at Patience. “It’s a curious sort of place.”

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CHAPTER 14

Envelope labelled:

Look to the Torrens for a supply of fresh water.

Contains:

- Letters, journal entries and sketches addressed to ST Gill.
- Clippings of newspaper articles.

ST Gill artwork:

- *May,* from the *Australian months and seasons* suite.

SCANDALOUS NEGLECT OF THE NATIVES

The park land on both sides of the river is swarming with natives, and the safety of the inhabitants, who are obliged to pass from North to South Adelaide, is continually endangered. Numerous persons have been threatened and attacked, and at the present moment it is absolutely unsafe for an unprotected female to go from one place to the other. Now we say distinctly, that it is disgraceful to the authorities, to the Government, and to the Protector, to permit this state of things to exist for a day. The river too is crowded, from morn till night, with these wretched creatures, and the inhabitants of the town, who have not the wells upon their premises and must look to the Torrens for a supply of fresh water, are obliged to content themselves with the washings of the filthy and diseased blacks!

The Adelaide Chronicle 1841, 3 February, p. 3.

Journal Day 390: Woodside, Peramangk Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

What do farmers from the Old Country think of as they stroll through their Antipodean fields? I picture them speculating about how the seasons will develop and then remarking over and over how contrary the elements seem in South Australia (Figure 14:1). Perhaps they rue the landscape and its features entirely, sniffing at straggly eucalypts while bemoaning the lack of shade. They might mutter of other places they've known and describe bucolic scenes with faraway looks in their eyes (Title: *Portraits of English farmers expressing regret and longing for the green pastures of home*).

I've learned there's a great deal of work that goes into the feeding of cattle and sheep, even when grass growing appears to be a natural turn of events. I picture the new farmers talking of harrowing and

Figure 14:1 ST Gill (c. 1840s). *May* (watercolour on paper, 21.9 x 18.2 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 18 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134360010/view

fertilising, and the value of manure spread at just the right time, and when to sow clover and ryegrass, when to plant vetch and lucerne. And of the wisdom of feeding out turnips and mangel-wurzel to cattle. They discuss fallow fields and alluvial loams and sandy soils, and drainage and subsoil ploughing. Perhaps they spend anxious hours watching to be sure that dung heaps do not mix with rain to make fetid water that could risk the cows' health (Title: *Uneasy emigrant farmers monitoring water*).

I suppose it's folk like these who populate your pastoral scenes. Farmers seeding pastures, shearing sheep, yarding cattle, grooming horses. Men planting gardens and loading drays. All working hard together and remarking upon their good fortune in securing all the good farming land in the new colony (Title: *Self-congratulatory emigrant men looking over the great wide breadth of their fields*).

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Journal Day 392: River Torrens/Karrawirra Parri, Kaurna Country.

Today, I draw Robert Torrens removing his boots to stand in the shallows of the river that bears his name. He squints, looks south, and pictures a wide boating lake and a regatta with ladies in elegant white dresses cheering from the sidelines. He thinks of gentlemen sculling mahogany boats with names like *Fly fast* and *All hail the queen*. He peers ruefully at the little stream trickling downhill and thinks of lambs drinking and cattle muddying the shallows. Then he cups his hands and lets water run through his fingers, enjoying the feel of the sand between his toes (Title: *Portrait of an Irishman claiming a legacy*).

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Journal Day 397: River Torrens/Karrawirra Parri, Kaurna Country.

Ruskin teaches me the fine art of drawing river shadows with a soft pencil (4B). Wide lines, thin lines, a broad brush, and puddle water to make wet grey. Ruskin calls this a *fixing colour*. When the *fixing colour* is wet, I take out the darks with a dry brush, and then when it is completely dry I scratch at the surface with a knife. Ruskin advises the use of bright white paper where the scoring and scraping will gradually return the highlights one small, slight scratch at a time. He recommends laying grey damp *cunningly*. I find grey damp everywhere: the underside of a bough, the hollows of stones, shadows between petals. I will be cunning in the matter of making shade at the river.

(Ruskin 1971/1857, p. 104).

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THE PARK LAND AND THE NATIVES

The Town Surveyor stated that one of the finest trees on the park land had been cut down yesterday; and on asking the men why they were doing so, he was told that they were ordered by Mr Hardy and Mr Gouger, in order to open a view to Mr Gouger's house. This, it would appear, is beyond the powers of the Council to interfere with; but it gave rise to a conversation regarding the natives on the park land, who are cutting down and otherwise destroying the trees; and Alderman Smillie said they were even carrying them away wholesale in carts. The trees were so fast disappearing, that in a short time the park land would present a forest of unsightly stumps.

Mr Alderman Stevenson stated that it was quite disgusting to see the natives about the park land. Females were perpetually insulted by them, and in fact, no woman would scarcely pass the bridge unprotected. In the river, too, they were to be seen to be daily swimming in dozens at a time, many of them labouring under the most filthy and abominable diseases. He would not taste of the river water, nor allow any one he had any respect for to do so.

Mr Alderman Davis confirmed Mr Stevenson's statement, and said his attention had been drawn to the same subject by a medical man, who said the natives bathing in the river was a much greater evil than the people imagined.

The South Australian Register 1841, 6 February, p. 3.

Journal Day 405: North Adelaide Parklands, Kaurna Country.

Today I draw leaves in the North Adelaide Parklands near the golf course. I have pencils, watercolours, a palette of sap, sage, and sienna, and Ruskin at my side. The art of drawing leaves like a colonial artist is taxing. First, I will work on *intricacy of leafage*, as Ruskin advises. He has shown me that I must understand two basic things about leaves. He calls these *universal facts,* and I hope to apply them to eucalypt leaves even though Ruskin refers to the bright green foliage and big fleshy shapes of European leaves and I have trouble picturing elegant Ruskin in an Adelaide parkland on a hot summer afternoon.

The first principle to apply to leaf drawings is that there will be a *beautiful divergence of growth according to the law of radiation.* The next is that the *divergence is never formal* but undertaken with an endless

variety of individual line. I have seven pencils in different grades laid out before me on the dirt, all sharpened to points.

I take up my softest pencil (6B) and a sprig of eucalypt fallen from an ancient tree and begin a variety of lines. Soft, firm, thin, wide, wedge. The drawing of leaves becames mesmerising and I fill page after page of sprigs, sprays, buds, and gumnuts. As the afternoon wears on, it becomes easier to picture Ruskin in the Adelaide parklands.

Later, I make sketches of him. In my drawings, he sits against the trunk of an old gum, loosens his cravat, lowers his hat over his eyes, and gives himself to sleep under an Antipodean sun.

(Ruskin 1971/1857, pp. 111-112).

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CHAPTER 15

Envelope labelled:

A torrent of their blood would crimson the earth.

Contains:

- Letters, journal entries and sketches addressed to ST Gill.
- Clippings of a newspaper article and a diary entry.

ST Gill artwork:

- *Natural avenue of trees near Eyre's station at Moorundie, River Murray.*
- *Natives hunting opossums.*
- *Water witch alongside Eyre's station.*
- *Old police station, Moorundie, South Australia.*

THE REPORT OF MR. M. MOORHOUSE TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR

Lake Bonney, 190 miles from Adelaide, September 4th, 1841
(Excerpt from a report on an expedition sent from Adelaide at the end of July to meet Mr Robinson, stock overlanded, and others on their route from New South Wales)

After narrating the previous day's adventure, Mr Robinson enquired where he could cross the herds and drays, as he was then reconnoitring the river, and intended to cross immediately. He had just been up to the Lake, but the Rufus at its junction with the Lake was too broad and too deep, therefore, he should try the Ferry. The sub-inspector of police, a volunteer gentleman and myself rode in advance of our party along the Rufus, as far as the Lake, and greatly to our surprise, discovered a large mob of natives running towards us, each bearing his implement of war.

We hastened to our party and communicated what we had seen; we had the drays placed on the banks of the river, and formed the constables into a line two deep, in order to protect them. In half an hour after, the natives were seen in the scrub, about half a mile from us, intending, evidently, to commence an attack. I then gave the command of the party to Mr Shaw, the sub-inspector, and said he might issue such orders as he thought necessary for our safety, and the overland property that we had to protect; urging him strongly not to allow any firing until I had spoken to the hostile natives.

I requested Pangki to accompany me in advance, and after proceeding four hundred yards from the Ferry, the three natives that had left us two days before plunged into the water and came to us. I asked them the result of their interview. They answered that the Lake people would not listen to their advice, they knew the Europeans had tomahawks, blankets, and food, and they were determined to take them, let the consequences be what they might.

I took the two natives to the Ferry and recommended them to sit there until the contest was over. Mr Shaw's party on the western, and Mr Robinson's on the eastern side of the Rufus now advanced and commenced firing. The natives were almost instantly thrown into confusion, one hundred running into the scrub, and about fifty into the water, with an intention of concealing themselves in the reeds. The Europeans followed them to the water's edge and continued the firing for about fifteen or twenty minutes; and the result was, to the natives, death of nearly thirty, about ten wounded, and four (one adult male, one boy and two females) taken prisoner.

The Southern Australian 1841, Tuesday 14 May, p. 2.

Journal Day 409: Blanchetown, River Murray, Millewa Country, Ngarrindjeri Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

When I see a shady river bend with big gums dipping low branches into sandy shallows, I imagine you and explorer Edward John Eyre sitting fireside in his cottage at Moorundie. And even though the cottage has gone, I can easily picture it near the water, surrounded by trees that dapple sunshine onto its small roof (Title: *Humble colonial cottage on the river, view 1*).

The cottage walls are made with pug and sweat and rough-hewn logs. Near the door there are iron hooks to hold coats, hats, and leather bridles. There is a crook-legged stool carved from a broad bole of gum, while another beside it supports two saddles with muddy girths (Title: *Humble colonial cottage on the river, view 2*). A long table fashioned from gum planks stands near an open chest that spills blankets onto the floor. Threadbare chairs rest near the fire and table candles chase gloom into corners. Cigar smoke hangs in the air. Dogs, damp and muddy, brown and brindle, lie on their sides by the fire, now and then whimpering and paddling in sleep (Title: *Humble colonial cottage on the river, view 3*).

You sit your sketchbook on your knees and make outlines to capture the elements in the room. Profiles, too, of Eyre, as effectively as you can while he moves. The untidy curl of his dark hair pushed back impatiently, the elegant nose sniffing at the cigar, the long fingers stroking a full beard. Eyre talks of the big Moorundie landscape and his enthusiasm for the avenue of giant river gums (Figure 15:1) that lead to his settlement. He talks of making his home and other buildings nearby. There are storage huts and accommodations for his police and stabling and shelters for animals. He plans more buildings, his voice rising with every idea. He describes fat geese and chickens and pigs in stalls.

As you draw, Eyre mutters of cattle and sheep and bloodlines, and of the trials of overlanding stock from New South Wales. His voice becomes more animated as he talks of violence, and of how he plans to improve the district for everyone (Title: *Portrait of an Englishman outlining a peaceful civilisation*).

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Figure 15:1 ST Gill (c. 1840s). *Natural avenue of trees near Eyre's station at Moorundie, River Murray* (watercolour on paper, from a collection, 27.0 cm x 39.0 cm or smaller). State Library of New South Wales, accessed 28 October 2023, https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/92eVlpPY/qJoMbQypybaGQ

Journal Day 412: Blanchetown, River Murray, Millewa Country, Ngarrindjeri Country.

In the avenue saplings move to water music. Some are shielded by older trees. Others dance alone. Leaves tip the heavens. The background is sky, all sky (Title: *A grand avenue by the river*).

~~

Journal Day 413: Blanchetown, River Murray, Millewa Country, Ngarrindjeri Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

You draw swiftly to capture the movement of a boy climbing the upper branches of a gum tree in pursuit of possum (Figure 15:2). He's so nimble he scales upward impossibly fast, using the trunk's full

curve, arms stretched, toes finding purchase. Somewhere above, a possum dozes, hidden by foliage. Leaves whisper in a breeze. Eyre smiles and warns that you will never see the possum yourself, but the boy will know exactly where it sleeps.

Below, a woman, wrapped in a blanket, makes patterns in the sand with a stick. When the leaves fall silent, you can hear her crooning.

You're struck by the image of an old man wearing a coat and the way the material moves with him when he digs his spear into the dirt. You let your brush move across the paper unguided, your attention taken by the boy in the tree. You wonder if the group is a family and think of them skinning and roasting a possum for dinner, and of all three gathering kindling and arranging stones around a fire.

Eyre watches you outline the old man with your brush. "We give out a great many coats and blankets," he says quietly. He stands alongside you, hidden, but not too far from the possum hunter. "They are wool coats, heavy and lined. The people love the warmth."

"The warmth," you say, although not really heeding Eyre at all. You're holding your breath at the antics

Figure 15:2 ST Gill (c.1840s). *Natives hunting opossums* (wash drawing on paper, 12.3 cm x 17.1 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 2 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134357012/view

of the boy, now stretching for a branch. You want to draw accurately, eyes measuring proportions and then down to the paper, as usual, but you don't want to risk missing the moment he steals close enough to wrap his fingers around a possum. It seems an unthinkable task, but you've been assured that it's not. You watch the hunter and your wet brush makes intuitive marks on the paper.

Eyre kneels quietly, keeping his voice low. "On my land I make sure to look after them. When they're camped here, I feed them — biscuits mostly — and give them blankets. I've shown them how to make hooks to fish in the river. They make campsites, but come and go as they please."

The boy seems suspended, held like a breath in a moment between the creak of a limb and a sigh of the wind. You touch brush to paper; one quick light stroke makes the twist of a branch, another, a small twig beside it. "Does it seem right, though, to change things as much as all this?"

The boy steals his fingers forward and takes the possum by the tail, then swings it high, grinning down at his family. Shouts a *coo-ee* and laughs as they look up at him. You fill in background. Bend the angle of the brush for the break of a limb. Make damp flicks for foliage and swirls to indicate hills. You watch the boy descend.

"Wool coats and blankets," Eyre says. "And biscuits."

~~

Journal Day 415: Blanchetown, River Murray, Millewa Country, Ngarrindjeri Country.

A ghost cutter anchors in a far section of the river, a silhouette made distant with smudged lines and the dying hints of sunset tipping her flanks in gold (Figure 15:3). She's slight, a figure of old, and needs a landscape worthy of her past (Title: *Sunset studies of a ghost cutter*).

~~

Journal Day 416: Blanchetown, River Murray, Millewa Country, Ngarrindjeri Country.

In the late afternoon a police rider walks his horse near the river (Figure 15:4). Dusk dogs hunt forest trees, scrambling into the fallen limbs of old gums. A man grooms a horse until dark. Wood ducks and kingfishers send birdsong into the night (Title: *Grooming the dusk horse*).

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Figure 15:3 ST Gill (c. 1842). '*Water witch' alongside Eyre's Station* (watercolour on paper, original size of work unknown). Discover Murray River, accessed 23 October 2023, http://www.murrayriver.com.au/paddleboats/river-boat-trail-blanchetown/

Figure 15:4 ST Gill (1843). *Old police station, Moorundie, South Australia* (pencil on paper, 22.8 cm x 29.5 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed October 30 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/old-police-station-moorundie-south-australia-1843/30286/#gallery

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE ABORIGINES OF AUSTRALIA

Chapter 1: Our injustice towards the natives

(*Excerpt*)
Without entering upon the abstract question concerning the right of one race of people to wrest from another their possessions, simply because they happen to be more powerful than the original inhabitants, or because they imagine that they can, by their superior skill or acquirements, enable the soil to support a denser population, I think it will be conceded by every candid and right-thinking mind, that no one can justly take that which is not his own, without giving some equivalent in return, or deprive a people of their ordinary means of support and not provide them with any other instead. Yet such is exactly the position we are in with regard to the inhabitants of Australia.

Without laying claim to this country by right of conquest, without pleading even the mockery of cession, or the cheater of sale, we have unhesitatingly entered upon, occupied, and disposed of its lands, spreading forth a new population over its surface, and driving before us the original inhabitants.

To sanction this aggression, we have not, in the abstract, the slightest shadow of either right or justice— we have not even the extenuation of endeavouring to compensate those we have injured, or the merit of attempting to mitigate the sufferings our presence inflicts.

Edward John Eyre, *Journals of expeditions of discovery into central Australia and overland from Adelaide to King George's Sound in the years 1840-1*, Vol. II, pp. 158-159.

Journal Day 428: Blanchetown, River Murray, Millewa Country, Ngarrindjeri Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

Today I will take a lesson, from Ruskin, in sketching a small section of a tree some distance from the river. My subject is a fallen gum limb. The old tree alongside is weathered and grey and might have

grown to a good size except for the lack of water in its surroundings (Title: *Old tree with broken branch in a parched creek setting*).

To choose my subject, I walk a short length of the creek, looking for what Ruskin calls the *full rounding of a bough of a tree*. On an earlier visit, I drew limbs in relief, and paid close attention to the shapes of bends and crooks, but the *full roundness* of a limb is a new subject and an advanced lesson. Ruskin recommends choosing a bough with a fork of around a foot in length, and using a piece of paper of the same size for the drawing.

I stand my forked limb in a fixed position with clear space surrounding. I draw the subject thoroughly, in light and shade, striving to get an accurate expression of its structure at the fork of the branch, just as Ruskin advises. I imagine him standing nearby, overseeing my lesson. *When once you have mastered the tree at its armpits*, he says, *you will have little more trouble with it* (Title: *Ruskin advises close studies of a tree fork and armpit*).

I sharpen pencils, make lines, add roundness, and ponder making the accurate armpits of trees as a nineteenth-century European artist would. I turn pages in my sketchbook, making more and more forks and armpits. Some pages have just one fork with full shading done carefully; others have outlines made quickly and discarded because of imperfections and inaccuracies. I discover the creases in the armpits are the most challenging areas in the forks of a limb. I think of the rich, ridged skin of English oaks and the bright flush of their spring leaves. I become as thirsty as the trees in the creek. The few standing old gums set back from the waterway have tired skins that feel rough and hot on my fingertips (Title: *Indomitable trees in the dry of a South Australian summer*).

Ruskin says I must be sure to make my background exactly as it appears, whether *ugly or not*, otherwise I will never truly know whether the light and shade are correct, and that things will always appear wrong for want of a precise background. *There is nothing visible out of which you may not get useful practice*, he says. I turn back the pages in my sketchbook and give each forked branch an accurate background. I draw in the parched, twisted roots of long-dead trees, half-buried stones, and the worn tracks of animals that have eroded the banks of the creek over decades.

The sun moves overhead, and my backgrounds darken. In the late afternoon I see an echidna. It's pleasing that I have made so little noise that it makes its slow way past my forked branch into the blue-grey shade of the creek.

(Ruskin 1971/1857, p. 67).

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Journal Day 434: Blanchetown, River Murray, Millewa Country, Ngarrindjeri Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

Eyre sits by the fire in the late afternoon, pleased with the morning's ride to monitor fences and with having you alongside to help with repairs. You sit behind him at the table, sketches and brushes set out neatly. The last of the day's light filters through the open doorway, and candles are lit and set at each end of the table for the benefit of your work.

