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Body and Trunk: Henry Kendall, the Trees, and the Un/makings of Lives

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Abstract

A great many eucalyptus trees and their understory of shrubs, grasses, and forbs have been destroyed across central New South Wales during non-Aboriginal occupation. Survivors are dotted across paddocks, along roadsides, in clumps on rocky outcrops, in small national parks and at times in generous areas on private land. Arguing for the ongoing power of historical presences, this case study of their background moves between the continuing presence of ancient trees in a small area of land, and the bodily presence, writings, and activities of Henry Kendall (1840–1882), inaugural State Inspector of Forests and most substantial and renowned of colonial Australian poets. This essay explores Kendall's changing lyrical expression—from representing European activities as bringing devastation and sacrifice to environment and Australian Aboriginal people alike—to a discourse of Europeanized agri-pastoral productivity, heroism and nation-building vision. It engages with Kendall's political and aesthetic sensibilities to end with the ambivalent non-literary presence he left as State Inspector, celebrity and semi-invalid as he travelled among the trees and European communities of south-western NSW.

Keywords: Henry Kendall, Lyricism, Wiradjuri, Dispossession, Eucalypts, Ringbarking, History of NSW Forests

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> One of the first lessons a young bushman should learn is how to fall [sic] a tree and how the tree will fall (*Practical Dairying for Australia* 25).

> [A]n industrious axeman can do more damage in a week than seven years can repair. (*Practical Dairying for Australia* 32).

Introduction

There has been a deep conflict of priorities in Australia since its colonization. At first, indigenous vegetation was so plentiful that few colonists imagined that choices had to be made between preserving it or devastating it to establish European-style farms. In the twenty-first century, pressure from industrial agricultural practices, urban growth, the effects of climate change make that vegetation decrease radically. This essay retraces writing suggesting that literature, as well as human technical culture, remains embedded in the trees, in their living and dead remains, and in human lives. Many tree-species have a longer lifespan than any human's. They produce the place they occupy as they grow and die according to their species, habitat, and the changing conditions around them. Every place also has its basis for how it is at any moment. It is the meeting and interdependence of these factors that interests me here. My (non-Aboriginal) witness to a small area is alert to Aboriginal history, to species-loss, and degradation of land—beginning with an image and narrative of a tree, in words attempting material immediacy, that are culturally-constructed, and derived from and embedded in broader European-Australian historical contexts. The narrative signals a little of the state of current forest, my ancestrally-European bodily presence in it, and in my reading of Kendall's writings.

This tree (see *fig. 1*) was here when Henry Kendall (1840–1882) passed through on one of his forest inspections in the summer of 1882. The lane must skirt around this eucalypt, it is so big. Living bark coats one side of the trunk and rises to leafy branches that accommodate birds, sugar-gliders, possums, scarab beetles, praying mantis, ants, molds, and aphis. Its dead side shows marks of its chequered life.

Fig. 1. Chequered lives. White Box-gum.

Similarly, it is Kendall's European bodily presence among such trees, roads, and in regional towns that also incorporates the conflicting storying of colonist / settler, forest and tree. Though the outlines of his life are well-known, and his writing well-studied, the implications of his combined verse, life, and participation in the material administration of forests has been less examined. This study follows threads between surviving trees of the area he travelled and the many public personas of Kendall—renowned poet, frail human, bureaucrat, forest expert, tourist—to argue the germ of current relationships between tree and society is encapsulated in the paper trail of his position as Chief Inspector of Forests (1881–2). I trace conflicting ethico-aesthetic and utilitarian dimensions in the later nineteenth-century's social, mental, and physical engagement with the trees in which they are both erased as an obstacle to European settler productivity and establishment of a British state, and championed as reservoir of spiritual and environmental enrichment. The situation led to what Karen Thornber calls "ecoambiguity": "the cultural tendency to selectively appreciate and resist the natural world, seeking to control our experience and the natural environment as a way of maximizing a desired mode of experience." In Australia, critic and poet Pete Hay identified a deeper historical discrepancy that celebrated the existing biosphere and its destruction simultaneously:

> A lyrical appreciation of the beauties of the bush . . . gathered pace in the 1840s and 1850s, yet this co-existed with a similarly entrenched aesthetic fondness of bush-obliterating manifestations of colonial development (19).

By the 1870s Kendall began to publish and gained early fame for his Romantic engagement with the natural world. In little more than a decade he published three substantial volumes of verse, contributed essays to numerous publications and wrote satire for journals such as *Humbug*. His best-known lyrics, notably "Bell birds" and "The Last of His Tribe," were studied by gen-

erations of schoolchildren and included in contemporary editions of Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* and *The Oxford Book of English Verse* (Cross; Wilde, Hooton and Andrews).[1] He experienced celebrity status, partly as a result of a "colorful" life while his fame as a poet was maintained until the 1970s, a time when the new nationalist rhetoric in Australian literary studies demanded a revisionist approach to 19th century Australian colonial writers and stereotypes. More recent (post)colonial criticism has dismissed the numerous poems with colonial and Aboriginal themes. Extensive posthumanist attention has yet to be brought to his work.

Kendall's early verse, written in Sydney when he was employed in the Surveyor-General's Department, reverberates with his "rare gift for seeing, and hearing, and feeling, and describing our Australian wilderness," more specifically the south-east coast of NSW (A. G. Stephens qtd. in Clarke 1). Equally unusually, some of these lyrics articulate the human, as well as environmental, devastation inflicted by the colonizers. In these works, the entire land responds as a living entity to the violence. By contrast the indigeneity first represented by Aboriginal embodiment is replaced in many later lyrics by framing Europeans born in Australia as "natives." The sentient natural world is offset by heroizing a pastoral of British farming practices and culture symbolized in color images.

These conflicting codes are also found in the small câche of notes, records, letters, and newspaper items relating to his work as Chief Inspector of Forests in the last year of his life.

Bodily Presences in the Present

Body and sign are apparent, but how do they work together? In *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre focuses on how "[e]ach individual being—of whatever material nature—continuously produces its space and is produced by it." He does not then reject signifiers, culture, language but suggests overturning precedence. "A good case," he suggests, can be made for "according . . . precedence over highly articulated languages with strict rules to those activities which mark the earth, leaving traces and organizing gestures and work performed in common" (16-17). Lefebvre proceeds from a demonstration of a spider

[1] Gustav Cross, *Sydney Morning Herald* 6 Nov. 1960, p. 16. The tenor of his renown is indicated by the titles used by Aurora Hamilton-Grey touring eastern Australia when lecturing on Kendall, verse and man, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, "The Poet Kendall, our God-made Chief, Singer of the Dawn . . . " and "Kendall: Facts and Fancies about Our Son of the Woods, Henry Clarence Kendall and his Poetry."

producing its space throughout its life. I proceed in this essay from assuming that the earth—in the broadest sense of animate and inanimate beings—equally marks and drives languages, directly and indirectly.

It is a circular process: the emanations of beings within a place feed into other ecologies, both material and, in human terms, abstract so that they might include societies and cultures, which in turn impact technologies, aesthetic, and economic practices. The latter (economic practices) also return as interactions with the trees. I see them as meeting the twenty-first-century challenge of de-centering the human actor, instead presenting interactions of interdependent beings and so confronting issues of both justice and climate change.

