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This article compares two different photographic accounts of pastoral properties in nineteenth-century New South Wales and shows how they reveal changing ideas about the representation of land, leisure, labour and class between 1860 and the mid 1890s. The two sets of photographs are different in remarkable ways, despite the fact that both sets depict the land surrounding specific homesteads. The photographs were made approximately two decades apart and the images reflect some significant changes in the economic, social and cultural life of New South Wales. The photographs also offer an opportunity to further analyse representations of pastoral properties, which as Jeannette Hoorn has suggested, form a significant part of Australia’s cultural history and reflect the economic and social importance of pastoralism within the European development of Australia.¹

Joseph and Ernest Docker made the first set of photographs between 1860 and 1869 of their family property, Thornthwaite, in northern New South Wales near Scone.² The photographs, on the whole, depict the property within existing landscape

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¹ Hoorn, Jeannette. ² Docker, Joseph and Ernest.
conventions; that is, as picturesque with melancholic overtones and without reference to the working life of the station. The second set of photographs of Pulletop, in the Riverina District of New South Wales, were commissioned by the owners Edmund and Ashley Westby and were made by a commercial landscape photographer from Sydney, Charles Bayliss.iii Although there are some conventional landscape and view photographs in the set and some references to the cultural life of the station, there is more emphasis on the working life of the station. Notably, neither set of photographs depict Aboriginal subjects and the Aboriginal absence in these photographs is significant in relation to the colonisation of the land.iv

The differences between the two sets of photographs are not simply reducible to notions of “old” and “new money,” although the different sets do suggest changing ideas of symbolic representation of wealth and social prestige. Both the Dockers and Westbys were immigrants with some capital to invest in Australia and both families held positions of influence and respect within their communities (although the Dockers were more influential in this regard). Yet there were significant differences in the families and their relationship to economics and politics. Some of these differences relate to the changing social and economic context in Australia between the 1860s and 1890s. The conventional and delicate photographs of Thornthwaite reflect Docker’s educated and monied background, while the photographs of Pulletop reflect the sensibilities of Westby’s investment in a modern working landscape. The photographs are not simply descriptive in this regard, however, and indicate too an investment and interest in the symbolic significance of the landscape and pastoralism. This paper then will examine the backgrounds and histories of the two families in relation to the sets of photographs and the wider economic, social and ideological changes happening in Australia over the latter half of the nineteenth century; this will include a brief analysis of the absence of Aboriginal subjects both in relation to the melancholic overtones of the Dockers’ photographs, and the organisation of labour represented in the Westby photographs.

My analysis of these photographs and their contexts utilises an approach developed by Elizabeth Edwards.v Arguing for a close reading of photographs that identifies both “possible closures of meaning, and open spaces of articulation” she proposes that the “whole performative quality of the image” be acknowledged.vi Whilst photographs are perhaps meant to be secure in their meaning what is produced by photographs are instead “points of fracture.”vii Indeed, the photographs I discuss
are fragments of space and time, separated from history and from the subjective and reflective responses of the original owners and viewers. The meaning of the photographs becomes more fluid over time, especially when little empirical evidence exists to provide a convincing historical context. In this instance, “meanings [proposed by the photographs] are not necessarily in the photographs themselves, but in their suggestive appearances within different contexts … [and can be] transposed from the culture of viewing” to a new culture of viewing. viii

In this sense, Edwards proposes that photographs be invested with a degree of agency in the making of history:

Like the social saliency of the material object, active agency implies a level of performance, projection and engagement on the part of the object. In the idea of performance, and its more overt and formal manifestation, theatricality, is implied a presentation that constitutes a performative or persuasive act directed towards a conscious behold. ix

In relation to the photographs under scrutiny here, Edwards’ approach enables a historical contextualisation of the production and use of the photographs that is indebted to materialist historical methodology; that is, a historical contextualisation of the photographs that acknowledges the social material relations of the production and consumption of the images. x Such an approach requires an engagement with the context of production, an understanding of the broader society at the time of the images’ production, and an engagement with the discursive spaces in which the images originally appeared. However, the “fractures” created by the difficulty of reconstructing a complete historical context combined with the openness and suggestiveness of the photographs themselves enable the performative qualities of the photographs to be interpreted with a view to analysing what was, and is, at stake in these representational practices. It is clear in both sets of photographs under scrutiny here that a performance is being conducted in the photograph and that the photograph was designed to act performatively in its use: citing and reiterating economic success, the acquisition of land and the acquisition of symbolic capital associated with the ownership of land. xi What this article aims to do is tease out the threads of what this performance might have meant in the cultural context of late nineteenth-century New South Wales and to acknowledge that such an approach connects to debates in the
Both sets of photographs enabled their owners to record and performatively reiterate statements about their class status and their symbolic wealth as produced by the ownership of a pastoral property. Both sets of photographs disavowed prior Aboriginal ownership of land. Both include aspects of leisure in contrasting ways, yet only Westby foregrounds images of industry and conspicuous leisure. In addition, Bayliss’s photographs of Westby’s property explicitly deny Aboriginal contributions to the pastoral industry by failing to depict Aboriginal workers.

