

*“According to the fair play of the world*

*let me have audience”:*

*Reading Convict Life-Narratives of Van Diemen’s Land*

*by*

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## ***Abstract:***

### **“According to the fair play of the world let me have audience”: Reading Convict Life-Narratives of Van Diemen’s Land.**

This thesis examines published convict life-narratives of Van Diemen’s Land. I analyse eighteen self-referential accounts of convictism, written by male transportees and published in Britain, Ireland, America or Australia during the nineteenth century. I scrutinise how convict authors gained access to public autobiographical space and how they negotiated an authoritative speaking position within that space. My approach follows the precedent of autobiography theorists like Gillian Whitlock, Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, who encourage readers of life-narrative to understand self-referential writing as an historically situated conversation between the personal and the public. I understand autobiographical narrative not as the story of a life as lived, but as a site where, as Smith and Watson suggest in *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, “the personal story of a remembered past is always in dialogue with emergent cultural formations” (83). My thesis is underpinned by the assumption that publication attests to that dialogue. I conduct an historicist reading of the narratives and use the retrievable history of each text to situate it within the historical context of its first publication.

Chapter One interrogates the narrative and material forms of each text to locate evidence of how a personal recollection of crime and convictism was shaped and packaged for commercial readership. I borrow from Whitlock’s *The*

*Intimate Empire* the notion of the “unlikely autobiographer.” I suggest that, like former slave Mary Prince, convict life-writers were disenfranchised and disempowered within the operative and discursive frameworks of convictism, which rendered their access to publication unlikely and the eighteen published accounts consequently exceptional. I identify five kinds of extra-textual conditions that facilitated the original publication of each extant narrative. I locate each text within the promotional, propagandist, political, pragmatic or historical conditions of its initial publication.

Chapter Two considers how the dictates of publication impacted upon convict writers’ autobiographical authority. Again, I borrow from readings of Mary Prince’s narrative, by both Whitlock and Moira Ferguson, which recover Prince’s agency within a highly scripted collaborative production. I argue that authorial employment of autobiographical space as a site for self-determination and self-reconstruction demonstrates some degree of protagonist and authorial agency in these texts. I then return to the notion of dialogue and consider several features of some accounts which complicate their status as autobiography. In this final discussion, I posit that convict life-narrative is a polyvocal site and that attending to this polyvocalism furnishes a fuller portrayal of the experiences, meanings and ramifications of convictism for individuals than does a reading that presumes life-narrative is a unitary utterance of a life as lived.

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***Introduction:***

***Confinement***

Campbell Town is enjoying a renaissance. The Tasmanian midlands town was established in the 1820s and, like all the state's early settlements, its development was underpinned by convict labour. Transported prisoners provided the labour force necessary to build roads, houses and bridges, to farm the land and herd the cattle and sheep, to wash clothes and cook meals for enterprising land-owners. By the early 1990s, when I lived there, Campbell Town had stagnated into a typical rural service centre, a place to stock up on groceries, pay bills, get the car or tractor serviced, send the kids to high school, but lacking the energy provided by interconnectivity with outside communities. Geographically Campbell Town marks something approximating the halfway point on the two hundred kilometre trip between Hobart and Launceston, one reason for its colonial prosperity, but in the 1990s few travellers stopped there, preferring to forego a rest stop in order to sooner reach the cities at either end of the highway. Today, however, people take the time to rest in Campbell Town. The town has reacquired its former colonial role as a coach stop, providing refreshment, replenishment and accommodation for travellers. Cafes line the main street, offering good coffee and epicurean delights. What was the newsagent is now a Subway franchise. The butcher has given way to a trendy juice bar, the mechanic to a shop boasting a glisteningly colourful array of lollies in plastic jars. Campbell Town's High Street now has the trimmings of urban modernity, yet this renaissance has not entirely obscured the town's convict past. Skirting the refurbished shop fronts, under the feet of coffee-sipping visitors, a narrow brick trail is inset in the footpath. Each brick in this trail is inscribed with a brief biographical sketch of one of the 68 000 convicts transported to Tasmania

during its fifty-year penal era. Name, offence, transport ship, date of arrival and the ultimate fate – ticket-of-leave, pardon or death – are recorded for each individual and the abutted red bricks stretch out into a chain 2½ kilometres long.

The convict trail at Campbell Town sits comfortably with other contemporary treatments of convictism at various sites around Tasmania. At Port Arthur, the state's premiere tourist destination, a new interpretative methodology was implemented in 1999 to "add a human element to a place which had subjected convicts to dehumanising conditions" (Strange 6).<sup>1</sup> When visitors buy their tickets they are assigned a convict identity, represented on a mock playing card which contains summary biographical details and a cartoon portrait of a man once incarcerated at the establishment. This card guides the patron through the interpretation gallery in Port Arthur's visitors' centre, an intermediary space between the car park and the historic site itself. The "Lottery of Life" exhibition is designed both to improve visitor interactivity at the site and to facilitate reinterpretation of the familiar myths about Van Diemen's Land convictism. Carolyn Strange comments that "by introducing individual convicts' stories of triumph and not just tragedy, the gruesome image of dehumanising punishment was modified and moderated" (2). This is in stark contrast to an advertisement for

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<sup>1</sup> Port Arthur is 60 km south of Hobart on the Tasman Peninsula. Guarded by shark-infested waters and a chain of vicious dogs, the settlement quickly occupied the popular imagination as a place of suffering and horror. Port Arthur began as a timber station in 1830 and was established as a place of secondary punishment by Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur in 1833. In the 1840s and 50s, a period of change in penal administration throughout the colony, Port Arthur became a site of experimentation in criminal rehabilitation along Benthamite ideals, including a panopticon and a Separate or Model Prison, where sensory deprivation techniques were instituted to prohibit all contact between prisoners. Port Arthur closed in 1877 due to the dwindling number of prisoners after the 1853 cessation of transportation. The settlement was subdivided for private ownership in the 1880s and by 1890 many buildings were being used to provide accommodation to meet the demands of the emerging tourist trade. The site was ravaged by bushfires in 1895 and 1897. In 1916, certain ruins were reserved and placed under the control of the Scenery Preservation Board, becoming Australia's first historic site (Alexander 285-86).

the Port Arthur Historic Site printed on the back of a 1991 Tasmanian street directory. Black and white photographic portraits of six aberrant individuals stare up harrowingly from under a heading that challenges, “Would you ask directions to Port Arthur from any of these gentlemen?” Presumably not, since the advertisement also records the offences committed by the six men, and William Turner, sentenced for life for “shooting with intent” looks like a particularly nasty character (*Tasmania: Cities and Towns*). But visit Port Arthur today, some sixteen years after this advertisement was in circulation, and similar characters are likely to be your trustworthy guides, their misadventures parcelled out conveniently on a palm-sized card so you can travel with, engage with and sympathise with some of Port Arthur’s former inmates.

Visitors interested in Tasmania’s convict heritage can patronise other penal establishments, relics or repositories of memory around the island: the female factories at South Hobart and Ross, the Watchhouse at George Town or the abandoned buildings on Maria Island, all sites recently renovated and revitalised through the telling of individual stories. The current interpretative tools and methodologies which focus on the individual and personal stories of convict lives are part of what Kevin Walsh labels the “empathetic re-creation” technique of heritage tourism, an increasingly popular, though historically problematic, practice emergent in the 1990s (101-02).

The phenomenon is not confined to tourism. Employing a convict voice or a convict story to interpret Australian history and / or Australian identity has been a recurrent practice in Australian fiction. Graeme Turner argues that

imprisonment, particularised in Australia as convictism, is a “rich source of imagery and meaning within Australian culture, and in its specific meanings, as well as its wider application, it provides us with a central paradigm for the depiction of the self in Australian narrative” (60). Laurie Hergenhan, in his introduction to *Unnatural Lives: Studies in Australian Convict Fiction*, similarly indicates the importance of the convict trope in Australian fiction, contending that the “convict theme has offered writers special possibilities,” evidenced by the “comparatively high quality of the fiction about convicts” in relation to fiction about other historical subjects, such as pioneering life on the land, bushranging or interactions between the indigenous and settler populations (1). Hergenhan’s study, originally published in 1983 and appearing in a second unaltered edition ten years later, is a survey of fiction about convicts with an historicist aim: “to explore changes and continuities of representation and how these were in turn shaped by changes in society and literary production” (xi). Hergenhan charts these changes across a century of convict fiction, from James Tucker’s *Ralph Rashleigh* (written around 1845, but not published until a century later) to Patrick White’s *A Fringe of Leaves* (1976).

Fictional treatments of convictism, and particularly of Tasmanian convictism, have continued to engage writers and since the publication of White’s novel many works, popular or critically acclaimed or both, have been published. Three recently published books employ the empathetic re-creation methodology currently dominant in Tasmanian tourism, taking the life of an historically verifiable Van Diemen’s Land transportee and refiguring that life through fiction.

Bryce Courtenay's hugely popular *The Potato Factory* (1995), together with its two sequels (produced as a highly successful television miniseries in 2000), chronicles an imagined life of Isaac "Ikey" Solomon and his fictional progeny; Andrew Motion's *Wainwright the Poisoner* (2000) creatively constructs a story for Thomas Griffiths Wainwright, the Romantic artist turned poisoner transported to Van Diemen's Land for life; and Richard Flanagan produces a fictional autobiography of convict artist William Buelow Gould in *Gould's Book Of Fish* (2001). These contemporary convict fictions give a voice and a story to real characters in history. But what did convicts say for themselves, without the twenty-first-century writers or tourist practitioners ventriloquising their lived experience into fiction? How did convict authors tell their own stories? And to whom did they tell these stories and acquire the audience so coveted by J.F. Mortlock in the epigraph to his *Experiences of a Convict, Transported for Twenty-One Years* (1864-65), which this thesis adopts as its title? I explore these questions by examining eighteen published life-narratives about Van Diemen's Land purportedly written by convicts transported to the colony.

As Lucy Frost and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart demonstrate in *Chain Letters: Narrating Convict Lives*, transported men and women employed diverse means, both textual and non-textual, to compose and communicate autobiographical accounts of convictism. These stories assumed narrative and material forms as wide-ranging as love tokens and tattoos through to letters and oral stories and enabled their authors to share personal experiences of transportation with local or intimate audiences. Love tokens, tattoos, letters, diaries, oral accounts, pamphlets



and books were all sites for convicts' autobiographical acts. Phillipe Lejeune defines autobiography as the "retrospective narrative in prose that someone makes of his own existence when he puts the principal accent upon his life, especially upon the story of his own personality" (13). But as Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson demonstrate in *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, autobiography as a discrete genre is only one form that self-referential narrative can assume. Autobiography, Smith and Watson argue, is a "term for a particular practice of life narrative that emerged in the Enlightenment and has become canonical in the West" (3). Autobiography, alongside memoir, testimonio, apology and countless other terms, designates only one of many different kinds and contexts of self-referential writing.

Some nineteenth-century convict accounts fit the conventions of autobiography. Some do not. Consequently, I adopt a flexible definition of self-referential writing in this study of published convict life-narratives, following the terminology employed by Smith and Watson in *Reading Autobiography*. Here, life-writing, life-narrative and autobiography are used as distinct categories rather than as synonymous or interchangeable terms. To paraphrase Smith and Watson, *life-writing* is an umbrella term for any writing that takes a life as its subject, including biographies, novels or histories. The recent convict fiction by Courtenay, Motion and Flanagan are examples of life-writing. *Life-narrative* distinguishes the writing of one's own life from that of another's. Life-narrative is a narrower term than life-writing but includes within it the many and diverse kinds of self-referential writing, including autobiography as well as memoir, recollection,

meditation, travel narrative, oral history and captivity narrative and the more contemporary manifestations of self-referential narrative, such as oughtabiography, ecobiography and autoethnography.<sup>2</sup> The inclusiveness of life-narrative renders the term most appropriate for this study, which examines self-referential accounts by convicts composed in variant narrative forms. In the criticism and theory of life-writing, however, “autobiographical” is often used as an adjective synonymous with “self-referential”. I use autobiographical in this way.

Of the 68 000 men and women shipped to Van Diemen’s Land in its transportation era, a mere twenty-three – all men – had their recollections of the experience published as autobiographical narrative. These exceptional instances of public story-telling are the focus of this study. What enabled these few individuals to have their stories published and shared with a public audience? I address this question in Chapter One. By delineating the narrative and material form of these convict life-narratives, I locate each text in the historical context of its original publication to demonstrate how convict writers gained access to a public speaking position and an audience. Chapter Two considers issues of authority and agency. How, in the face of the editorial, technical and commercial demands of publication, did convict authors find or retain sufficient autonomy to tell their own story? I begin by reading each account for evidence of agency, both on the part of

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<sup>2</sup> Smith and Watson identify each of these self-referential forms in Appendix One of *Reading Autobiography*. Oughtabiography, coined by Chon Noriega, designates life-narrative that focuses on all the things one should have done. Ecobiography refers to those narratives that link the story of the protagonist with that of the “fortunes, conditions, geography and ecology of a region” and reflect on the connection of self and place. Autoethnography is a mode where colonised subjects collaborate with or appropriate a coloniser’s discursive models to represent themselves in literature (185-99).

the narrative protagonist contesting the power relations encoded within penal discourse and practice and on that of the author accepting, resisting or rejecting the confines of the narrative form. But the convict authors share even this autonomous space with their editors and others who facilitate publication. The second part of Chapter Two looks for the multiple voices evident in these narratives, the whispers of the editor, amanuensis or scribe that echo in the text.

I examine eighteen works, distinguished by being self-referential accounts published in the nineteenth century that depict a lived experience of Van Diemen's Land penal life. These narratives have not, to date, been the subject of close literary analysis. Some, particularly those by the Canadian Patriots,<sup>3</sup> have been studied as historically significant documents (Cassandra Pybus and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart's *American Citizens, British Slaves: Yankee Political Prisoners in an Australian Penal Colony 1839-1850* is primarily based upon Patriots' autobiographical narratives) but no study of these texts as sites of literary self-expression has been undertaken. Only one of the eighteen texts purports to be "autobiography," but the titles of the remaining books situate the works as unarguably self-referential. John Broxup and Samuel Cockney dub their respective narratives a "Life," William Gates pens "Recollections," while J.F. Mortlock furnishes his readers with "Experiences of a convict" in an "autobiographical memoir." "Narrative," "true account" and "true history" are also terms that recur among the titles of Van Diemen's Land convict narratives. All these accounts,

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<sup>3</sup> The Canadian Patriots were ninety-two American citizens transported to Van Diemen's Land as political prisoners in 1840 after their participation in a rebellion against the colonial government in Upper Canada in 1838. Nearly all surviving members of this group were pardoned and returned to America by 1848 (Pybus 1).

despite the variations among their titles, bear the mark of autobiographical production: the narrating “I” who tells the tale and who is a referent of the real historical person whose signature appears on the cover page. The narratives I study include accounts by both common felons (mostly convicted of property offences) and political prisoners from England, Ireland and America. The texts are authored by men of various ages, from different backgrounds, transported for a miscellany of offences and deployed to numerous locations across the colony. Consequently, the corpus encompasses a diversity of convict experience. Tolpuddle martyr George Loveless, transported to Van Diemen’s Land in 1834 for administering illegal oaths, worked as a stockman and shepherd at the Government farm during his incarceration and received a conditional pardon in 1837, a result of agitation by supporters at home.<sup>4</sup> Loveless’s narrative, *The Victims of Whiggery* (1838), is examined alongside *A Burglar’s Life, or, the Stirring Adventures of the Great English Burglar Mark Jeffrey* (1893), a collaborative narrative detailing the life of Mark Jeffrey, an inveterate and aggressive felon, who arrived at Norfolk Island in 1849 at the age of twenty-four, was transferred to Van Diemen’s Land in 1855 and spent about thirty years moving in and out of Van Diemen’s Land’s many prisons and probation stations.<sup>5</sup> The representation of such disparate experiences makes

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<sup>4</sup> The Tolpuddle Martyrs is an appellation given to the six agricultural labourers from the Dorsetshire village of Tolpuddle who were sentenced to transportation in 1834 for administering illegal oaths. The men had formed the Tolpuddle Lodge of the Agricultural Labourers Friendly Society and the convicted men and their supporters contended that the harsh sentence was designed to stamp out agricultural unionism (Marlow 110). The tag “Tolpuddle Martyrs” was not applied to the group until trade unionist celebrations marked the centenary of the labourers’ conviction. Until this time, they were known as the Dorchester Labourers (Englander 50).

<sup>5</sup> Norfolk Island, situated over 14 000 km north-east of Sydney, was the site of two penal settlements. The first closed in 1814 and the residents were moved to Van Diemen’s Land. The second was infamous. Operating between 1825 and 1856, the island was a place of extreme punishment for transportees who were convicted of further crimes in the colonies. It gained a

different demands of narrative structure and shape. Accordingly, the works selected here encompass a range of narrative and material forms. Authors have adopted and adapted narrative forms, such as the warning narrative, memoir or the apology, to shape their experience into story. These stories have been published in many formats, from cheap pamphlets, to newspaper serials, to substantial chaptered texts. All are included in this study and their differences critically considered as evidence of how experiences of convictism were transformed into communicable and publishable narrative.

This project positions publication as the occasion when a convict gains exceptional access to an authoritative discursive position. Consequently, I privilege published texts and make some necessary exclusions, despite the inclusiveness of life-narrative, which permits my examination of divergent narrative and material forms. Unpublished manuscripts are omitted from this study. Letters and diaries, even if published and sold to a reading public as many nineteenth-century examples were, are also excluded. Ostensibly personal writings, such as letters and diaries and similar forms, are characterised by their periodic composition and authorial immediacy, which derives from the writer's "lack of foreknowledge about outcomes of the plot of his life" (Smith and Watson 193). The narrative parameters and autobiographical subjects of these forms differ markedly from those of the otherwise disparate genres of testimony, memoir, apology, warning narrative or autobiography drawn together in life-narrative. These latter narrative modes share a compositional framework that requires an

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reputation as an "island hell." The settlement was under the jurisdiction of New South Wales until 1844 when it was handed over to the Van Diemen's Land administration (Davison, Hirst and Macintyre 473).

author to look back over his or her lived experience and construct one coherent narrative of that life. Letters and diaries, on the other hand, consist of numerous instalments composed periodically from within that experience. The respective narrative trajectories and autobiographical subjects of letters and diaries are so dissimilar to those of life-narratives that the two forms cannot both be adequately examined within the confines of this study. Consequently, Benjamin Wait's *Letters from Van Dieman's [sic] Land Written During Four Years' Imprisonment for Political Offences Committed in Upper Canada* (1843), T.F.'s *The Horrors of Transportation as Narrated in Letters from a Convict, Van Diemen's Land* (1849) and John Mitchel's *Jail Journal; or Five Years in British Prisons* (1854) are excluded from my analysis.

A second exclusion is that of narratives that do not depict a lived experience of Van Diemen's Land penal life. Van Diemen's Land was a particularly notorious penal colony in the nineteenth century, a notoriety with a demonstrated legacy in contemporary literature and tourism. The appropriation of convict biography to reframe convictism in these two settings makes hearing convicts' own stories about their penal experiences compelling. Accordingly, James Porter's *A Narrative of the Sufferings and Adventures of Certain of the Ten Convicts, Who Piratically Seized the Brig "Frederick"* (1838) and William Jackman's *The Australian Captive; or an Authentic Narrative of Fifteen Years in the Life of William Jackman* (1853), although set in part in Van Diemen's Land, are excluded from this study because no portrayal of penal experience occurs in

either text.<sup>6</sup> Some of the authors of the eighteen selected texts resided in other colonies, either as prisoners or as free men after being granted pardons, but all figure Van Diemen's Land as the predominant location of the protagonist's penal experience. Published convict life-narratives set in other penal colonies, in Australia or elsewhere in the British dominions, would benefit from a similar analysis, but this is beyond the scope of my current study. Similarly, my project examines only English language accounts even though comparable narratives have more than likely been composed in other languages.

Female convicts were not able to access the authority required for publication of their autobiographical narratives and their stories are consequently absent from this study. Autobiography as a discrete genre is traditionally androcentric, but even employing the flexible framework of life-narrative does not create sufficient space to bring women's narratives within my research parameters. No autobiographical narratives by female convicts were published in the period. Larry E. Sullivan suggests in his edited collection *Bandits and Bibles: Convict Literature in Nineteenth Century America* that the absence of accounts authored by female felons from the catalogues of American publishing houses reflects the brevity of the sentences females received, sentences so short that the female criminal did not have the time to write a life-narrative (20). But Sullivan's reasoning ignores other obstructions to women's access to publication and, consequently, he overlooks the spaces and sites where female inmates were able to

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<sup>6</sup> Porter's narrative recounts the 1833 Macquarie Harbour mutiny in which the author participated. Jackman, who was not a transportee but was imprisoned for three months in the Launceston jail in 1836 for deserting his ship, devotes his narrative to detailing his experience of living with Aborigines on Nuyts Archipelago.

compose life stories. Some female convicts in Van Diemen's Land, as Lucy Frost explains, narrated their lives from within the confines of incarceration, rather than from without as their male counterparts did, or composed oral stories for intimate and immediate audiences (79, 90). The narratives that female transportees could construct during their incarceration in Van Diemen's Land, or after their sentence expired and they returned home or began a life as free women in Australia, were not scripted in the public ways that this project investigates.

Male convicts' access to the discursive position required and reinforced by publication was typically fleeting and the convict authors' writing careers seldom extended beyond the production of the one autobiographical text.<sup>7</sup> This transience is symptomatic of the authorship and the conception of prisoners' narratives, as Sullivan observes:

Since [prisoners'] books are outgrowths of their prison experience, an experience that to them is singular and often the product of culture shock, these convicts usually author only one book, of a quality that condemns it to one printing and quick public oblivion. (17)

Though Van Diemen's Land convict autobiographers rarely wrote more than one book, the texts they produced had a better chance of survival than other prison narratives. Some Van Diemen's Land convict life-narratives have attained subsequent publication in the twentieth or twenty-first centuries because of their historical significance. Several accounts have been resurrected in monograph or facsimile publications, typically produced by small, independent publishers, while

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<sup>7</sup> Appendix Two records all other published works by Van Diemen's Land's convict autobiographers. Four authors produced one text in addition to their autobiographical narrative. Only Jorgenson and Mortlock published more than one additional text.



three narratives have appeared in scholarly or critical twentieth-century editions.<sup>8</sup> Given that many of the eighteen texts have a complex publication history, appearing in multiple editions or alternate versions over a century or more, a consistent approach is required. I am interested in the moment when a convict was enabled to make an entry into the public, published domain. Accordingly, I give priority to the original edition, the first appearance of a published convict life-narrative. Twentieth-century facsimiles and monographs have been used where access to original texts is limited or impossible and only where these later versions are verifiable and reliable reproductions of the original publications. Reworkings of narratives – such as *The Convict King*, J.F. Hogan's 1891 abridged version of Jorgen Jorgenson's memoir – are omitted from this study.<sup>9</sup> Original editions have been identified using a number of research and bibliographic tools, including the Austlit database and Kay Walsh and Joy Hooton's enormously helpful and comprehensive *Australian Autobiographical Narratives*, an annotated bibliography of nineteenth-century Australian life-narrative.

Fourteen of the texts were originally published in Britain, Ireland or America (in the case of the Patriot narratives), being written and published after the felons completed their sentences and returned home. The fact of a return itself sets these particular authors apart from the tens of thousands of other transportees shipped to the antipodes. Repatriation of men and women transported from Britain

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<sup>8</sup> Appendix One details the publication histories of each of the eighteen nineteenth-century convict life-narratives about Van Diemen's Land.

<sup>9</sup> Sarah Blakewell alludes to the difficulties of nomenclature attached to this author. Following the practice in her biography, *The English Dane* (2005), and in accordance with the spelling of the author's name in the 1981 Sullivan's Cove edition of *A Shred of Autobiography*, I employ the Anglophone form Jorgen Jorgenson. Jorgenson adopted the Anglicised form himself, first used in 1817 with the publication of his *Travels through France and Germany* in London.

to Australia was rare: the rate of return was about five per cent after 1820 (Shaw 143). Those who did return, however, had markedly better access to publication opportunities. Book publishing was slow to prosper in colonial Australia, due in part to the predominance of “colonial editions”: books specifically produced for Australian readers by British publishing houses, exported to Australia and sold at such discounted prices that local publishers found it impossible to compete. Elizabeth Webby explains that “most nineteenth-century Australian literary works continued to be published in Britain; local publication usually meant publication at the author’s expense or, at best, by obtaining subscriptions from friends and relatives” (“Colonial Writers and Readers” 54). Local newspapers, however, flourished and it was here that many fledgling Australian writers were first able to publish their poetry, essays, short stories or extracts from novels (55). Four Van Diemen’s Land convict life-narratives were published in Australia, all in association with regional newspapers. Jorgen Jorgenson’s *A Shred of Autobiography* (1835 and 1838) was published, like James Porter’s account, in *The Hobart Town Almanack*, a periodical produced under the proprietorship of Hobart newsmen Dr James Ross and, later, William Gore Elliston. William Derricourt’s *Old Convict Days* (1899) and John Leonard’s narrative (1859) were both initially published in colonial newspapers. Mark Jeffrey’s *A Burglar’s Life* was published by the office of *The Examiner*, Launceston’s long-running daily.