You have sketches of the *Water witch* cutter laid out and you make wash drawings of pale-skinned saplings with brown and yellow colours (Title: *Quick studies of river eucalypts*). You've completed washes of the oldest gums, using umber and ochre for the branches and sage-greens and blue-grey tones for the foliage.

Eyre leans close to the fire, scanning recent Adelaide newspapers. He reads articles aloud, frowning as he takes issue with some of the opinions in them, particularly the letters sent to editors. As he turns pages, he has much to say on the matter of violence between Aboriginal people and settlers, especially those European emigrants overlanding stock from New South Wales along the river routes. He curses at any mention of settlers arming themselves and joining police in the field. Finally he pushes the papers aside and reaches instead for his journal, flicking through pages in search of notes made weeks before. He's already explained, when pointing out Aboriginal families fishing from canoes, how he intends to compile and publish his findings and explorations.

Eventually, he finds the notes he's been looking for. "Here's what I've written about clashes between natives and settlers. These paragraphs are almost ready for publication. I'm happy with the content and I think you'll agree that much of the violence is about incitement and merely needs explaining to those ignorant of the facts."

He reads passages aloud. "While it is true that occasionally crimes have been committed by them, and

that robberies and murders have too often occurred — ” Here Eyre pauses, extemporising before going on. “I want people to understand the environment of the misdeeds. Here’s what I have written… who can tell what were the provocations which led to the conflict, what exactly were the feelings which impelled such deeds?”

You pause your work. “Wise to take everything into account, before forming judgment.”

“We must understand the position of the Aboriginal people. They have not been the only or the first aggressors, nor has their race escaped unscathed in the contest.” Eyre takes up a poker and nudges at the fire, watching as the embers fizz red against the char-black of the chimney. “Could blood answer blood,” he says finally, “perhaps for every drop of European blood shed by natives, a torrent of theirs, by European hands, would crimson the earth.”

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CHAPTER 16

Envelope labelled:

A desert unknown to Europeans.

Contains:

- Letters, journal entries and sketches addressed to ST Gill.
- Clipping of a newspaper article.

ST Gill artwork:

- *North Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide, residence of Capt. Watts of Co. Kildare.*
- *Magistrates Court, old house, Currie Street.*
- *The Youngs' cottage, old one, Pulteney Street.*
- *Capt. Fromes and Engineers Barracks .*
- *EL Montefiore's house, Adelaide.*
- *Miss Bathgate's boarding house.*

MISREPRESENTATIONS OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

(Excerpt)

To use the language of a speech delivered by Governor Gawler in April 1840 — "Three years and a half ago, the spot on which we are now standing was a desert unknown to Europeans. Now we are surrounded by a populous, and, to a considerable extent, a handsome city. Our principal streets are lined with well-filled warehouses and shops (the number is 200) and crowded by all the attendants of active traffic; handsome and substantial buildings are to be seen on every side and are rapidly increasing (stone and brick houses 500. Wooden houses 800, places of worship 13). Our port, which a few years ago was an unknown salt-water creek, covered only by water-fowl, is now filled with large shipping from Europe, India and the neighbouring colonies. The swamp is traversed by a substantial road, and handsome wharfs and warehouses are rising on its borders. The neighbourhood of the capital is studded with numerous and populous suburbs and villages, while the more distant country is rapidly assuming in population, that healthy and natural proportion which is ought to bear to the metropolis. Farming establishments are in active formation on every side.

Flocks and herds of cattle from New South Wales, following each other in countless succession, already cover a tract of two hundred miles in length. Our institutions are assuming character of stability. Our public departments have attained a high degree of system and order. The aborigines have been kept under humane control. Property and private rights enjoy as much protection as in any country in the world: and peace, union, and good understanding reign throughout the community." These, merely in the eye of the philosophical observer, are surely most remarkable results.

The Adelaide Chronicle 1842, 20 April, p. 2.

Journal Day 466: King William St, Currie St, Frome Rd, Adelaide, Montefiore Hill, North Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

Some days I like to wander the city streets in search of your old sketching sites. When I feel I'm close, I stop and picture you perched on an artist's stool with a sketchbook in your lap, engrossed in possibilities. There will have been rustic outbuildings, stone stables, and plenty of bushland and wildflowers to make border flourishes with. I imagine you flicking from one page of your book to the next as you fill in details and make notes, hoping to turn sketches into commissions. I picture you looking into the distance, thinking of titles for paintings of big landscape scenes you'll make in the studio. Passers-by pause to look at your work and exchange greetings, and I picture them too.

These days, King William Street is busy, crowded with traffic and tall buildings. I've been to the site of the *General Post Office* (Figure 16:1) on a quiet chilly morning and pictured a low building with anxious folk gathered outside, all hoping for news from home. I've walked the length of Currie Street, imagining the first *Magistrates Court* (Figure 16:2) with police marching prisoners through the doorway. I've searched Pulteney Street looking for the bungalow of the Young family (Figure 16:3), and thought of them pruning fruit trees and trimming shrubs as fine carriages roll past.

There are so many of your pictures of old Adelaide places to search for. St John's Church in South Adelaide on a sunny day with a picnic in the parklands on the way. *Captain Fromes and Engineers Barracks* (Figure 16:4) on a rainy one. And a long hill climb to imagine the stately house of EL Montefiore (Figure 16:5) with its chimney smoke curling into the sky. Then a brisk walk to stand on Montefiore Hill looking over the city and taking in a big view of Adelaide, just like Adelaide's planner, Colonel William Light himself.

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Figure 16:1: ST Gill (c. 1840s). *N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide, residence of Capt. Watts of Co. Kildare* (wash drawing, 8.4 cm x 10.0 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 4 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134361613/view

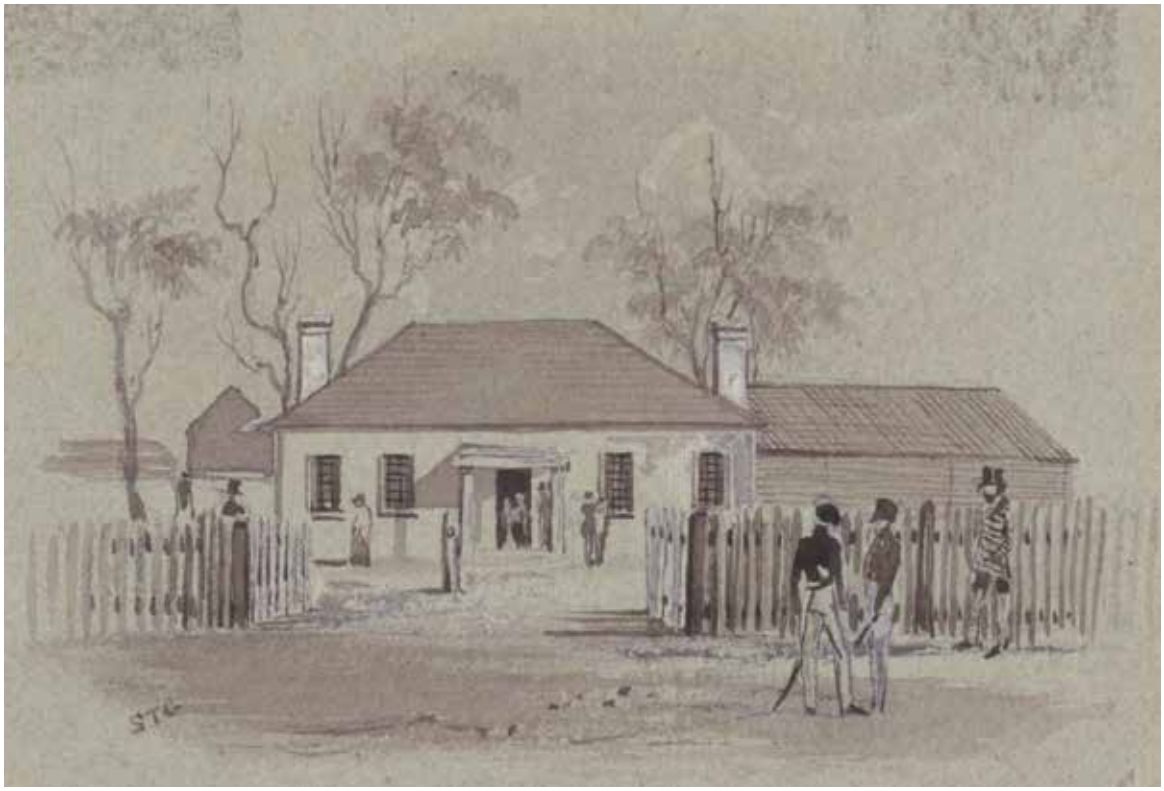

Figure 16:2 ST Gill (c. 1840s). *Magistrates Court, old house, Currie Street* (sepia wash on paper, 8.2 cm x 11.6 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 21 October 2023, https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/catalog/456597

Figure 16:3 ST Gill (c. 1840s). *The Youngs' cottage, old one, Pulteney Street* (wash on paper, 10.8 cm x 13.6 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 24 September 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134376741/view

Figure 16:4 ST Gill (c. 1840s). *Capt. Fromes and Engineers Barracks* (wash on paper, 9.5 cm x 14.1 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 21 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134364011/view

Figure 16:5 ST Gill (c. 1840s). *EL Montefiore's house, Adelaide, 1840s* (watercolour on paper, 9.5 cm x 14.8 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 18 October 2023, https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/catalog/1979638

Journal Day 469: Montefiore Hill, North Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

Colonel Light, high on his granite pedestal, stands on a rise in North Adelaide and stares into the distance. I follow the line of his pointing finger and wonder if he can see Light Square as he might once have done. (Title: *Light's (limited) vision in a new urban landscape*).

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Journal Day 472: Oakbank, Peramangk Country.

Today I make early morning nature studies in a sapling forest thick with fog. Ruskin's advice in the matter of colour for nature studies is heartening. I feel as if others before me have struggled with making fog on the page. *Even though you cannot produce finished coloured drawings of any value*, he says, *you may give yourself much pleasure, and be of great use to other people, by occasionally sketching with a view to colour only*. Ruskin's confidence is an important part of my preparation. I want to be useful to others.

I have white, sage green, slate grey, and a pale blue violet on my palette. To begin, Ruskin advises giving form to the subject but hastens to add that the entire value of what I am about to make depends primarily on the colour. It is easy to imagine Ruskin alongside me in the early fog. I picture him lecturing on the art of making colour and contrast, enthusiastically outlining suggestions for the pale trunks of saplings and the heavy white mist that clings to the low Oakbank scrub. I mix white with slate and violet and then add more white. *If the colour is wrong, everything is wrong,* Ruskin says. *Just as if you are singing, and sing false notes, it does not matter how true the words are. If you sing at all, you must sing sweetly; and if you colour at all, you must colour rightly. Give up all the form, rather than the slightest past of the colour: just as, if you felt yourself in danger of a false note, you would give up the word and sing a meaningless sound, if you felt that you could save the note.*

I make light fog on the page, adding trace colour a hint at a time. Blue and slate make the fog muddy. I give up the form and swirl clear water into my blue-grey fog and wonder if there is any way to save the note. I try to sing sweetly. Ruskin is silent.

(Ruskin 1971/1857, p. 135).

~~

Journal Day 478: Gawler Place, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

Nell tidies brushes at a workbench as Peter shuffles through newly completed sketches of Miss Bathgate's boarding house. "This is a very fine view from the street corner, Tom," he says finally, holding one small study aloft. "Marvelous sense of the building. I like the porches and the windows… and especially the variety of window dressings. I sense the different people living in all the rooms on the second floor. Mine's the last window on the right, the one with the curtains open. Although I can't help but wonder why there are no views from behind the building? You must have drawn pictures from

different angles? Miss Bathgate's property has the most delightful garden area at the rear of the house. I often take tea in the bower with some of the other fellows. Tom? I thought you might have drawn the house from the rear?" Peter frowns then and glances at you resting in your chair by the stove.

"I'll answer for Tom," says Nell. "I was with him when he was sketching Miss Bathgate's property. I stood just inside the portico on the right, see?" She leans forward, pointing one end of a paintbrush toward a collection of small drawings that show a slight figure on the right near the picket fence.

Peter sniffs and returns to organising sketches into lines. He sees that there are some without people in the foreground and places these at the far left of the bottom row, then positions his favourite in the centre of the group. It's a near-finished wash which shows a well-dressed couple strolling toward the front door of the building (Figure 16:6). He looks at Nell. "Well? Are you going to tell me that Tom didn't make drawings of the rear of the house? Or our little afternoon tea bower?"

Nell drops the last of the smallest brushes into a wide jar with a satisfying clatter. She's separated them based on sizes and pauses for a moment to admire her work, letting her fingers trail over the clean brush tips. "I wouldn't say any such thing. We both sat for a while in your bower with Miss Bathgate and Tom did a study of the rear of the building. The picture showed off the verandah area and the rose

Figure 16:6 ST Gill (c. 1840s). *Miss Bathgate's family boarding house, Rundle and Pulteney Streets, south Adelaide east* (wash on paper, 8.7 cm x 12.1 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 12 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134361933/view

bushes, as well as the fruit trees at the edge of the lawn. They are growing well, aren't they? One tree has apples ready to pick. Perhaps there will be an apple pie for your weekend afternoon tea very soon?"

"Miss Bathgate serves a very decent pie," Peter says. He looks down at the loose sketches on the bench and frowns. "A pity not to see the drawing. I like the view of the building from the garden. It's very homely. Although perhaps I think so because I have had some good times with the other chaps as we go through the newspapers with our tea. But where is the sketch now?"

Nell ignores Peter's query. "The picture also included a table piled with platters of cake, and scones, and cheeses." She looks at Tom and raises an eyebrow. "And there was a rather nice teapot, wasn't there? With a design of roses and garlands made from pink — "

" — Tom?" Peter interrupts. "Tom? Are you going to tell me that you have given Miss Bathgate a drawing in exchange for afternoon tea?"

"I will answer for Tom," says Nell. "Yes, we had the most delightful tea with scones and cake, and then Miss Bathgate received a wash drawing of the back view of her house. She seemed very happy. We had a pleasant afternoon."

Peter groans aloud. "Tom! How will it help to pay your rent if you give your work away? And in exchange for cakes and cheese?"

"Oh, we gave out plenty of Tom's cards during the visit," says Nell. "There was a lot of interest. Both with the lodgers, and when we were modelling for the foreground figures, out on the road. And Miss Bathgate said that she will purchase the view from the corner of Rundle and Pulteney Streets (Figure 16:6). She's seen the sketches and says her boarding establishment looks exactly as she wanted. There was also a discussion about purchasing a larger version to frame and put in the front entrance hall."

"Well, that is some good news. But as for giving pictures away… or exchanging them for afternoon tea," says Peter, "how will this contribute to Tom being able to pay his rent on time?"

"It was a very fine selection of cheeses," you say, looking up from the fire.

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CHAPTER 17

Envelope labelled:

Government House.

Contains:

- Letters, journal entries and sketches addressed to ST Gill.
- Clippings of newspaper articles.

ST Gill artwork:

- *Old Government House.*
- *Government House, North Terrace, Adelaide.*

Martha Maria Snell Berkeley artwork:

- *The first dinner given to the Aborigines 1838.*

THE LATE FIRE AT GOVERNMENT HUT — SERIOUS DESTRUCTION OF PUBLIC DOCUMENTS

It is with extreme regret that we announce that nearly all the records and documents connected with the legislative and executive departments of the Governments, have been destroyed by the late untoward burning of the old Government hut. We cannot but think that the keeping records of as much public importance in a hut, not merely reed thatched, but partitioned and almost entirely composed of the same dangerous material, exhibits an indefensible recklessness. With a government residence, built at an expense exceeding $10,000, of the best stone-work and affording ample accommodation; with public offices fire-proof, and where also every precaution for the safe keeping of the colonial archives had been provided at a cost of $15,000, it seems unfortunate that a combustive hut should have been chosen as the proper place to deposit the public documents. It is reported that these papers were actually removed from Government House to the hut a few days before the conflagration, for the purpose of making room, in the former place for Lady Franklin.

The South Australian Register 1841, 23 January, p. 3.

Figure 17:1 ST Gill (c. 1840s). *Old Government House* (sepia wash on paper, 11.5 cm x 20.0 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 28 October 2023, https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/catalog/461236

Journal Day 513: North Terrace, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

Early one morning an old man sits under river gums looking at an emptiness where the government hut used to be (Figure 17:1). Fog begins to lift and the bushland is lit low with the first rays of an orange sun. You're early too because you like the quiet and you're captivated by the sleepy dawn colours in the skins and bark of trees. Fog, especially the thin gossamer type that hangs low in scrub, is challenging. You've discovered that it's a mingling of water, brush, light and touch.

Some days you meet the old man before sunrise. You sit together looking into the past. Perhaps there's evidence of charred earth in the glade. Maybe there are green sprouts peeking through the dirt and pitch. Perhaps the emptiness will form the centrepiece of new pictures you make, and there'll be no walls or chimneys or doorways, just an ancient scene that might have been there forever.

The old man watches your fingers circle from palette to paper, pencil to brush, rag to water. "Aye, I liked it when the Governor lived in the hut," he says. "I thought it was a sign that things might be different here. I thought there might be less of the high-born gentlemen and their big estates and fences and rules. Less of the them and us of the old places. It was something I thought of, for a time. Aye, or hoped, at least."

You stop working and stare into the distance, thinking of places around Plymouth you knew as a child. "And what do you think now there is a big mansion for the Governor by the river, and plenty of folk working on the gardens and fences surrounding it? I see them working up there most days." You turn back pages in your sketchbook and show the old man a drawing of a gardener pushing a barrow toward a flower bed.

"I think it's more like the old places than ever," says the man. "That's the shame of it. More for them as ever it was, and less for us. At least that's the way it seems to me."

~~

Journal Day 521: North Terrace, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

Somewhere on the ground floor of new-built Government House, a teapot sweats on a dresser and macaroons wilt alongside. Lady Franklin, resplendent in indigo, squeezes between a dresser and a cupboard to peer at the garden through a small window. When she turns, she sees a faint line of dust, neglected by maids and looking just as if furniture has been recently moved (Title: *Flushed cheeks and tight velvet on a summer day*).

~~

THE ABORIGINES

On Thursday last, in pursuance of an advertisement issued by the Governor, a dinner was given to the natives, and the occasion excited much interest in the town. Soon after the hour appointed for the assembling, a vast concourse of the inhabitants had collected on the ground and were enjoying the fineness of the weather in promenading for upwards of two hours before the ceremonies commenced.

About two o'clock a band of about 160 natives were assembled, and their appearance was certainly highly pleasing and orderly; their huzzas would have done great credit to the lungs and voices of Englishmen, and their general demeanour upon the occasion was very orderly. The native men were dressed in gaudy coloured cottons and the women had new blankets and rugs, and the tout ensemble of the group had a very striking effect.