Connell and Irving in *Class Structure in Australian History* (1980) provide a theoretical and historical understanding of class relations, their formation and change in Australia. Eschewing stratification theory, Irving and Connell promote a model of class that favours social formations and an understanding of class within the “social division of labour as a whole,” enabling class to be seen as politically, ideologically and economically formed. Demonstrating that Australia was a society “polarised around capitalist production relations,” and examining working class resistance, their account of class helps to situate the visual and discursive changes evident in and suggested by the differences in the sets of photographs examined here.

**Amateur and Professional Photography**

Commercial portrait photographers largely initiated photography in Australia, but during the late 1850s, some middle- and upper-class men and women were practicing photography. Fulfilling a mid-Victorian convention of making leisure time profitable, photography provided the means by which one could expand one’s knowledge of recent scientific discoveries and practices (especially in relation to the chemical aspects of making legible images), whilst demonstrating knowledge of art. In contrast to amateur photography in Britain, where early amateurs learned about photography and its processes through their peers or scientific and artistic experimenters, early amateurs based in the Sydney region were privately taught by the commercial photographer William H. Hetzer. Indeed, meetings at Hetzer’s studio enabled the Dockers to meet other amateur photographers in the Sydney region. However, once amateur photography had a number of practitioners, processes and results were discussed and exhibited at the meetings of the Philosophical Society of New South Wales in 1858 and 1859. Many of the amateur photographers produced images of a broad range of subjects including landscape photographs, architectural
photographs, and portraits. The Dockers photographed typical subjects, such as their surrounding landscape and portraits of family and friends.

Amateur photographers, however, were not only distinguished by their relationship to commerce and whether their photographs were conventional and repetitious. As Grace Seiberling argues, amateurs in the nineteenth century were those who “pursued an activity, or rather, who pursued many different activities with enthusiasm, ease and confidence, who appreciated the arts and … [were] curious about the natural world.” Amateurs were monied and used their leisure time for rational pursuits that were taken seriously; it is likely that photography would have been one of several learned activities with which they engaged.

The biographical information on the Dockers is extensive. Joseph Docker (b. 1802, d. 1884) arrived in Australia in 1834 where he became a landowner and parliamentarian. Before Docker had decided to settle in Australia he had been an employee of the East Indian Company as a surgeon. Docker purchased Thornthwaite outright in 1835, had a family, eight children in all, and acquired further land bordering Thornthwaite when prices in land had dropped. Joseph Docker was also a Justice of the Peace during the time in which he owned Thornthwaite. However, Thornthwaite was difficult to make a going concern and Joseph Docker borrowed extensively to keep it afloat. By 1869, debts against Thornthwaite amounted to £16,000 and in 1870 the property was sold to George Finlay for £7,500. The debts against the property were annulled and Docker and his family moved to Sydney. Joseph Docker sat in the New South Wales Legislative Council for five years from 1856 and opposed the free selection bill before survey in 1861. (This land reform bill was intended to undermine the squatters in favour of smaller farmers who would “settle the land more closely” and dismantle the difference between the landed rich and the rural poor). His later political career included working as postmaster-general for Sir James Martin’s ministry. He was involved with the planning of International Exhibitions as well as being involved with The Philosophical Society of New South Wales where he showed his photographs in 1856. Although Joseph would have been travelling between Thornthwaite and Sydney for his public and familial duties, Joseph took up photography early in its history in Australia, and was practicing it at a considerable distance from Sydney where chemicals and other necessary equipment were procured.
Ernest (b. 1842, d.1923), Joseph’s eldest son from his second marriage, showed promise as a scholar, attended the University of Sydney, trained as a lawyer and became a Judge. Ernest took a keen interest in photography from the early age of eight, assisting his father in the preparation and exposure of photographs and remained a keen photographer throughout his life. At Thornthwaite, Joseph and Ernest made copies of their endeavours and gave them to their neighbours. The photographs have been celebrated both for their documentary value and their aesthetic sensibility.

Commercial photographers, in contrast, may have apprenticed in photography through an existing commercial photographer and their education would not have been as broad and encompassing as those in the middle and upper classes. Whilst some commercial photographers were able to become successful businessmen, and networked with the urban elite, they were unlikely to be members of the aristocracy or be in positions of power and influence. Photographers in larger urban areas sought commissions, from both wealthy clients and from the State, as a means of expanding and maintaining their businesses. For many photographers, their continued interest in photography was dependent upon the success of their business.

