Colonizers as Civilizers:
Aboriginal schools and the mission to ‘civilize’ in South Australia, 1839-1845

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This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Education, Charles Darwin University
January 2007
I hereby declare that the work herein now submitted as a thesis for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy of the Charles Darwin University, is the result of my own
investigations, and all references to ideas and work of other researchers have been
specifically acknowledged. I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis has
not already been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not being currently
submitted in candidature for any other degree.
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr Suzanne Parry and Professor David Carment. Thanks, also, to Dr Rob Foster, of the University of Adelaide, and Dr Jane Simpson, of the University of Sydney, for reading and commenting on draft chapters of this thesis. I would also like to thank my family for their help and support: my mother Audrey for reading and commenting on draft chapters; my sister-in-law Margaret Scrimgeour for her help and advice, particularly in the early stages of my research; my partner Mark Clendon for the interest he displayed in my project, and for the moral and material support he provided, without which I could not have undertaken this work; and my daughters, Ellie and Leila, who can’t remember when I wasn’t writing this thesis, for their loving patience and their encouragement to get it finished.
Abstract

This thesis provides an analysis of a project to ‘civilize’ Indigenous people that was undertaken during the early years of British colonial occupation of South Australia, a project which came to focus largely on the education of Indigenous children in schools. While recent scholarship has highlighted the diversity and disparity that existed in colonial ideology, little attention has so far been paid to that aspect of the colonial enterprise referred as the ‘civilizing mission’. This study challenges preconceptions that, within a given time and place, there existed a general homogeneity of colonial ideas regarding the nature of human difference and the process by which the indigenous Other could be made ‘civilized’. Through a detailed and finely nuanced investigation of the ideology, policy, and practice of South Australia’s ‘civilizing’ project, the study demonstrates the high degree of ideological diversity and complexity that existed within a single colonial context, and the high degree of conflict that surrounded the formulation of policy designed to achieve the project’s objectives. Its narrow timeframe provides evidence that changes in approach in ‘native policy’ and Indigenous education took place within a much shorter period of time than is generally assumed. It argues that the contested nature of the civilizing mission, and the changes that took place in Aboriginal education during the timeframe of the study, were a result not only of conflicting understandings of the notion of ‘civilization’, but of attempts by individual colonizers to use the civilizing mission to serve their own particular agendas.
Contents

INTRODUCTION................................................................................................................................. 1

SOURCES........................................................................................................................................ 7
IDENTIFYING LANGUAGE GROUPS.................................................................................................... 9

CHAPTER 1: THE HISTORICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL MOTIVATIONS OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA’S CIVILIZING MISSION ................................................................................................................. 11

HISTORICAL MOTIVATIONS........................................................................................................... 16
CONSTRUCTIONS OF ABORIGINALITY AND HUMAN PROGRESS WHICH UNDERPINNED THE CIVILIZING MISSION .................................................................................................................. 23
COMPENSATING ABORIGINES........................................................................................................... 31
EDUCATION AS A COMPONENT OF COMPENSATION........................................................................ 35
CONTESTING THE MOTIVATIONS OF THE CIVILIZING MISSION.................................................... 37
CONCLUSION...................................................................................................................................... 39

CHAPTER 2: THE SHIFTING FOCUS OF THE CIVILIZING MISSION.................................................... 42
SETTING OUT ‘TO CIVILIZE’ – THE CIVILIZING MISSION BEFORE GAWLER ................................. 42
THE CIVILIZING MISSION UNDER GAWLER ................................................................................. 44
REJECTING THE GIFT OF ‘CIVILIZATION’....................................................................................... 49
THE FAILURE OF THE PROJECT TO CHRISTIANIZE......................................................................... 56
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SCHOOL ............................................................................................ 60
THE PROMISING RESULTS OF SCHOOLING...................................................................................... 65
SCHOOLING AS THE PRIMARY FOCUS OF THE CIVILIZING MISSION............................................. 73
CONCLUSION...................................................................................................................................... 75

CHAPTER 3: NOTIONS OF ‘CIVILIZATION’ IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CIVILIZING MISSION, 1840-43................................................................................................................................................ 79

THE MISSIONARY APPROACH – CHRISTIANIZATION FIRST......................................................... 80
COLONIAL CRITICISM OF THE APPROACH AT PILTWODLI............................................................ 87
‘CIVILIZATION’ AS ‘SMALL BODILY HABITS’: HAYGARTH’S CRITICISM OF THE SCHOOL ........... 88
‘CIVILIZATION’ AS LABOUR: STEPHENSON’S CRITICISM OF THE SCHOOL ................................ 91
EXPLAINING INDIGENOUS REJECTION OF ‘CIVILIZATION’ ....................................................... 98
THE CALL FOR COERCION IN THE CIVILIZING MISSION.............................................................. 102
SEGREGATIONIST SOLUTIONS .......................................................................................................... 105
ABORIGINAL RESPONSES TO THE SCHOOL....................................................................................... 112
CALLS FOR THE SEPARATION OF ABORIGINAL CHILDREN FROM THEIR FAMILIES...................... 116
CONCLUSION...................................................................................................................................... 119

CHAPTER 4: THE SHIFT IN APPROACH IN ABORIGINAL SCHOOLING, 1843-44............................... 122

GOVERNOR GEORGE GREY ............................................................................................................. 123
POPULATIONhiftS IN 1843 AND 1844 ............................................................................................ 125
GREY’S VIEWS ON ‘CIVILIZATION’ .................................................................................................. 130
PROVIDING BOARDING FACILITIES AT PILTAWODLI.................................................................... 134
FACILITATING THE TEACHING OF SEWING.................................................................................... 140
“AN UNAVOIDABLE NECESSITY”: THE INTRODUCTION OF ENGLISH ....................................... 142
GREY’S RESPONSE TO POPULATION SHIFT .................................................................................... 151
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WALKERVILLE SCHOOL................................................................. 154
‘THE COURSE OF INSTRUCTION WHICH HE HAD MARKED OUT’.................................................. 158
‘CIVILIZING’ THROUGH CONTACT WITH ‘CIVILIZED’ MEN AND WOMEN .................................. 163
THE SMALL BODILY HABITS OF CIVILIZED LIVING ....................................................................... 165
CRITICISM OF THE APPROACH TAKEN AT WALKERVILLE............................................................ 168
CONCLUSION...................................................................................................................................... 176

CHAPTER 5: MISSION-STATE RELATIONSHIPS................................................................................. 179
# Maps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map of South Australia</th>
<th>41</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Piltawodli</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Illustrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illustration</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Klosé</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school at Piltawodli</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protector of Aborigines, Matthew Moorhouse</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor George Gawler</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Terrace, Adelaide, ca 1841</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaurna text, written by a Piltawodli schoolgirl</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide from River Torrens, ca 1843</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Stephenson</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor George Grey</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Forster</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clamor Schürmann in later life</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heinrich August Edward Meyer</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Teichelmann</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal schoolgirls walking to Trinity Church</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Colonizers as Civilizers:

Aboriginal schools and the mission to ‘civilize’ in South Australia, 1839-1845
Introduction

This thesis is an investigation of a project to ‘civilize’ the Indigenous people of South Australia during the early years of British colonization of the region. The civilizing mission that was undertaken there was a component of the colonial enterprise, and as such represents one of many facets of colonialism, the complex and multifarious nature of which has recently been identified by a number of scholars. In challenging the construction of colonialism as undifferentiated and as “oddly monolithic”,\(^1\) writers such as Nicholas Thomas have posited alternative understandings of colonial ideologies as “more variable, complex and ambivalent than has generally been acknowledged”.\(^2\) This revised understanding of the nature of colonialism has highlighted its contested nature, and the degree to which it was comprised of many different and competing ideas and responses. Julie Evans, Patricia Grimshaw, David Philips, and Shurlee Swain have described the establishment and maintenance of control in settler colonies, for example, as “fraught with tensions ... both within the individual colonies and between the colonies and the metropole”.\(^3\) Nicholas Thomas, too, has highlighted the fractured nature of the colonizing project, which he describes as “riddled with contradictions and exhausted ... by its own internal debates”.\(^4\)

One component of the colonial project that has received little attention from scholars is the civilizing mission, the generally haphazard undertaking of programmes aimed at the ‘civilization’ of colonized peoples. In an introduction to a recent publication on the civilizing mission undertaken in India, Michael Mann remarks that:

> [w]ith very few exceptions, historians who have written so far on the multifarious colonial attitudes towards British India and the other colonies have

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4 Thomas, 1994, p. 51
never paid close attention to the British civilizing mission in India and elsewhere as programme, concept and ideology.\textsuperscript{5}

This thesis seeks to further our understanding of colonialism through a detailed investigation of the operation of South Australia’s civilizing mission over a period of five years. In particular it is the contradictory and contested nature of the civilizing mission that is the focus of my attention. As a component of the colonial enterprise, I suggest, the civilizing mission exemplifies colonialism’s contradictory and contested nature, serving on the one hand to justify and facilitate colonial dispossession and exploitation, while on the other hand claiming a humanitarian concern for colonized peoples as its central motif. Michael Mann has discussed the contradictions inherent in the civilizing mission which were, he argues, “not simply irregularities but an integral part of the civilizing mission ideology, which enabled the British to react flexibly to changing colonial parameters and to ‘improve’ the means and mechanisms of self-legitimations”.\textsuperscript{6} Leela Gandhi, too, notes the “central paradox at the heart of imperialism: namely, the profound discrepancy between the inflated claims of the civilizing mission and the harsh reality of colonial violence”.\textsuperscript{7} Further, while the civilizing mission serves to illustrate the ideological diversity and inconsistency of the colonizing project, it was itself a fractured enterprise, fraught with the tensions of its own contradictions, its means and objectives the subject of conflict and debate in the colonies even among those who advocated its implementation. Through an investigation of the internal conflicts that characterized the civilizing mission undertaken in South Australia in the early 1840s, this thesis seeks to highlight the project’s fractured and contested nature.

A primary focus of my investigation is the operation of schools for Indigenous children, which was, indeed, a central focus of the colony’s civilizing project itself. The first half of the nineteenth century represents a distinct period in the history of Aboriginal education in that the administrations of a number of Australian colonies experimented with attempts to bring about the ‘civilization’ of Indigenous people. A number of

\textsuperscript{5} Michael Mann, 2004, “Torchbearers Upon the Path of Progress”: Britain’s Ideology of a Moral and Material Progress in India. An Introductory Essay”, in Harald Fischer-Tiné and Michael Mann (eds) Colonialism as Civilizing Mission: Cultural Ideology in British India, Anthem Press, London, pp. 25-6
\textsuperscript{6} Mann, 2004, p. 24
schools were established by colonial administrations, either as wholly government institutions, or in collaboration with missionary organizations. While missionary organizations continued to operate schools for Aboriginal children throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries, colonial government interest and involvement in Aboriginal education before 1860, albeit of a generally erratic and haphazard nature, stands in sharp contrast with the failure of governments to provide schooling for Aboriginal people over the following century. Research carried out into the history of similar experiments in the schooling of Aboriginal children in other Australian colonies in the first half of the nineteenth century include J. Brook and J.L. Kohen’s 1991 study of the Parramatta Native Institution, established in New South Wales by Governor Lachlan Macquarie in 1815, and William McNair and Hilary Rumley’s 1981 biography of the Wesleyan missionary John Smithies, who conducted the Wesleyan Native School in Perth, the Swan River Colony with the colonial government’s financial support. My purpose is to build upon such research through a detailed study of the motivations behind the establishment of such schools, of the ideological and political conflicts and debates that accompanied their operation, and of the impact of different ideological positionings with respect to civilizing mission on forms of schooling provided. Such research has significance for our understanding of the history of Aboriginal education because schools established at this time represent the genesis of the schooling of Aboriginal children in Australia. The form of schooling developed at that time left a powerful legacy, it has been argued, in the form of schooling that remains with us today.

What was it that motivated the establishment and operation of Aboriginal schools by Australian colonial administrations prior to 1860? In South Australia, the motivations behind the establishment of three Aboriginal schools in Adelaide, the colony’s principal town, were intimately bound up with the motivations of the civilizing mission. South Australia was established in 1836 as a ‘free’ province of Britain amid the rhetoric of the

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9 William McNair and Hilary Rumley, 1981, *Pioneer Aboriginal Mission: the Work of Wesleyan Missionary John Smithies in the Swan River Colony, 1840-1855*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands. For the colonial government’s support of the undertaking, see p. 42
benefits that colonization would bring to the Indigenous people of the region through the introduction of Christianity and ‘civilization’. The historical and ideological reasons why this was so are investigated in the first chapter of this thesis. In Chapter 2, I examine the reasons why the schooling of Aboriginal children, originally envisaged as just one component of the civilizing project, quickly became its primary focus. I argue that, to a large extent, it was Indigenous responses to the ‘civilizing’ efforts of the colonial administration which led to this increased focus on children, and these responses are discussed in Chapter 2. It needs to be said, however, that, as a study of ideology and motivations of the civilizing project, this thesis does not attempt to delineate the experience and effect of schooling or other ‘civilizing’ programmes on the Indigenous people who were subject to them. Indigenous responses to the civilizing mission are discussed only insofar as they impacted on the civilizing mission itself. It is the ideas and motivations of the British colonial men (as men they mostly were) who advocated and undertook the project to remake Indigenous people that provide the focus of this study, rather than the experience and responses of the men, women and children they sought to change.

Three groups of proponents of the civilizing mission in South Australia have emerged from my research: mainstream colonial settlers who urged the implementation of a civilizing mission and who commented on the means adopted in its implementation; German Lutheran missionaries who attempted to carry out the Christianization component of the project, and who operated the first Aboriginal school in the colony; and colonial administrators, in particular Governor George Grey. In comparing views and policies of those who advocated the ‘civilization’ of Aboriginal people, I have been interested in establishing the different constructions of the notion of ‘civilization’ that come to light through their writing, and the different ideas they held about the means required to bring about the ‘civilization’ of a group of people. In Chapter 3, a comparison is made between missionary views on the means required to bring about the ‘civilization’ of Aboriginal people and those of mainstream colonists who commented upon and criticized the missionary approach. Governor George Grey’s views on what it meant to be ‘civilized’ and how Aboriginal people could be enabled to ‘progress’ to a ‘civilized’ condition, are examined in Chapter 4.
I am interested, too, in how these different groups were able to reconcile the realities of colonization with the humanitarian sentiments of the civilizing mission. The rhetoric of the brotherhood of man and of the duty incumbent upon Christians to share the benefits of ‘civilization’, which underpinned the civilizing mission, was challenged by the realities of the colonial experience. Colonial responses to the presence in the colony of large numbers of Indigenous people affected the way settlers conceived the civilizing mission, leading to calls for the adoption of increasingly coercive measures in its implementation. These responses are examined in Chapter 3. Chapter 5 is an examination of missionary responses to the dilemma presented by the contradictions inherent in the premises of the civilizing mission. George Grey’s methods of dealing with the objectives of the civilizing mission on one hand, and the dispossession of Aboriginal people to achieve colonization on the other, are a focus of Chapter 6.

My study is also an investigation of the relationship between constructions of the notion of ‘civilization’, and the forms of schooling that were advocated or instigated. Chapter 3 includes an analysis of the form of schooling established by the missionaries, which reflected their own ideas of the requirements of the civilizing mission. Grey advocated an alternative educational approach to that adopted by the missionaries. Between 1843 and 1845, he took steps to have the schooling of Aboriginal children adhere more closely to his own pedagogical views, and the impact of this on the form of schooling provided is the focus of Chapter 4.

A unifying theme of the study is the contested nature of the civilizing mission. In addition to the ideological causes of conflict and contestation surrounding the mission to civilize, I am interested in the degree to which the project operated to serve political ends. The conflicting political agendas of missionaries and the governor in the civilizing mission, and the struggle for control of Indigenous education which came about as a result, is explored in Chapter 6.

Although mine is the first detailed study that has been carried out into these early Aboriginal schools in Adelaide, the implementation of a civilizing mission in South Australia in the first two decades of its existence as a colony, and the establishment of schools as a component of the project, has been discussed by a number of historians.
In 1971 the history of the schools were discussed in an Honours thesis written by Jennifer Hunt at the University of Adelaide, entitled ‘Schools for Aboriginal Children in the Adelaide District’. Hunt’s analysis was strongly influenced by the prevailing assimilationist ideology of the early 1970s, and she accepted uncritically the views of the Protector of Aborigines, Matthew Moorhouse, whose quarterly reports formed the basis of her research. Her primary argument was that Moorhouse has been overlooked by history for his determined and admirable efforts at assimilating Aboriginal people.

Histories dealing with the history of Aboriginal people in South Australia have also made reference to the civilizing mission and the establishment of Aboriginal schools in the 1840s. A brief history of the schools is provided in Kathleen Hassell’s 1921 thesis on relations between Aborigines and settlers in South Australia.11 C.D. Rowley drew largely on Hassell’s research in his own brief discussion of the schools in The Destruction of Aboriginal Society.12 R. M. Gibbs’ 1959 thesis the humanitarian movement of the 1830s and the treatment of Aboriginal people in early colonial South Australian history provides an early discussion of the historical and ideological background of South Australia’s civilizing mission. He makes reference to the education of Aboriginal children, but provides little detail of the schools themselves.13 More recently, Robert Foster’s chapter on ‘Civilisation and Christianity’ in his 1993 PhD thesis on the changing representation of Aboriginal people in colonial South Australia deals in more detail with the civilizing mission and the schools that were established as part of the project to ‘civilize’.14

Written from a church history perspective, A. Brauer’s 1956 history of the Lutheran church in South Australia, Under the Southern Cross, touches on the history of the

13 R. M. Gibbs, 1959, ‘Humanitarian Theories and the Aboriginal Inhabitants of South Australia to 1860’, thesis presented as part requirement for the honours degree of Bachelor of Arts, University of Adelaide
schools in his discussion of the Lutheran missionaries, as does John Harris’s history of Aboriginal missions in Australia, *One Blood.* Histories of education which make reference to the schools include Max Hart’s thesis on the schooling of Aboriginal children in South Australia. Hart devotes a chapter to the early schools in Adelaide, while Palva Miller’s history of state schooling in South Australia also gives a brief overview. Other education histories, such as Rodney Gouttman’s 1979 PhD thesis on the history of education in South Australia, make no reference to the schools at all.

**Sources**

Letters and diaries written by the South Australian missionaries to provide an account of their activities to their Mission Society in Germany provide a major source in my investigation of missionary views, and the educational approach they adopted. This historical material has recently been made accessible in English through translations of the original German documents carried out by the Lutheran Archives in Adelaide. The limitations of missionary texts have been highlighted by scholars who describe published missionary texts as “fundamentally and frankly propagandist in nature.” They warn that the letters and diaries of missionaries, which served as raw material for the production of missionary publications, need to be treated with caution, as missionaries frequently reported what they knew their missionary societies wished to hear. The mission society to which the Lutheran missionaries in South Australia belonged certainly did urge its agents to send detailed accounts of their experiences, as the publication of such material in the society’s *Mission News* served to “maintain interest” in the mission

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among readers.\textsuperscript{22} The missionaries' letters and diaries, however, show little evidence of a propagandist intent. In discussing the writing of one of the missionaries, Heidi Kneebone has noted the absence of “mission rhetoric” and the degree to which he was “meticulous not to give rise to false hopes or ... to mask the reality of the situation”.\textsuperscript{23} Far from being positive and optimistic accounts of the South Australian mission, the writing of the missionaries whose experiences are discussed in this study express the sense of hopelessness that they frequently experienced, and of their loneliness, frustration, and despondency. As such, I suggest that the texts represent genuine accounts of missionary views, experiences and responses.

A primary source for the views of George Grey on the civilizing mission in Australia is a report entitled “the best means of promoting the civilization of the aboriginal inhabitants of Australia” which was included in his published \textit{Journals of Two Expeditions of Discovery}....\textsuperscript{24} For the views of mainstream colonists, contemporary newspaper articles and letters to the editor have proved a rich source. The civilizing mission, its means and objectives, and the effectiveness of schools as a ‘civilizing’ strategy, were discussed and debated in the pages of the colony’s several newspapers. Writers of letters to the editors of newspapers frequently used a pseudonym, such ‘An Old Colonist’, or simply initials. In discussing the views of these writers, I have, for the sake of simplicity, referred to them in the masculine, although it is possible that some of the writers may have been women. The names of some of the newspapers referred to were changed within the timeframe of this study. The colony’s first newspaper, the \textit{South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register}, for example, the first issue if which was published in 1836, became the \textit{South Australian Register} in January 1840. I refer to this newspaper simply as the \textit{Register}. The \textit{Southern Australian} newspaper became the \textit{South Australian} in November 1844.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{22} Joyce Graetz (ed), 2002, \textit{Missionary to the Kaurna: the Klose letters}, Friends of the Lutheran Archives Occasional Publications no. 2, Adelaide, Lutheran Archives, p. 41, letter 17, from the Committee of the Dresden Missionary Society, 8/5/1845
\textsuperscript{24} George Grey, 1841, \textit{Journals of Two Expeditions of Discovery in North-West and Western Australia during the years 1837, 38 and 39}, Volume 2, T W Boone, London, Australiana Facsimile Editions No. 8, Library Board of South Australia, Adelaide, 1964
\end{flushleft}
This study also draws on historical information that comes to light through government correspondence. Records held by State Records of South Australia, especially the outgoing letterbook of the Protector of Aborigines, and incoming and outgoing correspondence of the Colonial Secretary’s Office, have provided essential historical material. I also use as evidence correspondence between South Australian governors and the British Colonial Office, made available in Australia through the joint copying service.

Identifying Language Groups

Throughout this thesis I refer to Aboriginal people of the Adelaide Plain, and their language, as ‘Kaurna’, although the term was not in use during the period of the study. Colonists referred to the Indigenous people of the area as the ‘Adelaide Tribe’, or, occasionally, the Cowandilla Tribe. Colonist John Wrathall Bull, for example, refers to the “Adelaide or Cowandilla tribe”,25 and similar references are made in newspaper articles.26 Missionary Clamor Schürmann recorded the name of the people of the Adelaide area as “the Tandanje tribe”.27 When referring specifically to Indigenous people of the Adelaide area and people who spoke the language used in the Adelaide area, however, I use the term Kaurna, as this is the term by which the descendents of Aboriginal people of Adelaide today refer to themselves.28

There is some uncertainty about the language spoken by the Indigenous people who began travelling from the Murray River to Adelaide in large numbers from the early 1840s. The missionaries Schürmann and Klosé referred to them as Pitta people, and as people speaking the Pitta language.29 The Protector of Aborigines, Matthew Moorhouse, who was stationed in Adelaide, compiled a vocabulary of a Murray River language now referred to as Ngaiawang, suggesting that this was the language spoken by the people

26 Register, 20/10/1838, p. 2; South Australian, 15/6/1847, p. 2
27 Schürmann, 'Natives of South Australia', undated document included in his letters to the Dresden Missionary Society, written late 1838
who made seasonal migrations to Adelaide. Norman Tindale identified “Pitta” or “Birta” as the Kaurna name for the Ngaiawang people.\textsuperscript{30} However linguist Jane Simpson, has advised caution in assuming that the Murray People who visited Adelaide were Ngaiawang, as early sources suggest there were several groups living around the Murray.\textsuperscript{31} I have therefore referred to these people as Pitta, or Murray River people.

\textsuperscript{31} Jane Simpson, personal communication
Chapter 1: The Historical and Ideological Motivations of South Australia’s Civilizing Mission

On Monday 25 May 1840, the inhabitants of the three-year-old colony of South Australia celebrated the twenty-first birthday of Queen Victoria “with every demonstration of loyalty and respect,” according to an account of the occasion given in the Register newspaper. The programme for the day began with parades of the horse and foot police and the volunteer cavalry, and a royal salute of twenty-one guns, responded to by vessels at Port Adelaide and Glenelg. A levee given by the Governor, George Gawler, for the colonial elite was followed by a number of events including the performance by Sunday-school children of two “loyal” hymns, and the provision of a meal to workmen employed at Government House. Included as part of the commemoration was a remarkable event involving Indigenous people. At two o’clock on the afternoon of that day, most of the colonial elite who had attended the Governor’s levee made their way to the lawns in front of Government House, newly constructed to replace the timber slab, wattle and daub hut which had served as the vice-regal residence since the colony’s foundation, to witness the arrival of a group of approximately three hundred Indigenous men, women and children. Leading the parade as they entered the grounds of Government House were Mullawirraburka and Kadlirpinna, men well known to colonists as King John¹ and Captain Jack respectively, and referred to as “our oldest friends” in a newspaper account of the occasion.² The group was accompanied by the Protector of Aborigines, Matthew Moorhouse, and two German missionaries, Clamor Schürmann, and Christian Teichelmann. Many of the three hundred had had little or no contact with Europeans, some having journeyed to the small settlement for the first time to take part in the ceremony. The Protector of Aborigines reported that fifty of those present were people he had not seen in town before.³

¹ see Tom Gara, 1998, ‘The life and times of Mullawirraburka (‘King John’) of the Adelaide Tribe’ in J. Simpson & L Hercus (eds), History in Portraits: Biographies of Nineteenth Century Aboriginal People Aboriginal History Monograph 6, Aboriginal History Inc, Canberra
² Register, 30/5/1840, p. 6
³ Moorhouse, Protector’s report 27/7/1840, p. 325, Enclosure 3 in Commissioner’s fifth annual report to Lord Stanley, in Papers Relative to South Australia, despatches to and from George Grey, printed by William Clowes, London, p. 321
When the group had taken its position at the southeast corner of the Government
grounds, the Governor, George Gawler, asked the German missionary Teichelmann to
bring forward the children who had been attending the Aboriginal school established five
months previously. Standing on a stage that had been erected for the purpose in front
of Government House, the nine children sang two short verses that had been composed
for them in their own language, now called Kaurna, by the missionary Schürmann. In
order to demonstrate the children’s newly-acquired proficiency in literacy and
numeracy, Teichelmann had the children spell and read Kaurna words, repeat numbers,
and answer questions in ‘scripture history’. Anxious to see the children perform well,
Schürmann believed that the demonstration was less successful than he had hoped, and
felt that Teichelmann had attempted to have them perform tasks with which they were
not sufficiently familiar. The editor of the Southern Australian newspaper felt
“constrained to confess there is great room for further exertions” in the children’s
education. The Protector reported, on the other hand, that “their performance
satisfied those of the public who knew the time the children had been under
instruction”.

Following the examination of the school children, Schürmann read to the assembled
Aborigines a Kaurna translation of the Ten Commandments, which was later included,
with a literal translation, in the Southern Australian’s account of the day’s events:

Tauata itto warranna Yowa pudlotti, wamggi ba:
All these words Jehovah has spoken, said he:

1. Ngai Yowa, atto niana pinggatti: kuma Yowa ngai taikurri
I Jehovah, I thee have made: another Jehovah me along with

yailtyaû
thou shalt not believe. etc

Gifts of clothing and blankets were then supplied to the Kaurna, the Register describing
the gifts as quantities of shirts, blankets and sashes, while the Protector reported that

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4 Moorhouse, Protector’s Report 27/7/1840, Papers Relative to South Australia, P. 325;
5 Schürmann, Letter to the Dresden Mission Society, written in the second half of 1840
6 Schürmann, Letter to the Dresden Mission Society, written in the second half of 1840
7 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 27/7/1840, Papers Relative to South Australia, p. 325
8 Southern Australian, 26/5/1840, p. 3
two hundred of the Aborigines “were supplied with cotton garments, made chiefly by
the ladies of Adelaide”.

Following the distribution of gifts a short address was given by Governor Gawler, translated into the Indigenous language by Schürmann. Addressing the gathering as “Black men” Gawler told the Aborigines:

These which you have just heard, are the Commandments of Jehovah who made
the sun, and the earth, white men, black men, and every thing - you must obey
them always with all your hearts.
You must not steal.
You must not quarrel and fight and kill each other.
You must not kill your children.
You must love your wives and be kind to them.
You must love Jesus Christ the Son of God with all your hearts.
He sees you every where - he is always with you - he is able to save you from
every thing bad and to give you every thing good.
You must not be drunkards - getting drunk will soon make you ill and kill you.
Besides which - you must live in houses, as King John, Captain Jack, Tommy, and
others are doing.
If you will try to build houses, white men will help you.
You must wear plenty of clothes, as King John, Captain Jack, and others always
do.
You should learn to read as those good children do.
You should plant plenty of potatoes, and cabbages, and turnips, and other
things to eat.
Encounter Bay Bob wants some ground to dig - I am very glad of it - I will give it
him, and some to any of you who will dig it.
You must do what Mr Moorhouse and Mr Teichelmann and Mr Schrümann [sic]
tell you, they love you and wish to make you happy, and white men and black
men will be brothers together.

The Kaurna translation of Gawler’s address was included in the Southern Australia’s
account of the day’s events:

9 Register, 30/5/1840, p. 6
10 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 27/7/1840, Papers Relative to South Australia, p. 325
Pulyonna meyunna!
Itto warranna (wa na yellara yurre kaitya) yowarna yerterititinna, padlo pinyatindo, yerta, parkanna meyunna, pulyonna meyunna, etc.\textsuperscript{11}

Following this address the Kaurna were treated to a meal of roast beef, biscuits, rice and sugar, laid out on large wooden platters on trestle tables.

In writing of the pageantry and display of the British empire, David Cannadine has identified events such as the celebration of the birthdays of English monarchs as a means by which the British empire “reinforced, legitimated, unified and completed” itself “as a realm bound together by order, hierarchy, tradition and subordination”.\textsuperscript{12} In the programme of activities to celebrate the Queen’s birthday in Adelaide, social stratification of the infant colony was made visible.\textsuperscript{13} Names of the colonial elite who attended the levee, for example, were listed in the newspaper accounts of the event, ranked according to office before being ranked alphabetically.\textsuperscript{14} What made the event different from other such events in settler colonies, however, was the inclusion of Aborigines. Cannadine notes that in settler societies such as Australia, indigenous people were simply excluded from such hierarchical social formations. I suggest, however, that the inclusion of Aboriginal people in the Queen’s birthday celebration was a public display of incorporation, in which Aborigines were ceremonially and officially included as subjects of the Queen whose birthday was being celebrated. It was a public performance of a sentiment expressed by Gawler on his arrived in the colony eighteen months earlier, when he exhorted the Kaurna to “love the Queen of Great Britain and all the people of Great Britain”.\textsuperscript{15}

The role of such display in creating and solidifying social hierarchy indicates an intention to incorporate Kaurna into the social hierarchy of the emerging colony. Aborigines were included in the ceremony as a distinct social grouping. Moreover, their incorporation

\textsuperscript{11} Southern Australian, 26/5/1840, p. 3
\textsuperscript{12} David Cannadine, 2001, Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire, Alan Lane, Penguin Press, London, p. 102
\textsuperscript{13} David Cannadine, 2004, ‘Second thoughts on Ornamentalism’, History Australia, 1:2, p. 172
\textsuperscript{14} Register, 30/5/1840, p. 6
\textsuperscript{15} Register, 20/10/1838, p. 2
into the social hierarchy of the colony was accompanied by an attempt to establish a hierarchy of Kaurna people themselves. At the head of the procession of Aboriginal people who entered the grounds of Government House on that day were men who, identified by the colonists as leaders, had been given the titles of ‘King’ and ‘Captain’. Further, these men were identified as having superior status on account of their more ‘civilized’ appearance and behaviour. Newspapers noted that “in their English dresses”, Mullawirraburka and Kadiitpinna “certainly contrasted favourably in appearance with some of their wilder and more originally clothed brethren”. In Gawler’s address he mentioned these men by name, using them as examples of men who, in wearing “plenty of clothes” and living in houses, had begun the process of becoming ‘civilized’. This attempt at ranking Indigenous people was part of the civilizing process; to participate in colonial society, an understanding of the importance of social hierarchy was essential.

The Kaurna were included in the Queen’s birthday celebration on that day as novice British subjects who required guidance and instruction to enable them to take their place as full participants in the new society. The event made explicit a relationship between colonized and colonizers that was, in essence, tutelary. Gawler’s address and the reading of the Kaurna translation of the Ten Commandments set out a list of instructions for living as ‘civilized’ Christians. This was the British civilizing mission on display, a public demonstration of the intention that the colonization of South Australia would bring about a process of human progress, the uplifting of a people from savagery to civilization.

Borrowed from the French mission civilizatrice, the term ‘civilizing mission’ is used to describe the project to bring benefit to colonized people through the gift of ‘civilization’. Since the end of the eighteenth century all European powers have claimed to carry out a civilizing mission in their colonies, but the particular character of the mission that was undertaken in South Australia in the mid-nineteenth century, and put on public display on the Queen’s birthday, reflected a particular set of beliefs and understandings, and arose out of a particular historical context. This chapter explores the ideological and historical foundations of South Australia’s civilizing mission,

16 Register, 30/5/1840, p. 6
17 Mann, 2004, p. 4
18 Mann, 2004, p. 4
which gave the project its specific characteristics, many of which were reflected in the
ceremonial display of the 1840 Queen’s birthday celebration. I argue that the civilizing
mission served to justify the colonial occupation of South Australia, and served also to
divert humanitarian attention away from a concern to protect Indigenous rights of land
ownership, a concern which threatened the colonial enterprise.

**Historical motivations**

In understanding the impetus to ‘civilize’ and incorporate Aborigines in the formation of
a new colonial society, albeit at the lower end of the social hierarchy, the timing of the
colony’s establishment is significant. Following the success of the campaign for the
abolition of slavery in 1833, a “considerable body of Englishmen - principally middle-
class Dissenters and Evangelicals”, 19 led by Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, began to turn
their attention to the plight of indigenous peoples across the British Empire, 20 forming a
pressure group known collectively as the ‘Exeter Hall’ movement after the name of their
meeting place in the Strand. 21 Martin Daunton and Rick Halpern note the “continuities
and connections [that] existed between opposition to slavery in the Americas and
protection of Aborigines in Australia”. 22 Discussing the impact of humanitarian theories
on policies towards Indigenous people in South Australia in his 1959 Honours thesis, R.
M. Gibbs, too, argued that “the legacy of the campaign against slavery was profound”. 23

Like the anti-slavery movement, the humanitarian movement of the 1830s and 1840s
was predominantly Christian, its promoters strongly evangelical. 24 The secular concern
for the welfare of colonized peoples had strong links with the flourishing evangelical
movement in Britain, which was at that time giving rise to a sharp increase in the
number and power of missionary societies concerned to bring about the Christianization

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Evans et al., 2003, p. 27
21 Semmel, 1970, p. 126
Peoples, and the Empire’, in Martin Daunton and Rick Halpern (eds), 1999, *Empire and
Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples, 1600-1850*, University of Pennsylvania
Press, Philadelphia, p. 2
23 Gibbs, 1959, p. 10
24 Gibbs, 1959, p. 3
of ‘heathen’ peoples. Michael Mann has highlighted the connections between the evangelical revival of the late eighteenth century and “the transformation of ... early British civilizing attitudes into a more coherent form”. By the mid 1830s, when South Australia was being planned, the influence of the humanitarian pressure group had a strong influence through its connection with men in powerful positions, such as the Secretary of State, Lord Glenelg, Parliamentary Undersecretary Sir George Grey, and Permanent Undersecretary James Stephen. All of these men had close ties with the anti-slavery and missionary organisations, and all were members of the Church Missionary Society.

Just six weeks before the South Australian Act was put before the British parliament, Thomas Fowell Buxton addressed the British House of Commons urging the establishment of an inquiry “into the state and condition of aboriginal tribes of countries, in and adjacent to, colonies under the dominion of Great Britain”. As Robert Foster has argued, “the resultant enquiry was to have a considerable impact on the foundation of South Australia”. The Select Committee on the Treatment of Aborigines in British Settlements, spearheaded by Buxton, brought down a two-volume report in 1837 which has been recently discussed by Elizabeth Elbourne. Employing similar language in its condemnation of British settlers and traders as had recently been employed against slave traders, the report recommended that the British government take responsibility for the treatment of indigenous people in its colonies and take measures to ensure their protection. In the case of Australia, specifically, it recommended the employment of ‘protectors’ to ensure that Aboriginal personal and

25 Mann, 2004 p. 6
26 Ronald Hyam, 2002, Britain’s Imperial Century: A Study of Empire and Expansion, Cambridge Imperial and Post-colonial study, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke and New York, p. 83; Evans et al, 2003, p. 28
27 House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates, 1 July 1834, p. 1061, cited in Foster, 1993, p. 8
28 Foster, 1993, p. 8
30 Elbourne, p. 1
property rights were protected. In that same year the Aborigines Protection Society was established.

With the Colonial Office run by men with sympathy for missionary organisations and evangelical humanitarianism, and the case for putting in place measures for protecting indigenous people in British colonies so clearly articulated, the welfare of indigenous people became “an important and strident note in colonial policy in the 1830s”. In Canada a number of experiments in ‘civilizing’ indigenous people were undertaken at this time in response to the British humanitarian and anti-slavery movements. It was in the 1830s, according to George Stanley, that “assimilation of the native peoples became the declared purpose of Indian policy.” Civilizing efforts generally involved the establishment of reserves where Indians were encouraged to settle and where the three components of the civilizing mission, the retraining of men and women, particularly in agriculture, the teaching of Christianity, and the education of children, could be carried out. John Tobias writes that the “reserve system, which was to be the keystone of Canada’s Indian policy, was conceived as a social laboratory, where the Indian was prepared for coping with the European”.

At the same time as the treatment of indigenous people was under review in Britain, proponents of systematic colonization were formulating plans for the founding of South Australia as a ‘free’ province of Britain. An act of parliament drawn up by a company promoting the venture, in which no mention was made of the inhabitants of the land proposed for colonization, was rushed through parliament in 1834. A Colonizing Commission was then established to make preliminary sales of South Australian land, and to make arrangements for the establishment of the new colony. Although South

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31 Evans et al, 2003 p. 31
32 Evans et al, 2003, p.27
33 Gibbs, 1959, p. 15
35 Stanley, 1983, p. 13
36 Tobias, 1983, p. 41
37 Tobias, 1983, p. 41
Australia was declared ‘waste and unoccupied’ in the preamble of *The South Australian Constitution Act* (4 & 5 WILL. IV C95), subsequent preparations for the establishment of the colony included debate and negotiation between the Colonial Office and the Colonizing Commissioners regarding the rights of the Indigenous people and the measures that needed to be set into place to protect them and their rights of land ownership. In the face of resistance from Colonizing Commissioners concerned to protect their commercial interests, the Colonial Office sought to resolve the contradiction between the intention to protect Indigenous rights to land and the declaration of South Australia as a British province available for purchase by Britons. Eventually some sort of compromise was reached: when the Letters Patent were issued formally establishing the province of South Australia in 1836, a clause was included which declared that:

Nothing in these Letters Patent contained shall affect or be construed to affect the rights of any Aboriginal natives of the said Province to the actual occupation or employment in their persons or in the persons of their descendents of any lands now actually occupied or enjoyed by such Natives.

The second measure resulting from negotiations between the Colonization Commissioners and the Colonial Office, and arising from Colonial Office concerns to safeguard the land rights of Indigenous people, was the appointment of a Protector of Aborigines. The appointment of protectors was one of the recommendations made by the Select Committee, and protectors would also be appointed in the Port Phillip District. It was intended that in South Australia the Protector would establish the native title of any land intended for sale, and either negotiate for the sale of the land if the owners were willing to surrender it, or, if they were unwilling to do so, ensure their continued undisturbed occupation.

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40 These negotiations are examined in detail by Foster, 1993, pp. 10-21; also see Reynolds, 1987, pp. 103-117; Gara, 1998, pp. 90-1
41 cited in Gara, 1998, pp. 90-1
42 Evans et al, 2003, p. 31
There was a clear discrepancy between these provisions and the colonization enterprise. A number of Colonizing Commissioners applied for the Protector’s position in South Australia in an attempt to safeguard their commercial interests in the new colony, or sought the appointment of a Protector with their own interests at heart. However the position was offered, in late 1835, to George Augustus Robinson, a man who had already made his name as a conciliator and civilizer of Aboriginal people. During the early 1830s Robinson had led Tasmania’s ‘Friendly Mission’, contacting and ‘bringing in’ Indigenous survivors of Tasmania’s Black War, and settling them at Wybalenna, on Flinders Island. His reports of success in ‘civilizing’ Aboriginal people there won him acclaim, although his biographer, Vivienne Rae-Ellis, has argued that the claims he made regarding his activities and their results were fraudulent, and that no project for the ‘civilization’ of Flinders Island people was ever undertaken. Robinson’s reputation led Glenelg to request that either he, his son, or both, undertake the office of Protector in South Australia. This offer was declined, however, apparently on account of the salary being insufficient, and Robinson accepted instead the position of Protector in the Port Phillip District.