Soon after they arrived, His Excellency said a few words, which were translated by Mr. WYATT, expressive of his desire that they should imitate the good qualities of the whites, learn to fear and love God, learn English, cease from quarrels with each other, and pay respect to the property of the whites.

Whether they understood what was said, we know not, but the vacant stare and senseless faces of many evidently bespoke utter ignorance of the meaning of His Excellency.

The Southern Australian 1838, 3 November, p. 3.

Figure 17:2 Martha Maria Snelll Berkeley (1838). *The first dinner given to the Aborigines 1838* (watercolour on paper, 37.5 cm x 49.5 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 20 October 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/the-first-dinner-given-to-the-aborigines-1838/24063/

Journal Day 530: North Terrace, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

Martha Berkeley sits at her studio easel sketching Governor Gawler at the first colonial dinner given to the Aboriginal people. She gives the Governor a top hat and elegant attire. She remembers the coat was blueish, a mixture of cyan and slate. She fills the foreground with ladies in walking dresses and gentlemen in frock coats. She fills the edges with horses and children and poor folk. When she wearies of people, she works on an elegant gum tree, making its limbs reach sinuously for the sky. Finally, she takes the barrels of food for the Aboriginal people and upends them onto bare dirt in the middle of the circle of guests. She fills in scores of Aboriginal people at the edges. They are tiny in the big composition, but she knows they are hungry and need permission to scrabble in the dirt for their dinner. In her picture, she makes them wait.

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Journal Day 533: North Terrace, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

I imagine Governor Gawler giving an evening party at Government House on North Terrace (Figure 17:3). There's animated conversation, the clink of crystal, and the sweet high notes of a string quartet. There are waltzes with tall gentlemen swinging pink-cheeked ladies around a ballroom. It begins at dusk, and the pale new building is ripe with the colours of the setting sun and lit inside and out by lamps and candles. Guests spill outside into the gardens and onto lawns and paths. The sounds of the bushland surrounding add to the music. Night birds call, insects buzz, and wallabies and lizards scratch in the scrub (Title: *Evening bush music to accompany a three-step dance*).

Supper is laid out in a great hall on tables with white cloths. The room is trimmed with banners and flags. Gum sprigs and wattle blossoms scent the air. There are soft-shoed staff moving about with refreshments for the hundreds of guests dressed in evening wear. The men are elegant in black velvet and the women wear silks trimmed with ribbons that shimmer as they move (Title: *Victorian fashions in the Antipodes*). In the reception rooms there are captains and officers in smart uniforms groomed to perfection. I picture George Gawler in uniform too, his boots polished, belt gleaming, epaulettes fringed in gold (Title: *Gallant soldiers in dress uniform for an important colonial* soirée).

I wonder if you might have been to a Government House party with your friends. Not as invited guests, but looking on, somewhere in the shadows near the forest trees and the carriages. I think of Nell disguised as a maid in a black uniform, and Peter and George dressed as grooms, murmuring to horses, each playing a part. You might have wandered the grounds and finally become bold and crept close to the building, peering into windows, inventing stories, and laughing about them later back in your studio with all three of you drinking whiskey and making new pictures of the Government House party just as if you had been there as important guests and not as outsiders, hiding in bushland shadows.

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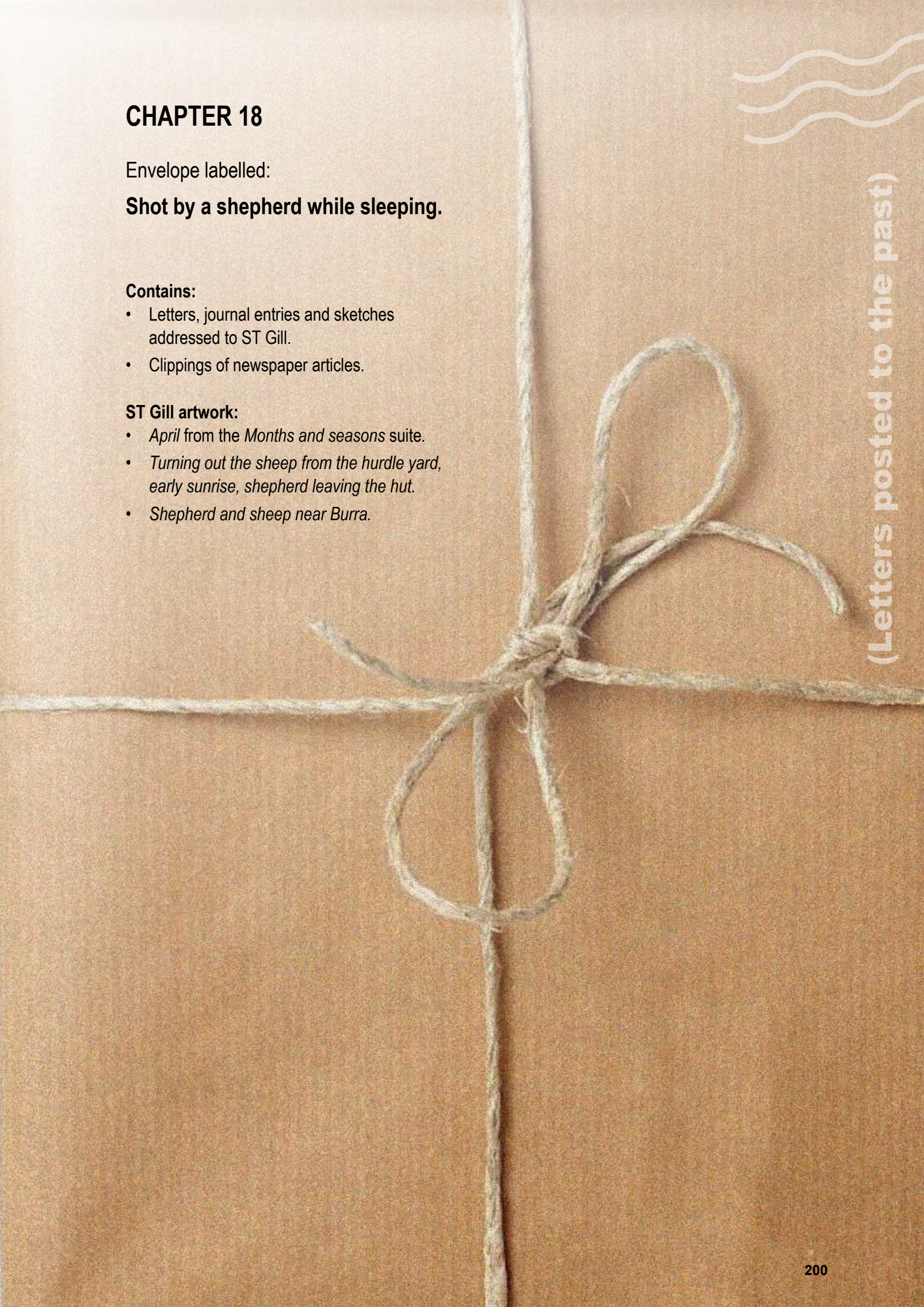
Figure 17:3 ST Gill (c. 1840s). *Government House, North Terrace, Adelaide* (watercolour on paper, 27.1 cm x 39.7 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 15 September 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/government-house-north-terrace-adelaide/24134/

THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY AT ADELAIDE

(Excerpt from Governor Gawler's speech to Aboriginal people at a public function)

Black men; - these which you have just heard are the commandments of Jehovah, who made the sun and the earth, white men, black men, and everything — you must obey them always with all your hearts.
You must not steal.
You must not quarrel and fight and kill each other.
You must not kill your children.
You must love your wives and be kind to them.
You must love Jesus Christ, the Son of God, with all your hearts.
He sees you everywhere – he is always with you – he is able to save you from everything bad, and to give you everything good.
You must not be drunkards – getting drunk will soon make you ill and kill you.
Besides which, you must live in houses, as King John, Captain Jack, Tommy, and others are doing. If you will try to build houses, white men will help you.
Encounter Bay Bob wants some ground to dig – I am very glad of it – I will give it him, and some to any of you who will dig it.
You must do what Mr Moorhouse and Mr Teichelmann and Mr Schürmann tell you; they love you and wish to make you happy, and white men and black men will be brothers together.

The South Australian Register 1840, 30 May, p. 6.



CHAPTER 18

Envelope labelled:

Shot by a shepherd while sleeping.

Contains:

- Letters, journal entries and sketches addressed to ST Gill.
- Clippings of newspaper articles.

ST Gill artwork:

- *April* from the *Months and seasons* suite.
- *Turning out the sheep from the hurdle yard, early sunrise, shepherd leaving the hut.*
- *Shepherd and sheep near Burra.*

(Letters posted to the past)

AFFRAY WITH THE NATIVES

On Wednesday the 16th instant, between the hours of four and five o'clock, p.m., as the shepherd of E B Gleeson, Esq., on the river Hutt, was herding his flock (consisting of about eleven hundred ewes and lambs) homewards he observed that the sheep had been rushed, and immediately afterwards he discovered two natives in the act of separating between two and three hundred from the flock; he then fired a blank shot for the purpose of intimidating them. At this time he observed several other natives in his rear in the act of spearing the sheep; one had been speared through the heart, and another through the thigh, and the man being in dread of his life, fired at them, whereby he killed one and wounded another; he also shot a dog belonging to the natives, used by them for the purpose of separating the flock. The sheep were now widely scattered, and much difficulty was experienced in collecting them, but when in sight of the Hutt the shepherd received the assistance of his comrade, in collecting and bringing in the remainder of them. The number of natives now surrounding the station is stated to be about 200 and very few women with them.

The Southern Australian 1840, 29 September, p. 3.

Journal Day 533: North Terrace, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

When I look closely at the mood of your *April* watercolour painting, all those pretty pastel hillsides lead me to think that being a shepherd might be an appealing sort of life (Figure 18:1). I often think of painting outdoors in the autumn months, and April especially seems a glorious time for an artist to make pictures of sheep grazing on hills and in valleys. I imagine experimenting with green tones for the flush of new autumn grasses, then cadmium and ochre hues for the last yellow pastures of summer peeking out between the new shoots. Sheep have nearly grown into their full fleeces in April and this adds to the

appeal of painting stock in the loveliness of autumn (Title: *Sheep studies and autumn on the palette*).

I imagine it's relaxing to paint sheep. Entertaining, too, in its way. I've always liked the way sheep seem content to do everything together — lying down at the same time, legs tucked under their briskets, for example. Or the way calm ones move easily across pastures toward a gate or water. Even in broad, open fields it seems charming that sheep are content to form a line behind a leader and follow at leisurely pace, each one waiting its turn to merge onto the track. Then there's the odd manner, especially noticeable in a large flock, of one sheep turning to face the sun or putting its back to the wind for protection, while all the others follow suit, positioned nearly exactly alike.

Figure 18:1 ST Gill (c. 1840s). *April* (watercolour on paper, 21.8 cm x 18.3 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 12 September 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134358298/view

If I am to truly imagine what it is to be a shepherd, I must also picture fierce weather and a tiny, rough-built hut perched on a windswept hillside as my home. I have examined your painting of the humble accommodations in *Turning out the sheep from the hurdle yard, early sunrise, shepherd leaving the hut* (Figure 18:2). Here's a little shanty built into the ridge of a hill as a barrier against the elements. Perhaps it's made from wattle and daub, or sapling logs with a bark and thatched grass roof. It has a fireplace, and I imagine the chimney made of paddock stone and sodden mortar, cragged inside and out, constructed out of necessity by an amateur mason chilled to the bone. There's nothing to compare to the warmth and cheer of a fire as you settle to sleep on a dirt floor, your sheep locked safely in the yard outside, dog at your feet. Then to emerge early, before the sun, to turn the flock out to graze.

And so to begin another peaceful day as a shepherd. All this I read from your paintings of herdsmen standing on gum-studded hillsides, crooks in hand, eyes fixed to the distance, faithful dogs at their sides (Title: *Myriad studies of untroubled shepherds in peaceful Antipodean landscapes*).

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Figure 18:2 ST Gill (c. late 1840s/1850). *Turning out the sheep from the hurdle yard, early sunrise, shepherd leaving the hut* (watercolour on paper, 9.6 cm x 15.9 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 24 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134355301/view

A NATIVE SHOT

A few days ago information was received from the neighbourhood of Gawler Town, that a Native of the Adelaide tribe, had been shot by a shepherd while sleeping. The Commissioner of Police immediately despatched Mr. Sub-Inspector Gordon, to the spot. Mr. Gordon left Town, accompanied by the Coroner, who, of course, would have the body exhumed, and hold an Inquest thereon. The party has not yet returned to Town..

The Adelaide Independent 1841, 12 August, p. 2.

Journal Day 556: OG Road, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

I imagine the stout and wealthy Osmond Gilles — settler, pastoralist, mining magnate — chasing sheep across broad paddocks at OG Road in Adelaide. In my picture, Gilles becomes red in the face, loosens his cravat and tugs at his collar. He is ineffective as a shepherd and quickly becomes furious, finally collapsing on the dry banks of the river and kicking his heels in the dust (Title: *Wealthy Osmond Gilles easily defeated by sheep*).

Figure 18:3 ST Gill (c. 1840s). *Shepherd and sheep near Burra* (black and brown watercolour wash on paper, 27.0 cm x 39.6 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 6 November 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/shepherd-and-sheep-near-burra/33405/

SUPREME COURT. CRIMINAL SESSIONS

Henry, a native, was indicted for stealing a sheep the property of Edward and Wm. Peter, in the month of June last. The Advocate General conducted the prosecution, and Mr Mann the defence. Mr Edward Peter proved his ownership of the sheep. The shepherd proved the driving away of the sheep and the killing by the prisoner and another native. Verdict – Guilty. Sentence – Twelve months imprisonment.

The Southern Australian 1843, 25 July, p. 2.

Journal Day 567: Oakbank, Peramangk Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

One late afternoon, riding out through scrubland, you find a sheep skeleton in a ditch. It's a full sized carcass, picked near-clean by wild dogs and insects and bleached to pale milk colour by the sun. You cut away the last shards of hide and sinew and collect the bones into a sack, tie it carefully to your saddle and bring the skeleton back to the studio. You lay out the pieces on a bench, enjoying the feeling of doing something practical, and the puzzle of it (Title: *Portrait of an artist contemplating the anatomy of a sheep*).

George and Peter help to position the bones in the right arrangement. The skull first, with the neck vertebrae correctly angled below. Then the length of the spine, with the sacrum raised at the rump and the last of the small vertebrae fitted correctly at the tail. And below, the scapula, ribs and pelvic bones placed under the rump, with the femur, patella, tibia, and other fine bones of the hind legs laid out further down. Lastly, with George and Peter sorting the pieces and handing them over, you pose the front legs' carpal and metacarpal bones. There are tiny phalange bones, too, visible inside split-away sections of hooves, and the three of you fuss with them, discussing the differences between front and hind legs (Title: *Studies of small ovine foot bones*). It's not the first sheep skeleton you've seen, and

you've learned the names of the bones from books, but it's the first you can call your own. There are other slivers of hoof and toe, and you position these as correctly as you can at the bottom of the legs.

While George organises kindling and Peter pours whiskey into glasses, you make sketches of the bones, first recording the find as a whole and then making notes alongside about the landscape. There's the nature of the scrub and distance from Adelaide to record and the condition of the grasses and proximity to water. Next, you stand on the end of the bench and look down to draw a draft of the entire skeleton before making close-ups of the skull. George, experienced in sheep husbandry, notes that the skull has the teeth of a two-year-old, and he wonders if it was brought down by a dog, or if it was speared or shot, or died from lack of water over the course of days with vermin picking its eyes before death (Title: *Pondering the last moments of a young sheep*).

George and Peter sit at the end of the bench and sip rum, muttering of seasons and tillage. You pick up the skull, examine it from all angles, and make sketches, lightly at first, and experimental, before moving a lamp close and turning one drawing into a detailed pencil composition with intense contrast, meticulously worked, highlights added with a fine brush at the last. You're taken with the wide-open, near-circular gaps of the eye sockets and what you can see of the bench through them. For a while, pencil in hand, you think about how a sheep sees the world, and then your thoughts move to the construction of a still life. You imagine filling each blank socket with a single large blossoming wildflower. You contemplate making a garland of gum leaves for a wreath to crown the skull (Title: *Humble ewe elevated to regal status in death*).

Peter fills your glass and squints at the finished drawing in the lamplight. "Were there other sheep anywhere nearby?"

George moves closer to examine the drawing. "Could you see marks in the dirt, from struggling? Do you think the sheep moved a great distance in the time it took to die? I suppose there would be tracks in the dust, wouldn't there? Sometimes these animals lie on their sides and paddle awhile, with all four legs, and you can see scuffing in the earth alongside."

Interesting thoughts, but you are too absorbed in the possibilities of light and dark and death and botany to ponder these questions aloud. Instead, you flick eagerly to the next page of your sketchbook, your mind already occupied with new compositions featuring the dead white bones and the blue-grey tones of Antipodean scrub plants. Eventually George and Peter move to the fire and look into the flames, musing about the short life of a sheep on a hillside far from its ancestors.

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CHAPTER 19

Envelope labelled:

Captain Sturt's expedition.

Contains:

- Letters, journal entries and sketches addressed to ST Gill.
- Clippings of newspaper articles and a diary entry.

ST Gill artwork:

- *Sturt's overland expedition leaving Adelaide 10th August, 1844.*
- *Sturt's expedition.*
- *The sandy ridges of Central Australia* (commissioned illustration for Charles Sturt's *Narrative of an expedition into central Australia* publication).

CAPTAIN STURT'S EXPEDITION

The Breakfast in honour of Captain Sturt, has been fixed for tomorrow morning, at eleven o'clock, at the stores of Messrs Stocks & Co., Grenfell Street. It is expected that upwards of 250 persons will be present, being, we believe, the largest assembly on a festive occasion that has yet taken place in the colony.

After the breakfast, a procession of ladies and gentlemen, on horseback and in carriages, will be formed, to escort the gallant Captain a short way from town. The procession will leave Mr Stock's store, Grenfell Street, between one and two o'clock, and proceed down King William Street, along the city Bridge, and by the windmill, on the Great North Road. The procession will be under the direction of Messrs Johnson, C. Campbell and F. H. Dutton. The Governor has appointed tomorrow to be held as a holiday, in honour of Captain Sturt's departure; it will also be a holiday at the banks and the public generally will follow the example.

Every true friend of the province must rejoice to see the admirable spirit with which the colonists have come forward to do honour to the distinguished man who is about to undertake the exploration of this great continent. The colonists will not only shew that they appreciate the conduct of the British Government in reference to the great object which Captain Sturt has undertaken to accomplish — they will shew that esteem, respect, and confidence in Captain Sturt, to which his past services and character so well entitle him, and by the honour done him, they will encourage and stimulate him in his arduous enterprise.