Charles Bayliss trained in photography with Beaufoy Merlin between 1870 and 1873 and Bayliss later established his own business in Sydney in 1876. He has been celebrated for his visual and technical sophistication, especially in relation to his compositions and arrangement of figures. He photographed landscapes, city views, architecture, Aboriginal subjects, and produced some portraits. Bayliss is credited with being an “author” of his works, but his relationship to the Pulletop photographs would have been markedly different to the Dockers and their relationship to the photographs of Thornthwaite. In contrast to the Dockers he would not have been attached to the property and perhaps his photographs could be said to mediate between the worker (as an employee of the Westbys) and the point of view of the Westbys.

The Thornthwaite Photographs

Many of the available photographs of Thornthwaite are presented in one album and another scrapbook. Album of views of “Thornthwaite”, Dartbrook, N.S.W., ca. 1860-1869 was deposited at the Mitchell Library in 1968. Ernest Docker is thought
to be the compiler of *Album of Views of “Thornthwaite”* although it probably contains photographs by him and his father. The album is beautiful and heavy, with leather and wood being used in its outer construction; the photographs are remarkably well preserved and are briefly captioned. The album also contains scenes from the Blue Mountains, Sydney Harbour, and other Sydney sights, a photograph of the Nepean River, a few photographs from Adelaide and photographs of Yosemite Valley. The structure of the album suggests a narrative of travel in relation to home; the photographs of distant locales in Australia are interspersed between the photographs of Thornthwaite and the river scenes of the Dartbrook. It is likely that the Dockers visited many of these locations, but it is not known for certain whether they visited North America.

The homestead at Thornthwaite has been photographed systematically. The album opens with views of the homestead and its gardens and are accompanied by more remote views that depict the homestead as the centre of the property with the photographer exploring it in a circular motion: the photographs are labelled in relation to points on the compass (i.e. from the north, east, south and west). The homestead was recorded from an increasing distance: the views demanded by the points of the compass are retraced from further away from the homestead, the scale of the house looks smaller within the landscape and the remoteness of the property becomes more evident. There are also images that situate the homestead and the boundaries of the property in relation to other geographical features, such as the Liverpool Ranges to the north. Thornthwaite, then, is visually constructed as a site of civilisation and settlement within a broader wilderness, with the central focus being on the homestead.

The garden at Thornthwaite, while planted and tended in some places, was more overgrown in others. Thornthwaite (Figure 1) depicts the front of the homestead, the steps leading up to it and a gardener, and other features such as the urns on the terraces are just visible. Despite being situated above the eye line, the house does not entirely dominate the landscape but is situated within it. As Robert Dixon has noted, it was common for representations of the country house landscapes to show the contrast between the wilderness and tended lands. The purpose of such country house representations, whether visual or written, was to create:

… symbols of that harmonious arrangement of use and beauty, nature and art, that constituted the proper use of wealth. They were visible proof that the
progress of empire was controlled by individuals whose social virtues derived from nature and from God. xlix

Colonists were encouraged to devote “wealth, taste and influence” in the creation of a landscape from the wilderness with the aim of creating a “symbol of utility reconciled with beauty” that contributed to British colonialism.¹ Colonists assumed that their perception of wilderness meant that the land was “empty of culture” and primordial, li disavowing prior and continuing Aboriginal presence and use of land. The productivity of land, combined with the moral value of labour, justified the colonisation of land and the dispossession of Aboriginal people. lii

In Thornthwaite (Figure 1), the man kneeling in the foreground seems to be taking a particular interest in one plant; whether for purposes of tending to the plant or studying the plant is unclear. In either instance, the gentleman in the garden is not labouring (and he does not undertake strenuous labour in the other photographs) but shows care and attention to his activity. In the nineteenth century it was believed that the study of natural forms could lead to the growth of mind and contentment of spirit. liii The gardener’s dress suggests that he is a member of the household rather than an employee. The garden is a site for the exploration of a variety of natural forms that exhibit good taste and which facilitate the development of the mind and character. The garden also signifies the gentry’s virtuous colonisation of space through the creation of cultured, cultivated and purposeful lands that, at least in the nineteenth century, justified Aboriginal dispossession. liv