In such multifarious and sometimes ephemeral publishing contexts, questions about authorship and authenticity inevitably arise. Purportedly convict-authored texts are not always what they claim to be. As Hamish Maxwell-Stewart

warns historians using prisoners' tales, "upon close scrutiny few, if any narratives, have a serious claim to being authentic convict voices" ("The Search for the Convict Voice" 78). Editorial intervention, collaborative authorship and outright frauds complicate the extent to which convict narratives can be regarded as bona fide accounts by transported men. Several of the texts included in this project, such as those attributed to Jeffrey and Derricourt, were ostensibly taken down by faithful scribes, who moulded and massaged raw material into a structured and entertaining narrative. Editors shaping manuscripts for publication often made substantial changes to the narrative (John Leonard's narrative, for instance, was patently altered) or, in some instances, produced entirely fraudulent accounts, like those attributed to the apparently fictional Thomas Page and Henry Easy.

I am not particularly interested in historical authenticity in this study. I view the intrusion of editors, amanuenses, ghostwriters or opportunistic hoaxers into convicts' autobiographical space not as disruptions of historical accuracy or autobiographical validity, but as demonstrations of how the personal becomes published. I have conducted archival research to ascertain the historical status of all eighteen authors, checking registers to substantiate the arrival in Van Diemen's Land of each supposed author and obtaining his convict record in order to establish which texts could be fraudulent life-narratives. Invariably, some individuals evade capture in official records in one way or another, even within the panoptic surveillance and rigorous documentation of Van Diemen's Land penal administration. Accordingly, I have used archival evidence indicatively, rather than conclusively, in gauging the veracity or otherwise of these purportedly

autobiographical accounts. I am similarly reticent to read the narratives through the scope of such evidence. No attempt has been made to match the narrative events with official records as a “truth test” of the narrator’s account. Such an enterprise would be underpinned by an assumption that truth and fact define autobiographical authenticity. Self-referential writing of necessity must have some confluence with an actual lived experience. As Lejeune puts it in his famous definition of the autobiographical pact, autobiography is founded upon a contract of identity between the author and reader, guaranteeing that the narrator and the author whose signature appears on the title page are one in the same (14). Yet, as subsequent theorists have pointed out, this requirement for congruence does not translate into a simple fact versus fiction binary. The life recounted, composed and constructed in the text exists within the domain of the imagined, the reconstructed and the literary. Philip Rawlings, scholar of British criminal biography, offers a succinct warning against readings which equate the life as lived with the life created in a text: “Even if a writer attempts to describe something, the description will never be the thing itself: a description of a tree is not a tree” (13).

This project accepts that fact and fiction are not easily nor necessarily divisible in life-writing and follows Gillian Whitlock’s approach in *Autographs: Contemporary Australian Autobiography*. She insists that life-narrative should be read in a way that focuses not only on experience and authenticity “but also on complexities of personality, identity, narrative forms, and how social, cultural and political formations are taken up in texts” (“Introduction: Disobedient Subjects” xxi). In my study, verifiable authenticity is less important than the narrative

shaping and material packaging necessitated by publication and its impact upon autobiographical authority. Spurious “true accounts,” whether outright frauds or accounts that deliver a highly imaginative version of events when compared to the supposedly factual evidence in convict records, might not possess historical accuracy, but they do illustrate the dialogic processes that are involved in autobiographical acts.

Whitlock’s approach recognises that life-narratives are always in dialogue with the society in which they are composed and published. The eighteen convict life-narratives examined in this study were written and published during a period that saw the dramatic growth in literacy in Britain. David Vincent’s examination of the spread of literacy in nineteenth-century England, *Literacy and Popular Culture: England 1750-1914*, demonstrates that this development was a complex and gradual one, beyond the scope of this project to discuss in detail. In summary, though, Vincent states that in the middle of the eighteenth century, half the English population could not write, but by the outbreak of World War I, over ninety-nine per cent of brides and grooms possessed sufficient command of literacy to place their own signature on the marriage register (*Literacy and Popular Culture* 1). Equating a one-off signature on a marriage certificate with fully realised literacy is problematic, but Vincent also documents the rapid expansion of the reading market and associated infrastructure. As readers became proficient, mass production techniques became practicable, books became cheaper and more were sold. Well-patronised circulating libraries, newsagents, coffeehouses and

Mechanics' Institutes appeared around Britain, and throughout the Empire, facilitating the obtainment of and engagement with literature of all kinds.

The expansion of literacy had a corollary in autobiographical writing. Self-referential writing in its manifold forms underwent a veritable explosion in nineteenth-century Britain. Smith and Watson trace this increase of autobiographical output to the eighteenth century, a time of a “democratization of the institution of life writing” in Britain and in the American colonies, where “more and more people – merchants, criminals, middle-class women, ex-slaves – turned to life narratives as a means to know themselves and position themselves within the social world” (97). Britain’s working-class, a demographic from which Van Diemen’s Land’s convict population was substantially derived, employed autobiographical narratives to achieve these purposes. Vincent’s *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working Class [sic] Autobiography* is an extensive and lengthy study of working-class testimony focusing on the myriad memoirs, apologies, narratives or lives produced by so many working-class citizens between 1790 and 1850. Autobiographical acts by individuals within this demographic facilitated the social positioning of the labouring classes through new textual subjectivities. Middle-class autobiographers, argues Regenia Gagnier in *Subjectivities: A History of Self-Representation in Britain, 1832-1920*, communicated a life story through the developmental framework of the “classic realist” mode, tracing the protagonist’s progression through childhood, formal education and attainment of social standing. The accordant subject, dubbed by Gagnier the “modern literary subject: a mixture of

introspective self-reflexivity, middle-class familialism and genderization, and liberal autonomy,” excluded working-class individuals who had a very different experience of family life, childhood and education (31). Working-class autobiographers of the period constructed subjects characterised by rhetorical modesty and passivity in the face of economic determinism (42-43). These divergent subjectivities are evident in the eighteen narratives I examine. Nine of Van Diemen’s Land’s convict autobiographers came from middle-class or professional backgrounds and nine from working-class backgrounds.

The nineteenth-century flood of life-writing was not confined to the established centres of Britain, Europe or America. The expanding British Empire prompted its own surge of life-writing activity, both private and public. Joy Hooton argues that for both free and indentured European arrivals in Australia, the “revolutionary” event of coming to the new colonies “inspired numerous individuals, who doubtless would never have become autobiographers had they stayed at home, with a compulsion to describe that experience” (1: 2). Non-fictional works about the colony – accounts of the settlements, travel narratives, sketches of exploration, histories, biographies and autobiographies – were published and read outside of Australia, mostly in London. An eager market existed for information about the far-flung colony, as the sales history of Australia’s first international best-seller, Watkin Tench’s *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay* (1789), demonstrates. First published in London in 1789, *Expedition* “went through three editions in London, two in Paris and one each of Dublin, New York, Amsterdam and Frankfurt” within one year (Webby,

“Writers, Printers, Readers” 115). The impact of empire also produced familiar and widely disseminated narrative patterns to capture and communicate the experiences of some of imperialism’s victims. Self-referential narratives testifying to the inhumanity of slavery were in wide circulation in both Britain and America by the mid-nineteenth century and performed important propagandist work in the Abolitionist campaign. Captivity narratives publicly recounted experiences of the captives and captivities that constituted “the underbelly of British empire” to English, American, Canadian and sometimes Australian audiences and detailed an individual’s journey from capture through to release, ransom or escape (Colley 4). These disparate narrative models all encode strategies for communicating the distant and unfamiliar to a home audience and as such furnished convict authors and their readers with ready and familiar patterns of emplotment for conveying stories of transgression and exile. This thesis considers how convict life-narratives participated with these imperial narrative frames, particularly in how the narratives of empire furnished a discursive position from which the disenfranchised individual could speak and act autonomously.

A more obvious narrative precedent for convict life-narrative was the longstanding tradition of crime literature. Literature about crime enjoyed immense popularity among British readers, a fascination which began as early as the sixteenth century (Baker 5). Crime literature appeared in numerous guises, from ephemera such as newspaper articles, pamphlets, tracts, chapbooks and broadsides to more substantial texts such as novels, prison calendars and philosophical treatises. In Britain and Ireland, crime literature found its core readership in the



same social group that published it – “tradespeople, lawyers, clergy, doctors and so forth who composed the middling classes” (Rawlings 4). Tastes and texts were imported into Australia by colonial readers and crime literature remained a staple in colonial reading lists. Mr Andrew Thompson’s request printed in the *Sydney Gazette* on 16 December 1804 attests to this. The Hawkesbury settler appealed for the return of some ten volumes which had been borrowed from him, “but from forgetfulness have neglected to be returned.” Among the listed items are two volumes of the “Newgate Kalendar” (Webby, “English Literature in Early Australia: 1820-1829” 267).<sup>10</sup>

Rawlings and other scholars delineate criminal biography as a subgenre of pre-twentieth-century crime literature, a category made distinct by the formulaic narrative patternings of such biographies and inclusive of both biographical and autobiographical writing, though autobiographical narratives typically proved spurious (1). Criminal biography characteristically includes documentation of the protagonist’s descent into sin and vice and his or her early unlawful career, as well as an account of capture, trial and punishment. Rumination upon suffering and reformation is entwined with these events, but the depiction of adventure and roguery predominates. Rawlings, while recognising that reliable sales figures do not exist to assist modern researchers in accurately ascertaining the popularity of criminal biography, suggests that anecdotal evidence and the sheer number of different titles surviving today gives an indication of the enormous appeal of the

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<sup>10</sup> The Ordinary of Newgate’s *Accounts* – biographical sketches of Newgate’s condemned prisoners – were regularly sold in a compendium publication known as the *Newgate Calendar*.

genre (1-2). A.W. Baker, whose investigation of convict literature *Death Is A Good Solution: The Convict Experience in Early Australia* is exclusively interested in literary depictions of Australian convictism, illustrates how British criminal biography operated as a model for divergent forms of Australian convict literature. For Baker, criminal biography provides a narrative template for writers of all convict discourse, from accounts composed within the records and registers of officialdom, to fiction about convicts, to accounts written by convicts themselves in narratives, letters and recollections (passim). But convictism was a multifaceted phenomenon, incorporating not only experiences of crime and punishment, but also of exile, captivity and indentured labour. Baker's analysis overlooks the significance of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century forms such as the captivity narrative, the slave narrative and travel narratives of various kinds which provided convict authors with other appropriate narrative models to communicate the multifarious aspects of their transportation experience.

This thesis is interlaced by an interesting theoretical tension. It couples post-structuralist autobiography theory – which represents a paradigm shift in understandings of the subject – with archival and historical contextualisation of subjectivity, authorship and publication akin to the work of new historicism. Like contemporary life-writing theorists, I discount the various myths of autobiography's singularity, monologic coherency and capacity to transparently represent a unified, sovereign subject, but I bring a contemporary understanding of life-writing and subjectivity to bear on texts that were composed and conceptualised within a quite different framework. My reading is an historicist

one, placing the convict life-narratives in the material and ideological conditions of their original production, but the concept of the irreducible, sovereign self was part of that nineteenth-century material and ideological situation. This tension is not resolved in the work of the thesis, but presents a productive dynamic for considering the dialogic nature and socio-temporal situatedness of autobiographical acts.

The biographical bricks of Campbell Town's convict trail reduce individual stories to a bald statement of a crime and a punishment. This is criminal biography in its most rudimentary expression. Each transportee is individualised, yet each man and woman's micro-biography is restricted to the narrative events that define and demarcate the story of his or her convictism. The playing card identity issued with entry tickets to Port Arthur similarly constrains the story able to be told about each prisoner represented in the interpretation gallery. Like the bricks, the physical dimensions of the playing card confine narrative scope, but the purpose for which the narrative is produced also limits the articulation of stories. As Strange states, the "Lottery of Life" exhibition was instituted to challenge conventional portrayals and preconceptions of the penal settlement by encouraging visitors to comprehend the site as a place of industry, rather than punishment. The decision to emphasise the 1830s industrial period meant that "work details superseded other possible criteria for selection" of the fifty-two biographies required in the gallery and other elements of their biographies, the crimes and punishments associated with the individual men, for example, are downplayed or omitted (19). The use of convict biography in empathetic re-creation

methodologies, then, can be something of an historical and narrative imprisonment. These techniques do remind us, a century and a half later, of the individuals who came to Van Diemen's Land as prisoners, who built the roads, bridges, houses and churches, who fostered the population, but the resurrection is also another sentence. It is a commemoration, not a voice; a record, not a story. The published narratives transportees left behind them, however, do record a story. If we attend to these publications closely, we hear not only one voice, but those of the many embedded in the act and process of publication: the reading public, the editors, the publishers and the public's taste and interest. And we can read for the convict authors' interactions with these multiple voices and agendas – sometimes resistant, sometimes compliant – but always evincing an interaction which more staunchly demarcates individuality than a mute inscription on a brick tablet.

## ***Chapter One***

### ***Access: The Autobiographical Moment***

Convicts were outcasts. They were double exiles, simultaneously ostracised as social pariahs and geographically expelled from Britain and Ireland as deportees. Transportation's punitive features – banishment, drab uniforms, head shaving, penal servitude and corporal discipline – cumulatively disempowered and disenfranchised errant men and women. Transportees were unlikely autobiographers, to echo Gillian Whitlock (*Intimate Empire* 12).

Despite popular imaginings of the convict population as underprivileged, unskilled and uneducated, literary ability was less of an obstacle to convict authorship than were issues of access and authority. Stephen Nicholas's statistical analysis of New South Wales convict indents reveals convict literacy rates. Half the English male convicts transported to New South Wales could read and write. Somewhat less than half the Irish male convicts and sixty-five per cent of Scottish male transportees possessed these skills (75). It is likely that these estimations are applicable to the Van Diemen's Land prisoner population given that it drew upon the same socio-geographic pools as New South Wales's convict arrivals. These rates are higher than those for the average English worker at the time and higher than the contemporary British prison population (Nicholas 76). Transportees were often employed as clerks or school teachers in the Australian colonies and much scholarship about life in Australia's penal era draws upon surviving letters written by male and female prisoners.

While he probably possessed the ability, a convict's capacity to achieve autobiographical authority was more problematic. Punitively disempowered and disenfranchised, transported men and women lacked access to a public voice. They

were effectively silenced, in the terms of Ross Chambers's theorising of oppositional narrative: deprived of the power of speech through their marginalisation and their "exclusion from the powerful discursive positions of 'preexisting' socially derived authority" (4). Only twenty-three male transportees had autobiographical accounts of Van Diemen's Land published, attaining a discursive position Chambers equates with "an immense amplification of the power of speech" (3-4). The existence of these narratives, then, testifies to an exceptional moment of access. Whitlock's reading of ex-slave Mary Prince's 1831 narrative recognises the importance of publication by employing an approach that views the text as "a record of how an unlikely autobiographer can gain access" to a reading public (*Intimate Empire* 12). I undertake a similar reading of published Van Diemen's Land convict life-narratives.

Book historians Thomas R. Adams and Nicolas Barker propose that the decision to publish, not the writing of a text, is the first step in the creation of a book (18). A story needs to be concordant with what the book-buying audience wants to read and with how that audience reads before it can make the transition from manuscript to book. I contend that a narrative's capacity for publication is dependent on its communicability and its saleability. Books, in both their material and narrative forms, are artefacts of reception.

I examine the narrative models convict authors adopted, either voluntarily or by compulsion, to illuminate how they rendered their personal stories communicable to a wider audience. The warning narrative form, for example, allowed convict writers to package salacious and anti-social material as edifying

counsel to those who might err, assuming the form of a moral tale to ensure the reading of otherwise lurid narratives was rendered acceptable (Maxwell-Stewart, “Seven Tales for a Man with Seven Sides” 69). The apology form had a comparable function, allowing a transgressive individual to recount his misdeeds in detail within his textual justification of them. I also consider the material form of each publication to discern how the narrative appeared to its original readers and buyers in order to situate it in its particular historical context. As Gerard Genette demonstrates, the text proper is only one component of a book. It is the text’s paratexts – its title, cover, title page, prefaces, appendices, notes, advertising and promotion – that facilitate its status as a book (1). My examination of the narrative and material forms of each extant text illuminates the processes by which convict authors secured a speaking position and an audience.

The publication of a narrative encodes how an unlikely autobiographer gains access to a public, an entry into the public domain which I term the “autobiographical moment.” This term refers to the occasion of a convict narrative’s publication, the transformative point at which the personal narrative became a public text and the convict writer attained an authoritative speaking position. The term also encapsulates the brevity of the individual writing careers of these convict autobiographers, the majority of whom produced only one published text. Like the men and women who wrote slave narratives in Britain and the United States, most convict autobiographers were “called into being by the needs of the genre, and existed only within its conventions” (Couser 125).



Autobiographical moments are generated by extra-textual conditions – by the political and social formations and the popular tastes and trends that determine what gets published. The narrative and material forms of an extant text, in evincing a manuscript's packaging as a communicable and saleable product, demonstrate the publishing trends, reader tastes and prevailing ideology contemporary to that narrative's genesis as a book. The particular narrative and material forms of each convict life-narrative, therefore, evidence the conditions that fostered individual autobiographical moments. This chapter, by attending to such evidence, discerns the conditions that produced five kinds of autobiographical moments for Van Diemen's Land convicts: promotional, propagandist, political, pragmatic or historical moments.

#### *A Promotional Moment*

Danish-born Jorgen Jorgenson's *A Shred of Autobiography*, published in two parts Hobart in 1835 and 1838, is the earliest instance of Van Diemen's Land convict life-narrative.<sup>11</sup> Jorgenson's access to publication is termed a promotional moment because of the specific project of the publication venue, a project that impacted upon the story Jorgenson could tell about his life. Jorgenson's autobiographical moment was generated by the marketing imperatives of *The Hobart Town Almanack*, a colonial periodical designed to entice free settlers from Britain and Europe to Van Diemen's Land and in which Jorgenson's narrative was published. The *Almanack* was sold bound with the *Van Diemen's Land Annual* and the

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<sup>11</sup> Parts One and Two were published in a single volume in 1981 by Adelaide's Sullivan's Cove press. My study analyses this edition.

resultant book was shipped around the world. The editor of the 1838 *Almanack* and *Annual*, William Gore Elliston, explains the remit of his publication:

An Annual is read in distant countries, and to excite interest, must partake in a great measure of originality. . . . [Annuals] are expected to convey original and useful information of the exact state of a colony for the purpose of assisting and enlightening those who may be desirous of emigrating. (x)

The eventful life of Jorgenson – seaman, explorer, convict, one time King of Iceland and “legend in his own lifetime” – certainly promised excitement and originality (Clune and Stephensen 452).

Jorgenson also possessed the skill and experience to craft a narrative suitable to the *Almanack*’s purpose and audience. Termed a “graphomaniac” by biographer Sarah Blakewell, Jorgenson published ten books and many articles and wrote several unpublished manuscripts, covering material as diverse as theology, economics, anthropology and history (130).<sup>12</sup> Blakewell emphasises Jorgenson’s literary productivity during his multiple periods of incarceration in debtors’ prisons and in Newgate jail where “he never rested for more than a day or two . . . without producing some fluent disquisition on Afghanistan or religion or smuggling or Danish history” (261). He wrote for newspapers in both England and Van Diemen’s Land, despite Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur’s decree forbidding convicts to write for the press (Blakewell 194).<sup>13</sup> Jorgenson’s

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendix Two for a complete list of Jorgenson’s other publications.

<sup>13</sup> Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur (1784-1854) governed Van Diemen’s Land from 1814 to 1822. He acquired a reputation for harshness and the period of his governorship is marked by the

professional acquaintance and personal friendship with *Hobart Town Courier* and *The Hobart Town Almanack* proprietor and editor Dr James Ross was the catalyst for *A Shred of Autobiography*. Ross suggested to Jorgenson, his assistant editor, that he should write the narrative, paying the ticket-of-leave holder an advance and promising further payments as the manuscript was delivered (Clune and Stephensen 426).

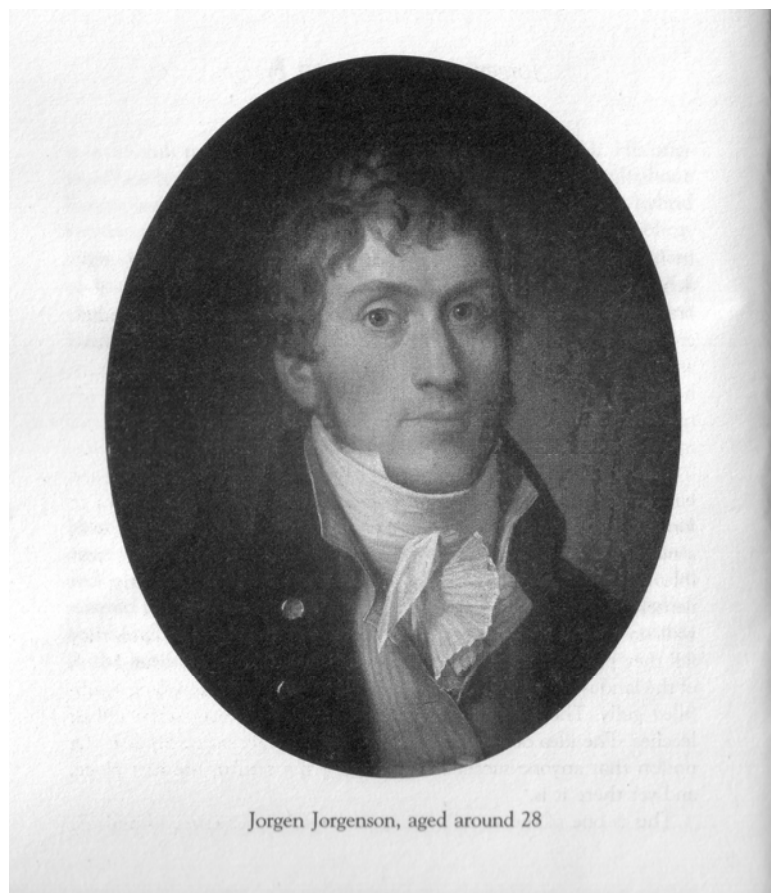


Fig. 1. *Jørgen Jørgensen*, attributed to C.W. Eckersberg (c. 1808). Oil.

Frederiksborgmuseet, Hillerød; rpt. in Sarah Blakewell, *The English Dane: A Life of Jorgen Jorgenson* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2005) Frontispiece.

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establishment of Port Arthur, the declaration of martial law against the island's indigenous people, the consequent Black War and the Black Line fiasco in 1830 (Alexander 29-30).

*A Shred of Autobiography* was originally published in two instalments in *The Hobart Town Almanack*, Part One appearing in January 1835 and Part Two in April 1838. It sits amid demographic information, registers of arriving and departing ships, a legend of flag, telegraphic and semaphore signals used at Hobart's Mount Nelson signal station and advertisements for a miscellany of Van Diemen's Land businesses – Longford Hall Academy, S.A. Tegg Bookseller and Stationer, Watchorn's Emporium, hotels, a haircutter and an ornamental hair manufacturer. Part Two of Jorgenson's narrative is preceded by James Porter's somewhat fantastic account of the "piratical seizure" of the brig *Frederick* at Macquarie Harbour in 1834.

The *Almanack* was a tool to lure and assist free settlers and, given this intention, its publishers were unlikely to embrace narratives that depicted grisly and ignominious details of penal servitude. The two narratives by Jorgenson and Porter are conspicuously consonant in the way each elides narration of the author's convictism. Details of penal servitude are completely absent in Porter's story, which is solely devoted to recounting his ostensibly limited participation in the *Frederick* mutiny and his subsequent adventures with his fellow escapees in South America. Jorgenson treats his convict experience as just one episode in his eventful life. *A Shred of Autobiography* is more thorough in its disclosure of Jorgenson's short-lived governance of Iceland, his espionage in France and Germany and his participation in colonial reprisals against Van Diemen's Land's Aboriginal population than in its recounting of Jorgenson's experiences as a transportee.