The Southern Australian 1844, 9 August, p. 2.

Journal Day 581: King William Street, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill

c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

I'd like to step into that festive August 1844 day and meet Sturt's expedition party just before they ride out across the river and onto the Great North Road (Figure 19:1). I'd make my way over to the line of fine horses jigging about in anticipation of departure and seek out the officers and leaders. I'd look for

Poole, Browne, McDouall Stuart, and Piesse, and ask them about their expectations and if they've heard any stories to make them feel uneasy about the months ahead — or whether in the moments before leaving they feel only excitement about what's to come. I suppose officers wouldn't admit to any uncertainty about riding off into unknown territory. It seems that Captain Sturt was a well-liked and respected man, and that those under his command were always very willing to follow him and worked hard to please him, too. I picture Sturt somewhere among those gleaming horses, jubilant after the celebratory breakfast, upright in the saddle with boots polished, keen eyes thoughtful even as the pleasure riders caper about, no doubt all of them thinking of an invigorating canter across the bridge and then home in time for a civilised tea by the warmth of a fire (Title: *Adelaide equestrians stirred by an expedition departure*).

Mostly, though, it's the expedition's working men I'd like to meet. I always look for them in the thick of the composition, and I particularly like the way that the foreground and edges are crowded with ordinary citizens in serviceable coats and caps. I like to think of all those workaday folk pleasantly surprised by a sudden holiday and merrymaking in the streets. Where would Sturt's head stockman, Robert Flood, be standing in the crowd? Surely he feels some trepidation about the responsibility of providing food and water for stock on a journey to unknown places. Might he believe in the dream of finding an inland sea and discovering pastures along the way? I picture him somewhere in the right-hand foreground with the animals. Or perhaps he's behind the boat, busily inspecting the state of the wheels on the dray and rubbing thick oil into wood as protection against grit and inclement weather.

Figure 19:1. ST Gill (c. 1844-1845). *Sturt's overland expedition leaving Adelaide 10th August, 1844* (watercolour on paper, 41.3 cm x 72.0 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 15 September 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/sturts-overland-expedition-leaving-adelaide-10th-august-1844/24201/

Where are the bullock drivers, Mack, Foulkes, Jones, and Turpin? Perhaps they are occupied with the welfare of the bullocks at the boat-dray, ensuring their feet are healthy. I'd want to meet Davenport and Cowley, too, the pair hired as servants. I picture them at the end of each tough day on the journey, wearily erecting tents and setting up comfortable bedding for the officers. Then providing meals, carting water, making fires, boiling kettles. Washing up, too. And trapping and skinning animals and digging for roots (Title: *Portrait of hard-working lackeys attending to the myriad needs of officers*).

Somewhere in your composition, likely in the middle ground, are Kirby and Sullivan, sheep handlers. They stand alert with their dogs, anticipating the command to move out. Perhaps all of these working men spend their last moments on the street corner pondering the strangeness of the scene all around them, and of their first task being to follow scores of fancy-dressed amateurs taking a pleasure ride across the river simply for the spectacle of it (Title: *Studies of working men struck by the class system*).

Most importantly, where, among the stir of the workers, is Daniel Brock, the amateur taxidermist who will need to learn fast how to preserve specimens in the most difficult of conditions? It's the serious, devout young Brock that I'd like to talk to more than any other in the party. I learn that he will write, secretively, a forbidden diary detailing hardships and great injustices on the expedition, and the disparity between the conditions of the officers and those of the working men. Whatever Daniel Brock expects as he waits for the word to ride out on that splendid August day, he'll find, like the other hired hands, that his only defence against the elements will be a fought-for space under a bullock dray, where he'll watch from a distance as the officers take their leisure in sturdy tents erected by flunkeys. Like the other working men, Brock will carry his putrid water long distances because the best water at any campsite, when it can be found at all, is reserved for the officers. He'll see his leaders talking tight-lipped at their private campfire, eating the finest of the provisions. After reading Brock's diary entries, I can readily picture him in the dark desert at night, tossing on sand as he tries to find comfort (Title: *Portrait of Daniel Brock under a bullock dray, restlessly seeking sleep*).

It's noisy in the picture of Captain Sturt's expedition departing, particularly alongside the chipped flagons and broken wheels of the foreground. There's a background of bullocks bellowing and the hum of conversation, occasional bursts of raucous glee. All those working folk agog at the sight of so many horses and carriages gathered at once. "Three cheers for Captain Sturt," a man hollers, tossing his cap into the air. Two putty-faced fellows in heavy coats join in. "Plant the Union Jack dead centre for Her Majesty," they shout. Folk nearby break into the anthem, trying hard to be heard. "Send her victorious, happy and glorious, long to reign over us, God Save the Queen."

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CAPTAIN STURT'S EXPEDITION

Lake Bonney, September 2, 1844.
"Sir—I do myself the honour of reporting to you, for his Excellency's information, that I reached the place which this is dated on the 30th ultimo, and have since been employed in surveying the Lake and Creek connecting it with the river Murray. I proceed, in the morning, towards Lake Victoria and will forward charts of both by Mr Eyre, when he leaves me.

"The river being flooded, I am obliged to keep the upper ridges of sand, and the teams have the greater labour on that account, but I hope to reach Laidley's Ponds before the end of the month, and as Mr Eyre proposes turning back from Lake Victoria, I shall endeavour to send natives from the upper branches of the Darling with an account of my proceedings in that neighbourhood, and of the prospects before me, begging the Governor to bear in mind, that my desire is to turn Lake Torrens by its north-east angle, and to gain a position, according to Lord Stanley's instructions, due north of Mount Arden.

"I have &c.,
"Charles Sturt.

"P.S.—I may add that the men are looking very well, and the animals are in excellent working order, and that no accident of any kind, has, as yet, occurred of any moment.
"The Honourable Colonial Secretary."

The Adelaide Observer 1844, 21 September, p. 4.

Journal Day 587: King William Street, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

Patience and Nell stare at a preliminary wash drawing of the expedition departure scene laid out on a bench (Figure 19:2). Nell nudges rags and brushes aside, picks up a magnifying glass, and holds it over the pitched-roof structure that dominates the middle ground.

“What a view you had, Tom,” says Patience, leaning in alongside Nell. She points to the foreground. “Were you standing at the fence for a while? I recognise the woman in the striped scarf. She stands out because of that pattern in the weaving.”

From where you sit opposite, the study is upside down and you contemplate it. You’ve combined sketches of different individuals to make up the foreground line of viewers. Many weren’t drawn on the afternoon of Sturt’s ride out, and most have been made in the days since. “Not long enough. I drew a line of people but then couldn’t bear to stay in one place. I wanted to move about and see everything. I was as stirred-up as most of those horses.”

Patience traces her finger over the long skirt of a woman in the picture. “It was thrilling, wasn’t it? I stood near one of the hackneys, right there behind the riding horses. There was a fine lady standing alongside in a new silk dress. It was style I’d never seen before. Oh Tom! I do wish you had been there, to make a drawing of it for me.”

“I was near the line of horses, too, and wishing that I was mounted up on one of them,” says Nell. “I had the strongest urge to ride out across the bridge and start the journey alongside them all. Perhaps if I was smarter, I could have hidden under that long wooden boat. And then I could have crawled out and joined the men for tea. Wouldn’t they have been surprised? What do you think Captain Sturt would make of that?”

Figure 19:2. ST Gill (c. 1844-1845). *Sturt’s expedition* (sepia wash drawing on paper, 11.8 cm x 18.0 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 28 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134375514/view.

You've spent the days since Sturt's festive departure making quick sketches, most of which remain unfinished, your mind elsewhere as you ponder the expedition's progress. "I keep thinking how much I would like to join an exploration party into the northern unknown places that people speculate about. I haven't properly applied myself to this picture. Each night I stand outside and wonder about them… Where are the men camped at this very moment? And do they begin each new day expecting to find the inland sea?" You begin to pace about the studio, agitated. "Although in the beginning they will be following a well-known path. They're making their way to Eyre's place at Moorundie to finalise stores. Yes! I would very much like to join an exploration. To work during the day and settle each night at a campfire with the others, cooking what we have managed to hunt or dig for ourselves."

Nell sets the magnifying glass down with a clatter. "Tom! What a picture you paint of it! Did you approach Captain Sturt to ask for a position? Surely he would have considered having an artist along to make a record of the scenery?"

You pause to stare at working drafts pinned to an easel. "I'd prefer to be in a smaller group. This expedition is cumbersome. Anyone can see it. All those animals and drays and barrels of this and that. All needed to feed such a big company of men, and yet impractical. I would rather travel lightly and have less responsibility for so many others."

Patience twists her scarf around her fingers. "It sounds frightening. I wouldn't want to travel into the wastelands. That's what people are calling it. Have you heard what they say in the streets? Some say that Captain Sturt's party… well, they cannot all hope to survive."

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From *To the desert with Sturt*
(Daniel Brock's expedition diary, October 16, 1844)

I observe an indication of bad feeling in these natives towards us. Old Nitebook seems in a study, however, somewhat before the day closed in, as a considerable body of natives were seated jabbering away, old Nitebook opened out upon them, and a more perfect piece of Bouncing Bullyism could not well be, than the way he talked to them.

It is no wonder they should have meditated evil against us, for this is the very tribe which were so shamefully injured by Mitchell's party. I will here relate the circumstances. As was customary, Mitchell had encamped 2 or three miles from the river. One of the men, on coming to the river for water, had had an interview with a female native, and had promised her a kettle, if she would gratify his lust. A day or two after, the wretch came to the river and the poor native, who had an infant at her back, came for her kettle, having with her two or three others. It appears he first knocked her down, and she as soon as she could ran to the river, but just as she was jumping in, the brute fired, and instead of falling into the water, she fell back on the bank a corpse. The white fellow came up to her and finished his butchery by taking the child by its heels and dashing its brains out against a gum tree; and then observing the natives (who were with the unfortunate female) crouching behind a tree on the opposite bank, he fired a volley at them. To conclude the scene— one of these behind the tree was a young lad— he is now a tall fine young man, name Toup-pa — he has shewn us the grave, the tree where the child perished, the tree behind which he crouched, in which were the marks of three balls. Well might Mitchell say "Oh! That my good name is entrusted with such men".

Brock 1988/1975, p. 50.

Journal Day 613: Sedan, Towitta, Ngadjuri Country, Meru Country, Danggali Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill

c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

This afternoon, walking dirt tracks near Towitta and Sedan, I imagine a day in Captain Sturt's expedition. I have your watercolour of chaining alongside, the picture you made from Sturt's own pencil sketches for his book, *Narrative of an expedition into central Australia* (Figure 19:3) The enormity of the landscape

strikes me most. There's a sense of the men's insignificance as they struggle to work on navigational tasks in the dunes. Making charts and plots and taking bearings seem formidable tasks in such conditions. I see the flag flying horizontal and picture a hot wind stirring the sands and beating red into the faces of the men.

It's difficult to imagine the sense of hopelessness when faced with such an unforgiving environment, particularly on a day with onerous physical work to be done. Daniel Brock's diary entry that tells of the burden of chaining adds a great deal to your composition and my interpretation of it. I picture Brock hiding under a bullock dray to write after the long day's work is done:

> 1st July*, Friday. We have chained 46 miles from last Monday. No perfect picture can be conveyed to the mind of the desolateness all around us, sand ridges and hollows. With the heavy chain we have often to wade up to our knees in a liquefied mud sufficiently consistent to make it like pulling up a 50 lb. weight at each foot. Very little timber, it being either a stunted acacia or the prickly spinifex. A break in the scene was the sight of an unknown but most beautiful flower, strange to me. Although in full bloom it was a beautiful green colour (Brock 1988, p. 169).
>
> (*Editor's note in the text: 'Brock is in error with the month — it was August').

Figure 19:3. ST Gill (c. 1846). *The sandy ridges of Central Australia* (watercolour on paper, 15.2 cm x 22.9 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 23 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134371152/view

And then a few days later, writing of dashed hopes upon finding the great body of an arid lake:

> 4th August. The Captain feels dreadfully chagrined that the lake is dry — the most sanguine hopes have been entertained that we should float the boat on Lake Torrens, but there is barely water to float a duck. The bed of the lake was too soft to travel on, as the Captain and Doctor proved; in essaying to cross over it the horses got bogged. We encamped, the Captain and Doctor proceeding away on the bank trending north. Stuart took and opposite course S. I have been speaking of the country of which we have been passing as desolate, but this scene which we now pass our eyes over, is the Climax of Desolation — not trees, no shrubs all bleak barren undulating sand. Miserable! Horrible! (Brock 1988, pp. 171-172).

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Journal Day 701: Sedan, Towitta, Ngadjuri Country, Meru Country, Danggali Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill

c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

I sit in a dry summer field that has one large dead tree. I think of John Ruskin's instruction in the art of painting skies, and his insistence that an artist must fully understand the *leading lines* and the *awful lines* of nature. Ruskin writes that an artist must always be ready to seize these lines to make successful landscape pictures. I'm determined to find them and seize them and show them on my sky paintings.

Today's lesson is a study of clouds made in the nineteenth-century manner. I have a mix of cerulean, azure, white, slate, charcoal, grey, violet, and rose colours on my palette. I've made a dozen soft blue backgrounds and set them beside me on the ground. I imagine that I have Ruskin alongside, and I think of stratus, cumulus, cirrus, and cumulonimbus, and all the colours that go into making a cloud. I think of Ruskin's *awful lines*, and how to show them on my paper (Title: *European sky studies above dry yellow Antipodean pastures*).

I lie under the tree and look at the changing cloud patterns to the north, trying to understand the running of the late afternoon wind. I find it helpful to think that the atmosphere is made of layers, and that some are still and quiet, while others are filled with the kind of energy that makes thin stratus clouds streak high above the horizon.

Ruskin says that clouds are like waves, and that the *leading lines show the run of the tide*. In the pictures

I make of Ruskin, he is considered and takes his time to put his theories into words. Understanding, he says, is key. *A dullard will think that things are standing stock still, and he will draw them all fixed. But a wise man sees the changing in them, and draws them so: an animal in motion, the tree in its growth, the cloud in its course across the heavens. Try always to see, and make on your page, the lines in things which have had power over its past fate, and which will have power over its futurity. I call these the awful lines, and you must seize on them and capture them, whatever else you might miss in a scene*.

I am resolved to not be a dullard in the matter of making clouds. I determine to seize on the awful lines and capture them. It comes to me that I must work quickly to harness these lines and the patterns of the sky in colour., and so I work fast, pushing wet paint into damp paper to capture the energy of stratus in white, slate, rose, violet and grey. My careful blue backgrounds become messy and loose and damp with the awful lines of nature.

(Ruskin, 1971/1857, p. 91).

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Journal Day 709: North-eastern South Australia, Dhirari Country, Dieri Country.

I force myself to trek for five miles without water to stand at a rusted fence in outback South Australia. I want to picture James Poole's grave, distant at Depot Glen. The sun is relentless, and I have enough damper for one long day. Later I will have water, but during the trek, I want to want water. To feel a new thirst.

At the fence, I picture Poole's gravesite and the beefwood tree and the shade moving through the afternoon. I see James Poole dying in agony on the back of a dray. I think of lemons and thick juice dripping into the sand. I imagine the heat of the dirt and Sturt's men digging, drenched in sweat. I close my eyes and imagine I can hear a bush funeral said at the close of the day. I say the words aloud. *The Lord bless him, and keep him, and in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ we commend to almighty God…*

I feel a new thirst and deny myself water. The sun begins to fall. I have another five miles to trek (Title: *For the want of fruit and vegetables*).

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CHAPTER 20

Envelope labelled:

**Promoting South Australia —
the James Allen commissions.**

Contains:

- Letters, journal entries and sketches addressed to ST Gill.
- Clippings of newspaper articles.

ST Gill artwork:

- *North Terrace, Adelaide, looking south-east from Government House guardhouse.*
- *Trinity Church, Adelaide.*
- *Hindley Street, Adelaide, looking west from King William Street.*
- *Rundle Street, Adelaide.*
- *Trinity Church, Adelaide.*

DETESTABLE OUTRAGE

On Wednesday last, the neighbourhood of Wright's Cottages witnessed a scene which, for brutality, we believe to be almost unparalleled. A miscreant in human form, in broad daylight, between the hours of four and five o'clock, was seen pursuing a native girl, for the most criminal purposes; not satisfied with this brutality, he seized the unfortunate creature by the hair of the head, and struck her so violently with a waddie, which he had seized from her male companions, that the blows could be heard at some distance. The unfortunate girl (her companions being gone, we believe, for the police), ran from door to door, her persecutor being in hot pursuit of her: the doors were closed against her, the male inhabitants being absent, and the females afraid to open them, from a dread of her lawless pursuer. Not satisfied with his previous cruelty, when the object of his pursuit literally flung herself against the door of a house to obtain admission, this monster deliberately put the waddie against his chest, and drove it violently against the girl's breast. Five soldiers of the 11the Regt. were spectators of this outrage, but instead of interfering to save the helpless native female, they seemed to regard the whole affair as a rich treat. The Police arrived shortly after, when the ruffian was taken into custody, affecting a degree of drunkenness quite incompatible with the activity of his previous movements.

The South Australian 1846, 23 October, p. 6.

Journal Day 726: Gawler Place, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

Today I make a portrait of the newspaperman James Allen. If words were shades on a palette, which ones should I choose? James Allen is driven and energetic. Industrious, too, and with intermittent gruff touches, visible as he strides along Adelaide's streets with new copies of *The Register* under his arm. Allen always has an abundance of appointments and ideas. He's well-connected, and whichever route he takes he will meet acquaintances on the way. He'll shake hands, offer assurances, make agreements. He'll sell advertising space and compile data, all the while jotting new plans into a little

notebook pulled from the pocket of a smart tweed coat. Notes about shipping, prices of acres and bushels and pounds per head. Then he'll set off, stepping quickly from auction marts to shops with his pipe in his mouth, coat dapper and boots shining. The very picture of a successful Adelaide entrepreneur (Title: *Portrait of a prosperous colonial gentleman making deals*).

You will have known James Allen well. I imagine him — family friend, colleague, Baptist minister, mentor — dropping in to your studio, stepping up to easels to peer close at finished paintings. He'll squint at the colours in the coats of thoroughbreds, the style of harness on horses and gigs, the accents on buildings and the paint on fences. He'll look for excellence in the way Adelaide is presented, and then, being somewhat of an artist himself, he'll make suggestions. As a man who is intent on marketing the new colony of South Australia at every opportunity, he'll direct where to add people in the street, sunshine overhead and shadows underfoot, all to better permeate every scene with charm (Title: *Portrait of James Allen painting the colony in the best light*).

One day, James Allen arrives at your studio and outlines an exciting new idea. He is to commission a number of Adelaide scenes and South Australian vistas to promote the colony in an English lecture tour. His excitement is unbounded, and he will return to England himself to generate enthusiasm and investment, sure that he will soon have emigrants and financers reaching eagerly into their pockets.