The emanations of people's work are still inherent in tree-stumps, in the hard wood, and in implements: axes, saws, adzes, iron wedges, timber-jinkers, and draught-horse shoes—all signs of the bodies that have been present. There is a semiotic vocabulary within our cells; it is reading the actions of the world and translating them directly into our bodies. Perception belongs to the world whilst also being in tension with it as dynamic energy inputs, and thus "the emerging senses and semiotic frameworks that are interpreting them, inter-affect each other, communicate each other into discernible patterns" (Judith 3).

As my neighbor and I looked at holes hand-drilled through hand-cut iron-bark fence-posts more than a century ago, I commented what very hard work went into building the fences, enclosing land and stock, excluding traditional owners. "That's true," she said. "What was that saying of my father's? They worked like that when men were men and women ate their young".

Hard humor about desperation in times, times that were hard for forests and for many workers, be they European, Aboriginal, or Chinese. Codes evolve when such necessities interrelate beings, become social practice—even humor—and respond to the state in legal and subversive practices, thereby continuing to determine the shape of the present.

Kendall must have passed the eucalypt (see *fig. 1*) on the lane in March 1882, on his journeys through the district between Young and Cowra.[2] Its roots are deep at the foot of the long westward-facing slope of the Danandbilla Range. It is "part of the White Box Yellow Box Blakely's Red Gum woodland listed as an endangered ecological community under the Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995." (Conservation Agreement 2007, NPWS NSW Govt., 6). In

[2] Frederick Kendall drew and dated all his father's journeys on the NSW Department of Lands "Map of the Central Southern Tourist District" of 1928 (Kendall Papers, Mitchell Library). Unfortunately, the map only shows the region from Forbes and Grenfell west, but he has drawn arrows in the eastern margin labelled "Young 25.2.1882." As the lane was at that time the major route from Young to Cowra and Forbes it seems inevitable Kendall travelled this route.

ecological terms the woodland signifies a liminal zone for wildlife to move between the crest, the creek, and flat pastureland spreading into the distance. It is Wiradjuri Country and it is impossible to write about the being of the trees without acknowledging the presence of Wiradjuri people. In this essay I recognize their ongoing ownership through their tree-naming: *birri*, or *birrigan* for White Box Gum; *piyal* for Red Gum; *buurree* for Wattle / Acacia; *gwandaang* for Quandong, *bilarr* for River Oak (*Macquarie* 92). Though not all Wiradjuri language has been overwritten: Quandong and Belah are the common names of these species. Small quartz scrapers lie scattered, stark white against the mosses and lichens, and Wiradjuri presence is officially continuous, with the state government seeking their input as consultants to government and conservation.

Settler locals of the Danandbilla area, first co-opting Indigenous practices like stripping thick stringy-bark for housing, still refer to the range as "the Mountain." Generations climbed for adventure as children and as adults cut trees for fence posts, building material, and firewood. Some trees are multi-trunked survivors displaying both a long life-history and the marks of changing human technologies: a living trunk with a crown of healthy foliage grows from roots still supporting stumps showing respectively signs of a hand-saw, ring-barking, and a chain-saw. The ironbarks, hardest of woods and impervious to fire and termites, were hunted for railway sleepers, bridge spans, and telegraph poles; timber-getters and draught-horses hauled them down the steep slope, the horses shod in shoes blacksmithed with an extra tab to stop them from slipping. The trees resisted, shooting epiphytes, and "suckering"—sending up new saplings from roots. But burning and grazing decimated the ecosystem. Layers of humus washed or blew away, and settlers shifted rocks into piles to maximize grass for grazing, until the topsoil also eroded. The paddocks were sold again, and then bought again. We are all impacted, in such ways, by the presences of the past.

Despite the losses, a thick forest survives, the body of each species or formation perpetually making and being made. My body-weight crushes lichen on stones that press deeper into the earth-dwellers' underworld. Micro-organisms on and within me respond to those in the air; my moves disturb the tiny yellow thornbills hunting psyllids on the leaves high above. The birds flying, psyllids living in their lerpy shelters, and trees—hosting multiple organisms—photosynthesize, and extend their roots and mycorrhiza around rocks and soil granules. Nearby, tree skeletons and stumps have mosses, fungi, spiders and scorpions under their bark (see *fig. 2*) in their smoothed hollows, as they offer up their vantage-point branches for climbing or flying animals. In critic Christine Winter's

terms, science recognizes "trees as complex webs of communicative and symbiotic relationships" and human beings as "multispecies assemblages" (SEI 2020).

Fig. 2. Complex webs of communication.

The conservation area is located on hilly sandstone terrain on the western edge of the Danandbilla Range, rising from 400m on lower slopes to 500m just short of the top of the range. Scientific names of the surviving trees are syncopated with the common English names they become known by at different times. The vegetation of the steeper slopes of the range is predominantly open forest of red stringybark (*Eucalyptus macrorhyncha*), Dwyers red gum (*Eucalyptus dwyerri*), mugga ironbark (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*), with bundy box (*Eucalyptus goniocalyx*), and black cypress (*Callitris endlechri*). The lower parts of the conservation area consist of yellow box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*)—red gum (*Eucalyptus blakelyi*) woodland with a grassy understory (Conservation Agreement 2007, 4). Kendall shared space, however briefly, with the massive White Box-gum (see *fig. 1*) pictured on the lane that runs parallel to the range. Perhaps following the Wiradjuri path, this was the main route between Young and Cowra when Kendall travelled in his capacity as State Inspector of Forests. Giant red gums, drought-tolerant kurrajongs (*Brachychiton populneus*), and grey and yellow box-gums survive either side. How might we understand this ecosystem shared and made, body by body, bird by bird, tree by tree, grass by grass, sign by sign?

Henry Kendall was one such "shared and made" worker, providing an opportunity for seeing the trajectory as poet, public figure, and as an instrument of the state. In these manifestations he contributed to the presence or absence of old-growth forests, to European and Aboriginal relations with the forests, to the viability of settler communities and, ultimately, to the success of British Expansionism and (through much of his poetry) to the forms nationalism was to take in Australia. In his literary history of the Western Australian wheatbelt, Tony Hughes-D'Aeth, argues for the value:

> of paying close attention to creative literature as historical document. . . . What literature does is show how people felt, and how often this is at variance with how they wished they felt. In exposing the inner life of the participants . . . we can also begin to grasp something of the remarkable force—a desire and not just a material necessity—that caused a world to disappear (40–1).