Meanwhile, the new colony of South Australia was being established, settlement had begun, and a number of provisional Protectors were appointed during the term of office of its first governor, John Hindmarsh, while the Colonial Office awaited a reply from Robinson regarding the offer of the Protector’s job. Once it became clear that Robinson was not going to accept the position, a recommendation was made by one of the Colonizing Commissioners in England that Matthew Moorhouse, a young man about to embark as a settler to South Australia, might have the requisite “character, disposition, and energy both of body and mind” for the position. Moorhouse, a doctor who had practised as a surgeon at Hanley, in Staffordshire, before emigrating to South Australia, was twenty-six years old at the time of his appointment in July 1839, and was to be a

46 Josiah Roberts to Lord Glenelg, 21/12/1838, Colonial office – Australian joint copying project, Papers relative to South Australia (AJPC)
47 Schürmann, Letter to the Dresden Mission Society, 5/11/1839
key player in the colony’s civilizing mission throughout its existence, holding the title of Protector of Aborigines until the position was abolished in 1856.

Considering that it had been originally intended that the Protector’s role would be one of establishing and protecting native title to land, it is notable that by the time of Moorhouse’s appointment this function was not included in his duty statement. Despite Colonial Office efforts to put safeguards in place to protect Aboriginal land ownership, and commitments made by the Commission, no negotiation or treaty was ever made with the Indigenous people, nor was land ever purchased from them. Henry Reynolds has argued that the Colonial Office’s attempts to ensure the recognition and protection of Aboriginal land rights through the office of the Protector and the Letters Patent were subverted by the Colonizing Commissioners. In part, the commissioners and colonizers were able to ignore such instruction by reference to the ‘waste and unoccupied’ claim in the Act’s preamble. But I suggest, too, that the civilizing mission was used as a means by which the attention of British humanitarians could be distracted from the issue of native title. Once Aboriginal people were ‘civilized’, it could be argued, then Indigenous notions of land ownership and traditional forms of land usage would become obsolete. This reasoning was made explicit by Robert Gouger, a key instigator of the colonial project in South Australia, and the first colonial secretary of the new colony, who wrote in the year following its establishment that:

> no legal provision, by way of purchase of land on their behalf, or in any other mode, has been yet made; nor do I think that with proper care is at all necessary. I can see no reason why they should not, in a comparatively short time be made to understand our notions, and to depend upon their own exertions for a livelihood … At any rate, until it and other means shall have been tried and found fruitless, the enervating effect of specific legal protection shall not be tried.\(^{49}\)

The means by which the Aborigines would be brought to “understand our notions, and to depend upon their own exertions for a livelihood” was the civilizing mission.

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\(^{48}\) Reynolds, 1987, p. 121

The implementation of programmes for the Christianization and ‘civilization’ of indigenous peoples had been a major recommendation of the Select Committee, its report arguing that such programmes would enable indigenous peoples to withstand the onslaught of colonization. Whereas the insistence by the Colonial Office that Indigenous rights to land be respected presented a clear threat to the colonial enterprise, the civilizing mission presented no such threat, for it was the means by which, in Buxton’s terms, “the spread of British colonies” could be rendered “beneficial, not ruinous, to the Aborigines”.\(^{50}\) “Can we suppose otherwise”, the Select Committee asked in its report, “than that it is our office to carry civilization and humanity, peace and government, and, above all, the knowledge of the true God, to the uttermost ends of the earth?”\(^{51}\) Since colonization could be the means of carrying these benefits “to the uttermost ends of the earth”, colonizers who purported to be undertaking a civilizing mission had a clear justification for their colonial enterprise. As Evans, Grimshaw, Philips and Swain have argued, “the evangelicals saw the righteousness of the ‘civilizing mission’ as justification enough for expansion of White settlement provided proper procedures were sustained”.\(^{52}\) Michael Mann has recently argued that the civilizing mission, “the colonizer’s claim to improve the country and to bring the fruits of progress and modernity to the subject peoples” was Britain’s “most powerful tool of self-legitimization”.\(^{53}\)

Accordingly, it was the civilizing mission that the Colonization Commissioners claimed as their primary justification for the commercial enterprise of the establishment of South Australia. Their first report made no mention of Indigenous rights to land, but claimed rather to bring civilization and Christianity to Aborigines. It claimed that:

> colonization thus extended to South Australia, though it should do nothing for the colonists, and nothing for the mother country, would yet deserve, in its influence upon the Aborigines, Lord Bacon’s character of ‘a blessed work’.\(^{54}\)

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\(^{50}\) cited in Semmel, 1970, p. 127  
\(^{51}\) Report of the Select Committee on Aborigines (British settlements) with Minutes of Evidence, British Parliamentary Papers 1837, vol 7, p. 76, cited in Evans et al, 2003, p. 29  
\(^{52}\) Evans et al, 2003, p. 31  
\(^{53}\) Mann, 2004, p. 5  
\(^{54}\) British Parliamentary Papers 1836, 491, p. 10, cited in Gibbs, 1959, p. 44
According to instructions given to Moorhouse at the time of his appointment, therefore, his efforts were to be directed toward the collection of knowledge about Aborigines, the prevention of the exploitation of Aboriginal labour, and the maintenance of good relationships between colonized and colonizers. He was also to undertake a programme of civilization and Christianization, to “instruct the natives in reading, writing, building houses, making clothes, cultivating the ground, and all the other ordinary acts of civilization”. He was directed also “[a]bove all things”, to “perseveringly endeavor to bring them to the knowledge of GOD, and of the fundamental truths of CHRISTIANITY”.

A focus by the colonial administration on the project to ‘civilize’ Aborigines ensured that the process of clearing the land of its original owners to enable European settlement could proceed unhindered. A colonist calling himself ‘An Old Settler’ put the case for a privileging of the civilizing mission over a concern to protect Indigenous rights to land in 1840 when he argued that rather than “claiming for the natives rights which are legally untenable”, it was:

safer and sounder ... to treat them with kindness, compassion, and forbearance
- to supply them permanently with food and raiment, in lieu of that which our presence has deprived them - to teach them, if they can be taught, habits of industry and the arts of civilized life, and to raise them from the foul depravity in which we found them, to some sense of moral obligation and religious truth.

Constructions of Aboriginality and human progress which underpinned the civilizing mission

I have argued that the civilizing mission was undertaken as a means of justifying the colonial occupation of South Australia at a time when, in the wake of the successful anti-slavery campaign, humanitarian concern for the plight of colonized peoples was being expressed. It served to divert attention away from an insistence that Indigenous rights to land be recognized and respected. Yet in arguing that the civilizing project

55 Appendix to the ‘Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council Upon ‘the Aborigines’, South Australian Parliamentary Papers, 1860, no. 165. Original emphasis
56 Register, 1/8/1840, p. 5, letter to the editor from ‘An Old Settler’
was undertaken as a matter of expediency, I do not wish to suggest cynical motives for all who advocated and implemented it. Although the historical context of South Australia’s civilizing mission can in part explain its motivations, it was due to a particular set of understandings about the nature of human difference and human progress that the impetus of the anti-slavery movement gave rise to an intensified interest in bringing about the ‘civilization’ of other groups. These beliefs were never universally held, and views regarding the nature of human difference and human progress were always debated both in Britain and in the colonies. Nevertheless, certain common presuppositions underpinning the civilizing mission can be identified which gave rise to a widely-held belief that South Australia’s colonizers could and should put strategies into place to facilitate the ‘civilization’ of Aboriginal people, and which gave the project undertaken in South Australia in the 1840s its particular characteristics.

Robert Young has argued that, in “the positive atmosphere of the anti-slavery movement” English attitudes to race were “comparatively benign” in the period from the end of the eighteenth century until the late 1840s. During this period attitudes to non-Western people drew on both the Enlightenment emphasis on the unity of the human race and an Evangelical Christian belief in the family of man.57

The civilizing mission was premised on an assumption of the existence of a hierarchy of human societies, but not one that was fixed. This was a hierarchy based on notions of human progress. John Marriott has recently argued that ideas of human progress “had profound consequences for the ways in which ... subject peoples were represented throughout the nineteenth century”.58 By the latter part of the century a hierarchy of human development would become widely accepted which assumed that Europeans were more highly developed biologically, those at the bottom of the developmental ladder representing earlier forms of human development. The hierarchy of human development on which the South Australian civilizing mission was based, on the other hand, was a hierarchy, not of biology, but of cultural, economic and moral development. Drawing on the ‘four-stage scheme of history’ propounded by the Scottish


58 John Marriott, 2003, The Other Empire: Metropolis, India and Progress in the Colonial Imagination Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, p. 6
Enlightenment, the civilizers understood the progress of human societies to proceed along a unilinear path from hunter-gather nomadism through nomadic pastoralism, to agriculture and, finally, mercantile capitalism. Although the German missionaries ranked Aboriginal people at ‘the lowest stage of mankind’, it was, in part, on a scale of economic development that they were so placed. The missionary Clamor Schürmann urged the South Australian administration to supply Aborigines with land and cattle, believing that cattle farming, as “the natural transition from a wandering life of hunting and fishing”, represented the first stage of the ‘civilization’ process. This idea was also expressed in an article in the *Southern Australian* newspaper in 1840. “The human race have progressed, by successive steps, from absolute barbarism ... to the pastoral life ... to agriculture ... up to commerce, with all the refinements and luxuries calculated to expand the mind and elevate the character”, the writer claimed. He argued that to “attempt all at once, to teach science and refinement to a savage, without taking him through the immediate gradations of civilization, appears to us to be expecting too much”. He suggested, instead, that if a flock of sheep were to be given to each ‘tribe’, and a shepherd employed to instruct each ‘tribe’ to manage their flock, Aborigines could be led along a path of “gradual civilization”. Civilization, imagined as “the achieved but still progressive secular development of modern society”, according to Robert Young, “expressed not only the culmination of this long historical process, but also the process itself”.

For the Evangelists, the hierarchy of human societies was also one of moral development, human progress involving a movement upwards towards Christianity. Although Schürmann described the Aborigines as “people mentally endowed by their Creator with the same capabilities as the finest races on the face of the earth”, he believed them to be “morally sunk into a bottomless pit of wickedness of heart and

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59 Evans et al, 2003, p. 32
60 C. G. Teichelmann, Diary 1839-1846, Translated by Markus Kreig, Lutheran Archives, Adelaide, p. 9
61 Schürmann, letter to George Fife Angas, 12/6/1839, cited E. A Schurmann (ed.) 1987, *I’d Rather Dig Potatoes: Clamor Schürmann and the Aborigines of South Australia 1838-1853*, Lutheran publishing House, Adelaide, p. 49. Schürmann consistently argued that cattle farming was the most appropriate occupation to introduce to Aborigines in place of a hunter-gatherer lifestyle.
62 *Southern Australian*, 19/3/1940, p. 5
63 Young, 1995, p. 32
pervertedness of judgement”. The missionary Teichelmann told a meeting of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in Adelaide in 1841 that “as far as it is hitherto known, there is no manner of worship in all their observances: but that is merely proof, that they are upon a lower scale of spiritual knowledge than any known nation upon the globe”.

Certain, as Andrew Markus has noted, that “Christianity was the one true religion and that European civilization was the pinnacle of human progress”, early Victorians imagined a ladder of social and cultural development with European culture at the top, representing the highest stage of human social development, or ‘civilization’. Non-European societies were placed on lower rungs of the ladder, according to their perceived stage of development towards civilization, with hunter-gatherer societies at the bottom. Since it was assumed that human groups would naturally develop along a unilinear path towards civilization, explanations needed to be found to explain why some groups had failed to do so. “The important point”, Marriott says, “was that savages were so because they had not been subject to the law of progress”. Whereas by the end of the nineteenth century an explanation of biological inferiority was axiomatic, in the 1830s and 1840s environmental explanations were much more widely accepted. Schürmann believed that the failure of Aboriginal people to ‘progress’ from a hunter-gatherer economy to agriculture had been the result of “there being no horses, no cattle, no grains, no vegetables nor anything requisite for agriculture”.

As Robert Miles has argued, environmentalism sustained the civilizing mission through the belief that heathenness and savagery were the consequences of circumstances that could be changed. Explanations for the failure of human groups to ‘progress’ towards civilization also included the explanation that some groups simply lacked the knowledge required. Lack of progress was the result, quite simply, of a lack of knowledge of

64 Schürmann to Angus, 3/4/1840, cited in E. Schurmann (ed), 1987, p. 97
65 Southern Australian, 26/1/1841, p. 3. ‘Mr. Teichelman’s report upon the natives, at the Wesleyan Missionary Meeting’
66 Andrew Markus, 1994, Australian Race Relations 1788-1993, Allen & Unwin, Australia, p. 18
68 Marriott, 2003, p. 6
69 Schürmann to Angas, 12/6/1839, cited in E. Schurmann (ed), 1987, p. 50
70 Robert Miles, 1989, Racism, Routledge, London and New York, p. 29
agriculture and ‘civilized’ living. The undertaking of a civilizing mission in South Australia was, therefore, premised on the construction of Aboriginal people as ignorant. Exhorting colonists to deal patiently with Aborigines, Gawler began with the exclamation, “[w]hat a state of ignorance these poor creatures are in!” While other non-European groups were viewed as having a culture inferior to that of Britain, the Aborigines were viewed as being without culture. Schürmann wrote in 1839 that “one finds almost no signs whatever of culture amongst the aborigines”. The civilizing mission was to be a process by which Aborigines were given culture, and shown how to live. “You must wear plenty of clothes”, Gawler told the Kaurna at the Queen’s birthday celebration. “You should plant plenty of potatoes, and cabbages, and turnips, and other things to eat”. Through colonization Aborigines would gain access to the means by which they might progress towards ‘civilization’, through instruction and education they would receive the requisite knowledge and skills.

Ignorance was not perceived as a matter of lack of cognitive ability, but a lack of opportunity to know. The construction of human difference as cultural difference arising from environmental causes and access to knowledge gave rise to a belief that differences between human groups were not fixed and inevitable, but could be altered. This assumption contrasted markedly with the biological view of racial difference which would gain widespread acceptance during the second half of the nineteenth century. Although the civilizers imagined “a hierarchical racial structure and a historical movement upwards”, their view of human difference was non-essentialist; the “narrative of conversion and improvement” that was central to their construction of Aboriginal people was premised on a view of human difference that stressed the mutability rather than fixity of the human character. The hierarchy which was constructed was a temporary one, merely, as Robert Young argues, “a different stage at the present which could be transformed through education, not a constitutive basis of difference for all time”.

71 Register, 20/10/1838, p. 2
72 Schürmann, ‘Natives of South Australia’, undated document written late 1838
73 Miles, 1989, p. 30
74 Gillian Cowlishaw, 1999, Rednecks, Eggheads, and Blackfellas: A Study of Racial Power and Intimacy in Australia, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, p. 149
75 Thomas, 1994, p. 190
76 Young, 1995 p. 32
The construction of Aboriginal people on which the civilizing mission was premised drew on Biblical teaching which stressed the essential brotherhood of all mankind and its common descent from the original parents. George Stocking has argued that the Biblical tradition held “a kind of paradigmatic status” in the pre-Darwinian period in Britain.\footnote{George W. Stocking Jr., 1987, \textit{Victorian Anthropology}, The Free Press, New York, p. 44} Based as it was on an acceptance of an essential sameness in all human groups, the ideology of the civilizing mission accepted the coexistence of hierarchy and unity,\footnote{Stocking, 1987, p. 44} in what John Marriott terms “a double movement of exclusion and incorporation”.\footnote{Marriott, 2003, p. 28} The “[i]deas of a universal human nature and of a universal human capacity to attain civilization,”\footnote{McGregor, 1997, p. 5} which underpinned the civilizing mission, included a belief that all people possessed the intellectual capacity to ‘progress’ up the ladder of social development towards ‘civilization’ once the environmental factors which had hitherto retarded their natural development were altered. The missionaries Schürmann and Teichelmann concluded from their study of the Kaurna language that “a race of human beings possessing a language so regular in its formation and construction as that of the South Australian natives, cannot be incapable of either [civilization or Christianity]” and they sought through a publication of a grammar of the language “to refute premature and unjust detractions concerning the mental capabilities of the Aborigines of Australia.\footnote{C. G. Teichelmann & C. W. Schürmann, 1840, \textit{Outlines of a Grammar, Vocabulary and Phraseology of the Aboriginal Language of South Australia, Spoken by the Natives in and for Some Distance Around Adelaide}, Thomas and Co., Adelaide (facsimile edition 1982), p. iv, Introductory preface} As Robert Young has noted:

the attitude to non-Western races [at this time], predicated on the unity of all humankind, was characteristically benevolent even if hierarchical: though regarded as culturally backward in relation to the norms of European civilization, it was assumed that in time other peoples could be acculturated and educated up to European levels.\footnote{Young, 1995, p. 119}
While Aborigines were constructed as a people without knowledge and without culture, the civilizing mission was an attempt to incorporate them into the colonial social hierarchy as British citizens and subjects of the Queen.

At a time when constructions of ‘race’ were relatively benign, the boundary between notions of race and notions of class were somewhat blurred. As Daunton and Halpern argue, “[t]he languages of race and class always operated in relation to each other, with constant slippage”. The construction of the colonized Other as ignorant and without culture, and as retarded in their development along the natural course of human progress through environmental factors, bore remarkable resemblance to the construction of human groups also considered other; such as the Irish, and poor and working class Britons. A number of historians have recently noted parallels between concerns to transform the poor and working class in Britain and the project to ‘civilize’ and Christianize ‘heathens’ in the empire. Ann Stoler has argued, for example, that “[t]he ‘civilizing mission’ of the nineteenth century was ... directed not only at the colonized as often assumed, but at recalcitrant and ambiguous participants in imperial culture at home and abroad”. Michael Mann, too, asserts that “the British civilizing mission was not restricted to the colonies, but included society at home”. Noting the relationship between notions of civilization and ‘culture’ at this time, Robert Young highlights the central role of education in the process of improving mankind, arising from the Enlightenment stress on education as enculturation. In this emphasis on the role of education as enculturation, the education of children assumed central importance.

The construction of Aborigines as a people possessing an innate potential to become civilized Christians but at present lacking the knowledge or skills required to do so was a construction of Aborigines as children. Like children, they needed to be guided and instructed to achieve their full potential as civilized Christian adults. Governor George Gawler made this connection explicit in his address to colonists on his arrival in South Australia. Reminding the colonists that “we are descended from the same first parents;

83 Daunton and Halpern, 1999, p. 4
85 Mann, 2004, p. 8
86 Young, 1995, p. 32-33
they are the bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh; you are brothers”, and drawing
their attention to the ‘state of ignorance’ in which they existed, he described Aboriginal
people as “children in understanding”. He exhorted colonists to treat them with
patience as one should treat children. “[Y]ou bear with the ignorance of children”, he
said, “bear with theirs; so shall we have the gratification, under God's blessing, of
making them happy and useful members of society”. 87 Aboriginal people were thus
constructed as immature, but capable of becoming mature men and women through
instruction and education, a construction which Nicholas Thomas identifies as not only
“a crucial feature of missionary culture” but one which has “great generality”. 88 Leela
Gandhi has noted that the “perception of the colonized culture as fundamentally
childlike or childish feeds into the logic of the colonial ‘civilizing mission’ which is
fashioned, quite self-consciously, as a form of tutelage or a disinterested project
concerned with bringing the colonized to maturity”. 89

South Australia’s civilizing mission was accompanied by a belief that Aborigines, like
children, would respond positively to kindness. It was through kindness, not coercion,
that they would be won to civilization, as, like loving parents, civilizers and colonizers
guided them towards maturity with kindness and gentleness, showing patience with
them in their ignorance. This belief was expressed in a pamphlet circulating in England
in 1835, entitled New Colony in South Australia, which stated that “the natives of
Australia are a feeble, and when treated with kindness, they have proved an inoffensive
people”. 90 At a speech given before he left England, Gawler spoke of his intention to
treat Aborigines with kindness. “I never yet heard of a man so wild”, he said, “that
judicious kindness did not on some degree succeed in taming, and I hope that this
particular case will not prove an exception”. 91 The 1840 Queen’s birthday ceremony,
with its distribution of clothing and the provision of a feast, was a public demonstration
of the kind treatment which Gawler hoped would successfully ‘tame’ the Kaurna. This
was noted in the account of the ceremony printed in the Southern Australian, the writer

87 Register, 20/10/1838, p. 2
88 Thomas, 1994, p. 134
89 Gandhi, 1998, p. 32
90 Colonial Office Records, South Australia, Rowland Hill to Grey, 23/7/1835, CO 13/3, cited in
Foster 1993, p. 4
91 Register, 6/10/1838
hoping that “[t]he kindness and urbanity, both of the Governor, and of Mrs Gawler, [would] not, ... be lost, eiter [sic] upon the natives, or upon the native children”.92

Compensating Aborigines

Gifts of food and clothing represented a display of kindness, but would also have been understood by colonists present on the lawns of Government House as symbolizing the administration’s intention to compensate Aborigines for the loss of their land and livelihood. The notion of compensation had wide currency in South Australia at this time and was advocated both by those who acknowledged Indigenous land ownership, and those who did not. Although colonists disagreed over whether or not Aboriginal people could be said to have proprietary rights to the land, their position on this question tended not to affect their views on the question of compensation. In 1840 George Gawler and Charles Sturt, then assistant commissioner, asserted their belief that Aboriginal people had rights of ownership of the land, “which arose in remote and unknown antiquity”. Colonization was justified, they believed, because through colonization Aborigines would be introduced to agriculture and so enabled to “live in greater comfort on a small space than they enjoyed before it occurred on their extensive original”. Thus they argued that colonization was only justified if sufficient fertile land was reserved for Aboriginal use. “The invasion of those ancient rights by surveys and land appropriation of any kind”, they argued “is justifiable only on the ground that we should, at the same time, reserve for the natives an ample sufficiency for their present and future use and comfort, under the new state of things into which they are thrown”.93

But a recognition of the need to compensate Aborigines appears to have been more widely accepted than the notion of Aboriginal land ownership. It was a widely expressed view that, since Aborigines had failed to adequately use the land, it could not be claimed that they had any right of ownership over it. The colonist calling himself ‘An Old Settler’ argued that the notions of Aboriginal ownership of land were “cuckoo notions” instilled into the mind of Aborigines by “protectors and missionaries”. He wrote:

92 Southern Australian, 26/5/1840, p. 3
93 Register, 27/7/1840, p. 8
[i]t would be difficult to conceive what conceivable proprietary rights were ever enjoyed by the miserable savages of South Australia, who never cultivated an inch of the soil, and whose ideas of the value of its direct produce never extended beyond obtaining a sufficiency of white chalk and red ochre, wherewith to bedaub their bodies for their filthy corrobories.\textsuperscript{94}

Arguments against the concept of Aboriginal land ownership were also put forward by lawyer Charles Mann, who, through the pages of the newspaper he edited, argued that the earth had been given to all mankind, and that property rights only came into existence when labour was applied to the land. The colonization of South Australia was justified, Mann asserted:

\begin{quote}
on the basis of that great law of nature, which gave to the descendents of one ancestor, as brethren, the earth and the fullness of its produce in common, till labour supervened, and introduced by universal consent, that particular law of property which is the concurrent of civilization.\textsuperscript{95}
\end{quote}

It was argued that the British not only had a right to occupy South Australia, they had, indeed, a duty to do so, for “where a thousand acres would scarcely support a savage, a single acre might, if cultivated, give food to numbers”. It was the duty of civilized men, therefore, to gladden the earth “with the produce of abundant harvests”, and whiten it “with the increase of the flocks and herds upon a thousand hills”.\textsuperscript{96} Although this view had wide currency in the colony, the inconsistency between the assertion of the right to appropriate and use under-utilised land “on the basis of that common right with which the law of nature invests all her children”,\textsuperscript{97} and the existence of large tracts of uncultivated land held in the estates of the nobility in Britain, did not go entirely unnoticed. In a letter to the editor of the \textit{Register} in 1849, colonist James Jolly pointed out that those who accepted this argument as justification for the seizure of Aboriginal land “forgot that [this] argument would equally justify the seizure \textit{sic} of some

\textsuperscript{94} \textit{Register}, 1/8/1840, p. 5  
\textsuperscript{95} \textit{Southern Australian}, 10/5/1839, p. 2  
\textsuperscript{96} \textit{Southern Australian}, 10/5/1839, p. 2  
\textsuperscript{97} \textit{Southern Australian}, 3/11/1838, p. 3
thousands of uncultivated, goodly acres, in the possession of the nobility, in ‘merry England’”.  

In presenting his justification for British colonization of South Australia, Charles Mann drew on the biblical tenet of the brotherhood of man, arguing that “[o]ur right to be here is a right of brotherhood”. The right to take possession of the land carried with it a duty to care for those who, through ignorance, had failed to properly utilise it. Mann argued that “[w]hile … we contend that we have a right by labour to make the wilderness and the desert place to blossom as the rose … we contend strongly that our intercourse with the black population must be of gentleness and mercy, and we must bear with them as with younger brethren”. His representation of Indigenous people as ‘younger brethren’ combines the two constructions of Aborigines as members of the human family, and as ignorant and therefore, like children. The Register, which often took an oppositional position to that presented by Mann’s Southern Australian newspaper, also rejected notions of Aboriginal land ownership, and agreed with Mann that the imperative to treat Aborigines with justice was not dependent upon an acceptance of Aboriginal property rights. Although the editor of the South Australian Register was “by no means inclined to admit … the validity of the arguments in favor of the native rights to the absolute proprietorship of the soil of the territory”, he was nevertheless, most willing to concede that a lawful obligation is imposed upon the government to provide liberally for their physical wants, as well as for their moral and religious improvement”. Five years later, in 1845, an article in the Register considered the question “how and to what extent we have, by the occupation of their territory, imposed upon ourselves duties and responsibilities on their behalf”:

Whilst it cannot be doubted that by our advent among them, and by our occupation and profitable culture of this fair and fruitful portion of the earth’s surface, which they, in their savage ignorance, had used only as hunting grounds and battle fields, we are acting in consonance of a benevolent designs of the Author of the whole human family; just as certainly as it is a fact, also, that they

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98 Register, 24/10/1849, p. 4
99 Southern Australian, 3/11/1838, p. 3
100 Southern Australian, 3/11/1838, p. 3
101 Register, 1/8/1840, p. 4
have rights which we are bound to respect, and that humanity, not less than interest, imperatively demands our best efforts to reclaim them from the abject condition in which we have found them, and to substitute better things for the savage enjoyments with which we have necessarily interfered.\textsuperscript{102}

The belief that Aborigines should be compensated for the loss of livelihood brought about by the arrival of British settlers in South Australia was widely expressed in the colony during the first few years of settlement. Newspaper articles and letters frequently asserted the belief that colonization was only justified if Aborigines were provided with ‘an equivalent’ of their loss. Since they had, according to the colonists, obtained only a precarious and meagre living from the land they occupied, they could be more than fully compensated if they were enabled to share in the wealth created by a people with the knowledge to make the land fully productive. It was widely accepted that since colonization would prevent Aborigines obtaining food, shelter and clothing from their environment, they should be amply supplied with these by the colonial administration and by individual settlers. During the term of the first governor of South Australia, John Hindmarsh, an area of land was identified as a temporary ‘Native Location’ which served as a kind of ration depot. There, interim Protectors of Aborigines made daily distributions of food to Kaurna people, and a number of huts were erected for Aboriginal use. The colonial secretary George Stephen told a gathering of Kaurna people in 1839, six months after Gawler’s arrival, that “[t]he Governor has always told the Protector William Wyatt, and the interpreter James Cronk, and William Oldham [the schoolteacher], and all the white people to be kind to black men, and to give them biscuit, rice, and sugar whenever they could not find food in the bush, and the Governor made good wurleys for them to sleep in when the nights are cold”.\textsuperscript{103} The provision of a feast at the 1840 Queen’s Birthday celebration was a public display of the intention of the colonial administration to honour their debt to the dispossessed Aborigines.

\textsuperscript{102} \textit{Register}, 25/6/1845, p. 3
\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Register}, 27/4/1839, pp. 1-2
Education as a component of compensation

In addition to food, clothing and shelter, the compensation package that colonists believed was owed to the Aborigines included instruction in ‘civilization’ and Christianity. The manager of the South Australian Company, David McLaren, summed this up when he told a public meeting in 1839 that “[w]e have occupied their country - driven away their food ... - they have a right to look to us for food - to be clothed, to be lodged, to be instructed”.\(^\text{104}\)

As a component of the colony’s package of compensation, ‘instruction’ was the means by which Aborigines would gain skills in new forms of economic activity to replace their hunter-gatherer lifestyle, as well as moral and religious training through missionary activity. The project to ‘civilize’ Aboriginal people was thus undertaken as part of a package by which Aborigines would be compensated for losses incurred through colonization. John Henry and Wendy Brabham have noted the paradox inherent in the intention, “having dispossessed the Koorie nations of their resource base”, to offer compensation “through access to European christian culture, the culture of the dispossessors”.\(^\text{105}\) For the colonizers, believing as they did that the lifestyle of agriculturalists was superior and more comfortable than that of the hunter-gatherer, this seemed a more than fair exchange. The first interim Protector, George Stephenson, wrote:

\begin{quote}
The exchange we have to offer to the poor savage for his fertile, but to him unproductive plains, is to instruct him in the art of cultivation - to take away his waddy and his spear, and to put in his hands the hoe and the sickle - to bring him step by step within the range and influence of civilization; but above all to rouse him from the brutish condition in which he now sleeps - to wean him from the very depths of heathen ignorance to the light of the gospel.\(^\text{106}\)
\end{quote}

Inherent in the rhetoric of the civilizing mission was the impetus and rhetoric of the anti-slavery movement. The civilization process was expressed in terms of the

\(^{104}\) Southern Australian, 10/5/1839, p. 2
\(^{105}\) Henry and Brabham, 1991, p. 9
\(^{106}\) First annual report of the Colonization Commissioners for South Australia, 1836, pp 8-10, cited in Foster, 1993, p. 116
emancipation of people bound down by heathen superstition and savage custom. By reemploying the rhetoric of the anti-slavery movement colonizers created a vision of British colonization acting to rescue indigenous peoples from the bondage of their own ignorance. Through knowledge, of God and of better ways of living, the ‘native’ would be set free. In Brian Stanley’s terms “empire was the instrument not of oppression but of freedom, freedom from ignorance”.  

Michael Mann argues that “the mission civilizatrice rested upon the idea of mastery”; in the words of Alice L. Conklin “to be civilized was to be free from specific forms of tyranny; the tyranny of the elements over man, of disease over health, of instinct over reason, of ignorance over knowledge and of despotism over liberty”. Thus the duty of the British to share the blessing of ‘civilization’ with the savage arose not only from the obligation to compensate for losses incurred by colonization, but as the duty arising from a shared humanity according to the anti-slavery slogan “am I not a man and a brother? Am I not a woman and a sister?” In 1839 the manager of the South Australian Company, David McLaren, used the rhetoric of the anti-slavery movement to urge the kind treatment of Aboriginal people, reminding those gathered at a public meeting that:

> [i]t was because the degraded and iron-bound slave was pleaded on the ground of moral principle as for a fellow man, to be loved and treated as a neighbour, that he was emancipated - it was upon this fulcrum [that] the mighty lever of public feeling and discussion raised the degraded and iron-bound slave from the dust, and that he stands free and erect, and can raise his hands as well as his eyes to that God who has made of one blood all nations upon the face of the earth.

As Leela Gandhi argues:

> defence of the pedagogical motivations of colonialism betrays its Enlightenment legacy, namely, the sense that European rationality holds out the possibility of

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108 Mann, 2004, p. 4  
110 Young, 1995, p. 119  
111 *Southern Australian*, 10/5/1839, pp. 2-3
improvement for all humanity. Accordingly, those who are already in possession of the gospel of rationality are seen to have an ethical obligation or ‘calling’ to spread the word and proselytise on behalf of their emancipatory creed.  

Education, as a cure for ignorance, was central to the civilizing mission. Gibbs notes that “[e]ducation, both in its narrow sense of schooling for the young and the wider sense of conferring British morality, productive techniques and above all religion on the race as a whole, was the key-note of the ‘civilizing mission’ to be carried out” in South Australia.

**Contesting the motivations of the civilizing mission**

Whereas the colonial enterprise in South Australia was threatened by concerns, expressed by the Colonial Office, that Indigenous land ownership in South Australia be respected, the civilizing mission, I have argued, enabled colonizers to appropriate Aboriginal land while still claiming to have Indigenous interests at heart. It could be argued also that the civilization mission actually facilitated the colonial project, by serving as a means of bringing Indigenous people under colonial control. “[T]he ‘civilising mission’ conduced ... to colonial ends”, according to Evans et al, “by endeavoring to train compliant subjects”. Its potential as a means of securing colonial hegemony was argued in a letter to the editor of a South Australian newspaper in 1839. Demonstrating Ania Loomba’s contention that “[d]ominant ideologies are never total or monolithic, never totally successful in incorporating all individuals or subjects into their structures”, the writer advocated the undertaking of a civilizing mission, while entirely rejecting its prevailing humanitarian rhetoric and rationale. Rather, he advocated the education of Aboriginal people simply as the most acceptable means by which colonial hegemony, essential for the survival of the colony, could be established. Writing at a time when colonists were calling for the punishment of Aborigines accused of injuring Europeans, the writer questioned the justice of punishing Indigenous people under colonial law. He questioned, for example, that Europeans had any greater right to punish Aborigines for killing sheep, than Aboriginal people had to

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112 Gandhi, 1998, p. 33  
113 Gibbs, 1959, pp. 43-44  
114 Evans et al, 2003, Introduction, p. 8  
punish Europeans for killing their kangaroos. Further, and quite remarkably for that time, he questioned the right of colonists to punish Aboriginal people for killing Europeans, for “in doing so they may be following exactly their own laws, which are, no doubt, as much respected by them, as our laws are by us”. The imposition of British laws on Indigenous people had nothing to do with justice, he argued, but was simply a means of establishing colonial domination. He did not believe that colonists had the right:

to force our laws and customs upon [Aboriginal people], far less that they are under the slightest obligations to obey us unless they choose, but it is useless to disguise the fact - that we find it necessary, after taking their country, to force our laws upon them, to enable us to retain our possession.

In making a case for the adoption of a policy of educating Aboriginal people, the writer argued that, in order to obtain dominion over Aboriginal people, either physical force could be used, or “moral and intellectual force”. He rejected the use of physical force as universally unacceptable, including the option of “neglect[ing] them a short time longer, and personal safely will soon compel individuals to shoot numbers of them, like so many wild beasts, or put them to death by some other equally Christian means". The application of “moral and intellectual force” by “educating them so as to understand and conform to our laws and customs”, was “the only alternative left us”, he concluded. But “[l]et us not flatter ourselves”, he wrote, “by supposing that we are acting from higher motives towards the natives than we really are. Our conduct towards them, will be, and has been, regulated upon the principle of expediency and self-interest”.116

The argument that the civilizing mission was a matter of colonial expediency was contemptuously dismissed in an article in the Register written in response to this letter. The article employed emotive language to reiterate the prevailing ideological position of the civilizing mission as the moral obligation of colonists as Christians, and as a form of compensation to Indigenous people for their land. Using the Christian tenet that “thou shalt do no murder” to rebut the letter-writer’s argument regarding the justice of

116 Southern Australian, 8/5/1839, p. 3
punishing Indigenous aggression, the article neatly summed up much of the prevailing ideology underlying South Australia’s civilizing mission. The writer argued:

that on taking possession of this noble territory, we found upon it a race of human beings - abject enough, indeed, and in intellect or information a step only removed from the lower animals - but still human beings, and as such, entitled to the kindly sympathies of their fellow men. Nay more, we met them upon the footing of British subjects - their claim of property in the soil distinctly recognised by our sovereign and the Parliament of England. ... They received us as friends, without suspicion and without dread, we took their land without ceremony; we destroyed and extirpated their natural food without compunction; we occupied their plains with our flocks and herds without their permission; they were at our mercy; and it is the pride and boast of every right-hearted man in South Australia, that under these circumstances, no base advantage was taken over a defenceless people. We accepted the green branch they offered us; we gave them food and clothing in abundance ... as the first instalment of what by every tie of national justice and honour was their due. We promised them indeed more; we promised them not merely the rights of British subjects, but the blessings of Christianity and Civilization. That portion of our promise, we acknowledge, has been but indifferently kept, but it has not altogether been broken; and the time is at hand when it must be heartily and honestly fulfilled.\textsuperscript{117}

\textbf{Conclusion}

The colonization of South Australia was accompanied by promises to bring to its original inhabitants the blessings of a European lifestyle and the Christian religion. That the colonizers made such an undertaking was the result of the historical context in which colonization was carried out. In the wake of the anti-slavery movement, as humanitarian concerns to protect the property rights of indigenous peoples threatened to undermine the colonization project, colonizers turned to the civilizing mission as a means by which the colonial enterprise could be justified and humanitarian concerns for the welfare of the colonized placated. The undertaking of a civilizing mission was the result, too, of a generally accepted understanding that colonized people could be

\textsuperscript{117} Register, 11/5/1839, p. 2
‘civilized’, that they should be civilized for their own well-being in this life and the next, and that, given kind treatment and provided with the necessary means and skills, they would be ‘civilized’. Experiences within the colony would cause colonists to rethink their assumptions, however, and to adjust their original ideas about how the project to civilize would be implemented.
Chapter 2: The Shifting Focus of the Civilizing Mission

It was initially intended that the ‘civilization’ of the Indigenous people in South Australia would be undertaken on three fronts. Firstly, Aboriginal men and women would receive training in Christian morality and religion through missionary activity. Secondly, they would be provided with the necessary skills and the means to make the transition from a hunter-gather lifestyle to a settled agricultural lifestyle, while the third component of the civilizing project was to be the education of Aboriginal children in schools. All three components of the civilizing mission were put on display at the 1840 Queen’s birthday celebration, in a public demonstration of South Australia’s commitment to uplifting Aborigines from ‘savagery’ to ‘civilization’.

Within a few years of colonization, however, the attention of colonial civilizers shifted away from a concern to Christianize and ‘civilize’ Aboriginal men and women, to a focus on the third component of the project: the education of children in schools. The reasons behind this change of emphasis in the civilizing mission are examined in this chapter.

Setting out to ‘civilize’ – the civilizing mission before Gawler

In May 1840, when the Queen’s birthday was celebrated, all mechanisms were in place for a civilizing mission to be “heartily and honestly” undertaken. Its rhetoric had been incorporated into plans for the foundation of the colony, and some small initiatives had been taken under the governorship of Gawler’s predecessor, Hindmarsh. Interim Protectors had been appointed, food rations distributed to Kaurna people, and colonists prided themselves that, so far, their occupation of Kaurna land had been accomplished without bloodshed. In an attempt to compensate and maintain friendly relationships

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1 Register, 11/5/1839, p. 2
2 An editorial in the Colonial Register claimed that “it is with honest pride that we can state as a circumstance unexampled in all former colonial histories, that during nearly three years’ intercourse with the aborigines not a drop of native blood has been shed by the white man”, Register, 27/4/1839, pp. 1-2
with the Kaurina, food had been regularly distributed. An area of land intended for the botanic gardens had been set aside for the temporary use of the Kaurina, and some houses erected there. The establishment of such ‘Native Locations’ was central to the second component of the civilizing mission: the training of Aboriginal men and women in the skills of agriculture and a settled, ‘civilized’ lifestyle. It was intended that Aboriginal people, attracted to the ‘Location’ by the rations distributed there, would abandon their nomadic lifestyle and become settled within its boundaries. The lessons the civilizing mission sought to impart to Kaurina men and women were reiterated by Gawler on the Queen’s birthday: “[y]ou should plant plenty of potatoes, and cabbages, and turnips, and other things to eat”, “you must live in houses”. Robert Foster has described the “notion of concentrating the Aborigines on a defined portion of land and there converting them from their nomadic habits into useful members of the industrial classes” as “one of the most fundamental policies of the colonial government” and “essential to the concept of civilization and Christianization”.³ The first, temporary, Location had been established under the governorship of Hindmarsh in May 1837, when the second provisional Protector, Walter Bromley, had been given permission to use “for the employment of the natives” an area of the parkland designated as a future site of the botanic gardens.⁴ He attempted to encourage Kaurina people to stay there by providing them daily with food, but within three weeks was writing letters to Governor Hindmarsh of the “ill success in my endeavours to induce the natives to remain here”.⁵ Colonists who had learnt to speak Kaurina were employed at the Location as interpreters. The interpreter’s position was initially held by James Cooper,⁶ and then by James Cronk.