Where Jorgenson's convictism is described, the narrator portrays an auspicious period of servitude. His assignments – first as a government clerk and then as an explorer for the Van Diemen's Land Company “sent into the interior with a party of men to explore the Company's land, and trace a road from the River Shannon [in the island's south] to Circular Head [on the north-west coast]” – are recounted and evaluated in terms of the financial rewards the positions furnished (52). He laments his hasty decision to enter government employ:

a prisoner clerk only [received] sixpence a day salary, and a penny for rations. . . . Often when I saw prisoners assigned to gentlemen, tradesmen, and farmers, sitting down to a plentiful meal, I felt an inclination to curse my unlucky stars for not having designed me for a labourer, servant, or some handicraft. (51)

Through this monetary evaluation of Jorgenson's position in Van Diemen's Land, the protagonist is constructed as an autonomous individual, capable of bargaining with prospective employers and able to rue his misfortune as a result of his own error, rather than of a tyrannical imposition by colonial authorities. Jorgenson's autobiographical subject is not the incapacitated victim, broken by the vicissitudes and violence of penal servitude, that becomes a trope in mid-century English and Irish accounts. Jorgenson's narrative is a depiction of convictism that dispels the hardships typically associated with the assignment system.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Assignment was the core of penal practice until 1840. In this system, convicts were assigned as servants to free settlers, who had to feed and clothe the prisoners, who in return had to serve their masters in whatever way the master determined (Brand 7). Assignment came under much criticism for its randomness: the degree of suffering a convict experienced depended entirely on the nature of his or her master (R. Hughes 495).

Jorgenson's narrator conceives of transportation as a union of punishment and utility. Convicts, he argues, constituted a labour force for the benefit of colonists and the home government and transportees were consequently treated well. In recounting his voyage to Van Diemen's Land aboard the *Woodman*, Jorgenson speaks as an observer, rather than as a member of the convict cargo. He asserts "all convicts sent out are new-clothed, and ample rations of whole-some food apportioned to them. Health is preserved by cleanliness, which is strictly attended to" (48). A strategy instigated to protect the health of men aboard transport ships is cited by the narrator as further evidence of the good treatment transportees enjoyed because of their usefulness:

a surgeon of the Royal Navy has for some years past been appointed for the superintendence of the convicts on their passage out. This officer, in addition to his half-pay, will be entitled to half a guinea per head for every prisoner he delivers safe on his arrival in the colonies, on receiving a certificate from the Governor that his conduct merits such a gratuity. (48)

In these examples, Jorgenson positions his narrator as a kind of apologist for transportation, situating the speaker within the discursive space usually occupied by colonial authorities and free settlers and again eliding his convict status.

Jorgenson also assumed this defendant role in his historical life. In April 1840, he was among six speakers to address one of Hobart Town's largest public meetings, convened by Charles Swanston, a director of the Derwent Bank, to protest against the abolition of the assignment system (Clune and Stephensen 450).

Jorgenson's depiction of convictism, however, is incongruous with other contemporaneous events and publications. Part Two, in which Jorgenson makes these observations of transportation, was published in 1838, the same year that the Select Committee on Transportation (also known as the Molesworth Committee) handed down its findings<sup>15</sup> and that Reverend William Ullathorne's inflammatory and shocking exposé of convictism, *The Horrors of Transportation Briefly Unfolded to the People*, was published.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps Jorgenson simply did not believe transportation was particularly awful, either for himself or for others, which might explain the disparity. But the medium in which Jorgenson was offered publication furnishes an alternative explanation. The advertising imperative of the *Almanack* set the parameters for the story Jorgenson could tell about penal life. This particular moment required an autobiographical subject who could defy the perceptions of Van Diemen's Land as a heinous prison colony and demonstrate the opportunities the island provided to emigrants. Jorgenson's subject complies, refusing to participate in the popular mythology about convictism and constructing a protagonist who is not only autonomous, enterprising and useful during his penal sentence, but who is also a supporter of transportation and its contribution to the economic and commercial development of Van Diemen's Land. The

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<sup>15</sup> The Select Committee on Transportation, or the Molesworth Committee, was a Government inquiry into the efficacy of transportation, its influence on the moral climate of the colonies and the need for any improvements. Robert Hughes suggests "it was in fact a heavily biased show trial designed to present a catalog of antipodean horrors, conducted by Whigs against a system they were already planning to jettison" (492). After the handing down of the Committee's final report in August 1838, transportation to New South Wales ceased and the assignment system (in which transportees were assigned as servants to colonists) was replaced with the probation system (in which transportees worked on penal stations for a probationary period, the length of which was dependent upon the original sentence, and proceeded through a series of incremental stages toward the obtainment of a pardon) (Brand 6-11).

<sup>16</sup> Rev. W. Ullathorne, a former New South Wales Vicar-General, gave evidence to the Molesworth Committee. His testimony was published in 1838 as *The Horrors of Transportation Briefly Unfolded to the People* (Dawson 491).

autobiographical subject, then, is determined by the *Almanack*'s project: he is the ideal mercantile colonial citizen, reformed from his inauspicious convict beginnings.

### *Propagandist Moments*

Between 1839 and 1850, five pamphlets were published in England and Ireland, all purportedly written by returned convicts and all depicting penal life in Van Diemen's Land as an experience of horrific and unimaginable suffering. These texts, so similar in their inflammatory representation of convictism as to be formulaic, were published in concurrence with increasing debates in Britain and Ireland about the efficacy and morality of transportation. This context provided an opportunity for five convict writers to enter the published domain: Bernard Reilly, Thomas Page, Henry Easy, Samuel Cockney and John Broxup.

These narratives were published and circulated at a time of great upheaval within the British and colonial administration of penal transportation. After the Molesworth Committee released its findings and recommendations, substantial changes in penal practice were instituted, including the cessation of transportation to New South Wales (consequently swamping Van Diemen's Land with arriving convicts after 1841)<sup>17</sup> and the replacement of the much maligned assignment system with the probation system. These changes, writes historian A.G.L. Shaw, could not have come at a worse time for Van Diemen's Land, coupled as they

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<sup>17</sup>According to A.G.L. Shaw, in 1839 1376 male prisoners and 302 female prisoners arrived in Van Diemen's Land. Transportation to the colony peaked in 1842, when 4819 male and 681 female prisoners arrived. A further 9270 men and 1935 women arrived in the years between 1843 and 1845. In 1846, the year that the two-year moratorium on transportation to Van Diemen's Land was instigated, just 786 men and 340 women arrived on the island (300).



were with “the middle of an acute economic depression, when employers were asked to pay wages which they could not afford, when the colony was ruled by an elderly inexperienced governor [Lietenant-Governor Sir John Franklin]” (300).<sup>18</sup> The implementation of the recommended reforms was disastrous. First-hand accounts of what was happening in Van Diemen’s Land were invaluable to campaigners lobbying for an end to transportation and were often enlisted as propaganda. Robert Hughes notes that “letters and witnesses came across the oceans to Whitehall, testifying to the collapse of all moral values in the stained island” (529). In 1846, the year Page’s account was published, a two-year moratorium on transportation was imposed. By 1850, when Broxup’s *Life* appeared, the English press, led by *The Times*, was solidly against transportation (R. Hughes 571).

It is plausible that lobbyists employed autobiographical narratives by returned transportees in much the same way as accounts by ex-slaves were coopted as evidence in the Anti-Slavery Society’s campaign for abolition. Agitators may have been intimately involved in identifying, writing and publishing some narratives, but the anti-transportation debate also provided the would-be convict autobiographer with a mercantile opportunity. Within the context of the anti-transportation debate and the contemporary readership’s penchant for sensationalism, the content of convict life-narrative was highly commercial and the real or imaginary convict life-writer could hope to profit from publishing his

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<sup>18</sup> Lieutenant-Governor Sir John Franklin (1786-1847), former Navy officer and Arctic explorer, governed Van Diemen’s Land from 1837 to 1843. He was responsible for implementing the reforms consequent of the Molesworth Committee, which proved enormously challenging. Franklin was unpopular with civil servants, but on the whole enjoyed popular support with the people (Alexander 145-46).

story. Thomas Page was clearly one such opportunist. He makes direct reference to his hopes for the profitability of his narrative:

I am endeavouring to seek the means to enable us to return [to Cornwall], by selling those books containing my life and trials whilst undergoing my sentence, and do sincerely hope my sufferings may induce the humane to purchase of me to enable me to do so. (12)

Each of these five autobiographers fashioned their experience of transportation into a familiar and communicable story by engaging the warning narrative mode, one of the most familiar narrative forms of the criminal biography tradition. Hugh Anderson states that warning narrative is a mode of criminal biography where the “moral emphasis has the purpose of discouraging emulation or deterring others” (xxii). This moral code has two staple tenets: to listen to the advice of parents and to refrain from keeping bad company. Broxup urges young men away from public houses and the wanton intemperance and profligate company they house. Cockney makes similar demands of his audience, urging his readers to observe parental counsel and to choose associates wisely. Reilly’s short doggerel narrative laments the shame and suffering he caused his parents and, in so doing, exemplifies the wayward son / saintly mother relationship which has been identified as a key trope of mid-nineteenth-century convict autobiography (Bradley and Maxwell-Stewart 190).

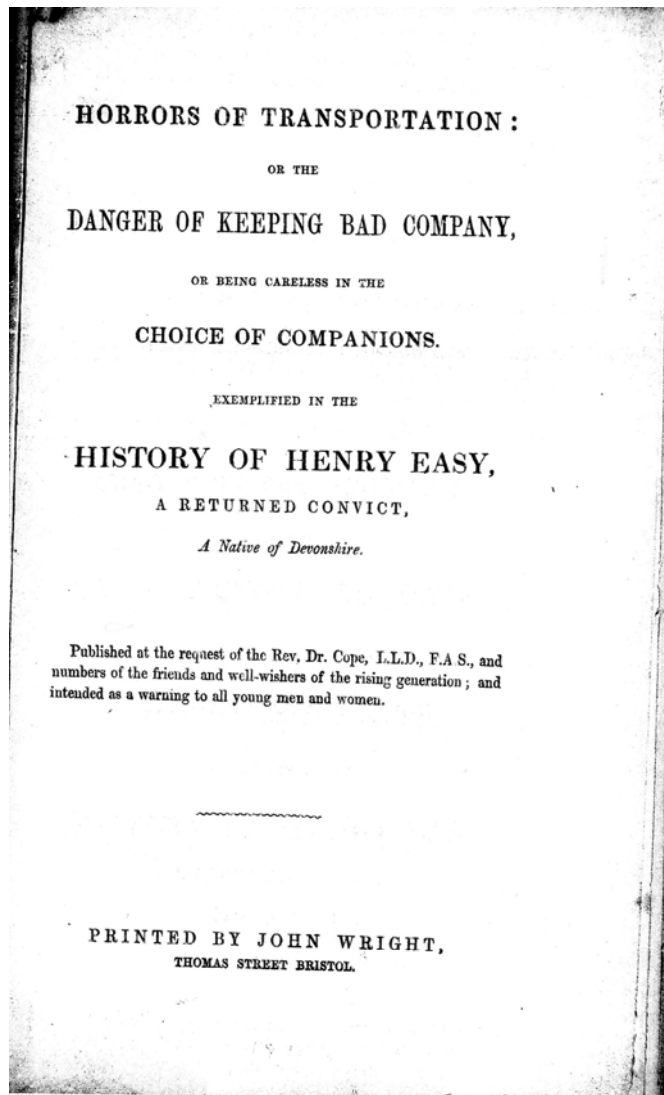


Fig. 2. Title page of Henry Easy's *Horrors of Transportation* [1847?].

Categorising these five accounts as warning narrative is not a reading imposed upon the texts so much as a reading necessitated by the didactic instructions issued by each account's narrator. Broxup, in concluding his narrative, commands his readers:

Study deeply what is contained in the foregoing pages – think of the horrid and heart-rending tortures that myself and thousands have endured through

neglecting the advice and instruction of those who were solicitous of our welfare. (19)

The warning component of Easy's narrative is prefigured in its full title: *Horrors of Transportation: Or, the Danger of Keeping Bad Company, or Being Careless in the Choice of Companions. Exemplified in the History of Henry Easy, a Returned Convict, a Native of Devonshire*. A note on the title page states that the publication is "intended as a warning to all young men and women." The narrator commences his story by stating that elucidating the miserable consequences of keeping bad company is the object of his book. And, if readers have to this point not realised this account is to be read as a cautionary tale, the narrator reiterates late in the narrative:

Should this book fall into the hands of any young man fond of company, let him take warning from my unhappy case; my innocence availed me nothing. My companions were guilty. The law judged me the same; and for the last time young men and women avoid bad company, for assuredly you will be judged by your company, be they good or bad. (10)

These five warning narratives have two operative narrative features: a victimised protagonist who has endured inconceivable suffering in consequence of his unwise decisions and a sensational and horrific depiction of penal servitude that inspires sufficient dread to induce caution in readers. Each author performs a textual recitation of typical experiences which virtually all convicts underwent, an experiential catalogue of prototypical Australian convict narrative identified by A.W. Baker that includes the outward voyage, often with reference to a foiled

mutiny; the inspection and interview of the transportee on his arrival in the colony and a thorough documentation of his appearance and personal history in the official registers; floggings and solitary confinement, typically for minor infringements of the tedious penal rules; attempts to abscond, with an associated discussion of bushrangers; and, after the protagonist's suffering through his period of probation, the allocation of a ticket-of-leave and, later, a pardon (68-72). Adherence to this formula facilitates an evocation of victimhood suitable to supporting the narrative's warning. All five Van Diemen's Land warning narratives emphasise the protagonists' continual suffering at the hands of false accusers, doctrinaire judges, tyrannical masters or overseers or depraved flagellators as they proceed through the standard experiences of convictism. Page is falsely accused and unjustly transported in consequence of a "vile woman's machinations" (12). Cockney is victimised by his master Mr Rooke:

I received a sentence of 12 months in chains for insolence. My misbehaviour consisted of telling him I would work no longer for him till he gave me a suit of clothes, for I was very ragged, as I had only the one suit of clothes while I was with him, and my boots were not worth one penny. (9)

Easy describes the work of a flagellator on the protagonist's back: "he tore away the flesh my mother had kissed so often, scattered the blood my father had reared with so much care" (6). These examples of victimhood illustrate how the engagement of generic experiences and events sets the stage for the second, and perhaps more conspicuous and memorable, operative component of these five

warning narratives: the revelation of terrible and immense physical, psychological and emotional suffering.

A warning narrative which lacks a memorable and disturbing evocation of anguish is rendered ineffective. This was likely to be problematic for the convict autobiographer. Baker warns, "It is necessary continually to call to mind that the average convict experience was not, objectively speaking, horrific" (53). The disparity between the requirements of narrative form and the actuality of lived experience was exacerbated by market imperatives. Pressure existed not only to ensure the account was suitably confronting to edify, but also to ensure it was saleable and therefore publishable. Larry E. Sullivan highlights the impact of saleability on the stories that can be told by prisoners:

punishment and torture take precedence over other details of prison life by providing the reader with the sensational and gruesome details of convict life. This discourse is intentional because narratives of endless days and nights surely wouldn't sell in the marketplace. Boredom is rarely marketable. (143)

British readers of the mid-nineteenth century were voracious consumers of sensational literature. While the "publishing bonanza" that produced the wildly popular sensation novels by writers such as Wilkie Collins, M.E. Braddon and Mrs Henry Wood did not appear until the 1860s, by mid-century, antecedents of the phenomenon were well entrenched in the tastes of Britain's mass readership by the popular gothic, romantic, criminal and penny dreadful traditions (W. Hughes 5-8). Indeed, the popularity of these literary precedents endowed the later sensation

novels with a readership. Alarmed early-nineteenth-century commentators noted that the “growth of the reading public . . . was characterised by the million-selling execution broadsides and the subsequent and apparently inexhaustible catalogue of murder and seduction in the penny fiction” (Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture* 208).

The combined pressure upon a convict’s narrative to be sufficiently shocking to simultaneously warn and sell could disrupt the authenticity of autobiographical warning narratives. Lincoln Faller argues that, within criminal biography at least, warning narratives retained little autobiographical veracity, because the stipulations of the form caused it to become one in which the author “invents and amplifies cruelties, presenting a fractured, etiolated, absurd, and often frankly fictitious version of life and character” (195). While the next chapter discusses spurious autobiography in the convict life-narratives of Van Diemen’s Land, it is worth noting at this juncture that of the eighteen accounts analysed in this study only two appear to be fraudulent: those attributed to Page and Easy. I am more interested here in how the authors of these five mid-century texts rendered their literary lives sensational, when their historical lives lacked the raw material demanded by narrative and marketing pressures (either partly in the case of Reilly, Cockney and Broxup who are verifiable transportees or completely in the case of the fictitious Page and Easy). A paratextual appendix, a common feature of nineteenth-century non-fiction publications, proved particularly advantageous for real or imaginary convict autobiographers. Appendices gave each author space to augment his account with shocking and salacious detail, facilitating the production

of a book with public appeal without compelling the author to fabricate incidents within his purportedly truthful literary life.

The last page of Easy's *Horrors of Transportation* sketches the barbarity and misery of Norfolk Island, a place he did not experience, at least as far as the narrative indicates, as either transportee or visitor. Easy's narrator recounts that he was transported to Van Diemen's Land for fourteen years in 1829 for "thimble-rigging" and that he served his sentence first under assignment to a master at New Norfolk and later, in consequence of his absconding from this post, in a chain gang at an unspecified location.<sup>19</sup> Yet the author dedicates a page of this twelve page text to conveying the "horrid scenes which are daily to be witnessed" on Norfolk Island (12). A note discloses the author's source for information about the settlement: "See Report of the Select Committee on Transportation, 1837" (12).

Easy's inclusion of observations of scenes and places of which he had no direct experience might be regarded merely as a reflection of this text's fabrication if it were not a customary practice among the life-narratives of historically substantiated transportees. Reilly adds a glossary of practices typical to Norfolk Island, Moreton Bay and Port Arthur, places not encountered by either the protagonist within the narrative or the historical Reilly.<sup>20</sup> These details are appropriated from the "truly horrifying" picture of convictism painted by Ullathorne in *The Horrors of Transportation* (Reilly 8). This resort to secondary

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<sup>19</sup> New Norfolk is a township 34 km north-west of Hobart. Originally called Elizabeth Town, the settlement acquired the name New Norfolk after former soldiers, settlers and convicts from Norfolk Island resettled in the area in 1813 (Appleton 219).

<sup>20</sup> A convict settlement was established at Moreton Bay in 1824 and continued through until 1842 when the area was opened up to free settlers. The settlement later became the city of Brisbane (Davison, Hirst and Macintyre 442).



sources to supplement the autobiographical account reflects the intertextuality of transportation literature. Published works about transportation appeared in many guises: life-narratives, rhetoric, letters or observational sketches. A significant degree of overlap occurred across the corpus. Titles, episodes, evidence or entire sections of text were cross-referenced, appropriated or plagiarised to such an extent that Cassandra Pybus and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart allude to the frequent borrowing and exchange as a kind of literary cannibalism (xiii). The accounts by Cockney and Broxup, both verifiable transportees, are strikingly similar. Large sections of text, including gruesome vignettes of the suffering of other unnamed transportees, are repeated word for word in both publications and it seems reasonable to assume that Broxup plagiarised Cockney's earlier publication to some extent.<sup>21</sup> *Life of S. Cockney* and *Life of John Broxup* extend the provision of extra-autobiographical evidence beyond general pictures of penal stations to the citation of specific events that evince the barbarity and mercilessness which transported men encountered. In Cockney's narrative, material to bolster the text's sensationalism is distinguished from the preceding narrative and subsequent concluding dedication by smaller typeface. In Broxup's account, identical material appears, here sectioned off by a line between it and the previous narrative. The appendices, which in both instances lack the reference made to source material by Easy and Reilly, depict the savage flogging of Port Arthur absconder Frederick Sherwin; the fate of Greenwood, "a fine aspiring young man as any one would

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<sup>21</sup> There are other explanations. Anne Conlon suggests that Broxup and Joseph Platt, author of a third congruent text, published c. 1850, "copied in part" from Cockney's text (44). A.W. Baker says "the similarity may also be attributable to the work of a literary hack, but there was another common source: the oral tradition" (63).

wish to set eyes upon,” who, for merely scraping a constable’s cheek with a knife, received one hundred lashes and was “sentenced to death, and suffered it, as is generally reported, while the maggots were crawling in [his] wounds”; and, finally, the catastrophe of *George the Third*, a convict transport which struck rocks just miles from the Van Diemen’s Land coast, and in which frantic prisoners were locked below deck or shot at by soldiers as the vessel sank (Broxup 16-17; Cockney 23).

The accounts by Reilly, Page, Easy, Cockney and Broxup were all published and distributed as pamphlets of between eight and twenty-four pages, ensuring cheap production and easy circulation to assist the satisfaction of both propagandist and profiteering objectives. The material form of these narratives reflects their alliance with criminal biography, which was frequently published in pamphlet form, and with political tracts.<sup>22</sup> Pamphlets, periodicals and newssheets, state David Finklestein and Alistair McCleery, are modes of printing that have “been linked with the dissemination of radical ideas and the raising of political awareness” since the Reformation (60). The public and political debate about transportation generated a context in which the accounts by Reilly, Page, Easy, Cockney and Broxup were communicable, saleable and consequently publishable, but none of these accounts are in themselves overtly political. The narrators critique transportation by cataloguing its horrors and producing a victimised protagonist, but do not issue demands to the British administration or call upon their readers to act. These five formulaic pamphlets are propagandist instruments

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<sup>22</sup> *Drunks, Whores and Idle Apprentices*, Philip Rawlings’s study of eighteenth-century criminal biography, concentrates entirely upon pamphlet and chapbook publications.

in an existing and familiar debate, the terms of which do not need to be reiterated within the accounts. The propagandist moment requires only an apparently authenticated statement of victimhood to support the wider debate, a requirement each pamphleteer author satisfies by emphasising his convict status in his narrative's title and by constructing a powerless and abject autobiographical subject.

### *Political Moments*

Eight narratives, published between 1837 and 1857 in both England and America, represent more overtly political acts than the life-narratives produced by propagandist moments. These narratives portray the appalling features of transportation not to critique the practice, but to disparage the government that administered it. In these political moments, the story of individual convictism is put to a broader purpose and the subject is accordingly more a witness or a champion of a cause than a debased and demeaned victim.

George Loveless's *The Victims of Whiggery* (1837) and John Frost's *The Horrors of Convict Life* (1856) are calls to action. Loveless's narrator cries: "Arise, men of Britain and take your stand! rally round the standard of Liberty, or for every [sic] lay prostrate under the iron hand of your land and money-mongering taskmasters!" (50-51). Frost's narrative concludes with an urgent encouragement: "When you go home to your families, you will probably talk these matters over, but will it end in talk? Will you not endeavour to reform the system that is productive of such a state of society as I have described?" (52). Where the

warning narratives foreground convictism and carefully map out the deprivations and misery it entails, Loveless and Frost portray transportation as a practice symptomatic of the British government's inadequacy and maladministration.

George Loveless was among six men from Tolpuddle, all founding members of the Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers, convicted of administering unlawful oaths and transported to the Australian colonies.<sup>23</sup> Loveless arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1834. His autobiographical pamphlet was published in 1837 by London's Central Dorchester Committee, established in 1834 to provide moral and fiscal support for the wives and families of the Dorchester Labourers and to provide a focal point for the continued agitation to secure pardons for the six men. Like the pamphlets of the 1840s, Loveless's text couples a first-person recollection of the author's experiences of transportation with an appended grim catalogue of penal practices. The two sections are differentiated spatially on the page by a dividing line and by a narrative shift in voice and content. The first part, which employs the structure of a diary, is thoroughly individualised and includes only those events and experiences of transportation in which Loveless was directly and personally involved, commencing with his crime and conviction, covering his engagements as an assigned servant during his sentence in Van Diemen's Land and concluding with his embarkation on the *Eveline* for the return passage to England. Precise dates are

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<sup>23</sup> Five other men were arrested as ringleaders in forming the Friendly Society: George's brother James Loveless, brother-in-law Thomas Standfield, John Standfield, James Brine and James Hammett. These men were transported to New South Wales and four wrote of their experiences in their own pamphlet called *A Narrative of the Sufferings of Jas. Loveless, Jas. Brine and Thomas and John Standfield, Four of the Dorchester Labourers, displaying the Horrors of Transportation, written by themselves with a brief description of New South Wales* (1838) published by the Central Dorchester Committee (Marlow 101, 212).

stated at the commencement of most paragraphs and the text between each date narrates a specific episode or development in Loveless's sentence. His conversations with colonial administrators, including an appearance before a magistrate on a charge of neglect of duty, and the negotiations involved in obtaining his ticket-of-leave, granted in February 1836, are detailed, but the text contains no indication of any great deprivation suffered by Loveless – no flogging, no goading by tyrannical overseers, no solitary confinement for trumped up charges.