"Henry Kendall NAP"

Literature is produced by sentient bodies (at least before the digital revolution) and taking physical presence into account through a writer's literary and non-literary writing sheds light on the "remarkable force" named by Hughes-D'aeth. Kendall, a second-generation European-Australian child in the late 1830s, reared on farms cut from the thick forests on both the South and North Coasts of NSW, "exposes" forces within his "inner life" and that of his society in his writing, both advocating for the trees and their ecosystems and revealing some of the vectors and lived life. For example, he signed the early lyrics he submitted to journals "Henry Kendall NAP," an acronym for "Native Australian Poet" (Kendall Papers 944804)

What does a Native Australian Poet write? The self-bestowed title partly reflects the public conversation. Though poets like Charles Harpur were equally claimed as "native-born," it had somewhat more political implications by mid-century. For example, "The Australian Natives Association (ANA) [was] established in 1871 as a friendly society, . . . its membership open only to men born in the colonies . . . its aim to snub the British-born who were generally favored as leaders of society" (Robin 13).

Author and academic, Andrew McCann, notes that Kendall aimed at "[m]ore than a hint of the poet's civilizing mission in all this" (20). It is partly Kendall's desire that the indigenous natural world be recognized as a "source of exaltation, pleasure and awe absorbed by every sense" equal to European "Nature" (Lefebvre 220). What is striking in some of Kendall's early work is its dedicated observation of local biosystems (Stewart 290) and that it records the violence in dispossession of Australian Aboriginal people and the killing of forests.

"The Wail in the Native Oak" (1861) is one such work conveying the killing of both the forest and First Nation people. The key presences are a "Native Oak" (*bilarr, casuarina* tree) beside a creek, a "hillside" covered in "gum trees ringed and ragged" which are "Staring out against the heavens."[3] The narrative

[3] I discuss this in more detail in "The Tree and its Voices: What the Casuarina Said."

verse is told by a speaker who is also a listener: he is riveted by the melancholy sounds made by the *bilarr* and their intonations lead him to speculate on violent possibilities for such despondency, within the context of the sickness of surrounding trees.[4] The atmosphere is conjured by the term "ringed": that is, the "gum trees" are dying as a result of being "ringbarked," (see *fig. 3*) a technique of cutting a wide band through the bark around each trunk, severing the flow of sap from roots to branches. The leaves drop as the tree dies, removing the canopy of forest so grass increases for stock to graze. A practice brought, with a new efficient axe, from the United States in the mid-nineteenth-century, it revolutionized the quantity and the speed with which trees could be killed. Kendall's lyric, along with the image of dying trees etched against the sky, makes the scene one of unjustly threatened life.

Fig. 3. Ring-barking: a *Callitris* Pine.

The "Native Oak" beside the creek is alive, its foliage emits a "melancholy" ghostly "voice" (27–8).[5] Trying to understand the vegetal language of the tree, the bioempathic narrator responds to the "muffled sobbing," and wonders "Did a lonely phantom wail, / Pent among those tangled branches . . . ?" Deciding it is a spirit that roams, "a wanderer from the ages which have fled!" the narrator's cognition succumbs to the cheerless mood of his questing imagination: Is this spirit, this wanderer, this "loving exile," this "lost, benighted child" grieving over the surrounding scene of destruction, and now "weeping o'er the desolation" from "Deep within the oak tree solemn!"? The burden of loss and desolation

[4] The adjective "native" signals to Kendall's contemporaries that the "oak" is the species indigenous to the Southern hemisphere: Australia has no native oaks (*Quercus*)). The term was attached to many species to distinguish them from the Northern hemisphere species that became known by familiar English names in an echoing of vegetal colonization.

[5] The fine "needles" of casuarina foliage give it a distinctive sound as wind moves through it. The casuarinas, with their differing names, were known in Aboriginal culture as "speaking trees," having numerous associations with the ancestral figures. I attempt to trace this connection in "The Tree and its Voices."

seemingly expressed by the Native Oak prompts the narrator's attention to turn to other unknowables in the scene, this time visual: "Or who knows but that some secret lies beneath yon dismal mound?" The questioning turns to human possibilities: does the mound contain a "dreadful secret [that] must be buried underground!" and if so, could this "dreadful secret" be bodies, and if so, are they, like the tree, "native"? The unsaid rises into consciousness. Readers are led to wonder Is it a gravesite? Is it the scene of murder? Each of the alleged possibilities is strikingly ambiguous about the perpetrator. Superstition and uneasiness follows the narrator's observation that "Not a ragged blade of verdure" grows on the mound. Darkness falls, the narrator's conjecturing becomes Macbethian ("Blood hath here been surely shed"); the interiorized monologue of a paralyzed mind leaps to the conclusion: "Oh, the unrequited Dead!"

When a "wild man" comes silently to the creek to drink, the narrator seizes the chance to ask him to "tell me of the Secret in the Oak?" The man is indigenous, as suggested by the narrator speaking of the wild man's "tribe about their camp-fires." But when questioned, he "rose like one bewildered, shook his head and glided past." Running water and wind, tropes for narrative, make it clear the "wild man" has a story to tell.[6] His refusal (or inability) to speak brings on crisis in both Aboriginal and natural worlds. A storm moves down from "the nearby hills," and as it breaks overhead, the forest, living and dying, "groaned and muttered like a monster". Natural and supernatural energies combine, a demoniacal "shriek rent the air" and the speaker "swooned away in horror" beside the "Native Oak".

Loss of consciousness relieves the speaker of investigating the intertwined human and forest deaths although the physiological affect of the experience suggests the speaker's feelings were approaching truth. While fainting upon the arrival of the supernatural is a cliché, used in this poem it inaugurates and compounds a silence that continues to haunt Australia.[7] "Where"—the opening word of the poem—is similarly suggestive. Used as a noun in this way, it places

[6] It is striking that Indigenous characters are almost never given speech in Kendall's numerous poems with such figures. Although at first glance the poems are simply racist, there is usually, as in this poem, a deep ambiguity. The details of the relationship between Aboriginal people and Kendall have yet to be uncovered. His mother, in the frank lyric she wrote after his death, wrote "The despised Aborigines loved him / they partook of his dry piece of bread / And he followed wherever they led him / Without fear, or peril, or dread . . . . " (Kendall 520) as though he, like Mary Gilmore, was on very familiar terms with at least one Aboriginal community in his childhood.

[7] I do not want to claim too much for Kendall's ethical position at this time, noting that the poem was published above his "Aboriginal Death Song," which concerns internecine Aboriginal warfare and deaths (*Sydney Morning Herald* 14 July 1862).

the scene ambiguously: it may be everywhere or nowhere.

The narrator's need to understand the voices in the Native Oak ("*Do they hint of deeds mysterious, hidden in the days gone by*!") arises from his need to understand the history that has gone on around it. Trees are longer-lived than humans, and are testaments, and witnesses, to events "hidden in the days gone by." Kendall, bard of the forest and epic events, creates a narrator seeking knowledge from the tree about its participation in history. It's a similar framework utilized in this essay, where a tree in a lane way becomes the means how an individual like the long-dead Kendall both produced the space of his existence and contributed to the material and cultural state of that space.