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Journal Day 732: Gawler Place, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

The scene is a crowded studio interior, warmed by morning sunshine. James Allen stands in the open doorway, nodding his approval at the number of studies you have pinned to walls and mounted on easels. He moves in close to peer at a drawing of a North Terrace landscape (Figure 20:1). You've worked hard on the composition. The row of cottages and shopfronts on the right-hand side features precise architectural particulars in the windows, fences, and roofline angles. The long street scene leads pleasingly to the impressive double-storey brick building at the far end of the roadway.

The guardhouse on the left-hand side is prominent, with its peaked roof, vertical posts and decorative balustrades drawn in accurately. In the middle ground, there's a portrait of a harness horse with a two-wheeled open carriage, the driver standing to converse with a pedestrian in a fashionable coat. Throughout the whole scene there are other figures loosely outlined at various points, most of which are in the middle ground and crowded around the first building on the right. In addition, there is one particularly well-detailed person in the foreground. This figure is an older man walking with a stick as he makes his way towards the central harness horse. You've become fond of this study of the elderly fellow, based on a street-sweeper you greet on your early morning walks down to the river.

You watch Allen, noticing his expression brighten as he follows the lines of the drawing across the full breadth of the landscape. You notice he appears to spend a large amount of his time examining the soldiers on the left-hand side — first the lone officer in the guardhouse with his weapon upright and then the group of three in the same uniform positioned just below.

Allen nods his approval before circling his fingers around the horse and carriage in the middle ground. "Now Gill! Consider this section. Here is a very nice portrait of the central group. It's clever to have the horse watching something occurring out of frame. It's a device that catches the eye and sets up a feeling of curiosity. I find myself being drawn back to that horse, wondering what he sees over the heads of Her Majesty's soldiers."

Figure 20:1. ST Gill (c. 1845). *North Terrace, Adelaide, looking south-east from Government House guardhouse* (watercolour on paper, 27.4 cm x 39.7 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 12 October 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/north-terrace-adelaide-looking-south-east-from-government-house-guardhouse/24133/

You've found it difficult to fill this scene with what you consider the right sort of citizens. As you've worked on the composition you've felt there's something about the soldiers that throws unease over the rest of the work. And so you've been experimenting, using small sketches of figures made on torn pieces of paper, trials to hold over the draft for effect before committing to final drawings. However, you're now pleased with the soldiers, and particularly so with the most prominent one in the foreground. He has his knee bent in relaxed fashion. He appears less rigid, and therefore less forbidding.

As if following your train of thought, Allen taps the soldiers with the end of his pipe. "These fellows will look good in their red coats," he says. "They look approachable. I believe the painting should show that our forces are here to help in any way that is needed."

You ponder the foreground for a time, then point to the space between the trio of soldiers and the old man with the long walking stick. "I might put something else in this corner. A bold figure. Perhaps a horse, facing inward with its back to the viewer? The shape and size of a horse will fill out this area of the foreground quite well." And then you turn and shuffle through a pile of sketches until you find one of a horse and rider. You hold it up in position to the right of the uniformed men.

Allen considers the sketch. "A fine idea," he says finally. "Perhaps the rider of this new horse should be a mounted police officer. It would offer an additional emphasis on law and order. It is, after all, a scene set close to the Governor's residence, and I imagine His Excellency would be pleased with all the uniformed figures in the composition."

You nod. "It is well known that law and order are most important to the Governor."

Allen points to the right of the composition, currently empty of any points of interest. "And what of this area here? Maybe there could be another horse and rider? Or perhaps a group of women would suit? I think it sends a good message when we can demonstrate that our womenfolk feel safe to walk alone in Adelaide. It would show viewers that our streets are not only secure but welcoming for all. You might consider portraits of society ladies in the latest fashions? Or then again… possibly some of our working women on their way to, or from, domestic duties?

You look on the bench alongside and find a small outline of three women talking together. Each holds a heavy bag over her shoulder, and each is dressed in a full skirt, a long apron, and a thick head scarf. You hold the drawing up to the right-hand side of the picture and squint, imagining bold colours. "These women could provide a real focal point in this area."

But a drawing left exposed on the bench has taken Allen's attention. He picks it up eagerly. "Now Gill, this one offers a good idea for a foreground," he says, positioning it directly over the drawing of the women you hold in place. "This is very agreeable. It's a welcome sight to see a fellow so absorbed in reading the news on the street." He smiles easily as you set aside the drawing of the working women. "Do you know, Gill? I think it wise not to try to compete with the soldiers on the left. A man reading a copy of *The Register* will suit to fill a space but leave the dominance entirely with the soldiers."

You've worked on commissioned pieces and well understand how to ensure the contributions of clients are welcomed. "I have seen fellows reading the news in the street many times. Perhaps at your next visit, the painting will be near complete, and the foreground made to your satisfaction?"

"I look forward to seeing the progress," Allen says.

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THE ABORIGINES: COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE, ADELAIDE

(An article excerpt from M. MOORHOUSE, Protector of Aborigines)

In my last report, I mentioned the bare fact, that the skeletons of five natives had been found about thirty-five miles from Port Lincoln, and that a shepherd in the neighbourhood was suspected of having administered poison. Careful inquiry and attention have been given to this case, and the following appears to be a statement of the facts: — A person named Patrick Dwyer, was in May last, in the service of Mr Mortlock, as shepherd and hutkeeper. It is not usual for one person to perform these two duties; but at times servants were very much in demand in the Port Lincoln district, and Dwyer engaged the double duty, by his wages being increased. He had, for about eight weeks, been in the habit of leaving his hut in the morning, going out with the sheep and returning at sunset in the evening, and day after day leaving his provisions under the insufficient protection of a padlock. The natives soon became acquainted with the unprotected state of his provisions; and had twice broken open the door of his hut and taken away its contents. Dwyer appears to have prepared for a third ransacking of the hut, by mixing arsenic with the flour; and the natives a third time entered and took away the flour. About a mile distant the natives made the flour into damper; eight of them partook of it — five died, and three are still alive.

The Adelaide Times 1849, 5 November, p. 4.

Journal Day 754: Gawler Place, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

I continue my portrait of James Allen. Filled with enthusiasm, he appears at your studio door with new ideas at all times of the day. He brings lists and reads them aloud, flipping through his notebook, calling out suggestions for scenes he thinks will add to the planned tour's appeal. He'll talk of how the vast countryside areas of South Australia, particularly those near the sea, will entice investors with grand plans for pastoral properties. He'll discuss how presentable a cattle-market scene could become under the careful eye of an artist accomplished in the individual depictions of farm animals and describe the thrill of kangaroo hunting in the hills around Adelaide. He'll compose imaginary pictures with agricultural views of ripe wheat swaying in the wind. He'll envisage sketches with grapes bunching on vines, families toiling happily in gardens, workers heaving sacks of wool onto drays. And he'll muse aloud about South Australia's exotic fauna and the explorers' new discoveries. He'll encourage you to include Antipodean flowers and colourful parrots and the otherworldliness of eucalyptus trees in moonlit woodlands (Title: *Portrait of James Allen enthusiastically directing colonial investment*).

Then he'll recall visiting farming villages near Adelaide and flip back through his notebook, finding scribbles of his own and describing how picturesque they could look if made into fully realised landscape paintings. He'll mention Christian congregations doing good works in outlying areas, and courthouses with a robust British justice system ensuring safety for new emigrants (Title: *Portrait of James Allen painting pictures of safe and harmonious South Australian places*).

When he looks up from his jottings and observes your wash studies pinned haphazardly around the studio, he'll stride about making suggestions for colour, muttering about cadmium and amber and bright summer yellow. And how paintings made with sunshine will please eager English audiences tired of the cold and grey and damp.

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JUDICIAL BUTCHERY IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The latest papers from South Australia bring accounts of the trial and execution of two natives. They were found guilty of murder. It appears probable from the evidence that each of them had been concerned in putting a settler to death. We say probably only, because no jury in the country would have returned a verdict of guilty on the evidence produced at either trial. The evidence, moreover, in both cases, consisted chiefly of admissions made by the accused — or said to have been made by them. The distinction is important, inasmuch as the alleged admissions consisted partly of words and partly of manifestations of feeling, which may have been misunderstood. In the face of the public at the trials, it was doubtful whether the interpreter succeeded in making the prisoners understand the nature of the proceedings, and quite certain that neither their language nor their sentiments were made intelligible to the court. "It is," said the Judge, "a painful feature of the present case that, however desirable it may be to make the prisoners thoroughly understand the proceedings, this can only be done through the medium of interpretation, in a broken language, of which the interpreters themselves have only a limited knowledge."

It was clear, however, that they disliked being hanged. "After," says the reporter, "the warrant for their execution had been read by the Sheriff, the unfortunate men were led, or rather dragged upon the scaffold, and placed by the executioner on the fatal drop. They then (not before) seemed quite aware of the fate which was overhanging them. Their countenances, especially that of Yerri-Cha, betrayed every symptom of terror, exhibiting none of that stern determination which despises to show a fear of death — a characteristic of the natives of some countries — but, on the contrary, evincing every symptom of apprehension and dread of dying. Yerri-Cha's limb's quivered, and his whole frame was agitated; while Wang Nucha, though shewing fewer symptoms of trepidation, made violent protestations, in his own language, as we understood him, against being hanged.

The Adelaide Chronicle 1840, 24 March, p. 2.

Journal Day 759: North Terrace, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

I imagine a summer morning in a grassy meadow, part way between the river and North Terrace. You've set up an artist's encampment under the shade of old gums distant from Trinity Church. You draft perspective and the vanishing point of a street scene featuring low buildings and long fences as well-dressed congregation members arrive for a service. You've chosen the site and the angle carefully because Trinity Church, with its impressive tower rising loftily in a near three-quarter view, will form the most prominent part of your composition marrying the earthbound to the heavens (Figure 20:2). You plan on a glorious sky to fill more than half of the landscape vertically and be as dominant as the church tower, evoking, above it, a sense of the sublime (Title: *An artist and his friends observing an Adelaide congregation under a divine sky*).

Nell, Peter, George, and Patience sit alongside you, occasionally remarking upon the scarce number of people arriving and pointing out that the few who do wear clothes that seem too warm for the season. For a time, you all enjoy watching one belligerent child intent on dragging her grandmother away from the church and over to a pony cropping at long grass. Nell has brought bread and cheese for a picnic, and George a basket of figs. Patience peels apples with a knife and arranges them on a platter in a circle, throwing curves of skin to parrots pecking in the scrub nearby. Peter sifts through a wallet of news clippings about the church's current woes. It's a collection a colleague lent him in view of a general excitement about this new commission to paint Trinity Church (Title: *Studies of friends picnicking as they support an artist in his work*).

"I've heard the church is in debt," says Nell after adding wedges of cheese to the picnic platter. "And that the tower could perish for lack of money to repair it. Also that the clock is no longer working. So many people have no idea of the time, and did you hear the latest news? Even the firing of gunshot at midday is now reduced to just once a week. I find it difficult to understand the advanced state of disrepair in a building that is not so very old. I suppose that means it was poorly built in the first place. We do not hear of our fine English church towers threatening to fall."

“Aye, it’s full of grief,” says George. “Building in a new place where the weather and materials are unknown is risky. I’m not surprised to find the tower is in trouble. There’s plenty of masons talking about how it could be repaired. Others say it should be pulled down altogether. Start it over would be best. Aye, it would.”

“Some are uneasy about going into the church at all because of the state of the tower,” says Patience. “I hear people say they fear it will fall onto their heads the moment they set foot in the door. And that God Himself cannot protect them.”

Nell reaches for a slice of apple and holds it up to the light, admiring the colour of rind against flesh. “Perhaps that explains the bad turnout at this morning’s service.”

Peter reorganises papers and then clears his throat before reading a letter to the editor that suggests members of the congregation use their own money to pay off the church’s debt. “Sir — it is a source of pain and grief to many of us to know the position in which this church is placed. Here we have a building, dedicated to the worship and service of God, without a permanent officiating minister, overwhelmed with debt, and in a dilapidated and falling state, and yet there is no plan devised, and no effort made to extricate it from the strange position we find it in.”

Figure 20:2. ST Gill (c. 1845). *Trinity Church, Adelaide* (watercolour on paper, 27.3 cm x 39.0 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 24 September 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/trinity-church-adelaide-1845/24380/

Nell swallows her apple and reaches for a fig. “Does the article say what is owed?”

“Around two thousand pounds,” says Peter. “And it seems most is for interest.”

“Well, that sounds very grim,” says Nell. “Tom? I suppose I needn’t ask if the perilous position of the church, and its tower, will form any part of your picture of it?”

“It might explain the lack of folk arriving for the service,” says George.

You stop drawing and look at the others. “I believe the purpose of my painting, when it is shown in England, will be rather the opposite. It needs to show that South Australia is a God-fearing place, welcoming for all, whether church-going or not. And that our buildings are in good repair and not threatening to fall on us.”

“You had better not show any cracks in the tower on the painting then,” says Patience.

“No, indeed,” says Peter. “Tom badly needs commissions, and if it means painting over the cracks, there will be no cracks.”

“There is often more in Tom’s paintings than meets the eye,” says Nell. “I’m sure all of the people who come to lectures at home will believe in the strength of Trinity Church in Adelaide by the time Tom has finished with it.”

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FLOGGING A NATIVE

Yesterday, at noon, Monitya, the native man who was sentenced at the late Criminal Sessions to one month's imprisonment and a Public whipping for stealing a watch, the property of Mr Peter Cook, at Thebarton, underwent the latter part of his punishment at a triangle erected in front of the jail. Several hundred persons were present, among whom we regretted to observe, a considerable proportion of women. The culprit had, on different occasions during the term of his imprisonment, been warned of his approaching castigation, by Mr Moorhouse the Protector of the Aborigines, and Mr Ashton; but, on arriving at the place of punishment, although his countenance gave certain evidence that he knew what was about to take place, a feeling of surprise, at beholding the strong party of mounted and foot police and the concourse of people assembled, appeared for the moment to be predominant. C. B. Newenham, Esq., the Sheriff, Mr Ashton, and Mr Moorhouse, were in attendance; and Monitya, having been secured to the triangle, received fifty lashes of a cat-o'-nine-tails, which he bore with considerable fortitude. The operator then gave him some water, dipped from a bucket provided for the occasion, of which the prisoner partook with eagerness. At this time his back presented no appearance of injury or suffering; the large and hard excrescences, caused by the process of tattooing, afforded him a protection from the lash almost equal to a coat of leather. At the command of the Sheriff, twenty-five more lashes were administered, making in all seventy-five, after which he was conducted away by two of his tribe. Our reporter had subsequently an opportunity of seeing Monitya's back, and described the apparent effect of the whipping as one which, although it cannot by any means be called cruel, is, nevertheless, likely to produce a lasting impression upon the mind of the unfortunate culprit, if not upon his native companions who witnessed the infliction. A considerable number of the aborigines of both sexes were present.

The prevalent feeling amongst the white portion of the spectators appeared to be that although the punishment of flogging per se savours of barbarism and revenge, in instances like the present it is likely to be far more effectual in the prevention of crime than any other penal chastisement that could be adopted. We would suggest, however, should its application be again necessary, that the natives, to whom either as a punishment or a warning it can be impressive, should alone be present. We think even the presence of the Protector might be dispensed with on such occasions as it is by no means clear that his interference is rightly understood or can be properly appreciated by the natives.

The South Australian Register 1842, 6 August, p. 2.

Journal Day 771: Adelaide Gaol, Trinity Church, North Terrace, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

James Allen, refining the list of commissions for the promotional tour to England, visits the studio. There is a preliminary drawing of the Trinity Church, North Terrace landscape mounted to the easel. You've made detailed outlines of buildings and fences and added shadow to some of the architectural features. You're now ready to add thin base colour washes to the large areas. Alongside, pinned to the frame of the easel, are tonal experiments for the great sky you've planned overhead. You've composed the Trinity Church drawing based on the sketches completed at the Sunday morning picnic and you're feeling pleased with it, particularly with a fellow in the foreground on the right-hand side who walks his dog away from the church. The others asked about it, given that the man is walking away from the service. You've defended the placement as employing a sense of realism and also on the basis of the character's strength and how he fills out the corner position, making the eye move first to the church and then around and around again in a circular sort of way (Title: *Portrait of an artist explaining the refinements of a composition and how to trap the viewer's eye within the picture plane*).

Allen leans in to examine the drawing before stepping back, a frown creasing his forehead. Finally, he waves one hand at the foreground. "This area looks a little empty, doesn't it, Gill? Where are all the parishioners?"

"I drew all the members of the congregation as they arrived on the Sunday morning, in the time before the service began. It was a slow morning. You can see the group at the entrance to the church?" You point to the middle ground, to a small number of people loosely defined in light pencil. The figures await colour.

Allen rocks a little on his heels. "We will need more worshippers. There should be quite a few more people well-dressed in their Sunday best."

You stand next to Allen and peer in close at the composition, thinking of the church building and all you've heard of it since beginning the work. "As I understand it, people are fearful of the state of the tower, and many stay away from the services."

“That will all be resolved very soon,” says Allen, bristling. “It need not bother us now, nor show in the painting. But as this picture stands, we need more worshippers.”

“Then more worshippers you shall have. I aim to please.”

“I’m delighted to hear it,” says Allen.

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Journal Day 784: Hindley Street, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

You work hard to fulfil the James Allen commissions and he is pleased with the *Hindley Street, Adelaide, looking west* painting (Figure 20:3). Allen has made no secret of the fact that he prefers the Adelaide scenes to look crowded and to show cheery folk getting along together as they go about their daily affairs. He’s fond of precision in the architecture, too, and of showcasing the workmanship of the Adelaide artisans and tradesmen. In *Hindley Street, Adelaide, looking west*, you’ve put a lot of time into the columns of the big Auction Mart on the right-hand side. And the lighting, too (Title: *Bright Antipodean sunshine colours the façade of the Auction Mart building*).

When I look at the architecture and the well-dressed gents milling about on the steps of the Auction Mart, I become interested in their stories. I read auction advertisements in the old newspapers, trying to find out what all those folks might hope to secure in the next big sale. There are a great many fascinating items listed. Scores of pairs of moleskin trousers in white and drab are advertised for sale in one lot, all manner of mustards, sauces, cheeses, and coffee in very large volumes in the next. Keg upon keg of chisel-pointed nails and tools. Then gunny bags and shovels and kettles. And I wonder, which of the fellows in your gathering at the Auction Mart might plan to bid for coir bags and shoe-threads by the hundredweight? Or comfit? Which for sail twine and a polished cedar counter?