A photograph of the Middlebrook River, Thornthwaite from the North (Figure 2), conforms to a picturesque sensibility. The river is centrally placed but snakes through the landscape and a large tree on the right frames the entire scene. Under the tree is a house and the homestead and wider property can be seen in the distance. This house is clearly less important within the landscape (and would not command the same view that the homestead does) but has its own enclosure and easy access to the water. On close inspection a woman with four children are posing in front of their house. They are not large enough or clear enough to be identifiable and yet their inclusion/elision within the image is significant.
Working people and tenants do appear within the picturesque tradition. The inclusion of people and their dwellings could suggest the landowners’ benevolence, the prosperity of a larger community that came from large estates and could also signal opportunities for the landowner to engage with the “humbler neighbours and … [to experience] their intercourse as clear ornaments to the landscape and as cheerful, interesting circumstances of variety, amusement, and humanity.” Unlike the gardener, however, this family are not visible enough to be identifiable and their relationship to the property remains unclear. The emphasis is clearly on the landscape and the moral implications of labour rather than the depiction of work and the challenges of creating and maintaining a productive landscape. The beauty and broader sense of order dominates the image and the employees of the property remain
largely invisible.\textsuperscript{lvi} However, this image is melancholic and is not wholly celebratory of the efforts to colonise the land. Melancholia was a significant theme within the representation of the Australian landscape in the colonial era.\textsuperscript{lvii} Although this can be linked to a European’s discomfort at the unfamiliarity of the environment, Ian McLean has argued that melancholia operates as a redeeming ideology “that overcomes the horrors” of the violence of Aboriginal dispossession.\textsuperscript{lviii} The absence of Aboriginal people from these two photographs, and from the rest of the album, signifies Aboriginal dispossession but melancholia appears as a means of mitigating the guilt at having dispossessed the rightful owners.

The extent to which Thornthwaite is treated as a cultural artefact is remarkable and although there are people in a few of the photographs, none of them are labouring.\textsuperscript{lix} This album is not a document of the work required in making a successful station but depicts a landscape that demonstrates the moral virtues of combining nature with utility in the name of producing a fitting contribution to the expansion of the British Empire. These activities indicate ownership of the land (practically, physically and culturally) and reinforce the dispossession of Aboriginal owners. As a magistrate, Docker was also a member of the class making use of cheap labour through the convict assignment system,\textsuperscript{lx} and convict labour was used in the early years on this property.\textsuperscript{lxi} As Irving and Connell have stated:

\begin{quote}
Pastoralism under the gentry created a polarised, patriarchal society in the countryside, a deep gulf of status, poverty and power separating the workforce from the rulers. The gentry attempted to entrench themselves politically in the institutions of the state and physically on the land.\textsuperscript{lxii}
\end{quote}

The solid classical and Georgian homesteads, which Irving and Connell describe as “ruling class domestic architecture” is a description that seems to fit Thornthwaite’s stone built homestead.\textsuperscript{lxxi} Joseph Docker was also in a position to network with similarly educated and elite members of the New South Wales’ aristocracy, as his political career attests. Joseph and Ernest did not view this property from the point of view of workers but as members of the social elite. The material operations of the property were not subject to practical interest and instead the property is depicted as an established and picturesque landscape free from the realities of labour and the violence of dispossession. Figures, with the exception of the gardener, are too small
and unspecific to be identifiable and remain part of the scenery. This album, probably only viewed by family and friends, enabled the viewers to perform their ownership of the property by looking at the landscape as an object and cultural artefact and excluded the workers and prior owners. The viewers of Dockers’ photographs were limited to members of the family and friends and the very act of looking at and possessing these photographs (which are untroubled by the realities of managing an estate) performs ownership: the right to look at the land in this way becomes performatively re-enacted and confirmed through repeated viewing of the photographs. Looking at the space of the landscape without depicting the owners suggests identification with established ways of looking at the land.

The picturesque setting of the homestead is privileged over the working aspects of the landscape but the colonisation of land is nonetheless successful and morally justified within the historical discourses of land productivity. Indeed, their aestheticised and partial representation of the property not only disavows Aboriginal dispossession, but it also disavows the labour, and types of labour, happening on the property. The financial failure of the property was not necessarily significant as the demise of the Dockers’ pastoral period and their move to Sydney coincided with broader changes in the political life of the colony. As the financially successful in the urban centres gained greater political power, the power of the pastoralists started to wane; indeed merchants in the urban centres were in a stronger position to influence politics and policy making. Given that political power was now centred in the towns and given the Dockers’ social prestige, perhaps the departure from Thornthwaite was more than an economic necessity.

The photographs, however, are not without their troubling aspects. As noted earlier, the photographs of the homestead and wider landscape have a melancholic tone to them. The melancholic tone of the images therefore operates as a “fracture” in these photographs that is open to both historical and contemporary interpretations; melancholia could signify the Dockers’ awareness of colonial responses to the landscape, their own pining for a familiar landscape, their sense of loss upon moving to Sydney, or an unacknowledged guilt of Aboriginal dispossession. In today’s context, I would argue, melancholia as an unacknowledged form of Aboriginal dispossession could have significant resonances for those interested in engaging with the violence of the past for both Aboriginal and settler communities. The absence of Aboriginal labour and Aboriginal cultural activity is significant in these photographs;
the photographs depict their absence (their displacement) and the melancholic tone suggests guilt, and an attempt at overcoming it, at having claimed the land as their own. Whilst the Dockers created a picturesque and established representation of their property, a note of regret appeared within their work. The melancholic overtone of the photographs could be seen as a wishful looking back on the idylls and elisions of the gentry’s pastoral existence. And although these photographs could represent a fragile and lonely settler experience, the photographs, by excluding both those who worked on the property and those who were dispossessed, evoke notable absences.