I return below to discuss Kendall's reframing of Australian Aboriginal being within colonization. His reframing avoids stating that an ethical or just invasion is an impossibility. But Kendall continued to celebrate wild nature as a strange demiurgic force and voice, crossing from other-than-human to human, and generating a desire he cannot satisfy, absorb or transmit. He repeatedly describes experiencing its presence,

> The Entity Almighty, whom we feel
> Is nearest us when we are face to face
> With Nature's features aboriginal,
> and in the hearing of her primal speech
> And in the thraldom of her primal power. ("Mount Erebus" 35)

The point is, however, that he believes he fails his greatest goal; that he is unable to render that "primal speech" into verse despite his awareness of the "primal power" in the natural world. He cannot articulate what he heard in the *bilarr*. He projects rapport onto other characters, such as Elijah who:

> saw
> and heard and felt that large mysterious life
> Which lies remote from cities, in the woods
> and rocks and waters of the mountained Earth. ("Elijah" 7-10)

Kendall's "mountained Earth" was rendered as detailed and lyrical observations of the sandstone formations of coastal NSW, along with their vegetation and bird life, thus gaining him a keen readership. "Bell Birds" (1867) is a lyric describing the coastal sandstone country of deep streams and damp forests while celebrating the sounds and plumage of these little honeyeaters *(Manorina melanophrys)* in the tree-canopy. It was among the most famous and anthologized of Australian poems:

> . . . . And down the dim gorges I hear the creek falling;
> It lives in the mountain where the moss and the sedges

> Touch with their beauty the banks and the ledges.
> Through breaks of the cedar and sycamore bowers
> Struggles the light that is love to the flowers; (26)

Though the plant life has reassuring European names, it reflects the high value Kendall placed on ecological accuracy, shown not only in his verse. In 1874 he replied to an enquiring poet:

> Bell-birds by the way never take to black butt trees—the black butt being a native of open forest land. Your scant knowledge of the bush is a sufficient excuse for this mistake; but you can get things right by bringing in some bush tree—the cedar—the blue gum—baglan—wild hazel—or wattle for example (Mitchell Library 5035).

From this evidence, I can't entirely agree with Judith Wright that Kendall's "landscape poems are more subjective than objective . . . [they] are symbolic of his own yearnings and distresses" (66), although these were nonetheless very real.

In the 1870s Kendall's attempt to earn a living in Melbourne as a professional writer failed and his family life imploded through poverty and his alcoholism. Returning to Sydney he was twice committed to Gladesville Hospital for the Insane in 1871 and 1873 during a prolonged breakdown, tormented by believing, with some justification since he drank what little money he earned and the family was starving, he had been responsible for the death of his baby daughter (Ackland 179–83). Records in the NSW Archives state baldly:

> Transferred as a dangerous lunatic from Darlinghurst Lunatic Reception House to Lunatic Asylum at Tarban Creek 4 July 1871.
> Occupation Literary man.
> age: 28 years
> Violent, threatens self-violence. Been taking alcohol and opium. "Reasonably" sound body. Accepts food.
> Wife at xxx Elizabeth St. (Kendall, Admissions Record. No. 1209)

Two years later his illness was worse:

> Previous Occupation: Poet and writer in "Punch" (vagrant).
> Refusing to speak or eat. Has delusions he is accused of murdering a child, is very strange in his manner, incoherent etc.
> Body: weak. (Folio 154 22 April 1873)

There are biographical details to explain Kendall's state. As Stewart puts it: "evangelicalism and alcohol, as historians such as Manning Clark have emphasized, were two of the most powerful shaping forces of early Australian history" and both were well-established in the poet's family (292). In this period, Kendall wrote "The Voice in the Wild Oak," revisiting the theme of "The Wail,"

of the same *bilarr* tree that testifies to events through the sounds it emits. In the later poem sounds from the tree are still inaccessible to the speaker though the poem is more personal. Now the speaker identifies his voice with that imprisoned within the tree itself. He hears its "voice" but transmission of its truth still eludes him, an inability he now sees as caused by his own failings as poet and human:

> But I, who am that perished soul
> Have wasted so these powers of mine,
> That I can never write that whole
> Pure, perfect speech of thine. (33-6)
> . . . .
> Then times there are when all the words
> Are like the sentences of one
> Shut in by Fate from wind and birds
> And light of stars and sun,
> No dazzling dryad but a dark
> Dream-haunted spirit, doomed to be
> Imprisoned, cramped in bands of bark,
> For all eternity. (49-56)

Although the speaker says he will always return to visit, he walks away from the scene and the tree, conscious that he is abandoning his muse, but at least not fainting into unconsciousness. As we see at the end of his life, he has made a serious declaration here.

Kendall's new heroes

Being unable to speak the "pure, perfect" language of the tree, he is "the perished soul" uttering words cut off from nature's primal energy engendered by "wind and birds." In a remarkable human-vegetal equivalent, Kendall's *persona* is "doomed to be / Imprisoned, cramped in bands of bark, / For all eternity." This strangling death seems a horribly apt metaphor for the colonizing poet's ethical situation. Kendall began to regain his health and life particularly when the Fagans—a family of timber merchants—befriended him. They moderated his drinking and employed him in their timber businesses in the coastal forests far north of Sydney. The poet still wrote, declaring his calling as a poet can still be realized "if *one* line's here that like a running water sounds," [emphasis in original] or has "an echo from the lands of leaf" because

> thou my Bible art
> With holy leaves of rock, and flower, and tree,

And moss, and shining runnel. ("To a Mountain" 20-3)

Kendall's verse, however, increasingly turns to an instrumental aesthetic that celebrates transformations of the land by colonists; it distances the human reality of Aboriginal experience. It is easy to suspect that he gained mental stability by supporting the colonizing enterprise of his community rather than continuing to bear witness to destruction and violence. It is equally possible he believed his published work would be more financially viable if he valorized settler colonialism. Perhaps with a little of both, his writing now conveys pastoral scenes reflecting settler aspirations, trials and achievements. His representation of Aboriginal people undergoes a reshaped reality of their colonization into European cultural molds, as in the series "Sonnets on the Discovery of Botany Bay by Captain Cook" (1863):

"The Second Attempt, Opposed by Two of the Natives"
… for wet
With surf and wild with streaks of white and black
the pair remained—O stout Caractacus!
'Twas thus you stood when Caesar's legions strove
To beat their few, fantastic foeman—
Your patriots with their stripes of red!
To drench the stormy cliff and moaning cove
With faithful blood, as pure as any ever shed.
("The Second Attempt" 6-14)

This sonnet cloaks the implications of Cook's exploratory landing in terms of Roman culture and British history. By reading Cook's outline of events through Tacitus's history, it can liken the two Aboriginal men (likely the saltwater peoples of Kamay) who remained on the beach as the boat approached, to the king of southern Britain who resisted the first Roman soldiers invading via the beach. Although it gives the Indigenous men heroic status and undermines any suggestion of *terra nullius*, it draws them into a "liberal arts" discourse.[8] It also signals to the reader that the poet, though a colonial, is within the umbrella of metropolitan culture: Tacitus's accounts of Roman imperial history were "profoundly influential" in the "discourse in European and Western history, *enabling colonization with the best . . . motives*" (Docker 148 my emphasis). Its logic also suggests that an incursion against the will of the Indigenous people is

[8] Texts like Homer's *Aeneid* and Tacitus's *Agricola* and *Germania* were embedded in British neo-classical education from the Renaissance to the twentieth century. In their light, a discourse of colonization arose as a heroic and civilizing project by association with such classical stories, erasing the injustice, violence, destruction, and dispossession experienced by the people subjected to this vision combining culture and (the invaders') heroism (Docker 148, 165).

justified by the fact that those now landing were themselves once landed upon by the (ennobling) Roman army.