After twenty-two pages, a shift occurs and the narrator, as in the accounts by Reilly, Page, Easy, Cockney and Broxup, furnishes the reader with a general picture of transportation and convictism. Loveless's narrator couches these observations in terms familiar from the warning narratives:

I now feel it a duty I owe my fellow-labourers, to offer a few remarks respecting the present system of transportation. Fain would I be silent, but that truth, justice and humanity, demands that something of its nature should be unfolded. (34)

Loveless's depiction, however, is more thorough than the abbreviated accounts given by Reilly, Page, Easy, Cockney and Broxup. Comprising seventeen pages rather than the warning narratives' typical one or two page appendix, Loveless's account encompasses his observations on prisoners' rations, the treatment of female prisoners, Van Diemen's Land agriculture, land ownership and administration, flora, fauna and climate as well as the seemingly obligatory retelling of the wreck of *George the Third* and a portrayal of "that hell upon earth"

Norfolk Island. Where the abject autobiographical subjects of the warning narratives merely chronicle the atrocities of penal practice, Loveless commentates on Van Diemen's Land as a burgeoning imperial outpost. His narrator is an authoritative and informed witness, a subjectivity fitting the political polemic of his narrative.

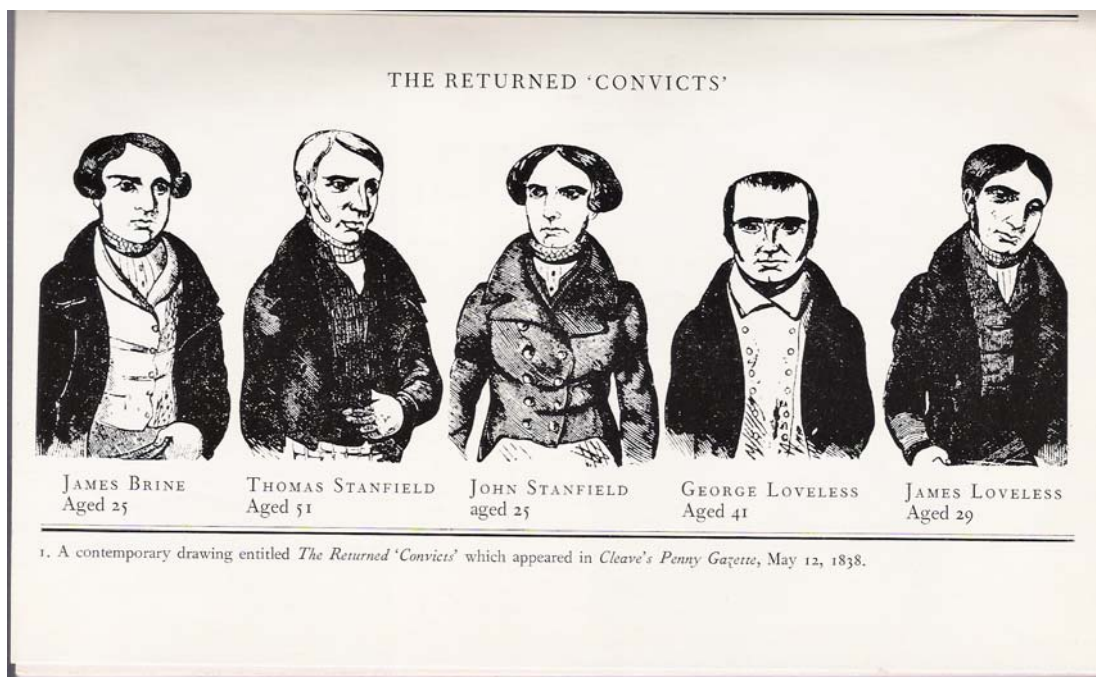


Fig. 3. *The Returned "Convicts."* Drawing. *Cleave's Penny Gazette*, May 12, 1838; rpt. in Joyce Marlow, *The Tolpuddle Martyrs* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1971) 32. George Loveless is second from right.

Loveless's pamphlet is also more complex than the five mid-century warning narratives in its material composition. There are three discrete parts to *The Victims of Whiggery*: the autobiographical narrative (itself composed in two parts), an introductory public letter signed by Robert Hartwell (the Honorary Secretary to the Central Dorchester Committee) and a comprehensive account of

the trial of Loveless and his co-accused at the Spring Assizes at Dorchester in March 1834. These paratextual elements – especially Hartwell’s public letter and the details of the court proceedings, as well as the book’s emphatic title – guide the reader to comprehend Loveless’s narrativised experience as an instance of political discrimination.

Loveless had good reason to understand himself as a victim. The Friendly Society founded by Loveless and his colleagues had humble aims – to ensure adequate wages for the village’s agricultural labourers so they and their families would not starve – but came into being at a time when trade unionism was arousing deep suspicion and resentment throughout Britain. An obscure piece of legislation, the 1797 Mutiny Act declaring that a society or club that required members to take any secret oath should be deemed an unlawful combination or confederacy, was resurrected to institute a maximum sentence for Loveless and his associates to swiftly and effectively stamp out nascent unionism in the agricultural south (Marlow 59). Baron Williams, the sentencing judge – a loyal Whig and fierce opponent of trade unions – emphasised the exemplary potential of the case. The *Dorset County Chronicle* of 20 March 1834 records Williams’s sentencing statement that “the object of all legal punishment is not altogether with the view of operating on the offenders themselves, it is also for the sake of offering an example and a warning” (qtd. in Marlow 93).

This judicial wrangling inspired public indignation. Extensive debate and commentary was carried in the press, public meetings were held and petitions issued from all over the country. On 21 April, a 35 000 strong contingent marched

through London to present Lord Melbourne with a petition for a remission of sentence, bearing the names of 300 000 signatories (Marlow 127). The agitation was efficacious. All six labourers were granted a free pardon and Loveless returned to England in 1837. *The Victims of Whiggery* was published soon after his return, riding the wave of widespread and enthusiastic public interest. Hartwell, the Committee's secretary, saw two purposes for Loveless's testimony:

it would be highly desirable for an authenticated statement of the persecutions of the Dorchester Labourers to be laid before the Public, which, while serving as a memento of Whig hypocrisy and tyranny, might also be made beneficial in aiding that Fund which is now raising to confer some recompence upon these ill-used men on their return, and from which their families are supported during their exile. (9)

Public interest in the Dorchester Labourers set the stage for Loveless's autobiographical moment. The existence of the Central Dorchester Committee facilitated it, by soliciting the story, funding the publication and promoting the book. *The Victims of Whiggery* went into eight editions by 1838, indicative, though not conclusive proof, of eager and ready reception. Loveless's text was much quoted at the Chartist meetings that were beginning to assemble across England and it is likely that John Frost, another Van Diemen's Land convict life-writer, became familiar with Loveless's account within this setting (Marlow 207-08).

Transported in 1839 for leading an armed attack on Newport, Chartist activist John Frost saw out his sentence at Port Arthur. He was first engaged as a



police clerk in the Commandant's office until a misdemeanour saw him removed to a labour gang. *The Horrors of Convict Life*, a curious life-narrative, was published in London in 1856. It consists of notes of two public lectures given by Frost at Oddfellows' Hall, Padiham, on 31 August 1856, according to details given at the beginning of the published text. No introduction is provided, nor preface, notes or appendices. In the first lecture, titled "Afternoon Lecture," Frost discusses the principles of Chartism and provides an account of his trial and the machinations involved in the commutation of his death sentence before narrating his experiences as a transported felon. Frost weaves his observations of Van Diemen's Land society and the penal code (including a vehement condemnation of the homosexuality he views as endemic in the colony) through the chronological narration of his experiences. The "Evening Lecture" concentrates on elucidating the peculiar dispensation of justice in Van Diemen's Land under the governorship of Sir John Franklin. Unlike Loveless, who writes of the personal and general in two distinct parts, Frost's narrative is sophisticated in its integration of the two, perhaps demonstrating his familiarity with formulating rhetorical arguments. This, coupled with the fact that the book is comprised of published notes of Frost's public address, explains the absence of appendices or other supporting documentation from this text.

The written text of Frost's life-narrative was effectively produced independently of its subject-protagonist. The narrative itself, in recording proceedings within the hall, suggests that the Chairman of the gathering, Mr Place of Padiham, produced the transcript of Frost's speeches. Frost, whose name does

appear on the title page of *The Horrors of Convict Life*, signals his enthusiastic support of the proposed publication:

The Chairman having announced that Mr Frost's lectures would be published, Mr Frost said: I do not think a more effectual method of helping forward to the object we have in view could be adopted than to place the truth before the people of this country, and I am therefore very glad to hear that it is intended to lay before the community some of the scenes that have been described today. Sometimes a powerful impression may be made by talking, but when you have a book before you, when you read it and go over it again and again, the impression is much more likely to be permanent and lasting. (52-53)

This passage clearly signals Frost's conception of a published book as a political instrument capable of reaching and inspiring a wide audience. It also provides evidence of both the specific catalyst and the socio-temporal context that generated Frost's autobiographical moment: Mr Place's suggestion and probable financing of the publication and the existence of a cause and an interested public that ensured the account was communicable and saleable.

Political identity and affiliation characterised the autobiographical accounts published by six of the so-called Canadian Patriots, ninety-two American citizens transported to Van Diemen's Land as political prisoners in 1840 "after they were captured in a series of cross border raids following a home-grown rebellion against the colonial government in Upper Canada in 1837" (Pybus 1). With the exception of Benjamin Wait's *Letters from Van Dieman's [sic] Land* (1843) and James

Gemmell's letter published in the *Plebeian* newspaper (June 1842) and reprinted in the *Jeffersonian* the following month, Stephen Smith Wright's *Narrative and Recollections of Van Dieman's [sic] Land*, written by amanuensis Caleb Lyon and published in New York in 1844, constituted the first entry of the Patriots into the published domain. Wright's narrative was the first of six book-length autobiographical narratives. Five subsequent texts were published in America between 1844 and 1850 authored by Samuel Snow, Linus W. Miller, Robert Marsh, Daniel Heustis and William Gates.

The two terms of the page header of Marsh's book – "Patriot Exile" – signal the tension between the American prisoners' ideals of liberty and democracy and the perceived tyranny underpinning British monarchism and colonialism. Marsh issues a caveat in the preface to his narrative, alerting his American readers that Britain's corrupt aristocracy was "rapidly and to an alarming degree, extending its principles to this side of the Atlantic, [so] I would raise my feeble note of warning, for all to be on their guard" (iiv). Marsh's elucidation of his transportation to Van Diemen's Land, like that of his five compatriot authors, is designed to lay bare the corruption, injustices and maladministration of British colonialism. Hunger, filth, inadequate clothing, the hard labour demanded of and extracted from men in ill health, the consequent deaths of emaciated men and the malicious conduct of tyrannical overseers are, within the American accounts, the staple stuff of life in Van Diemen's Land.

These accounts demonstrate a high degree of narrative consonance, a consequence of the commonality of the authors' experiences as convicts. With the

exception of Miller, all arrived in Van Diemen's Land on the *Buffalo* in February 1840 and were moved about various stations on the island as part of one large group. Miller, who had arrived a month earlier aboard the *Canton* from England, petitioned Van Diemen's Land authorities to be transferred to Sandy Bay Station to join his countrymen. All six accounts depict the major episodes in the 1837-38 uprising, the summary trials of the captured rebels, the executions of rebel leaders, the voyage and foiled mutiny aboard the *Buffalo* (or the *Canton* in Miller's case), transfers and movements between various penal stations, Lieutenant-Governor Sir John Franklin's speeches to the American men, the deaths of fellow transportees, the numerous escape attempts, the bestowment of tickets-of-leave and the consequent search for profitable employment and, finally, the attainment of a passage home and the subsequent journey back to family and friends.

All six narrators cede some of the narrative dominion of the narrating "I," adopting the more inclusive and representative speaking position of the collective "we" in describing the experiences of battle, trial, transportation and convictism. This narratorial self-effacement is characteristic of memoir, a genre of life-narrative which consists of the "recollections of a person involved in, or at least witness to, significant events" and typified by an extensive concern with the actions and experiences of characters other than the author (Goodwin 6). The Patriots' use of the memoir pattern is unique in Van Diemen's Land convict life-narratives and reflects the Yankee invective that underpins the accounts. All six memoirs are addressed to American audiences, "to the friends of liberty," and the authors use their narratives to create a history for comrades who died either in

battle, execution or in Van Diemen's Land, men who might otherwise be rendered obsolete in the annals of history. Marsh states: "my object will be, and I believe has been, so far, to give you a general history, (not of my own) but of our sufferings, for I have not been alone in persecution" (57). Marsh's statement evokes the tenets of testimony, an autobiographical genre often employed by narrators who "communicate the situation of a group's oppression, struggle, or imprisonment, to claim some agency in the act of narrating, and to call upon readers to respond actively in judging the crisis" (Smith and Watson 206). The narratives by all six Patriot writers demonise British colonial and monarchical institutions, providing an opportunity for their authors to convey the full extent of the horrors of transportation to the American public and to articulate their patriotic motivations in supporting the Canadian upstarts.

The people and practices of penal administration are deliberately undermined by each narrator, by pitting these institutions against American spirit and sentiment. Lieutenant-Governor Franklin, figurehead of the British monarchy in Van Diemen's Land at the time the American men were prisoners, is a common vehicle for subversion. Franklin is repeatedly made ridiculous. He is variously dubbed "His Bulkiness" (Gates 1: 44), an "imbecile old man" (Heustis 100), a "*bon vivant*, without any strong marks, save obesity and imbecility" (Wright 21) and "the old granny" (Marsh 72). Gates provides a particularly vivid description of the Lieutenant-Governor which demonstrates how the tensions between American and British political philosophies are set in opposition in the narratives. Gates

describes Franklin's first speech to the American prisoners soon after their arrival in the colony:

He was at least two hours in delivering what any American school-boy could have spoken extemporaneously in twenty minutes. The Queen's English suffered not a little – for his words were spoken in half finished sentences, with stammering pauses between that exceeded the sentences themselves, and his language was excessively poor and tautological, whilst his voice was even worse than all. (1: 45)

Marsh, particularly vehement in his treatment of Franklin, concurs with Gates's account, going so far as to convey the delivery of the speech, including parenthetical gasps for breath, heavy puffs and regular expulsions of hot air (71-72).

Unlike the convict life-narratives appearing contemporaneously in Britain and Ireland, all the American transportees constructed their narratives as substantial chaptered texts, ranging between thirty-two to 378 pages in length. But like the British and Irish pamphlet publications, the American texts make extensive use of appended supporting documentation. The title page of Wright's text alludes to "a copious appendix" and the paratextual material certainly warrants this description. The thirty-three page appendix – to a text of eighty pages – consists of fourteen separate notes, comprising letters, newspaper articles, excerpts from histories of the Canadian rebellion, parliamentary speeches and a poem, all pertaining to the discontent and uprising in Canada. Wright's contemporaries also include secondary sources. Miller adds three appendices: the

first, an account of the Battle of Prescott;<sup>24</sup> the second, an account of the Battle of Windsor;<sup>25</sup> and the third, a list of all the men who were transported to Van Diemen's Land and a statement of their current situation. Four character testimonials written for Miller by prominent Van Diemen's Land citizens – former Port Arthur Commandant Charles O'Hara Booth and Assistant Comptroller General J.J. Lempriere are among the referees – follow the three appendices. Heustis weaves secondary sources into his narrative. He regularly incorporates comprehensive lists of names: catalogues of the men who fought, died or were wounded in each of the two major battles of the uprising and of those who were executed, transported and eventually pardoned, providing not only names, but ages and places of residence. He also includes the obituary of the rebel leader General Von Schoultz published in the *Syracuse Standard* after his execution, Miller's eight-stanza poem memorialising fellow patriot Alexander McLeod who died in Van Diemen's Land, as well as letters and transcripts of the official documents of his convictism (his charge and his ticket-of-leave). The appended and incorporated source documentation is testimony to a broader political agenda within which, as in *The Victims of Whiggery* and *The Horrors of Convict Life*, the atrocities

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<sup>24</sup> Prescott, a town on the Canadian side of the St Lawrence River, was a site of insurgent action in November 1838: a siege known as the Battle of the Windmill. The Patriot army planned to seize Fort Wellington in order to control shipping. The commandeered vessels were to ferry reinforcements from Ogdensburg on the American side of the river to the rebels stationed at Prescott. Nils Von Schoultz assumed command of the attacking party who holed up in a windmill to secure their position. The siege lasted from 13 to 16 November when the Patriots surrendered to Her Majesty's 83<sup>rd</sup> Regiment. Twenty Patriots were killed, as were thirteen of the British and militia, and 160 men were taken prisoner. Heustis and Wright were taken prisoner at Prescott (Pybus and Maxwell-Stewart 34-37).

<sup>25</sup> Windsor, located across Lake St Clair from Detroit, was the site of a "farcical invasion." General L.V. Bierce led four hundred American men into Windsor and proclaimed the restoration of liberty while running up the Patriot flag in a small apple orchard on the waterfront. No Canadians made any move to join the ill-armed invasion party, which was quickly quashed by the British regulars and militia. Twenty-one Patriots died in this battle and forty-four men taken prisoner, Gates, Marsh and Snow among them (Pybus and Maxwell-Stewart 41-43).

endemic to Van Diemen's Land convictism exemplify British maladministration. The quasi-scholarly documentation, by situating the narrator within a myriad of supporting evidence and within a community of likeminded pundits, also reinforces the construction of the autobiographical subject of these political moments as an informed and authoritative commentator and witness.



Fig. 4. *View of the Battle of Prescott*, artist unknown. Woodcut. In Daniel Heustis, *A Narrative of the Adventures and Sufferings of Captain Daniel D. Heustis and His Companions* (Boston: Silas W. Wilder for Redding, 1847) Frontispiece.

The publishing opportunities fostered by the anti-transportation furore, the unionist movement and the progress of Chartism did not exist in America to



authorise the Patriot writers and grant them a public voice. But the very existence of these texts and textual evidence within the narratives demonstrate that there was sufficient public interest to stimulate the composition of these narratives and to warrant their publication. In his preface, Wright refers to the impact of public interest his decision to compose and publish *Narrative and Recollections of Van Dieman's [sic] Land*:

The constant call for statements in regard to my sufferings, induces me to venture upon this publication, and the hundreds who welcomed me home fully demonstrated the necessity of my taking this course. . . . to save the memories of the dead from cruel aspersions, and to gratify the living, this feeble effort is made to place in a *true light* many of the actors of the Canadian Revolution. (iii-iv)

The five narratives which follow Wright's all include each author's prefatory justification of his particular narrative. By 1850 and the publication of the sixth and last instance of Patriot life-narrative, the eager public alluded to by Wright in 1844 seems to have wearied of the story. Gates rallies his readers:

The question may be asked, why another narrative of the "Canadian Patriots" should be thrust upon the Public?: "There is no doubt they suffered; but what is that to benefit us?". . . . those engaged in the movement were forced away, like a gang of the most degraded felons, compelled to drudge out several years of unmitigated oppression, without law to sanction the cruelty! Is this not a theme worthy to write upon? and

should not such baseness be laid bare, and the truth unfolded, that those who wish may learn? (1: 8)

The educative component of these narratives, the content that evinces British barbarity, is also the element that bears witness to the oppression and tyranny that these American testimonies and the pamphlets by Loveless and Frost compel the reader to judge: transportation and the suffering it entails. Penal life sets the parameters of these narratives and, like the warning narratives, each account begins with a brief sketch of life prior to the commission of offence, is most thorough in its depiction of convictism and ends with the safe return home of the repatriated transportee. It is convictism, then, that constitutes the “significant event” that these memoirs commemorate, rather than participation in the political activities from which that convictism transpired. But the narratives published within political moments do not merely relay catalogues of suffering as do the warning narratives. The English and American convict autobiographers produced by political moments use their narratives to bear witness, to testify, to lay the truth before the public. Accordingly, these autobiographical acts do not construct narratives that evoke sympathy for the protagonist, as the propagandist warning narratives do, but assume audience sympathy for the ideology simultaneously challenged and fortified by the experience of transportation and championed in the narrative.

*A Pragmatic Moment*

J.F. Mortlock's *Experiences of a Convict, Transported for Twenty-One Years*

(published in England 1864-65), the last instance of Van Diemen's Land convict life-narrative to be published outside of Australia, is something of an oddity within this body of texts in both its material and narrative forms. Mortlock was transported to Norfolk Island (and later removed to Van Diemen's Land at the closure of the penal settlement on Norfolk Island) for violently assaulting his uncle, an act of desperation on Mortlock's part, emanating from his belief that he was duped out of his inheritance by this and another uncle. The publication and circulation of *Experiences of a Convict* was ostensibly a practical solution to two connected concerns: Mortlock's financial hardship and his desire for vindication. His account was composed and published in five separate parts between 1864 and 1865, the sale of one instalment financing the publication of the subsequent one. The narrative offers rare insight into the processes of its publication:

I determined to publish my Memoir in five numbers, and sought in vain for a printer at Cambridge. Mr. Child, of Bungay, in Suffolk, wrote, "it was right to say that they could not print a book of that description." Being of a persevering turn, I went to London, and quickly found one there, who engaged in less than a fortnight to furnish me with a thousand fifty-paged copies of number one for £10 17s. 6d. This was rather more than I then possessed, still, with the assistance of a few kind friends paying in advance, I managed to settle with Mr. Collingridge, although he refused to print the last seven pages, and yet compelled me to pay for the setting up.

Having handed him five pounds in advance, I was quite in his power, and though exceedingly chagrined, obliged to receive number one as they chose to let me have it. Most of the matter which they objected to was printed in the beginning of number two by another person. (Mortlock 236)

Each of the five parts was produced by a different printer, with all of whom the author was dissatisfied for one reason or another. Mortlock also states that Charles Dickens was interested in publishing extracts of the account, an offer which Mortlock declined, preferring to retain his copyright and sell the books “on each Saturday, myself attended with them for sale, at a stand in the Market-place” (237). Mortlock’s commentary on the publication, ownership and sale of his published text evinces a mercantile objective in producing his account, an objective divergent from the acts of witness and testimony published in mid-century Britain, Ireland and America.

Mortlock’s commercial ambitions, however, seem to have been restricted to the sale and copyright of the text and have little impact on the narrative composition of the account. In short, Mortlock’s profiteering project did not lead him to participate in the kind of sensationalism that characterised earlier British, Irish and American narratives and *Experiences of a Convict* differs markedly from these publications in its treatment of penal life. Despite the parameters indicated by its title, Mortlock’s narrator details the author’s life well beyond the bounds of convictism. The narrative meticulously chronicles Mortlock’s early military career serving in India, his travels around Europe and, after the expiration of his probationary period, his employment in various positions and places in the colony

as a ticket-of-leave holder and his later journeying as a licensed hawker after being granted a pardon in 1855. Mortlock also toured Sydney and the New South Wales goldfields and spent sixteen months incarcerated at Rottnest Island after being transported a second time for being in England illegally, a charge the author treats with much contempt and chagrin. Reminiscent of Jorgenson's *A Shred of Autobiography*, Mortlock's antipodean adventures as a roving hawker, professional billiards player and tourist are treated more thoroughly than his time as convict in the colonies. These profitable career digressions testify to the protagonist's industrious, resolute character and to his business acumen.