The Pulletop Photographs

Edmund Wright Westby owned Pulletop Station with his brother, Alfred Ashley Westby from 1868 to 1911. Their father, Edmund Westby, arrived in Australia in 1840, set up a sawmill in Melbourne and became a merchant and a member of Melbourne’s town council. Edmund W. Westby, the eldest son, was educated in England and seems to have retained a tie to the country. Edmund Wright Westby died in London and Pulletop was sold at the request of his will. It is commonly thought that Edmund Wright Westby commissioned the photographs of Pulletop, but this is uncertain and it was Alfred who spent more of his life in Australia, the only Westby to remain there until his death. Both Edmund Wright and Alfred Westby were members of the Riverine Club (1881-1892 and 1881-1893 respectively), where the pastoralists stayed when in Wagga Wagga. Edmund Wright was also a magistrate, but neither of the Westbys had prominent political careers. It is not known whether either or both of the Westbys typically resided at Pulletop, but their membership of the Riverine Club suggests that they both spent time in the district and were not entirely absentee landlords. The Westbys also liked to entertain and arranged for extensive improvements, including the landscaping of the garden, to be carried out. Thomas E. Tylor or Taylor managed Pulletop and he owned his own set of photographs, some of which duplicate the images under discussion here.

Westby’s photographs of Pulletop are held at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. The photographs were made by Charles Bayliss and are dated approximately 1886-1891. These photographs were originally presented in album format, but are now disbound, making their original sequence impossible to determine. The photographs show Bayliss’s trademark choreography of figures and they form a
rare photographic overview of a single working property as made by a commercial photographer (collective photographic portraits or documents of properties were also undertaken by Henry King and Charles Walter). The photographs in this instance are remarkable for spatially mapping Pulletop, for displaying signs of significant cultural investment in the station and for its depiction of the wool production process: the source of the station’s wealth. In similarity to the photographs of Thornthwaite the photographs disavow prior Aboriginal ownership and continued Aboriginal presence within the landscape. In addition, the photographs of Pulletop exclude known Aboriginal contributions to the running of the property.

The series contains photographs of the beautiful gardens and valleys surrounding the station and the owners are posed within the photographs so as to establish their proprietorship over the area. The relative rank of workers is evident: the owners are depicted with the workers in Shearing shed (Figure 3) and Homestead garden showing perimeter fence and carriageway (Figure 4). The photographs have been subject to analysis by Nigel Lendon; his account of the album focuses on the ideological implications of the photographs and the production of wealth. Lendon therefore argues that these photographs were signs of “the buyer’s social relationship to [the] … production processes” and they confirm the viewer as middle or upper class. Lendon further argues that these photographs were not able to transcend particularity, making their audience and messages of proprietorship evident. Lendon’s account has been criticised for being limited and for not acknowledging the workers as the central subject of the photographs. Whilst I broadly agree with Lendon’s analysis, a close reading of these photographs suggest some developments on the labour theme, especially as the workers seem at ease during a fraught period in the history of labour relations. Moreover, the photographs resonate in the here and now and thus problematise wholly instrumental interpretations of the photographs.
Shearing shed (Figure 3) is a compelling image, especially as the smiling boy in the bottom right corner resonates with the smiling boy in The Golden Fleece. Every available space seems to be in use and many men work here, each with their allotted role (shearing, collecting the fleece, sorting the fleece, supervising work) and the shed appears to be running smoothly. Three men, in the centre of the image look towards the camera. The man in the suit – probably Westby – appears relaxed. The man to Westby’s right appears sterner and creates tension in the otherwise orderly space. There were notable labour disputes in the late 1880s and early 1890s, to which this image may speak. Strikes, such as that held at Jondarayn Station, were the subject of bitter dispute and rallied the support of other workers, especially in the maritime strike of 1890. While this particular image is not free from tension, the sense of order and cooperation is also paramount. Perhaps Westby and his manager were proud of the stable working environment at Pulleetop and the workers were proud of their labour. This image, whilst illustrating class relations and the different aspects of shearing and sorting wool, does not directly document class conflict.