Such works deploy ideological imagery and structuring to establish a valid bodily Australian (i.e., European) presence. In Kendall's hands the aesthetic that Hay calls "bush-obliterating manifestations of colonial development" configures pre-invasion forest as darkness, allotting symbolic values to pastoral figures in a social space established by the sequence of productive operations involved, namely the very clearing and agriculture that "The Wail in the Native Oak" shows as violence experienced in individual, original human, and forest bodies.

Kendall's new imaging of a relationship between tree and *European* Australian privileges the ring-barker or timber-getter as owner, expert and hero as shown in his poem, "Jim the Splitter." The first verses assert the poet is not in good health and neither is the subject worthy of true poetry, being uncouth, ill-dressed and a rascal in his dealings. Glancing incidentally at the hardship of life for many rural white women, "Wollombi Jim" proceeds then to establish male, European, bodily presence sustained by the forest; instead of an essential entrapment in a tree, this human has absorbed the tree that literally nourishes his body:

> You see, he was bred in a bangalow wood,
> And bangalow pith was the principal food
> His mother served out in her shanty. (28-30)

This forest intimacy is developed in the hero's other senses: where sight and hearing were privileged in the "Native Oak" poems, the "feel of bark" alone delivers understanding and trees become known through the acquisitive intimacy of touch:

> His knowledge is this—he can tell in the dark
> What timber will split, by the feel of the bark; (31-2)

Such embodied expertise makes Jim both "native" and dominant in this environment, cemented into a social place by the poem's humor and respect:

> He shines at his best at the tiller of saw,
> On the top of the pit, where his whisper is law
> To the gentleman working below him.
> When the pair of them pause on a circle of dust,
> Like a monarch he *poses* exalted, august—
> There's nothing this planet can show him! (49-54)

He is supernaturally gifted at all he does, such as driving a bullock team. "Wollombi Jim" thus overwrites Aboriginal forest management to the extreme of bestowing the authenticity of the indigenous on a non-Aboriginal presence. He

is bodily integrated with a forest of trees that are now secularized in the sense of being fully knowable and accessible (and disposable). A host of later writers would cement non-urban Australian social space with similar comic / heroic initiates—they make the space which makes them; it is usually deconsecrated and does not address the discrepancies between the reality of dispossession and aesthetics of the colonizing literature.

The Trees in the Meantime

While Kendall's reputation as champion of the "native forest" was growing in the 1860s and '70s, the trees in several areas of eastern Australia decreased. Clearing and timber-cutting doubled with the waves of many nationalities arriving with the gold rushes. Trees that had grown in areas surrounding diggings were reduced to a forest of stumps, to supply struts for mining, shelter and again, domestic needs. After the Robinson Land Act was passed in 1861, immigrants escaping hardship in Britain also flocked to farm "new" land.

The Act permitted purchase of freehold land from the vast holdings of Crown Land leased until then by individual squatters. They were now encouraged to clear or ringbark forest and then sell their "properties" for a higher price. Trees were severely impacted—especially as the new would-be land-owners, nicknamed "cockatoo farmers" ("cockies"), moved inland and cleared forest for grazing and grain-growing on their impossibly small blocks. Their access was aided by a rail network into south-western NSW which meant clearing swathes of vegetation for the tracks, cutting ironbark for every bridge, and for thousands of "sleepers" on which the tracks were laid. In the burgeoning cities, timber also underpinned infrastructure, housing and manufacturing, household heating and cooking. Some species were more vulnerable than others, for example Grey Box (*E. Woollsiana*) "was sought out by Europeans for roofing houses, huts and sheds, while the timber made excellent fuel and was used . . . in firing bakers' ovens and brick kilns, for making charcoal and as fence posts" (Thompson 11). Until the 1870s, neither exploitation nor conservation was defined or regulated.

Ideology is a "system of ideas that inhabits a material practice" in the view of Tony Hughes-D'Aeth. Its function in a settler-colony is to "provide imaginary solutions to real contradictions" (22-3), and for Lefebvre "ideologies do not produce space: rather, they are in space, and of it" (210). Kendall's later Australian-themed lyrics are silent on ethical conflicts in a move to ideological articulation of trees, tree-clearing and colors, as for example his "Sydney Exhibition

Cantata." In 1878 a long version of the poem won a competition for work to be performed at the opening of the Exhibition Building prior to the Sydney International Exhibition (*CW* 413–416). The original work was enthusiastically received; a joint letter from the governors of NSW, Victoria, and South Australia congratulated the poet on "your gorgeous Effusion" (ML5030). The libretto performed was single-mindedly focused on English history shaping the character of citizens who establish a vision of city spires, crops and collective British prosperity.

> Where now a radiant city stands,
> The dark oak used to wave,
> The Elfin harp of lonely lands
> Above the wild man's grave . . . (31-4)

Readers will note the reference here to the "native oak" of "The Wail;" its troubling voice now bowdlerised to "Elfin harp," and the "wild man's grave" serves with other allusions to overrule the generic wild man's history that goes back several millennia.

A choir of children, the future citizens, sang the finale:

> The life and heat of light have chased away
> Australia's dark, mysterious yesterday.
> A great, glad glory now flows down and shines
> On gold-green lands where waved funereal pines. (57-60)

These "gold-green lands" signify successful grain- and pasture-growing and Kendall was to employ "gold-green" in many poems. Contrasted with the pre-existing (and synonymous) "funereal pine" it signifies colonizing "progress" and this undertone still inhabits the Australian national colors. Kendall certainly uses the green and gold of wattle in flower to symbolize spring and hope, as in "The Curse of Mother Flood": "Never there hovers a hope of the Spring by it / Never a glimmer of yellow and green." James Campbell, influential field naturalist, photographer, and newspaper columnist, founded the Wattle League in Victoria in the later nineteenth century and from 1908 presented an annual lecture "portraying the [wattle] plants as a muse for the nation." Generally accepted as such it (specifically Golden Wattle, *acacia pycnantha*) was formally declared the national plant in 1988 (Robin 27).

As in the cantata, however, references are as much ideological as botanical; Aboriginal society is superseded, green stands for the pasture or crops growing after sufficient trees have been removed, so stock—sheep, cattle, horses, goats—flourish. Gold refers to ripe grain but it is also a trope of racially-specific Woman symbolizing nation, earth, agriculture and motherhood. Kendall merges the

image of grain with northern European ethnicity, the blonde hair and blue eyes as in the series "Austral Months" with its "bright-" [i.e. blonde] "haired, blue-eyed last of summer." October is "Fair lady of the yellow hair!" "And all the beauty of the pure blue skies / Has lent its lustre to her soft bright eyes" in "November."[9] The suite is explicit with "In Memoriam to Daniel Deniehy:"[10] "Marvel much while summer cometh, trammeled with November wheat, . . . Gold about her forehead gleaming, green and gold about her feet . . . . " James Campbell made explicit use of the combination of race, gender, and plant in championing wattle developed by Kendall:

> As our theme, "Yellow-haired September" with her plaits of gold is suggestive of the feminine gender, it is to be supposed that many of our pictorial illustrations, whether allegorical, idealistic or purely botanical, will be accentuated by the introduction of the human female form—the beau ideal (qtd. in Robin 18).