I like to picture you seated outdoors for long pleasant hours making preliminary studies of *Hindley Street, Adelaide, looking west*. Perhaps you sit perched on a small folding stool in the centre of the roadway, with Jack lying contentedly alongside as the traffic passes by, folks commenting favourably

on your sketches (Title: *Portrait of a popular artist on location drawing a crowd*). You will have spent time planning the picture before committing to a specific view, pacing the intersection and looking into the distance before choosing one to draw from. You will have visualised brushstrokes and tints and shades and looked for appealing features in buildings and then decided which side of the street to show for greater effect. And when you settled upon the decision that the classic columns of the Auction Mart would show bustling Hindley Street to best effect, you will have positioned your artist's stool in just the right place in the sun, and then made perspective lines, determined a vanishing point, and put pencil to paper in swift, certain strokes. You will have stared long into the distance, committing to memory the way the buildings soften into the blue of the horizon (Title: *Portrait of an artist contemplating the length of a streetscape*).

Do you know what I always think of when I look at this painting? It's that most of the people — at least, those not intent on attending the next auction — seem to have somewhere important to go. They stand tall in their drays and rally their bullocks. They rein their horses and steer traps to the far end of the street, away from where you're working. They call out greetings to each other, and then pass by with what appears to be a single-minded focus. One of the most intriguing things about *Hindley Street, Adelaide, looking west* is that at the moment you've chosen to depict, almost everyone in the street is turned away from you. They go west, where the sky is bleak.

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Figure 20:3. ST Gill (c. 1845). *Hindley Street, Adelaide, looking west from King William Street* (watercolour on paper, 27.3 cm x 39.8 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 14 October 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/hindley-street-adelaide-looking-west-from-king-william-street/24135/

EXECUTION OF THE NATIVE

On Saturday morning the sentence of the law was carried into effect upon the native Wira Maldira, for murder, but to Douglas, the warrant for commutation of punishment to transportation for life was read by the Sheriff. The native had been crying during the whole night, which he had passed with four other blacks. He so far braced his nerves as to show the white men little emotion, beyond an evident paleness, and an occasional involuntary tremor. To the operation of pinioning, he submitted with the slightest resistance and ascended the scaffold as firmly as the bandage permitted him. Happily for South Australia, we do not require a permanent hangman; and the man who made his debut on this occasion was exceedingly nervous; but although he executed his revolting duty in a rather bungling way, the poor native seemed to suffer very little: his shoulders and breast heaved convulsively for a minute and a half, and all was over. He had begged that the blacks should carry him to his grave, and no white men should be allowed to touch him after death. This request was strictly complied with. They received him in their arms, placed him in the coffin, and buried him in the gaol-yard by the side of the other murderers.

The South Australian Register 1845, 2 April, p. 3.

Journal Day 789: Hindley Street, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill

c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

One fine afternoon, a stout woman pauses in the street to adjust the tie on her bonnet and agrees to stand for a portrait (Figure 20:4, detail). She says, no matter, her small basket of goods is light, and it's no trouble for her to hold it for a while as you draw. And so you begin to sketch her clothing and then other small refinements, particularly her basket and the set of the long scarf around her shoulders. You're taken with the range of blue tones in her dress, and the highlights and shadows that colour her serviceable apron. The woman gazes over your head to the east, standing upright but resting one hip in relaxed fashion, as if she is suddenly gladdened that someone has given her permission to stand perfectly still and stare into the distance.

As you work, you become curious about the whip she holds in her right hand and think of asking about where it was made. But in the end you're too taken with capturing the contrasts in her clothing. The two of you converse quietly together, murmuring of other things. She talks of children, and says that all three of hers lie in a Swindon graveyard and that she fears she will never have a chance to visit them again. She murmurs of a growing anxiety that there will be no-one left to lay flowers or take care of the graves (Title: *Portrait of a mother uneasy about the distant graves of her children*).

You speak for a while of your two young brothers who perished in a smallpox outbreak, now lying in a Saltash cemetery, and of how you visit your mother and younger sister in the rough graveyard on the West Terrace. You tell of how each lived less than a year after arrival in Adelaide, and that you fear they will never have marked graves.

When you finish the portrait studies, you decide that you like the way the woman is content to turn her back to the bustle of Hindley Street. There's a singularity about it that appeals to you. Why not one single-minded person who is prepared to turn away from everyone else?

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Figure 20:3 (detail). ST Gill (c. 1845). *Hindley Street, Adelaide, looking west from King William Street* (watercolour on paper, 27.3 cm x 39.8 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 14 October 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/hindley-street-adelaide-looking-west-from-king-william-street/24135/

Journal Day 791: Hindley Street, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

One sunny day, George helps you with a drawing experiment to help you understand the passage of the Antipodean sun and the movement of shade on the soil. You begin at midday. George stands on a section of roadway, and you draw a careful outline of his shadow in the dirt. He stands similarly positioned every quarter hour for the whole afternoon as you trace his shadow, making a corresponding, accurate diagram in your sketchbook with notes alongside. You're interested in the way shadow seeps and colours the dust and cracks in the road. There are few people about, but when anyone approaches, you and George stand over your experiment, protecting it from the wheel-marks of drays and the scuff of foot traffic.

As you wait for the minutes to pass until the next drawing, you stare at the surface of the road and envision the colours and textures that you will make on your palette in the studio, particularly the places where shadow dips into ruts and leaches over the clumps and sods that wheels and horses have made. You think of umber and charcoal added sparingly, then touches of sodden violet and trace hints of a dirty indigo blue you've used to muddy shadows in the past.

You pick up a handful of the dust and let it run through your right hand and into the palm of your left, thumbing it into granules. You put handfuls into your pocket and think not only of the brilliant colours and shine within — sienna, amber, ochre, glint — but of stirring grains into paint powders and water. And of laying them with a brush to make a line of roadway unfurling onto white paper in a ribbon of grit.

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Journal Day 799: Gawler Place, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

In 1845, the commissioned works for the English tour are nearly complete and mounted in your studio awaiting James Allen's final assessment. I picture you sitting in the middle of the room anticipating his

comments, the new day's sun streaming through the open doorway and playing over the paintings pinned to easels and walls (Title: *Morning light favours the artist and his completed works*).

I often think of your various Adelaide studios, and how you were hounded for rent by landlords and forced to move often. It's the rustic furniture pieces and odd collectibles that always complete my image and make each studio space, however humble, truly yours. The easels are rosewood, notched and stained, the tables scratched, worn, and mended. Rough-hewn stools sit near the benches and jumbled, mismatched jars stand on shelves. The corner spaces are crowded too, most with large found objects that George especially likes to bring to the studio at the end of his working day. Here's a broken barrow wheel leaning against an orphaned table leg. There a seal skin stretched wide on a wall. Nearby, odd strappings of harness and lengths of splintered picture frames rescued from a fire. By the stove is your collection of sagging chairs, all with shredded upholstery and loose threads.

In my picture of the sunny morning studio with paintings ready for inspection, James Allen sits on one of your fireside chairs. He drums his fingers against his pipe as he reads aloud from a notebook. He's been talking of his plans to take a live kangaroo to England to generate interest and is now firming up a definitive list of final works. He mutters of emu hunts and stringybark forests, of Albert Town and new-made gardens, mine workings and ships from myriad ports berthed at Port Adelaide. As ever, Allen's voice rises enthusiastically as he flicks through his little book, talking of progress and important matters yet to be achieved (Title: *Portrait of a busy colonial gent confirming details of a promotional tour*).

Figure 20:4. ST Gill (c. 1845). *Rundle Street, Adelaide* (watercolour on paper, 27.3 cm x 40.5 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed October 14 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/rundle-street-adelaide/24139/

Allen rises from his chair and makes his way to a sketch of the meeting of hunting hounds at Dry Creek, then gazes for a time at a moon-soaked scene of Mount Lofty. He moves to an easel by the doorway where he stops to peer at a partially coloured drawing of *Rundle Street* (Figure 20:5). It shows a long and busy roadway, and it has thin, base stain washes and construction details added to some of the more prominent buildings. Allen is pleased to see that you've filled the streetscape with the right sorts of folk. There are soldiers on duty, men riding thoroughbreds, workers cracking whips and others hefting bags onto drays. There are ladies picking up fashionable skirts as they step into stores and gentlemen conversing on porticos, their canes rapping against boards to strengthen their opinions. In the foreground, a small group of working women shoulders heavy sacks, and to their left a highly detailed pencil portrait of two young society ladies awaits colour. The two women are fashionably dressed, and each holds a parasol aloft, oblivious to a worker with a tray of bottles set to pass behind them.

Allen nudges his finger at the two women in their full skirts and fitted bodices. He wonders aloud at their prominence in the composition, frowning and shaking his head. After some deliberation, he makes up his mind and speaks with great emphasis. "What do you say, Gill, to the idea of replacing these ladies with a portrait of two gentlemen, instead?" He points his pipe a little to the right. "There are already three women in the foreground of this picture. It scarcely seems necessary to have any more."

He turns to look at you. "Perhaps the two of us would look very fine in the centre of this picture? Think of it! A successful businessman with an eminent working artist conversing together in a busy street. What could be better to show the potential of our fair new city to investors? And those who are almost ready to commit to emigrating, who need only a small amount of encouragement to purchase their passage?"

You find a near-suitable sketch of two gentleman and hold it directly over the drawing of the stylish young women in the centre foreground.

"A much better composition," says Allen and then he makes his way to an open space in the studio and stands to attention, smoothing the lapels of his checked tweed coat. "I have some small amount of time to pose for you."

Allen's intention is clear, and so you take up your sketchbook and pencil, settling yourself on a stool opposite. "Perhaps if you were to read from a newspaper, I would be able to sketch a few different views and choose the most suitable as I work them into the composition?"

"An admirable idea," says Allen, unfolding a copy of *The Register* and posing himself expertly, hat tipped forward and riding whip tucked under his right arm (Figure 20:5, detail).

Figure 20:4 (detail). ST Gill (c. 1845). *Rundle Street, Adelaide* (watercolour on paper, 27.3 cm x 40.5 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed October 14 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/rundle-street-adelaide/24139/

When all the works for the tour are completed to Allen's satisfaction, I like to think of him, with his associates, arriving at the studio to pack them for the journey across the sea to England, each painting protectively wrapped and placed in a large trunk with blankets layered between them. Men load the trunk onto a dray, strap it tightly and set off down the roads and tracks to the ship at Port Adelaide.

You sit for a time at your fire, whiskey in hand, struck by the sudden emptiness of the studio, thinking of all the time each work has taken to plan and execute and of how you will never see your Adelaide scenes again. Thinking, too, of the long journey each will take to England, and of all the folks who will come to view them, surely murmuring appreciatively about the sunny beauty of South Australia and all the harmony of the fine new colony.

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CHAPTER 21

Envelope labelled:

Progress of discovery —
Horrocks Expedition to the North-West.

Contains:

- Letters, journal entries and sketches addressed to ST Gill.
- Clipping of a newspaper article and a diary entry.

ST Gill artwork:

- *Looking SW from table land, August 22nd, 1846.*
- *Waterplace, Depot Creek*.
- *Salt lake looking SW September 1st.*
- *Invalid's tent, salt lake 75 miles north-west of Mount Arden.*
- *Return of invalid.*

MR HORROCKS'S EXPEDITION

(Excerpt)
We do not say Mr Horrocks's projected expedition because we believe that the characteristic energy of South Australians has settled it as a matter determined on. We have no doubt that our old bushman will start in a few days with a well-appointed and competent party. The exploration of the parts of the colony to which he will direct his course is an object too important to be neglected by the many amongst us who are requiring pasture lands, and equally to those who have the control of capital destined to be sunk into the earth, that like the anglers bait it may fructify and drag up more. But little is required to complete his outfit; he has done the greater part himself, and those for whose benefit he offers gratuitously to work are doing the rest.

Mr Horrocks is to be accompanied by Mr Theakstone, the able coadjutor of the late Mr Darke, and by our talented artist Mr Gill, a gentleman of whom, as of true South Australian breed, the colony has a right to be proud. It was only the other day that we had the opportunity of seeing some of his recent drawings of bush scenery. They are the most vivid and lifelike of any that have been before presented to us. He gives the true idea of South Australian scenery — nothing is exaggerated, nor any point lost. His sketches of the yet unknown districts he is to visit will be invaluable. He goes only as an amateur for the purpose of filling his notebook. We shall have a rich treat on his return.

The South Australian Register 1846, 4 July, p. 2.

Journal Day 804: John Horrocks's cottage, Penwortham, Ngadjuri Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

In the late winter of 1846, the longed-for adventure to the unknown beckons. You feel a sense of liberation in being able to leave the demanding nature of commissions behind, thrilled instead at the prospect of mounting up next to your friend John Horrocks, himself keen to live a stirring life, and to set off on an expedition north-west in search of new pastoral regions. It's exciting to read news of

explorations and discoveries via first-hand reports and letters in the papers, all of these fuelling your desire to see uncharted places for yourself (Title: *Portrait of an artist yearning for new challenges*). There are ongoing reports of Aboriginal and settler retaliations, the landscapes treacherous as far as news can reach. It must have been reassuring to join an expedition where you would travel with someone you know well, a stout-hearted fellow of your own age and of like mind, a friend you could trust unreservedly.

I imagine you will have been pleased at the party's small scale and the planning details — most particularly, the pledge to travel lightly with a small number of men: John Theakston, an intrepid explorer noted for extricating another group from an expedition near Port Lincoln after Aboriginal warriors killed his comrade, John Darke; Bernard Kilroy, labourer, cook and long in Horrocks's employ; William Garlick, in charge of equipment; and Jimmy Moorhouse, a young Aboriginal fellow responsible for the horses and livestock, including 'Harry' the camel.

It is plain to see that Horrocks — brave, intelligent, and well-travelled throughout Europe in his youth — would make a fine expedition leader, strategising for almost every conceivable eventuality. Easy to envision, too, that he would place great value on the importance of making detailed visual records of new things discovered, including birds, flora, insects, and animals. I like to think of you packing to depart, laying out your possessions and carefully arranging art materials into saddlebags. Sketchbooks, paper sheets, a notebook and diary, pencils, knives, an eyeglass, and brushes of different sizes. Rags meticulously folded and tucked away. Flasks, a compass, and pans of colour (Title: *Carefully stowing artist's materials for an exploratory expedition into remote places*).

I picture a boisterous evening in a lively tavern on the night before your departure. You celebrate with your friends and a wide circle of acquaintances, all of whom wish you well on your adventure (Title: *Celebrating the departing artist, view 1*). After the tavern, I imagine you in your studio with Nell, Peter, George, and Patience in an intimate, heartfelt farewell. It being August, a fire warms the room and candles flick patterns onto the ceiling and walls. Your friends sit at the stove with whiskeys in hand, sharing your excitement, glancing around the room at easels and benches and unfinished works tidied and awaiting your return (Title: *Celebrating the departing artist, view 2*).

And so, the Horrocks Expedition to the North-West departs with great fanfare. The first weeks are productive in terms of your work as you capture immense scenes and strange new landscapes with watercolour on paper. In contrast, Horrocks's reports are gloomy, remarking on the lack of water, feed, and possibilities for hopeful pastoralists. Then, suddenly and shockingly, it all ends in one inauspicious moment — wretched, as you describe it later.

It is some comfort to discover your diary entries printed in the newspapers shortly after your return. But

by the time they are published everyone in Adelaide knows of the disastrous turn the expedition has taken. Many will remark that some of your most carefully nuanced paintings of the expedition, composed with tenderness, were so because of the long days and nights you spent with John Horrocks laid out in his tent, cast in agony, waiting for help to arrive and taking small comfort in the best way you know, your fingers tightened round a paintbrush, pouring hope, colour, and anxiety onto page after page.

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Journal Day 812: Horrocks Pass, Wilmington, Ngadjuri Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

August 22nd,1846: the day you made the tableland painting (Figure 21:1). I imagine you standing somewhere central in that great wide expanse contemplating the surrounding sweep of stunted scrub and the limitless blue grey and red earth colours blurring into the distance (Title: *Portrait of an artist overwhelmed by his surroundings*).

Figure 21:1 ST Gill (c. 1846). *Looking SW from table land, August 22nd, 1846* (watercolour on paper, 18.1 cm x 30.7 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 21 September 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/looking-sw-from-table-land-august-22nd/22924/

I like to picture you and Horrocks sitting quietly, taking it all in, perhaps leaning up against a crag of rock. The ride has been fatiguing for horse and rider, so for a time the pair of you are still, amazed at the enormity of the landscape. Horrocks takes up his eyeglass and stares at the spread of scrub softening into the smudge of the horizon. Alongside, you make progress on the picture, your palette spread out next to you. The day is blindingly hot, and you steel yourself to mix colour and work as swiftly as you can before the paper's damp spread dries too quickly. You're anxious about using up your flask, but the scene needs water; without it, the painting will not work (Title: *Portrait of an artist working against the elements*).

When you are back in camp, you'll write about the day of hard trekking in your diary, capturing the beginning and end of a fine August day, simple words to bookend the timelessness of the painting itself:

> Saturday, 22nd — Mr. Horrocks and I left on horseback for the tableland; travelled over the plain to a low scrub, constantly meeting with the track of the kangaroo and emu as well as wallaby; crossed the neck of the Lake dry, but found the sand very soft in places. After reaching the other side crossed many sand ridges covered with dwarfish, dry, dusty, scrub, had ridden a considerable way in search of feed and water with no success… (Bowden 1971, p. 115).

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Journal Day 813: Horrocks Pass, Wilmington, Ngadjuri Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

Day after day of the Horrocks Expedition to the North-West grinds slowly through relentless arid plains with you recording what you see on paper and in your diary. When the daily chores are done and the landscape offers inspiration, I can picture you clambering onto a rocky ridge to make a long view of the camp (Figure 21:2). Here is a vast, scenic gorge made for the careful brushwork of an artist with time on his hands and his favourite tools in his fingers. Great heights and contrasts of light and shade, thick slabs of rock and umber shale in the foreground, the lean of a stately old tree leading the eye from the roots to the peaks, and in the distance, the great roll of the landscape pushing on to the horizon. You sit

for all the time it needs to give precision to rocks and trees and the sandy creek bed made soft with buff and shadow. Last of all you add your companions with the camel and Jimmy in the foreground, the naivety of the figures serving to highlight the height and splendor of the landscape at Depot Creek.

On the last days of August, you make entries into your diary about small side treks planned away from base camp with you and Horrocks and the camel, just days before disaster, with nothing to foreshadow it:

> Wednesday, 26th — Removed the stores from the dray into the tent, which in our absence will occupy the space we shall not require. Thursday, 27th — Mr. Horrocks and one of the men went to the top of the range, to take the right bearings of the rising land north-west. Returned, and took the sun, when finding the day too advanced to enable him to prepare in time for leaving will make the necessary arrangements for a start early in the morning. Have packed my apparatus for the journey contemplated to-morrow. Saturday, 29th — Moved at half-past eight. Travelled 15 miles and halted that night at the Stoney Pass in the Table Ranges. Watched until the moon set. Weather windy and cool with some rain (Bowden 1971, p. 116).