More broadly the series of photographs situates the homestead within an aesthetic and cultured space. The gardens are immaculately maintained, which the
presence of the gardener in three of the images reinforces, such as Homestead Garden (Figure 4). In similarity to the Docker photographs of their property, this photograph is an elevated view of the formal garden, and a paddock and the distant hills are visible in the distance. In the immediate foreground two men are relaxing in the garden. A gardener or other worker stands in the middle distance, separated from the men seated on the lawn. The other photographs of the garden similarly show men of leisure while a gardener works or stands further away. The emphasis on the garden within the series of photographs suggests that Pulletop was a country retreat for Westby; the land was not just a means of making money or a place of work and responsibility but also a place for leisure. The garden also possibly confirmed his class status as several stations in the Riverina District had fine gardens during this period of time. (The photographs contrast vividly to the gardening photographs at Thornthwaite, where gardening is not so much a form of labour and more an outlet for the productive pursuit of leisure.) The photographs are equally concerned with other cultured aspects of the life on the station, such as hunting and riding with dogs, a detailed interest in fine horses and landscape views of the broader property. There are four photographs depicting the shearing of sheep and wool sorting, pressing the wool, packing the wool and transporting the wool to market. So while there is an emphasis on the wool process this is not the only activity on the station and placed together creates a comprehensive statement about wealth and culture in relation to the land.
There are significant differences between the kinds of class interests demonstrated by the Dockers and those demonstrated by the Westbys. As Irving and Connell have demonstrated, free selection (which was meant to enable small farmers to take up land) enabled squatters to become permanent landowners, but their ownership of land required financial borrowing.\textsuperscript{xc} By 1890, they claim, “half the pastoralists of New South Wales were mortgaged clients of bankers or brokers”\textsuperscript{xci} and:

\begin{quote}
… the plantation ideal of the pastoralists was weakened as the public sector legitimated [the] ideology of development and pastoral capital was absorbed into mercantile capital as the economy expanded … The mercantile capitalist emerged as the leading faction of the reconstituted bourgeoisie.\textsuperscript{xcii}
\end{quote}

As merchants and traders in Melbourne the Westbys were in a position to belong to this new powerful group yet the symbolic prestige associated with the purchase of
land seems to have remained desirable, as well as providing opportunities for further economic investment and exploitation. Indeed, as Jeanette Hoorn has argued, the 1890s was possibly one of the most significant decades for representations of pastoral landscapes, partly because the pastoral industry continued to experience financial growth and partly because there was substantial popular and artistic investment in representations in the bush and working landscapes.\textsuperscript{xciii}

This could explain the significant difference in the depiction of labour in the photographs by the Dockers and Bayliss. Westby is involved – albeit in a highly hierarchical way – in the running of this station and he is not treating Pulletop exclusively as a cultural object. As a man with a family background in trading, Westby takes pride in the productivity of his land and the means by which it is produced. This does not prevent him from enjoying the beauty of his property, but he does so in a manner that demonstrates his position to commerce. These photographs represent another form of moral justification for Aboriginal dispossession: a very practical form of productivity displaces the moral framework of dispossession through the combination “beauty and utility”. The announcement of Westby’s ownership and wealth suggests that this mercantilist had no qualms about the explicit celebration of his wealth and the need for it to be filtered through established expressions of art and taste. Workers are subordinated in their labour relationships in Westby’s photographs and Indigenous contributions to pastoralism are denied.

Pulletop is not an idyllic pastoral and picturesque landscape, but a modern and productive space that openly inscribes some of the social and economic relationships on the land and in the photographs. This space is organised and disciplined and clearly effective as a means of processing large quantities of wool in the pursuit of wealth. Bayliss’s photographs of Westby’s presence at the station are not melancholic, but instead (from Westby’s point of view) celebratory, including the conspicuous celebration of leisure and wealth. The absence of melancholy suggests a detachment from the guilt of the violence of settlement. It also suggests, especially given the absence of Indigenous labour in these images, that Westby actively disavowed the contribution that Aboriginal people could make, and were keen to make, to the successful running of a pastoral station. Moreover, the absence of working Aboriginal men and women reinforce the idea that Aboriginal people could embrace work as a moral virtue. This disavowal is explicit because it is known that at least one Aboriginal man, possibly called Tipo, worked for Westby.\textsuperscript{xciv} Tipo’s
exclusion from these photographs could be for other reasons, but as Aboriginal subjects were frequently excluded from or marginalised in representations of labour, Tipo’s exclusion becomes an instance of denial of Aboriginal contributions to labour, economy and colonial settlement of the land. Although many Aboriginal people made active contributions to the running of pastoral properties and desired to own and run their own farms, their labour as willing, knowledgeable and moral was frequently denied. Instead, as Jeanette Hoorn has noted, the struggle between white man and the land was frequently represented, but not struggles between men of different races. Indeed, it is likely that the white working men on the station would have excluded Aboriginal workers from their unions and from their “working men’s paradise.” The photographs of wool production, however, also suggest some developments regarding the representation of labour and the photographer’s role in this commissioned (i.e. labouring) process.