Inspector of Forests

Kendall's life stabilized in the later 1870s. His verse, now more conformist, and his health better, his relationship with the state also changed. Having worked in the Surveyor-General's Office as a young man, having gained experience of the timber industry as well as intimate knowledge of coastal forests, he now requested a position in the new branch of Forestry Conservancy from the Premier, Henry Parkes, a fellow-poet and a believer in the elevating power of verse. Parkes was able to create a position for him that combined figurehead, arboreal authority, and roving arbiter. The *Sydney Morning Herald* announced:

> Mr. Henry Kendall, the well-known Australian poet, has been appointed, by the Government, Inspector of State Forests. The appointment is a new one, and the duties appertaining to the position will be those of a head forest ranger, or of an officer who is required to examine the condition of the natural forests of the colony, and to report upon their present state and the facilities at hand for their preservation, and for planting out forest trees for suitable places (n.d. Mitchell Library 3796/3).

"The condition of the natural forests" had become a political concern. The

[9] The whole repertoire of symbols can be seen in the stained-glass window, "NSW," in Sydney Town Hall. Commissioned to celebrate the centenary of the state, Lucien Henry's work shows a young goddess in the central window wearing a headdress of a merino ram's horns topped with native flora. The stars of the Southern Cross fill the surrounding arch and the side windows bear the slogan "Advance Australia."

[10] Daniel Deniehy (1828-1865) was the son of Irish convicts. An "Orator, man of letters, lawyer and politician" he, like Kendall, struggled with alcoholism (*ADB*, vol. 4, MUP, 1972).

widespread destruction of trees was by now thought to cause not only a shortage of timber but also flooding, erosion, and even drought in areas of NSW where there were no longer enough trees to "draw down the rains," in Kendall's phrase (ML Kendall Papers Notebook).

The appointment was part of the response by the NSW Government coinciding with new concern about human impact on the natural world, that the actions of "man" were harming the whole of "Nature" particularly after land had been deforested. *Man and Nature* by the American G. P. Marsh (1864), for example, talks of "the interdependence of human and the larger organic realm, how humans are modifying that which they had formerly understood as sempiternal and beyond human influence" (qtd. in Plotz 9). Marsh was certain these effects resulted from forest clearing, mining and warfare. Similar views were held in Australia, as an anonymous review of the annual *NSW Gazette* asserts:

> Whole tracts of country have been ruthlessly denuded of its forest trees, an insensate procedure which, independent of the destruction of valuable timber, cannot but have an injurious effect upon the climate of the colony (*Temora Herald and Mining Journal* 5).

The NSW Government first declared timber reserves on certain areas of Crown Land then it established the first State Forests by decree. From 1875 it appointed forest rangers and set up the Forest Conservancy Branch within the Department of Mines followed by the appointment of the Chief Inspector (Carron 5). Most of the papers relevant to Kendall were lost with all the fledgling Forestry records, in a fire just after his death, that gutted the wooden Sydney Exhibition Building opened so recently to his rousing cantata. A useful number—letters from Kendall's departmental heads, some of his reports, forms, note-books, and the official diary of his travels—survive among his own papers in the sandstone Mitchell Library.

Kendall wrote no poetry during the process of inscribing state regulation on forest, and on human alike. His professional notes show he could be politically astute as well as aware of the long-term effects of lack of regulation. He defined his role as advising how "best to conserve what is best of the affluent forests we have" (ML 3796/3). He wrote notes showing that interrelationships between colonists and forests were changing. Engaged by new bureaucratic and social presences, he supported state regulation and invigilation, proposing "proper training for forest rangers, protection and propagation of species, replanting denuded areas." In his view: "no doubt when a real occasion for alarm occurs posterity will commence to protect the forests" but at the same time he underlined "*Heavy fines necessary to preserve forests*" and proposed to make "wilful sic

firing of bush" a felony, as should "taking bark of standing trees, destroying bush timber, working without a license" (ML 3796/3). Further notes, apparently for a speech, again address the problems of conservation in the context of viability, available technology, and colonist / settlers' desires. Kendall's notes alternate between presenting the behavior of specific species—eucalypts and "wattle" [acacias]—advocating for regulation and expressing his views on the role of different species in the greater environment:

> Believe in Nature's regenerating of eucalypts as habitat.
> Ringbarking a mistake. Nurseries to be set up. Best (native) hardwood list.
> [T]he cockatoo farmer should preserve adjoining timbered country from the effects of his burning off by [illeg].
> Wattle needs no protection. It is without doubt the most indestructible tree in the colony.
> As to the effect of trees on rainfall heat and cold I quite believe in that effect. Speak of change on Clarence [River] where rainfall has fallen off.
> People should be rewarded for planting and fostering trees—the propagation of the weeping willow, birch oak and elm poplars and other exotics should be encouraged. (ML 3796/3)

Kendall's earlier focus on the ennobling, ecstatic and sublime experiences inseparable from the original forests is reduced in discourse and space to a single line: "beautiful scenery of rock and wood and water should be reserved in certain places for the aesthetic wants of the future . . . . " and again, foreseeing wholesale transformation: "as many mountains as possible should remain in the hands of the State, reserve isolated mountains and other places absolutely for posterity to have some idea of primeval Australia" (Ackland 282). At the same time, just as his early verse drew on intimate knowledge of forest ecology, he is impressively aware of the cycle of destruction begun by forest clearing:

> I quite believe that the destruction of the forests means the destruction of arable country. Trees not only draw down the clouds . . . but they arrest the rich vegetable matter brought down by flooding rains and so are the means of fertilizing the country. When forests have been destroyed floods not only carry off the alluvium brought from the mountains—they gradually wash away all the loose rich surface soil they pass over. The disastrous consequences must of course seriously affect society (MSS 3796/3).

For some months the Chief Inspector made short forays from Sydney but at the end of the year a new trajectory set up "disastrous consequences" for him:

> 24/11/1881 Department of Mines Sydney
> . . . be good enough to report upon the applications for permission to ringbark Timber on Crown Lands held under five year pastoral lease specified in the annexed Schedule (Mitchell Library doc. 353).

He set out in January 1882 by train from Sydney to Wagga Wagga with a list of leases and Crown Lands to be inspected. From there he travelled by coach, buggy, and horseback across south-western NSW where "[t]he south-west slopes tumble and subside towards the western Riverina plains from the mountains and tablelands of the Great Dividing Range" (Main 2). It is at this time that the tree pictured at the opening of this essay was passed as Kendall the forester inspected, endorsed, or rejected applications lodged by landholders through the ecosystems of the Western Slopes to the Grassy Woodlands and Floodplains. Kendall was experiencing very different ecosystems from the densely forested coastal ranges he was intimate with. The flat Temora district, for example:

> before the white man was heavily timbered with grey box, yellow jack, ironbark and she oak trees . . . The trees were all old and big, spread well out and below them there was a dense undergrowth of wattles, quandongs, wild cherries and similar scrub. The herbage was kangaroo grass which grew very thickly and waist high on a man, spear grass, white top, oat grass, corkscrew and cotton bush. This matt of accumulated vegetation held most of the rain when it fell (Webster 10).