Some early steps had also been made during Hindmarsh’s governorship towards the establishment of a school for Kaurina children. The education of children was an essential component of the civilizing mission, its importance illustrated by the display of the schoolchildren’s achievements at the Queen’s birthday celebration. Plans for

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⁴ State Records of South Australian (SRSA), Outgoing correspondence of the Colonial Secretary’s office, Government Records Group (GRG) 24/6 B 24/4/1837/68
⁵ Bromley to Colonial Secretary, 26/5/1837, SRSA GRG 24/1/1837/152
⁶ Cooper resigned from the position in July 1837. Bromley to Colonial Secretary, 17/7/1837, SRSA GRG 24/1/1837/241; see also a letter from the Colonial Secretary to Colonial Treasurer 26/9/1837, SRSA GRG B 24/4/1837/191
‘civilizing’ South Australia’s Aboriginal people had always included plans for the establishment of a school. In 1837 when William Wyatt replaced Walter Bromley to become the third interim Protector of Aborigines, he decided that one of the buildings erected by Bromley on the temporary Location should be used as a school and storehouse. Bromley, dismissed from his position as provisional Protector, was engaged instead as a teacher. A trained schoolteacher, he had established South Australia’s first school on Kangaroo Island.\(^7\) It is doubtful, however, whether he did actually begin teaching Kaurna children before his death from drowning in the Torrens River in May 1838. Reports of the Colonization Commissioners written in 1839 and based on early reports of the Protector of Aborigines claimed that a school had been established at the Location,\(^8\) and that “several men and boys [had] made tolerable successful attempts at writing”.\(^9\) These claims were refuted in an article in the *Register*, however, as “an impudent and gratuitous misrepresentation”, and “merely a sop to an influential and most benevolent class at home”.\(^10\) When the Lutheran missionaries Clamor Schürmann and Christian Teichelmann arrived in the colony in October 1838, five months after Bromley’s death, the schoolhouse was not in use, and they were given permission to use it for their own accommodation, although it leaked badly in the wet weather.\(^11\)

The first component of the project, the teaching of Christian beliefs and morality, was not attempted during Hindmarsh’s governorship. In accordance with the recommendations of the Report of the 1837 Select Committee on Aborigines, the civilizing mission was to be undertaken as a collaboration between missionaries and a Protector of Aborigines. Interim Protector Wyatt looked forward to the arrival of missionaries as he believed that it was only through teaching the “simple and sublime doctrine of Christianity” that the civilizing project could be achieved.\(^12\)

**The civilizing mission under Gawler**

It was with the arrival in the colony of Colonel George Gawler as Hindmarsh’s successor in October 1838 that South Australia’s civilizing mission seems really to have got

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\(^7\) Gouttman, 1979, p. 60  
\(^8\) *Register*, 23/11/1839, p. 4  
\(^9\) *Register*, 9/1/1841, p. 4  
\(^10\) *Register*, 23/11/1839, p. 4  
\(^11\) Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, written between 10 and 21 December, 1838  
\(^12\) Wyatt, Protector’s report 1/7/1838, cited in Hunt, 1971, p. 26
underway. The ship that brought him to the colony also brought Christian Teichelmann and Clamor Schürmann, the colony’s first missionaries to the Aborigines, sent to South Australia by the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society of Dresden, Germany, to carry out the Christianizing component of the project. The Society had been invited to send missionaries by George Fife Angas, one of the founding Colonial Commissioners and a financial backer of the new colonial enterprise, who promised financial support for the missionary undertaking. As partners with the colonial administration in the colony’s civilizing mission, the missionaries were placed under the direction of the Protector of Aborigines, although they were equally obliged to accept direction from the mission society in Germany that had trained and sent them into the field. They were to be joined in July 1840, two months after the Queen’s birthday celebration, by two fellow missionaries, Samuel Gottlieb Klosé and Heinrich August Edward Meyer.

Training in Christian morality and conversion to Christianity were essential components in the process of maturation that was the objective of the civilizing mission. In the view even of those proponents of the civilizing mission whose priority rested squarely on changing the lifestyle of the ‘uncivilized’, conversion to Christianity was held to be an essential component of the project; to be truly ‘civilized’ meant to be Christian. This has been noted by Ronald Hyam, who observed that while civilizers contested the relative importance of different aspects of the civilizing mission, “nearly all seemed to have agreed that the crucial cement was Christianity”. The centrality of religious and moral training in the civilizing process is illustrated by the reading of the Kaurna translation of the Ten Commandments at the Queen’s birthday ceremony. Gawler was an evangelical Christian who believed that success in the civilizing mission could only be achieved through Christian conversion. He asserted that “everyone with even a small knowledge of his bible would know that only the Word of God would change the most despised and most degenerate and coarsest person”. In his speech to the Kaurna on the Queen’s Birthday he made clear his belief in the primacy of Christian conversion and the acceptance of Christian morality to the civilizing process. Setting out a list of rules for ‘civilized’ living he began with religious and moral precepts: “[y]ou must not steal”, “[y]ou must not quarrel and fight and kill each other”, “[y]ou must love Jesus Christ

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14 Hyam, 2002, pp. 114-115
15 Teichelmann diaries, p. 16, 15/5/1841
The Son of God with all your hearts”. Gawler did go on to include the secular requirements for ‘civilized’ living in his list of instructions, exhorting the Kaurna to build and live in houses, to learn to read, and to cultivate the ground, but separated these injunctions from the moral and religious injunctions with the words “besides which”. These lifestyle changes were presented as secondary to the adoption of Christian morality and beliefs.¹⁶

The European population at the time of the arrival of Gawler, Schürmann and Teichelmann in the colony was about five thousand.¹⁷ Schürmann expressed surprise that two years after the colony’s foundation so little of the land had been cultivated. Predicting the economic crisis that was to cripple the colony a few years later, and lead to Gawler being recalled to England, he accused the British colonists of being “nothing but a heap of speculators who all carry on such tremendous usury against one another that the few moderate people look forward with horror to the outcome”.¹⁸ Adelaide had been surveyed as the colony’s principal town by the Torrens River, with a large area surrounding the town set aside as park land. A colonist described Adelaide early in 1839 as resembling:

an extensive gipsy encampment. Not the semblance of a street existed on the land, although all the main streets had been duly laid down on the plan. It was in fact an extensive woodland, with here a solitary tent and there a cluster of erratic habitations. There were canvas tents, calico tents, tarpaulin tents, wurleys made of branches, log huts, packing case villas, and a few veritable wooden cottages, amid which here and there appeared some good houses.¹⁹

The missionaries Teichelmann and Schürmann were given permission to live in the leaky timber house intended for use as a school at the temporary Location in the parklands.²⁰ There they set about learning to speak the Indigenous language and establishing a relationship with the Kaurna people. They made a bad beginning, however, as personal

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¹⁶ *Southern Australian*, 26/5/1840, p. 3
¹⁸ Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, December 1838
²⁰ Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, December 1838
antagonism between the two men became so intense that they refused to work together, each cooking his own meals and eating separately from the other. Both complained in letters to their mission society in Germany about the behaviour of the other. Schürmann wrote, for example, that when the Congregational minister, Thomas Quinton Stow, offered to provide English language lessons to the missionaries, Teichelmann accepted on condition that they be taught separately.\(^{21}\) Schürmann urged the society to send more missionaries, writing that the news that two missionaries the society had considered sending to South Australia would probably go instead to the East Indies “sent a chill down my spine”. “[W]hat shall I do”, he wrote despairingly, “if I am to work along with Br. Teichelmann alone through the whole of my life?”\(^{22}\) He was keen to leave Adelaide and establish himself as a missionary at Encounter Bay, writing that he could thereby achieve what he had “constantly desired, that Br. Teichelmann and I be separated”.\(^{23}\) Although Schürmann was able to assure his mission society in March 1840 that God had “united our hearts again”,\(^{24}\) the Lutheran Mission in South Australia continued to be hampered by conflict between its members, and it was probably one of the reasons why the four missionaries later worked in separate regions of the colony.

The improvement in the relationship between the two missionaries may have been brought about by the fact that in 1839 they were provided with new houses by the administration, and no longer had to share the leaky wooden house at the temporary Location. In January 1839 Gawler had the ‘Native Location’ moved from its temporary site at the Botanic Gardens to a section of the Parkland where Kaurna people frequently camped, called by them ‘Piltawodli’. This Location was established on a triangle of land of about two or three acres formed by a curve in the Torrens River, and the missionaries had their houses built at opposite corners of the triangle, each as far away as possible from the other.\(^{25}\)

For the next few years Piltawodli was to become the locus of the civilizing mission, where the Kaurna would be encouraged to live a settled lifestyle in European houses.

\(^{21}\) Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 8/3/1839
\(^{22}\) Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 8/3/1839
\(^{23}\) Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 21/6/1839
\(^{24}\) Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, ‘Piltawodlingi’ [at Piltawodli], 16/3/1840
\(^{25}\) Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, begun 19/1/1839
and grow their own food. During 1839, houses were built at this new site for the missionaries and the schoolteacher, and Kaurna men worked with Europeans to construct small houses for their own use. During that year an acre of ground was fenced in as a garden, portions of which were allotted to individuals, on which they were encouraged to plant vegetables. As the missionaries gained proficiency in the Kaurna language, the position of interpreter was no longer required, and James Cronk was dismissed in January 1840. John Canham, a forty-two year old leather worker who had been a missionary with the London Missionary Society in Madagascar, was appointed as instructor in his place. Canham’s wife was apparently also employed, presumably to instruct Kaurna women in the skills of ‘civilized’ living.

In January 1839 the colonial administration also engaged a schoolteacher, William Oldham, who set about building himself a house at the new Location at Piltawodli. No school was built there during that year, however. In October the new Protector, Matthew Moorhouse, submitted plans for a school building for Gawler’s approval, reporting that “[w]hilst we are labouring among the adults, it is my intention at the same time to be educating the children. Hitherto little has been done with the young, on account of having no accommodation.”

Despite his employment as teacher at the Location, however, it was not Oldham but the Lutheran missionaries who undertook the task of teaching literacy to Kaurna children when the school first began operating in December of that year. Three months earlier the missionary Schürmann had preempted the establishment of a government school by attempting to run open-air literacy classes, and had “succeeded in gathering a small group of eight natives, mainly children, of whom a few learned some letters by heart”. In preempting the establishment of a government school he had been motivated, perhaps, by a belief that the children, who understood only “a few crumbs of English”

26 Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, begun 19/1/1839; Moorhouse, Protector’s report 9/10/1839, Papers Relative to South Australia, p. 321
27 Moorhouse, Protector’s report, 9/10/1839, Papers Relative to South Australia, p. 321
28 Moorhouse, Protector’s report, 27/7/1840, Papers Relative to South Australia, p. 324
29 A letter requiring Moorhouse to inform Canham of his dismissal in 1841 stated that Canham’s services, “and those of his wife” were no longer required. Colonial Secretary to Moorhouse, 30/9/1841, SRSA GRG E 24/4/1841/118
30 Colonial Secretary to William Oldham, SRSA, GRG C 24/4/1838/52
31 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 9/10/1839, Papers Relative to South Australia, p. 321
would be overextended by any attempt to teach in English.\(^{32}\) He felt that if he could gather children together “for an hour each day, something could be achieved”, but without a supply of food to give them he could not persuade them to attend his classes.\(^{33}\) In December a conversation took place between Schürmann and Moorhouse that was to lead to the establishment of a school as a joint enterprise of the mission and colonial administration, over which the Lutheran missionaries, rather than the government-appointed teacher, exercised a controlling influence. But the establishment of the school was not an indication that the civilizing project was proceeding strongly and according to plan at Piltawodli. Rather, it arose from a growing pessimism in the prospects of the project’s success, and as a final attempt to find some means of making progress in a project which appeared doomed to failure almost as soon as it was begun. Before looking at the establishment of the school, I will examine the reasons for this rising pessimism.

**Rejecting the gift of ‘civilization’**

The Queen’s birthday celebration of May 1840 was, I have argued in the previous chapter, a display of optimism in and commitment to the civilizing mission, a public demonstration that all the requirements of the civilizing mission had been set in place. Its performance, on the other hand, concealed a rising awareness that Kaurna people were decidedly uninterested in the gift of ‘civilization’ that was being offered to them at Piltawodli. The naive assumption that Aborigines would, as intelligent people, choose to live a European lifestyle if provided with the means to do so, was already proving to be fallacious. Almost as soon as he began the task of teaching agriculture to the Kaurna, it became clear to Moorhouse that “the European mode of producing food” which seemed to him so clearly superior to the hunter-gatherer existence, did not appear so to the Kaurna. He quickly realised he was wrong in his expectation that simply by being shown “the superiority of our method, they might be induced to adopt it”.\(^{34}\) Some of the Kaurna displayed an interest in learning new skills, and the civilizers were given cause for hope when Kaurna men undertook the building of homes for themselves, and began to cultivate the ground at Piltawodli. But contrary to the civilizers’ expectation, the acquisition of these skills did not lead them to adopt a

\(^{32}\) Schürmann, ‘Natives of South Australia’
\(^{33}\) Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 5/11/1839
\(^{34}\) Moorhouse, Protector's report, 9/10/1839, *Papers Relative to South Australia*, p. 321
European lifestyle. Their lives were not empty vessels to be filled with new ways of thinking, living and being. They continued to live lives that were, for them, full of meaning. They used Piltawodli in their own way, sheltering in their houses in wet weather and using them as repositories for their weapons when they travelled.\(^\text{35}\) The great fallacy of the civilizing mission, the assumption that non-European people would eagerly accept European beliefs and modes of living as superior to their own, was already foreshadowing the failure of the project. What the civilizing experiment was proving was that Aboriginal people were entirely capable of acquiring the skills of ‘civilized’ living, but simply did not wish to change their way of life. Moorhouse made this point in a report in early 1841. “That they are able to acquire dexterity enough for the ordinary purposes of farming and building”, he wrote, “is now proved beyond a doubt”. At Piltawodli Kaurna had built a house “with but little assistance from Europeans” and fenced the thirteen acres of the location with poles, rails and narrow palings.\(^\text{36}\) Moorhouse attributed their failure to adopt a European lifestyle, despite a proven capacity to acquire the requisite skills, to “unconquerable indolence”, which was “united so intimately” with their “powers of acquiring … that the ingenuity they possess cannot be satisfactorily bought into operation”.\(^\text{37}\) The Kaurna’s rejection of the gift of ‘civilization’ being offered to them at Piltawodli caused Moorhouse to lose hope in this component of the project. Schürmann records that in December 1839, just five months after Moorhouse had been appointed as Protector, he “very definitely expressed as his firm opinion that the Aborigines could never be educated into being useful people”, and wondered “what on earth could one do with people like this?”\(^\text{38}\)

The early pessimism that attended the project to civilize Indigenous men and women arose in part from the fact that the intention to compensate Aboriginal people carried with it an implicit assumption of reciprocity. While food, clothing and shelter were to be provided to Aborigines as compensation, the assumption of reciprocity was implied in the juxtaposition of Gawler’s entreaties to the Kaurna on how to behave, with the provision of gifts of clothing and a feast. There was an implicit understanding on Gawler’s part of an exchange taking place: in accepting his gifts Kaurna were undertaking, from the colonists’ viewpoint, to accept the tenets of the civilizing

\(^\text{35}\) Moorhouse, Protector’s report, 14/1/1840, *Papers Relative to South Australia*, p. 323
\(^\text{36}\) Moorhouse, Protector’s report, 20/2/1841, *Papers Relative to South Australia*, p. 325
\(^\text{37}\) Moorhouse, Protector’s Report, 20/2/1841, *Papers Relative to South Australia*, p. 325
\(^\text{38}\) Schürmann to Dresden Missionary Society, 16/3/1840
mission. The hope, expressed by observers of the ceremony, that the kindness of the governor and his wife would not be lost upon the natives,\(^{39}\) suggests an expectation that Aborigines would feel a sense of gratitude, and respond to the kind treatment they had received by complying with the requirements of the civilizing project. The provision of food, gifts, clothing and shelter was seen to both compensate Aborigines for their loss, and win compliance in the civilizing process.

But Kaurna brought their own meanings to the transaction. Tim Rowse has described the provision of food and other handouts, or ‘rationing’, in such situations as a “complex and ill-defined” transaction.\(^{40}\) Discussing the provision of rations to Aboriginal people in central Australia, he argues that Aborigines “once rationed, were expected not to attack settlers or their livestock”. “In a sense (which might not be shared), rations ‘purchased’ acquiescence to a new, imposed social order”.\(^{41}\) In his work on ‘The life and times of Mullawirraburka (‘King John’) of the Adelaide Tribe’, Tom Gara identifies the issuing of rations and handouts to the Kaurna as typifying “the misunderstandings that developed between the two races”. In 1837 Interim Protector Bromley accused the Kaurna of being “ungrateful” and “insolent” when they refused to eat the boiled gruel he prepared for them each day. Gara suggests that when a Kaurna man named Ityamaipina or ‘Rodney’ stole pork from Bromley’s tent he was exerting “what he believed was his right to the better food that Bromley kept for himself”.\(^{42}\) However, as Inga Clendinnen reminds us, “understanding another culture’s meanings is and will always be a hazardous enterprise”, because “those meanings are rarely made explicit”.\(^{43}\) Just how the Kaurna understood the provision of supplies by the colonial administration at that time is difficult to ascertain now. There is some evidence, however, that some believed that the British supplied them with food in payment for their land. In 1839 Schürmann reported to his benefactor in England, George Fife Angas, that:

\(^{39}\) Southern Australian, 26/5/1840, p. 3  
\(^{41}\) Rowse, 1998, p. 20  
\(^{42}\) Gara, 1998, p. 104  
[e]very adult native possesses a district of land, which he calls his country and which he inherited from his father. When I asked them, whose their country was now, they replied the white men’s, to whom they had given it; when I enquired further, what the white men had given them for it, they either said rice, biscuits and sugar, or nothing.44

Having forfeited their land, there is no reason to suppose that the Kaurna saw their acceptance of food rations and other provisions as placing them under any further obligation.

As the assumption that Aborigines would want to become like Europeans if given the opportunity to do so was showing itself to be fallacious, Moorhouse’s pessimism in the project to civilize was fed also by a growing awareness of a contradiction inherent in the rhetoric of the project. The intention of the colonizers to compensate Aborigines by providing them with food was incompatible with the intention to teach them to produce their own food through agriculture. Prior to Gawler’s arrival, during the governorship of Hindmarsh, a policy was adopted of compensating Aboriginal people by providing food without requiring an equivalent in labour. According to colonist John Wrathall Bull an “order was issued by the government to the settlers as to the treatment of the natives, vis., that they were not to employ them in work, in order to avoid any approach towards slavery”.45 Bull writes that “such bastard sentimentality was not generally responded to or obeyed”.46

As to the order not to employ them, I for one, when applied to by them for food or clothing, made it a rule to give them a job more or less slight, and paid them accordingly, thinking if their necessities drove them to beg, degrading habits would be set up, and that it was our duty to induce them to adopt habits of thrift and industry.47

Rowse has noted the concern, expressed by “[m]any observers of the rationing relationship, in its various forms, ... that it made ‘paupers’ of the recipients, that is,

44 Schürman to Angas, 12/6/1839, cited in E. Schurmann (ed.), 1987, p. 50
45 Bull, 1884, p. 63
46 Bull, 1884, p. 63
47 Bull, 1884, p. 64
that rationing degraded people, morally and culturally, and perverted their progress towards citizenship”,\textsuperscript{48} or, in nineteenth century terminology, towards ‘civilization’. This view was also expressed by the Lutheran missionaries, who believed that the provision of food to Aborigines by colonists, or of rations by the government, created a lifestyle that, though “more comfortable for the body,” was “totally destructive for the spirit”.\textsuperscript{49} They advised colonists “that they should give nothing to the adults unless they work for it”.\textsuperscript{50}

Other commentators took an opposing view, however. Edward John Eyre, who served as an Assistant Protector in South Australia between 1841 and 1844, disagreed with “the general feeling among [colonists] … that a native should never have any thing given to him until he does some work for it”, arguing that:

\begin{quote}
we have no right to force him to a labour he is unused to, and \textit{which he never had to perform in his natural state}, whilst we have a right to supply him with what he has been accustomed to, \textit{but of which we have deprived him – food.}\textsuperscript{51}
\end{quote}

Although Bull writes that “after the arrival of Governor Gawler right steps, as far as they went, were adopted”, the contradiction in the colonial policy was never really resolved. Moorhouse discussed the incompatibility in these two propositions in his first official report written three months after he commenced his duties as Protector. Although he made it a policy not to provide rations at Piltawodli “until an equivalent of work is done”, he found that Kaurna people were easily able to obtain food from colonists in Adelaide either “in payment for work done, or performed as charitable acts”. At Piltawodli rations of biscuit and salt meat were made available in return for work, but in town Kaurna could obtain bread and fresh meat, both of which they preferred. Consequently Moorhouse found that “we get no work done at the location”.\textsuperscript{52} As the project to civilize the Kaurna could not proceed under these conditions, Moorhouse proposed two alternative courses for the civilizing mission to take. The first proposal

\textsuperscript{48} Rowse, 1998, p. 25
\textsuperscript{49} Teichelmann diaries, p. 2, 24/11/1839
\textsuperscript{50} Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 18, Letter 6, 20/8/1841
\textsuperscript{52} Moorhouse, Protector’s report, 9/10/1839, \textit{Papers Relative to South Australia}, p. 321
was that the Kaurna be prevented from obtaining European food unless they grew it themselves or received it from government agents at Piltawodli as a reward for participating in the civilizing project. He proposed that this could be achieved through a government order prohibiting colonists from supplying food to Aborigines. Unless such an order be made, he believed, the project to civilize men and women at Piltawodli would fail. In that event, he could see no option but “to give up the idea of locating and civilizing the adults, and confine our labours to the young”. Although he recommended the adoption of the first proposal, no government directive for colonists to refrain from providing the Kaurna with food was ever made, and by the end of the year it seemed clear to Moorhouse that civilizing efforts should be focused on children.

The project to civilize through the retraining of Indigenous men and women at Piltawodli was not immediately abandoned, however. For a time there was a continued attempt to provide Kaurna men with the skills deemed necessary for ‘civilized’ living, and at encouraging them to settle at Piltawodli. The instructor, John Canham, and his wife, remained employed at the Location until September 1841, but the extent to which they were involved in working with the Kaurna is unclear, as no reference is made to their activities in missionary or the Protector’s correspondence or reports. Certainly the Lutheran missionaries continued working with Kaurna on this component of the civilizing project throughout 1841, and they expressed frustration at the withdrawal of Government financial support for the project, particularly after George Grey replaced Gawler as governor in May of that year. Teichelmann’s reports to Germany rarely described the behaviour of Indigenous people in positive terms, but in May 1841 he wrote that Kaurna people were “busy grubbing the tree trunks on the Location; digging the land”, and that “some of the older people [had] been really busy”. With the change of governorship that took place at that time, however, the project at Piltawodli was made more difficult by the tight financial constraints of the early years of Grey’s governorship. Determined to cut government spending in the young colony, Grey seems to have provided little support for this component of the civilizing mission. At a time when some Kaurna people were displaying an interest in agriculture, missionary efforts were frustrated by the government’s failure to provide the necessary material. Although the land had been worked, and although “every day the natives ask[ed]:

53 Teichelmann diaries, p. 16, May 1841
‘When will the potatoes etc. arrive for sowing?’, the government provided no seed, and Teichelmann doubted that the Kaurna would be able to plant anything that year.\textsuperscript{54}

Further evidence of the withdrawal of government interest in the project to retrain Indigenous men and women at this time is found in the abolition of the position of instructor at Piltawodli that September. In casting about for areas in which savings could be made in government spending, Grey quickly identified the instructor’s salary as an unnecessary government expense, particularly in view of the fact, perhaps, that Teichelmann was working with Kaurna on this component of the civilizing mission as part of his missionary activities. Shortly after his arrival in South Australia, Grey asked Moorhouse “could you not manage without an instructor at the location?”\textsuperscript{55} and in September the Canhams were advised that their services were to be dispensed with at the end of the following month.\textsuperscript{56}

It appears that the project to civilize by retraining Indigenous men and women continued to some extent during 1842, as Edward John Eyre was able to record that during that year “three families of natives assisted by the school-children, ... dug with the spade the ground” at Piltwodli, “and planted and reaped more than one acre of maize, one acre of potatoes, and half an acre of melons, besides preparing ground for the ensuing year”.\textsuperscript{57} No further references were made after this time, however, to any attempt to transform Kaurna people into settled agriculturalists at Piltawodli. During 1842 Teichelmann gave up trying to encourage Kaurna to settle so close to Adelaide, and moved to a section of land twelve miles south of the town. This section, which he called Ebenezer Farm, was purchased with money provided by the Dresden Mission Society. Although he continued to travel to Adelaide to preach to Kaurna people on Sundays, Teichelmann transferred his ‘civilizing’ activities to Ebenezer, attempting over the next few years to encourage Kaurna people to settle there as farmers. Unlike the project at Piltawodli, this was entirely a Lutheran Mission initiative, operating without the involvement of the colonial administration. Of the missionaries only Klosé remained at Piltawodli, where his activities were entirely directed towards the operation of the

\textsuperscript{54} Teichelmann diaries, p. 16, May 1841
\textsuperscript{55} Moorhouse to Schürmann, 16/7/1841, Letterbook p. 11
\textsuperscript{56} Colonial Secretary to Moorhouse, 30/9/1841, SRSA, GRG E 24/4/1841/118
\textsuperscript{57} Eyre, 1845, p. 445
school.\textsuperscript{58} With Teichelmann’s relocation to Ebenezer, the colonial administration’s project of ‘civilizing’ Indigenous men and women by providing them with the means and skills of ‘civilized’ living was abandoned.

**The failure of the project to Christianize**

While the project to remake Kaurna men and women as settled agriculturalists floundered, the project to make them Christian showed no greater prospect of success. The Kaurna quickly demonstrated a clear determination to resist the evangelising efforts of the missionaries. Expressing surprise at the tenacity with which the Indigenous people retained their own beliefs, Teichelmann told a Wesleyan missionary meeting in 1841 that “[i]f they are asked ‘why do you do such and such a thing?’ – they reply, ‘thus our forefathers have done, thus we do and live’; certainly a principle which shows great stubbornness, and will only be annihilated by the omnipotent spirit of God”.\textsuperscript{59}

What seems to have particularly set the Kaurna against the teaching of the missionaries was the exclusivity of their message, their insistence that Christianity represented the only truth, and that Aboriginal beliefs were evil. There is evidence that some Kaurna people were not opposed to hearing what the missionaries had to say to them, but were not prepared to renounce their own beliefs. They took a position of relativism, arguing that “the Whites believe in Jehovah and the Blacks have their own beliefs” and that both sets of belief were valid. They told the missionaries, “what you believe is good, and what we believe is good”.\textsuperscript{60} Schürmann wrote that they believed that “[w]e are right and they are right”. For the missionaries, however, Christian beliefs excluded all other religious beliefs. “How can both be right?” Schürmann asked.\textsuperscript{61} When Teichelmann spoke to Kaurna people of two paths, the path to Hell which they would take by following Indigenous beliefs, and the path to heaven through Christian conversion, a Kaurna person told him “Kartameru,\textsuperscript{62} we blacks want to follow neither

\textsuperscript{58} Graetz (ed) 2002, p. 26, Klosé letter 10, 4/1/1843
\textsuperscript{59} Southern Australian, 26/1/1841, p. 3
\textsuperscript{60} Teichelmann, Report to a Wesleyan Missionary Meeting, Southern Australian, 29/1/1841, p. 4
\textsuperscript{61} Schürmann, Diary entry for 4/12/1839, cited in E. Schurmann (ed), 1987, p. 75
\textsuperscript{62} This name, given by Kaurna to a male who was the first-born child of his mother, was the name by which Kaurna addressed Teichelmann
the one nor the other path, but the general one, i.e. the middle way”. Teichelmann told them that there was no third way, to which one of the Kaurna responded “that they would just go on living as usual”.

The missionaries’ attempt to denigrate and destroy Aboriginal beliefs and customs gave rise to strong resistance to their teaching, particularly from Kaurna elders. When Teichelmann asked a young Kaurna man, “Kauwadla, tell me, what do your elders say about what we are teaching them about Jehovah?” Kauwadla replied that “[t]hey say it is all lies”. One evening in late 1841 Teichelmann heard his name mentioned in a discussion being carried out by Kaurna people camped close to his house at Piltawodli, and went outside to listen to what was being said. They were discussing the sermon he had preached in the Kaurna language on the previous Sunday, in which he had said “that Jehovah’s word alone was true, that Jehovah was in the heavens looking down on their evil behaviour”. In his own account of the incident Klosé wrote that “[t]hey mocked that there was no such Jehovah, that it was all a lie”. It was not the first time the missionaries had heard their teaching ridiculed and contested, but on this occasion the whole community seems to have made the decision to reject it. “[A]ll of them without exception”, Klosé wrote, “even … those of whom we were very hopeful that they would soon come to the faith” expressed their rejection of the missionaries’ message.

One of the means by which Kaurna resisted the missionaries’ evangelisation was to simply refuse to listen. Teichelmann records a visit to Kaurna people at which “we began conversing and when I moved on to spiritual matters they stopped speaking to me, looked around and spoke to each other on irrelevant matters. Nothing remained but for me to go”. In 1843 the Kaurna began receiving flour in return for attendance at religious services conducted by the missionaries at Piltawodli, but this strategy backfired. Teichelmann recorded one occasion on which he was greeted warmly by Kaurna he visited, but whenever he managed “to introduce the one thing necessary”, “they always turned away from it”. When Teichelmann “finally became more insistent”,

63 Teichelmann diaries, p. 27, 24/3/1844  
64 Teichelmann diaries, p. 28, 31/3/1844  
65 Teichelmann diaries, p. 15, 28/2/1841  
66 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 21, Klosé letter 7, 10/12/1841  
67 Teichelmann diaries, p. 62, 4/5/1845  
68 Moorhouse to Colonial Secretary (Col Sec), 9/4/1844, Letterbook pp. 11-12
one of the women called out “Be quiet! They are not giving us anything to eat!” On another occasion Schürmann and Teichelmann spoke to two women who pretended to be delighted with what they heard, and urged the missionaries “to go to the rest of the natives and tell them what we had told these because they had not yet known it.” Since he had frequently repeated the same message to the others in the presence of the women, Teichelmann believed that their response was “purely a pretext to rid them of our troublesome presence.”

One of the earliest and most consistent responses of the Kaurna to the missionaries' preaching was that of laughter, a response the dour Teichelmann in particular found galling and disheartening. On one occasion, for example, Teichelmann recorded that a woman “started talking about Jehovah, but of everything I would say to her she made fun and raised laughter”. “There are a few who listen to what I say”, Teichelmann wrote:

but they are like the Athenians, laughing in their hearts while saying: “Oh, what you say is true, that is fine; how clever you are, what fine new things you teach us!” Meanwhile nudging each other at the way we trip over our own feet.

The Kaurna also employed strategies to defend themselves against attempts by the missionaries' to instill in them a fear of the retribution of God and the torments of Hell. They told the missionaries they were not afraid of them. On one occasion, when a Kaurna man challenged the missionaries' beliefs, Schürmann told him that although “he was arrogant now”, he would be very sorry “when in the future God ordered him to go into the great fire”. The man seized his spear and, shaking it “with vigorous gestures” replied “with horrible impertinence” that he would throw his spear at God. Kaurna deflected the missionaries’ rebukes by saying, “Yes, yes, I am bad, I do not believe Jehovah's word, I do not believe in Christ, or obey; yes, Jehovah will throw me into hell', and then they ask again, ‘Why do you give us no food?’”

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69 Teichelmann diaries, p. 22, 12/12/1841
70 Teichelmann diaries, 24/11/1839
71 Teichelmann diaries, p. 5, 1/1/1840
72 Teichelmann diaries, p. 22, 12/12/1841
73 Schürmann to the Dresden Missionary Society, 5/11/1839
74 Southern Australian, 29/1/1841, p. 4
Ridicule was another means by which Indigenous people resisted the preaching of the missionaries. It was a strategy used by the missionaries in their attempt to persuade Aborigines to reject their traditional beliefs, and Aboriginal people similarly countered the proselytizing of the missionaries by ridiculing Christian beliefs. A Kaurna man responded to missionaries’ warnings that their souls would go to hell if they continued to carry out their traditional practices, for example, by arguing that as the soul has no body it could feel no pain, it could therefore not suffer from the fires of the Christians’ hell.

It quickly became clear to the missionaries that the project to convert Aborigines to Christianity would be a long and difficult one. Teichelmann wrote in early 1840 that “from what I have up to now experienced amongst them and what is to be deduced from the relationship in which the Europeans stand with the natives and vice versa” he had developed “an almost total conviction” that the project would require “tremendous efforts and sacrifices on the part of the mission as well as for its messengers”. Schürmann at the same time described the obstacles to the task of converting Aborigines as “humanly speaking, insurmountable”. According to their religious beliefs, however, God was capable of converting the heart of even the most degraded and wicked of individuals. “I firmly believe” Schürmann wrote at a time of deepest pessimism, “that the almighty power of the gospel can affect and change even the most ignorant and most depraved … person, so that it is possible that he can take it basically and enduringly to his heart”. They clung to this belief as they continued to attempt to ‘sow the seed’ of the knowledge of the Christian God. Describing their prospect of success in their project as “gloomy and discouraging”, Schürmann wrote that “the only thing which can cherish our hopes is the promise of him who doth not lie, that the preaching of his word shall not be in vain”. Teichelmann believed that “among all heathen people” Indigenous Australians required “a special targeting of God’s

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75 For example, Teichelmann and Schürmann ridiculed the Kaurna for their intention to leave Adelaide because the water had been bewitched. (Teichelmann diaries, p. 5, 3/1/1840)
76 Schürmann, diary entry for 7/3/1840, cited in E. Schurmann (ed), 1987, p. 88
77 Teichelmann diaries, p. 9
78 Schürmann to Angus, 3/4/1840, cited in E. Schurmann (ed), 1987, p. 97
79 Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 22/8/1842
80 Schürmann to Angus, 3/4/1840, cited in E. Schurmann (ed), 1987, p. 97
grace on whose appearance we must wait and hope with patience and hope”. 81 So they continued to repeat their message, to lecture, harangue and rebuke the Kaurna on their refusal to renounce their traditional ways, but they frequently did so “with a heavy heart” in the face of Kaurna rejection of their message. 82 What should they do in the face of such rejection, Klosé wondered. “Shall we throw away our precious pearls? Or shall we keep silent and leave the way open for the devil”. 83 “With their knowledge they have not only become fools”, Teichelmann wrote, “but have sunk lower than cattle. If God does not perform wonders of grace, we work in vain for their salvation”. 84

The establishment of the school

When Moorhouse expressed his pessimism at the prospect of achieving success in the civilizing mission in December 1839, Schürmann took the opportunity to extend the work of the mission to the children. He was anxious for Kaurna children to be educated according to his own beliefs regarding the language of instruction, and knew that he needed to be able to provide food for children attending school. Although he was himself becoming despondent at the prospects faced by the Christianization component of the civilizing mission, he disputed Moorhouse’s pessimistic assessment of the situation, urging him to “give the old ones work instead of a beggar’s hand-out, and get the children accustomed to going to school”. Asked by Moorhouse if he was himself prepared to take on the education of the children, Schürmann replied that if the government would supply him with food to give the children, he would begin a school immediately. Provided now with an opportunity to run a school with government assistance, he extracted from the dubious Moorhouse a promise to provide an issue of rice or rusk and sugar for each child each day they attended school.

Schürmann began teaching at Piltawodli the following week, on 23 December. 85 He initially conducted his school “under the open sky behind an aborigine’s house” 86 as no

81 Teichelmann diaries, p. 9, early 1940
82 Both Teichelmann and Schürmann use this term. Teichelmann diaries, p. 69, 24/8/1845; Schürmann, postscript to letter to Dresden Missionary Society, 22/8/1842
83 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 21, Klosé letter 7, 10/12/1841
84 Teichelmann diaries, p. 22, 12/12/1841
85 Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 16/3/1840; E. Schurmann (ed), 1987, p. 80
86 Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 16/3/1840; Teichelmann, Report on the Natives at the Wesleyan Missionary Meeting, Southern Australian, 26/1/1841, p. 3
schoolhouse had yet been built. He began with seven children and a few adults, including one man, Ityainaitpinna, who soon learnt the letters of the alphabet and began to assist in teaching the children. However, there is no evidence that Ityainaitpinna participated in the school for long. After a while the school moved into one of the disused houses built for Kaurna use while a schoolhouse was being built. William Oldham resigned from his appointment as teacher at Piltawodli shortly after Schürmann began teaching and took the position of teacher at the school for the children of colonists established by the South Australian School Society.

Like Moorhouse, Teichelmann was unsure about the wisdom of Schürmann’s undertaking. His concern that the undertaking was premature suggests an original intention to begin teaching children only when their parents had adopted a settled lifestyle at Piltawodli. To Teichelmann it seemed unwise to commence a school when “the parents, on whom the children are totally dependent, still lead their old nomadic lifestyle”. It had been envisaged that once parents had begun the process of becoming ‘civilized’ they could be persuaded to send their children to school; as it was, “Schürmann had to gather the children, persuade them forcibly and give them food (even if it is with government supplies) or they do not come”. As Schürmann was unable to gather the same children each day, and as families frequently travelled away from Piltawodli, there were, Teichelmann wrote, “different children almost every day which damages the enthusiasm because no progress is to be seen”. Schürmann, too, expressed concern at the difficulties faced by the school, writing two months after the school started that “[t]he way led through many difficulties and still does”. Even when children were camped at Piltawodli with their families they preferred to go into the town, where they were able to obtain food from colonists, rather than attend school. The school held little interest for them compared with the attractions of town, a fact

87 E. Schurmann (ed), 1987, p. 80; Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 16/3/1840
88 Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 16/3/1840; Moorhouse, Protector’s report 14/1/1840, Papers Relative to South Australia, p. 323
89 Jennifer Hunt, 1971, ‘Schools for Aboriginal Children in the Adelaide District’, thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Honours Degree of Bachelor of Arts in History, University of Adelaide, p. 38
90 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 27/7/1840, Papers Relative to South Australia, p. 324; Gouttman, 1979, p. 83
91 Teichelmann diaries, p. 4, 24/11/1839
92 Teichelmann diaries, p. 4, 24/11/1839
93 Schürmann to Dresden Mission Society, 16/3/1840
Schürmann attributed to “their apathy towards learning”, as a result of which he “often had great trouble getting children”.94

A further reason for Teichelmann to feel that the school was premature was the lack of teaching materials.95 The missionaries strongly believed that children should be educated in their own language, and the school therefore taught literacy in the Kaurna language. The missionaries had developed an orthography to enable the language to be written down, but no Kaurna teaching materials had yet been prepared. Despite his reservations, Teichelmann supported Schürmann’s undertaking by preparing a set of letters for Schürmann to use in the school, writing the letters of the alphabet in Indian ink. He completed one set of letters on 26 and 27 December 1839, and made further sets over the following month.96 Not long after the school commenced he began taking a more active role in its operation, participating directly in teaching the children. By March Schürmann was able to record that “Br. Teichelmann … now undertakes the main part”.97 Moorhouse also seems to have also participated in teaching in the school, writing shortly after the school started that “when the attention can be no longer kept up I show them objects in natural history, and practise them in the English language”.98 Three years later a newspaper article stated that Moorhouse occasionally assisted in the school.99

Although missionaries ran the school according to their own beliefs, it was clearly considered part of the government’s civilizing project. In reporting on the progress that was being made in the colony’s civilizing mission, Moorhouse consistently made reference to the school as evidence of the progress that was being made in the project to civilise. Until its closure in 1845, he reported on the school, providing details such as average attendance and the academic progress of the scholars.

During the first months the school was seldom run for more than an hour a day, after which children were “supplied with biscuits, rice, or sugar for attending”100 and allowed

94 Schürmann to Dresden Mission Society, 16/3/1840
95 Teichelmann diaries p. 4, 24/11/1839
96 Teichelmann diaries p. 4, 24/11/1839; also p. 9, 27/1/1840
97 Schürmann to Dresden Mission Society, 16/3/1840
98 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 14/1/1840, Papers Relative to South Australia, p. 323
99 Southern Australian, 4/4/1843, p. 2
100 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 27/7/1840, Papers Relative to South Australia, p. 325
to go. At first children were taught the alphabet and what was termed ‘spelling’. ‘Spelling’ presumably involved the sounding out of Kaurna words, as writing was not initially included in the curriculum. The approach taken to the teaching of reading at the school was phonetic; children were taught the alphabet, and were then taught how letters combined to form syllables. Children first learned to read syllables, as there are no words of one syllable in Kaurna, and then progressed to learning to read words of two syllables, then three syllables, and so on. Schürmann used the alphabets prepared by Teichelmann by pasting individual letters onto little boards, and hanging these on a row of nails on the blackboard to demonstrate how the letters combined to form syllables and then words.  

This syllabic approach was to be used throughout the time that the Adelaide schools were in operation, not only in the teaching of Kaurna literacy but also, later, in the teaching of literacy in English. The reports on the progress of children at the schools which Moorhouse was to make over the next thirteen years recorded the number of children who knew the alphabet, those who could read words of a syllable, those who could read words of two syllables, and so on. In his report for the quarter ending 30 June 1840, he recorded that although the attendance of the children was irregular, owing to the attraction of town, thirty children knew the alphabet, and eight of these could spell and pronounce words of two syllables, seven could read texts comprising words of less than four syllables, and one boy could “read anything that could be expected from a European child that had only had the same opportunity of acquiring”. As well as receiving food for attending school, children were rewarded for achievement, receiving a dress or blanket “as soon as they [could] read and pronounce accurately words of four syllables”. Writing was included in the school’s curriculum during the second half of 1840, Moorhouse’s comment that “our next step with the children will be to commence writing”, indicating the extent to which he saw the school as part of the government’s civilizing project.