Stacking Wool Bales onto a Cart (Figure 5) does not depict the owners and overseers of the station. Placed with Processing Wool Bales (Figure 6), both images suggest pride in physical masculine labour as well as pride in the specific job at hand as the choreographed composition emphasises the men’s effort and physique. Comparing Processing Wool Bales to Shearing Shed reveals less emphasis on the hierarchy of labour, despite the presence of foremen. Here the centrality of the workers, and the impressive effort of their labour, together with the stillness of the scene suggest that the life of the station rests in the workers’ efforts. By moving the managers to the periphery of the image and making a central striking pose of the man operating the wool press, Bayliss is able to prioritise and celebrate labour more optimistically; physical strength, here, is more important than any other facet of the production and distribution of wool.
Figure 5. Charles Bayliss, Stacking Wool Bales onto a Cart, c. 1890-7. Albumen photograph, 15.1 x 19.9 cms. Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 149.1984.3.

Figure 6. Charles Bayliss, Processing Wool Bales, c. 1890-7. Albumen photograph, 14.8 x 20.7 cms. Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 149.1984.5.
Bayliss has found a way to use his own approach in a way that suits the vision of his client. It is interesting, therefore, that Westby commissioned Bayliss to represent his property instead of, say, a painter. These photographs are markedly different to traditional painted portraits of properties for the detailed depiction of labouring and labour relationships. Bayliss’s photographs suggest admiration for the men and their labour but also celebrate Westby and his success. This is a significant change in both taste and the purpose of the images: Bayliss and Westby see the landscape in both instrumental and cultural terms. This explicit approach to the land speaks of the progress of economics and the opportunities that Australia presented for the accumulation of capital, even if that capital was ultimately to enrich European fortunes. The landed classes, moreover, could celebrate their gains in wealth and opportunities for leisure explicitly.

In similarity to Dockr’s photographs the viewing of these photographs during the 1890s and early twentieth century would have been limited to Westby, his family and possibly his social circle, and the repeated viewing of the images performs ownership and the investment in organised working environments. The album’s overall context, and its limited circulation in the nineteenth century, confirm that the Westbys had a controlling interest in the labour market and mitigates how celebratory Bayliss’s photographs can be presumed to have been on the part of the workers, especially as the men represented in these images would not have had the opportunity to see this celebration of their labour. Had the labourers been able to view the images it is difficult to know whether they would have identified with the pride in their labour or experienced anger at the privilege that exploitation of their labour enabled.

Such photographs, however, are not necessarily limited in their meaning by the context of production but also work to create meanings in the present. The points of fracture examined in these photographs (such as celebrating the importance of working men’s labour and the organised atmosphere of the shearing shed) trouble the ideological interpretations of these photographs and present opportunities for considering the nuanced and perhaps ambiguous relationship to class and wealth. In addition, the situation of these objects within Australian institutions today points to the ways in which the cultural capital of these images speaks to Australian audiences. Although Westby had capital to invest there is a sense that the photographs celebrate Westby’s increase in wealth and his success as a landowner and the photographs are
therefore suggestive of economic opportunities associated with meritocracies. The photographs consequently offer an opportunity to see these images as participants in Australian debates on the representation of the accumulation of capital, the possibility of improved economic and social standing and the sense of optimism for the development of the country. Indeed, as some of these men may well have had aspirations to own their own land, or as they may well have had their own properties but supplemented their income through seasonal itinerant work, the photographs potentially speak to a range of competing concerns regarding land and labour. It is clear, when considering these complex historical matters and the tensions within the photographs, that the Westbys do not have the final say on what the images may or may not mean and the photographs now signify beyond the photographs’ original historical context. Indeed, Processing Wool Bales is a much more evocative image than Homestead garden and ultimately Bayliss successfully negotiated the representation of both the owners and the labourers, mediating between both classes in their representations, initially to the satisfaction of Westby and perhaps now to the interest of wider audiences.

The significant exclusions, however, continue to trouble the photographs. The unacknowledged the Aboriginal labouring contributions to the property, combined with the more optimistic tone of the photographs, suggest that the guilt associated with dispossession was no longer troubling to the settler. The absence of Indigenous subjects also signify the settlers’ continuing disavowal of Aboriginal ownership of the land and disavow the contributions that Aboriginal workers made to the pastoral industry.