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Figure 21:2 ST Gill (c. 1846). *Waterplace, Depot Creek, August 27th* (watercolour on paper, 19.0 cm x 31.3 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 12 September 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134371955/view

Journal Day 817: Horrocks Pass, Wilmington, Ngadjuri Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

I picture it like this. Kilroy walks ahead of you and Horrocks, who leads Harry the camel. The day is hot, the sky clear, the sun below the afternoon's mid-point. There is little noise to break the silence of the scrub surrounding you. Walking is difficult in the blue-grey salt-bush landscape with areas of deep sand making the going heavy underfoot. Sometimes the foliage is profuse and Kilroy, bent to the task of shoving his way through the dense growth, disappears out of sight. But then he straightens up suddenly and holds up his hand in a gesture of silence.

Horrocks drops Harry's lead and steps forward, speaking low. "What can you see?"

Kilroy replies softly. "It's a beautiful bird. You should take it for your collection. It really is a fine specimen." He keeps his eyes strained to the broken roots of a twisted mulga tree a little ahead.

Horrocks turns and steps back to Harry, motions you to stay quiet, and asks the camel to kneel. Then he reaches toward his shotgun, hanging from the pack saddle —

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Figure 21:3. ST Gill. *Salt Lake looking SW September 1st* (watercolour on paper, 19.0 cm x 31.0 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 24 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134371791/view

PROGRESS OF DISCOVERY — EXPEDITION TO THE NORTH-WEST

(Excerpt from the diary of ST Gill kept on the Horrocks Expedition)
Tuesday, September 1st — Moved at half-past eight and continued walking up to twelve o'clock when we came on to a large lake, with a little water in it, the drainage of the country round. Stopped to test the quality of the water but found it very salt. I sketched the lake, and we went on intending to round the north end before camping. Had walked about one hour when Kilroy, the man, called Mr. H's attention to a bird which he saw in some scrub just before us; we stopped for Mr. H. to prepare to shoot it. The camel knelt down for me to get the shot-belt, while Mr. H. drew his charge of slugs close by; the beast lurched with his load on the near side, on which we stood, when the saddle hove down on the hammers of the gun; on its slipping off, the right-hand barrel, with the ramrod in it, went off, taking off the middle finger of Mr H's right hand and lodged the charge in his left cheek. He instantly fell back bleeding copiously. We succeeded in staunching the blood with our handkerchiefs, and after cutting off a part of the finger which hung slightly on, managed to dress it with such stuff as we had brought in case of spear wounds, treating the face in the same way; we laid him down, and fixed the tent; after getting him in, Kilroy started back to the depot the same evening, leaving me in charge of Mr. H. until relief arrived. Soon after Kilroy had left Mr. H. rallied sufficiently to speak and convinced me that his brain was not affected. We had, of course, a wretched night of it.

The South Australian Gazette 1846, 10 October, p. 4.

Journal Day 820: Near Hawker, Lake Torrens, Banggarla Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

The scene is a flat landscape with a startling dawn sky. You make the painting of the *Invalid's tent* (Figure 21:4) on a morning with an intense sunrise tinging the earth, horizon, and leafy scrub foreground in vibrant rose hues. And yet… this masterly background of natural splendor only serves to highlight the sense of awkwardness and the naivety in the pose you have made for yourself, the anxious attendant

outside the tent, dog at your feet, camel in the background. The quick carelessness of your own figure, made without a model to observe for proportions, shows in the odd set of the shoulders and elbows and heightens the portrait's sense of despair. All is painted, however, with the most delicate of brushwork, and there is a wealth of detail in the detritus of the makeshift field hospital alongside the tent. Protective blankets, water in a barrel, a towel so the patient can drink. A tin mug, tea ready, a fire burning. The portrait of Horrocks's worn boots is made poignant by the sense of disquietude each tender brush stroke imbues into the umber-brown leather.

You make notes in the diary for early September in the first days after the accident:

> Wednesday 2nd — Mr. H. appears still better. Through the night I kept his lips constantly moistened and he swallowed a little cold water, which I got into his mouth by squeezing it from the end of a towel; this morning he took some lukewarm tea in the same way. I continued to bathe his forehead and face in warm water, and about eleven o'clock he slept a little. I am cheered by the prospect of his recovery. In the evening he sat up, supported for a few minutes, but passed a very restless night (Bowden 1971, p. 117).

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Figure 21:4. ST Gill (c. 1846). *Invalid's tent, salt lake 75 miles north west of Mount Arden* (watercolour on paper, 21.4 cm x 34.2 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 12 September 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/invalids-tent-salt-lake-75-miles-north-west-of-mount-arden/24272/

Journal Day 820: Near Hawker, Lake Torrens, Banggarla Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

Theakston and Kilroy return with horses and the small hospital camp is quickly dismantled. You and the men make your way as gently as you can through thick scrub, stopping whenever the movement becomes too much for Horrocks. In *Return of invalid* (Figure 21:5) he is no longer the intrepid explorer you've known throughout the early parts of the journey, but instead becomes a diminuitive figure surrounded by a landscape that has defeated the expedition. Horrocks, a crude dark bandage strapping his cheek, clutches awkwardly at one rein with his left hand. Without models for correct position and musculature, it is a simple rendering. Yet the pain — that of artist and victim — shows in the portrait. Behind, Theakston and Kilroy lead the extra horse and the camel through the scrub, the landscape that has beaten them nearly engulfing them all. The dry foliage seems to close behind them as they pass, shutting out the unwelcome interlopers.

Figure 21:5. ST Gill (c. 1846). *Return of invalid* (watercolour on paper, traces of pencil, 18.4 cm x 30.3 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 21 October 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/return-of-invalid/24273/

In your diary, you describe the day of rescue in early September as Theakston and Kilroy arrive with horses:

> Friday, 4th — Mr. H. slept well towards morning. I got him some tea, and after bathing his eye and cheek left him composed and went about two miles to the northward to look for water; not finding any, returned, and found him calling me. Soon after, at his urgent request, managed to dress him and remove him from the tent to walk a little in the open air; was out of bed about half an hour, when he again laid down and I applied the 3rd poultice to his check, after which he sat up, supported, for some time. About half-past one in the afternoon Mr. Theakston and Kilroy arrived on horseback which was a great relief to Mr. H. and myself. We prepared some arrowroot which Mr. Horrocks partook of, and in half an hour were on our way back. Rode five miles and camped the night after shaving Mr. Horrocks and dressing his wounds (Bowden 1971, p. 117).

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DEATH OF MR HORROCKS

We deeply regret to announce the death of Mr John Horrocks on Wednesday week last, from the effects of the wounds he had received, and the exhaustion consequent upon his long journey from Mount Arden to his late residence at Penwortham. We are promised, in time for next week, by Mr Gill, the artist, full details of the expedition, which will, no doubt, be read with interest. Mr Gill is at present in the country, completing the sketches made during the expedition — with the view, we hope, of submitting them to the public when finished.

The South Australian Gazette 1846, 3 October, p. 3.

Journal Day 832: Penwortham Cemetery, Ngadjuri Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill

c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

I've composed a picture of Horrocks's burial at the Penwortham Cemetery. It's a scene that Horrocks outlined in his last hours and there are clear instructions to follow. To these, I've added my own depth and shadow.

With no local clergyman at Penwortham, a funeral service of the Church of England is led by Horrocks's good friend John Jacobs. It's a late spring afternoon, sunny and mild, and there are around four dozen friends and villagers gathered to grieve. Horrocks's brother, too. Overhead, parrots shriek in the tall old gums and leaves shift in a breeze. Nearby the cemetery, the pastures are bright with spring growth and budding wildflowers dot the surrounding landscape. Within, the burial site follows the English tradition for an explorer, with the grave aligned on a north-south axis. Mourners, dressed in black, gather around the grave and bow their heads.

When the hymns are sung and the last of the prayers recited, Horrocks's final instructions are undertaken. He has directed that the camel, Harry, be put down directly after his own burial, not as an act of revenge but because Horrocks feared he might become notorious and then be mistreated because of the accident. A friend, Gleeson, has agreed to complete the task, and as young Jimmy Moorhouse steps forward with Harry Gleeson raises his gun and fires into the camel's body. But Gleeson is shaking, and the shot misses the vital organs, resulting in Harry leaping forward in pain and biting savagely at Jimmy's head. A local man, Darmody, fires a single bullet into Harry's heart, killing him instantly. Some of the mourners tend Jimmy's wounds, and the first camel to join a South Australian exploration party is buried below a nearby gumtree.

At the end of a long September day, a final entry in your diary:

> Thursday, 24th — Mr H. was carried to his grave by the villagers, followed by his bereaved brother, friends, and the party he had command of in the wilds, and with whom he was a general favourite. His funeral took place about half past five o'clock, in the grounds set apart for a burial place, to be connected with the church, which was about to be erected at Penwortham and which, in all probability, would have been commenced on his return from the expedition, had not this fearful accident occurred (Bowden 1971, p. 119).

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CHAPTER 22

Envelope labelled:

Property extensively and profitably worked.

Contains:

- A letter addressed to ST Gill.
- Clipping of a newspaper article.

ST Gill artwork:

- *Kapunda mine.*
- *Patent Copper Company's smelting works and the Burra Burra mine.*
- *Neales's stopes, Burra Burra mine, April 12th 1847.*

THE KAPUNDA

We are happy to learn, from undoubted authority, that the proprietors of the Kapunda Mine are about to be compensated for the spirited manner in which they have persevered in carrying out the plans of their talented Mine Agent, to place that property in an efficient state for being extensively and, we trust, profitably worked. On Friday last the main lode was cut at the end of the 30-fathom cross-cut, driving eastward from the engine-shaft, at 26 fathoms from that shaft. The lode, when cut, is about three feet and a half big, and contains a large proportion of black and grey sulphuret of copper, with a fine kindly spar, such as miners like to see. The lode, from what has been seen of it, is estimated to produce six tons of dressed ore per fathom, of 30 per cent produce. The dip of the lode is 8 feet per fathom. The regularity with which this mine and that of the Reedy Creek are found to descend in-depth, proves sufficiently the important fact, that mines in this country are governed by the same great law of nature that regulates them elsewhere, and that our adventurers ought not to fear the expense of following down well-defined lodes, although they may be unproductive near the surface.

We are informed that the engine and machinery lately erected at the Kapunda are almost perfect and complete, and fully sufficient to carry the workings down to 60, or even 80 fathoms, if there is not a greater increase of water than may be anticipated. We very sincerely congratulate Capt. Bagot, the principal proprietor on these results. No-one more eminently deserves success.

The South Australian Gazette and Mining Journal 1848, 9 September, p. 3.

Journal Day 841: Near Burra, Ngadjuri Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill

c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

The wheels of industry turn quickly in the new colony. Local newspapers fill up with articles and letters to editors about the immense wealth to be found beneath South Australia's soil. Influential men — many business-focused with cool heads, others risk-takers eager to set off with mining equipment in hand — gather in elegant Adelaide drawing rooms putting investment proposals together (Title: *Wealthy emigrant gentlemen plotting how best to secure the riches of the Antipodean soil for themselves*).

Overseas, emigrants and speculators, alerted to the excitement, purchase passage on ships, hastening to take advantage of opportunities in the unsullied southern land.

As you work on landscapes in the studio, Peter is eager to read aloud from the papers about South Australia's progress. "Nothing throws *The Sydney Herald* into such hysterics as a favourable announcement of mining progress in South Australia," he says. "As soon as a glowing Burra dividend is declared the people of Sydney begin to scream themselves into a fit of envy."

You undertake excursions to Kapunda and Burra Burra to produce sketches and paintings above ground and under it as well. I see in these paintings a bleakness of thought and a scarring of the earth layered with each sweep of your brush. Dull in tone, the infrastructure of the *Kapunda mine* (Figure 22:1) sits awkwardly on the landscape, while all around are hints of ruination. Thirsty trees reach for the sky, enveloped in a bleak light. The middle ground gum with the Aboriginal group alongside has a trunk made so crooked that it threatens to topple onto the timber structure beneath. Fallen branches fill the left-hand side foreground alongside workmen's rubbish and their dirt-coloured tools. A scythe, discarded bottles, and barren rocks combine to settle an ugliness over the landscape. Even the bullock team stands listless while the driver swings a whip so high that it is clear the beasts no longer have the will to move. In contrast, the central, foreground men in their fashionable attire look eagerly to the earth, each appearing to examine the yield with greedy eyes. Ownership is assumed (Title: *Portraits of investors eagerly counting returns*).

Figure 22:1. ST Gill (c. 1845). *Kapunda mine* (watercolour, 27.6 cm x 40.0 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 12 October 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/kapunda-mine-1845/24179/

Patent Copper Company's smelting works and the Burra Burra mine (Figure 22:2) makes a similar statement about pillaging the soil and the ruination of place. Rigid buildings squat grotesquely, while to the left a trio of painterly English cattle pose in an alien, sunburnt landscape. In the central, most prominent position, chimney stacks emit thick smoke, and even the treeless mound behind appears blackened by it. In the distance, another shaft colours the sky in a dull stench. Unnatural hues permeate this place.

Figure 22:2. ST Gill (c. 1850). *Patent Copper Company's smelting works and the Burra Burra mine* (watercolour on paper, 27.2 cm x 49.6 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 12 October 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/patent-copper-companys-smelting-works-and-the-burra-burra-mine-1850/24199/

Neales's stopes, Burra Burra mine (Figure 22:3) makes the land look similarly broken. Here is a rude plundering of the earth below the ground, with a towering ladder cleaving the picture in half to create the sense of a great wound. A heavy column is entrusted to hold up the soil and protect vulnerable workmen and yet it leans precariously. Gloom pervades the picture, and every new cavity hollowing further into this subterranean landscape adds to the sense of devastation. While some men may be growing wealthy from South Australian mines, it is clear in this painting that the beauty of place is being systematically ruined from the inside out.

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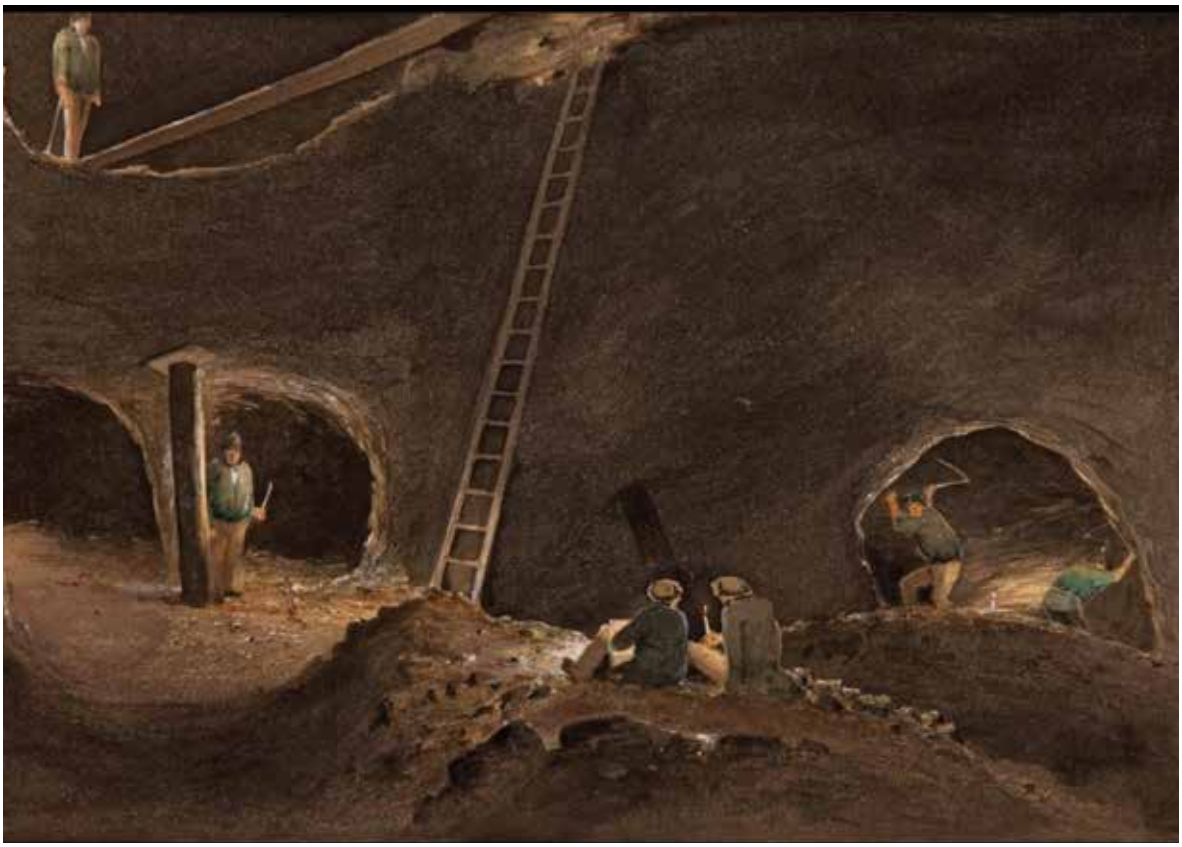

Figure 22:3. ST Gill (c. 1847). *Neales's stopes, Burra Burra mine, April 12th 1847* (watercolour on paper, 19.5 cm x 31.3 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 12 September 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/nealess-stopes-burra-burra-mine-april-12th-1847/24198/

CHAPTER 23

Envelope labelled:

Gratifying to see so many temples rising up in various parts of the province.

Contains:

- A letter addressed to ST Gill.
- Clippings of newspaper articles.

ST Gill artwork:

- *St James' Anglican Church, Blakiston.*

LOCAL NEWS OF THE WEEK

(Excerpt)
It must be highly gratifying to the members of the church to see so many temples thus rising up in various parts of the province. There are four now in the course of erection— St. Mary's, on the Sturt; St. George's, Woodford, Macgill; St. James', Blakiston, Mount Barker; and the church at Gawler; all of which, it is hoped, will be nearly ready for consecration by the Bishop of South Australia on his arrival about May or June next; there are also others which will be commenced shortly, at Walkerville, &c. The church at Blakiston is rapidly progressing towards completion.

The South Australian Gazette 1847, 13 March, p. 2.

INSTALLATION OF THE BISHOP OF ADELAIDE

On Thursday morning last, the installation of the Right Reverend Augustus Short, D. D., as Protestant Bishop of Adelaide, took place in the (now) Cathedral Church of Trinity. The shortness of the notice, the extreme heat of the weather, and the apprehension of an oppressively crowded state of the Church, concurred to lessen the anticipated attendance so much, that not many more than two hundred persons were present, including his Excellency the Governor (who appeared in a new and splendid uniform, and looked remarkably well) members of the Executive Council, the Postmaster General, and several other officials; the Colonial chaplain and resident clergy; the Revds. Messrs Hales, Wilson, and Burnett, who had accompanied the Bishop to the colony; and the vice-presidents and lay members of the South Australian Church Society; together with private members of the church of England, and several leading members of dissenting congregations.

The Adelaide Observer 1848, 1 January, p. 2.