By July 1840 the school was being conducted in a new schoolhouse, located centrally at Piltawodli and built with the assistance of Kaurna men who made the lime floors, and “plastered the whole outside, so as to protect the pisé work from the action of the

101 Schürmann, diary, cited in E. Schurmann (ed), 1987, p. 69
102 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 27/7/1840, Papers Relative to South Australia, p. 324-5
103 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 27/7/1840, Papers Relative to South Australia, p. 325
104 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 27/7/1840, Papers Relative to South Australia, p. 325
105 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 20/2/1841, Papers Relative to South Australia, p. 325
weather”,\textsuperscript{106} It contained two wings originally intended for use as hospitals,\textsuperscript{107} although there is little evidence that they were actually used for this purpose. The following year a visitor to the school described three rooms, a central school room and two side rooms, one of which was used as a sewing room and one as a storeroom and a place for children to sleep when their families were away from Piltawodli.\textsuperscript{108} These two side rooms were presumably the two wings originally intended by Moorhouse to be used as hospitals.

That July, two new missionaries from the Dresden Mission Society arrived from Germany, thirty-eight year old Samuel Gottlieb Klosé, and Heinrich August Edward Meyer. Instructions given to Klosé by the Mission Society before he left Dresden had included an addendum requiring him to “concentrate not so much on public preaching as on pedagogical work in school and the management of the external affairs of the mission, because of your special gifts in these directions”.\textsuperscript{109} Awaiting favourable winds on their ship at anchor off Glenelg, Klosé and Meyer learnt of the school that had been established by their brother missionaries. Klosé wrote that “this gave us joy beyond all measure, and I immediately said to Br Meyer that if the brothers have a school, I shall remain in Adelaide”. He did, taking over the school from Schürmann who moved shortly afterwards to the remote new settlement of Port Lincoln as missionary and Assistant Protector there.

Soon after his arrival Meyer told George Fife Angas that:

A spacious schoolhouse has been erected by the Government, in which the brethren daily instruct a number of from 15 to 20 children in singing, spelling and reading their own language. We were truly gratified with the black, half-naked little creatures, their good conduct and attentive countenances.\textsuperscript{110}

To Germany he wrote:

\textsuperscript{106}Moorhouse, Protector’s report 27/7/1840, \emph{Papers Relative to South Australia}, p. 325
\textsuperscript{107}Moorhouse, Protector’s report 9/10/1839, \emph{Papers Relative to South Australia}, p. 321
\textsuperscript{108}Southern Australian 9/11/1841, p. 4, letter from Dr Burton Haygarth; Klosé wrote that, although most of the children accompanied their parents when they left Piltawodli, a few would remain at the school. Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 22, Klosé letter 8, 26/4/1842
\textsuperscript{109}Graetz (ed), 2002, Introduction, p. 7
\textsuperscript{110}cited in Brauer, 1956, p. 160
The school is very pleasant and the black faces and partly or wholly unclad bodies of the youngest children formed a lovely contrast with white walls. Brother Schürmann carried out some exercises with the children; they were obliged to sing some verses to German melodies and then to spell. My heart leapt with joy and I could quietly praise the Lord for showing such visible support to the Brothers’ work.\footnote{Kneebone, 2000, p. 22}

In July 1840, the month when the two new missionaries arrived, half a year after the school was established and just a year after taking up the appointment of Protector of Aborigines, Moorhouse made a comment in his quarterly report which has frequently been quoted by writers discussing South Australia’s civilizing mission. “Our chief hope now” he wrote, “is decidedly in the children; and complete success as far as regards their education and civilization would be before us, if it were possible to remove them from the influence of their parents”.\footnote{Moorhouse, Protector’s report 27/7/1840, Papers Relative to South Australia, p. 324} In making this statement, Moorhouse signaled a change of focus in the civilizing mission, away from an attempt to remake Indigenous men and women as settled agriculturalists, to a focus on the education of their children.

The promising results of schooling

In contrast with the less than promising results of efforts to ‘civilize’ and Christianize Kaurna men and women, the civilizers were encouraged by the aptitude of the children and their ability to adapt to the requirements of school. Moorhouse was impressed at the facility with which the children acquired English, writing that some of the children showed “considerable acuteness in acquiring language, much more than the adults, as any person will perceive who comes into contact with both”.\footnote{Moorhouse, Protector’s report 27/7/1840, Papers Relative to South Australia, p. 323-4} Four months after arriving in South Australia, Klosé wrote that the quietness and attentiveness of the children in the school made it “a pleasure to be with them”. He found that in intelligence they were no different to children in Europe.\footnote{Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 14, Klosé letter 4, 29/12/1840} In August 1841, a year after his arrival, he wrote that that children’s literacy was progressing well. It pleased him, when he gave them dictation, to see the children sounding out each word, “silently and slowly
repeat[ing] the words and then writ[ing] them down letter by letter”, and noted their
delight at being able to read words in their own language “like the Europeans”. “How
eagerly they take the dictionary and read their words”, he wrote. In arithmetic, too, the
progress of the children exceeded his expectations.115 In his 1841 publication
Aborigines of South Australia, Teichelmann wrote that, “in instructing [Aboriginal]
children the same faculties are observed as in others, so that there is comparatively no
difference between a European and an Aboriginal child”.116

Governor Gawler, too, was impressed with the performance of children at the school. In
April 1841 he wrote in a financial minute that “an improvement - astonishing to all who
visit the school – has taken place” among the children at the school, many of whom
could “read as well as European children of their age, and all show themselves capable
of receiving any species of ordinary instruction”. Such ‘improvement’, he conceded,
was not so apparent among the adults, but he believed that the same results could not
be expected among the adults as was being achieved with the children.117

The following month, recalled to England for apparently mismanaging the colony’s
finances, Gawler paid a final visit to Piltawodli to say goodbye to the Kaurna and the
missionaries. As was usual when the school had visitors, the missionaries put the
children through their paces to demonstrate what they had learnt. Teichelmann wrote
that, “with the children we did what we usually do; singing, praying, writing, arithmetic
and catechism reciting”. An address written in the Kaurna language by the native girls,
and signed by all those children who could write, was given to Gawler, thanking him for
the interest he had taken in their progress, as well as expressing, in Teichelmann’s
words, “the feelings of the natives”. Teichelmann told his mission society in Germany
that “everybody was amazed at the progress of the children, so much so, that some of
the women could not help crying for joy”.118

116 C. G. Teichelmann, 1841, Aborigines of South Australia. Illustrative and explanatory notes
of the manners, customs, habits and superstitions of the Natives of South Australia, Adelaide.
South Australian, (facsimile editions no. 2, Library Board of South Australia, 1965), p. 5
117 Southern Australian, 27/4/1841, p.4
118 Teichelmann diaries, p. 16, 15/5/1841
In its creation of a positive impression of the capability of Indigenous children, the school at Piltawodli mirrored the experiences of early schooling endeavours in other colonial settings. In New Zealand, for example, contemporary accounts recorded the ease with which Maori acquired skills in literacy, the Catholic Bishop, Pompallier, claiming that Maori:

> easily learn to read and write without the necessity of constant teaching. It is only necessary to give them a few leaflets of easy reading, and to write some characters on bits of slate to enable them to read and write their own language within three months.\(^{119}\)

In New South Wales, early missionaries had recorded similar results. The missionary Coates was impressed by the intelligence of the Indigenous children who attended the small school, established in 1832, at the Anglican Church Mission Society mission at Wellington Valley, about 350 kilometres northwest of Sydney.\(^{120}\) He claimed in 1838 that children learnt to read, and find pleasure in reading, in just a few months, and that “in the course of nine months [they had] become able to read the Holy Scriptures as well as the Book of Common Prayer; and to find the Lessons, Psalms, Hymns, etc”.\(^{121}\) On his arrival at the Wellington mission in 1837, missionary James Günther wrote of his surprise and pleasure at the progress made by the children at the school, writing that “some of them put many European children to shame”.\(^{122}\) William Watson, the missionary engaged in teaching children at the school, was impressed with the degree of enjoyment children obtained from reading. “While they are learning the Alphabet, and to spell, they feel no interest, and the work of instruction is tedious to both the teacher and the pupil”, he observed, “but when they have overcome these preliminary difficulties, and are able to read so as to understand, their attention become \[^{sic}\]\ excited; they begin to feel the pleasure in the employment, and never appear to be


\(^{121}\) *Historical Records of Australia*, series 1, vol XIX, p. 660, Coates to Glenelg, 31 October, cited in Rowley, 1970, p. 97

wearied with it”. He believed that “[t]he Aboriginal Natives are indeed capable of attaining to the knowledge of any thing in which they may be instructed”.\textsuperscript{123}

An earlier, government-run Aboriginal school in New South Wales had produced similar promising results. At the Native Institution, established in Parramatta by Governor Lachlan Macquarie in 1815,\textsuperscript{124} Indigenous children quickly demonstrated their capacity to acquire skills in literacy and numeracy. In 1819 Macquarie informed Lord Bathurst in the Colonial Office in London that the Institution had:

\begin{quote}
succeeded far beyond my most sanguine Expectations, the Children having made very great Progress in all those Useful and Necessary Branches of Instruction they are taught, evincing good Natural Understandings, and an Aptitude for learning whatever is proposed to be taught them.\textsuperscript{125}
\end{quote}

At a Sunday school examination in 1819, at which about twenty children from the Native Institution had been examined along with almost a hundred white children, first prize was awarded to a fourteen-year-old Indigenous girl from the Native Institution, a fact the writer of a newspaper article on the occasion found “not less strange than pleasing to remark”.\textsuperscript{126}

Accounts such as these written by participants in the civilizing project need to be treated with caution, of course. It has been argued by some writers, such as D.F McKenzie, that an uncritical acceptance by historians of missionary accounts of their educational activities has led to an overestimation of the degree to which indigenous peoples in countries such as New Zealand sought and attained literacy skills. McKenzie disputed claims that high rates of literacy were achieved among Maori people in the mid-nineteenth century. He argues that this is a fallacy created by missionaries who “reported what they knew their London committee wished to hear”.\textsuperscript{127} However there seems little reason to suspect the motives of the Lutheran missionaries in South

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{123} Watson’s journal, in C.M.S Register for 1839, p. 386, cited in Woolmington 1973, pp. 96-7
\item \textsuperscript{124} see Brook and Kohen, 1991
\item \textsuperscript{125} Macquarie to Bathurst, 24/3/1819, Historical Records of Australia, I, x, p. 95, cited in Woolmington 1973, p. 25
\item \textsuperscript{126} Sydney Gazette, 17/2/1819, cited in Woolmington, 1973, p. 24; Brook and Kohen, 1991, pp. 250-1
\item \textsuperscript{127} McKenzie, 1985, cited in Simon, 1992, p. 41, note 2
\end{itemize}
Australia in reporting positively on their achievements in the school, as they appear to have had no hesitation in reporting their pessimism and failures in other aspects of their work. There is no suggestion in the letters and diaries they sent to their mission society of any attempt to present the experiences and prospects of their mission with anything but honesty. Heidi Kneebone has noted this with regard to the reports written by the missionary Meyer. She observes that Meyer avoided the use of “mission rhetoric” in his reports to the Dresden Mission society, and that he was “meticulous not to give rise to false hopes or ... to mask the reality of the situation”. The “forthright honesty” which Kneebone notes in Meyer’s reports is just as apparent in the reports and letters of Teichelmann, Schürmann, and Klosé. Indeed, they probably had little reason to distort the true nature of their undertaking, as they received little financial assistance from Germany.

While acknowledging the need to deal critically with missionary reports, Judith Simon has pointed out that missionary claims regarding the high rate of Maori interest in and aptitude for literacy are supported by the accounts of traders and travellers who had nothing to gain by making exaggerated claims. Similarly in South Australia, Klosé’s assessment of the achievement of children in his school is supported by accounts given by other observers, including colonists who were critical of the school as ill-designed to meet the objectives of the civilizing mission. Even those colonists who voiced strident criticism of the school reported positively on the intelligence and achievements of children who attended it.

In the early years the school received a good deal of attention from colonists. The Southern Australian newspaper, which was generally supportive of the school in its early years, praised Gawler for the provisions he had made for the Aborigines, and invited those who doubted that progress was being made in the civilizing mission “to visit the location, as we ourselves have visited it, and to witness for themselves the progress which some of the children of the natives have made”. Responding to criticism of the government approach, Moorhouse wrote a letter to the editor of the Register in August 1840, citing as evidence of progress in the civilizing project “the progress and conduct”

128 Kneebone, 2000, p.21
129 Simon, 1992, p. 41, Note 2
130 Southern Australian, 4/12/1840, p. 2
of many of the children attending the Location school, which he believed would prove “most interesting to those who will take the trouble to come and witness it”.\(^\text{131}\)

Many visits were made to the school by both supporters and critics during its early years. On these visits children were put through “various exercises”\(^\text{132}\) to demonstrate to the visitors what they had learned, a practice which must have been disruptive to the school routine. Klosé told his Mission Society that he needed to always be respectably dressed as the school was often visited by the English.\(^\text{133}\) While criticism of the school as a solution to the problem of Aboriginal ‘primitivity’ remained, observers of the school, both critics and supporters, were fairly unanimous in their positive reports on the intelligence and competence demonstrated by the children who attended it. One strident critic of the school responded to Moorhouse’s invitation ‘to come and witness it’ with the assertion that he had taken the trouble, and although he “affirm[ed] and incontrovertibly assert[ed] that there is not anything like an approach to a chance of the civilization of the young creatures in the arrangements in use”, he went on to describe with admiration the academic achievements of the children there:

So clever are the children - those half dozen that are there altogether - that they will write as well as the children of an English parish school, on the whole average, of the same age. Though in their language they express but two numbers - one and more than one - yet they have acquired addition, and that of many figures; they have acquired multiplication, and they have knowledge of division. Eight in forty-one was asked of a child, and the child gave the result without hesitation, five times and one over, using a form of phraseology which I forget exactly, but in English words. They understand English conversation that they hear, and they speak it pretty considerably; and with all this, bear in mind, reader, that the school has existed but scarcely upwards of two years.\(^\text{134}\)

A newspaper article, published in April 1843, similarly provides evidence of the school’s success in teaching literacy and numeracy to Kaurna children. This article was the first

\(^{131}\) *Register*, 8/8/1840, p. 5

\(^{132}\) *Southern Australian*, 14/8/1840, p.3

\(^{133}\) Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 15, Klosé letter 4, 29/12/1840

\(^{134}\) *Register*, 30/10/1841, p. 2. This writer’s criticism of the school is discussed in the following chapter
in a series of articles on the barriers to the ‘civilization’ of the Aborigines, examining the question of why “no impression has been made upon their stolid apathy and indifference to anything relating to mental exertion”, and why “the natives, as a body, remain the degraded brutish race they were when the colony was first settled”. The article provides evidence of profound pessimism in Indigenous capacity to be ‘civilized’ by 1843, and demonstrates the existence of increasingly derogatory representations of Aboriginal people at that time. Yet the writer’s visit to the Piltawodli school, presumably made in an effort to find evidence to support his pessimistic assessment of the prospects of the civilizing mission, seem not to confirm but to contradict his position. The article is, I think, of sufficient interest as a description of the performance of the school from a disinterested observer to be reproduced here in full:

We had the pleasure a few days ago of examining the Native School at the Location, which is conducted by Mr Klosé, the German missionary, with the occasional assistance of Mr Moorhouse, Protector of the aborigines.

The exercises commenced by the children singing a tune of sacred music, which they did with surprising harmony and sweetness.

The following exercises were then performed by the children: - Figures marked on a board were named to the amount of tens of millions, and the various sums were then added up - the most of the children named the amounts with tolerable accuracy, but one little boy of about ten years of age, scarcely ever made a mistake. The smaller ones aged about five or six years, wrote the sums with the chalk. A clock face was next exhibited to the children, and they were requested to name the hours which the hands indicated, which was done correctly. They were also asked to point to where the sun was at the respective hours named, which they did accurately, except when the question related to the sun’s position at night: then they pointed down and said with a smile, "there". They next performed exercises in the multiplication table, with ease and accuracy, and one boy about ten years old, mentioned before, gave all the dividers of amounts named, at once and correctly. They were next required to name the amount of small pebbles put into their hands, and a little girl of five
years, counted twenty pebbles, the number placed in her hand, with perfect ease, and some of them told how many would remain in their hand when a certain number were taken out. They were asked the names of the days and months, which they gave at once; also the number of hours in a day, of days in a week, and of months in a year. The whole of them were tried and were found to be able to read their own language - some of them fluently - some of them could translate it into English. They could all write, and we found that their copies rather surpass the average of white children’s of similar ages - they seem to have more firmness and flexibility in their fingers - one little girl of five years wrote beautifully, holding her pen quite gracefully, and making her strokes straight and with evident ease. Several of the elder children wrote to dictation. The Missionary stated that they understand theoretically the system of the Christian religion.

On the whole, so far as we could perceive, there was no inferiority in capacity to white children. They showed quite as much intelligence, and, probably, more interest in their lessons, and there was no appearance of mere rote; every child seemed perfectly to comprehend what was meant, though at times they had a treacherous memory. It would appear that most of them have been in the bush lately, and have forgot much of what they knew in December; but in the common elements, and so far as they have gone, there appeared nothing to shew that their intellect could not be cultivated and improved to any extent equally with white children.\textsuperscript{135}

The evidence presented by the performance of Kaurna children at Piltawodli was, it seems, widely accepted as evidence of the intellectual capacity of Indigenous children in the 1840s, and gave rise to a degree of optimism in the project to ‘civilize’ through the schooling of children at a time of growing pessimism in the other components of the civilizing mission. This widespread acceptance of the intellectual equality of Indigenous children with European children in the early 1840s is interesting when compared with views expressed a century later. By 1937, A. P. Elkin was to write that of forty teachers of Aboriginal children he consulted regarding their achievements in school, not

\textsuperscript{135} Southern Australian, 4/4/1843, p. 2
one “even suggest[ed] that the aboriginal pupils were the equal of the white children in school”\textsuperscript{136}.

Yet there is one interesting exception to the negative assessment of Indigenous children’s capacity to achieve success at school at the time Elkin was researching their ‘educability’. In accordance with the views of J. R. B. Love, the missionary at the Presbyterian mission at Ernabella, in northern South Australia, the school established there in the 1940s was initially conducted in the vernacular (the Western Desert language). Children attending school continued to live with their families, travelling with them when they left the mission, and were not clothed at school. This approach to schooling was very similar to that adopted by the Lutheran missionaries a century earlier at Piltawodli, as will be discussed in the next chapter. In a 1969 paper on the experience of using the vernacular at Ernabella, Bill Edwards cited an undated, handwritten document by the first teacher there, R. M. Trudinger, who wrote that:

On March 1\textsuperscript{st}, 1940, fifteen entirely uncivilized naked brown children came to school for the first time in the history of the tribe ... After an equivalent of 12 months’ tuition at the school (a very interrupted 12 months) some of these children are writing their own language as fluently, neatly and correctly as white children in Grade VII at our schools ... The average child learns to read and write in six months equivalent instruction.\textsuperscript{137}

**Schooling as the primary focus of the civilizing mission**

The academic achievement of Indigenous children at Piltawodli provided some hope to colonial civilizers that, in spite of the less-than-promising results of efforts to ‘civilize’ adults, the civilizing project might yet achieve its ends. Accordingly, with the abandonment in 1842 of the project to settle Kaurna people at Piltawodli, and with the early realisation that missionary activity would not achieve a mass conversion of Indigenous men and women, the education of children became over the following decade the sole focus of government activity in the civilizing mission. Although the

\textsuperscript{136} A. P. Elkin, 1937, ‘Native education, with special reference to the Australian Aborigines’, *Oceania*, 7:4, p. 489

Lutheran missionaries continued their work of evangelisation, the school at Piltwodli remained the most promising arm of their activities until its closure in 1845. The Dresden Mission Society recognized this fact in a letter to Klosé written in 1842, stating that:

as it is now obvious that the children particularly, in fact almost entirely, (as is perhaps always the case among savage peoples), present a fruitful field capable of being cultivated, who could not fail to be pleased that a beginning has been made and a breakthrough achieved with at least a few, and with the hope of better things to come.

In other nineteenth-century civilizing projects, the experience of missionaries and civilizers frequently gave rise to a shift from adults to children as the targets of ‘civilizing’ efforts. O. Stavem, superintendent of the Norwegian mission to South Africa, wrote in 1882 that “the school attracts the younger generation to the Saviour and presents the greatest hope”. Comparing the policies of assimilation in Australia, Canada and New Zealand, Andrew Armitage has observed that “[t]he children of aboriginal people have received particular attention in all three countries”. In Upper Canada in the 1830s, a government-initiated project designed to settle indigenous people in permanent villages came increasingly to employ education to achieve its goals, according to historian Elizabeth Furniss. In the words of John Tobias, “the education of the Indian child was the keystone of the civilizing process the reserve system was to perform” in Canada. Russell Smandych and Anne McGillivray call this focus on children in the civilizing project in North America “the colonization of aboriginal childhood”. “Where transforming adults failed because of the fixity of adult ways and

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138 The school’s closure is discussed in Chapters 5 and 6
139 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 23, letter 9, from the Committee in Dresden to Klosé, 25/5/1842
141 Andrew Armitage, 1995, Comparing the Policy of Aboriginal Assimilation: Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, p. 204
142 Furniss, 1995, pp. 20-1
143 Tobias, 1983, p. 48
opinions”, they write, “childhood, infinitely mutable, would transform the future adult. ... Children were smart but wild, both the origin and solution of ‘the Indian problem’.”\textsuperscript{144}

**Conclusion**

It had originally been envisaged that the ‘civilization’ of Indigenous people in South Australia would be achieved in three ways: through their conversion to Christianity, through the provision of means and the teaching of skills to enable men and women to adopt a ‘civilized’ lifestyle, and through the teaching of children in schools. But the fallacies and contradictions inherent in the civilizing mission, and the rejection by Kaurna people of its civilizing and Christianizing agenda, caused an early sense of pessimism in the prospect of its success. This left the third component of the civilizing mission, the teaching of children in schools, as the major focus of the project. Despite difficulties, this did show a promise of eventual success.

Yet in spite of promising results and the evidence of ability demonstrated by its scholars, the school at Piltawodli was the target of severe criticism during the first years of its operation. This criticism will be examined in the next chapter. While the school was clearly successful in teaching literacy and numeracy to Indigenous children, it was criticized by commentators who argued that the activities undertaken there did not represent progress in the civilizing mission. At the heart of this debate was an essential disagreement about the meaning of ‘civilization’ and the means that were required to achieve it.

\textsuperscript{144} Russell Smandych and Anne McGillivray, 1999, ‘Images of Aboriginal Childhood: Contested Governance in the Canadian West to 1850’, in Daunton and Halpern (eds), p. 252
The School at Piltawodli
W. A. Cawthorne, artist
reproduced from Graetz (ed), 2002, cover illustration

Matthew Moorhouse
SLSA B10848

George Gawler
SLSA B14428
North Terrace, Adelaide, ca 1842
J Hinchen, artist
SLSA B7070
Chapter 3: Notions of ‘civilization’ in the context of the civilizing mission, 1840-43

While the rhetoric of the civilizing mission proved a powerful instrument for legitimising colonization, its meaning, and the means by which it might be achieved, were highly contested. As Michael Mann has recently argued, ‘protagonists basically concurred on the subject, differing only in its means’.¹ This chapter examines the debate that took place in South Australia in the early 1840s regarding how the ‘civilization’ of the Aborigines could be achieved. At the heart of this debate were different ideas about what ‘civilization’ meant. While it was widely accepted that the Aborigines must, for their own sake and for that of the colony, be ‘civilized’, there was no commonly accepted understanding of just what this meant. In this chapter I argue that different conceptions of what it meant for ‘the natives’ to be ‘civilized’ in the colonial imagination gave rise to different ideas about how the project should be undertaken.

In part the debate that took place in South Australia in the early 1840s was part of a wider international debate on the order in which the Christianization/civilization process should be undertaken. The two components of Christianization and ‘civilization’ were very closely linked: Christianity was central to the British culture that the civilizers encouraged Indigenous people to adopt, and the Christianity that the missionaries preached was so strongly imbued with European values and ways of understanding the world that Europeanisation was an essential element in the Christianization process. Nevertheless, despite this interweaving of Christianity and British or European culture, an international debate was waged during first half of the nineteenth century about the order in which the ‘civilization’/Christianization process should be attempted.² Some argued that ‘native’ peoples could only be taught to accept Christianity after they had first been ‘civilized’, while others contended that ‘civilization’ could only be achieved when the natives had been converted to Christianity. Jean Woolmington has discussed this debate among missionaries, with particular reference to Australia,³ and Robert Foster has referred to the debate that took place in South Australia in his 1993 thesis.⁴

¹ Mann, 2004, p. 24
² McGregor, 1997, p. 12
⁴ Foster, 1993, pp. 121-3
Other writers, too, have noted the existence of the debate, but because notions of Christianity and ‘civilization’ were so closely linked little attention has been focused on the effect of either position on the approach taken by nineteenth century civilizers and colonial educators. Iverson’s discussion of the schooling of Native Americans dismisses the civilization/Christianization argument as ‘one of semantics’ because “in practice ‘civilization’ and ‘Christianity’ were always linked”. In this and the following chapter I argue that the position of civilizers and educators on this issue did in fact influence the approach taken in the civilizing mission, and did influence the form of schooling that was provided to Indigenous children in the nineteenth century.

In this chapter, I look firstly at the ideology of the missionaries regarding the requirements of the ‘civilizing’ process, and at the form of schooling that they put into place as a result of these ideas. Alternative understandings of the notion of ‘civilization’ will then be examined through the analysis of the writing of men who criticized the missionary approach, who opposed the policy of ‘civilizing’ by first Christianizing, and who argued for a greater degree of coercion in ‘civilizing’ Aborigines. Even among those who urged a ‘civilization-first’ approach, different ideas of the meaning of ‘civilization’ are evident.

The chapter also examines the ideas of those who supported the Christianization-first approach of the missionaries. By 1842, in the light of the application of successful strategies by Kaurna people to subvert the ‘civilizing’ and Christianizing agenda of the school, these colonists began putting forward suggestions designed to make the school more successful as a ‘civilizing’ agent. These suggestions are discussed in the second half of this chapter.

**The Missionary Approach – Christianization First**

Although the school at Piltawodli was operated collaboratively by the Lutheran Mission and the colonial administration, the missionaries were free to teach according to their own beliefs regarding the most effective way of achieving the ‘civilization’ and Christianization of Indigenous people. They held a strong belief that the ‘civilizing’

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process could only be achieved when Aborigines had been converted to Christianity. They believed, as Brian Stanley writes in his 1990 work *The Bible and the Flag*, that “the gospel in itself was ... the civilizing agent”.\(^6\) To attempt to change a person’s lifestyle without first bringing about a conversion of the heart was to “ascribe more powers of regeneration and conversion to the spirit of civilization than to the Holy Spirit and to His Word”.\(^7\) Without the inner change of heart that came about as a result of conversion to Christianity, they believed, the adoption by Aboriginal people of a ‘civilized’ lifestyle could only be superficial and temporary. In the words of one of the missionaries, Christian Teichelmann, “unless the heart be changed and improved, inveterate manners and habits cannot be changed by any splendour of civilization”.\(^8\) They believed that Christian converts would naturally adopt a ‘civilized’ lifestyle because that was the way a Christian would choose to live, and that once the heart had been converted the change of lifestyle would be genuine and lasting. “The heart must first, as the main source of customs and usages, be improved beforehand, if the latter are to be improved”, Teichelmann wrote.\(^9\)

As a result of the missionaries’ emphasis on changing what they referred to as the inner condition of the Aborigines, the school they established at Piltawodli focused on religious teaching, on the teaching of reading to enable children to read the bible, and on writing and numeracy, rather than attempting to change the outward appearance or habits of the children. During the first two years no attempt was made to change children’s appearance when they attended school, the children being required only to wash their hands and faces in the river at the beginning of the school day. “[Y]ou could have no idea how dirty they can be at times”, Klosé wrote, “even though they bathe often and gladly. But when they come out of the water they go straight into dust and sand, and then to school”.\(^10\) “You must ... not think that the order and attention of European schools pervades our classes”, Schürmann wrote to his benefactor George Fife Angas in 1840. “Some come naked from head to foot, some with a native cloak and some with a rag of European clothing”.\(^11\)

\(^6\) Stanley, 1990, p. 171  
\(^7\) Teichelmann diaries, p. 79, 18/12/1845  
\(^8\) *Southern Australian*, 22/4/1841, p. 4  
\(^9\) Teichelmann diaries, p. 10, 4/12/1840  
Certainly the missionaries had little choice in this, and would later welcome the provision of means to enable them to keep the children clean and clothed at school. Like the English colonists who criticised their approach they saw cleanliness and the wearing of clothes of signifiers of ‘civilization’ and looked forward to the day when Kaurna would be conform to European standards of decency in cleanliness and dress. But they saw the clothing of black bodies as the end result of a process of bringing Indigenous people to an awareness of their own nakedness, as the outcome of the ‘civilizing’ process, not as the process itself. “Oh if only the dear Lord would awaken shame in the old and the young,” Klosé wrote, “so that they would begin to clothe themselves”.12 Through their Christian teaching they sought to ‘civilize’ by awakening shame in the hearts of Aboriginal people. They therefore did not see the teaching of literacy, numeracy and Christianity to dirty and naked children as contrary to the goals of the civilizing mission. Meyer was “truly gratified with the black, half-naked little creatures, their good conduct and attentive countenances” when he first visited the school on his arrival in the colony,13 and Klosé found that the only difference between his students and other European children was that “they are black and not clothed”.14

The missionaries believed that in order to speak to the heart of Aboriginal people to effect conversion, they needed to preach the gospel to them in their own language. Schürmann argued that as “the nature of the human soul as well as the information extracted from them in their own language show, one can get close to the human heart only by means of one’s own familiar language”.15 In this they drew on Luther’s example in making the Bible accessible to people in their own language.16 “I should have thought that the abuses perpetrated before the Reformation through the use of latin would have sufficed to dispose of all differences of opinion on this subject”, Schürmann wrote.17 Both Schürmann and Teichelmann learnt to speak the language of the Adelaide plain, now called Kaurna. They were aware that Kaurna was only one of the languages spoken in South Australia, but observed that Aboriginal people who travelled into

13 cited in Brauer, 1956, p. 160
15 Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 19/1/1839
16 Kneebone, 2000, p. 22
17 Schürmann to Dresden Mission society, 19/1/1839
Adelaide from other areas learnt or spoke Kaurna. They hoped, therefore, that Kaurna would become the main language, the lingua franca, spoken by Indigenous people.¹⁸

As Joanna Eggert has noted of German Protestant missions in Tanzania, “[t]he vernacular, considered to be the expression of a people’s soul, became the key concept for evangelisation and consequently for the formulation of school policy”.¹⁹ Accordingly, all religious teaching at the school at Piltawodli was carried out in Kaurna. The fact that children had very little knowledge of English strengthened the missionaries’ commitment to the use of Kaurna in the school, as Schürmann believed that the children would be overextended if an attempt were made to teach them in English.²⁰ “We of course instruct them in their own language”, he told George Fife Angas, “and think it not only unnecessary and unjust, but altogether impracticable for the present to introduce the English language”.²¹ A further reason for the missionaries’ reluctance to use English in the school, although not one they put forward in making their case for using the vernacular, was their own lack of proficiency in English, which they were in the process of learning along with Kaurna. English was, therefore, the language of neither the children nor the teachers at the school.

The decision to use Kaurna as the language of instruction in the school was initially not opposed by the colonial administration. Governor Gawler told the missionaries on a visit to the school shortly before his departure in May 1841 that he agreed with their methods.²² His support for this approach is also indicated by his policy of having Aboriginal people addressed in Kaurna on public occasions such as Queen’s birthday celebrations.

From mid-1840, when Samuel Klosé arrived in the colony and Schürmann left Adelaide to work in Port Lincoln, religious instruction at the school was given by Teichelmann while Klosé was acquiring the language. During this time Klosé taught literacy, using Kaurna as the medium of instruction even though, as he said, his knowledge of the

¹⁸ Schürmann, 1838, ‘Natives of South Australia’
²⁰ Schürmann, 1838, ‘Natives of South Australia’
²² Teichelmann diaries, p. 16, 15/5/1841
language was poor. When he began teaching arithmetic in December 1840, he found his own lack of knowledge of the language, and the absence of words for numbers in Kaurna, made it necessary for him to teach it in English. To a large degree his teachers in the language were the children themselves, who would correct his use of the language, saying “you must say so and so, that is how black men say it.” “[I]n this way I learn the language best”, Klosé wrote. A year after his arrival, however, he had still not acquired sufficient proficiency in the language to enable him to undertake the religious instruction. He wrote that although he tried to recapitulate Teichelmann’s teaching, he was still unable to make himself understood to the children. Nevertheless, he does seem to have taken over the complete running of the school during the second half of 1841.

The missionaries’ decision to teach literacy in Kaurna accorded with the emphasis placed on the reading of the scriptures in the vernacular in Lutheran thinking. Moorhouse supported their decision. In explaining this approach to George Grey, who replaced Gawler as governor in 1841, he gave practical reasons, including the fact that its regular spelling system made it easier for children to learn, especially given the use of a phonetic approach in teaching literacy. “[T]he child can, according to an undeviating rule, in a short time, spell and pronounce the word”, Moorhouse wrote. “As soon as the word is pronounced, it is recognised by the child, pleasure is produced in the mind, and a taste for further attempts encouraged”. Although an attempt had been made to introduce English literacy, Moorhouse claimed that this “had a repulsive effect, rather than an attractive one” as children struggled with the irregularity of its spelling system.

The high priority given to schooling by missionaries is an example of what Brian Stanley calls the “strange amalgam” in missionary thought of “distinctly biblical preoccupations and other assumptions which owed more to Enlightenment philosophy then to Christian theology”. Drawing both on “Protestant biblicism, and respect for rational knowledge”, an emphasis was placed on the teaching of literacy to enable the reading of the Bible.

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26 SRSA GRG 24/6/1843/315
27 Stanley, 1990, p. 63
Also underlying the concern to teach children in school, not only to read but to write and be numerate, was an idea that education represented an awakening of the intellect that would facilitate the acceptance of Christian ‘truths’. A newspaper article in early 1843 supported the establishment of schools on the grounds that it was “almost an established proposition, that the native Australian intellect requires to be exercised and trained, and so elevated to that state, in which it may be capacitated for receiving and believing in the truths of religion”.

Along with literacy and numeracy, religious instruction was a major component of the curriculum at Piltawodli. Six months after Klosé’s arrival, and a year after the school had commenced, Teichelmann told a Wesleyan missionary meeting that the school programme in the morning consisted of the singing of a hymn, followed by a prayer, and a second hymn. The children then recited the Ten Commandments and sang another hymn. Following this were lessons in reading and writing, after which, Teichelmann told the meeting, “I speak to them of the commandments, or the contents of the prayer or hymns, or I give them a history out of the scripture”. “The afternoon is merely for spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic”, he said. By April 1842 Klosé reported that the children were acquainted with:

a few Bible history stories such as the Creation, the Fall, the Flood, the giving of the Commandments; in the New Testament: the birth of Christ, the prodigal son, the resurrection of the young man at Nain and the daughter of Jairus, the suffering and death of the Lord, his resurrection and ascension, and that he would come again in judgement.

The teaching of literacy was also a means by which religious teaching was carried out, the children’s writing lessons, for example, frequently involved writing what Klosé called ‘Jehovah’s word’: either Biblical texts, commandments, or a section of a hymn or prayer in their own language. In this way religious and moral precepts were reiterated and instilled into the children. Discussing the importance placed on handwriting in the colonial teaching of Maori, Alison Jones and Kuni Jenkins have recently asserted that

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28 Southern Australian, 24/3/1843, p. 2
29 Southern Australian, 29/1/1841, p. 4
30 Graetz (ed), 2002 p. 22, Klosé letter 8, 26/4/1842
indigenous language texts such as these constituted an “unsettling of indigenous meaning”. They argue that in this process a “new language, in the disguise of te reo, is being taught and learned”. Klosé, however, also saw value in having the children express their own thoughts in writing. When the children received gifts of toys and religious pictures from Germany, Klosé invited those who chose to do so to write letters in response, and allowed them to freedom to express their own thoughts in the letters. The children used their vernacular writing skills in other ways, too. Klosé noted that when “children have offended one another and one begins to cry, another will soon write the cause on the slate and show it to me, asking if it is written correctly”.

Illustrating Jones and Jenkins’ contention that handwriting represented “visible signs of civilization”, samples of children’s handwriting were sent by the missionaries to Germany, as evidence of progress in the civilizing mission. The Dresden Society was pleased with Klosé’s positive reports of “the intellectual as well as the practical ability of the children”, and believed that “the specimens of handwritings of Wailtyi and Kartanya are visible evidence of how soundly based your opinion and your expectation is”. Klosé was encouraged to continue in his efforts “to prepare [the children] for their calling as human beings and as Christians”. Specimens of children’s handwriting were also sent to London, either forwarded in official dispatches with Protector’s reports, or taken there by colonists. A minute scribbled on a Protector’s report which was forwarded to the Colonial Office in London states “[Mr?] Montefiore who has just returned from S. Austa showed me some specimens of the school childrens writing which was very good”. Moorhouse included samples of children’s handwriting in his Protector’s report of 2 April 1845.

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32 the Maori language
35 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 23, letter 9, from the Committee in Dresden to Klosé, 25/5/1842
36 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 24-5, Klosé letter 11, 7/7/1843
38 Jones and Jenkins, 2000, p. 40
39 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 16, letter 5, from the committee in Dresden to Klose, 14/8/1841
40 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 8/7/1843, AJCP reel 594
While samples of handwriting served to provide evidence of progress in the civilizing mission to interested parties in England and Germany, colonists in Adelaide were free to visit the Piltawodli school to assess the progress being made there, and to record their impression in a visitor’s book. The manager of the South Australian Company, David McLaren, visited the school in December 1840, where he found Moorhouse, Teichelmann, Klosé and eleven children present. He “heard the children sing; and was much gratified to witness the progress made in numeration, reading, and writing”. The following week another visitor, Fredrick Nainby, also recorded that he was:

much gratified in hearing them sing a hymn in their native language, and observing their quick and intelligent countenance; indicating - and that, too, at no distant day - that they are fully capable of being civilized, and becoming useful citizens of the world. May the means now used for their instruction be persevered in, is the ardent desire of the undersigned.\textsuperscript{42}

Colonial Criticism of the approach at Piltwodli

Not all colonists were impressed or “much gratified” by the undertaking at Piltawodli, however. Many criticised the degree to which the civilizing mission had come to focus on the education of a small number of children in school. They argued that the acquisition of literacy and numeracy and the singing of hymns did not represent progress towards ‘civilization’. They criticised the attempt to ‘civilize’ Aborigines by putting their children in school as a ‘Christianization-first’ approach, and advocated more direct strategies for bringing about the ‘civilization’ of Aborigines. While the Dresden Mission society found reason for optimism in the civilizing mission in the samples of children’s handwriting forwarded to them, and while Fredrick Nainby found evidence in the school of the capacity of Aborigines to become ‘civilized’, there were those who ridiculed the suggestion that the academic achievements of Kaurna children in the school bore any relationship at all to the ‘civilizing’ process. Their criticism of the school provides evidence of the existence of quite different understandings of the goals of the civilizing mission, arising from differences in the way the concept of ‘civilization’ was understood. Even among advocates of a ‘Christianization-first’ approach, the notion of ‘civilization’ was contested. Two different ideas of what constituted evidence

\textsuperscript{42} Southern Australian, 16/2/1841, p. 3
for progress towards 'civilization' are demonstrated in their comments on the school. For some, as Jones and Jenkins have noted, “it was the ‘small’ bodily habits which were the telltale signs of the success of the civilizing project”.\textsuperscript{43} For other critics of the approach taken at Piltawodli, the notion of ‘civilization’ was intimately related to the concept of labour, and they criticized the school at the Location for attempting to teach children to read and write, before they had learned to dig. These alternative views of what ‘civilization’ meant were particularly apparent in two newspaper sources which I will look at in some detail, the first a letter to the editor, and the second an article.