**Conclusion**

Joseph and Ernest Docker were able to practice photography as an expression of their education and interest in science and the arts; this coincided with their interests in depicting the landscape. Although their photographs of Thornthwaite are a rare document of a pastoral station, the photographs fulfil the conventions of the picturesque, disavowing the labour and the social relations that made Thornthwaite an economic possibility. The melancholic tone of the photographs suggest that the Dockers already saw the pastoral idyll as created in their images as part of the past, or as unsustainable and suggest unacknowledged unease at the dispossession of the
Indigenous inhabitants. Their pastoral period coincided with a period of Australian history that saw landowners as powerful social people and the construction of their images reveals their education and social prestige. However, when the power of pastoralists declined, the Dockers continued to be socially influential but moved to an urban context. The Dockers’ images of Thornthwaite contrast vividly to commercial photographs of the time, which concentrate on the progress of the successful establishment of the colony.\textsuperscript{xcix}

Bayliss’s photographs of Pulletop show a modern working and leisure landscape. This approach seems to fit with Westby’s interests in Pulletop, which were as a place of leisure, entertainment and culture as well as a source of wealth and pride. Westby and his family did not simply “make it good” in Australia: they consolidated their existing capital from merchant businesses by investing in a pastoral property. Indeed, as noted by Connell and Irving, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, social, economic and political power were associated with the merchants of the urban centres rather than with pastoralism. It is therefore entirely possible that the Westbys had therefore already acquired much of their economic and social prestige before acquiring Pulletop. This historical context of the Pulletop photographs suggests that the symbolic prestige of pastoralism was important to the Westbys. Indeed, although the population of Australia was largely urban, there was still a considerable interest in the representation of station and bush life on the part of the wider public\textsuperscript{c} and it seems that Westby was performing his own version of social prestige in relation to station life.

It is unclear how attached Westby was to this Australian landscape, especially as he returned to England repeatedly. The photographs suggest that he was attached to the production of wealth and to the station as a site of leisure. Although it cannot be established for certain that Westby and Bayliss intended a specifically Australian approach to the landscape, the description of modern working practices (the division of labour) and the explicit acknowledgement of social relations suggests that Westby and Bayliss were not concerned with all of the conventions inherited by the landed gentry. The explicit representation of the acquisition of land, wealth and the pursuit of culture was not distasteful to Westby and with Bayliss he created a record of his financial success that situated himself within the symbolic importance of land ownership and pastoralism. This suggests that the acquisition of wealth was not necessarily frowned upon and the markers of social prestige coveted.
In a contemporary context, however, Australian audiences have the opportunity to reimagine and populate Australia’s pastoral working past. This is a fraught past, evocative of labour disputes and competing desires for Australia’s working future but the photographs indicate too, a sense of confidence and ease in the creation of a pastoral working environment. The absence of the representation of Indigenous labour, however, needs to be acknowledged as a means of disavowing Aboriginal dispossession and the exclusion of Aborigines from the discourse surrounding the rights of working men.


xii Records regarding the use, distribution and responses of these images (whether spoken, written or thought) is very incomplete. Aspects of this research are therefore speculative, but hopefully realistic given the broader history of New South Wales.


xvi Willis, *Picturing Australia*, 27-35.


Willis, *Picturing Australia*, 24-35.


S. Woodman, “Dockers, Ernest Brougham (1842 - 1923)”.


Ennis argues that Bayliss is the author of his photographs in *A Modern Vision*, 5-19.


State Library of New South Wales, *Albums of View of “Thornthwaite”, Dartbrook, N.S.W.*

It could be argued that the absence of labour is the product of the very long exposures required in making images. However, it was common to pose people for photographs (as the Dockers did for their portraiture work) and the absence of people in the landscape then, cannot be attributed to technical factors alone.

Connell and Irving, *Class Structure in Australian History*, 34.


Connell and Irving, *Class Structure in Australian History*, 53.


Docker was reminisced about his time at Thornthwaite: Valdon, “Our Artistic Workers,” 235.


Sydney Morning Herald, 12 January, 1912, 10.


Riverine Club Members Register 1881-1915, Charles Sturt University Regional Archives, RW2633/7/41; Riverine Club Cash Book 1888-1899, Charles Sturt University Regional Archives, RW2633/6/27.

*Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 May, 1870, 3.


The Art Gallery of New South Wales created the titles of the photographs in their cataloguing process.


Lendon, “Ashton, Roberts and Bayliss,” 82 and 79.

Art Gallery of New South Wales, *Photography*, 2007, 48; they also compare Bayliss’s photograph to the earlier Tom Roberts’ painting *Shearing the Rams*, which also contains a smiling boy.


Connell and Irving, *Class Structure in Australian History*, 107; Cathcart, *Manning Clark’s History of Australia*, 356; the takeover of pastoral properties by banks is also recounted, 382-383.

Connell and Irving, *Class Structure in Australian History*, 112. From the 1850s onwards, according to Manning Clark, there was a concerted attempt from the bourgeoisie to be the leading influence of social life: Cathcart, *Manning Clark’s History of Australia*, 269-273.


Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, 150-152.


Willis, *Picturing Australia*, 57-71.