Although he was incarcerated at two key sites of convict mythology – Norfolk Island and Cascades, on the Tasman Peninsula near Port Arthur – *Experiences of a Convict* actually contains scant depiction of Mortlock's life as a convict. The narrator's depiction of these penal settlements is entirely incongruous with the emphatic condemnations typical of the propagandist warning narratives and it employs a tone and terminology akin to those of discourses of exploration or tourism. Mortlock's narrator assumes an empiricist gaze in introducing Norfolk Island to the reader, situating the colonial outpost in a way that is incompatible with the propagandists' perspective:

That gem of the ocean lies in 28° South Latitude, and nearly 170° East Longitude, is of irregular, oblong shape, being pinched in about the middle, where the distance across is not much more than two miles, and contains about fifteen thousand acres. . . . The circumference is twenty miles, so that in size it resembles Jersey and St Helena. (64)

Mortlock's Norfolk Island is a paradise, an edenic farmland where "pine-apples, plantains, and other tropical fruits flourished . . . as did sugar cane, coffee tree, and arrow-root," where "cattle, sheep, horses, goats, and swine, thrive exceedingly" and where the military officers amused themselves, not with vicious baiting and battering of prisoners, but with "pic-nics, shooting, boating, and flirting" (73-74).

The narrator concedes that he encountered the infamous settlement "at a comparatively improved period" after the administration of the enlightened reformist Captain Maconochie and that the site earned its fearsome reputation by virtue of its previous "dreadful days," but the punitive purpose of Norfolk Island is eclipsed by Mortlock's fulsome account of life at the settlement (66, 69).<sup>26</sup>

Cascades is also subjected to Mortlock's explorative gaze, but fares less auspiciously. The landscape there is inhospitable, the bush impenetrable and unfit for the kind of peripatetic activity Mortlock enjoyed on Norfolk Island (81). The narrator does recount his difficult work labouring in a timber gang, but his astonishment and critique of the site is incited only by the fact that "hares, deer, partridges, and pheasants have not been introduced" to the area for game enthusiasts and gastronomes like himself. Penal stations, in Mortlock's account, are not defined by their punitive design or their housing of violence and suffering. Rather, they are spaces for adventure and the acquisition of knowledge. Mortlock

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<sup>26</sup> Alexander Maconochie (1787-1860) was the superintendent of Norfolk Island from 1840 to 1844. He came to Van Diemen's Land in 1837 as a private secretary to Sir John Franklin and was tasked with reporting on the convict system by the British government. He advocated a rehabilitative component in punishment and in his period of command at Norfolk Island instituted a "mark system" which rewarded good behaviour with a view to reforming prisoners. He was dismissed from this post, but his reformist agenda was promulgated in several publications including *Australiana: Thoughts on Convict Management* (1839), *General Views Regarding the Social System of Convict Management* (1839) and *Crime and Punishment, the Mark System* (1846) (Davison, Hirst and Macintyre 408).

may have arrived in these colonies as a deported criminal, but his autobiographical subject is a leisurely tourist, not a long-suffering transportee.

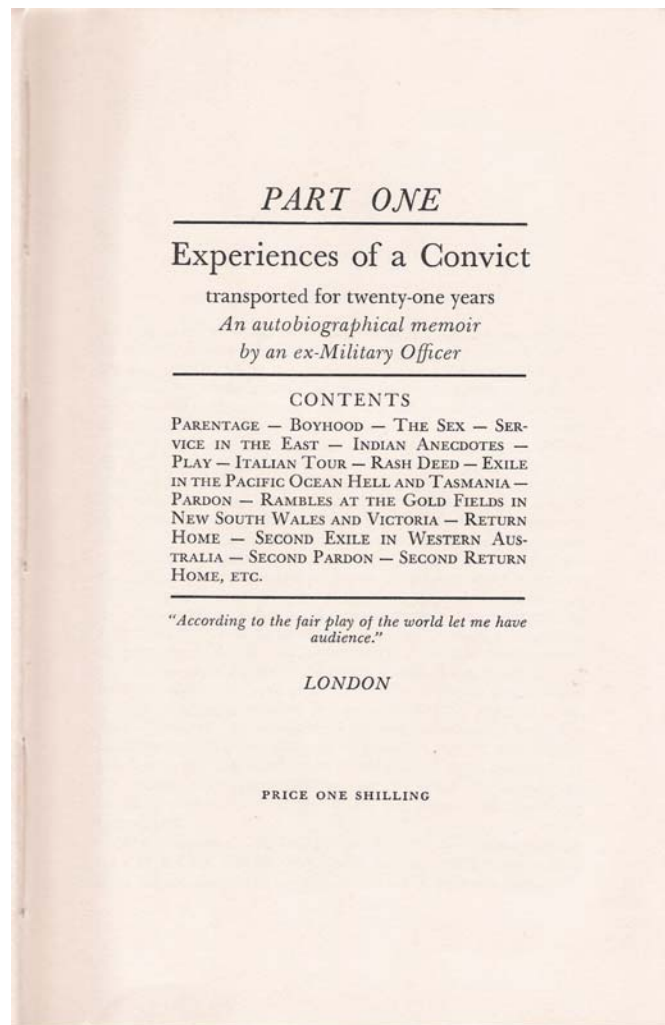


Fig. 5. Title page of J.F. Mortlock's *Experiences of a Convict* rpt. in J.F. Mortlock *Experiences of a Convict*. Ed. G.A. Wilkes and A.G. Mitchell. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. ([Sydney]: Sydney UP, 1966) 1.

The grim catalogue and gruesome vignettes much exploited in British and American propagandist and politically driven life-narratives are entirely absent in Mortlock's account. The narrative does, however, share some features with both

the English and Irish pamphleteer autobiographers and the American authors in its material composition. Mortlock supplements his account with extra-textual evidence: copies of letters, extracts from his father's will, quotations from legislation and other kinds of material are transcribed within the body of the narrative. Previous authors used documentation to dramatically malign convictism or the government that administered the practice, but Mortlock's evidence is coopted to a more self-interested objective, enlisted ostensibly to validate his claims of his uncles' and legal authorities' unjust treatment. This transcribed material, therefore, is part of the second project of *Experiences of a Convict*, to denigrate the family members who set in motion the chain of events that led Mortlock to be transported to the antipodes. Yet even in constructing this history, Mortlock is not figured as a victim. Rather, he is the skilled compiler of legal evidence, confidently, if somewhat audaciously, assembling a compelling case to publicly prove his charges against his uncles.

The incongruity of Mortlock's depiction of transportation and the Australian colonies with those written by British and American returnees in the preceding decades demonstrates the impact of the autobiographical moment: while it facilitates publication, the autobiographical moment also prescribes how the life-narrative can be framed and communicated. Mortlock was not subject to the same narrative confinement as British, Irish and American authors who, within the requirements of their propagandist or political occasions, were compelled to tell sensational stories of transportation and construct accordant subjects. The extensive narrative scope and unusual treatment of convictism in Mortlock's



account is made possible because Mortlock manufactured his own autobiographical moment. Mortlock could tell his own story of convictism because he controlled his own publication.

### *Historical Moments*

It was only after the cessation of transportation to Van Diemen's Land in 1852 that autobiographical accounts by convicts which portrayed their experiences of penal life, as opposed to Jorgenson's earlier narrative elision of it, began to be published in Australia. Three texts were published between 1859 and 1899: John Leonard's narrative (1859), Mark Jeffrey's *A Burglar's Life* (1893) and William Derricourt's *Old Convict Days* (1899). The publication of John Leonard's narrative, facilitated by an Australian periodical, patently demonstrates how publishers controlled the legitimisation of convict story-telling. In an inversion of Mortlock's autobiographical moment, the telling of Leonard's story is controlled by an interventionist editor. Leonard's narrative was never published as a discrete text and only found a readership as a narrative embedded within a short-lived Melbourne serial, the *Australian Magazine*. Selections from "The Life and Adventures of John Leonard, a Prisoner in V. D. Land" appeared in the second, and last, issue of the magazine in November 1859, under the heading "Reviews". The introduction signals the degree of editorial intrusion in Leonard's narrative in preparing it for publication:

The manuscript of this person's life has been placed at our disposal; but as there is much that will not bear publication, we purpose to give such

extracts as will enable our readers to have an idea of the miseries of a convict life in recent times in a grand Penal Settlement. (97)

Irrespective of what Leonard's complete manuscript may have contained, his published narrative is an episodic picture of the tyrannical and wretched nature of Van Diemen's Land society. The narrative, which jumps from portraying one penal station to another and provides a catalogue of named cruel overseers and despotic magistrates, is comprised of a succession of incidents in which Leonard is maltreated or excessively punished. The protagonist is repeatedly victim of underhand machinations by fellow convicts, superintendents and magistrates alike and is regularly punished by floggings, removal to other stations or chain gangs and stints in solitary confinement as a result of the actions of these duplicitous men. The anonymous editor interjects at various points in the article, summarising here, equivocating there, actively shaping Leonard's narrative into an illustration of "the course of convict discipline" (98). By 1859, transportation was a thing of the past in Van Diemen's Land, the arrival of convicts having ceased in 1853, but with thousands of men and women still seeing out their sentences in the numerous probation stations around the island, it was not so comfortably in the past that an ex-convict could tell his own story to an Australian audience without the guiding voice of an interjecting editor.

Late-century publications *A Burglar's Life* and *Old Convict Days* were both discrete and substantial texts produced in connection with provincial newspapers. The office of *The Examiner*, Launceston's daily, published Jeffrey's narrative in 1893, after a flurry of fervent advertising. Derricourt's story initially

appeared as the series “Old Convict Times to Gold-Digging Days” in Sydney’s *Evening News* during 1891, before being collated by Louis Becke<sup>27</sup> and published as a standalone text in London in 1899.<sup>28</sup> That Jeffrey and Derricourt achieved publication through the publishing mechanisms of the local press is not unusual. Newspapers, magazines and other periodicals were, as Elizabeth Webby states, “the primary outlets for writers wishing to publish in Australia” during the colonial period (*Colonial Voices* xiii). What is remarkable, however, is that these late-century accounts are the first instances of Van Diemen’s Land convict life-narrative to be published as standalone texts in Australia. This leads me to suggest that the autobiographical moments for Jeffrey and Derricourt were not consequent of their local celebrity or of an occurrence of serial space in a regional paper, so much as of what I term a moment of historicity: a public arrival at a comfortable distance from which convictism could be viewed at best as an important economic strategy in the formation of a viable new country, at worst as a curious quirk remembered with smug nostalgia.

The paratexts of *Old Convict Days* and *A Burglar’s Life* evidence how these convicts’ stories were historicised in their publication. The full title of Jeffrey’s narrative is *A Burglar’s Life, or, the Stirring Adventures of the Great English Burglar, Mark Jeffrey: A Thrilling History of the Dark Days of Convictism in Australia*. The title of Derricourt’s text, *Old Convict Days*, immediately locates

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<sup>27</sup> Louis Becke (1855-1913) was born in Port Macquarie (New South Wales) and became writer famous for his tales of the South Pacific published in the collections *By Reef and Palm* (1894), *His Native Wife* (1895) and *The Ebbing of the Tide* (1896). He also wrote over a dozen novels (some collaboratively), a number of historical works and two books for boys (Nairn and Serle 238-39).

<sup>28</sup> *Old Convict Days* was first published as the serial ‘Old Convict Times to Gold-Digging Days’ in Sydney’s *Evening News* during 1891. My study analyses the compendium edition produced by Louis Becke, published in 1899.

convictism in a safe and distant past. Editorial notation further pushes Derricourt's tale into that past. Becke cites the original introductory note from the *Evening News* to give a sketch of Derricourt's narrative in prefacing the 1899 compendium edition:

It shows the career of one who, arriving in this part of the world as a convict, gradually, and not without some temporary slips backward, worked his way to a position of competence and respectability, finally arriving at a point sufficiently assured for him to be able to reveal his past without fear of anyone making it a reproach to him. (v)

Forty-six years after transportation to Van Diemen's Land ceased, Becke was able to construct Derricourt's account as a tale of rehabilitation and reformation.

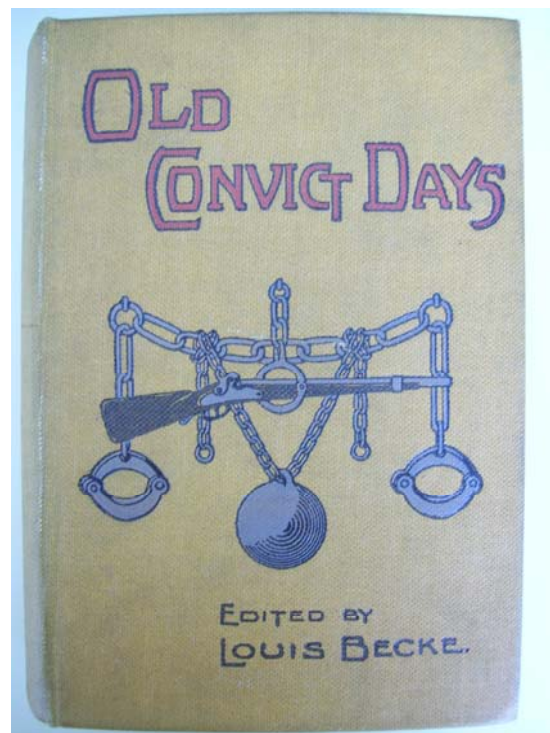


Fig. 6. Front cover of 1899 publication of William Derricourt's *Old Convict Days* (London: T.F. Unwin, 1899).

Both texts assume a narrative and material shape more aligned to the novel, which had become increasingly popular during the century. *A Burglar's Life* and *Old Convict Days* are similar to *Experiences of a Convict* in narrative scope, detailing the lives of the protagonists before and after the period of their penal sentence. Given that Jeffrey was in and out of Van Diemen's Land prisons and penal stations for almost thirty years, there is not much beyond the bonds of convictism to narrate in the life of the historical Mark Jeffrey, but the narrative is extensive in its depiction of Jeffrey's life as a transportee. It resists relying on vignettes or set pieces of convictism and in so doing provides a more staunchly individualised account than does Cockney, Broxup or their contemporaries in Britain, Ireland and America. Derricourt's *Old Convict Days* provides a history for the protagonist prior to his conviction and transportation. The narrator recounts Derricourt's childhood living by his wits in the English midlands, his apprenticeship to a gunsmith and his youthful induction into the seedy and often gruesome world of cock-fighting and bull-baiting. Derricourt arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1839, being transported under the pseudonym William Day for stealing a waistcoat. Such details not only facilitate character development but also perform significant work in the historical project of the narrative. Derricourt is situated as a member of the British working-class from which Australia's convict population was derived. The historicisation of this class in the narrator's reminiscence of childhood works to contain convictism safely in Australia's past, as a result of a social situation that existed in another time and place. The text also covers Derricourt's probationary sentence, detailing the places at which he was

stationed, the work he performed and the secondary punishments he endured for repeated attempts to abscond. But the bulk of Derricourt's narrative, contrary to its title, depicts his life as an enterprising emancipist in South Australia and New South Wales. The increased narrative scope of these two late-century texts is materially manifest. Both are substantial chaptered texts, Derricourt's totalling 338 pages and Jeffrey's 137 pages.

Alignment to the narrative and material forms characteristic of the novel is also evident in each text's abandonment of the appendices typical of mid-century convict life-narratives. Prefacing comments, however, are not dispensed with. The text proper of both *A Burglar's Life* and *Old Convict Days* is preceded by an introductory note which intimates the collaborative process underpinning the composition of the two narratives. While the complications of collaborative authorship will be considered in the following chapter, here I draw attention to how *A Burglar's Life* and *Old Convict Days* differ to John Leonard's narrative in each narrative's exposition of the interventions of unnamed others within the autobiographical text. While the interjecting editor of Leonard's account is easily discernible in the variation of typeface which visually distinguishes the editor's voice from the narrator's, such intrusions are obfuscated in Jeffrey's and Derricourt's narratives. These accounts are narrated by a single unified voice that the reader assumes to be that of the convict author named on the text's title page and it is only in the preface to each text that any evidence to the contrary is suggested. This contrast indicates the significance of historical perspective in legitimating autobiographical convict story-telling. In 1859, the convict voice was

actively and patently controlled. By the last decade of the century – forty years after transportation of prisoners to Van Diemen’s Land ceased – convict autobiographers could speak without obvious interruption in their published accounts.

The authority acquired by these late-century convict writers is manifest in the way each figures his protagonist. Earlier accounts – warning narrative, political dissertation and memoir alike – demonstrated, albeit in variant ways, how the cruelties and caprices of penal practice determined the protagonist’s experience as a transportee. While not necessarily rendering the protagonist as abject victim, all these accounts pit the power of penal administration and implementation against the individual. Jeffrey’s and Derricourt’s narratives reverse this dichotomy and put the protagonist in control of his penal sentence. *A Burglar’s Life* is particularly adept at this reversal, a consequence of its alliance to the apology form.

Admission of guilt is not fundamental to the literary apology. Its appeal lies, as James Goodwin states, in the space it proffers for the author to explain “the origins of ideas and opinions behind actions, which will rectify inaccurate and unfair judgement over his or her conduct” (5). Jeffrey’s literary apology is based on two tenets: his quick temper and his unusually voracious appetite, both attributes that belong indivisibly to Jeffrey and not to the vagaries of colonial and penal authorities. One of these two traits is invariably cited as the cause of the protagonist’s many violent outbursts and refusals to work. Of the bar fight which led to Jeffrey’s second life sentence for manslaughter, the narrator comments:

No man placed in the same position as I was, when Hunt and “Yorkey” so unprovokedly insulted and assaulted me, would have listened calmly and borne chastisement with folded arms. The blow with which I felled Hunt was given in self-defence; the force of it was due to the ungovernable temper he had aroused within me, but I had no desire or intention to inflict severer injury upon him. (107)

“Big Mark” stood over six feet and weighed above fifteen stone. Jeffrey’s unusually large build is repeatedly linked to both his appetite and his quick temper, a causal triumvirate by which the author’s frequent misdeeds and charges are explained and defended. Jeffrey’s self-justificatory apology demonstrates an ownership and a sense of control over his sentence absent in the autobiographical accounts of Van Diemen’s Land convict life published in Britain, Ireland and America.

The autonomous subject of Jeffrey’s account is in accordance with the historicist project of the three Australian publications. All three texts attest to their authors’ movement from convict to useful citizen in either the preface or concluding statements. Just as these stories apparently could not be told in Australia until convictism was a thing of the past, the author’s convict status, even though the substantial stuff of the narrative, had to be clearly relegated to the past before he could access a reading public. The evident reformation or rehabilitation of the subject was required and endorsed by historical moments.

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The particular narrative and material forms assumed by a given text, along with the temporal and geographical location of its original publication, attest to the autobiographical moment which transformed a convict into an unlikely autobiographer. In elucidating the narrative and material forms of each life-narrative by Van Diemen's Land transportees, I have identified five kinds of autobiographical moments: the promotional, the propagandist, the political, the pragmatic and the historical. These thematic categories are not specific occasions in themselves, but extra-textual conditions that fostered the publication of individual convict life-narratives. A publication can result from coexisting kinds of conditions. Loveless's and Frost's narratives, for instance, were produced by a political situation, but the narratives also actively promote that political agenda. Jorgenson's narrative, while ostensibly promoting the fledgling colony, is also an instance of pragmatism, given that it was published as a result of a particular collegial expediency. But, even with this interplay, one set of circumstances seems to have provided the opportunity for each narrative to be published and it is this prevailing situation that I identify as generative of each convict's autobiographical moment.

Smith and Watson offer an observation which accords with my definition of the autobiographical moment. They suggest that "understanding how individual representations of subjectivity are 'disciplined' or formed enables readers to explore how the personal story of a remembered past is always in dialogue with emergent cultural formations" (83). This disciplining and dialogue can raise doubts about authority in autobiography. Crafting experience into a recognisable

and acceptable narrative facilitated a public voice for the unlikely autobiographer, but the requirements of form simultaneously curtailed the presentation of authentic experience, as Moira Ferguson argues in her introduction to *The History of Mary Prince* (4-10). Ferguson demonstrates how Prince established a speaking position only by aligning her experience to the narrative patterns characteristic of the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* – the press organ of the Anti-Slavery Society of which Prince’s editor, Thomas Pringle, was Secretary – a framework in which “Christian purity . . . overrode regard for truth” (4, 25). If subjectivity and genre are so prescribed, how self-referential can the resultant narrative be?

In response, I return to Whitlock’s and Ferguson’s illuminating readings of Mary Prince’s narrative. Each of these scholars demonstrate that while Prince’s account was scripted by the conventions and interests of the Anti-Slavery Society, Prince simultaneously complied and resisted, retaining some control of her story yet still participating sufficiently to guarantee her voice would be heard. This leads me to ask two questions: how did convict writers retain their autobiographical authority and with whom did these authors share their narrative space? These questions are considered in the following chapter.

## ***Chapter Two***

### ***Authority: Negotiations in Autobiographical Space.***

The conditions that facilitated publication of convict life-narratives simultaneously provided and prescribed story-telling possibilities. The interplay of narrative and material forms furnished prospective convict life-writers with a particularised script by which to imagine, construct and narrate their experiences. Such scripts limited what stories could be told and how those stories should be told, but this did not necessarily compromise the agency of the autobiographical writer, the author's capacity to exercise free choice and independent decision-making in composing the narrative of his or her life. As Paul Smith contends in *Discerning the Subject*, an autobiographer is not simply an actor following an ideological script, but is also an agent who reads that script "in order to insert him/herself into [it] – or not" (xxxiv-xxxv). For authors who experienced the disempowerment and disenfranchisement of penal servitude, the possibilities for autonomy within autobiographical space renders it significant territory. Smith and Watson explain: "within [the] context of state coercion, autobiographical narrative can become a site of enabling self-reconstruction and self-determination in its insistence on imagining forms of resistance to those deindividuating routines" (57). For the convict autobiographer, the very act of imagining, composing and publishing an autobiographical account, even within the prescriptions of publication, should be understood as a process of individualisation.

Van Diemen's Land convict writers employed many strategies to recover autonomy within autobiographical space. This chapter begins by discussing the two most predominant and effective of these strategies: detailing protagonist resistance and refuting the "convict" appellation. Discussion of the first strategy –

the documentation of resistance as a kind of contestatory writing back – focuses on the narratives of Mark Jeffrey and John Leonard. Jeffrey’s *A Burglar’s Life* and Leonard’s narrative are generically apologies, that mode of autobiographical writing that foregrounds self-defence and explanation. My analysis examines these writers’ use of the apology through the scope of another sub-genre of autobiography, the prison narrative, in which prisoners “inscribe themselves as fully human in the midst of a system designed to dehumanise them and to render them anonymous and passive” (Smith and Watson 201). The concept of re-inscription of identity is expanded in my discussion of the second strategy of self-determination in convict life-writing. Here, I consider how authors construct an autobiographical identity that resists and refutes that inscribed by the designation “convict”, taking the narratives by the Canadian Patriots as particularly illustrative of this individuating practice.

As a micro-narrative, Jeffrey’s official conduct record portrays an insolent, disobedient and regularly violent character, with a predilection for arguing with authorities, resulting in recurrent stints in solitary confinement or some other secondary punishment. The official gaze constructed and documented Jeffrey as an incorrigible.<sup>29</sup> Jeffrey’s autobiographical narrative contests and disrupts this characterisation, not by denying or renouncing his actions, but by providing a justification for those actions in his own terms. Leonard, whose conduct record also attests to an incorrigible character, similarly uses the autobiographical space

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<sup>29</sup> In penal discourse, this term was used as a noun to designate recalcitrant prisoners who showed little or no capacity for or willingness to reform.

of his narrative to provide an alternate explanation for the lengthy entries against his name in the official registers.



Fig. 7. Mark Jeffrey, photograph by unknown artist (n.d.).

Both authors offer their explanations within a discourse of moral self-rationalisation, a feature that is symptomatic of the apology genre, but a feature also common to nineteenth-century prison narratives. Larry E. Sullivan suggests

that American prisoners' narratives, written contemporaneously to those by Van Diemen's Land convicts, demonstrate a greater degree of protagonist autonomy than do those penned in the twentieth century. Earlier narrators, Sullivan argues, assume a level of moral ownership and accountability for their actions which is absent in twentieth-century accounts, where narrators deny and excuse their actions through a web of determinism – economic, social and environmental. Nineteenth-century narrators, by contrast, pride themselves on their personal autonomy, even in the commission of crimes (21-24). This celebratory elucidation of personal autonomy pervades the apologies of both Jeffrey and Leonard.