‘Civilization’ as ‘small bodily habits’: Haygarth’s criticism of the school

In November 1841 a letter to the editor was printed in the \textit{Southern Australian} which severely criticized the approach taken in the civilizing project at Piltawodli. According to an article in the same issue, the letter was written by Burton Haygarth, “the upstart son of a respectable clergyman in the South of England”, who apparently spent only two weeks in the colony.\textsuperscript{44} The letter was also adapted slightly and published as an article in the \textit{Register}, without reference to Haygarth as the author.\textsuperscript{45} Haygarth was dismissive of the school, referring to “a building in some enclosed ground [at Piltawodli]- which building is the representative of a school”. “I have seen the native school”, he went on:

\begin{quote}
if to be known by such a title, the place alluded to is sufficiently worthless; and I can discover nothing in the whole of it of any sort calculated to act on a child's mind, otherwise than to discourage its attendance.\textsuperscript{46}
\end{quote}

Haygarth’s main criticism of the school was not that it failed to teach literacy and numeracy to the children, indeed he praised the intelligence and academic ability of the children, but that the children by becoming literate and numerate, were not becoming ‘civilized’. He sought signs of progress towards a more ‘civilized’ state in the physical

\begin{footnotes}
\item[{43}] Jones and Jenkins, 2000, p. 42
\item[{44}] \textit{Southern Australian}, 9/11/1841, p. 4
\item[{45}] \textit{Register}, 30/10/1841, p. 2
\item[{46}] \textit{Register}, 30/10/1841, p. 2
\end{footnotes}
appearance and behaviour of the children, and was therefore appalled to find them
unwashed and unclothed. ‘Civilizing’ Aborigines involved, in his mind, the
transformation of the dirty and unclothed native into a clean and decent being, and he
was highly critical of the school for placing the children “under tuition of grammar and
arithmetic”, without providing “training in the merest elements of civilization and
civilized habits”.47 As Gillian Cowlishaw has noted, “the paraphernalia of sheets and
proper china are the material markers of the direction of evolutionary change. ... ‘Civilization’ is nothing without its physical accoutrements”.48 For Haygarth, to ‘civilize’ Kaurna children meant:

to train their habits to a relish for clothes and cleanliness, and clean sheets and
beds, and the use of a knife and fork, and a plate, and a clean table - though
ever so common and course - and the use of soap, and of a comb, and orderly
meals - though of the coarsest - and all the civilized habits of the merest pauper
child in the parish workhouse.49

He characterized the attempt to ‘civilize’ children by teaching literacy and numeracy as
a ludicrous undertaking. “Judging by the evidence the conduct of the school affords”,
he wrote:

it must be undoubtedly supposed that the civilization of the native young is
comprised in two fundamental principles. That to wean them from their own
habits, and allure them to relish our habits, and to rear them members of the
civilized community, ... two principles ... must be brought to bear ...; these
being - first, cyphering, instead of clothing to naked ones; second, spelling,
instead of the use of soap and water for disgustingly dirty faces and shreds of
dress.50

Such criticism of the school disheartened the missionaries. Following the publication of
Haygarth’s letter, Klosé wrote to the Mission Society in Germany that:

47 Southern Australian, 9/11/1841, p. 4
48 Cowlishaw, 1999, p. 91
49 Register, 13/11/1841, p. 3
50 Southern Australian, 9/11/1841, p. 4
From the letters of the brothers you will certainly know well that a large number of the English are working against us. It is the lowest class of these people who daily roam around the native huts and teach them all sorts of vices including even the denial of God’s truth; the educated on the other hand visit the Location and the school in order to find reasons to reprove us in public papers.51

He wrote that although the new governor, George Grey, who had replaced Gawler in May of that year, did whatever he could for the Aborigines, he could not “stop the mouthings of the godless people among the English”.52

Many colonists shared Haygarth’s belief that the clothing of naked bodies was a central element of the civilizing process, but chose to support the school rather than oppose it. In March 1841 a group of middle-class women, mainly Wesleyans, formed themselves into the Committee for Instructing Native Children, and began instructing the girls at the Plitawoldi school in sewing for two hours each morning.53 Teichelmann noted that the girls “really seemed to take to it”.54 They sewed shirts for the boys and dresses for themselves, which they wore on Sundays and on special occasions. Although Klosé wrote in August that “[t]o allow [the children] to wear [their clothes] regularly is not advisable as long as they are living in huts, for who would wash them”,55 one of the women who taught sewing wrote in November that the clothes were worn on most days.56 This woman wrote a letter to the editor of the Southern Australian defending the school against Haygarth’s criticism. She argued that the literacy, numeracy and religious teaching the children received at the school was not “mere moon-shine in comparison to the washing and dressing their persons, the love of knives and forks, &c.” as Haygarth had suggested, but that while “both are necessary, yet the first is most essential”. Although the primary purpose of the women’s attendance at the

51 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 20, Klosé letter 7, 10/12/1841
52 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 20, Klosé letter 7, 10/12/1841
54 Teichelmann diaries, p. 15, 2/3/1841
56 Southern Australian, 19/11/1841, p. 3
school was to teach sewing, “yet the important instruction, as far as could be done in the English language, in the virtues of cleanliness, was not neglected”.

During 1841 the women ran sewing classes for the girls when the weather was fine enough for them to make the walk through the parklands to Piltawoldi. However, the distance the women had to walk from their homes, and the fact that the school was frequently empty when Kaurna families left Adelaide for periods of time, led to the classes being discontinued. Klosé wrote that he was saddened by this, “because the girls enjoy this occupation. They often ask me ‘When will the white women be coming again? When will we be able to sew again?’”

‘Civilization’ as labour: Stephenson’s criticism of the school

The second newspaper source that I examine in some detail is an article published in the *Register* in February 1841, presumably written by the editor, George Stephenson. Stephenson, who had been the first interim Protector of Aborigines for a short term in 1836-7, was consistent in his criticism of the way the ‘civilizing’ project was conducted. He opposed the approach taken at the school for its prioritizing of the Christianization component of the project, and like Haygarth urged the adoption of an approach in which ‘civilization’ would be directly introduced. However, it was not the habits’ of cleanliness and dress, that he viewed as the essential signifiers of ‘civilization’, but the ability to produce food through labour. Drawing on Enlightenment thought, Stephenson believed that the primary characteristic that set the civilized man apart from the savage was “the application of labour to the production of the necessities and superfluities of life”. As Russell McGregor wrote, “it was the cultivation of the soil that was the necessary badge of civilization”. It was a view, as we have seen in the previous chapter, that was used to justify Aboriginal dispossession by such commentators as Charles Mann. Criticising the approach at Piltawodli for its attempt to Christianize Aborigines before introducing the first and most basic step of the ‘civilizing’ process, the cultivation of the earth, Stephenson wrote:

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57 *Southern Australian*, 19/11/1841, p. 3
59 Graetz (ed), 2002, pp. 20-1, Klosé letter 7, 10/12/1841
60 Graetz (ed), 2002, pp. 20-1, Klosé letter 7, 10/12/1841
61 McGregor, 1997, p. 3
Will the Protector say to what market, to what ultimate object of usefulness is the native child to carry his reading or his ‘hymn singing’ when he shall have escaped from the profitless thraldom of the location schools and returned to his family, in the bush gloriing in all its pristine savageness, and rendered reckless or desperate probably by the new vices acquired during its visits to Adelaide and the neighbourhood? Great exception is taken by Mr Protector to our assertion that he had begun his efforts to civilize the natives at the wrong end, and that before attempting to teach them christianity, he ought to have taught them to till the ground, and to have shewn them by what means they could take an evident and useful step towards civilization - the forerunner of others more important.  

He proposed that Moorhouse should “retire at once from the comforts of Adelaide to the splendid tracts of country recently reserved for the use and occupation of the natives, and there commence instructing them in the first principles of civilization - the art of producing human food”.  

This view was widely expressed in the colony. “Good hard work is an excellent civilizer, where the workman is not a slave”, an article in the Observer newspaper stated in 1855. An article in the Register, written after Stephenson had left the newspaper, argued that “all the protectors we have ever had” began “at the wrong end” by trying “to teach them to read before they have taught them to work and to be peaceable”.  

The missionaries and Gawler saw the process of ‘civilizing’ the Aborigines as a long, slow process. “The change of the aborigines in any moderate time even to mere civilization would be an especial effect of the power of God,” Gawler wrote in 1840:

> The deep-rooted prejudices of a very ancient people ... are not to be overcome in a few years. The protector and missionaries have done much to shake it, but the progress will be slow, and not very discernible to indifferent spectators”.

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62 Register, 6/2/1841, p. 3
63 Register, 6/2/1841, p. 3
64 Adelaide Observer, 21/4/1855, p. 6
65 Register, 1/7/1846, p. 2
66 cited in Brauer, 1929, pp.44-5
Mainstream colonists, however, were exasperated by the slow pace of such an approach. They felt annoyed and threatened by the large numbers of Indigenous people in Adelaide whose conduct they found increasingly intolerable. In his article of 6 February 1841, Stephenson wrote that “[o]n all hands it is admitted that under the present Protectorate, these poor savages are in a more degraded state than ever; and so far from having advanced one solitary step in moral, physical, or religious improvement, they have retrograded in the most fearful manner”. Serving to illustrate the extent to which Aborigines’ public sociality had come to be, in Gillian Cowlishaw’s terms, “construed as a realm of disorder and untrammelled desire”,67 the article goes on to describe the Indigenous presence in Adelaide in a way which suggest a rising fear of “the imagined threats of dirt, disorder, and animal passions”.68

Let any man of common sense regard the hundreds of natives who infest the park land - over whom the Protector possesses and can exercise no control - and who crowd into Adelaide to beg or to steal, or to become the prey of horrible disease, deny this statement if he can. We have said before, and we repeat again, that the inefficiency of the measures adopted by the Protector, and the general neglect of the aborigines- in spite of fine speeches, and big words - are alike scandalous and disgraceful.69

While the civilizing mission had originally been envisaged as a means of compensating Indigenous people, by early 1840 there is evidence of an increasing intolerance of the presence of a people who continued to live according to their own custom. Rob Amery notes that although colonists initially seemed willing to give food and money to Aboriginal people as a small measure of compensation for the use of their lands, “a strong resentment of the very existence of the Aboriginal population emerged” within a few years.70 An article printed in the Southern Australian in April 1840 argued that Aborigines must be ‘civilized’ not only for their own benefit, but for the benefit of the colony. It was argued that “[i]f they must for their own sake be civilized and brought

67 Cowlishaw, 1999, p. 63
68 Cowlishaw, 1999, p. 63
69 Register, 6/2/1841, p. 3
into regular habits, it is not less necessary for the sake of the colony”. The article called for the adoption of measures to make Aborigines conform to British standards of morality and decency. “But assuredly it would not render their ultimate civilization the less certain,” it was argued:

if means were adopted to induce them or compel them to observe something like decency. Why for instance should our females be compelled to witness such disgusting sights as are common in the most public streets of our town? Why should men and women be suffered to pass along in a state of perfect nudity. Are there no means of preventing this?\(^{71}\)

“The indigenous population is construed”, Cowlishaw writes, “as intruding with their disruptive and illegal practices, into the [colonial] space. They are discursively placed in the civil, moral realm of whites, but as wilfully ignoring its rules”.\(^{72}\)

In the climate of this rising intolerance of a large and visible Indigenous presence in Adelaide, colonial settlers looked to the civilizing mission as the means whereby Aborigines could be brought to behave in ways they found more acceptable. As attempts to convert Aboriginal people into settled agriculturalists at Piltawodli faltered and were abandoned, colonists were affronted by the idleness and mendicancy of the large number of Aboriginal people in Adelaide, and urged the adoption of means to compel them to work. They were angered by Moorhouse’s comment that, although they had found without question that Aboriginal people were capable of undertaking any form of labour, they could not be induced to like it. This “elegant and sensible observation”, Stephenson wrote, could be translated to mean “that the natives, ... ‘would rather be d__d than dig’.” He contended, however, that:

the question is not whether the natives ‘like to work’ or not. The hackney coach-horse has been taught to draw, although it is a fair presumption he does not like it - and there are few bipeds to whom the necessity to work brings with it any liking to the task. Motives and objects must first be created, and we see no reason why the obligations which are found to be imperative on the white

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\(^{71}\) *Southern Australian*, 16/4/1840, p.7

\(^{72}\) Cowlishaw, 1999, p. 95
man and which impel him to the toil he liketh not, are to have no equal or sufficient influence on the black native.\textsuperscript{73}

There is evidence in Stephenson’s article of an anxiety arising from the existence in colonial society of a category of people who stood outside the existing class structure. There was an anxiety to see Aborigines incorporated into the social hierarchy of colonial society, but a tension existed between this and the intention to compensate them. During the first two or three years of settlement the intention to compensate Aborigines by kind treatment and gratuitous gifts of food and clothing had seemed viable, but as a greater number of Indigenous people came into contact with Europeans, and as greater numbers of Indigenous people travelled to Adelaide, the outcome of this policy of compensation became increasingly intolerable to most colonists confronted with a large number of people seeking food from door to door. As people to whom a debt was owed, to whom compensation was due, the status of Aboriginal people within the colony was one which threatened the social order. Racial hierarchy demanded that Aborigines be socially subordinate to Europeans. Yet notions of compensation threatened to challenge the hierachical structure of colonial society. If Aboriginal people were owed a debt of gratitude and compensation, how could they be made to understand their subordinate position in the scheme of things? It was an anxiety that had been expressed in 1839 by a colonist who felt that, although many colonists treated:

\begin{quote}
the natives with great wisdom and kindness, … a few carry the latter a little too far. … Whilst we treat them with every kindness, we should not be too ready in giving them our hand, and such familiarities: they know very well that such practices amongst us only prevail between parties on a nearly equal footing in society, and the consequence of so acting towards them has been, that some are so puffed up as to altogether to forget their proper place; and a feeling has been instilled which cannot fail to retard, if it do not render abortive, the most zealous and well directed exertions for their moral improvement.\textsuperscript{74}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{73} Register, 6/2/1841, p. 3
\textsuperscript{74} Register, 15/6/1839, p. 4, Letter to the editor from 'Scribbler'.
In British society only the elite were not required to work, the lower classes being defined by their need to labour. Since it was only conceivable that Aborigines be incorporated at the bottom end of the social hierarchy, they needed to be incorporated as peasant farmers, or as “the lowest class of free labourers” that George Fife Angas had envisaged in 1836. But the drudgery and hard labour of the peasant or working classes held no attraction for Aborigines. As Moorhouse told the Missionary Meeting, although they could work they chose not to. While some colonists, such as Edward John Eyre, argued that Aborigines should be supplied with food without being required to undertake labour, for most colonists the existence of a class of people at the lower end of the social hierarchy who had simply opted out of labour, was an outrage. If Aborigines refused to work, then means must be found to make them, for it was only through labour that Aborigines could be incorporated into the hierarchical structure of colonial society, and a sense of order restored.

In the face of these anxieties, a ‘civilizing’ approach which focused on the teaching of a small number of children in school seemed ridiculously inadequate. Stephenson’s discussion of the school is highly sarcastic. “We are exultingly referred to the school at the location”, he wrote:


where, according to Mr Teichelmann, the German Missionary – ‘six can write, and almost double that number read! ’ This surprising achievement - the result of three years labour - the catching of a dozen young natives out of several hundreds, ... is held to be a proof, not to be gainsayed, to the progress of the native tribes of South Australia in their career of civilization! In the location, forsooth! you will see young natives read and write, and sing ‘a hymn in their own language’.

In developing his argument that alternative means were needed to achieve the objectives of the civilizing mission, Stephenson portrayed the school as a ludicrous undertaking by drawing parallels between the teaching of Aboriginal children to read,

76 Eyre, 1845, p. 478
77 Register, 6/2/1841, p. 3
write and sing hymns, and the teaching of circus tricks to animals. His description provides evidence of the growing acceptance of derogatory representations of Aboriginal people. When children were put through their “various exercises”\(^ {78} \) to demonstrate their academic achievements, observers noted that “there was no appearance of mere rote”, and that “every child seemed perfectly to comprehend what was meant”.\(^ {79} \) Yet Stephenson likened these demonstration to the performance of animals and ‘freaks’ on show at Bartholomew Fair, at Smithfield in London. “[W]ill Mr Protector assert that these poor creatures understand a word of what they are trained to gabble”, he asked:

> that their writing can ever be of more use to them than the unknown tongue to Mr Irving - or that they possess a whit more distant notion of their "singing" or rather howling - "a hymn" than a dog has when baying at the moon? It is almost a sufficiently decisive evidence of the abortion of the whole system, when such puerile specimens of what has been done to civilize the natives can only be produced. The parrot has been taught to speak; the timid hare to fire a cannon; and if Bartholomew fair be still extant, many similar wonders might be seen for twopence, which would leave far in the shade the infant phenomena at the location.\(^ {80} \)

Stephenson further ridiculed the approach taken at Piltawodli by reference to the small number of children educated there. Again, he used the metaphor of the performance of circus tricks by trained animals, this time with reference to Edward Cross and his menagerie at Exeter Change, in London, to argue that even if reading and writing were evidence of a progress towards ‘civilization’, the fact of a few children gaining literacy could hardly be presented as proof that the ‘race’ as a whole was making progress:

> We never heard even Mr Cross's logical showman at Exeter Change insist, because Chuay picked up sixpence and dropped them in his keeper's hat, that therefore all other elephants were on the high road to civilization - or because Toby, the learned pig, knew his letters as well as any Christian; that an important

\(^ {78} \) *Southern Australian*, 14/8/1840, p.3
\(^ {79} \) *Southern Australian*, 4/4/1843, p.2
\(^ {80} \) *Register*, 6/2/1841, p.3
advance had therefore been made in the education of his kindred in the neighbouring sty. So we cannot accept as a triumphant proof of the successful progress of the civilization of the natives, the fact that half-a-dozen of children have been caught and parroted into the repetition of words they do not understand, or, that they are initiated in the cabalistic art of scrawling pot hooks.\textsuperscript{81}

The missionaries, of course, thought differently. The fact that the school provided education to only a few children, a small percentage of the Indigenous population, did not render the undertaking futile in their view. Certainly they would have liked to have more children in their school, and more consistent attendance. But they imagined a time when one of the children educated at the school would become converted to Christianity and carry the Word of God among the rest of the people. Again, this was a long-term vision. They were prepared to work intensively with a small number, looking forward to the conversion of “even a single soul so that we could trumpet the gospel among the various tribes, through a living instrument”.\textsuperscript{82}

Stephenson’s call for authorities to give up the attempt to offer ‘civilization’ to Indigenous people and to apply measures to force them to adopt ‘civilized’ practices, and labour in particular, was repeated frequently throughout the following two years. Calls for the adoption of coercive means became particularly strident at the end of 1842 and in early 1843. These calls were accompanied by a changing representation of Indigenous people.

\textbf{Explaining Indigenous rejection of ‘civilization’}

By the early years of the 1840s, as it became clear that Kaurna were rejecting the ‘civilizing’ package offered at Piltawoldi, the writings of South Australian colonists give evidence of the same “sense of being surprised, offended, and righteously angered by Aborigines’ hostility and resistance to the civilizing process” that Cowlishaw noted in the Northern Territory in the following century. Cowlishaw writes that it was assumed

\textsuperscript{81} \textit{Register, 6/2/1841}, p. 3
\textsuperscript{82} Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 20, Klosé letter 7, 10/12/1841
that Aborigines “would value the opportunities that settlement offered”. Given the axiomatic status of the assumption of European superiority, Aboriginal rejection of the gift of ‘civilization’ required explanation. The belief that the civilizing mission as originally conceived had failed was expressed in November 1842 in a letter to the editor of the Southern Australian by a colonist signing himself Z.Z.:

I came to the colony impressed with the notions that the protection afforded by the Government, aided by the kindness and forbearance which a Christian community are ever ready to exercise toward the ignorant heathen with which they come in contact, would be sufficient, coupled with the force of example, to induce the aborigines to settle down into our habits, trust themselves to the equal protection of our laws, and become, in the course of time, an industrious community; but alas, the experience of six years has shown the futility of these expectations.

The writer offered environmental explanations for the failure of Aborigines to “settle down to our habits”. “The mildness of the climate renders them indifferent to the comforts of European habitations or clothing”, he wrote, “and the facility by which they can procure food, either by hunting, begging, or stealing, disinclines them for labour”.

An explanation that was frequently put forward during the early 1840s for the failure of Kaurna to accept the colonist’s gift of ‘civilization’ was that habits and ideas formed early in life could become so ingrained as to be irrevocable. Allied to this idea was the growing belief that Aboriginal actions were controlled by instinct, rather than by rationality. A rational person, it seemed to colonists, would accept the opportunity to become ‘civilized’ which colonization offered. It was not believed, at this stage, that Aborigines were incapable of learning the skills required for ‘civilized’ living, for many had proved their capability beyond question. But to the colonists it seemed that some irrational impulse was operating to prevent Indigenous people making permanent lifestyle changes. One young Kaurna man, Bappa Monatya, for example, went to Van

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83 Cowlishaw, 1999, p. 53
84 Southern Australian, 18/11/1842, p. 2
85 Southern Australian, 18/11/1842, p. 2
Diemen’s Land in 1841 and worked for two years in a corn mill there, before spending some years working in whaling ships. In 1846 he returned overland to South Australia, traveling with some Europeans. Moorhouse wrote that he had a good knowledge of English, and “would make a useful servant”. However, having returned to his family, he “exchanged his European clothes, for the opossum rug, and ... returned to his wandering habits”. To the colonists, for whom the superiority of a European lifestyle was axiomatic, his decision to reject ‘civilization’ seemed irrational and governed by instinct. Teichelmann records the experience of another Kaurna man, Miltewidlo who worked for a merchant for eighteen months, and according to Teichelmann “was fully civilized”. He then “returned completely to his naked lifestyle”. Teichelmann explains his decision:

Then he made several journeys as a sailor on a ship, came back, dividing the wealth he had gained amongst his countrymen, went around completely naked on the third day and was worse than before. In Singapore he had seen black people who were slaves, living on atrocious foodstuffs and now says: Would not I be a fool to take on a life like that! These people are half-starved and at the end of the week they get 1/2 crown, ... while I live in comfort and can eat meat whenever I like. And what have I earned after all that? Nothing.

It was not Miltewidlo’s generosity in sharing his wealth with his countrymen that Teichelmann emphasised, nor the logic of his decision, but his ‘return’ to ‘nakedness’. According to the colonist’s understanding of human progress as a historic movement towards ‘civilization’, the decision of men like Miltewidlo and Bappa Monatya to return to the lifestyle of their families was construed as an irrational move backwards from having human culture, to having nothing. To nakedness.

The antithesis of ‘civilization’ was expressed as ‘the bush’. At a time when most of South Australia might have been referred to as ‘bush’ it is notable that Aboriginal people living a traditional lifestyle are referred to as living ‘in the bush’. The term was frequently used when referring to young men and women who, like Miltewodli and Bappa Monatya, had lived for a time in a way that colonists called ‘civilized’, undertaking

86 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 15/4/1846, p. 4, SRSA GRG 24/6/1846/434
87 Teichelmann diaries, p.16, early 1841
employment with Europeans, and then returned to the fulfill the social and other obligations of Aboriginal life. These men and women were referred to as having ‘gone into the bush’. There were two simultaneous but contradictory constructions of ‘the bush’ in colonial discourse. On one hand, ‘the bush’ was construed as being a state of complete freedom and lack of restraint, where the natural and sinful passions of human beings could find free and full expression. Christian ‘civilization’, then, was the restraining hand that would keep such sinfulness under effectual control. Moorhouse would later write that young men were “invariably enticed into bush life, from being promised unlimited intercourse with young women – The inducement is too powerful for them & I have not yet seen one young man who could resist it”. Schurmann wrote that “the unlimited freedom of the natives is their boundless misfortune, the lack of any sort of authority among them inhibits any co-operation”.

The other and contradictory view expressed by the same commentators was that life in ‘the bush’ was one of tyrannical rule of the old men over young people and women. The civilizing mission was, according to this representation of Aboriginal social life, a means of freeing young people and women from a tyrannical gerontocracy. Moorhouse wrote that two girls employed by him as domestic servants “were compelled to leave after being two months with me”. He wrote that they were commanded to leave by their parents and prospective husbands, but that “the poor girls would have remained a few years longer, had they dared to do so. They were threatened with death by the sorcerers, if they continued to live with europeans [sic]”.

For the missionaries and some colonists, Indigenous people’s return to a traditional lifestyle provided proof that a permanent change of lifestyle could only be achieved through the inner transformation of Christian conversion. For many colonists, however, the Aboriginal rejection of a ‘superior’, ‘more advanced’ lifestyle seemed to provide evidence that rationality was being overridden by an instinctive tendency to behave in certain ways. Increasingly, as Indigenous people continued to live their lives according to an Indigenous understanding of the world, as the ‘civilizing’ project at Piltawodli faltered almost as soon as it had begun, colonists characterized Aborigines as people

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88 Stanley, 1990, p. 96
89 Moorhouse to Robe, 12/7/1851, Letterbook p. 281
90 Schürmann to Dresden Mission Society, 28/5/1845
91 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 8/7/1843, pp.6-7, SRSA GRG 24/6/1843/812
governed by irrational urges and instinctive behaviour. Aboriginal people continued to travel from place to place for economic, religious and social purposes, and it was this behaviour, in particular, which colonists increasingly construed as instinctive. It was argued that “[t]he rambling habits of the natives, as well as their distaste for the least restraint, militate much against the success of the mission amongst them”. An article in the *Southern Australian* in 1843 argued that one of the great barriers of the civilizing mission was “their extremely unsettled habits ... which it is found impossible to break”. The article states that Aborigines responded “to the arguments used to restrain them” with “the emphatic expression that their breast heaves, and throbs through the desire to go to a particular place, and they can only allay the throbbing, by that desire being satisfied”. “The habit seems at present unconquerable”. Their movement from place to place was discursively construed, as Tim Rowse notes, as “drift’ (movement devoid of agency) occasioned by ‘craving’ (desire not checked by reason)”. The civilizing mission, originally envisaged as a gift which would be gladly accepted by Aborigines as rational people, increasingly came to be portrayed as something which Aboriginal people must be made to accept, for their own good. In November 1842, following a public meeting at which colonists called for the adoption of more effective measures for bringing about the ‘civilization’ of Aborigines, the *Register* stated that “[o]n one point, all parties seem now to be pretty much agreed, and that is, that little, humanly speaking, can be expected from the exertions of the Missionaries or Protector among them, unless something is done towards restraining their habits of vagrancy”. Three years later the *Register* stated that the “grand and radical evil in the present condition of the aborigines, and one which will ever inevitably be a barrier to their improve-ment [sic] and a constant source of mischief and vexation to ourselves, is their roving vagabondage”.

**The call for coercion in the civilizing mission**

In late 1842 and early 1843 discussion on “the great public question of the civilization of the natives” was carried out in the columns of newspapers and at public meetings

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92 *Southern Australian*, 11/11/1842 p. 2
93 *Southern Australian*, 18/4/1843, p. 1
94 Rowse, 1998, p. 33
95 *Register*, 26/11/1842, p. 2
96 *Register*, 25/6/1845, p. 3
97 *Register*, 25/2/1843, p. 2
in Adelaide. Discussion focused largely on the rising conviction that Aborigines needed to be controlled and compelled to adopt a European lifestyle, for their own benefit and protection. Z.Z., the writer of the letter to the editor mentioned above, argued for a change of approach in the civilizing mission to one involving “a mild but determined system of coercion”. “We must behave to them as we would to our own children”, he argued, “and compel them to acquire such habits as will fit them to become industrious members of society”. An article in the *Southern Australian* stated in January 1843 that:

> [t]he secret of the want of success lies in the natives themselves. Their wandering habits - their distaste for restraint or instruction - their jealousy of one another, and of the white man, together with the vicious habits which many of them have been taught by depraved whites, renders the work of conversion and civilization one of a very slow and uncertain character among them; and we believe, until they are removed to a place where they will be under restraint, and control, that little good will be done.

George Stephenson wrote in late 1842 that “[o]ur private opinion decidedly is, that nothing effectual will be done, either in the way of civilizing the native, or of rendering them accessible in any considerable degree to the Missionaries, without coercion”. “Without compulsion”, another colonist argued, “the wandering habits of the natives can never be restrained”. An article in the *Southern Australian* in November 1842 stated that “[w]e object to coercion when it is an evil, but if good is likely to result from the mild use of coercion we desire to see it used”. They called for a civilizing mission that would, in Cowlishaw’s terms, “impose rationality … on … the natives’ untamed waywardness”.

It is significant that calls for increased coercion in the civilizing mission were also made in the Port Phillip District at this time. Michael Christie notes that “[a]s the various

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98 *Southern Australian*, 18/11/1842, p. 2
99 *Southern Australian*, 31/1/1843, p. 2
100 *Register*, 26/11/1842, p. 2
101 *Register*, 26/11/1842, p. 2
102 *Southern Australian*, 11/11/1842, p. 2
103 Cowlishaw, 1999, p. 58
efforts to win over the Aborigines either by example or the inducement of European food and comforts failed, an increasing number of colonists argued that the Aborigines should be forced to change their life style”. He cites George Arden, the editor of the *Port Phillip Gazette* and the *Sydney Magazine* who wrote in 1841 that in order to settle Aborigines “compulsion must be substituted for inducement”. Christy notes that this was a view that “gained in popularity during the protectorate years”, which ended in 1849. In part this tendency to seek more coercive means for bringing about the ‘civilization’ of Indigenous people came about as a result of the evident failure of “inducement”, but I suggest that it represented the beginnings of a general hardening of attitude towards Indigenous people in British colonies that was to result in a rising racism during the following two decades. John Henry and Wendy Brabham note that, “[a]lthough the pattern was not uniform across the colonies of eastern, southern, and western Australia, the 1840s saw the beginning of a hardening of official colonial attitudes towards the prospects of ‘civilizing the natives’”. Andrew Banks has noted the decline of the humanitarian movement in the Cape Colony in the 1840s. That a shift in attitude towards Indigenous people took place during the middle decades of the nineteenth century has been widely noted. In her study of the changing attitudes of Edward John Eyre, for example, Catherine Hall argues that the shift in the way Eyre saw and understood colonial subjects shifted between the 1830s and the 1860s as a result of the general shift in attitudes towards race in Britain. Although, as Robert Miles notes, there isn’t consensus on when the transformation happened, many historians place the shift in attitudes towards colonized people as occurring in the 1850s and, perhaps to a lesser extent, the 1860s. Andrew Markus, for example, argues that “[b]y the 1850s the inequality of races was generally accepted as fact in the scientific world”. Ways of understanding the world do not change overnight, and I suggest that for this to be generally accepted by the 1850s, a gradual change in attitude must have been beginning to take place during the 1840s, during which the Enlightenment

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105 Christie, 1979, p. 132
106 Henry and Brabham, 1991, p. 11
109 Miles, 1989, p. 31
110 Markus, 1994, p 12
view of human difference began to decline, accompanied by a rising pessimism in the
capacity of Indigenous peoples to attain ‘civilization’. The tendency for the
“Enlightenment ethos of the universal sameness and equality of humanity” to be
“increasingly ridiculed as the evident diversity of human societies became ever more
apparent”, which Robert Young notes as characteristic of the 1850s\textsuperscript{111} had its
beginning, I suggest, in the decade of the 1840s. Certainly there is evidence that such
a hardening of attitudes took place in South Australia at that time.

The public debate that was carried out at meetings and in the pages of newspapers at
the end of 1842 and the beginning of 1843 included discussion of alternative proposals
for the ‘civilization’ of Aboriginal people. A society formed in 1842 to provide financial
support for the Lutheran missionaries held a meeting in November of that year at which
proposals formulated by two sub-committees were discussed,\textsuperscript{112} and further proposals
were discussed at a public meeting at the Mechanics Institute in February 1843.\textsuperscript{113}
During the following few years the discussion was sporadically taken up in newspapers.
Whereas this was in part a debate over the question of whether Christianization or
civilization should be adopted first, it provides evidence of a growing belief that
 Aboriginal people should be forced to accept the constraints of an imposed ‘civilization’
and to conform to the cultural standards of mainstream colonial society.

**Segregationist Solutions**

An essential component of the proposals put forward at this time was the call for
Aborigines to be physically segregated from colonial society through the creation of
what Cowlishaw calls “spaces for races”.\textsuperscript{114} Segregated, Aborigines would be subjected
to a ‘civilizing’ programme involving the instillation of discipline and subordination.
George Stephenson concluded the article of February 1841, discussed above, with a call
for the civilizing mission to be undertaken away from Adelaide.\textsuperscript{115} The editor of the
*Southern Australian*, which usually took a position opposing that of the *Register*, and
which had generally expressed support for the approach taken by the administration,
agreed. “We are ourselves of opinion that in order to succeed in civilizing them, they

\textsuperscript{111} Young, 1995, p. 47
\textsuperscript{112} *Southern Australian*, 29/11/1842, p. 3
\textsuperscript{113} *Register*, 25/2/1843, p. 2
\textsuperscript{114} Cowlishaw, 1999 p. 59
\textsuperscript{115} *Register*, 6/2/1841, p. 3
must in some degree be separated from the whites, and have some restraint placed on their liberties”, an editorial stated in November 1842.\

‘Z.Z.’, the writer of the letter to the editor discussed previously, having decided that the approach of kindness, conciliation and example was failing to ‘civilize’ Aborigines, presented a more detailed proposal for their ‘civilization’ in isolation. He suggested that the civilization of Aborigines would “be best done by compelling them to reside in barracks with their families, which, with a certain portion of land attached to each, should be converted into schools of industry”. In a further letter published the following month he expanded on his civilizing ideas. He proposed that “a whole tribe (say the Adelaide tribe which consists or about eighty individuals)” should be induced “to enter into an agreement to serve [the Aborigines Missionary Society] say for three years”, and that all who failed to honour their agreements should be placed in military-style barracks, which would essentially have been concentration camps. He outlined details of how these camps should be run, with estimates of costs and so on, even stipulating the clothing Aborigines would be made to wear. “[T]he highland costume would be preferable, and they should at all times be required to wear shoes”.

A similar proposal was put forward in an article in the Register a few years later. The article recommended the adoption of what would have been a kind of apartheid system designed to stop Aborigines “wandering, and begging in a state of nudity and destitution, from station to station”. It was suggested that all Aboriginal people be forced to remain within the boundaries of their own traditional country, and encouraged to build their ‘wurleys’ within designated fenced-off areas. Farms in each ‘tribal area’ would be leased on favourable terms to European farmers on condition that they employ Aborigines at a fixed rate. Aboriginal people who failed to remain in their own area and who attempted to obtain a living from means other than working on the farms would “be refused countenance and assistance” by the colonists and “rendered amenable to the common Vagrant Act”. What was being called for was a replacement of a policy of civilization by tuition, with one of civilization by force. “If

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116 Southern Australian, 11/11/1842, p. 2
117 Southern Australian, 18/11/1842, p. 2
118 Southern Australian, 12/12/1842, p. 2
119 Register, 25/6/1845, p. 3
they could be induced to stay still”, Gillian Cowlishaw writes of this kind of approach, “their difference could be masked by the enforcing of ‘normal’ habits and practices of everyday life”.¹²⁰ “Thus, … with kindness and force combined”, the Register article continued, “they can be gradually brought into decent and orderly habits, morally and physically improved, and rendered useful to ourselves, in the place of pitiable and offensive pests, which they too often are at present”.¹²¹

Another proposal for the segregation of Indigenous people was put forward by a colonist, Dr Cotter, at a public meeting held at the Mechanics Institute in February 1843. This proposal involved the establishment of two ‘locations’ “in which the whole native community shall be placed.”

In the one, the good shall be placed, who shall be free to enter and depart at pleasure, and shall be subjected to such restraint only as may be necessary for inculcating order, cleanliness, and habits of industry. In the other location, vagrants and pilferers from white people, who are called the bad, are to be placed, in order to undergo a course of civilization and moral training, after being convicted of what the whites call misdemeanours.¹²²

An article on the meeting which appeared in the Southern Australian noted that “this new plan was not received with much favor by the meeting”.

Other suggestions were also put forward at this time. There was a proposal, for example, “to remove as many as possible of the natives to Kangaroo Island, and there form an establishment where the blacks might be educated and instructed in civilized usages”. It was also proposed that a black police force be formed. “The drilling would not only break them into the performance of their duty”, it was argued, “but into civilized habits and usages, to which they would become soon reconciled, and all objections to have their children brought up by Europeans would vanish”.¹²³

¹²⁰ Cowlishaw, 1999, p. 101
¹²¹ Register, 25/6/1845, p. 3
¹²² Southern Australian, 28/2/1843, p.2
¹²³ Southern Australian, 11/11/1842, p. 2
Whereas the removal of a ‘nuisance’ was the first priority of colonists, they believed that a secondary objective of the civilizing mission should be to make Aborigines useful to colonists, to “banish from our doors a troublesome nuisance, and create in its place a useful and almost gratuitous class of labourers”. The writer of an article in the *Southern Australian* argued in 1846 that, if it were considered:

not as a question of benevolence, but as one of profit and loss, the gain is great by civilizing the natives. We gladly pay £20 to get out for the colony a good laborer from home, but if we, by expending £20 can render a savage child of the soil a good workman, the profit is double. Besides gaining a useful colonist, we free society from a nuisance.

In the recommendations made by these colonists for the ‘civilization’ of Aborigines during the 1840s, a particular notion of what it meant to ‘civilize’ is evident. These colonists looked to the civilizing project to at least remove the threat and “troublesome nuisance” presented by the existence of a group of people with different cultural mores within the colony, and at best to create a source of cheap labour. They saw it as the means by which a total colonial hegemony could be established, and a sense of order and control created in a colony which was becoming increasingly racialised. The desire to physically separate Aborigines represented an outward manifestation of an existing view of colonial society, in which Indigenous people were viewed as alien, and as existing outside the social order. Gillian Cowlishaw has described the “racialised designation of space” as being “more than simply a technique of control and governance”.

Segregation, she contends:

expressed and reproduced social and ontological categories on which colonial society was founded. It was understood that the social existence of the natives and the settlers were separable, and ideally separate, because of the different natures of black and white people, a difference construed as natural and inscribed in each individual.

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124 *Register*, 25/6/1845, p. 3
125 *Southern Australian*, 24/4/1846, p. 2
126 Cowlishaw, 1999, p. 63
While draconian solutions devised by colonists in the first half of the 1840s were designed to rid the colony of a ‘nuisance’, calls for the segregation of Aboriginal people from colonial society were sometimes motivated by a genuine concern for their welfare. By the mid 1840s, Indigenous people were suffering severely from destitution and disease, particularly venereal disease. The 1845 proposal to confine Aborigines to their own ‘tribal’ districts included the recommendation that “in each district a medical man ought to be appointed to watch over their condition generally, but especially to attend to the horrible ravages which disease and destitution are so rapidly working amongst them”. There were those, however, who urged authorities and colonists to stop debating means for civilizing and Christianizing Aboriginal people, and to be, instead “regardful of their temporal wants”. One colonist wrote at the end of 1843 that:

[w]e have meetings and abundance of large talk about the natives, and we even deign to talk of spreading the glorious light of the gospel among these poor beneighted [sic] creatures; but, in the name of all that is good and great, I would ask, What idea can they form of the religion of their destroyers? It must be bad … otherwise its professors would never strip the unoffending piecemeal of all their means of subsistence, and leave them to starve.

Segregation was a policy that was also advocated by the Lutheran missionaries, who consistently sought the means to form separate settlements of Aboriginal people during the life of their mission in South Australia. Their motivations for doing so differed from those of mainstream colonists, however. In the mainstream colonial imagination, a ‘civilizing’ process could be undertaken by a process of removing from colonial society an Aboriginal otherness that was offensive, annoying, and potentially threatening, and remaking Aboriginal people in isolation through a programme of discipline, control and subordination. Once they had become more acceptable to colonial sensibilities, Aborigines would begin to participate in colonial society as an underclass of cheap labour. The missionaries, on the other hand, had a quite different vision of the outcome of their ‘civilizing’ activities. They wanted to segregate Aborigines from colonial society, not because Aborigines offended the colonists, but because they saw colonial

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127 Register, 25/6/1845, p. 3
128 Adelaide Observer, 9/12/1843, p. 7, Letter to the Editor from AMI DES NOIRS
129 Adelaide Observer, 9/12/1843, p. 7
society as an impediment to the civilizing process. The lifestyle they imagined for their Christian converts was a rarefied and idealised Christian civilization, the attainment of which was as much impeded by the degraded culture of colonial society as by the degraded condition of the Aborigines themselves. Schürmann described the obstacles to the ‘civilization’ of the Aborigines as:

very great, nay humanly speaking, insurmountable, both in regard to the character of the Aborigines themselves and in regard to the relation in which they are placed with the white population. They are superstitious, immoral, idle, obstinate – in most of the Whites they see nothing but drunkenness, swearing and worldliness in general, with whom therefore their own evil inclinations find an ample scope of gratification and encouragement. Consequently our prospects are gloomy and discouraging.\(^{130}\)

To achieve ‘civilization’, therefore, they believed they needed to segregate Aboriginal people from the uncivilized wickedness of colonial society, and to create separate settlements of Christian Aboriginal people who would be truly ‘civilized’. While they saw the application of labour as central to the ‘civilizing’ process, they did not envisage a future as an underclass of cheap labour for their converts. Rather, they saw subsistence farming as a noble and godly form of living most suitable for a civilized and Christian community. Throughout the 1840s, until their mission ended in 1848, they pressured the colonial government, unsuccessfully, for the financial support to establish such settlements.