We know from the evidence gathered by researchers like Bruce Pascoe and Bill Gammage that generations of Australian Aboriginal food and resource managers had created and maintained tree spacing, understory, and herbage. Aboriginal social presence was still a parallel space, invisible not because it was not there but because in general it could not and would not be read by the colonists. The large-scale killing of the forests also reduced Aboriginal mobility and social viability. State aggression may have been less terrifyingly random than the violence of the preceding decades for Indigenous people in the Riverina (Gammage 37, 75) but it superseded the partial co-existence when "runs" and farms were largely unfenced and scantily occupied by Europeans.

The repetition of Wiradjuri names in the list of applicants' holdings—Ungarie Run, Youngara Run, Bolagamy-Gulma Run, Wargambegal—inscribes the reality that these trees have a Wiradjuri relationship and social space, but the resonance of these names was in the process of becoming frozen to a single note—identifying a lease to squatters or a private property bought by a colonist—while new legal and cultural dimensions accrue to "property," "run," "block" and "farm".

The form for each request for permission to clear trees required Kendall to measure the area on foot or horseback, identify tree-species and their density relative to grass cover, interview whoever was in charge, and make recommendations. In a sense such writings continue the inscriptions of a Native Australian Poet, multiplying the marks of a colonized eco-social space. Kendall travelled

across the Lachlan and Murrumbidgee River catchments, identifying, measuring, noting and filing his reports with the Sydney Office. His travels deepen tracks already in use as railway lines, roads, stock routes, partly forming new tracks within a network of country now divided into farms, townships, businesses and government services, however remote from the seat of state power. Kendall's diary, his lists of trees visited property by property, leave traces as do his reports and recommendations making their way to Sydney. His notes grant or refuse permission to ring-bark, fell, or preserve trees on leases, reserves and "runs." One such itemizing summary is typical:

> Cookaburragong Run about 3500 acres. County Gipps. Parish unknown. Cos and Houre lessees / Applicant Thomas Wait 6400 acres. 3 ¼ miles each way. No preleases, land measured for sale, or reserve of any kind. Run 16 000 acres—1300 acres of which have been ringbarked. Level and undulating. No timber previously ringbarked on block. No water, very little grass. Belar, bulloak, yarran. Timber box, ironbark, mallee, dogwood, forest pine. Want to ringbark all timber save pine and ironbark and to thin scrub pine. No space without trees. Reserve 10 chains (Ackland 281).

Once received and registered by Forestry, the recommendation was sent back to local magistrates—who were often nearby land-holders with mutual obligations and vested interests—to assess, grant or refuse the license.

The unofficial body

In "paying attention to the sounds that hum along the arteries of the country" (Mahood 33), a different presence emerges in the paper trail left by Kendall in his last months at work, an "other" record inscribing the space of an Unofficial in local papers and his own letters. No less signaling erasure of precolonial ecology and Aboriginal command of Country, his visit to Temora, for example, was significant enough for R. H. Webster, writing 70 years later, to describe the poet-bureaucrat's journey in detail as to where he stayed, whose horse and buggy transported him, what the weather was like—he had been received as a celebrity, Poet Kendall, Literary Man as well as Forestry Inspector. And it was an extremely hot summer (78). Kendall was in a climate he had not experienced and now the Kendall who had belonged to the Bohemian Circle in Melbourne, the Kendall who had been a mental hospital inmate, whose drinking was a chronic issue—these bodily Kendalls leave another textual self within regional society.

He became so ill he had to return to Sydney but a month later he resumed work, with William Fagan to accompany him for a time, along the Lachlan

River Catchment. He wrote in high spirits to Fagan's brother, Peter, from the Court House Hotel, Forbes, arranging his friend's return to Sydney:

> 29 April 1882
> His Royal Highness who is at present banqueting with the Forbes Coroner desires me to instruct you to meet him at Redfern Station [Sydney] with a four-in-hand on Monday morning next at 7 a.m. sharp. We have been treated with rapt reverence everywhere. Vide all the local newspapers . . . .
> P.S. We are treated with highest reverence
> P.S. No. 2 We are treated with rapt reverence
> P.S. No. 3 The people here kiss our backsides
> His Royal Highness sports 3 yards of hair.

Kendall's wife Charlotte had begged Peter Fagan to persuade him to "give up the situation . . . let it be on the score of ill health . . . What a disgrace to him if he got the sack through drink." But Kendall did not resign (Ackland 276). Instead, his participation extended from property assessments into the communities where he stayed. Fagan returned to Sydney, leaving Kendall both reporting on established forest and, as in this letter, creating a Dionysian presence within an established colonial dynamic of small towns. It is easy to believe with Lefebvre that such energies are "eroticized and restored to ambiguity thanks to the potential energies of a variety of groups capable of diverting homogenized space to their own purposes" (391). It also perhaps establishes excess as the space of freedom.

A running commentary by and about Kendall followed from town to town. The *Grenfell Record* reprinted his contribution to *The Forbes Times*:

> A stranger's view of Grenfell—our friend, Mr. Henry Kendall, in an article under the heading "from Wagga to Forbes" (in the Forbes Times last) alludes to Grenfell thusly:—We reached Grenfell late in the afternoon. The divine afflatus is hardly likely to oppress the stranger after a good old honest dose of Grenfell. There was a poet there in the ancient days, but he is dead now, and buried somewhere up Gladesville way. Grenfell proper consists of an evil-smelling, boomerang-shaped alley, called George-street! It is almost as wide as an ordinary stable . . . . Nearly all of its houses are built of wood, and everyone of them is drunk. I have seen some queer shops in my time; but the tipsiest thing I have yet looked on is the Temperance Hall, in George-street, Grenfell . . . . Grenfell, however, promises to be a flourishing place. It stands on a picturesque site, and the higher streets contain many elegant buildings. The local newspaper is a credit to the culture of the place—its proprietor, Mr. Howarth, being a pressman of wide and varied experience [Oh, Henry, how can you!—Ed. G.R.] I have not lost sight of either his kindness or the kindness of the Grenfell post office . . . Have I nothing to say with regard to that bold gentleman, Mr. Publican Wallett? He is a capital fellow and I respect his fighting weight . . . I managed to get over Grenfell without going into a galloping consumption . . . and took coach for

> Forbes. There is some fine country between "Boomerang Alley" and the City of the Lachlan . . . (*Grenfell Record* June 1882, 5)

At first reading the local detail and the speaking, rather than writing, voice make it simply a good-humored satire about town rivalry and revelry. Closer attention suggests more: it also evokes Lefebvre's sense of "those activities which mark the earth, leaving traces and organizing gestures and work performed in common" (16-7) in hotels, post offices, and Temperance Halls. Without this "poetics of residence" Kendall, embodied instrument of the state, would not be able to fulfil his duties. On a minor note, Kendall's mentioning that "the houses of Grenfell" are "timber" is possibly intended to highlight how few trees remain or simply to signal it is not an affluent township of brick or stone.