Jeffrey utilises his autobiographical space to explain his actions and to provide a framework by which he can be understood as something other than an inveterate villain. The narrator of *A Burglar's Life* usually justifies Jeffrey's many colonial infringements by referring to the protagonist's volatile and often violent temper, but this justification at no point compromises or denies his autonomy. The narrative repeatedly provides evidence of Jeffrey's self-determination, despite the constraints of penal servitude. Jeffrey's negotiations in obtaining employment as a ticket-of-leave holder are meticulously recounted, thoroughly detailing the bargaining between prospective employer and employee. Jeffrey is presented as an equal, and sometimes a better, in these negotiations, as exemplified in his resignation from a position with a Mr Murdoch. After an argument between Jeffrey and Murdoch's wife over the behaviour of a young nursemaid also in the Murdochs' employ, the narrator states: "I emphatically assured [Murdoch] that I would not remain in his service any longer, as the mistress had insulted me, and I

did not intend to be insulted by anyone” (77). During his second sentence at Port Arthur, Jeffrey inveigles himself a billet as delegate in the cook-house to ensure that rations are adhered to and, while in this position, he refuses an order to assist the cooks, stating, “I shall pay no heed to such a rule. The delegates are appointed to see that every prisoner has his proper allowance of food, and it is impossible for them to detect dishonesty among the cooks unless they are allowed their own latitude” (81). Jeffrey’s refusal earns him fourteen days solitary confinement and a six week sentence served in the model prison.<sup>30</sup>

Leonard’s autonomous actions, conscientiously depicted throughout his narrative, also result in further punishment and additions to his period of sentence, a consequence so frequent it prompts the narrator to reflect “I’ll let things take their course, for what is lotted to a man he must put up with. . . . I will strive no longer to keep out of trouble, for bad luck nor ill fortune cannot be prevented” (103-07). Such despondent and fatalistic statements might be construed as undermining any exposition of efficacious agency on Leonard’s behalf. To subscribe to that conclusion, however, is to participate in a very limited reading of textual agency, one that locates agency in what the narrative depicts, rather than what the text does. In Leonard’s narrative, agency is better understood as a kind of writing back to the authoritative centre, to borrow from the terminology of post-colonial theory. Leonard constructs a personal history that contests and

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<sup>30</sup> The Model, or Separate, Prison was opened in 1852 and was designed to accord with contemporary penal reform in Britain and America. The model prison utilised psychological rather than physical punishment, and was built on the theory that complete isolation was an effective form of rehabilitation. All contact between prisoners and other people was prohibited. Prisoners were kept in isolation and complete silence was enforced. Prisoners were referred to by a number, rather than a name, and wore hoods whenever they left their cells so that they could not recognise anyone, nor be recognised (*Port Arthur Historic Site*).



interrogates the authority and veracity of the official record of his incarceration, a subversive manoeuvre similar to the interrogative work performed by post-colonial writers, whose “vital and inescapable task” is “the rereading and the rewriting of the European historical and fictional record” imposed by colonial domination (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 196).

May 6. 1840 Armstrong / Misconduct in being drunk and most disorderly conduct. 3 months h<sup>d</sup> labour in chains & ret<sup>d</sup> to Govt. / Oaklands Chain Gang then to Willis Corner for Asst<sup>t</sup> V.L.G.D. 8 May 1840.

June 3 1840. Crown / Misconduct in feigning sickness. Dismissed.

June 20 1840. Ch. gang / Insubordination. Dismissed.

June 29 1840. Crown / Gross misconduct in assaulting and ill-using his fellow prisoner ~ discharged.

Oct 12. 1840. Cox (?) / Disorderly conduct & disobedience of orders. Reprimanded.

25<sup>th</sup> Nov 1840. Treadwheel / Disobedience of orders. 7 days Solitary Confinement.

Nov. 30. 1840. Cox / Gross misconduct. 6 weeks hard labour.

Dec<sup>r</sup> 30 1840. Cox / Drunk & disorderly / 36 Lashes. ret<sup>d</sup> to Govt. / Launceston V.L.G.D. 1 January 1841.

19 March 1841. Jordan / Absent with<sup>t</sup> leave & Illness = One Month hard labour on the Roads Ret<sup>d</sup> to Govt.

July 20<sup>th</sup> 1841. Murphy / Absent without leave & disorderly conduct. 1 M<sup>o</sup> h<sup>d</sup> Labor & ret<sup>d</sup> to Govt. / Launceston for Asst<sup>t</sup> V.L.G.D. 23/7/41.

Oct<sup>r</sup> 14 1841. Heighly (?) / Gross misconduct. insolence to his master and leaving his master's premises (?) without permission. 12 M<sup>os</sup> h<sup>d</sup> Labor in chains ret<sup>d</sup> to Govt. / (Campbell) Town Ch. Gang then Launceston for Asst<sup>t</sup> V.L.G.D. 22/10/41.

Fig. 8. One page of the transcription of John Leonard's conduct indent provided in *John Leonard's Narrative* (Woden, A.C.T.: Popinjay P, 1987) 106.

Reading Leonard's narrative as an instance of writing back is facilitated by Popinjay's 1987 publication of the text. The editor, in an effort to verify the existence of the convict John Leonard and to provide historical context, includes a transcription of Leonard's conduct record on the facing pages of the facsimile of the *Australian Magazine* text. The juxtaposition of the two narratives – the conduct record and the autobiographical account – evidences the discord between the official word and the convict's own. A particularly illuminating example of this discrepancy is Leonard's explanation of a recorded conviction for disobedience of orders on 5 March 1842 and the resultant punishment of ten days' solitary confinement. Leonard's narrative furnishes a history to the perfunctory record. He details the altercation between himself and a tyrannical overseer, One Armed Wilson, that led to the charge:

During the day he spoke to me something about a spade, and I told him I did not know where it was; he then said I was insolent to him. Lieutenant Somerset came out that day to inspect the party, and asked Wilson how he was getting on, and pointed to me, saying 'There's a man you must look sharp after.' Wilson said that he would, and that I was for trial now for being insolent to him. Lieutenant Somerset replied, 'That's right, fetch him up.' I was then tried and received a sentence of ten days' solitary confinement. (108)

Leonard's account simultaneously vindicates the author and attests to what he perceives as the arbitrariness of penal justice by demonstrating the imposition of a harsh penalty for a minor and ostensibly contrived offence, a penalty consequent

of Wilson's tyranny and Somerset's prejudice, rather than of Leonard's recalcitrant behaviour. The narrator goes on to describe the avaricious Wilson, who was "going on for the indulgence of a conditional pardon" and consequently "would not care how he sacrificed his fellow-creatures" in pleasing authorities to sooner obtain that indulgence (108). This criticism of penal practice embedded in Leonard's account constitutes an instance of writing back, an instance of authorial contestation and re-empowerment.

Matching narrated events to those recorded in Leonard's conduct record is not, however, an entirely straightforward process. Several issues complicate a simple correspondence between record and narrative. Firstly, the narrative does not describe every event documented in the conduct register, demonstrating Leonard's authorial control and design in producing his own narrative. Secondly, Leonard's narrative is scant in provision of dates, a feature common to all Van Diemen's Land convict narratives. The only date stated by the narrator is that of his arrival in Hobart Town: October 1835. Years, seasons, months and days are collapsed in the narrative, by both narrator and editor, rendering any clear correlation of narrative episodes and conduct record entries difficult. Thirdly, the editor of the *Australian Magazine*, in preparing Leonard's manuscript for publication, paraphrases and summarises the narrative, often eliding and obscuring episodes in Leonard's life that are recorded in the official documentation of his sentence. Details of Leonard's actions are concealed within such editorial encapsulation as:

Leonard was returned to the service of his former master at Clarence [P]lains. . . . From this service, on complaint against his master, he was sent to Hobart Town, where he was engaged by a publican; from whom he passed for some offence, to Sandy Bay Road party. At the term of his sentence, he was taken by a wood-cutter at Restdown, and implicated by the knavery of his master and others, tried, and succeeded in proving the perjury of his fellow-servant, escaped the artful snare laid against him, and was next assigned to a settler at Norfolk Plains, where he did not continue long in consequence of insolence and insubordination; and, after punishment, was transferred to the service of W. Kermode, Esq. of Mon Vale [sic] . . . (102-03)

Four removes are glossed within this paragraph of editorial intercession. Each of those movements is consequent of some action on Leonard's part, but the summary provided by the editor elides exposition of what those actions might have been. This not only makes it difficult to correlate narrative events with Leonard's conduct record, but also jeopardises Leonard's authorial agency. The reader is unable to know what, if anything, Leonard himself had to say about these incidents and charges. Even the editor's grammar in this passage works against Leonard's agency as the recurrent use of "was" constructs the protagonist as entirely passive in each of the transfers.

Any correlation of episodes from the narrative to entries in Leonard's conduct record is complicated in three ways – narratorial evasion of certain events, imprecise or complete lack of dates and editorial obfuscation of events. This

dissonance, however, demonstrates how autobiographical territory opens up space for authorial self-determination. This space is utilised by Leonard to good effect and itself demonstrates a fourth, but more evidently autonomous, way in which simple correspondence is frustrated. Leonard's narrator recounts incidents that are not recorded in the pages of officialdom, an attribute which disrupts and challenges the authority of the conduct record. Leonard recounts his difficult relationship with Larry Murray, who was in charge of the prisoners' huts for the Grass Tree Hill party in which Leonard served a period on a road gang. Leonard was appointed night watchman of the huts within a week of his arrival at the station. He recalls:

Things went on very well for three days, until one night I fell asleep, and Larry Murray came behind me and took my cap off. I awoke a minute or two afterwards, and missing my cap, guessed who had taken it; and seeing Murray's door open, I went in and asked him what he had taken my cap for. He replied, "Oh, you villain!" and he ordered a constable to take me in charge, which was instantly done, and I was placed in handcuffs, and sent in, charged with wilful neglect of duty in being asleep on my post. (101)

The narrative divulges that the charge was dismissed, on account of the superintendent's "knowing what a man Murray was" (101). Unlike other dismissed charges, this particular incident is not inscribed in the official documentation of Leonard's incarceration. Perhaps the charge was never heard, which could explain its absence from the record. Perhaps Leonard invented the episode to libel Murray, to portray himself as vindicated victim or simply to add

another interesting episode to his narrative. Whatever the provenance of this narrative incident, its inclusion proffers an alternate history – real or imagined – which disrupts the legitimacy of the official micro-narrative.

The second strategy of self-reconstruction and self-determination utilised by convict autobiographers also works by disrupting the perceptions and preconceived ideas of officialdom, as well as those of popular imagination. Transportee authors commonly refute the “convict” label. “Convict” functions as a scripted identity, one that the majority of Van Diemen’s Land transportee writers, or their publishers, employ in titling their works. Reilly, Easy, Cockney, Broxup and Mortlock all attach the appellation of “convict” to their names in the titles of their accounts.<sup>31</sup> That so many narratives include such designation indicates that contemporary audiences responded to this labelling of the author. The inclusion of “convict” in the title of a book or pamphlet signals the kind of experiences or events narrated within that text and prescribes, or at least indicates, the model of autobiographical identity operative within the narrative.

Yet the use of “convict” as identity and genre marker in the titles of these narratives does not necessarily equate to an author’s easy relationship with that identity. Contemporary observers, such as novelist Charles Rowcroft, noted that transportees in the colonies “generally shunned calling themselves” convicts, a term they regarded as an insult. “Government men” was the preferred term or, on

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<sup>31</sup> For example, *A True History of Bernard Reilly, a Returned Convict; Horrors of Transportation: Or the Danger of Keeping Bad Company, or Being Careless in the Choice of Companions, Exemplified in the History of Henry Easy, a Returned Convict; The Life of S. Cockney, a Returned Convict, Containing a Faithful Account of his Dreadful Sufferings in Hobart Town, Van Diemen’s Land, During Ten Years; Life of John Broxup, Late Convict, at Van Dieman’s [sic] Land; Experiences of a Convict, Transported for Twenty-One Years*. Leonard’s narrative appears in the *Australian Magazine* under the title “The Life and Adventures of John Leonard, a Prisoner in V.D. Land.”

some occasions, “prisoners” (qtd. in Duffield and Bradley 5). Van Diemen’s Land’s convict writers use autobiographical space to define themselves as something other than convict; in so doing they undermine the contemporary perception of what a convict was – irredeemable brute, uneducated and insatiable thief, member of a distinct “criminal class” and source of moral contagion – while simultaneously engaging those stereotypes to differentiate both protagonist and author from the stigma of the convict appellation (R. Hughes 168). This defiance is usually situated in the narrator’s assumption of superior strength, intelligence or morality, a narratorial standpoint characteristic of the apology mode. Derricourt’s protagonist is exulted as an exemplary worker of exceptional strength and energy, qualities that result in his being appointed a team leader at the Port Arthur coal mines:<sup>32</sup>

Together with my strength, my early training among bulls, dogs, and fighting men stood me in good stead, and I was soon in a position to bully down any who were inclined to interfere with our turn in getting our truck loaded or molest us in any other way. As I was 5 feet 11 inches, my chain was too short for a middle donkey, and so I was promoted to be leader and spokesman of our team. (56)

Appointment as leader, a consequence of Derricourt’s physical prowess and scrupulous work practice, enables the narrator to distance his protagonist from

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<sup>32</sup> The Coal Mines Station, located on Plunkett Point on the Tasman Peninsula, was a punishment station for Port Arthur. The work was difficult and dangerous, with severe punishment for those who failed to carry out their allotted work. Convicts worked eight hour shifts and production was maintained around the clock. Not all men at the station were worked in the mines; some were employed in building barracks or in tending the gardens. The station operated between 1833 and 1848 (Brand 46-47).

other convicts labouring in the mines, those whose lack of comparable strength and fortitude manifests as cheating and foul play. Other convicts are effectively demonised and Derricourt becomes not only the model labourer, but also the stalwart protector of his team.

Similarly constructed as physically intimidating and exceptionally strong, the protagonist of *A Burglar's Life* is frequently depicted as possessing an exemplary work ethic and superior powers of moral reasoning. These two attributes allow Jeffrey to rise above the collusion and conspiracy apparently endemic amongst the lower levels of penal officialdom. This is illustrated in an episode which occurred while the protagonist was stationed at privately operated mines on the Tasman Peninsula as a woodcutter and attendant on three constables (84). Hancock, the senior constable, acquired a cow and a butter churn through surreptitious means. This became known to McGuire, a constable eager for promotion and ready to use the information to his advantage. McGuire offered Jeffrey a bribe to collude in reporting Hancock's theft of government property. Jeffrey's narrator recounts his contemptuous response:

I gave a most emphatic refusal, stating that not only did I object to such a vile conspiracy, but that, as the senior constable had never interfered with me, I was not going to meddle in matters concerning his public or private business. So indignant, in fact, did I feel at this unmanly proposal that I sought an immediate interview with Hancock and acquainted him with McGuire's conduct. (84)



This episode typifies the moral righteousness and pragmatism that characterises Jeffrey's narrative, an attitude that recurrently brought him before superintendents, judges and flagellators. Jeffrey here is not an ignorant brute, guided only by the threat of the lash as a convict might be supposed to be, but a man freely acting in accordance with his own ethical persuasion.

Defiance of the convict appellation is also evident in more perfunctory and less protracted examples in a number of the texts. Easy, for instance, divorces his protagonist from the convict mob by stating that "brute law" was necessary in dealing with some morally degenerate convicts unable to respond to any reasoning or motivation other than the "fear of the lash, the double chains, or Norfolk Island" (7). Broxup and Mortlock challenge the limits of the convict identifier by detailing their lives beyond the bounds of their convictism, describing their international travels with the British navy and army respectively. Despite these numerous instances of defiant individualism in convict life-narratives, the accounts also demonstrate occasional participation within a collective identity. Narrators frequently employ collective pronouns in depicting the experience of transportation or in detailing the conditions within barracks or on road gangs.

The Canadian Patriot prisoners couple delineation of a collective identity with a refutation of the convict label in their individual autobiographical assertions of autonomy. Effective and demonstrated autonomy was integral to these texts, given their political motivations and messages. As Cassandra Pybus and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart point out, in the discourse of Yankee patriotism "no white American male could be positioned in the public perception as the abject victim of

imperialist task-masters, cruelly enduring the indignity of being treated like a dog” (xiv). A sense of group identity pervades these narratives, a feature perhaps augmented by the fact that the Canadian prisoners were transported together and were, until a government order for their partial separation in 1841, managed as a group during their incarceration in Van Diemen’s Land. All six individual American authors narrate their stories from a communal perspective, usually speaking through collective pronouns to refer to the Canadian prisoners as a unified body. These six narratives employ a titling strategy that differs from British, Irish and Australian publications in its adoption of terminology that evinces the prisoner’s political crimes and status. Gates is dubbed “one of the Canadian Patriots” in the title of his *Recollections of Life in Van Dieman’s [sic] Land*. Snow’s, Miller’s and Marsh’s protagonists are situated as “exiles” by the titles of their texts. The first of the Yankee publications, Wright’s *Narrative and Recollections of Van Dieman’s [sic] Land*, foregrounds captivity and imprisonment in its full title, as does that of Heustis’s narrative which refers to “a long captivity.” Convict, in the Patriot narratives, is the identity of the other. All six narrators are careful to create and maintain distance between their political prisoner protagonists and the British and Irish criminals with whom they were incarcerated within Van Diemen’s Land.

A.W. Baker suggests that protagonist dissociation from other criminals is a common feature of British criminal biography. Condemnatory observers of English prisons lamented the “indiscriminate bundling together of prisoners” that occurred within the jail walls and Baker notes that “after the loss of freedom, the

prisoner's chief source of torment seems to have been his fellow-prisoners" (22).

The accounts by Marsh and Gates are sympathetic to other convicts and enlist depictions of the suffering and maltreatment of British and Irish prisoners to condemn Britain's administration and social structure. No such empathy pervades the other four Patriot narratives. Wright, Snow, Miller and Heustis emphatically and obstinately distance the American political prisoners from the English and Irish common convicts by depicting those men as heinous and loathsome.

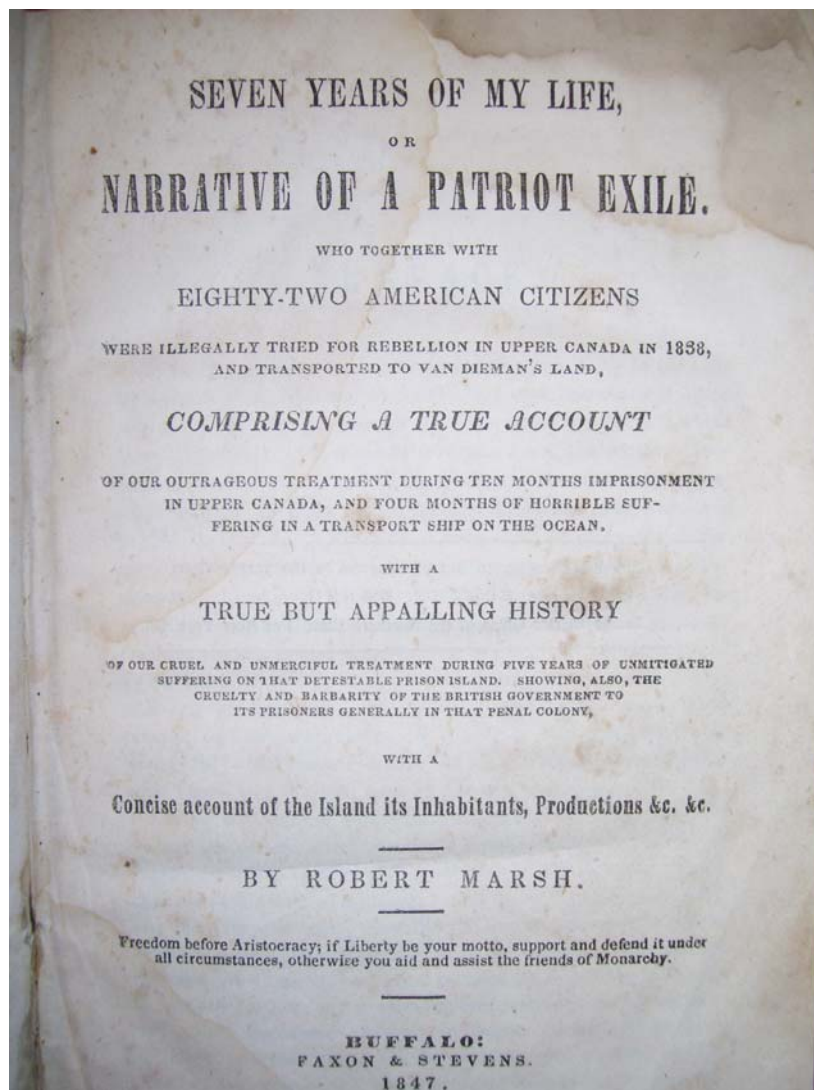


Fig. 9. Title page of Robert Marsh's *Seven Years of My Life* (1847).

Huestis's differentiation between political and criminal prisoners starts aboard the *Buffalo*. He claims that two common felons betrayed the Patriots by foiling a mutiny plot and latent in this accusation is the assumption that such felons were, unlike the political prisoners, necessarily duplicitous and untrustworthy. Unique to his account, Heustis names these men, identifies their crimes and outlines their fate. He also offers commentary on the aptness of the punishment the two men suffered: "I left them at Van Dieman's [sic] Land, in irons, and there they deserve to remain, as long as they live" (93). Miller similarly expresses contempt for common felons and great indignation at being deprived of his status as a political prisoner well before he reaches Van Diemen's Land. His disgust at being bunkered down with common criminals aboard the *Captain Ross* transport from Canada to England is palpable when he recounts:

Eleven French-Canadian convicts, thieves, highway robbers and murderers, were thrust in with us: fortunately but one or two of their number could understand or speak English. Indignant as we all felt at the insult, we had no redress, except in keeping them a distinct class as much as possible.

(119)

Dissociation is given colonial validation in the accounts of Snow and Heustis, who both recount an instruction to the American prisoners spoken by Lieutenant-Governor Franklin: "He recommended to us to hold no conversation with the old prisoners, as they were a desperate and hardened class of individuals" (Snow 13). Validation of the Patriots' assumed superiority was also offered by overseers and employers. Robert Nutman was, according to the Patriots, a superintendent

renowned in the colony for his cruelty. His treatment of the American prisoners was, however, humane and indulgent, because, so Snow states, their status as political prisoners, rather than common criminals, ensured Nutman thought no less of them as human beings (16).

The binary designations – political / criminal and American / British – constructed by the Patriot authors are blind to other kinds of “politics” involved in transportation. The convict population against which the Patriots defined themselves was not, as they imagined, a homogenous group, but rather a body that incorporated a miscellany of individuals: men, women, English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, Catholic, Protestant, literate, illiterate, skilled, unskilled, even dissenting soldiers from the Empire’s armed forces and foreigners convicted in the Empire’s colonial outposts. Despite the references Snow and Heustis make to administrative validation of their own dichotomous perceptions, it is important to recognise that the simplistic binary which the Americans construct and uphold is a strategic invention that benefits their individualisation, rather than a historical fact. The narratives become a space where the Patriots can publicly iterate their sense of distinction, something they were probably unable to do during their incarceration. Heustis, who along with Miller is the most vehement in his loathing of the “old hands,” expresses contemptuous indignation in his account of the events of 14 May 1841 at Bridgewater Station, where the group of American prisoners was finally disbanded and reformed into gangs alongside British transportees. The narrator recounts: “for the first time, we were herded with the English convicts. . . . They were the vilest of the vile, and it was only by the strictest watch that we

prevented them from stealing our rations” (113). Heustis’s new gang, composed of both American and British prisoners, was moved to Brown’s River Station, south of Hobart Town, and the narrator details the malcontents’ efforts to avoid any interaction with the British convicts:

Our party was quite unwilling to associate with criminals from the lowest sinks of iniquity in England, and we asked permission of the magistrate and superintendent to build ourselves a separate hut, which we would do in the Saturday afternoons allotted us to do our washing. (116)

Permission was granted and the hut quickly built, the men motivated by the prospect of “being speedily separated from our disagreeable companions.” Their object, however, was ultimately frustrated. The finished hut was promptly requisitioned by the superintendent to house a company of soldiers (Heustis 116).