The proposals put forward by colonists for the segregation of Aboriginal people from colonial society which I have discussed above are examples of an approach to the civilizing mission in which ‘civilisation’ would be directly imposed on Aboriginal people. Under such schemes, the Christianisation component of the project would be a secondary concern. Colonists who put forward such proposals called for the adoption of a ‘civilization-first’ approach, in place of the Christianization-first approach taken by

\(^{130}\) Schürmann to Angas, 3/4/1840, cited in E. Schurmann (ed), 1987, p. 97
the missionaries and the colonial administration. Other colonists, on the other hand, continued to argue that Aboriginal people could only be ‘civilized’ by first become converted to Christianity, and they opposed such proposals on these grounds. However, proponents of the Christianization-first approach were not immune to the hardening of attitudes towards Aboriginal people that was taking place. They, too, experienced the anxiety created by the presence in the colony of a large, aberrant and idle population, which chose neither to conform to the European codes of conduct, or to take its rightful place within the social hierarchy by undertaking labour. Illustrating the rising pessimism in the civilizing mission, proponents of the Christianization-first approach argued, for example, that only the power of God could effect change in a people so degraded. “[I]t is only the Almighty power of God acting through his revealed religion”, it was argued, “which ... can change the hearts or habits of those degraded beings”. The view, which gained wide currency by 1843, that Aboriginal behaviour was a response to instinctive impulses and irrational ingrained habits acquired in early life, gave rise to a belief that the education of the young was important in enabling the Aboriginal mind to be receptive to Christian teaching. While the minds of Aboriginal men and women were described as “being so debased and habituated to their idealess and brutish habits, that nothing has any effect upon them”, young Aboriginal minds could be “exercised and trained” through schooling, and so prevented from entering that ‘brutish’ and ‘idealess’ state from which it was impossible to arouse them. In 1843 a newspaper editorial contended that:

the course taken of instructing the children, seems the correct one, and if it is systematically and extensively adopted, we might expect that the powers of mind of the rising generation will receive a great advance, and that they shall be rendered capable of thinking and acting like reasonable and responsible beings.

In this view the schooling of Aboriginal children was not about educating equals, but raising debased and brutish minds to a base level of rationality and intelligent thought.

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131 Southern Australian, 28/2/1843, p.2
132 Southern Australian, 24/3/1843, p. 2
As changing understandings of the nature of Aboriginality were giving rise to changing ideas of the function of schooling, supporters of the school as a mechanism of the civilizing mission began to express concern that the transforming potential of education was not being fully realized in the way the project was being carried out at Piltawodli. In part, this was the product of actions taken by Kaurna people to undermine the school’s Christianizing and civilizing agenda.

Aboriginal responses to the school

There is evidence that Aboriginal people did actively oppose the attempts being made at Piltawodli to teach their children Christian beliefs and morality. According to Moorhouse, all children who attended the school at Piltawodli prior to 1844 had to be taken “almost in direct opposition to the wish of the parents”. Edward John Eyre, too, recorded that it was “a rare occurrence for parents to send, or even willingly to permit their children to go to school, and the masters have consequently to go round the native encampments to collect and bring away the children against their wishes”. Eyre, who worked as Resident Magistrate and Assistant Protector of Aborigines at Moorundie on the Murray River from 1841 to 1844, provides us with an interesting account of Aboriginal responses to the placement of children in schools. He observed, firstly, that young children frequently assisted their parents in hunting and fishing activities, and that their services were missed by their parents when they were at school. Eyre noted also that Aboriginal people resented the removal of their children because of “the natural desire of a parent to have his children about him”. They also resented the fact that instruction at school had the effect of undermining Indigenous culture and beliefs. “[A]ll the instruction, advice, or influence of the European”, he wrote, “tends to undermine among the children their own customs and authority, and that when compelled to enforce these upon them, they themselves incur the odium of the white men”. It was no wonder, therefore, “that by far the great majority of natives would prefer keeping their children to travel with them, and assist in hunting and fishing”. He recorded the response of one man whose children, having been

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133 Moorhouse, Protector’s Report, Register, 17/1/1844, p. 2
134 Eyre, 1845, p. 438
135 Eyre, 1845, p. 437
136 Eyre, 1845, p. 438
taken away for schooling, had absconded and returned to him. If his children were taken again, this man said:

he would steal some European children instead, and take them into the bush and teach them; he said he could learn them something useful, to make weapons and nets, to hunt, or to fish, but what good did the Europeans communicate to his children? 137

Missionary accounts support the contention that Aboriginal people opposed the schools because of the threat they posed to Indigenous systems of belief and social structure. In their attempt to convert Kaurna children to Christianity, the missionaries consciously ridiculed Indigenous beliefs, and recorded as evidence of their success incidents in which children expressed disbelief in the teachings of their elders. Klosé recorded with optimism, for example, an incident in which children in school saw a small lizard (Tarratarru) and said that their parents had told them that it was the creator. One boy said that it could not be the creator, because the parents of the lizard they saw were probably in the hole from which it had emerged. Klosé wrote that such incidents were evidence that “God’s Word has made an impression on their hearts, which in its own time will flourish”. 138

By 1841, it was becoming evident to the Kaurna that the school was actively working to undermine their own religious and social systems, and opposition to the school grew. In November of that year, two schoolgirls of thirteen or fourteen years of age attempted to avoid marriage according to their own traditions by seeking refuge at the homes of the missionaries on the Location. For the Kaurna, the girls’ refusal to accept the social norms of their society was evidence of the negative influence of the school on their children, and they responded with anger. They countered the missionaries’ teaching by ridiculing Christian beliefs, and by admonishing their children not to attend school and not to listen to the lies told to them by the missionaries. 139 They then withdrew from the school all girls above the age of seven. Further, when they moved away from Adelaide during the following month they took all the children from the

137 Eyre, 1845, p. 438
139 Graetz (ed) 2002, p. 21, Klose Letter 7, 10/12/41; Teichelmann diaries, p. 21, 23/11/1841
school to the Willunga region, south of Adelaide, for three months. Some children returned to school for a fortnight in early March, but then accompanied their parents to Glenelg, where a gathering of Murray, Encounter Bay, and Adelaide people was taking place. From Glenelg they were taken the hills, a few returning on 5 April.\textsuperscript{140} While there were likely to have been social and religious reasons for these movements away from Adelaide, the fact that this prolonged absence of children from the school followed so closely the expressions of opposition to the school’s teaching, suggests that the two occurrences were related. Klosé recorded that, while individual children came and went from the school, this was the first time that the school had been completely emptied.\textsuperscript{141}

Although schooling did resume after this conflict, Kaurna continued to resist efforts made by teachers at the school to undermine Indigenous systems of belief and sociality. Teichelmann wrote that the children themselves were receptive to the Christian teaching of the school, but that their progress towards Christian conversion was severely impeded by adults who, “naturally proud and wise in their own estimation, ... express themselves perfectly satisfied with the traditions of their forefathers”.\textsuperscript{142} He claimed that Kaurna men and women responded to Christian teaching “with scorn, anger and opposition ... more particularly as soon as the elder aborigines perceived that their children gave ear to the religious instruction, and became disinclined to their ways”.\textsuperscript{143} Much more could be accomplished with the children in converting them to Christianity, he believed, if “the adults ... did not literally extinguish again what has been planted”. He claimed that adults countered the school’s teaching not only by setting an alternative example and teaching an alternative message, but by “literally prohibit[ing] [the children] to believe what they are taught”.\textsuperscript{144}

Aboriginal people also resisted the attempt to remake their children in the image of the Europeans by withdrawing their children from the school when they moved to different areas. They withdrew them also when the time came for children to undertake the educational processes of their own society, despite all attempts by colonial authorities and missionaries to prevent them from doing so.

\textsuperscript{140} Graetz (ed) 2002, p. 22, Klosé letter 8, 26/4/1842
\textsuperscript{141} Graetz (ed) 2002, p. 22, Klosé letter 8, 26/4/1842
\textsuperscript{142} Southern Australian, 11/1/1842, p. 4
\textsuperscript{143} Southern Australian, 7/6/1842, p. 3
\textsuperscript{144} Southern Australian, 29/1/1841, p. 4
Although the missionaries felt disheartened when school children returned to their families, they did not believe that their efforts were in vain, for they believed that the children who left the school did so with the seed of the knowledge of God planted in their hearts. They had hope that God would, in his own time, cause that seed to grow and bear fruit. They likened themselves to gardeners, tending the garden of Christianity, in a harsh climate and poor soil, certainly, but did not see their efforts at the school as futile. “When the sower has just sown his seed”, Klosé wrote:

he firmly believes that if no calamity disturbs the seeds whether it be flood, insects, fire or such like, he will see the fruition of his work. Even more we, when we sow the seed of God’s word, have reason to believe that we will see fruits, since we have the promise that it will bear fruit.\(^{145}\)

In 1842 two girls educated at the school, Kartanya and Kauwewingko, left their employment as domestic servants, and, removing their clothes except for “only one garment which they wrapped around their bodies under their arms, as the other woman do, ... followed the men to whom they had been promised previously”. Klosé wrote:

[1]ow painful that is for the teacher, who resembles a gardener in his garden when he sees a shoot from a seed he has sown break through the earth, only to see it destroyed by a swarm of insects on the following morning. But in spite of that I still have the consolation that no one can tear the Word from their hearts; in due course it will break through.\(^{146}\)

He believed that “the seed is sown and when it pleases the Lord of the harvest to bless the work, the fruit will not be lacking”.\(^{147}\)

For many colonists, even those who supported schooling as a mechanism of the civilizing mission, the return of children to ‘the bush’ rendered the education of

\(^{145}\) Graetz (ed), 2002 p. 36-8, Klosé letter 15, In the book this is dated 14/9/1844, but this is only 11 days after the last letter. Also it mentions the birth of his daughter 7 months after he married, but September was only 5 months after his marriage. Perhaps it was 14 December?

\(^{146}\) Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 26, Klosé letter 10, 4/1/1843

\(^{147}\) Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 45, Klosé letter 18, 29/8/1845
Aboriginal children entirely futile, however. Eyre was highly critical of the school because of its failure to produce settled and ‘civilized’ Aboriginal people. In 1845 he wrote that children educated at the school were “falling back again upon the rude and savage life from which it was hoped education would have weaned them”, and that he did not believe that the education of Aboriginal children had “the least prospect of any greater benefits resulting in future than have been realized up to the present time”.

Calls for the Separation of Aboriginal Children from their Families

By late 1842, it became clear to colonists that the effectiveness of schools in achieving the goals of the civilizing mission was severely limited by the actions of the children’s families, and even those who supported policy of ‘civilizing’ Aboriginal people through education began to criticize the school for its failure to produce ‘civilized’ and settled Indigenous people. Just as advocates of a ‘civilization-first’ approach called for more coercive measures to ‘civilize’ Aboriginal people during 1842 and 1843, supporters of the policy of using schools as instruments of ‘civilization’ also began to advocate the adoption of more coercive measures for obtaining and retaining children for schooling. A major feature of the measures suggested was the separation of children from their families.

Like the proposition to segregate, confine and control Indigenous people, child removal became a more acceptable proposition within the colony by 1842 than it had been a few years earlier. While discussion of the civilizing mission had originally been couched in terms of the rights of Aborigines as possessors of the soil, changing perceptions of Aboriginal people gave rise to a greater level of acceptance of more coercive solutions to the problem of their ‘civilization’. The separation of Aboriginal children from their families had been suggested as early as 1839, in a rather pompous letter to the editor, which argued that:

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148 Eyre, 1845, p. 438
149 Eyre, 1845, p. 460
if the parent could be induced to lop off the branches from stem by mortgaging his bairns at an early age, ... a depot could be formed, say at Kangaroo Island, and an efficient plan concerted to form the mind of the infant savage and convert him into the Being-civilized”\textsuperscript{150}.

Such a measure was out of step with the rhetoric of a more idealistic civilizing mission that still hung in the air at that time, however. George Stephenson described the idea of transporting “the children of our black population” to Kangaroo Island as “ridiculous and unnatural”.\textsuperscript{151} But by the end of 1842, as more negative representations of Aboriginal people gained currency, attempts were made to justify such proposals by reference to the low moral condition of Aboriginal people. The complete separation of Aboriginal children from their parents would not constitute an "infraction of any essential law of humanity" because of the “low state of moral feelings possessed by the natives”.\textsuperscript{152}

The idea of using Kangaroo Island as a means of isolating Aboriginal children from their families to achieve their ‘civilization’ was again raised early in 1842, when colonists concerned to see the more effective implementation of the civilizing mission placed before Governor George Grey a proposal for the removal of Aboriginal children to the island. It was proposed that children’s contact with Indigenous society be completely severed to enable their education and training for ‘civilization’. Grey considered this proposal to the extent that he had Moorhouse draw up an estimate of the cost of supporting one hundred children on the island. Moorhouse appears also to have been receptive to the idea. In discussing his estimate of the cost of the undertaking, he told Grey that:

\begin{quote}
[t]he first two years would be placing the children just one step above their present habits. I would not dress them at the commencement but the second year the material for dresses might be bought and the girls make them. Each child would want two blankets each year.\textsuperscript{153}
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[150] Register, 4/5/1839, p. 3
\item[151] Register, 18/5/1839, p. 4
\item[152] Southern Australian, 29/11/1842, p. 3
\item[153] Moorhouse to Grey, 6/4/1842, Letterbook p. 48-9
\end{footnotes}
The proposal was not carried into effect, however. Almost twenty years later the Very Rev. James Farrell told a Legislative Council Select Committee investigating the situation of Indigenous people in South Australia that although he believed Grey had personally favoured such an approach in the civilizing mission, the proposal had been rejected because the Governor believed it would be objected to in England. Farrell told the Committee members that:

Captain Grey was known to take great interest in the native. ... To every application made to him the Governor gave a ready ear, and he always professed his anxiety, to aid any plan, without regard to expense, for the well-being of the natives, if any practical plan could be pointed out to him. But that was the great difficulty. There was one plan thought to be the best – though some persons objected to it – to take the children, at an early age from the parents; which I still believe would be the most effectual way of producing any valuable result for their well-being, either temporal or spiritual. However, it was contrary to the law of England; they were recognized as British subjects – and it was opposed to the law, both in letter and spirit, to alienate children, and take them away.154

Farrell stated that Grey “himsel thought it would be advantageous to get the children as young as possible, and to separate them from their parents”, and that it was entirely on account of the “great outcry” that such a measure would give rise to in England that he decided to rejected the Kangaroo Island proposal. “I think that that plan might have met his approbation”, he told the committee, “were it not for the feeling that it might excite disapprobation in England”.

The idea of removing children to Kangaroo Island was not completely put to rest with Grey’s rejection of this proposal, however. A letter from Bishop Short to Governor Robe in 1848 suggests that the removal of Indigenous children to Kangaroo Island was again being considered at that time.155

154 S.A. Select Committee Report, p. 71
155 Bishop Short to Colonial Secretary, 8/7/1848, SRSA GRG 24/6/1848/954/1/2
Farrell’s statements to the Select Committee suggest that the 1842 proposal to remove children to Kangaroo Island had been made by the South Australian Missionary Society. However, the proposal was made before the Society was formed. The establishment of the Society shortly after the Kangaroo Island idea was mooted suggests that Grey’s rejection of this proposal may have led to its formation, as clergymen and other colonists sought other means, acceptable to British humanitarians and so acceptable to Grey, to render the civilizing mission more effective. Formed in June 1842 to give financial and moral support to the German missionaries in their Christianizing and civilizing efforts, the Society set about formulating proposals for the effective civilization of the Aboriginal people. In these proposals, a major emphasis was placed on the need to ‘civilize’ children away from the influence of their families. Two sub-committees were formed that year to make suggestions for Christianizing Aborigines, and both produced reports which urged the removal of children from their families as a necessary precursor to their conversion to Christianity. “[T]he entire separation of the children from the parents, for the benevolent purpose of instructing them in the arts of life and the doctrines of Christianity”, one of the reports maintained “appears to offer the most rational hope of success”.156

Conclusion

The approach taken in the civilizing mission at Piltwodli reflected a particular set of ideas regarding the nature of ‘civilization’ and the process required to achieve it held by the German Lutheran Missionaries. The approach was widely opposed with the colony, however. Differing views on what it meant for a people to be ‘civilized’, and the differing emphases placed on the two components of ‘civilization’ and Christianization, gave rise to quite different ideas about how the project should be carried out. Colonists who believed that the ‘civilizing’ process should be carried out before attempts were made to effect a religious conversion saw the teaching of a few children in school as a ludicrously slow and ineffectual process. They ridiculed the schooling at Piltawodli for its failure to bring about the transformations they believed to be essential signifiers of progress in ‘civilization’. Reflecting the divergence of views on what it meant to be ‘civilized’, some argued that evidence of children becoming ‘civilized’ should be apparent in their physical appearance and personal habits, while others

156 Southern Australian, 29/11/1842, p. 3
argued that to be ‘civilized’, children needed to be taught to produce their own food through labour.

Confronted with an Aboriginal population which showed no signs of adopting a European lifestyle, colonists sought alternative means for bringing about their ‘civilization’, calling for the adoption of more coercive measures, particularly in 1842 and 1843. Such calls were made both by those who supported the use of schools as instruments of ‘civilization’, as well as those who advocated alternative measures. While some colonists called for the separation of Aboriginal people from colonial society, those who supported the use of schools in the ‘civilizing’ project argued that education could only be made really effective if Indigenous children were separated from their families. Increasingly during the following years the separation of Aboriginal children from their families in residential schools was to become a major feature of the project to ‘civilize’.

Other measures that were called for at this time were also adopted by the colonial administration over the following few years. Under the governorship of George Grey, changes in the education of Aboriginal children were instituted which placed greater emphasis on the changing of children’s bodies through the introduction of ‘civilized’ habits such as cleanliness and the wearing of clothes. Although the Colonial Chaplain, James Farrell, claimed that Grey always “gave a ready ear” to all recommendations concerning the Aborigines, and “always professed his anxiety, to aid any plan, without regard to expense, for the well-being of the natives, if any practical plan could be pointed out to him”, the degree to which these changes were influenced by the concerns and ideas of colonists is unclear; the changes put into place by Grey reflected very much his own beliefs regarding the nature of ‘civilization’ and the process required to achieve it. Grey’s views, and the changes he instituted, are the focus of the next chapter.

157 S.A. Select Committee Report, p. 71
Kaurna text, written by a Piltawodli schoolgirl, Kartanya, and sent by Klosé to the Dresden Mission Society
Reproduced from Graetz (ed) 2002, p. 15
Chapter 4: The shift in approach in Aboriginal schooling, 1843-44

In 1843 and 1844, a number of changes took place in the education of Aboriginal children in Adelaide, as the government increased expenditure on the schooling component of its ‘civilizing’ project, and instituted policies which increased government control over educational policy, reducing the influence of the missionaries in educational decision-making. This increase in government control over educational decisions represented the beginning of a shift in the form of schooling that was provided to Aboriginal children, from a missionary approach to a government approach.

The educational policy changes which took place at this time were instigated by the South Australian governor, George Grey, and reflected a particular set of ideas about the way the ‘civilizing’ mission should proceed. They were a response to changing demographic conditions in Adelaide, as well as to Grey’s concern to see the approach taken in the civilizing project fall more into line with his own ideas about how its goals might best be achieved. There was a political motivation to these changes, too, as Grey sought to make his own mark on the civilizing mission in order to enhance his personal reputation, but this dimension will be examined in Chapter 6. This chapter is an examination of Grey’s views on ‘civilization’ and the ‘civilizing’ process, and of how these ideas impacted on schooling for Aboriginal children in Adelaide in 1843 and 1844, as Grey moved to exert a greater influence on the nature of the civilizing project. It examines the demographic changes that occurred in Adelaide at that time, as large numbers of Indigenous people from the Murray River made extended visits to Adelaide, displacing the Kaurna people of the area. The educational changes made by Grey in response to these movements, including the establishment of a second school, are also discussed.

Some of the changes made in the civilizing project during this period addressed concerns expressed by colonists regarding the efficacy of the approach initially adopted, as discussed in the previous chapter. Criticism of the schools continued, however, and give evidence of increasingly derogatory representations of Indigenous people by the middle years of the 1840s, and a concern that the civilizing project
should operate to maintain the status quo, ensuring the continued subordinate status of Indigenous people. In the final section of this chapter, colonial responses to the civilizing mission after the establishment of the new government school are examined.

**Governor George Grey**

Grey’s appointment as governor in May 1841 was welcomed by the missionaries because of his demonstrated interest in Aboriginal people and in the civilizing project. Prior to his appointment, and following his exploration of northern Western Australia, Grey had received a temporary appointment as resident magistrate in Albany, in southwestern Western Australia, where he gathered information on the local Aboriginal people. Returning to England in 1840, Grey put together a two-volume publication entitled *Journals of Two Expeditions of Discovery in North-West and Western Australia during the years 1837, 38 and 39*, which included two hundred pages of information gathered in Albany on Aboriginal languages, laws and customs, and a report he had written for colonial secretary Lord John Russell on “the best means of promoting the civilization of the aboriginal inhabitants of Australia”.

The missionaries were optimistic at the appointment as governor of a man so clearly interested in the Indigenous people and the project for their ‘civilization’. After a visit by Grey to the Location shortly after his appointment, Teichelmann wrote that, “on the whole the outlook for the physical welfare of the natives appears more favourable”. Klosé also wrote favourably of Grey, telling the Missionary Society in Dresden that although many of the English worked against them, the governor was on their side. “He loves the natives”, he wrote shortly after Grey’s arrival, “and does whatever is in his power”.

Another reason for the missionaries to welcome the appointment of Grey as governor was his demonstrated interest in learning and recording Indigenous languages. During his time at Albany he had recorded a vocabulary of the Nyungar language, which he had published as a *Vocabulary of the Dialects Spoken by the Aboriginal Races of South-

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1 Grey, 1841  
2 Teichelmann diaries, p. 18, 13/7/1841  
3 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 20, Klosé letter 7, 10/12/1841
In 1840, prior to his appointment as governor, Schürmann and Teichelmann had met Grey when he passed through Adelaide on his way from Western Australia to England. Schürmann wrote that:

Captain Grey who recently came here from Western Australia and who takes a great interest in everything relating to the aborigines has encouraged us to have our vocabulary printed here assuring us that such an undertaking would not only be profitable but would also be helpful in our continued study of the language. Captain Grey speaks from experience because he himself has issued a vocabulary of the Western Australian language, so we have taken his advice and intend, God willing, to publish our collection shortly after we have once more jointly revised it.  

Such encouragement stood in sharp contrast to the opposition the missionaries faced within the colony to their approach of teaching and preaching in the vernacular. And Grey did continue to encourage the publication of their language work throughout the period of his governorship. But if they expected that Grey’s knowledge of, and apparent interest in, Indigenous languages would lift the status of Aboriginal languages in the colony, or lead to support for their approach of using the vernacular in schools and mission work, they soon found that they were wrong. Indeed, the opposite was the case; during the four and a half years that Grey was in office the status of the Kaurna language fell dramatically. It ceased to be used in public ceremonies, interpreters were no longer employed, Teichelmann was forbidden to preach in Kaurna, and the education of Aboriginal children shifted from a vernacular literacy approach, to an English-only approach.

As it became clear that Grey’s approach to the ‘civilizing’ mission that was at odds with their own, the missionaries’ opinions of him changed radically, and their optimism at his appointment soured. “The Government does, and will do, nothing as long as Grey is at

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4 George Grey, 1840, *Vocabulary of the Dialects Spoken by the Aboriginal Races of South-Western Australia*, T & W Boone, London
5 Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 16/3/1840
6 These publications are discussed in Chap 6
7 Amery, 2000, p. 63
the helm”, Schürmann wrote in 1842.⁸ Teichelmann agreed with Aboriginal complaints that “the former Governor had been very well disposed towards them while the present one was just the opposite”.⁹ The missionaries compared Grey unfavourably with Gawler, writing that they missed “the forceful way in which the outstanding Governor Gawler accepted the aborigines”.¹⁰

What was it about Grey’s approach which so put him at odds with the missionaries? Certainly there were financial constraints influencing Grey’s policies; his appointment as governor followed the recall of George Gawler due to the state of financial crisis into which the colony had descended. Grey was faced with the task of reducing expenditure, and bringing the bankrupt colony into solvency, and certainly he did reduce spending during the first period of his governorship. However, the changes he implemented in Aboriginal schooling between June 1843 and July 1845 represented an increase in government expenditure rather than a decrease.

Population shifts in 1843 and 1844

The changes put in place by Grey in 1843 and 1844 were in part a response to a new problem that presented itself to the ‘civilizing’ mission with the presence in Adelaide of a large number of Indigenous people from the Murray River. Seasonal visits had been made to Adelaide by Indigenous people from the Murray River, as well as by Ramindjeri people from the Encounter Bay district, since the first years of colonial occupation, and possibly prior to that. During the summer of 1839-40 Schürmann recorded the presence in Adelaide of large numbers of Indigenous people from Encounter Bay, and people he described as coming from the lower Murray and speaking the Pitta language.¹¹ Klosé wrote that during the following summer Indigenous people from the lower Murray, whom he referred to as Pitta people,¹² were among those who assembled in Adelaide, and that Murray people were among the five hundred Indigenous people who gathered in Adelaide in the summer of 1841-42.¹³

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⁸ Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 1842
⁹ Teichelmann diaries, p. 61, 6/4/1845
¹⁰ Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 1842
¹¹ Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 16/3/1840
It may be that such summer gatherings had taken place prior to the arrival of Europeans. Schürmann wrote that they gathered “because it is one of their customs to visit each other in the summer”.14 On the other hand Mullawirraburka, a leading Kaurna man known to colonists as King John, is cited in an article in the *Adelaide Observer* as saying that “[b]efore white man come, Murray black fellow never come here”.15 It is likely that such visits occurred on a smaller scale before colonization, taking place only when conditions were such that sufficient food was available to support such a gathering, and this probably occurred in different localities every few years. However, the European settlement of Adelaide made sufficient food available to enable large numbers of people to assemble there each year. Edward John Eyre wrote of the seasonal migration to Adelaide of “native tribes, whom curiosity has attracted to town, but whom the Adelaide tribe were not in the habit of meeting at all, at least, not in such familiar intercourse prior to the arrival of white people”.16 Although Schürmann records something of a festive atmosphere at the gathering that took place in the summer of 1839-40, with “no lack of new songs and dances for mutual (general) entertainment”,17 the arrival each summer of such large numbers of people into their country added to the strain already imposed on Kaurna people by the presence of increasing numbers of Europeans. Klosé observed that whenever people arrived from the Murray “these meetings never pass without bashings and spearings”.18

A sharp increase in migration from the Murray River took place in 1842, following the establishment of a ration depot at Moorundie, near present-day Blanchetown. Established in September 1841 as a response to hostilities between Aborigines and overlanders bringing stock down the Murray River from New South Wales to Adelaide, the depot at Moorundie was administered by the explorer Edward John Eyre, who, as Resident Magistrate and Assistant Protector of Aborigines, was given the task of establishing friendly relations with the Indigenous people of the Murray region. The causal relationship between the establishment of the ration depot, and the increase in numbers of people travelling to Adelaide, has been established by Robert Foster, who

15 *Adelaide Observer*, 27/4/1844, p. 5
16 Eyre, 1845, p. 419  
17 Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 16/3/1840  
18 Graetz (ed) 2002, p. 20, Klosé letter 7, 10/12/1841
argues that the increase in migration from the Murray River was facilitated by the establishment of a ration depot there.\(^{19}\)

During 1842 Pitta migration into Adelaide increased to the extent that Kaurna people felt threatened by their presence. Eyre wrote in February 1843 of “very many of the Murray Natives going from time to time to Adelaide & remaining there many months – at these times they alarm & occasionally almost force the Adelaide Natives to leave their own district”.\(^{20}\) In March 1842 a spear-fight took place at Holdfast Bay, between Ramindjeri and Kaurna people on the one hand, and Murray River people on the other. “[B]lood flowed on both sides”, according to Klosé. “[M]any on both sides were wounded”, and one Ramindjeri man was killed.\(^{21}\)

The continued seasonal migration from the Murray led to further conflict in December 1842 between Kaurna and their allies from Encounter Bay, and the Murray people, during which seven Murray people were wounded, and one killed.\(^{22}\) Moorhouse reported early in 1843 that there were “200 Murray Natives in Adelaide”,\(^{23}\) and that their presence had driven Kaurna people away from the town.\(^{24}\) In April Aboriginal people from Encounter Bay travelled to Adelaide with the intention of engaging in further battles with Murray people. They had been “expressly invited by the Adelaide Natives”, according to Moorhouse, “to drive away the Murray people from Town”.\(^{25}\) However Moorhouse and Eyre used the threat of police action to prevent the planned battle from taking place, and most of the Pitta people returned with Eyre to the Murray,\(^{26}\) although they informed Eyre that “three or four hundred” of them intended making the journey to Adelaide during the following month.

Whereas visits had previously been made during the summer, at this time the pattern of seasonal migration shifted, with the greater number of Murray people now making the journey in May, arriving in Adelaide in time to attend the annual Queen’s birthday.


\(^{20}\) Eyre, Reports and Letters to Governor Grey, p. 50, 7/2/1843


\(^{22}\) Moorhouse to Col Sec, 6/4/1843, Letterbook pp. 70-71

\(^{23}\) Moorhouse to Col Sec, 4/4/1843, Letterbook p. 69

\(^{24}\) Moorhouse, Protector’s report, 30/1/1843, p. 5, SRSA GRG 24/6/1843/132

\(^{25}\) Moorhouse to Col Sec, 6/4/1843, Letterbook p. 70

\(^{26}\) Moorhouse to Col Sec, 19/4/1843 Letterbook p. 73
distribution of food and blankets. They would then stay in town for the winter months, returning to their own districts in the summer. It was a seasonal pattern of migration that would continued for the next decade. Ten years later, in July 1853, Moorhouse reported that Murray people told him that:

they had come to Adelaide for the winter and would return to the Murray at the commencement of Summer. In winter they cannot procure fish from the river and the natural productions are chiefly vegetable this makes them prefer Adelaide to their own district.27

The arrival of more Murray people in Adelaide in May 1843 led to further attempts by Kaurna and Ramindjeri people to engage with them in battle, but conflict was again prevented by threats that anyone carrying spears would be apprehended and punished, and their spears broken.28

The arrival in Adelaide of so many people from the Murray presented a dilemma for the civilizing mission. When he had first arrived in the colony in 1838 Schürmann had noted that Indigenous people visiting Adelaide had learnt to speak the language of that country,29 but as numbers of new-arrivals from other regions increased, they no longer bothered to follow this protocol. The missionary approach of using the local language to evangelise to the adults and educate the children was challenged by the presence in Adelaide of a large number of people speaking a language unknown to them. Klosé wrote that “the Pitta men who speak a totally different language are here but go their own way without being taught about the grace of God”.30 In late 1842 and early 1843 he did sometimes take “children of the Murraymen” into the school in order to teach them the alphabet, but was unable to give them religious instruction as they understood neither Kaurna nor English.31 In June 1844 Teichelmann recorded that he:

went out from the city to where I found close on 300 Murray natives, all lying about, literally like sheep without a shepherd. But since they spoke a quite

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27 Moorhouse to Col Sec, 29/7/1853, Letterbook p. 344
28 Moorhouse to Meyer, 1/5/1843, Letterbook p. 75
29 Schürmann, 1838, ‘Natives of South Australia’
31 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 27, Klosé letter 10, 4/1/1843
different language there was nothing I could do other than make an appearance among them.\textsuperscript{32}

Between February and April 1843, a series of letters passed between Eyre, Moorhouse and Grey regarding the means by which the migration to Adelaide from the Murray might be prevented. Both Eyre and Moorhouse requested that measures be taken to prevent such large movements of people. Moorhouse argued that “if they are allowed to locate here, the real proprietors of the soil (the Adelaide Tribe) will at once leave, & our attempts at education greatly retarded”.\textsuperscript{33} He reported that the arrival of so many people from the Murray had “caused the Adelaide natives to be much more wandering and unsettled than they otherwise would have been”.\textsuperscript{34} He believed that they intended to take over the country of the Kaurna people, complaining that they had “pressed the Adelaide tribes and their friends to encounter them in battle, supposing that their numerical force was sufficient to expel from Adelaide the proprietors of the locality, and then claim the place as their own”.\textsuperscript{35}

Effectively prevented from defending their territory against such incursions through actions of the colonial administration in disallowing violent interchanges between Indigenous groups, the Kaurna seem increasingly to have left Adelaide when large groups of Murray people arrived. By the end of 1842 the presence of Murray people was affecting attendance at the school, as Kaurna children left town with their parents. In the final quarter of the year the school was attended only 47 days out 92, with an average of only six Kaurna children daily. Moorhouse blamed the drop in attendance on the fact that Kaurna people had fled Adelaide in fear of the Murray people, and on Kaurna resistance to having the children of Murray people attend school with their own. “[O]wing in a great measure to the differences that have existed between the Adelaide & Murray tribes”, he wrote, “the former have been driven from Adelaide by the latter”.\textsuperscript{36}

This was the situation as it existed in early 1843, when Grey put in place the first of the changes he was to make in the education of Aboriginal children in Adelaide. Some of

\textsuperscript{32} Teichelmann diaries, p. 33, 16/6/1844
\textsuperscript{33} Moorhouse to Grey, enclosing a letter from Edward Eyre, 25/4/1843, Letterbook p. 74
\textsuperscript{34} Moorhouse, Protector’s report, 8/7/1843, AJPC reel no. 594
\textsuperscript{35} Moorhouse, Protector’s report, 8/7/1843, AJCP reel no. 594
\textsuperscript{36} Moorhouse, Protector’s report, 30/1/1843, p. 5, SRSA, GRG 24/6/1843/132
these changes were probably a response to the changing population of Indigenous people in the town, but I suggest that they were also motivated by Grey’s understanding of the notion of ‘civilisation’ and the nature of human progress. Before looking at the changes made by Grey, I will examine these beliefs, in order to establish how they impacted on decisions he made with regard to the education of Aboriginal children at that time.

**Grey’s views on ‘civilization’**

Like the missionaries, Grey believed that Aboriginal people were intellectually capable of achieving ‘civilization’. He wrote that “[t]hey are as apt and intelligent as any other race of men I am acquainted with; they are subject to like affections, passions, and appetites as other men”.37 Like the missionaries he believed that, given the right conditions, human societies would progress from nomadic heathen ‘savagery’ to settled Christian ‘civilization’, and that all people were capable of such development if and when the right conditions were in place. Both Grey and the missionaries accepted that it was not an inherent inferiority that had prevented Aborigines from progressing beyond a savage state prior to colonization; rather, they attributed the failure to progress to other causes.

In Grey’s view, the major barriers to Aboriginal progress towards ‘civilization’ were the particular laws and codes of Aboriginal society. In his 1841 *Journals of Two Expeditions of Discovery in North-West and Western Australia*, Grey set out his beliefs regarding the nature of Aboriginal society, and the measures that needed to be set into place to facilitate their progress towards ‘civilization’. Dismissing outright the ‘noble savage’ paradigm which constructed savagery as a state of freedom, Grey argued that “to believe that man in a savage state is endowed with freedom either of thought or action is erroneous in the highest degree”. He argued, rather, that the ‘savage’ was:

> in reality subjected to complex laws, which not only deprive him of all free agency of thought, but, at the same time by allowing no scope whatever for the development of intellect, benevolence, or any other great moral qualification, they necessarily bind him down in a hopeless state of barbarism, from which it is

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37 Grey, 1841, p. 373
impossible for man to emerge, so long as he is enthralled by these customs; which, on the other hand, are so ingeniously devised, as to have a direct tendency to annihilate any effort that is made to overthrow them.\[^{38}\]

It was culture, not biology, that held Aborigines in a savage state, in Grey’s view. He insisted that their failure to develop out of savagery towards ‘civilization’ was not an indication of any innate inferiority in the people themselves, and that they were as capable of being ‘civilized’ as any other human group once the impediment of their barbarous culture had been broken down. “It would be unfair”, he argued:

> to consider the laws of the native of Australasia any indication of the real character of this people, for many races, who were at one period subject to the most barbarous laws, have, since new institutions have been introduced amongst them, taken their rank amongst the most civilized nations of the earth.\[^{39}\]

As George Stocking has noted, Grey “tended to see native society and culture as integrated systemic phenomena, in which different social institutions worked together to maintain the existing social order within a given environmental setting”.\[^{40}\] He saw the laws and customs of Aboriginal society as an ingenious system which both enabled the survival, and prevented the progress, of Aboriginal society. In considering the origin of such stultifying laws, Grey rejected a number of ideas current at that time, dismissing ideas that the laws developed of their own accord, as well as rejecting the idea that they could have been handed down by the original ancestors of Aboriginal people. As Aboriginal laws seemed perfectly designed for a hunter-gatherer economy, Grey dismissed a degenerationist argument which postulated their formation at a time when Aboriginal people were at a higher stage of ‘civilization’,\[^{41}\] yet he rejected equally the proposition that they could have been formulated by Aborigines when in their ‘savage’ state for it seemed:

\[^{38}\] Grey, 1841, pp. 217-218  
\[^{39}\] Grey, 1841, p. 377  
\[^{40}\] Stocking, 1987, p. 104  
\[^{41}\] Grey, 1841, p. 222
impossible that they could have been promulgated and enforced throughout so wide a range of country, and amongst a dispersed race of barbarians of such a variety of dispositions, who acknowledge no chief or lawgiver, and are so characteristically impatient of restraint.\footnote{Grey, 1841, p. 223}

Since no explanation that discounted the hand of God could be found for the existence of the laws of Aboriginal society, Grey concluded that they had been specifically designed by Providence, to bind the people subjected to them in a state of savagery, until such time as they came into contact with a ‘civilized’ race through whose influence the ancient laws would be broken down. Indigenous people, thus emancipated, could be led to follow the path of human progress to ‘civilization’ and the knowledge of God, from darkness into the light. The laws of Aboriginal society, therefore, were a part of a grand design according to which human progress was to be achieved, not by the spontaneous advancement of groups in isolation, but through contact with more ‘civilized’ peoples. The “laws and customs of the natives of Australia” provided evidence, he believed, that it had:

been willed that this people should, until a certain period remain in their present condition, which is consequently not the result of mere accident, or of the natural condition of man. From the peculiar nature of their institutions, it was impossible that they could emerge from a state of barbarism whilst these remained in force, and from the tenacity and undeviating strictness with which they are retained, and the strong power they hold over the savage mind, it seems equally impossible that they could have been abrogated, or even altered, until the race subjected to them came into contact with a civilized community, whose presence might exercise a new influence, under which the ancient system would expire or be swept away.\footnote{Grey, 1841, p. 223}

These laws seemed to Grey to be “proof, that the progress of civilization over the earth has been directed, set bounds to, and regulated by certain laws, framed by Infinite wisdom”.\footnote{Grey, 1841, pp. 223-4} Here was evidence, Grey believed, that the march of human progress was to
be brought about, according to the will of God, through the agency of European commercial and missionary activity, facilitated by European imperialism. It was a process that was rapidly being accomplished even as he wrote. “The progress of events, and the rapid march of science in our country are very wonderful”, he wrote:

but the progress of events in the eastern hemisphere at present is still more amazing: Christianity and civilization are marching over the world with a rapidity not fully known or estimated by any one nation; the English are scarcely aware what has been effected by their own missionaries and commerce, and they are utterly ignorant of what has already been done, and is now doing, by the Americans, Dutch, and Portuguese.\footnote{Grey, 1841, p. 224}

Michael Mann has recently identified among the proponents of the civilizing mission “a secular group of civilizing missionaries”,\footnote{Mann, 2004, p. 8} and Grey fell into this category. Although in his view of things Christian missionaries played a part in the spread of civilization through the world, commerce played an equal part. I have argued in the last chapter that although the missionaries sought to Europeanise Aborigines through the introduction of a Christianity strongly imbued with European culture, the ‘civilization’ they imagined as the end result of their project was an idealized and rarified \textit{Christian} civilization that was quite distinct from the society of British colonial South Australia. For Grey, ‘civilization’ was \textit{European} civilization, with commerce at its core. Drawing on Scottish Enlightenment notions which placed mercantile capitalism at the pinnacle of human economic and social development\footnote{Julie Evans, 2001, ‘Beyond the Frontier: Possibilities and Precariousness along Australia’s Southern Coast’ in Russell (ed), p. 32} he saw commerce, spread throughout the world through European commercial activity, as a stimulus for the development of human groups with which it came into contact. It was a view expressed in 1810 by the Reverend Samuel Marsden, Chaplain of the penal colony of New South Wales, who wrote that “commerce promotes industry – industry civilization and civilization opens up the way for the Gospel”.\footnote{Marsden papers, 25/10/1810 ML A1993 p. 3, cited in Brook and Kohen, 1991, p. 266} It seemed to Grey that the rapid expansion of British imperialism at that time was a process by which a benign and enlightened British civilization, through the agency of British commerce, was sweeping through the world bringing light
to dark places. In his *Journals* he set out his vision of the way in which British commercial enterprise was bringing about “the march of improvement among distant lands”. He used romantic language to describe British commercial activity throughout the world as a “wizard wand”, cleansing and modernising the world as it swept away all that was old, dark and evil:

The merchant in London who lays on a vessel for a certain port, regards the affair as a mere mercantile speculation, but could he trace out the results he effects in their remotest ramifications, he would stand astonished at the changes he produces. With the wizard wand of commerce, he touches a lone and trackless forest, and at his bidding, cities arise, and the hum and dust of trade collect – away are swept ancient races; antique laws and customs moulder into oblivion. The strong-holds of murder and superstition are cleansed, and the Gospel is preached amongst ignorant and savage men. The ruder languages disappear successively, and the tongue of England alone is heard around.