The piece makes a surprising return, however, to Kendall's ethico-aesthetic crisis a decade earlier. The reference to "divine afflatus" implies that no true aesthetic inspiration will be found in such a town. That seems conventional enough, but Kendall is aware of a different relationship he once had with writing: he then returns to the loss of inspiration described in "The Voice in the Wild Oak," now refracted and distanced as a reference to a classical death: "There was a poet there in the ancient days, but he is dead now, and buried somewhere up Gladesville way." Whether he is referring to his life choices or the period he spent in Gladesville Asylum, he still sees himself as failing the tree and its (implicitly) Aboriginal, truth. The piece moves to another bodily immediacy—he has "managed to get over Grenfell without going into a galloping consumption." This is Kendall's darkly humorous reference to the precursor to tuberculosis that will finish him off in a little over a month, in August. Kendall continued to work. He had reached Humbug Creek (see *fig. 4*), near Wyalong, where he became too weak to continue. The sick man was taken back to Forbes in a sulky, by coach from town to town, to Wagga where the train carried him to Sydney, an exhausting journey in itself. The news of his retreat travelled again through the network of country-town newspapers:

Fig. 4. The last stop. Near Wyalong.

> We regret to learn from the ECHO that Mr. H. Kendall the well-known poet and Chief Inspector of Forests (and a near relative of Mr. C. L. Kendall, manager of the local branch of the Bank of New South Wales) is seriously ill and incapacitated from attending to his official duties. Mr. Kendall, as our readers will remember, a short time since inspected the timber in the Lachlan district and in the course of his tour resided several days in Temora (*Temora Star* July 22 1882, 4).

His writing, his tree-surveys and his tenure as Chief Inspector of Forests ended. "[A]lthough tenderly nursed by my mother, he gradually sank, and passed quietly away on August 1, 1882," his son reported (F. Kendall 36).

Conclusion

Was the travel and conscientious labor of the Chief Inspector of Forests, his licenses, lists and reports in support of the regulation of tree-lives, successful? In his outline of the region's history, Webster wrote about the 1880s after Kendall's death:

> The greatest contribution to the progress of the district by the Chinese was made when gangs of them were employed all over the station country, ringbarking, clearing, scrub-cutting and grubbing . . . . Thousands of acres were cleared . . . The biggest tragedy of their employment was the total destruction of great areas of valuable timber. They razed good and bad in a trice and millions of magnificent old pines, free of knot and pith, such as will never be seen again, fell before their relentless axes (73).

European settlers and the Chinese working gangs have long borne the burden of willful deforestation. Here, the gangs were doing exactly what they were hired to do but in David Lindenmayer's summary of the twentieth century: "[L]and clearing was not a process that was limited to the early period of European settlement in Australia. Approximately 50% of all land clearing has taken place since the 1970s" (42). Lindenmayer made his point in 2007. In 2019 figures obtained from the NSW Government showed that "[t]otal clearing, excluding deforestation from fire, rose from 39,000 hectares in 2015-16 to 59,700 hectares the following year." That rise occurred even before the NSW government replaced the Native Vegetation Act with the controversial Biodiversity Conservation Act of 2017 (Cox). The new Act *decreases* the regulation of tree-clearing.

After a further century of ploughing, grazing and clear-felling, the "Nature" whose supreme power Kendall believed in has ceased to be able to "regenerate eucalypts," or "sustain 'wattle'" in much of the area he visited. What he described as "[r]eal occasion for alarm" has been identified repeatedly in the crisis of species extinctions and ecological deterioration resulting from land practices

and climate change. The story of the trees, however, is not divided neatly into state versus society. The space of Kendall's work is one network among others, one space among interpenetrating spaces, so the existence of his work is embedded in laws, licenses, requests for licenses, and correspondence about requests for licenses; but, unlike Kendall's lyrics, without a necessary correlation with the material beings such as the tree. Kendall's presence was part of a logistical, operational and quantifying rationality, but it was also making social space, with trees as the medium as well as the purpose. He was soon succeeded by other inspectors, by separation of state and private land forest-management, and almost continuous community debate.

In more recent decades, Wiradjuri writers like Kevin Gilbert, Jeanine Leane, Stan Grant, Kerry Reed-Gilbert, and Tara June Winch have told their own relationships with their Country in both lyrics and prose. The children at the primary school nearest the tree on the lane have a different understanding of the "funereal pines" and "gold-green land" sung about by the children's choir performing Kendall's cantata. They have a sign on the classroom wall overlooking their desks, in Wiradjuri and English: "We thank the elders past and present for their care of the land." Behind the tall old elm trees at the front gate, the school has planted land with local indigenous species all the way down to the creek. The area was designed with Wiradjuri names, presence and history, on the advice of the Aboriginal elder who accepted an invitation to teach about the names, habits, and uses of the plants and trees that he advised them to grow.

There is also a strong movement in this area, as among some landholders across Australia, towards regimes that maintain tree-cover and biodiversity. Regenerative agriculture, in which "connectivity is acknowledged and nurtured" is increasingly recognized by landholders (Main 245), and it is finding popular expression in Charles Massey's best-selling account, *Call of the Reed Warbler* (2017). At the same time, the tree that Kendall passed on the lane is alive, its living bark still gripping its dead trunk, its foliage sparse but green. The Danandbilla Range, useless for farming, was declared a Nature Reserve in the 1950s and a National Park in the 1980s.

The causes of relentless clearing take complex modern forms yet they are layered over the lyrics and records left by Kendall. The relics of his tenure enable retracing the inscriptions of a presence still conflicted in aesthetic, instrumental and ecological terms.

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身體與樹幹：亨利・肯德爾，樹木，生命的創造與毀滅

摘要

在非土著佔領期間，澳洲西南威爾斯中部許多尤加利樹與下層植物包括灌木，青草，闊葉雜草被大量砍伐摧毀。零星殘存者目前僅見於圍籬內，公路邊，或散落岩石旁小樹叢，以及小小國家公園或繁茂生長於私人園地。本文探討澳洲殖民時期最知名詩人之一，也是最早期國家森林巡守員亨利・肯德爾（1840-1882)，幽遊於僅存的古木參天，寫下的迷人詩句，讓人思索身體與樹幹的互動，以及林木持續的歷史變革。從肯德爾抒情詩句的改變可以見證澳洲林木農業的變化，從最早期對環境及土著的破壞及殘殺到建立歐式農業田園模式，英雄主義以及澳洲國家的建立。本文討論肯德爾政治與美學的特色，思索詩人以一位森林巡守員，名人，也是疾病纏身，在澳洲西南威爾斯林木與歐洲移民社區之間，留下複雜，矛盾的遺產。

關鍵字： 亨利・肯德爾，抒情詩，澳洲土著瓦拉哲里人，剝奪，尤加利樹，環剝樹皮，澳洲西南威爾斯林業史