Autobiographical agency is evident in a variety of ways across Van Diemen’s Land convict life-narratives. Each of these links in some way to the self-determination and self-reconstruction which Smith and Watson identify as individuating outcomes of prisoner life-narrative. Leonard’s narrative simultaneously documents protagonist self-determination and authorial self-reconstruction by writing back to the legitimised narrative of the conduct record. Broxup, Mortlock and Derricourt along with the Canadian Patriots, carve out autobiographical identities that contest the convict appellation and in so doing exemplify life-narrative as an occasion or a site of self-reconstruction for the disempowered and disenfranchised prisoner. This is not to say, however, that convict life-narrative is entirely agentic terrain. Autobiographical acts offer self-

reconstructive space, but that space is often in tension with the demands of the specific autobiographical moment. Various intrusions – editorial intervention, appropriation of narratives to political or religious causes, collaborative composition and fraudulent accounts – problematise the reading of convict narratives as sites of agency. This chapter now examines these interruptions to authorial agency and demonstrates Van Diemen’s Land life-narratives as polyvocal sites. Each narrative is a space where numerous and disparate voices are subsumed within the voice of the apparently “real” narrator.

Similar to the abolitionist movement, in which slaves were “urged to recite their narratives of slavery’s degradations” for the abolitionist press, the furore in Britain over transportation in the 1840s furnished many returned convicts with autobiographical opportunities (Smith and Watson 53). Reilly, Page, Easy, Cockney and Broxup all attained publication in this period and the titles of these works, which foreground the “horrors of transportation” and “dreadful sufferings in Hobart Town,” indicate the kind of emotional work these narratives performed within the transportation debate in Britain and Ireland. Kirsten McKenzie illustrates the import of religious and moralistic discourse in criticisms of Britain’s penal practice, stating that the critiques launched against penal transportation in the 1830s were imbued with “discourses of sexual scandal” because debates about bonded labour were “concurrent with the emergence of a bourgeois imperial culture of manners which stressed the importance of personal respectability and domestic morality” (1). Autobiographical narratives by returned convicts were enlisted to fortify and support these arguments. The title page of Easy’s *Horrors of*

*Transportation* states that the narrative was “published at the request of the Rev. Dr Cope . . . and numbers of the friends and well-wishers of the rising generation” (7). Broxup’s association with representatives of the Society of Friends, both in Van Diemen’s Land and in England, was apparently the impetus for the composition and publication of his account and the narrator cites the “humane and philanthropic conduct” of Quaker missionaries James Backhouse, George Washington Walker and Mr Kershaw

who, through disinterested motives, took a tour through the penal Settlements, and pryed [sic] into the hardships of poor abject fellow-creatures who suffered with myself, and laid a detailed account of all they felt and all they saw before our British legislature. I am here constrained to quote a phrase from Holy Writ which says: Go thou and do likewise. (16)

Likewise Broxup did, laying his own “detailed account” of Van Diemen’s Land’s privations and atrocities before the English reading public, a book patently devised to educate and agitate.

The most arrant appropriations of convict life-narrative, however, appeared in the decades on either side of the mid-century publication glut. *The Victims of Whiggery*, George Loveless’s account, was published in 1837, a year before the findings of the Molesworth Committee were handed down. The publication of Loveless’s testimony has two stated purposes – to provide an authoritative account of his suffering and to raise funds to assist the Central Dorchester Committee’s support of the families of the transported Dorchester Labourers. *The Victims of Whiggery* became, however, a “rabble-rousing, republican pamphlet” quoted at



Chartist meetings and engaged as an inspirational text for trade unionists (Marlow 207-08). A 1968 reprinting by the British Communist Party, reissued in 1969, suggests that the account retained its potency as a “passionate plea to the working classes of England,” while simultaneously demonstrating a twentieth-century appropriation (Walsh and Hooton 1: 100). Currently, Loveless’s narrative is published on the internet site *Tolpuddle Martyrs Online Today*, its transcription (alongside that of its sister narrative *The Horrors of Transportation* by James Loveless, James Brine and Thomas and John Standfield) cited there as an authoritative historical source in scholarship about the Martyrs (*Tolpuddle Martyrs Online Today*).

While Loveless’s narrative has been appropriated in numerous temporal and political settings, the original publication of Frost’s *The Horrors of Convict Life* perhaps demonstrates a more significant instance of publishing appropriation. Frost’s narrative employs the marks of autobiography – a self-referential narrator and a narrating “I.” However, Frost’s own testimony was not textual, but oral, the extant text being a transcription penned by a scribe who attended the public lecture. This text verges on collaborative autobiography and as such is indicative of the kinds of complex transactions implicit in collaborative production that will be considered later in this chapter. Here, I draw attention to the appropriative aspects of *The Horrors of Convict Life* and consider how the identified political agenda underpins narrative inclusions and exclusions.

Frost’s scribe is anonymous and largely unobtrusive. This effacement facilitates reading *The Horrors of Convict Life* as autobiography in accordance

with Lejeune's assessment of the nuances of collaborative autobiography: "we are coming closer to biography if the intervention is critical and creative, or rather to autobiography if it tries simply to relay the model by discreetly effacing itself" (190). Frost's scribe, however, does make patent editorial interventions at some points in the narrative and it is at these points where the appropriation of Frost's autobiographical voice is evident. This cooption, perhaps somewhat incongruously, emphasises the convict experience at the expense of the Chartist argument that Frost, as speaker, foregrounded. In ending the narrative, the writer summarises and circumscribes Frost's narrative: "Mr Frost then went on to argue for the necessity of a change in the government, and having gone at some length into the doctrines of Chartism, he resumed his seat amid loud applause" (65). To Frost, the experience of convictism is illustrative of the need for governmental reform. To the scribe, Chartism is incidental. It is Frost's experience as convict which is legitimised by the interventionist's pen.

The same process of legitimisation occurs in the appropriative publication of Leonard's narrative. Editorial intervention in Leonard's account is candid. The editorial voice interjects at numerous points in the text, manipulating Leonard's narrative to fulfil its proclaimed objective: "to illustrate the course of convict discipline" (98). The excerpts included in the *Australian Magazine* – the only version of Leonard's manuscript ever to be published – aptly render such an impression of convictism. Leonard's narrator attests to the tyranny of overseers and superintendents, the deprivation prisoners suffered in consequence of inadequate provision of food, clothing or shelter and the harsh punishments for

trifling and often trumped up charges. Leonard's manuscript, therefore, provides valuable raw material to the *Australian Magazine's* agenda, but there are tensions between the authorial and editorial voices.

The editorial voice is spatially and visually differentiated by textual spacing. The editor's comments are double spaced and are formatted in a slightly larger font size than the excerpted, single-spaced text of Leonard's manuscript. Typically, these interjections summarise periods of Leonard's life or passages of his manuscript, eliding and effacing Leonard's autobiographical authority. These interjections regularly, and perhaps involuntarily, hint at the extent of Leonard's original manuscript and at the degree to which that manuscript was compromised by editorial intervention. For example, after Leonard's expulsion from Mona Vale (a large property in the Campbell Town district owned by the Kermode family) as punishment for an illicit drinking bout with a fellow convict named Tuck, the *Australian Magazine's* editor interjects:

From this place [Snake Banks Station] he absconded, was taken at Longford, tried, and sentenced to Port Arthur for one year; and now life at this place is fully depicted. There was a second visit to this locality, when the events being somewhat similar, we will not follow, b[u]t rest satisfied with this picture:- (103-04)

The editor proceeds to furnish the reader with a description of Port Arthur:

Port Arthur is a beautiful spot on Tasman's peninsula. The bay is finely land-locked, and interspersed with islands. The hills rise in amphitheatre around the settlement, densely timbered. No landscape could be more

lovely; and the settlement itself, with the church and barracks, officers' quarters, and prisoners' cells, the constant bustle of the men, the tramp of sen[--] vessels, boats, and all the stir of life, gives peculiar animation to the whole place. But it is the hell of Tasmania; the prison-house of woe; the theatre of most revolting crime, where abomination, atrocity, and blasphemy, are rife. (103-04)

Leonard's own account of life at Port Arthur, like his depiction of the many places at which he resided during his sentence, lacks the descriptive scene-setting the *Australian Magazine* provides. Leonard's account consistently concentrates on action and interaction. Place is incidental to, and only differentiated by, the people who occupy it – the superintendents who govern the convicts, the overseers who supervise and enforce daily work routines and the convicts with whom Leonard interacts and sympathises. This particular passage of editorial intervention demonstrates not only the appropriation and subjugation of Leonard's voice to provide evidence for the *Australian Magazine's* agenda, but also the tension between the two frames of reference operative within the text. The appropriative publication seeks to make generally representative a narrative Leonard composed as staunchly individualised.

Editorial interventions in *The Horrors of Convict Life* and Leonard's narrative make the multiple voices of these texts easily discernible. Frost's scribe and Leonard's editor do not leave subtle traces of their intervention within the texts, but make explicit statements that clearly record at least some of the intercessions made into the narratives in preparing them for publication. Multiple

voices also speak in the autobiographical accounts of Derricourt and Jeffrey, but, in these instances of collaborative autobiography, disparate speakers are more difficult to discern.

Collaborative life-narrative is that composed by more than one person through one of three processes: the as-told-to narrative where a scribe relays the story of the autobiographical subject; the ghostwritten narrative where an interviewer records, edits and perhaps even expands upon material provided by the subject; or the collective narrative in which individual speakers are not specified or in which one speaker is identified as representative of the group (Smith and Watson 191). Collaborative authorship of convict narratives is not unusual. Indeed, in the centuries preceding convict transportation to Australia when criminal biographies flourished in the British market, the authorship of a biography by someone with special and privileged access to the prisoner was regarded as equivalent to autobiographical authorship. For example, the regularly published *Account of the Ordinary of Newgate*, the prison chaplain who heard confessions of the prisoners and administered their last rites, “became a market leader by emphasizing the unique access which the Ordinary had to the prisoner” (Rawlings 6).

The statements made about collaborative production in the introductions to *A Burglar's Life* and *Old Convict Days* suggest that the editors of both texts conceive of the narratives as unproblematic transcriptions of the respective subject's story, aligning the texts to the as-told-to mode. Louis Becke, editor of the 1899 publication of Derricourt's *Old Convict Days*, offers assurance that the

collaboration which produced the narrative has not undermined the subject's autonomous voice:

neither the author of the 'introduction' which I have just quoted [from the *Evening News*] nor myself thought that Mr Day's rugged, honest style required more than to be left alone in its integrity as it was taken from his lips, and that to attempt to tamper with it would be an injustice to the old gentleman, and, perhaps, annoying to the reader, as an instance of good material spoilt by incompetent hands. (vii)

The anonymous author of the brief preface to *A Burglar's Life* makes a similar, though more succinct, statement: "the following pages are written in Mark's own language, with very few alterations" (5).

Within the body of Jeffrey's and Derricourt's narratives, the narrator is unitary and singular, effacing the collaborator's purportedly minor intrusions. Lejeune terms this kind of collaborative life-narrative "heterobiography" – a site where two speakers pretend to be only one (264). This collapsing of two or more voices together into one narrative speaker obscures the machinations and multiplicity of collaborative composition. Smith and Watson suggest that in the production of a collaborative narrative "multiple levels of coaxing take place, including those of the ghostwriter or cowriter, whose prompting questions, translations of the autobiographer's oral speech, and revisions are often invisible in the final text" (53). In both *A Burglar's Life* and *Old Convict Days*, the collaborator is anonymous and the collaboration, though alluded to, is obscured through a number of strategies. The editors use their introductions to encourage

readers to understand the collaborative author as an unobtrusive scribe, who simply put the subject's words on paper. Such an intervention, the introductions claim, is limited and the narrative consequently authentic. The scribe's lack of interference is also signalled by the narratives' title pages and statements of authorship. Both texts were published with the convict protagonist named as author and continued to bear this mark of autobiography in their twentieth-century manifestations.

There are, however, disruptions which undermine the unity and singularity of the autobiographical narrators of *A Burglar's Life* and *Old Convict Days*, interruptions which attest to the otherwise obscured processes of collaborative production. Philip Rawlings contends that many claims to authenticity made by publishers and promoters of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century criminal biographies were frequently compromised by attributes of the texts themselves. He identifies a number of these destabilising textual traits: a recurrent "scant regard for the facts of the individual's life"; the inclusion of names or positions other than that of the autobiographical subject on the title page; an apparent disregard of any incompatibility between editorial involvement and the promotion of the pamphlet as autobiography; and "the wealth of detail and the highly literate, often flowery, style" which many of the narratives display (4-8).

*A Burglar's Life* and *Old Convict Days*, however, prove to be more effacing of their collaborative authorship than the criminal biographies Rawlings examines. Both convict narratives furnish readers with highly detailed accounts of the lives of the respective protagonists and depict life well beyond the confines of

the convict identity, thoroughly portraying the early criminal careers of the historical Jeffrey and Derricourt and their experiences after the end of their convicted sentences. There are two explanations for this disparity between Rawlings's suggestion and the actual attributes of these two particular narratives. Firstly, Rawlings's reference to a "scant regard for the facts of the individual's life" is associated with his exposition of the contemporaneous controversy around the Ordinary of Newgate's *Account*, which eighteenth-century critics maligned for its apparent mercenary objective that contravened the moral or catechistic purpose the *Account* purported to serve (4-5). Secondly, Jeffrey's and Derricourt's autobiographical accounts enjoyed the comfort of historical distance from their narrative content. This temporal distance from what Derricourt's *Evening News* editor dubs "a state of society that has now passed away almost as completely as the Dark Ages" enables the more thorough and individualised depiction of convictism that characterises these two narratives (v-vi).

Neither of these two collaborative texts foregrounds the relationship between the autobiographical subject and anonymous scribe. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century pamphlets, Rawlings suggests, often used claims of the compositional participation of a close associate of the prisoner-subject – a jailer, a lawyer, a clergyman, a sheriff or a constable – as "an important selling point" of criminal biography (7). The two late-nineteenth-century Australian narratives, however, elide any exposition of the relationship between autobiographer and amanuensis, a silence that obscures the process by which the protagonist's story was identified as a story worth recording and how that story was solicited, shaped



and shared. Becke is named as an editor of the book publication of *Old Convict Days*, but the narrative was already taken down from Derricourt's "own lips" in composing the narrative that was published in the *Evening News*. The collaborators of both texts remain anonymous and, by the signature on the title page, to echo Lejeune's famous definition of autobiography, authorship is collapsed with the name of the convict subject. In this way, the "prompting questions," "translations of the autobiographer's oral speech," revisions and coaxing that Smith and Watson identify are indeed rendered invisible.

Twentieth-century scholarship attempted to recover and identify the collaborative author of *A Burglar's Life*. W. and J.E. Hiener propose ex-convict James Lester Burke as the narrative's likely scribe. Numerous stylistic similarities between this text and Burke's *The Adventures of Martin Cash*,<sup>33</sup> published in Hobart in 1870, are cited, including a lack of the "melodramatic sentimentality that coloured much nineteenth century [sic] popular writing," an avoidance of "moralizing" and "clumsy and pretentious verbosity" and an abundance in both narratives of "remarkably accurate references to people who were living in Tasmania at the time" (xvii). The likelihood of Burke's authorship, the Hieners argue, is strengthened by several traceable points of contact between Burke and Jeffrey at the Hobart Prisoners' Barracks and at Port Arthur.

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<sup>33</sup> Martin Cash (c.1808-1877) was one of Van Diemen's Land's famous bushrangers. Arriving in the colony in 1837, Cash escaped from Port Arthur in 1842 and went on a twenty-three month spree, robbing settlers and travellers with his associates Lawrence Kavanagh and George Jones. He was captured in Hobart in 1844 and, after fatally shooting a police constable in the ensuing melee, was sentenced to death. This sentence was commuted to transportation to Norfolk Island. He obtained a ticket of leave in 1854 and a pardon in 1863. His biography, written by James Lester Burke, was a best-seller (Alexander 66).

The strategy which underpins the Hieners' identification of Burke as the authorial voice in *A Burglar's Life* is in consonance with the fourth textual trait that Rawlings identifies as disruptive of the claims to autobiographical authenticity made by some criminal biographies. Rawlings contends that the quality of writing in some accounts belies their purported authorship. In the Hieners' reading of Jeffrey's narrative, Burke's voice is discernible in the very composition of the text. Despite the assurances given in the preface to *A Burglar's Life*, the Hieners validate Rawlings's observation: multiple voices are discernible and the published work rarely corresponds with what the subject's "own words" would conceivably be. It is this disparity which is the major disruption to the unified autobiographical voice in *A Burglar's Life* and a similar dissonance is evident in *Old Convict Days*.

Jeffrey, according to the author of the preface, is illiterate. The narrative that follows is purportedly "written in Mark's own language, with very few alterations," a statement contradicted by the quality and idiosyncrasies of the writing (5). In detailing the commencement of his career as a burglar and his self-appointment as the leader of the thieving gang, for example, the narrator recalls: "At my suggestion we agreed to adopt a ghostly costume for the purpose of carrying out our operations. . . . It was mutually agreed upon that our first exploit should be at the residence of a Mr Jones" (24). Jeffrey's story plays out across twenty-six chapters, each of which bears a long, descriptive title, demonstrating the narrative's allegiance to the material form of the increasingly popular novel. The narrative form also borrows from the novel and differs remarkably from the brief, rather rambling accounts of Page, Easy, Cockney and Broxup, which share

more with an oral tradition than a literary one. Vocabulary, sentence construction and narrative design all evidence a voice other than that of the illiterate Jeffrey.

*Old Convict Days* is, according to Becke, a transcript, “left alone in its integrity as it as taken down from [Derricourt’s] lips” (vii). That this cursory and dismissive reference to the narrative’s collaborative production obscures the negotiations, revisions and constructions inherent in the cooperative production of this text is similarly made patent by the voice which narrates the account. The narrator describes life at Port Arthur and ruminates, “crushed down, worked like a beast of burden, and oppressed more than human nature could endure, I made up my mind to ‘bush it’ again” (46). As in *A Burglar’s Life*, it is difficult to reconcile the narrating voice of *Old Convict Days* with that of its “rugged” subject. The narratives do not appear to be as-told-to productions, a compositional process which attempts to merely relay the subject’s story as the introductions to *A Burglar’s Life* and *Old Convict Days* claim. Rather, the narratives are instances of ghostwriting, a practice in which the collaborator reworks material provided by the subject into publishable narrative. Both collaborative practices involve an effacement of the co-author, but ghostwriting permits the collaborator greater scope to augment and amplify the subject’s story, generating more interstices at which his or her voice is discernible in the narrative. In this way, *A Burglar’s Life* and *Old Convict Days* are sites of polyvocalism.

The apparently fraudulent autobiographies attributed to Reilly, Page and Easy comprise a third site of polyvocalism in Van Diemen’s Land convict life-narratives. Anonymous and potentially unknowable voices speak in these three

accounts. No reliable archival evidence can be located to verify the transportation of any of these three men to Van Diemen's Land. While the names Bernard Reilly and Thomas Page appear in the conduct records, arrival registers and description lists, the individuals recorded therein do not tally with the details of crimes, sentences, dates or transport ships that the narratives provide. There is no record at all of a convict named Henry Easy in Van Diemen's Land.

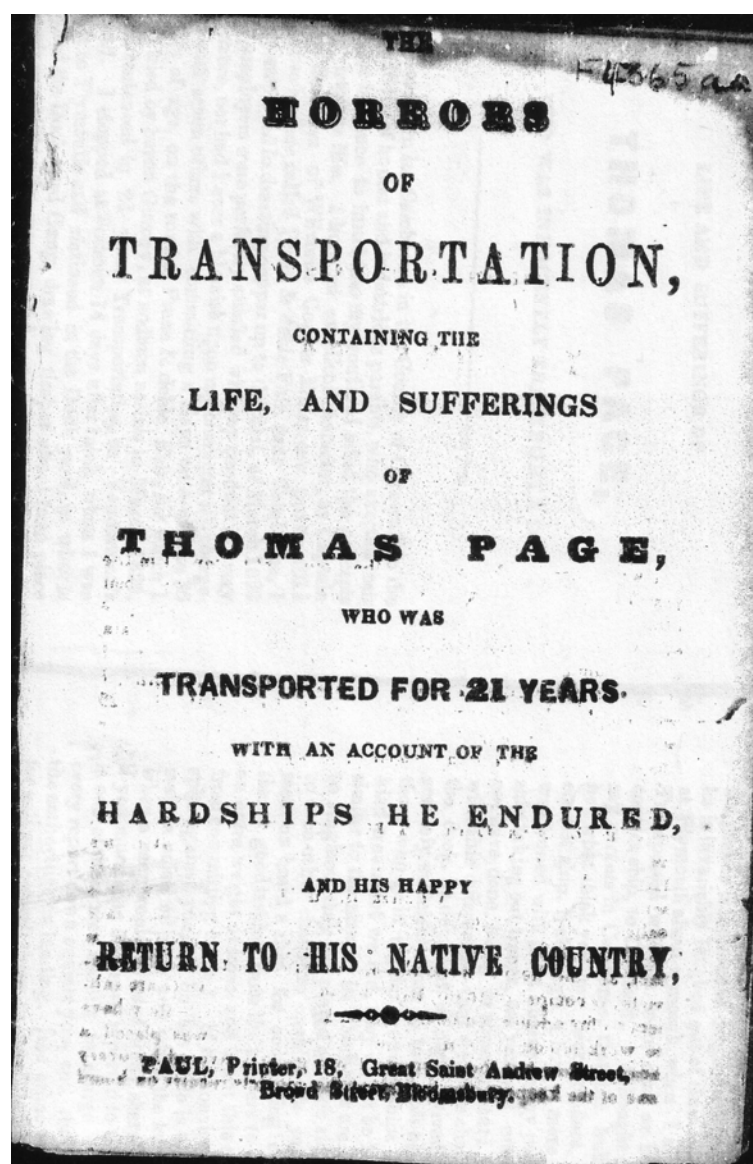


Fig. 10. Title page of Thomas Page's *Horrors of Transportation* [1846?].

The highly derivative and formulaic nature of these three narratives also complicates any reading of the accounts as authentic autobiography. Each narrative is arranged in accordance with Baker's elucidation of the criminal biography formula: early life, introduction to and progress within crime, capture, sentencing and transportation (4). Reilly's, Page's and Easy's accounts fit this mould more readily than the otherwise comparable narratives by Cockney and Broxup, which are brief in detailing the pre-transportation lives of their protagonists, but meticulous in depicting experiences in Van Diemen's Land, providing names of masters, overseers, stations and townships throughout the account. Reilly, Page and Easy are silent on such specifics and their narratives consequently lack the individualisation and immediacy of Cockney's and Broxup's narratives. In this study, however, I am less interested in establishing incontrovertible evidence that these accounts are fraudulent or otherwise, than in demonstrating what these factually dubious texts evince about narratorial multiplicity within Van Diemen's Land convict life-narratives.

In his analysis of nineteenth-century working-class autobiography, David Vincent discusses the generic differentiation of autobiography in the period and contends that "the form was susceptible to appropriation by practitioners in other fields" (*Bread, Knowledge and Freedom* 2). He provides two examples of such appropriation, both of which indicate how the form generated particular possibilities for fraud. Firstly, working-class novelists appropriated autobiography as they found the structure an acceptable solution to surmount the technical challenges posed by the novel. Secondly, autobiography proved "an ideal medium

for preaching to the working class about the dangers of violence and to the middle class about the need to alleviate the condition of the poor” (*Bread, Knowledge and Freedom* 2). This latter use of autobiography, or of fictive accounts packaged and promoted as autobiography, can explain the emergence of the counterfeit accounts attributed to the supposed convicts Page and Easy. These narratives, both titled *Horrors of Transportation*, were probably published in 1846 and 1847 respectively and are styled as warning narratives, urging young working-class men and women to resist the temptations of “bad company” while simultaneously alerting middle-class readers (the narratives’ more likely readership according to Rawlings’s analysis of the circulation of criminal biography in England) to the conditions of penal servitude and administration in Van Diemen’s Land. It is possible, then, that the narratives were authored by reformists, agitating for the anti-transportation cause and inventing a convict identity to champion that agenda. In this case, while the authors of these two texts remain anonymous and irrecoverable, the narrating voices speak to represent and promote the anti-transportation agenda. If the appearance of the two narratives resulted from an impulse more opportunist than reformist – taking pecuniary advantage of a popular subject – the narratorial voices still echo the rhetoric employed by the many speakers within that debate. These spurious autobiographies, then, are sites that attest not to one voice, but to many.