Although Christianity certainly played a part in this process of global improvement, it was the magic of commerce that would enable “[t]he strong-holds of murder and superstition” to be cleansed, and “the Gospel [to be] preached amongst ignorant and savage men”. Aborigines required the agency of a more advanced society to bring them out of the darkness of ‘savagery’ to the light of ‘civilization’, a process involving, in Grey’s imagination, the supplanting of a dark and malign culture by enlightened British culture, “not by the sword, but by the gentle arts of peace and beneficence.”

**Providing boarding facilities at Piltawodli**

George Grey’s view of ‘civilization’ as a force with the power to sweep away the ancient system which bound Indigenous people in a state of barbarity led him to favour a ‘civilization-first’ approach in the schooling of Indigenous children. He believed that Aboriginal people could achieve ‘civilization’ only when their stultifying traditions were broken down through the intervention of a ‘civilized’ race. Aboriginal individuals would

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49 Grey, 1841, p. 200
50 Grey, 1841, p. 200-1
51 Grey, 1841 p. 201
52 Grey, 1841, pp. 201
continue “suffering under their own customs” as long as their elders were permitted to perpetuate them. Grey’s plan for the ‘civilization’ of Aboriginal people involved ‘protecting’ children from the cruel and enslaving laws of their elders, and teaching them the skills and habits of ‘civilized’ living in residential schools. The civilizing project was a process whereby Aboriginal people would be freed from the bondages of dark and cruel customs to no less an extent than African slaves had been released from the bondage of servitude.

While children attending the Piltawoldi school came under the influence of their teachers during school hours, they returned to their families in the evening, and travelled with them when they left Adelaide. In order to increase the ‘civilizing’ influence of education by reducing the influence of Aboriginal culture and its purveyors, older Aboriginal men, Grey provided the means for the establishment in 1843 of what Klosé referred to as “a kind of educational institution here on the Location”. Initially a trial was made with eight girls, the most regular attendees, being boarded at Piltawodli. On 22 June a woman named Jane Russell was employed by the government to care for schoolgirls in one of the small houses at Piltawodli which had been built by Aboriginal men and the missionaries. These houses had been intended for use by Aboriginal families, but Aboriginal use of the buildings had not conformed with European notions of house occupancy, and for much of the time they had remained empty. Moorhouse reported that “though in good tenantable state” they were “little used”. Jane Russell’s husband, Thomas, improved and extended the house to make it suitable for use as a boarding house to accommodate themselves and the schoolgirls. The scheme was shortly afterwards extended to include boarding provisions for seven boys whose attendance had also been regular. Boys were housed in the school building, where a sleeping and mess room was fitted up. Once these provisions were set in place, Moorhouse reported that “the attendance of boys and girls was required in the night, as well as the daytime”.

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53 Grey, 1841, p. 375
54 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 24-5, Klosé letter 11, 7/7/1843
55 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 8/7/1843, AJPC Reel no 594
56 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 25, Klosé letter 11, 7/7/1843
57 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 14/1/1840, Papers Relative to South Australia, p. 323
58 Moorhouse to Col Sec, 29/7/1845, Letterbook pp. 139-40
59 Moorhouse, Protector’s report, 8/7/1843, AJCP Reel no 594
60 Moorhouse, Protector’s report, 8/7/1843, AJCP Reel no 594
was responsible for keeping the children and their accommodation clean, and instructing them in cooking, washing, and other domestic skills.\textsuperscript{61} The costs involved in setting up the sleeping and eating arrangements, the provision of meals, and Jane Russell’s salary of “£20 a year, free board, free accommodation and wood and [the] use of supplies provided for the natives”,\textsuperscript{62} were met by the colonial administration.

Whereas the missionaries opposed later changes in the provision of education to Aboriginal children made by Grey, they were pleased with the boarding arrangements. Boarding the children at the Location was seen as a means by which children, and particularly girls, could be protected from contracting the venereal disease which was at the time severely affecting the Indigenous population. A number of school children had already been affected. One student, Kartanya, who had attended school since its first year, and samples of whose handwriting had been sent to the committee of the Dresden Mission Society in 1840, contracted venereal disease when, after working for a year in the home of the Protector, she had left to be married. Klosé had written of his hope that God would “provide means, ways, and paths to control this repulsive disease, especially among the children”.\textsuperscript{63} He saw the boarding provisions as the means by which the children at least would be protected.

As early as 1841, too, Klosé had expressed a wish to provide protection for Kaurna girls from the social requirements of Indigenous culture. When two schoolgirls had attempted to escape from their promised husbands by seeking refuge with the missionaries, he expressed regret that, as an unmarried man, he was not able to take them into his house as servants. He wrote that if he “were married and had the means [he] would build a boarding-school and as far as possible try to give the children a Christian education and keep them away from the sinful lives of their parents”.\textsuperscript{64}

The establishment of dormitory system at the school not only met the perceived need to protect children, but furthered the missionaries’ Christianization agenda because the evangelisation taking place in the school was not interrupted by the children’s return to their own families. Now both Klosé and Russell could reinforce the Christian teaching of

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\textsuperscript{61} Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 24-5, Klosé letter 11, 7/7/1843
\textsuperscript{62} Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 24-5, Klosé letter 11, 7/7/1843
\textsuperscript{63} Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 24-5, Klosé letter 11, 7/7/1843
\textsuperscript{64} Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 21, Klosé letter 7, 10/12/1841
\end{flushleft}
the school even when the children were not in class. Klosé wrote that even though it required “great patience” to teach domestic skills to children who were “by nature ... inclined towards slovenliness”, Jane Russell carried out her duties:

with great devotion for she knows him who bears her with great love. This is very fortunate for me and for the children because if she were a worldly woman she could destroy ten times as much as I can build up. On the contrary, she supports me, because at every opportunity she directs the children towards the Lord our Saviour so that she confirms in word and deed everything that they are taught in school, as Christian parents normally tend to do with their children.\(^{65}\)

Although the institution of boarding facilities increased the degree to which children were removed from “the sinful lives of their parents”, the location of the school at Piltawodli, where Kaurna people frequently camped, enabled children to maintain some contact with their families and other Aboriginal people. Some colonists saw this as a major fault in the system. Edward John Eyre believed that boarding the children at such close proximity to their families represented only minimal improvement on the previous day-school approach. He noted that the children, out of school hours, were free to “roam in a great measure at will”, and were frequently employed in gathering firewood for the school in the parklands. Because the parklands were “constantly occupied by the grown up natives”, Eyre argued that “there is consequently nearly as much intercourse between the school children and the other natives, and as great an influence exercised over them by their parents and elders, as if they were still allowed to frequent the camps”.\(^{66}\)

At a time when many Kaurna people were leaving Adelaide due to the presence there of large numbers of Murray River people, the boarding facilities provided by Grey effectively served to minimize the disruption caused to the school by such movements. Although Klosé did not expect constant attendance at the school “because the bush-life or rather the actual free life is enjoyed by all people, especially by the natives here”, he was hopeful that the boarding arrangements would bring about more regular

\(^{66}\) Eyre, 1845, p. 437
attendance by enabling children to remain at school when their parents travelled away.\textsuperscript{67} The South Australian Missionary Society, established to provide support to the missionaries, stated that the attendance of children being taught in the location school by Klosé had been:

irregular, from the habits of their parents, a difficulty which he expects ... will be diminished by their improved treatment under a new plan, instituted by his Excellency the Governor, for their being permanently boarded and instructed at the location.\textsuperscript{68}

The new arrangements do seem to have been successful in achieving this. For the first time, some parents willingly left their children with the missionaries.\textsuperscript{69} The girls seemed happier when they were boarded, Klosé wrote, “because they [had] better food and [slept] warmer”, and “even the parents are satisfied because they see that the children are completely cared for”\textsuperscript{70}. While some children continued to attend irregularly, going to school while their parents were at Piltawodli and then travelling with their families when they moved again, a core group of children remained consistently at school. In September 1844 Klosé wrote that “[t]he result of [the boarding] arrangement is that for the past year I have had 20 children (12 girls and 8 boys) at school every day”.\textsuperscript{71}

Twelve months after the system was put into place, Moorhouse stated in his quarterly report that:

[t]he school, during the quarter, has been the most encouraging field of labour; the attendance has been more regular than at any previous period. Eighteen is the number now under instruction in the school at the location, and the average out of the 18 is $17^{3/4}$ daily. Several instances have occurred in January of one or two girls occasionally sleeping in the branch huts, but none have slept out of the matron's house since the 20\textsuperscript{th} of February.\textsuperscript{72}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{67} Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 24-5, Klosé letter 11, 7/7/1843
\item \textsuperscript{68} Southern Australian, 8/9/1843, p. 2
\item \textsuperscript{69} Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 24-5, Klosé letter 11, 7/7/1843; Register, 17/1/1844, p. 2
\item \textsuperscript{70} Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 24-5, Klosé letter 11, 7/7/1843
\item \textsuperscript{71} Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 33, Klosé letter 14, 3/9/1843
\item \textsuperscript{72} Grey to Stanley, dispatch no. 49, 10/11/1844, AJPC reel no 597; Moorhouse, Protector’s report 10/4/1844, AJPC reel no 597
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Grey reported to the Colonial Office in London that “the introduction of this system has been attended with very great success”.73

The more consistent attendance of children led to a broadening of the school’s curriculum. Before boarding arrangements were in place Klosé had written that:

[i]f the children attended more regularly one could work on other subjects such as geography. But the nomadic life is too firmly rooted. If one were to take another subject one would have to repeat it over and over again throughout the year because they are always going here and there.74

Now Moorhouse signalled an intention to “offer to the mind other branches of knowledge”, besides the four ‘Rs’ of religion, reading, writing and arithmetic that hitherto made up the schools curriculum.75 Geography was introduced for the first time. Moorhouse reported in October that all the children knew “the general divisions of the Earth – its shape, diameter, circumference the names of continents, oceans, seas and gulphs, also the general character of the inhabitants of each part, as colour &c”.76 Not only was attendance more regular now, Klosé found that he was able to hold their attention at school for longer periods. He began, as a result, to teach “the Bible story in sequence, from the Creation on”.77

Moorhouse proudly reported that since the adoption of “an improved system of education”:

there is not a child between the age of five and ten years, 60 miles to the north or 60 miles to the south, with an average bredth from east to west of 10 miles, that does not know the alphabet, and some more advanced reading, writing, and arithmetic.78

73 Grey to Stanley, dispatch no. 49, 10/4/1844, AJPC reel no 597
75 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 8/7/1843, p. 6, SRSA, GRG 24/6/1843/812
76 Moorhouse, Protector’s report, 4/11/1843, p. 26, SRSA, GRG 24/6/1843/1234
77 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 31, Klosé letter 13, 10/2/1844
78 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 8/7/1843, AJCP reel no 594
Facilitating the teaching of sewing

The new arrangements at the Location school represented a shift towards the Government’s approach of placing a greater focus on the ‘civilizing’ component of the civilization/Christianization project. A further shift towards the ‘civilization-first’ approach took place with the setting in place of provisions to enable the recommencement of sewing lessons for Kaurna girls. A group of middle-class women, mainly Wesleyans, had formed themselves into a group called ‘the committee for instructing native children,’ and had, during 1841, run sewing classes at Piltawodli. However, the women had found the long walk from town through the parklands to Piltawodli arduous, particularly during the winter, and this, together with the irregular attendance of the children, had led to the lessons being discontinued. To enable the women to conduct classes without having to walk through the parklands, Grey made available a small house in town, near Government House, for use as a sewing school.

On 24 June 1843, two days after the new boarding arrangements were instituted, Klosé and Moorhouse took the schoolchildren there for a small ceremony to mark its opening. The ceremony was attended by the Methodist Minister, Weatherstone, and several women colonists. Grey had indicated an intention to be present with his wife, but was unable to attend. The schoolchildren sang a Kaurna hymn, Ngadluko yerli Karralika, prayed with Klosé in Kaurna, and were told the purpose of the new arrangements. Weatherstone spoke of the women’s duty to “be concerned with the welfare of [the] souls” of the children, as well as teaching them to sew. Following this opening ceremony, the schoolgirls attended sewing lessons in town, walking from Piltawodli under the escort of Jane Russell.

The teaching of sewing was an important feature of Grey’s civilization-first approach for three reasons. The first was that the sewing of clothes by the girls made it possible for children to be clothed at school, as the wearing of clothes in ways considered appropriate was a key signifier of progress in ‘civilization’. Accounts of young men and women who returned ‘to the bush’ after a period of apparent ‘civilization’ almost

79 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 20-1, Klosé letter 7, 10/12/1841 – he says that the women had not come for sewing lessons since July.
80 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 24-5, Klosé letter 11, 7/7/1843
81 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 24-5, Klosé letter 11, 7/7/1843
82 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 24-5, Klosé letter 11, 7/7/1843
invariably included reference to the removal of clothing. Reporting on the young Kaurna man, Bappa Monatya, who returned ‘to the bush’ after a period of years of employment in Van Dieman’s Land and on whaling ships, Moorhouse wrote that he had “exchanged his European clothes, for the opossum rug, and ... returned to his wandering habits.” 83 Teichelmann described the return of Miltewidlo to his family after a period of being “fully civilized”, as a return to “his naked lifestyle”. 84 When two Kurna girls left their positions as domestic servants to join their husbands, Klosé wrote that they “took off their dresses and took with them only one garment which they wrapped around their bodies under their arms, as the other woman do”. 85 “We have the mortification to find”, Anglican Bishop Augustus Short wrote, “that after years of cleanliness; wearing clothing; obedience to rules; ... – all is cast off; clothes are left behind, & the savage once more returns to his Tribe: to resume the freedom of the wilderness with the filth, disease, & scanty subsistence of his forefathers”. 86 If the civilizing mission sought to transform the body, the mind and the heart of Indigenous people, it was the wearing of clothes that most signified the transformation of bodies. This was demonstrated ten years later when Short described young Aboriginal people at the Anglican mission at Poonindie as “now clothed and in their right minds, sitting at the feet of Jesus”. 87

Two months after the opening of the sewing school, Moorhouse informed Grey that “the ladies constituting the committee for instructing native children [were] anxious to see them clothed when attending school”, 88 and requested that material be provided by the government to enable this. Subsequently, material was provided by the government, and clothes were made by the girls to be worn by both boys and girls at the school. 89 At Klosé’s wedding, on 16 April 1844, he was accompanied to the church by the school-children “in their green woollen jackets” which had been made by the girls in their sewing classes. 90

83 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 15/4/1846, p. 4, SRSA GRG 24/6/1846/434
84 Teichelmann diaries, p.16, early 1841
86 Short to Robe, SRSA, GRG 24/6/1848/954/2
87 Short, letter written following a visit to Poonindie, 14/2/1853, cited in M. B. Hale, 1889, The Aborigines of Australia, being an account of the Institution for their education at Poonindie in South Australia, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, p. 52
88 Moorhouse to Col Sec, 23/8/1843, Letterbook p. 82
89 Moorhouse to Col Sec, 23/8/1843, Letterbook p. 83
A second reason for Grey’s reinstitution of sewing classes was that they represented a means by which contact could be established between middle-class women and Aboriginal girls. At a time when missionaries and colonists were calling for the segregation of Indigenous people from colonial society, Grey’s view of ‘civilization’ led him to envisage as the end result of the civilizing mission the incorporation of Indigenous people into British colonial society, rather than their segregation from it. In accordance with his view of British society and commerce as agents capable of bringing ‘civilization’ to ‘uncivilized’ peoples through colonization, he believed that the ‘civilizing’ process could only be achieved if Aborigines were brought fully into contact with ‘civilized’ society, not isolated from it. His approach in the civilizing mission was to bring about closer contact between Aboriginal children and ‘respectable’ sectors of colonial society. In accordance with his belief in the transforming power of British civilization, he consistently encouraged middle-class men and women to interest themselves in the school and the children who attended it, in order that they might exert a ‘civilizing’ influence over them, and provide role models for the children in their progress towards ‘civilization’.

The third reason why sewing classes for girls were important in Grey’s approach was that training children for ‘civilization’ included training in the gender roles of nineteenth century British society. The missionary approach, aimed as it was at bringing about an inner transformation of the heart, made no gender distinction in its teaching, except for instruction in sewing when teachers were available. As the approach in Aboriginal education shifted from a missionary to a government approach over the next few years, however, the education of girls was to become increasingly different from that of boys. In the institution that Grey was to establish for Aboriginal children in 1845, boys were to be “chiefly occupied in reading, writing and accounts”, while girls would be predominantly occupied with sewing, laundering, and “the cooking and cleaning of the Establishment”.  

“an unavoidable necessity”: the introduction of English

In early 1844 Grey made further changes in the form of schooling undertaken at Piltawodli when English was introduced to the curriculum of the school. Grey’s plan for

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91 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 15/10/1845, p.10, SRSA GRG 24/6/1845/1217
the economic incorporation of Indigenous people into colonial society included the replacement of Indigenous languages with English. When the ‘wizard wand of commerce’ worked its magic, bringing about the global advancement of mankind, he believed, ‘the ruder languages [would] disappear successively, and the tongue of England alone [would be] heard around’.92 Although he had learnt and recorded the language of the Nyungar people of South Western Australia, he had no interest in the preservation of languages except as text. “Knowledge of their past was considered valuable for understanding their conditions”, one of Grey’s biographers has written “but had no value for their future”.93 English, for Grey, was the language of civilization, and the teaching of English was an essential part of his approach in the schooling of Aboriginal children.

From the beginning the missionaries had encountered public opposition to their policy of teaching literacy in the vernacular at Piltawodli. Edward John Eyre noted that “almost all [colonists] have felt, that the system originally adopted [of teaching children in the vernacular] was essentially wrong”.94 Whereas many colonists opposed the school as a futile approach in the civilizing mission, as I have argued in the last chapter, colonists who supported the attempt to ‘civilize’ through education were frequently unconvinced of the utility of teaching in the vernacular, and voiced their opposition in public meetings. The missionary objective of creating ‘civilized’ Aborigines who spoke their own language was a contradiction in terms to most colonists. To be ‘civilized’ was to speak in English. An article in the Register stated in 1846 that “[w]e would … deem no native a British subject till he were so far civilized as to understand and talk the language”.95 Schürmann wrote shortly after beginning his school that “[a] few friends of the natives are of the opinion that we should instruct them in English and have criticised us for following a different approach”.96 They were determined to continue with their approach, however, “whatever may be said or advised against it”.97

92 Grey, 1841, p. 210
94 Eyre, 1845, p. 442
95 Register, 1/7/1846, p. 2
96 Schürmann to Dresden Mission Society, begun 19/1/1839
97 Schürmann, 1838, 'Natives of South Australia'
The South Australian Mission Society, founded in June 1842 to provide moral and financial support to the Lutheran Missionaries, applied pressure to the missionaries to abandon the use of the vernacular in the school. According to the Colonial Chaplain, James Farrell, the Society wished “to see that instruction was given to the natives in a more comprehensive way, and in a way that would be most available to them”, and instruction in English language and literacy was clearly seen as a means by which the missionary approach could be rendered more effective. A vocal opponent of the missionary policy was Anthony Forster, a dissident Wesleyan who was George Fife Angas’ agent in the colony. At a public meeting of the South Australian Missionary Society in September 1843, Forster argued against the use of the vernacular in the school. Giving reasons to support his contention that “the perpetuation of the native language was neither necessary or convenient”, he stated his belief, firstly, that English was a better medium through which to give religious instruction, because “many of the most important truths of the gospel could not be placed before them through the idiom of their own language”. Secondly he contended that, “if the aboriginal race was continued, it must amalgamate, sooner or later, with the white population, whose language and customs it must necessarily acquire”. The lack of knowledge of the Kaurna language among the colonists was a third disadvantage, he argued, because it meant that only the missionaries, as the only Europeans who had acquired the language, were able to teach in the school, and “should anything in the providence of God happen to their present teachers, the children would be left without instructors”. Presented as a fourth reason for opposing the use of the vernacular was his belief that, as the language of a savage people, its use inhibited Aboriginal ‘progress’ towards ‘civilization’, through its association with Aboriginal culture. “[T]heir own language was associated with habits and prejudices which it would not be easy for them to overcome whilst they were encouraged to use it”, he argued. Finally he provided an example of a missionary who had found it “impossible to impart religious truths to the negroes of his charge [in south-eastern Africa] unless their language was superseded”.

98 S.A. Select Committee Report, p. 72
100 Register, 9/9/1843, p. 3
101 Register, 9/9/1843, p. 3
meeting, printed in the *Southern Australian*, stated that Forster had argued that “the native would be sooner civilized if their language was extinct”.102

Eyre was also critical of the policy of teaching in the vernacular at Piltawodli. In his description of the approach taken in the civilizing mission in South Australia at the time of his departure to England in December 1844, he set out the reasons why he and “almost all” colonists disagreed with the missionaries approach, which corresponded broadly with Forster’s reasons for opposing it. He cited the length of time required to learn a language, the small number of children that could be taught through the medium of each language, and the problems presented by the death or illness of a teacher as disadvantages of the vernacular literacy approach. He argued also that children taught in their own tongue were “debarred from the advantage of any casual instruction or information which they might receive from other than their own teachers, and from entering upon duties or relations of any kind with Europeans among whom they are living, but whose language they cannot speak”. He also identified, as Forster had, the close relationship between language and culture, arguing that children taught in their own language were “more deeply confirmed in their original feelings and prejudices, and more thoroughly kept under the influence and direction of their own people”.103

The position of colonists who opposed the use of Kaurna in the school was strengthened during 1843 and 1844 by the displacement of Kaurna-speaking people with people who spoke other languages. By 1844 there were large numbers of Indigenous children in Adelaide who did not speak Kaurna, and for whom the Kaurna literacy programme at Piltawodli was inappropriate.

When Klosé informed his Mission Society in Germany, early in 1844, that, since school attendance was now more consistent, he would “next give lessons in the English language”,104 he wrote that to do so was “an unavoidable necessity” “because later on they will have to make their living among the English”.105 However, the decision to move away from the use of the vernacular was a result of outside pressure, rather than his own conviction. His own experience of learning English continued to inform his belief

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102 *Southern Australian*, 8/9/1843, p. 2
103 Eyre, 1845, p. 442
104 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 31, Klosé letter 13, 10/2/1844
that children would better understand their lessons through the medium of their own language. In December 1844, ten months after the introduction of English instruction in the school, he was asked by a colonist if he still considered it best to teach in the vernacular. He replied that he did, “based on my own experience, as I still understand German much better than English”. 106 That the missionaries changed their approach unwillingly is confirmed by Eyre, who noted that despite a general approval at the adoption of English teaching in the school, “the missionaries themselves still retain[ed] their former impressions, and that although they have yielded to public opinion on this point, they have not done so from a conviction of its utility”. 107 Teichelmann, too, in support of his claim that the missionaries had always “endeavour[ed] to accommodate our operations as far as compatible to His Excellency’s wishes” cited as an example the concession made by Klosé “to instruct the native children either entirely or partly in the medium of the English language”. 108 Teichelmann remained critical of the move to teach literacy in English. In April 1845, he took a lesson with the schoolchildren, using an English reader that contained moral and biblical texts. He asked the children to translate short sections into Kaurna. He recorded in his diary that although the children read well, they did not understand what they read, because they could not translate it into their own language. 109

Although public opposition to the use of Kaurna in the school was strengthened by the presence in Adelaide of Indigenous people who did not speak the language, the change of policy in the school seems to have been brought about through the direct intervention of Grey. Public opposition had been consistently expressed since the school had commenced, but this had not swayed the missionaries in their belief that their objectives could be most effectively achieved through the vernacular. It is significant that the introduction of English literacy followed a visit to the school by Grey. Klosé informed the Dresden Society of his intention to teach English two weeks after Grey’s visit, and although he did not mention any pressure from Grey in his letter, the mention of his intention to teach English and the mention of Grey’s visit were made almost in the same breath. It seems very likely that Grey spoke to Klosé or Moorhouse during or following that visit about the language of instruction used at the school.

107 Eyre, 1845, p. 442
108 Teichelmann to Moorhouse, SRSA, GRG 24/6/1845/115
109 Teichelmann diaries, p. 62, 27/4/1845
suggestion that the language that should be used was English.\textsuperscript{110} Teichelmann later referred to Grey’s belief that Aboriginal people should be spoken to only in English as Grey’s “favourite idea”.\textsuperscript{111}

In recent years the debate over the use of the vernacular in education has frequently been between those who believe the central role of Aboriginal education to be assimilatory, and those who support ‘cultural pluralism’ as a societal goal. Margaret Scrimgeour has argued that “[d]ifferences in ideology between proponents of assimilation and ‘cultural pluralism’ impact significantly on the current bilingual education debate in Australia”.\textsuperscript{112} While proponents of bilingual education today argue their case “on the grounds that [bilingual] programmes represent a legitimate vehicle for the preservation of Indigenous knowledge systems and languages”,\textsuperscript{113} the German missionaries believed the vernacular represented the best vehicle for achieving success in the project to Christianize and ‘civilize’ Indigenous people. While they were concerned to see Indigenous languages preserved, this was because they believed their objective of changing Aboriginal people could most easily be achieved through the medium of Indigenous languages, and not on the grounds that Indigenous people had a right to maintain unique linguistic and cultural identities within Australian society. Both sides of the nineteenth century debate were located squarely within the ‘civilizing’ paradigm. Yet important similarities between the nineteenth century debate and the current debate over bilingual education can be found in the different ideas on each side of the debate regarding the centrality of assimilation, or incorporation, as a goal of the education process. Because the incorporation of Indigenous people into colonial society was not a primary goal for the missionaries, the teaching of the language of the mainstream community was not an important component of their schools. For colonists such as Forster who supported the attempt to ‘civilize’ Aboriginal children by educating them in schools, and for Grey, the role of schools was to achieve the incorporation of

\textsuperscript{110} Teichelmann diaries, p. 52, 31/12/1844
\textsuperscript{111} Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 31, Klosé letter 13, 10/2/1844: “As the children, I hope, will now stay here more constantly, I will next give lessons in the English language, which is very necessary. About a fortnight ago the Governor visited the school with the eldest son of G. F. Angas who has recently arrived from England…”
\textsuperscript{113} M. Scrimgeour, 2001, p. 127
Indigenous people into the mainstream community, and into the economic life of colonial society, and they saw the teaching of English as essential to this process.

In early 1843 Moorhouse had set out in a report to Grey the advantages of using Kaurna in the school, but in a letter to Grey accompanying his quarterly report of 8 July 1844 he announced the adoption of English as an improvement “calculated ... to be of permanent advantage” in the school.\(^{114}\) While reiterating that the “line of procedure ... adopted by the Missionaries to the Aborigines” had the advantage of enabling an easier acquisition of literacy, he stated that experience had “somewhat modified these views”. He now set out the disadvantages of using the vernacular in the school, including the concern that only those children who spoke “the Adelaide dialect” could attend the school. When the school had been established this had not been an issue, as all Indigenous children in Adelaide were Kaurna, or learnt to speak the language when they visited Adelaide. Evidence that children from other areas of the colony attended school at Piltawodli and learnt to speak Kaurna there is found in a comment made by Teichelmann in December 1840, when he visited Lake Alexandrina. There he met two Ramindjeri boys “from Encounter Bay who had attended school in Adelaide, and had got so far as to be able to read and understand our language [Kaurna], whom we now used as interpreters”.\(^{115}\) By 1844, however, most of the Indigenous children around Adelaide spoke languages other than Kaurna, and Kaurna-speaking children were in the minority. Nevertheless, when Klosé started teaching English at Piltawodli, plans for a separate school for Murray River children were already well underway, indicating that the inclusion of children of other language groups in the Piltawodli school was not a reason for its introduction.

As a further reason for moving away from the vernacular literacy approach at Piltawodli, Moorhouse cited the disadvantage of a programme that depended on a teacher fluent in the language. Another disadvantage of the missionary approach, Moorhouse argued, was that:

\(^{114}\) Moorhouse to Grey, letter accompanying Protector’s report 8/7/1844, SRSA GRG 24/6/1844/712
\(^{115}\) Teichelmann diaries, p. 12, 8/12/1840
if the children should be led to embrace christianity, it necessarily follows, that they would adopt civilized habits at the same time, and if educated only in their own tongue, and brought into commercial intercourse with the Europeans, they could not effect treaties on the ground of equals against equals, in consequence of the difference in language.\footnote{Moorhouse to Grey, Letter accompanying Protector’s report 8 /7/1844, SRSA GRG 24/6/1844/712}

Although this statement is made as a part of a letter from Moorhouse to Grey, it illustrates nicely the shift in emphasis that was taking place in Aboriginal education that was being set in place by Grey himself. While the Christianization component of the project was still emphasized by Moorhouse, the importance of training in “civilized habits at the same time” to facilitate the economic incorporation of Indigenous people into mainstream society was now being fore-grounded.

He wrote that “[t]he Rev\textsuperscript{d} Mr Klosé is now adopting the english language in the School at the Location, with the exception of instruction upon religious subjects, and this is sometimes given in english and sometimes in the Native language.\footnote{Moorhouse to Grey, Letter accompanying Protector’s report, 8 /7/1844, SRSA GRG 24/6/1844/712} The children were “exercised in reading the English language twice a week”. Having learnt to read their own language phonetically, the children had difficulty with the non-phonetic nature of written English, Moorhouse noting that “they find considerable difficulty in pronouncing words containing mute consonants”. He hoped, however, “that practice will shortly render it easy”.\footnote{Moorhouse, Protector’s report 10/4/1844, AJPC reel no 597} Although Moorhouse wrote in July 1844 that “the english language has chiefly occupied [the] attention” of the children\footnote{Moorhouse, Protector’s report 8/7/1844 SRSA GRG 24/6/1844/712}, the school programme was actually bilingual. Eyre noted when he left the colony in December 1844 that “[u]ntil very recently this school was taught in the native language; but English is now adopted, except in lecturing from the scripture, when the native language is still retained”.\footnote{Eyre, 1845, p. 432} The first part of every school day, until recess time, was devoted to religious instruction carried out in Kaurna. Instruction in Kaurna literacy was still
included in the curriculum, along with English literacy, while arithmetic and geography were taught in English.\textsuperscript{121}

Moorhouse claimed in July 1844, shortly after English literacy was introduced in the school, that twelve children were “able to read sentences, containing words of one & two syllables, with ease”, and in September, when a number of books arrived in the colony for the use of the Aborigines, he requested twenty New Testaments, as “some of the Native children [were] so far advanced as to be able to read [it]”.\textsuperscript{122} In his quarterly report of 2 April 1845 he claimed that of the fifteen children attending daily eleven were reading the New Testament, and four were “in the Second Class Book”. All were able to write in English, and Moorhouse forwarded to Grey specimens of handwriting from nine of the children.\textsuperscript{123} Anthony Forster expressed his satisfaction at the change in policy when he told a meeting of Methodists of the New Connexion that:

\begin{quote}
[t]he desirableness of instruction in the English language had received so much confirmation that Mr. Closé [sic] had commenced its adoption in the school attached to the German mission, wherein several children could read the New Testament with tolerable accuracy, and were rapidly improving.\textsuperscript{124}
\end{quote}

The establishment of dormitories and sewing lessons represented a large increase in government expenditure on the school. Until 1843 government expenditure on the school had only involved school materials and food for the children to take with them back to their homes. Now a matron’s salary, three meals per day, and material for clothing was provided. The government also provided the sewing room in town. The shift from day-school to residential school, the provision of sewing facilities and the increased emphasis on the clothing of children’s bodies, and the teaching of English, represented a shift towards a greater emphasis on the ‘civilization’ component of the Christianization/civilization project.

\textsuperscript{121} Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 34-5, Klosé letter 14, 3/9/1844
\textsuperscript{122} Moorhouse to Col Sec, 19/10/1844, Letterbook p. 110-1
\textsuperscript{123} Moorhouse, Protector’s report, 2/4/1845, p. 5-6, SRSA GRG 24/6/1845/336
\textsuperscript{124} Adelaide Observer, 10/8/1844, p. 5
Grey’s response to population shift

By 1844, according to Eyre, the number of Indigenous people around Adelaide usually averaged about three hundred, but rose at times to as many as eight hundred. The Kaurna were powerless to prevent these incursions into their land. In April 1844 another attempted battle was averted when Kaurna and Ramindjeri people, travelling from Adelaide to Genelg to meet Murray people in battle, were intercepted by three policemen, who destroyed all their weapons. The incident was reported in the *Adelaide Observer*, the writer noting the response of the Indigenous people to this interference. “[S]ome looked quite aghast”, he wrote, “others were confounded, and many for the moment, I dare say, doubted their senses, whether such a collection of beautiful uwindas and shields, kylahs and midlahs, were absolutely to be destroyed”. Undoubtedly frustrated by his inability to respond to the incursions into his country of Murray River people in a traditional way, Mullawirraburka, a leading Kaurna man known to colonists as King John, asked the writer of the article to “write in the paper and tell white man what for we fight”. According to the writer, Mullawirraburka told him that:

> before white man come, Murray black fellow never come here. Now white fellow come, Murray black fellow come too. Encounter Bay and Adelaide black fellow no like him. Me want them to go away. Let them sit down at the Murray, not here. This is not his country. What he do here? You tell Captain Grey to make Murray black fellow go away, no more fight them.

The writer of the article argued that “some attention should be paid to their grievances; for ... trivial and unimportant as they appear to us, still in the eyes of the natives, they are of the first importance”. “Let their complaints be listened to”, he urged, “and redressed as far as possible; and let force alone be applied in cases of absolute necessity”. It was too late for such a call, however; an alternative response to the Pitta migration to Adelaide had already been made, and three days after the article was printed a school was opened for the children of Murray people in a village close to Adelaide.

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125 Eyre, 1845, p. 445
126 *Adelaide Observer*, 27/4/1844, p. 5
127 *Adelaide Observer*, 27/4/1844, p. 5
128 *Adelaide Observer*, 27/4/1844, p. 5
Calls for the adoption of measures to prevent the movement of large numbers of people into Adelaide had been made also by Eyre and Moorhouse, who expressed concern at the “contaminating” effects of town visits on the Murray people, the degree to which these visits unsettled Kaurna people, the nuisance caused to colonists who lived along the routes travelled, and the inconvenience to colonists of large numbers of Indigenous people seeking food in Adelaide. Although Grey did act on recommendations made by Moorhouse to discourage movement into Adelaide, his response to the presence of Murray people in Adelaide was to take the opportunity of incorporating their children into the ‘civilizing’ project. An early attempt had been made to include these in the school at Piltawodli, but, according to Moorhouse, this had proved unsuccessful. Before the establishment of dormitories at Piltawodli, Klosé had, in gathering children for school each morning, persuaded some Murray children to attend. He made no mention of any conflict arising from their attendance, but Moorhouse claimed that they found it impossible to have children of both language groups at school together. In October 1845 he wrote that:

[t]hree years ago, an attempt was made to educate these children in the same school, but it was unsuccessful. The children belong to opposing tribes and speak different dialects, and the less numerous party, whichever it happened to be, felt timid, and would go away, lest their more numerous associates should enchant them.

In early 1843 he informed Grey that:

[t]he Murray people ... are not in their own country & if they send their children [to school], they meet with insolence and abuse [sic], & are accused of taking the food, which by proprietary right, belongs to the Adelaide children, & hence we are prevented access to the Murray children living in Adelaide.

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129 Eyre to Grey, 7/2/1843, Reports and Letters to Governor Grey from E. J. Eyre at Moorundie. Sullivans Cove, Adelaide, 1985, pp. 50-1
130 Moorhouse to Grey, 25/4/1843, Letterbook p. 74
131 Eyre, Reports and Letters to Governor Grey, p. 57, 17/4/1843
132 Graetz 2002, p. 27, Klosé letter 10, dated 4/1/1843
133 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 30/1/1843, p. 5, SRSA, GRG 24/6/1843/132
In view of the problems presented by the presence of large numbers of Murray people in town, it seems surprising that Grey chose to locate the new school close to Adelaide rather than in the Murray region. Having children in school at Moorundie, for example, would have tended to keep Aboriginal families in that area. Locating schools in town, on the other hand, had the effect of keeping families in town, as colonist John Wrathall Bull noted. Writing of the school which Grey would establish in Adelaide the following year, Bull wrote that “[t]he policy of placing the school in the city ... was accompanied with great evils and drawbacks, as it of necessity led to the adults sitting down there also”.\(^{134}\) Eyre, too, was critical of the decision to locate the school in town.\(^{135}\) However I suggest that the decision was very much in accordance with Grey’s ideas regarding the nature of the ‘civilization’ and the measures required to achieve it. Just as the ‘civilizing’ influence of education could, according to his ideas, be increased by reducing the influence of Aboriginal culture through residential schooling, it could also be increased through contact with a civilized community.\(^{136}\) He wanted the school located in town so that children could be brought into contact with ‘civilized’ men and women. He also thought it preferable that Aboriginal people be concentrated in centres of European population, rather than scattered in remote areas, where the danger of violent conflict was greater. The recommendations for civilizing Aboriginal people which he had presented to colonial secretary Lord John Russell had included the suggestion that Aborigines should be encouraged to “assemble in great numbers” in “well-peopled districts where a force sufficient to protect and control [them] exists” and “where proper means for their improvement can be provided”. He argued that this would also have the benefit of reducing their numbers “in those portions of the colony which have a small European population”.\(^{137}\)

Kaurna seem to have been left with little option but to leave the Adelaide area to the newcomers, both European and Indigenous. Teichelmann wrote in November 1844 that “[t]hose who speak our language are scattered all over the country and will probably not return within the coming months, if ever”.\(^{138}\) The men and women he gathered

\(^{134}\) Bull, 1884, pp. 64–5
\(^{135}\) Eyre, 1845, p. 443
\(^{136}\) Grey, 1841, p. 223
\(^{137}\) Grey, 1841, p. 385-6
\(^{138}\) Teichelmann diaries, p. 48, 8/11/1844
together to preach to on Sundays were now all Murray people, and after years of
learning Kaurna in order to preach to people in their own language, he was forced to
preach through an interpreter.\textsuperscript{139} Klosé wrote a few years later that “the Adelaide
Natives (whose Language alone I understand and with whom I can speak) are driven
away entirely from town and neighbourhood and scattered about by the Murrey \textit{[sic]}
Natives having come to Adelaide as they have such a terror of them”.\textsuperscript{140}

The Establishment of the Walkerville School

Grey informed Legislative Council of his intention to establish the new government
school in October 1843. He told the Council that the school was for the children of the
Murray River natives who were unwilling to meet at the same school as the Adelaide
children “already under tuition, and whose progress was very gratifying”.\textsuperscript{141} It took
several months, however, for suitable premises to be found to house the school, and
the necessary preparations made. In January, Moorhouse identified a building, belonging
to John Morphett and available for rent at £12 per year, as suitable accommodation for
the school.\textsuperscript{142} The building was located in Walkerville, a village near Adelaide were
Murray people frequently camped.\textsuperscript{143} Moorhouse visited the building in March with the
‘overseer of works’, who prepared an estimate for the cost of repairs required to make
the building habitable and, according to Moorhouse, “for making the six rooms into neat
and comfortable dwellings”.\textsuperscript{144} Eyre described the school building as “a plain, low
cottage, containing a school-room, a sleeping-room for the male children, another for
the female, and apartments for the master and mistress”.\textsuperscript{145} The repairs were
completed by mid-April, when Moorhouse requested furniture for the school, consisting
of a writer’s desk, blackboard, dining table, forms for seating thirty children, and two
guard beds.\textsuperscript{146}

Meanwhile, Moorhouse attempted to find a suitable schoolmaster and matron to run the
establishment. In February 1844 the position was offered to Schürmann, now living in

\textsuperscript{139} Teichelmann diaries, p. 47, 27/10/1844; also p. 47, 3/11/1844; p. 51, 15/12/1844
\textsuperscript{140} Klosé to Robe, 15/2/1848, SRSA GRG 24/6/1848/207
\textsuperscript{141} Adelaide Observer, 21/10/1843, p. 10
\textsuperscript{142} Moorhouse to Col Sec, 25/1/1844, Letterbook p. 92
\textsuperscript{143} Schürmann, Letter to Dresden Mission Society, 15/4/1844
\textsuperscript{144} Moorhouse to Col Sec, 13/3/1844, Letterbook p. 94
\textsuperscript{145} Eyre, 1845, p. 432
\textsuperscript{146} Moorhouse to Col Sec, 9/4/1844, Letterbook p. 12; also SRSA GRG 24/6/1844/286
Port Lincoln. Although the stipend of £70 per annum was attractive, Schürmann declined the offer. The position was also offered to a young schoolteacher, William Cawthorne, and his mother, Georgina. William and Georgina had arrived in the colony three years earlier, when William was sixteen, to join their father and husband, but found he had left the colony. To support herself and her son, Georgina set up a small day-school in Adelaide, at which she taught the girls’ class while William taught the boys. William was an avid recorder of life in the young colony, and left a legacy of diaries and other written documents recording, amongst other things, ethnographic information on Indigenous people. He also left many drawings, including drawings of the Aboriginal school at Piltawodli, and the institution that was to be established by Grey in 1845. Grey seems to have offered the position at Walkerville to the Cawthornes in order to help them out, having learned of their situation through George French Angas, the son of George Fife Angas, who had formed a friendship with William. William recorded in his diary being visited by Moorhouse, who:

came from the governor to offer us the superintendence of the aboriginal school – at Walkerville. The government wanted two parties like us – because we suited exactly – Being a matron & a schoolmaster – those were the words he used. - as to salary – he could not speak positively –perhaps it may be so high as 50£.148

Although he seemed attracted by the salary, as Schürmann had been, as well as by the prospect of being designated “schoolmaster” to his mother’s “matron” instead of his current role as assistant at his mother’s school, Cawthorne called on Moorhouse at Piltawodli the following day to decline the offer. He listed their reasons in his diary, including, interestingly, the consideration that “according to the view of the Governor – we should lose a little of our respectability”, indicating the low status that was attributed to teachers of Indigenous children. The Cawthornes also felt that the situation would be “a laborious one- so much menial labour connected with it” and “a trying one – inasmuch as the native children which would be under our teaching have never been to school or under any regulations before”. William wrote that his mother’s

148 William Cawthorne diaries, ‘Literarium Diarium’, SLSA, second reel, p 205
health was “to precarious” \textit{[sic]} for such a position. However, he gave as the main reason for declining the position the fact that “the situation is not \textit{permanent} and this was the point upon which Mr M told us particularly to consider”.\textsuperscript{149}

The fact that the positions were not permanent indicates that the school at Walkerville was established as a temporary arrangement only, a suggestion supported by fact that it was housed in rented premises. The rental agreement made by the government with Morphett included “a proviso that the Government should be allowed to occupy, at their pleasure, on the same terms for three years”,\textsuperscript{150} though the building was never really suitable for use as a residential school. Moorhouse reported, just a month after the commencement of the school, that the boy’s bedroom was unusable in wet weather, and the building deteriorated rapidly during the fourteen months of the school’s occupancy.\textsuperscript{151} The school seems to have been established as something of an experiment, possibly in order to assess the capability of the Murray River children, and the feasibility of educating them in Adelaide. As I argue further in the next chapter, Grey seems, during 1844, to have been considering a number of options for proceeding with the civilizing mission, including the option of working through the agency of the Lutheran Mission by providing financial support for further mission schools. In considering what course to take in the civilizing project, the Walkerville school served as a kind of testing ground for putting his ‘civilizing’ ideas directly into place in a government school. Its success, I suggest, was to contribute to Grey’s decision to concentrate all funding in the establishment of a central government institution the following year. This suggestion is supported by a comment made by Klosé, who wrote that the decision to create a central government school was made “[s]ince His Excellency has seen the ability of the children of [the Murray] tribe”.\textsuperscript{152}

Moorhouse seems to have had difficulty in finding a trained or experienced teacher for the Walkerville school. The positions of schoolmaster and matron were eventually offered to William Smith and his wife, who had no previous teaching experience, William coming to the position at Walkerville from a job as draftsman with the Colonial Land

\textsuperscript{149} Cawthorne diaries, second reel, p 205
\textsuperscript{150} Grey to Moorhouse, 22/3/1844, SRSA GRG G 24/4/1844/589
\textsuperscript{151} Moorhouse to Col Sec, 29/5/1844, Letterbook p. 100
\textsuperscript{152} Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 40, Klosé letter 16, 1/2/1845
Office. In April, Moorhouse informed Grey that the school building would be ready on the sixteenth of that month, and on the eighteenth the Smiths were informed that the “new establishment at Walkerville for the education of Native Children” was to be placed under their control. Smith was employed on a salary of £100, while his wife, in her role as ‘matron’, was “allowed the same rations as the matron at the other Native School”. They also received free accommodation and wood.