Journal Day 854: Trinity Church, North Terrace, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

I imagine the eminent Bishop Augustus Short, recently arrived in South Australia, standing inside Trinity Church dressed in heavy ceremonial garb. It's a sweltering December day with a cerulean sky and the white-hot sun beating down hard onto the Cathedral's roof and tower.

The new Bishop wears a light surplice over a heavy black cassock, and I first picture these somber weighty garments being lifted carefully from the chest — solid, satin-lined, and strapped — that has carried them here. Dutiful aides assist the Bishop in his dressing, fussing about, pinching, tweaking the fabrics so that they fall correctly. The aides slip away quietly and Bishop Short stares for a time into an ornate glass in a dressing-room behind the nave, contemplating the grave import of the service to come and how far he has travelled to get to Adelaide. He smooths his fingers down the length of the surplice, thinking of the last time he wore it and the consequence of bringing sacraments and Christian progress to the new colony. He lifts his chin, frowns a little and purses his lips (Title: *Portrait of a Bishop contemplating his reflection*).

Then I make another picture. Bishop Short turns from the mirror and steps into the nave, clears his throat and makes ready to project his voice into the church's vast open spaces. His Excellency Governor Robe is at the front of proceedings, and the pair make ready to begin this most important of religious rituals. The Governor is impressive in his splendid uniform, leather burnished and silver and gilt all well-polished. He stands tall, broad-shouldered, barrel-chested. Both men, and almost the entire congregation positioned before them in tight pews and with fans fluttering discreetly, are flushed because of the heat and the number of worshippers crowded in. Dress is formal and the faces of all are ruddy, their cheeks damp, collars starched and close. If I were to take up a watercolour palette and fill in the faces of Bishop Short, Governor Robe and those florid members of the congregation nearby, I would need not only the range of ivory, sienna, ochre, and umber hues expected to colour pale skin, but an array of magentas and mauves so as to fully realise how complexions are made shiny and clammy in hot, trapped conditions.

How to best blend tones on the palette for light and damp? Colour is vital in making mood for a picture, and although crimson and rosy tones have a power all their own, especially for portraiture, it seems that yellow has the potential to affect mood more than most. Although perhaps that may be particularly so in South Australia, where sun and dry can be pleasant or threatening, and are often both. Your summery *Beehive* painting with its feeling of sunshine flooding the streetscape uses yellow to a sweet, cheering effect. And yet, the welcoming nature of the *Beehive* and its jostling Rundle Street atmosphere stand in sharp contrast to another of your watercolours, similarly soaked in yellow.

I imagine you working *in situ* on the commission for the *St James' Anglican Church at Blakiston* painting (Figure 23:1), and I have decided that the heavy use of yellow accentuates the sense of the landscape's fragility. I can't help but think that was your intention. Scattered leaves are tinged with rust, all with yellow as the base. In the foreground, the fallen gum limb with brittle leaf illustrates an unmoving heat not relieved by even the slightest of breezes. The whole place looks ripe for a terrible summer burning. Scorching dry is everywhere. It colours the buildings in honey and the old tree trunks in dirty gold. Dry foliage withers on the ground and the new-made wooden fence in amber seems almost to recede into surrounding dust. The sky, too, looks as if it is touched with ochre, dull in parts. Even the thin cloud wilts in the fug.

Figure 23:1. ST Gill (1848). *St. James' Anglican Church, Blakiston* (watercolour on paper, 21.6 cm x 35.3 cm). Art Gallery of South Australia, accessed 24 September 2023, https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/st-james-anglican-church-blakiston/23786/

I'm picturing the day you washed the Blakiston church in yellow. You and your friends have hired a horse and buggy from the livery stable and are making slow progress along the dusty winding track up toward the mount. Although you made good time at the beginning of the morning, the sun is now high above the trees and foliage hanging limp in the heat closes over the path. Twig fingers snap overhead, birds warble low, and the scent of oily resin gum leaf steeps the air. The journey is quiet and subdued. As you make your way up to the site of the new church, you look around at the dead branches, the thirsty trees, the dirt umber shadows and the full range of yellow colours staining the distance (Title: *Portrait of an artist contemplating dry tones in a landscape*).

Nell sweeps a fan and tweaks irritably at ribbons on her day bonnet. Patience holds a parasol and swats at flies. Peter yanks his collar apart and yawns. George nudges at his hat, trying to shade his eyes from glare. You relax the reins, give the plodding horse its head, and wipe at your forehead with a paint rag pulled from a pocket, announcing to your friends that it is time to show the country just as it is.

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CHAPTER 24

Envelope labelled:

Convert them from outcasts and nuisances into good and useful colonists.

Contains:

- A letter addressed to ST Gill.
- Clippings of newspaper articles.

ST Gill artwork:

- *Cydnus, the property of Mr A. Malcom, winner of Adelaide Grand Steeplechase 1851, ridden and trained by Mr J. Prest.*
- *Fidget, ridden by W. Filgate Esqr. at the Adelaide Grand Steeplechase of 1851.*
- *Going to work.*

THE ABORIGINES

(Excerpt)
The publication in the “Gazette”, and in the newspapers, of a report by certain teachers of a Sunday School attended by native children, has caused us — and doubtless many of our readers — to consider anew the present condition and future prospects of the aboriginal population; but its very painfulness makes it an imperative duty on all who have any regard for the welfare of this unfortunate race, both to think, deeply and act strenuously, in order to the adoption of some plan to raise them in the scale of civilisation, and to convert them from outcasts and nuisances into good and useful colonists.

Perhaps there is no more difficult problem than is that which relates to the best means of civilising a people, sunk, morally and intellectually, almost to the level of the brutes. A dispute has long existed, whether minds so very degraded intellectually, can be taught morals and religion; and it has been thought by many, even of the most pious Christians, that a certain, nay a high degree of civilisation, is a condition precedent ordained by Providence, before the mind can receive vital and practical religion.

The South Australian 1847, 1 June, p. 2.

THE ABORIGINES

(Excerpt)
The only fact officially communicated (incidentally) is, that at present a number of children are undergoing a course of instruction daily by a teacher, and on Sundays, at a Sunday school, under the sanction of Government. It is evident that something has been done for the children ; but the unfortunate and painful fact is also made apparent, that such is at present of little or no avail, as the children invariably return to their vagrant habits, speedily lose all the good that has been taught them, and retain only the superior intelligence and knowledge which they must have acquired.

The South Australian 1847, 1 June, p. 2.

THE ABORIGINES

(Excerpt)
These, it is evident, however, without morality to guide and control them, must make those children in the end more dangerous and more hurtful members of society than were their savage fathers; and it is prophesied now by many, with good show of reason, that the rising generation will be exceedingly troublesome, possessing, as they must, greater powers for evil, with no good principles to balance and check them. They will become organised and successful thieves and robbers, possessed at once of the arts and intelligence of the white man, and the cunning and ferocity of the savage. This is not a mere vague idea but has been repeatedly exemplified in history. It is difficult and might be presumptuous to make a suggestion, but we should be glad to hear that even an experiment has been made with the adults. They have no idea of individual property, or of remaining permanently in one place. We should wish to know if one fair experiment has been made in endeavouring to create such ideas, or carrying out any plan, having in view their training, up-bringing, and improvement, upon such principles. Until something of the kind has been fairly attempted, we will not believe it impossible to improve them, and must refuse the Government credit for doing their best the carry out the intentions of the Legislature or to promote the welfare of the aborigines.

The South Australian 1847, 1 June, p. 3.

Journal Day 867: Leigh Street, Adelaide, Kaurna Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill

c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

I like to make modest pictures of your last South Australian years. It's pleasing that your renown has grown, and that you keep busy with portraits of colonists and larger paintings of grand estates for those who can pay handsomely, enabling you to settle debts. I imagine you and your friends visiting pastoral properties and them assisting you in making draft sketches of homes and gardens. You make many detailed watercolours of hunters and thoroughbred racehorses, such as *Cydnus, the property of*

Mr A Malcom (Figure 24:1), pictured galloping over open country with legs and tail extended, showing great speed and athleticism. *Fidget ridden by W Filgate Esqr. at the Adelaide Grand Steeple Chase of 1851* (Figure 24:2), leaping a solid wooden fence, is a study in precision, of equine anatomy and landscape both. The ground is dry and barren, the sky gloomy, and the colouring looks as if dust permeates the country surrounding, yet I have no doubt that Fidget's owner would have taken great pride in the painting. Pleasingly, you've pictured him jumping cleanly with his legs well-positioned for the hurdle, and all of these factors combine to make it an exemplary study of a model steeplechaser any gentleman would be proud to call his own.

Some of the last pictures I make of your final Adelaide studio are intimate ones, concerned with domestic matters. I imagine you sorting your belongings, selling furniture pieces where you can, giving away favourite things. Easels and benches and chairs are sold. Perhaps it is up to George to hold onto your animal skeletons and other treasured personal items used in still life studies. I picture Patience and Nell dividing up the costume store, with Patience in particular hoping to sell clothing pieces to supplement her meagre income. I envision Peter diligently advertising items on your behalf for the best possible prices, always anxious to make sure that you have funds for when you leave for the Victorian goldfields carrying everything you own in packs and saddlebags.

Figure 24:1. ST Gill (1851). *Cydnus, the property of Mr A Malcom, winner of Adelaide Grand Steeple Chase '51, ridden and trained by Mr J Prest* (watercolour on paper, 29.2 cm x 46.4 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 28 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134374511/view

As I make these small pictures of you parcelling together paints, papers, brushes and other artist's tools, I likewise take the time to pack up the Adelaide friends I invented for you, imagining fictional futures for each as I stow them away. I have an image of Peter continuing to work diligently in the financial field, growing wealthy as he continues his rigorous daily attendance at offices that will some day have his own name on the door, etched in brass. The rooms will always have polished desks and tidy papers, and a sober atmosphere. As he ages, Peter will become more particular and wary in the matter of relationships with others and he will live alone, taking comfort in the certainty of arithmetic.

I make a picture of Patience, living out her years in Adelaide at the same boarding house where she spent her youth. Fortune will smile upon her, and through hard work and harmonious relations with the owner of the establishment, it will one day become her own, and she will take care of young women who need homes and employment in Adelaide. In her last years, she will train friendless girls to succeed in domestic service and will always make sure to give them shelter and care. Patience, as I envision her, will be well-loved by many.

I have an easy picture of George, who returns, as young man, to England. His longing for the climate of home, and the bountiful flowers of lush gardens drive him to return before he spends more than a decade in South Australia. I imagine him married young to a good-natured Yorkshire wife, and living on a small holding where he continues to lovingly construct stone buildings and long fences, using his spare time to prune roses and marvel at the vibrant greens of English foliage. In time, the blue-grey colours of the South Australian scrub and the arid soils will fade in his memory.

Figure 24:2. ST Gill (1851). *Fidget ridden by W Filgate Esqr. at the Adelaide Grand Steeple Chase of 1851* (watercolour on paper, 29.0 cm x 46.0 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 28 October 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134358612/view

I picture Nell leaving South Australia to embark on a free-spirited, bohemian life in France, where she becomes an artist's model and lives with other like-minded women, many of whom — including Nell — are inspired by the art, industry, and singularity of Rosa Bonheur and take to boldly wearing trousers, coats, and cravats in public in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, no matter the disapproval of others.

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Journal Day 869: Oakbank, Peramangk Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

I have one more South Australian picture to make. It is a broad, outdoor image, perhaps a part of the travel you undertake on your way to the Victorian goldfields upon leaving Adelaide for good.

You sit in open pastoral country with Jack at your side and your horse grazing nearby. You have camping gear set aside in a shelter near a stream and plan on making sketches for several days before continuing on your journey. You've chosen a setting that's picturesque and truly Antipodean. There are rolling hills covered in the yellowing pastures of summer. There are shade trees and a small stony creek that widens into a pond before trickling away down a hill and out of sight. Dozens of glossy cattle, fat from spring grasses, spread out over a rise, and it is these that have taken your fancy for sketching. You fill page after page with them butting heads, resting, grazing, and moving as a mob from sun into shade. For background, low scrub fills a broad slope nearby and a stand of gum saplings clump together at the base of the hill. Some in the group lean to the north, formed by the wind. Suddenly two stockmen ride through your scene, camaraderie evident in their laughter as they canter side by side.

Inspired, you make outlines, recording all the anatomical equine attributes as swiftly as you can. As ever, you ponder a suitable title as you draw and it comes to you suddenly: *Going to work* (Figure 24:3). It is the relationship between the men that is key to the drawing's success, as the composition immediately shows, and you know as you work that this is a sketch you will turn into a painting. Here's a European worker and an Aboriginal stockman riding side by side, as harmonious together as the horses they canter effortlessly across the landscape.

You make quick notes for colour and atmosphere. Striped shirts for both, weathered hats, whips held easily. The horses have good conformation, with strong necks, deep chests, and well-formed heads. They have powerful rumps and bright glossy coats and carry their tails high. Like the stockmen, they seem keen on their job.

Going to work tells a new story, evident in the big heart of the composition. In the landscape's scope and the depiction of the men, here are two cultures working together to build a society where everyone is equal. It is a picture of hope.

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Figure 24:3. ST Gill (c. 1850s). *Going to work* (watercolour on paper, 24.9 cm x 33.4 cm). National Library of Australia, accessed 18 September 2023, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134377067/view

CHAPTER 25

Envelope labelled:

George Street, Sydney, NSW, c. 1857.

Contains:

- A letter addressed to ST Gill.
- Clipping of a newspaper article.

ST Gill artwork:

- *The avengers,* front cover illustration of Louisa Atkinson's *Cowanda: the veteran's grant.*

COWANDA, THE VETERAN'S GRANT - REVIEW

(Excerpt)
Few and far between are Australian literary productions; it is therefore with a feeling of greater interest that we welcome any addition to the small collection. The above-named tale has recently been published by Mr. Clarke, and is written by the authoress of *Gertrude*, which was issued some months since from the same house. The work before us bears many marks of a skilful hand, but we regret the fair writer did not fill up the sketches she has made more fully. She leaves many scenes half told, and breaks abruptly from incidents capable of working out to a degree that had proved more satisfactory to the general reader. A pleasing, pious, and moral tone pervades the work throughout.

The Australian Home Companion and Band of Hope Journal
1859, 8 October, p. 416.

(Excerpt)
These few extracts will speak for themselves, and we doubt not *Cowanda* will command an extensive circulation. The book is well printed, and got up quite in the London style. The cover is embellished with a truly Australian scene, drawn by S. T. Gill, and engraved by W. G. Mason. We heartily wish it success, and trust we shall see other productions by the same hand.

The Australian Home Companion and Band of Hope Journal
1859, 8 October, p. 418.

Journal Final Day: Oakbank, Peramangk Country.

To: The studio of the artist ST Gill
c/o N. Terrace, General Post Office, King Wm. St. Adelaide

(Letters posted to the past)

Dear Tom,

Today's sketch is a portrait of a middle-aged artist at work in a cluttered Sydney studio. On my palette I have colours to blend the greying of chestnut hair and the thickening and reddening of skin exposed to the sun and the long-term effects of alcohol. I make untidy hair with steel-tipped curls parted above a furrowed brow. Kind eyes, creased at the corners. Lips with a knowing smile (Title: *Portrait of an ageing artist reflecting on his career*).

In the George Street studio you spread out drawings and consider the commission at hand. It's a hot day, and the room's single small window is jammed open, allowing air from the street to filter in. Below, whips crack, horses whinny, carriages rattle past at speed, and the sound of cursing cuts through the still fug of the afternoon. When dusk falls, crowds will gather at taverns and women and sailors and ne'er-do-wells will begin transactions in the gloom of the street. As always, you will work into the night.

You turn your attention to the manuscript on your workbench, considering the scene the young Australian author Louisa Atkinson has outlined in the early pages of her new novel, *Cowanda: the veteran's grant*. The publisher has scrawled suggestions in the manuscript's margins. Some you have noted and accounted for in the composition, while others are ignored.

After much preparation, and many sketches patched together as experiments, you outline a scene Louisa Atkinson has described in detail. A group of Europeans, led by Superintendent Mr Blackmore, are set upon enacting a murderous sunset revenge. The men make ready to retaliate against the spearing murder of an itinerant shepherd wandering the district in search of employment. In the story, Atkinson narrates the pernicious pledges of Blackmore and his deputies and describes them loading their guns with a deadly charge as they slink along a waterway in the half dark. The group is focused on a small camp of Aboriginal people, distant in a clearing:

> Already the smoke from the fires at the native encampment rose up before them, and the clatter of light-hearted gossip broke the stillness.
>
> Some large trees, the roots of which had been left bare by some previous inundation, reared themselves in a rugged wall between the avengers and their prey. On hands and knees Blackmore wound his way up the drift-tangled elevation, drawing his gun after him, and closely followed by his companions. Cautiously they raised their heads to explore the scene. About half-a-dozen tents, formed of dry grass, bark, and green branches, were grouped upon a small point, almost surrounded by a bend in the stream. Little fires shot up their red tongues of fitful blazes, and sent showers of sparks amidst the darkness, as the wind rose in puffs, casting a light upon the wild scene. Men, women, and children sat or lounged about; some roasting fish on the coals, some sleeping, others chatting, and laughing with the clear, sudden laugh of the Australian black, a being so completely the slave of the impulse of the moment.
>
> Blackmore raised his gun and took aim where there were clustered together the Chief and his young Lubra, with her babe resting in her arms… (Atkinson 1995/1857, p. 9).

You pick up your favourite sketch and make ready to apply shading to the large foreground gum and the group of men behind the trunk making ready to fire (Figure 25:1). The Aboriginal camp is set in a small clearing at the edge of forest bushland, and trees protect it well on three sides. Many of the group sit close to the fire and several wear blankets for warmth.

These figures are also ready to be shaded in. Atkinson's publisher has instructed you to ensure that your final drawing allows space for a large title treatment at the top, and you have done this, even pencilling in *Cowanda* in an elaborate font. You have planned a decorative border treatment for the whole using ornamental rules and curlicue corner elements. It's designed to bring the viewer's eye first to the novel's title and then into the glow of the campfire and the vengeful men who make ready to destroy it. As you work, you think of an inscription for the picture and find it in Atkinson's text — *The avengers*.

You pick up your pen, load it with ink, and begin work, absorbed in the scratching of fine leaf into foliage and the darkening of twigs, the cast of moon shadow and firelight made pretty with dancing flame. In George Street below, the sounds of industry fade into the background.

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Figure 25:1 ST Gill (c. 1859). Cover illustration of *Cowanda: the veteran's grant* (size and materials of original artwork unknown). *The La Trobe Journal*, accessed 24 October 23, http://latrobejournal.slv.vic.gov.au/latrobejournal/issue/latrobe-57/latrobe-57-007.html

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The South Australian Gazette and Mining Journal

The South Australian Record and Australasian and South African Chronicle

The South Australian Register

The Southern Australian

Historic works, authors unknown

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