Like Page’s and Easy’s narratives, Reilly’s doggerel narrative may not be the “true history” it claims to be. At just eight pages, *A True History* is the shortest of Van Diemen’s Land convict autobiographies and, with its rhyming couplets,

variant font sizes, botched spacings, grammatical errors and three woodcut illustrations, is the only publication that demonstrates some of the curious and often problematic characteristics of broadsides identified by Hugh Anderson (xxiii). *A True History* is scant in its provision of the specifics of the protagonist's convict experience. No names of people or places, dates or events are detailed. While most convict authors state the names of transport ships, assigned masters or probation station overseers and locales of residence, Reilly is conspicuously vague about the particulars of his penal servitude. The vessel which brought him from Ireland to the antipodes is referred to merely as "the transport" and no date of departure or arrival is given – details which even the apparently fictitious Page and Easy provide (4). Reilly's inspection and assignment on arrival in Hobart Town (the only place named in the narrative) is recounted with brevity and obscurity: "Like horses they examined wind and limb / When a gentleman said I was the man for him / When straightaway in a waggon [sic] I was taken / To the estate where I had to remain" (4).

The lack of precise detail in *A True History* renders alignment of the narrative persona with any individual recorded in Tasmania's convict archives difficult. Bob Reece, however, by moving away from relying on information provided within the narrative to considering the conditions of its production, recovers the historical identity of the man to whom the narrative refers and establishes the protagonist as a verifiable person within history. Reece locates a certain Bernard Reilly "a twenty-six year old hawker from Co. Cavan who was convicted for picking pockets at the Donegal assizes on 1 April 1830 and

sentenced to seven years transportation” (12). This particular character is posed as the most likely candidate on the basis of his literacy, the spelling of his name and his possible return to Leitrim by 1839 when the undated narrative was most probably published in Ireland (12). The historically verifiable Reilly, however, was transported to Sydney and not to Van Diemen’s Land as the narrative attests. It is this anomaly that disrupts the veracity of *A True History* as a legitimate autobiographical account.

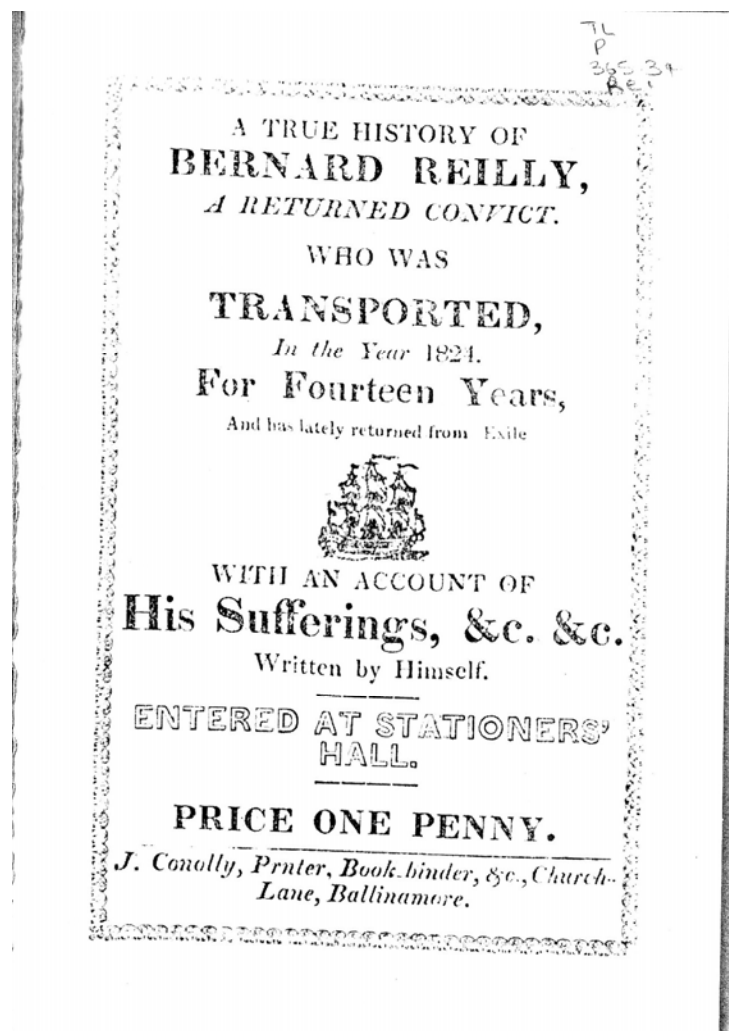


Fig. 11. Title page of Bernard Reilly’s *A True History of Bernard Reilly* [1839?].



Reilly's narrator makes only one direct statement about being transported to Van Diemen's Land. After twelve lines about the journey aboard the unnamed transport, he declares: "At Hobart town [sic] we got on shore at last" (4). His recollection of sentencing makes no reference to the island colony and only vague reference to Australia, recalling the judge's pronouncement: "for the crime of which you guilty stand / I'm forced to send you from your native land / for fourteen years to climes beyond the seas" (3). In his celebration of the return home that closes the narrative, Reilly collapses New South Wales with Van Diemen's Land: "I am happy blown by their Southern Gales / from that land of Heathen called South Wales" (7). The substitution of Van Diemen's Land for New South Wales as the narrative locus may have occurred, as Reece suggests, because the island prison was "already well known from ballads and newspaper reports as a place of suffering" (14). An alternate explanation lies in a contemporaneous change in transportation practice. In 1839, the year *A True History* was probably published, transportation to New South Wales ceased, making Van Diemen's Land the only active antipodean penal colony. The author of *A True History*, or its publisher, may have shifted the narrative setting to accommodate this change and retain a contemporary setting for the narrative. In this explanation, the substitution of Van Diemen's Land for New South Wales suggests an interventionist hand.

Although Reece painstakingly resurrects the historical Reilly, he concedes that archival verification does not guarantee Reilly actually authored *A True History*. He considers the narrative and material forms of the text, and the

traditions in which those forms participated, to estimate the degree of Reilly's participation in composing the narrative:

Broadside ballads and chapbooks were usually written by professional writers or publishers, sometimes using information supplied by the people about whom they wrote. . . . The likeliest possibility seems to be that [Reilly] did write the *True History*, possibly with assistance from John Conolly [Reilly's editor who also produced broadside material], and certainly with some knowledge of an earlier broadside in a similar vein.

(14)

*A True History*, unlike either Page's or Easy's *Horrors of Transportation*, appears to be an autobiographical account that refers to a real historical person. This narrative may even have been written by Reilly himself, rather than transcribed or ghostwritten, albeit with some support from Conolly. The substitution of Van Diemen's Land, however, along with the lack of specific detail about Reilly's penal experience, itself possibly symptomatic of the narrative re-placement of Reilly's historical life, evidences the input of a shrewd collaborator who assisted Reilly to craft a commercially viable text. Here, two speakers are discernible and, thanks to Reece's scholarship, potentially identifiable. The voices Reilly and Conolly are subsumed within the one narrator of *A True History*.

\* \* \* \* \*

These eighteen transportees who published life-narratives of their experiences of Van Diemen's Land became autobiographers, however unlikely, because they

cooperated in some way with the narrative scripts proffered to them in and by the conditions of their specific autobiographical moment, be it one charged with promotional incentive, propagandist invective, political argument, pragmatic opportunism or the nostalgia of historical perspective. Publication necessitated some degree of compliance with the scripts laid out. But, as Whitlock's interrogation of Mary Prince's narrative demonstrates, complicity does not entirely preclude authorial agency. Compliance, like resistance – insertion or non-insertion in Paul Smith's description of autobiographical agency – is a choice.

Autobiographical writers and their subjects can opt in and out of the scripts furnished to them and in this way complicity transforms from an act of mere submission into a demonstration of active control, authority and agency on the part of the subject of the autobiographical act. Life-narrative is performative and participatory.

Convict life-narratives are stages for multiple speakers. The protagonist's story of transgression, transportation and tyranny is the product of negotiation and dialogue between the subject, the narrator, the author, the scribe, the editor, the publisher, the book-buyer, the reader and the broader audience. Convict life-narratives, then, disrupt conventional ways of thinking about autobiographical writing, especially those approaches that assume self-referential accounts are underpinned by the unified and solitary voice of the subject-narrator-author. These autobiographical accounts of Van Diemen's Land penal life, by virtue of the evidence of agency, appropriation and participation that each narrative encodes, demonstrate the polyvocalism of self-referential writing.



***Conclusion:***

***Emancipation***

Popular belief in late 1830s Britain and Ireland held that transportation to the Australian colonies offered the urban and rural poor a better future, promising anything from the mere security of regular meals to the prospect of land ownership and prosperity. Charles Dickens saw a role for literature in correcting this misperception. In a letter dated 2 July 1840, he made a proposition to Home Secretary Lord Normanby, offering to compose a “vivid description of the terrors of Norfolk Island and such-like places, told in a homely narrative with a great appearance of truth and reality and circulated in some very cheap and easy form” (qtd. in Bradford 1380). Lieutenant-Governor Arthur, in his testimony to the Molesworth Committee, had made a similar recommendation, suggesting a widely circulated pamphlet warning people about life as a convict was necessary to remedy the fact that many transportees arrived in the colony unaware of and unprepared for what lay in store (Marlow 258).

Kate Grenville’s much lauded *The Secret River* (2005) promulgates the notion of the propitiousness of transportation. Grenville imaginatively reconstructs the life of her convict forebear Solomon Wiseman, penning a convict fiction in much the same vein as those by Courtenay, Motion and Flanagan. William Thornhill begins as a near-starving orphan in the gloom of London’s slums and, after an interlude of transportation and convictism, ends as one of the Hawkesbury’s wealthiest landowners, ensconced in a hilltop mansion-come-fortress. His transportation, the journey from the mother country to the colony, is the primary catalyst for his transformation. Thornhill’s success confirms those hopes extant in the popular imagination of nineteenth-century Britain that Dickens

and Arthur sought to correct through the publication and distribution of pamphlets unveiling the “true horrors” of transportation. The transformative capacity of transportation was not, now nor then, entirely a myth or a false hope. Many ex-convicts did go on to become wealthy landowners like the fictional Thornhill, or make fortunes in business like Mary Reibey or Simeon Lord, or become prominent politicians, artists, pressmen or architects. Many more, while not attaining eminence, did at least become respectable and useful citizens in nascent Australia.

Despite the reputable free lives emancipist men and women might have lived, they are predominantly remembered as convicts. Indeed, today it is perhaps convictism that is more celebrated than the other contributions these individuals made. There is a particular satisfaction, it seems, in locating a convict ancestor on a branch of the family tree. In mid-2007 a new online genealogical database was launched to help Australians “unlock [their] criminal past” (*ancestry.com.au*). Promoted on breakfast television and advertised on the internet, *ancestry.com.au* offers Australian family researchers access to the transportation registers of 1788-1868 to help them discover their own convict progenitors. The site claims that an estimated “one in five Australians can trace their ancestry back to a convict.” It then asks: “Could you be one of those Australians? Does crime run in your family?” Somehow, a transported ancestor is more interesting or more important in personal, if not national, lineage than a forebear who arrived in Australia as a free man or woman at any point in the nation’s two century post-settlement history. A claim of descent from convicts, argue Bruce Tranter and Jed Donoghue, “is more

than just about blood ties, it is also an aspect of national identity for many Australians” (555).

Convictism is a sentence that is patently difficult to escape. Men and women transported to Van Diemen’s Land were subjected to multiple imprisonments. Their incarcerations were manifold: within manacles and chain gangs, within prisons or factories, within the “open prison” of the island itself, within their appellation as convict, within centuries of history that continually revisits and reframes the stories of transportees for new and divergent purposes. In Campbell Town, thousands of transportees are now imprisoned, not within jail walls, but within the very bricks themselves. Their stories are scratched out in commemoration, not of their full lives, but of their convictism, a story punctuated only by crime and punishment.

Life-narratives depicting convictism in Van Diemen’s Land proffer scope for hearing the voices of transportees, for comprehending those particular men as individuals for whom transportation was one event or experience, rather than the cornerstone of existence. But here too, the protagonists and autobiographical subjects are imprisoned. I have argued that the entry of these transported men into the public, published domain was exceptional because transportation was fundamentally underpinned by disenfranchisement and disempowerment. Conversely, the fact of transportation was also what brought these unlikely autobiographers into being. Their accounts were composed and published as narratives of convictism. Without that story to tell, the majority of these men would never have become published writers.



Of course, my own project participates in and perpetuates this recurrent consignment. My research parameters – to critically examine eighteen texts published in the nineteenth century that depict a lived experience of Van Diemen's Land penal life – deliberately exclude those narratives by convict authors that do not portray the author's experience of convictism. My study prioritises the convict status of these authors and assumes that status as definitive of each individual's access to publication and of the subsequent narrative and material forms of their published accounts.

I have not emancipated any of these eighteen men. I have not attempted to or necessarily wanted to. Rather, I have attempted to demonstrate that these autobiographical texts do provide readers with access to a convict voice, despite the external mechanisms which enable publication and the proliferation of voices which echo in these narratives. I have reinterpreted these narratives as sites where the transportees have left evidence of their negotiations and deliberations, evidence, that is, of their autonomous authority. More so, I have undertaken a reading that has attempted to open up space for comprehending that voice as one in dialogue with other, sometimes more authoritative, voices and, in its published afterlife, with contemporary perceptions and representations of convictism to demonstrate what stories could be told about convictism in the nineteenth century and how those stories could be communicated to audiences. Autobiographical moments are conversations. This reading of Van Diemen's Land convict life-narratives, which recognises the interpersonal nature of autobiographical storytelling, furnishes a much fuller depiction of the experiences, meanings and

ramifications of convictism for individuals than do the purportedly personalised touristic renderings of convict experience constructed in Port Arthur's interpretation gallery or Campbell Town's convict trail. If Campbell Town is enjoying a renaissance, reinventing itself as a fashionable, if intermediary, destination, I can hope that my reading of Van Diemen's Land's convict life-narratives rejuvenates and reinvigorates these texts as sites of complex and dialogic literary self-expression.

## *Appendix One*

Annotated bibliography of Van Diemen's Land convict life-narratives.

Broxup, John. *Life of John Broxup, Late Convict at Van Dieman's [sic] Land*.

Leeds: J Cook/e, 1850. 11 p.

A second publication was produced in 1850 (Wetherby: W. Sinclair, 1850. 12 p.). The Cooke edition was reproduced as a facsimile in the twentieth century

(Adelaide: Sullivan's Cove, 1973. 19 p.).

Cockney, Samuel L. *The Life of S. Cockney, a Returned Convict: Containing a Faithful Account of his Dreadful Sufferings in Hobart Town, Van Diemen's Land, During Ten Years*. Manchester: S. Cockney, [1848?]. 24 p.

Derricourt, William. "Old Convict Times to Gold-Digging Days." *Evening News* [Sydney] 1891.

Also published as *Old Convict Days* (Ed. Louis Becke. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1899. 338 p. New York: New Amsterdam Book Co., 1900. 338 p.). Becke's edition was reproduced as a facsimile in the twentieth-century, where the cover and title page misspell Derricourt as "Derrincourt" (Penguin Colonial Facsimiles Ser. Ringwood: Penguin, 1975. 338p.).

Easy, Henry. *Horrors of Transportation: Or, the Danger of Keeping Bad Company, or Being Careless in the Choice of Companions. Exemplified in*

*the History of Henry Easy, a Returned Convict, a Native of Devonshire.*

[Bristol?]: n.p., [1847?]. 12 p.

Frost, John. *The Horrors of Convict Life: Two Lectures by John Frost*. London:

Holyoake, [1856?]. 24 p.

Reproduced as a facsimile in the twentieth century (Adelaide: Sullivan's Cove, 1973. 65 p.). Reprinted as *Memoirs of the Convict Frost* (Woden, A.C.T.: Popinjay P, 1989. 41 p.).

Gates, William. *Recollections of Life in Van Dieman's [sic] Land*. Lockport: D.S.

Crandall, 1850. 231 p.

Edited edition, with an introduction, notes and commentary by George Mackaness published as *Recollections of Life in Van Diemen's Land* (Australian Historical Monographs Ser. Sydney: George Mackaness, 1961. 2 v. 76 p.; 52 p.). This edition was reprinted in the 1970s (Dubbo: Review, 1977. 2 v. 76 p.; 52 p.).

Heustis, Daniel. *A Narrative of the Adventures and Sufferings of Captain Daniel D. Heustis and His Companions: In Canada and Van Dieman's [sic] Land, During a Long Captivity; with Travels in California and Voyages at Sea*. Boston: Silas W. Wilder for Redding, 1847. 168 p.

A second edition was issued in 1848. 168 p.

Jeffrey, Mark. *A Burglar's Life, or, the Stirring Adventures of the Great English Burglar Mark Jeffery: A Thrilling History of the Dark Days of Convictism in Australia*. Launceston: Examiner Office, 1893. 137 p.

Reproduced in Tasmania (Tales of the Early Days Ser. Hobart: J. Walch and Sons, n.d. 124 p. Reprinted 1969. 185 p.). Reproduced in Victoria (Melbourne: Alexander McCubbin, n.d. 124 p.). Edited edition with an introduction and notes by W. and J.E. Hiener (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1968. 194 p.).

Jorgenson, Jorgen. "A Shred of Autobiography." *Hobart Town Almanack and Van Diemen's Land Annual*. Hobart Town: James Ross, 1835. 115-80.

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Five editions published were published in 1837. An eighth edition appeared the following year (London: Cleave for the Central Dorchester Committee, [1838]. 32 p.). The Cleave edition was reproduced as a facsimile, with an editorial introduction by Donald A. Davie and correct spelling of Van Diemen's Land in the title (Hobart: Cox Kay, 1946. 59 p.). A facsimile reproduction of the second E. Wilson edition was published in England (London: Communist Party of Great Britain, 1968. 32 p.). A second impression was produced in 1969. The narrative is published online at <<http://tolpuddlemartyrs.online-today.co.uk/1.html>>.

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This memoir was published in five separate instalments between 1864 and 1865. A compendium publication, edited and introduced by G.A. Wilkes and A.G. Mitchell, was produced in Australia ([Sydney]: Sydney UP, 1965. 248 p.) A second edition was published in 1966. The Wilkes and Mitchell edition was produced in a Braille edition (Kew, Vic.: St Paul's School for the Blind and Visually Handicapped, n.d.) and as a sound recording (Sydney: Australian Listening Library, 1992. 8 cassettes.). The narrative has been published online on a website titled "The Making of Modern Law" (Farmington Hills, Mich.: Thomson Gale, 2004. <<http://exproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/login?url=http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/MOML>>).

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## *Appendix Two*

Other publications by Van Diemen's Land's convict life-writers.

### **Frost, John.**

*A Letter from Mr John Frost to His Wife, from Port Arthur, in Van Diemen's*

*Land, his Place of Settlement: In Which He Gives an Account of His Voyage, and the Situations which He and His Companions (Williams and Jones) Hold.* Manchester: A. Heywood, R.J. Richardson and all other booksellers, 1840.

This letter was published without Frost's permission.

### **Jorgenson, Jorgen.**

"Aboriginal Languages in Tasmania." *Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science* 1.4 (1842): 308-18.

*An Address to the Free Colonists of Van Diemen's Land, on Trial by Jury, and Our Other Constitutional Rights. By Pubicola.* [Hobart]: Andrew Bent, 1834.

*The Copenhagen Expedition Traced to Other Causes than the Treaty of Tilsit; with Observations on the History and Present State of Denmark. By a Dane.* London: T. Harper, 1811.

*Efterretning om Engælændernes og Nordamerikanernes fart of handel paa Sydhavet.* Kiobenhavn: A. Seidelin, 1807.

Published in English as *Observations on Pacific Trade and Sealing and Whaling in Australian and New Zealand Waters before 1805* translated by Lena Knight and edited by Rhys Richards (Wellington, N.Z.: Paremata P, 1996).

“Historical Account of a Revolution on the Island of Iceland in the Year 1809.”

*The Usurper: Jorgen Jorgenson and his Turbulent Life in Iceland and Van Diemen’s Land 1780-1841*. Ed. Dan Sprod. Hobart: Blubber Head P, 2001. 146-282.

“History of the Origin, Rise, and Progress, of the Van Diemen’s Land Company.”

*Colonial Advocate, and Tasmanian Monthly Review and Register*. 1 May 1828: 105-07.

Also published in a slightly truncated edition (London: Robson, Blades, 1829) and as a facsimile (Hobart: Melanie, 1979).

*Letter to the Editor of the Courier concerning John Liddiard of Nicholas’s*

*Account of the Massacre by Maoris of the Crew of the Ship Boyd*. London: J.P. Wanless, 1817.

*Loitering in a Tent: Jorgen Jorgenson in the High Country*. Ed. J.M. Bruce.

[Burnie, Tas.]: J.M. Bruce, 1995.

A collection of facsimile reproductions of Jorgenson’s diaries of his journeys in the North-West region of Tasmania.

“A Narrative of the Habits, Manners, and Customs of the Aborigines of Van

Diemen’s Land.” *Jorgen Jorgensen and the Aborigines of Van Diemen’s Land: Being a Reconstruction of His “Lost” Book on Their Customs and*

*Habits, and on His Role in the Roving Parties and the Black Line.* Ed.

N.J.B. Plomley. Hobart: Blubber Head P, 1991. 47-131.

*Observations on the Funded System: Containing a Summary of the Present*

*Political State of Great Britain, and the Relative Situation in which the*

*Colony of Van Diemen's Land Stands Towards the Mother Country.*

Hobart Town: H. Melville, 1831.

Also published serially in the *Colonial Times* 15 June 1831: 4; 22 June

1831: 4; 29 June 1831: 4.

*The Religion of Christ is the Religion of Nature.* London: Joseph Capes, 1827.

“Report of Mr Jorgen Jorgensen of a Journey Undertaken for Discovery of a

Practicable Route from Hobart Town to Circular Head, dated 8<sup>th</sup>

November, 1826.” *Van Diemen's Land Company: Report made to the*

*Third Yearly General Meeting . . .* London: Robson, Blades, 1828. 63-81.

*State of Christianity in the Island of Otaheite: And a Defence of the Pure Precepts*

*of the Gospel Against Modern Antichrists: with Reasons for the Ill Success*

*which Attends Christian Missionaries in their Attempts to Convert the*

*Heathens. By a Foreign Traveller.* London: J. Richardson, 1811.

*Travels through France and Germany in the Years 1815, 1816 and 1817,*

*Comprising a View of the Moral, Political and Social State of the*

*Countries. Interspersed with Numerous Historical and Political Anecdotes,*

*Derived from Authentic Sources.* London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1817.

**Loveless, George**

*The Church Shown Up: An Open Letter from Loveless to the Rev. Henry Walter, Vicar of Haslesbury Bryant, Dorsetshire.* London: London Dorchester Committee, 1839.

Loveless penned this text as a reply to a direct attack on his character by the Rev.

Henry Walker, a Church of England vicar.

**Mortlock, J.F.**

*Am I Not the Right Owner?: A Very Brief Narrative Respectfully Dedicated to All Interested in the Discouragement of Injustice and Fraud.* N.p.: n.p., 1870.

*An Attested Copy of the Will of the Late John Mortlock . . . Banker of Cambridge.* N.p.: n.p., 1841.

*Dialogue between Former Lord Chancellor and J.F. Mortlock.* N.p.: n.p., 1871.

*Dialogue between the Master of the Rolls and J.F. Mortlock, 1867.* N.p.: n.p., 1871.

*A Dialogue for the Perusal of all Concerned and Interested.* N.p.: n.p., 1869.

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*Honorable to the Master of the Rolls.* N.p.: n.p., 1870.

*A Short Memoir, from Different Sources, of Sir Robert Walpole.* N.p.: n.p., 1880.

*A Short Sketch of the History of John F. Mortlock, Detailing Particulars of His Life, and the Cruel Treatment He has Received from His Relations which has Compelled Him to Embrace His Present Humble Mode of Obtaining His Bread.* Cambridge: n.p., 1835.

*Startling Disclosures! For the Benefit of Chancery Suitors, Shewing, Also, Why,*

*“Possession is Nine Points of the Law.”* London: George Stevens, 1867.

*This is Addressed to Any Person Wishing to Perform an Act of Benevolence, And*

*At the Same Time, Very Profitably to Invest £100.* N.p.: n.p., 1876.

*Three Dialogues. 1. On the Nature of Religion. 2. Church and State. 3. Ritualism.*

N.p.: n.p., 1868.

### **Page, Thomas**

*An Earnest Appeal to the Nation at Large, on the Mischievous Effects of Beer*

*Houses.* London: Seeley, Burnside and Seeley, 1846.

Page is not a verifiable transportee and there is no incontrovertible evidence to prove that both this text and *Horrors of Transportation* were written by the same man. However, the alignment of publication date and thematic concerns between the two texts is intriguing and it is worth

positing that the two might have a common author as the attributed names suggest.



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