The school began operating on 30 April 1844, and although it was set up to accommodate thirty children, there was an average daily attendance of 73 children during the first three months, suggesting that conditions must have been very overcrowded. Two weeks after the school began Moorhouse requested a supplementary supply of provisions as there were seventy children at the school, more than twice the number anticipated, and a fortnight later he informed Grey that the number of children had risen to eighty. There were as many as ninety children at one time during that winter, but as the year went on numbers fluctuated, “in consequence of the adults being engaged in frequent hunting excursions, in which they induce or compel their children to join”.

The attendance of such large numbers of children at the school was achieved, in part, through the agency of the police. In his quarterly report of 10 April 1844, Moorhouse recommended that:

In order to secure their attendance I would recommend to His Excellency that no children be allowed to wander and beg about Adelaide or its neighbourhood. They might be allowed to visit Town, once or twice a week on Saturday or Wednesday afternoon, that the restriction might not be so much felt. The

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154 Grey to Stanley, dispatch no. 49, 10/4/1844, AJPC reel no 597; Moorhouse, Protector’s Report, 10/4/1844, AJPC reel no 597
155 Colonial Secretary to William Smith, 18/4/1844, SRSA GRG G 24/4/1844/628
156 Colonial Secretary to William Smith, 18/4/1844, SRSA GRG G 24/4/1844/628
157 Colonial Secretary to William Smith, 18/4/1844, SRSA GRG G 24/4/1844/628
159 Moorhouse to Col Sec, 18/3/1844, Letterbook p. 94
160 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 8/7/1844, SRSA GRG 24/6/1844/712
161 Moorhouse to Col Sec, 16/5/1844, Letterbook p. 98
162 *Register*, 7/12/1844, p. 2
Commissioner of Police would completely check those visiting town by ordering them to be taken into custody and locked up for a few hours if found begging in the street.\textsuperscript{163}

\textbf{‘the course of instruction which he had marked out’}

The ambiguity of ownership that existed with the Piltawodli school as a joint mission-government project, an ambiguity which was to cause conflict between the government and the Lutheran Mission later that year,\textsuperscript{164} was avoided by Grey in his establishment of the Walkerville school as a government institution. The Smiths were informed that they were under the supervision of the Protector of Aborigines and “required to regard that Gentleman as Head of your Department, and to carry into execution such instructions as you may receive from him”.\textsuperscript{165} That the school was to be under government control had also been made clear to Schürmann when he had been offered the position as teacher there. Schürmann understood that, as the school was to be “entirely under the care and direction of the Government”,\textsuperscript{166} he would not be able to teach according to his own conviction, but would rather be required to “subjugate [himself] to all the rules of the Government which apply to teaching”\textsuperscript{167} and declined the offer of the teaching position on this account.

It seems that Grey was keen to be able to directly implement his own ‘civilizing’ ideas at the Walkerville school. Informing the Colonial Office that it was about to be opened, Grey told Lord Stanley that he would, “as soon as the second school has been some time in operation, to address to your Lordship a detailed report upon the system of education adopted in these schools”.\textsuperscript{168} A report put out in December 1844 by members of the Methodist New Connexion church, who ran Sunday school for the children at Walkerville, referred to “the course of instruction which [the governor] had marked out”.\textsuperscript{169}

\textsuperscript{163}Moorhouse, Protector’s report, 10/11/1844, AJPC reel no 597 discussed in Chapter 6
\textsuperscript{164}Colonial Secretary to Smith, 18/4/1844, SRSA GRG G 24/4/1844/628
\textsuperscript{165}Register, 19/7/1845, p. 2, Protector’s Report 16/7/1845
\textsuperscript{166}Schürmann to Dresden Mission Society, 15/4/1844
\textsuperscript{167}Grey to Stanley, dispatch no. 49, 10/4/1844. AJPC reel no 597
\textsuperscript{168}Register, 7/12/1844, p. 2
In accordance with Grey’s views on what it meant to ‘civilize’ Indigenous people, there was never any question that the language of instruction at the school would be English, a fact applauded by colonists. A short article in the *Southern Australian* announcing the opening of the school noted with approval that English would be the medium of instruction, and stated that “we have always been of the opinion that it would be much better had the natives been taught the English language first”. Although English literacy was already being taught at Piltawodli by this time, the writer of the article hoped that, if the approach adopted at Walkerville proved successful, “the German Missionaries will lose no time in changing their system”. The report of the Sunday-school teachers expressed their desire:

> to encourage and aid the Governor in his benevolent arrangements and efforts to convey to them the rudiments of an English education; for his Excellency had wisely, in our view, determined to supersede the use of the native language in the course of instruction which he had marked out.

The extent to which Grey did actually give directions on “the course of instruction” at the school, other than stipulating an English-only approach, is unclear however. Jennifer Hunt, in her 1971 Honours thesis on the schools, suggests that the school served as a means of trying an alternative teaching methodology to that used at Piltawodli, but Smith was initially informed that he was to use the Piltawodli school as a model for his own. Probably motivated by the academic success of the children at Piltawodli, Grey stated that he wanted the new school to be conducted, “both as regards instruction, and internal economy and arrangement, ... on precisely the same principles as are observed in the existing school for native children”.

Although Moorhouse was responsible for supervising the school and ensuring that Grey’s directions were followed, he was not himself a teacher and seems to have provided little guidance to Smith on how the method of instruction used by Klosé at Piltawodli might be applied at Walkerville. In the brief “outline of the mode of conducting the Native School at the Location” which he drew up for Smith, he set out

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170 *Southern Australian*, 28/5/1844, p. 2  
171 *Register*, 7/12/44, p. 2  
172 Hunt, 1971, p. 56  
173 SRSA GRG E 24/4/1844/628
hours of school attendance and meal times, but provided no useful information on the curriculum or teaching methodology to be adopted. Other than suggesting that “it will be necessary to vary the instruction in order to secure the attention of the children”, he was unable to “give precisely the manner in which this will have to be done”. Basically, Smith was advised that he should simply use trial and error to find out what worked best, Moorhouse informing him that “experience will suggest the mode of doing it with advantage to yourself and the profit of the children”. Although Moorhouse added that “I shall have the pleasure in giving you any information that I am able to give you upon the subject”, Smith was later to complain about the lack of advice he received from Moorhouse. “[W]hen I have asked his advice or direction how to proceed”, he complained, “9 times our of 10 he told me I was a European as well as him and I must do the best I could”.

By July, however, Moorhouse reported that the “mode of instructions” at the Walkerville school was “that of the infant schools in England; there is only one class, and all are required to learn the same lesson”. The English infant school methodology originated in schools established in New Lanark by Robert Owen, which were progressive in their emphasis on treating children with kindness, and at which children spent half their time doing simple school lessons, and half their time in supervised play. Lessons were made enjoyable for children through the use of music and toys, clapping and marching, and so on. Owen’s work gave rise to an infant-school movement in the first half of the nineteenth century, and the establishment of further Infant Schools. According to John Lawson and Harold Silver, however, the schools that emerged “had a more emphatic moral and intellectual character” than Owen’s original schools, although they still “had their music, their toys, their equipment and their kindness”. This teaching methodology had already been found to be useful in teaching Aboriginal children: at the Church Missionary Society mission at Wellington Valley, in New South

172 Moorhouse to Smith, 15/5/1844, Letterbook p. 97-8
173 Smith to Col Sec, SRSA GRG 24/6/1846/171
174 Moorhouse to Grey, accompanying Protector’s report 8/7/1844, SRSA GRG 24/6/1844/712
176 Lawson and Silver, 1973, p. 247-8
Wales, missionaries found the methods worked well with Indigenous children at their school. William Watson wrote in 1832 that:

surely never were human means better adapted to the design than the Infant System is adapted to teach the Aborigines of New Holland. The pleasing and amusing manner in which the instruction is presented to them, makes it rather desirable than a task. The clapping of hands, marching &c. falls in so much with their native habits of corrobobring (dancing) that the Black children are quite delighted with it.

Whether the infant school methodology was actually implemented to any extent at Walkerville, with its large number of children and untrained teacher, is doubtful. Even with the assistance of the “pious female, who ... volunteered her services without any promise of reward”, with up to ninety children in crowded conditions, and almost no resources, Smith would have been hard-pressed to carry out his teaching in a stimulating way. It is possible that what Moorhouse referred to as the Infant School methodology was simply the use of ‘object lessons’ in the school curriculum. One of the features of the teaching methodology of infant schools, the ‘object lesson’ was originally based on the ideas of the late eighteenth century educator Pestalozzi, who argued that teaching should be carried out through the use of objects, rather than words. His ideas entered infant school methodology, particularly in the context of large classes with few resources, as separate lessons in which objects, or pictures of objects, were used as teaching aids. Although these lessons represented a reduction of Pestalozzi’s ideas into a “sterile exercise”, as Anne Digby and Peter Searby claim, they may have been a quite effective strategy for teaching English. An example of an object lesson, set out in the 1875 publication, the *Handy Book of Object Lessons*, is included as an appendix to this thesis. Moorhouse may have previously used object lessons in teaching Kaurna children; shortly after the Piltawodli school began he wrote

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179 Fletcher, 1989, p. 24
181 Register, 7/12/1844, p. 2. Unfortunately, except for this reference, nothing more is known of this volunteer teacher.
that “when the attention can be no longer kept up, I show them objects in natural history, and practice them in the English language”.183

By whatever means, the Murray River children who attended the Walkerville school seem to have made rapid progress in achieving skills in literacy and numeracy. Two months after the opening of the school, Moorhouse reported “that 70 know the Alphabet and multiplication table so far as 8 times 10 and can repeat our divisions of time – minutes, hours, days, months and years”.184 At the same time he requested that a quart of ink be added to the requisition for the Aborigines department, as twenty of the children at Walkerville were “able to write tolerably well upon the slate", and he and Smith thought it “desirable that they should be allowed to practice upon paper”.185 By September, five months after the school commenced, Moorhouse requested from a supply of New Testaments that had arrived in the colony forty for the Walkerville school, claiming that within a few weeks that number of children would be far enough advanced to be able to read them.186 He seems to have been somewhat over-optimistic in this, however. The Sunday school teachers reported in December that the upper two classes of children could read “tolerably well, without spelling, words of three or four letters”. This report did state, however, that the children had made “an almost incredible advancement in intelligence in the space of a few months”.187 At a public examination of the children in December at the home of one of the Sunday school teachers, the collective answers of “the Murray scholars … were surprisingly prompt and distinct”, according to a report in the Southern Australian:

The number of days in the year, the names and number of days in the week, and months in the year, as well as of particular days, &c. were given with almost invariable accuracy. They counted from one to one hundred, and the hundreds in a thousand, with very good pronunciation; and in undergoing a cross-questioning in the table of multiplication, they were very seldom at fault.188

183 Moorhouse, Protector’s Report 14/1/1840, Papers Relative to South Australia, p. 323
184 Moorhouse to Grey, accompanying Protector’s report 8 /7/1844, SRSA GRG 24/6/1844/712,
185 Moorhouse to Col Sec, 26/6/1844, Letterbook p. 101-2
186 Moorhouse to Col Sec 19/10/1844, Letterbook  p. 110
187 Register, 7/12/1844, p. 2
188 Southern Australian, 17/12/1844, p. 3
In his quarterly report of 2 April 1845, when attendance at the school had fallen to thirty-two children, Moorhouse reported that, although the school had only been operating for eleven months, thirteen children were able to read the New Testament, and twenty knew the multiplication table. As an indication of the progress they were making, Moorhouse included with this report some samples of the children’s handwriting, “cut out of the books in which the children [did their] writing”. By July he reported that nineteen Murray children were able to read the New Testament.

‘Civilizing’ through contact with ‘civilized’ men and women

In accordance with his belief that ‘savage’ societies required the stimulus of contact with ‘civilized’ societies to lift them from stagnation to progressive development, Grey was keen to bring Indigenous children into contact with ‘respectable’ members of colonial society. Whereas all religious instruction at the Pilawodli school was carried out by the missionaries in the Kaurna language, the secular, English-language curriculum of the government school enabled the involvement of colonists in the teaching of Sunday school there. Grey believed that such involvement facilitated the ‘civilizing’ process through the establishment of relationships between the children and ‘civilized’ community members, and through the force of example set by ‘respectable’ middle-class colonists. Two months after the school’s establishment, members of the Methodist New Connexion church began running Sunday school classes there. The following month Moorhouse invited Methodists to participate in the education of Aboriginal children. Addressing a church meeting, he said that “if any then present participated in his desire to be useful to the natives and were willing to teach, their services would be thankfully accepted at the schools”. One colonist, William Peacock, responded to this invitation, saying that he was “so delighted to hear of the efforts making for their religious instruction in the English language, that [he felt] the strongest inclination to offer [his] services as a teacher among them”. He did so, teaching Sunday school at Walkerville and then at the Aboriginal school established by Grey the following year, until that school’s closure in 1852. Grey was pleased with the

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189 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 2/4/1845, p. 6, SRSA GRG 24/6/1845/336
190 Moorhouse, Protector’s report 2/4/1845, p. 6, SRSA GRG 24/6/1845/336
191 Southern Australian, 18/7/1845, p. 4, Protectors report 2/7/1845
192 Adelaide Observer, 10/8/1844, p. 5
193 South Australian Advertiser, 25/11/1863, p. 3, The Hon. Wm Peacock "had had 7 years experience in teaching the native children and fully believed in their powers and faculties".
involvement of community members in the school, writing to Lord Stanley in the Colonial Office in London that:

[t]he plan which invited, the colonists to join in the education of the natives, appears to be good, and its operation very satisfactory. The interest in, and sympathy for, the natives generally, which are created, will tend I am persuaded, much to the benefit of the Aborigines.\textsuperscript{194}

The primary objective of the Sunday school teachers was “to instruct them in the great truths of Christianity, and, through a process of elementary discipline, to lead them eventually to the Saviour of the World”, but they also conducted literacy classes.\textsuperscript{195} Classes were held in the schoolroom at the Walkerville school on Sunday mornings and afternoons,\textsuperscript{196} and were conducted, according to Moorhouse “on the same plans as the Wesleyan Sunday Schools”.\textsuperscript{197} The Sunday school report stated that the lessons were “for the most part, of a catechetical nature”.\textsuperscript{198} Teichelmann visited the Sunday school in August, “to see what the Methodists and the Protector were going through with the Murray children in the English language” and provided an interesting account of the methods used. “There I saw and indeed heard my wonder”, he wrote:

Apart from the fact that several of the teachers were speaking to the children about God and Christ etc. in the English language while others were trying to teach them the a, b, c (in English), the leader of the first class announced to the children; “Our Father which art in heaven” and then he asked: Where is our father? In heaven. Who is in heaven? Our father. Who is our Father? God. Where is God? In heaven etc. etc. This approach to the Lord’s prayer and the questions with the answers pre-told to the children was now thrashed and for about 2 hours filtered into the children without the children having any knowledge of the English language nor the teachers understanding any of the

\textsuperscript{194} Grey to Stanley, dispatch no 139, Protectors report, 15/101844, AJPC reel no. 599
\textsuperscript{195} Register, 7/12/1844, p. 2
\textsuperscript{196} Eyre, 1845, p. 432
\textsuperscript{197} Moorhouse to Grey, accompanying Protector’s report, 8/7/1844, SRSA GRG 24/6/1844/712
\textsuperscript{198} Register, 7/12/1844, p. 2
native language. The will, intention and desire of the people is indeed good; but how can the poor children know what is being sounded and warbled.\textsuperscript{199}

Shortly after the Sunday school was begun Grey granted permission for the Church of England to conduct services at the school on Sunday evenings.\textsuperscript{200} Eyre reported that the children were “said to be attentive and well behaved” at these services.\textsuperscript{201}

**The small bodily habits of civilized living**

At Piltawodli, the missionaries had adopted a ‘Christianization-first’ approach in the school, seeking to transform the hearts and minds of the children at the school, rather than focusing on changing children’s bodies. I argued in Chapter 3 that colonists criticized the school there on the basis of two opposing constructions of ‘civilization’; for some colonists to be ‘civilized’ meant to be clean, dressed, and behave in a ‘civilized’ manner, for others it was the ability to produce food through labour that was the essential marker of a ‘civilized’ being. The establishment by Grey of residential schools at Piltawodli and Walkerville represented a shift towards a greater focus on those ‘small bodily habits’ that some colonists sought as evidence that a ‘civilizing’ process was being achieved. Grey’s ‘civilization-first’ approach at Walkerville included the transformation of bodies through the inculcation of European standards of cleanliness, dress, order and routine. When not in class, children had other lessons to learn. They were required to be clean, washing in the yard of the school or in an old outbuilding when the weather was wet.\textsuperscript{202} Much of their time would have been taken up in carrying out tasks required for the running of the institution. Edward John Eyre recorded that the older children were required to collect and chop the firewood for the institution. They also learnt to prepare, serve and eat food in a manner considered acceptable by the colonists, carrying out these activities “under the master’s eye”, according to Eyre. “The cook is said to take good care of himself”, Eyre wrote, “and certainly his appearance does not belie the insinuation, for he is by far the fattest boy in the lot”.\textsuperscript{203}

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\textsuperscript{199} Teichelmann diaries, p. 45, 25/8/1844  
\textsuperscript{200} Moorhouse to Col Sec, 19/7/1844, Letterbook p. 103  
\textsuperscript{201} Eyre, 1845, p. 432  
\textsuperscript{202} Eyre, 1845, p. 432  
\textsuperscript{203} Eyre, 1845, p. 432
\end{flushleft}
Central to the ‘civilizing’ agenda of the Walkerville school was the development of habits of order and discipline. Being ‘uncivilized’, Aborigines were seen as people who acted erratically, their movement and behaviour unregulated by order or routine. The ‘civilizing’ process included the imposition of control over previously disordered lives. When Grey reported to Lord Stanley in the Colonial Office in London on the imminent opening of the Walkerville school, it was the controlling influence of such schools he emphasized. With the opening of the school at Walkerville, he wrote, “50 native children [in the Adelaide area] will not only be instructed and supported, but will be kept under the constant control and supervision of competent persons, whose attention is directed to every portion of their conduct”.\(^{204}\) The schoolteacher, William Smith, saw his role as one of constraining wildness. He later told Fredrick Holt Robe, who succeeded Grey as governor in 1845, that although the children:

> when I first took them in hand were wild from the bush and could not speak a word of English ... I have had the pleasure of having it frequently remarked to me by His Excellency the late Governor and many others how much they were improved in general demeanor and discipline since they came under my control.\(^{205}\)

A colonist who wrote an account in the *Register* of a visit to the school in December 1844 expressed surprise and approval at the “general conduct” and orderliness of the children.

> There is, strange to say, great regularity, and system among them already and in school they are as orderly as any children in the first seminaries in England. They have their sleeping-rooms, one for boys, and one for girls; -they have their cooks; and the meal hours are at stated periods.\(^{206}\)

Despite the importance placed on clothing in the civilizing process, for the first eight months only small blankets were provided for the children at Walkerville to cover

\(^{204}\) Grey to Stanley, dispatch no 49, 10/4/1844. AJPC reel no 597

\(^{205}\) William Smith to Colonial Secretary, SRSA, GRG 24/6/1846/171

\(^{206}\) *Register*, 21/12/44, p. 3
themselves. However, steps were taken by colonists to remedy this situation. In August the ‘committee of ladies for instructing native children’, which had taken on responsibility for teaching Kaurna girls to sew, decided to transfer their operations to the Walkerville school. Klosé had been married in April, and, since Jane Russell was still employed as matron at Piltawodli, his wife, Elizabeth, was able to undertake sewing classes there in her own home. The girls had probably stopped going into town for sewing lessons since Klosé’s marriage, remaining at Piltawodli to be instructed by Elizabeth. In August, the women’s committee applied to Grey for permission to again use the room near government house to conduct sewing classes for girls, this time those from the Walkerville school. As this room was now being used for other purposes, they were given a room in the council chambers.

Sewing classes were held in the council chambers on four afternoons a week, the schoolgirls presumably walking there from Walkerville. They began making themselves summer clothes to wear at school. In October, however, Moorhouse told a meeting of the Ladies committee that “His Excellency had expressed a wish to see the native boys clothed as well as the girls in a summer garment”. The women replied that they were “now occupied in preparing the girls’ dresses”, but would “gladly undertake to prepare a set for the boys if His Excellency would be kind enough to allow material”. They recommended “strong blue shirting or unbleached Holland”. In their report of December 1844, the Sunday school teachers expressed satisfaction in learning that the children were to be provided with clothes, which they believed would “do much to relieve them of a feeling of degradation arising out of their comparative state of nudity”.

The visitor to the school in December 1844, mentioned above, who recorded his impressions in an article in the *Register*, made favourable reference to the intellectual capability of children, but focused mainly on the children’s appearance. In his article the success of the government’s ‘civilizing’ efforts at the school is described by contrasting

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207 Eyre, 1845, p. 432  
208 Moorhouse to Col Sec, 15/8/1844, Letterbook p. 106  
210 Moorhouse Col Sec, 15/8/1844, Letterbook pp. 106-7  
211 Eyre, 1845, p. 432  
212 Moorhouse to Col Sec, 23/10/1844, Letterbook p. 112  
213 *Register*, 7/12/1844, p. 2
the children’s appearance with a negative stereotype of Indigenous people outside the institution. The contrast is so great, the report claims, as to “make one suppose that they cannot belong to the race we are every day accustomed to see loitering about our streets”. In contrast to the “loitering” of those not participating in the ‘civilizing’ process, children at the institution are described as “frisking about”, “full of life and gaiety”. The hair of the schoolchildren was “combed, polished and hangs down their necks in jetty curls” in contrast to the hair of people outside, sarcastically described as “gracefully matted with red ochre and fat.” Instead of having their bodies covered with an “oily varnish” the children are described as now “satisfied with the gloss which nature and soap and water give” and look, indeed, “whiter than in their ordinary wild state.” Moreover, the civilizing process taking place at the institution had removed “the disgusting look about their eyes … as well as other equally unpleasant appearances”.214
At a time when the dispossession of Indigenous people was leading to widespread destitution and disease, the ‘civilizing’ project was represented in this article as a physical transformation which stripped Indigenous children of those features considered characteristic of ‘uncivilized’ Aborigines. The article provides evidence of the derogatory stereotype of Indigenous people that was increasingly gaining acceptance in South Australia by the middle years of the 1840s.

Criticism of the approach taken at Walkerville

The Lutheran missionaries were critical of the approach set in place by Grey at Walkerville. Their view of colonial society as impeding rather than a propagating ‘civilization’ among Aborigines, made them doubtful that this approach would be successful. Grey’s objective of incorporating Aboriginal people into colonial society conflicted with their own belief that the ‘civilizing’ process should be undertaken in isolation from mainstream society. Schürmann wrote in 1843 that Grey was “totally against any effort to establish corporate bodies of aborigines alone, segregated from the Europeans. On the contrary he holds the firm intention of raising the children in the English way, in order to train them to be useful servants for the Europeans”.215

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214 Register, 21/12/1844, p. 3
215 Schürmann to Dresden Mission Society, 27/11/1843
The missionaries criticised Grey’s approach as an attempt to change habits without first changing the heart. They disputed his belief that the salvation of the Indigenous people could be achieved through the teaching of ‘civilized’ habits, and warned colonists that any effort to ‘civilize’ without first evangelising would fail. They found plenty of evidence for their view in cases of Aboriginal people who, although apparently ‘civilized’, returned to their families and an Aboriginal lifestyle. In 1845, for example, a young Kaurna woman, called Manjo by the missionaries and Nancy by the British, left her employment at Government House, where she had worked as a domestic servant for five years, originally working for Governor Gawler. She had been deemed by Grey to be fully ‘civilized’, and her case had been frequently held up by him as proof of the possibility of ‘civilizing’ Aboriginal people by raising them in European households as domestic servants.\textsuperscript{216} Teichelmann recorded in December 1845 that “she who only a few months ago was outwardly no different from a European except for her black-brown colour” was now “wandering about the city with the others, half-naked”. “Such are the fruits of civilizing without evangelizing”, he wrote, adding that:

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\text{[t]he Government school will take a similar direction, since religious instruction occupies only an extremely subordinate position. Exactly the same must happen to all who ascribe more powers of regeneration and conversion to the spirit of civilization than to the Holy Spirit and to His Word.} \textsuperscript{217}
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The approach taken by Grey at Walkerville did not escape criticism from colonists as well. The criticism that had been made with regard to the approach taken at Piltawodli, that of teaching children to read and write instead of teaching them to undertake physical labour, also applied to the approach at Walkerville. Although the shift in approach in Aboriginal education towards a greater emphasis on teaching habits and skills of ‘civilized’ living was noted and applauded by colonists, criticism of a ‘civilizing’ project that failed to provide training in manual labour continued to be expressed. The colonist who reported on a visit to the Walkerville school in December 1844, which I

\textsuperscript{216} Teichelmann diaries, p. 79, 18/12/1845; Schürmann to Dresden Mission Society, 27/11/1843
\textsuperscript{217} Teichelmann diaries, p. 79, 18/12/1845
have discussed above, and who noted with approval the progress made towards ‘civilization’ in the regularity and order he observed, and in the ‘civilized’ appearance of the children, expressed concern at what he considered its overly academic curriculum. It seemed to him that “[t]he grand business of the school - and indeed of native schools generally - appears to be to cram the children's brains with as much reading and writing as possible within a given time, without regard to anything beside”. Arguing that “much more real practical good could be effected ... by teaching the children a little less of the A B C, and a little more of the useful occupations of life”, he recommended that “an area of three or four acres of ground” be fenced off, and “the youngsters ... supplied with small spades, and be set to work upon it, commencing of course by little and little until they get the perfect use of their tools”. As well as spades, children should, he believed, “be taught the use of the reaping hook, scythe, axe, and saw”.\footnote{Register, 21/12/1844, p. 3} He argued that:

by this means they would become habituated to useful work, and as they grew up would not feel it burthensome or fatiguing; and instead of lounging about or basking lazily in the sun, as the natives now generally do - they might be actively and profitably engaged in earning their bread, and would prove of the greatest utility to the settlers.\footnote{Register, 21/12/1844, p. 3}

In urging the adoption of a more practical curriculum at Walkerville as “the most effectual means of civilizing the natives, and of making them useful members of society” the writer referred directly to the civilization/Christianization debate. He argued that “Christianizing barbarians before civilizing them” was to “go to work at the wrong end”, for it seemed to him “more rational to imagine that the first should follow the last”. He argued that “missionaries in America and other countries where the natives are superior to these, admit this candidly, ... and it is not till they are wearied and thwarted in their endeavours to christianize before they civilize, that they find out their grand mistake”.\footnote{Register, 21/12/1844, p. 3}
A letter to the editor of the *Adelaide Observer* the following month reiterated the call for an alternative approach in the civilizing mission. The views expressed and phraseology used in the letter suggest that the writer may have been George Stephenson, although he signed himself N. A. “To say that the children are *educated* at the Missionary schools or at the Walkerville Academy, he wrote:

is an extravagant – what shall I call it – absurdity. Education forms no part of the course. No instruction of any useful or practical character is afforded them. They are taught no handicraft – they know not how to dig or to sow or to reap. There is not a young carpenter, or bricklayer, or shoemaker, or even a ninth fraction of humanity among them.

There were those, however, who continued to support the government approach. One colonist, calling himself ‘A Friend of the Aborigine’, argued against N.A.’s contention that the children were not educated because they were not taught to undertake manual labour. “Is nothing done towards those children when they are taught to read, write, and cast accounts as well as to know the first principles of the Christian religion?” he asked:

Is not this education of practical utility? But still your correspondent will say there are no carpenters, bricklayers, or shoemakers, among these children of from seven to ten years old. Is it usual, sir, to teach such trades to children at that early age, before teaching then to read, write, &c.? Was their calumniator so taught?221

The question, “was their calumniator so taught?” is significant. Underlying it is an assumption that I suggest was not shared by N.A., an assumption that the form of education that was appropriate for middle class British children was also appropriate for Indigenous children. At the heart of the debate over the form of schooling that was appropriate for Aboriginal children was the question of the place which Aboriginal people would occupy in the social hierarchy of South Australian society. For colonists who envisaged as the end result of the ‘civilizing’ process the formation of a servant

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221 *Adelaide Observer, 25/1/1845, p. 4*
class of menial labourers and domestic servants, the teaching of literacy and numeracy was a futile undertaking, when what Aboriginal children really needed was to learn to labour.

The context in which N.A. made his criticism of Walkerville provides evidence of a growing anxiety about the perceived threat posed to the existing social and racial hierarchy by the ‘civilizing’ project. The relationship between such anxieties, and the calls for an approach in the civilizing mission which would place Aboriginal people appropriately within the social hierarchy, is illustrated by the anger that was generated in early 1845 by a seemingly innocuous event. Anthony Forster, a supporter of the project to ‘civilize’ through schooling, an advocate of the use of English only in education, and a Sunday school teacher at Walkerville, was leaving the colony to return temporarily to England, and the children of both schools were invited to a farewell tea in his honour in December 1844. At this gathering, children of the Piltawodli made the following farewell speech, which they presented to Forster:

Sir- As you are about to leave us for England, we, the undersigned, wish you a happy and safe voyage there and back to Adelaide, and we would recommend you to God, and the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and make you wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Jesus Christ.
Please to give our united thanks to Mr Montefiore for the Bibles he so kindly sent to us.

For Klosé, engaged as he was in the religious teaching of these children every day, it was entirely appropriate to have his older students write or sign such an address. It was signed by twelve of the schoolchildren, probably those who had been at the school longest. These were children who had been attending school for many months and possibly, in some cases, for years, and who had been subjected to intensive Christian teaching, both in and out of school hours. It was written at a time when Klosé was expressing optimism at the possibility that some of the children would convert to Christianity, as he had heard them praying in the dormitories. Two months earlier Teichelmann had observed that the children at the Piltawodli school had “a good treasury of christian truths in their minds” and that many had “more (perception or)
knowledge of divine matters than many European children, for which honour is due to our Lord”.

The language and the sentiment of the Apostolic Blessing they made to Forster would have been quite familiar to them. For the past year, for example, they had been attending with several “Christian friends” weekly evening prayer meetings, which concluded with the Apostolic Blessing.

There was, however, an angry response to the address. The editor of the *Adelaide Observer* wrote of “our disgust at the ... address to Mr. A. Forster on the occasion of his quitting the Colony, which some indiscreet friends of the aborigines put into the mouths of native children at the school in the Native Location”.

If an unconverted man had used such language as is here made to emanate from these semi-civilized black babes and sucklings, he would have been denounced a blasphemer. Luckily, the “pious fraud” whether “got up” for a missionary platform or for private circulation amongst the friends of the Aborigines’ Protection Society at home, is too transparent not to be seen through; but it is nevertheless not the less reprehensible.

The letter from N.A., discussed above, was written as an expression of support for the editor’s comments. The writer expressed disgust that “an apostolic benediction upon Mr Anthony Forster” should be put “into the mouths of poor creatures entirely unacquainted with the solemnity of the language employed, nay even ignorant I believe, that it had any meaning at all”. It was, he argued, a “profane impudence” to do so, and a “disgusting and offensive mummery”. “The worst of it is”, he wrote, “that many really charitable and worthy people in England are imposed upon so far as to believe that some progress is really making towards the civilization of the natives”.

The anger which these colonists expressed suggests that the address made by Aboriginal children to a middle class Englishman represented a transgression of rules of social behaviour. In the increasingly racialised social environment of South Australia, it was an outrage generated by the crossing of racial and class boundaries. I suggest that

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222 Teichelmann diaries, p. 48, 10/11/1844
223 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 31, Klosé letter 13, 10/2/1844; also p. 36-7, letter 15, Dec 1844
224 *Adelaide Observer*, 11/1/1845, p. 5
225 *Adelaide Observer*, 18/1/1845, p. 6
the same outraged response would not have arisen had the letter of farewell been signed by the children of wealthy colonists at St. Peter’s College, which was to be opened three years later. Gillian Cowlishaw has noted, with reference to racial attitudes in the Northern Territory during the following century, “[t]he anger unleashed by any contesting of the popular images, and any attempt to alter the relationship between the races”. In order to prove that the address to Forster was a farce put into the mouths of Aboriginal children incapable of understanding its meaning, N.A. described an encounter with some children of the Walkerville school in a way which reinforced the popular image of Indigenous people, an image he apparently felt was threatened by an alternative image thrown up by the civilizing mission. In doing so he confused the Walkerville school with the Piltawodli school, for it was children of the Piltawodli school who had signed the address, not children of the newly formed Walkerville school. Nevertheless, N.A., in describing the activities of Walkerville schoolboys, gave them the names of those who had signed the letter. The stereotype he reasserted in his description of the encounter was that of the Aboriginal person as semi-naked, as speaking broken English, and as continually begging for bread and copper coins, called ‘black money’, an image clearly incompatible with the representation of Aboriginal people suggested by the address to Forster:

Three young natives, whose names we take to be of those who signed the Apostolic address to Mr. Forster, namely, Murra-purra, Watte-watte, and Tidla were observed by the river side. They were clad as usual, that is, they had a dirty piece of blanket over one shoulder which opened gracefully in front. One of them had a peg top which he was busily employed spinning – the other two were watching for throws at parrots and small birds in the neighbouring trees. The natives of course had a race who should get first up to the white party to secure bread or “black money” for himself.

MURRA-PURRA (out of breath) Oh, oh, me werry hungry – me werry hungry – give me bread – give me bread.

WATTE-WATTE –Give me some – give me some – you werry good.

N.A. Where do you come from?

227 Cowlishaw, 1999, p. 58
ALL - Walkerville – Walkerville – Missy Smith – Missy Morehouse-no good – give me money &c.
TIDLA – Me sing- me pray – “Our Father
WURRA-WARRA – (capering and dancing round like a Savoyard boy, and winding up his top) – “Our Father which art in heaven – you give me black money? – “They kingdom come-“ and round went the top, the young savage grinning with delight at his plaything.

In the rejection of alternative representations of Indigenous people to the image reasserted in this description, a problem central to the project to civilize is touched upon. We sense from these writers an anxiety to make clear that ‘civilizing’ Aborigines, though a process of Europeanisation, was not about making them the social equals of Europeans. Here we are reminded of Homi Bhabha’s work on mimicry in colonial discourse, in which he discusses the “slippage” or “excess” inherent in mimicry in the discourse of the civilizing mission. “Colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other”, he argues, “as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite”; “to be Anglicized is emphatically not to be English.”

Other writers have noted that, premised as it was on the assumption of a human social hierarchy, the civilizing mission threatened to undermine its own power of legitimation when its goal of removing difference was achieved. The use of the civilizing mission as justification for colonial occupation and domination depended on a maintenance of the otherness of the colonized; once the colonized had become ‘civilized’, colonial domination could no longer be justified. Michael Mann has noted this paradox, arguing, with reference to British colonization in India, that once colonized people were civilized, and therefore equal, “the basis of colonial rule would vanish, likewise destroying the foundation of self-legitimation”. Discussing Bhabha’s ideas, Nicholas Thomas writes that “[t]he civilizing mission is problematized and partly undone” when “these threatening expressions of hybridity disrupt and subvert colonial

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229 see chapter 1
230 Mann, 2004, p. 5
hegemony, in the sense that they exclude the possibility of total epistemic mastery”. As we have seen in the previous chapter, an anxiety existed at the presence in Adelaide of hundreds of Indigenous people, described as “crowd[ing] into Adelaide to beg or to steal”, as “infest[ing] the park land”, and “over whom the Protector possesses and can exercise no control”. As the civilizing mission increasingly came to be seen as the means by which order could be imposed and control established, colonists were angered by the image raised by Forster’s farewell address, of a civilizing mission that sought to create a small group of Christian ‘civilized’ Aboriginal people. Such a civilizing mission, I suggest, was seen to threaten colonial hegemony in that it challenged the social hierarchy on the one hand, for how could such a group of well-educated, Christian Indigenous men and women be accommodated within the existing class structure of colonial society? Yet it failed, on the other hand, to provide the means by which the Indigenous majority could be brought under control.

**Conclusion**

The civilizing mission undertaken in the newly founded British colony of South Australia purported to bring to the Indigenous people whose lands were being occupied skills in ‘civilized’ living which would enable their incorporation into the modern social and economic world. It was, however, a fractured enterprise, its contested nature arising in part from ideological differences regarding the nature of ‘civilization’. The missionaries’ ideas about what ‘civilization’ entailed led to a ‘Christianization-first’ approach, and to the establishment of a school at which literacy was taught in the vernacular, and at which girls received the same instruction as boys. At the missionaries’ school the emphasis was not on changing the outward appearance or habits of the children but on bringing about an inner conversion of the heart. Reflecting his views on what constituted ‘civilization’, Grey adopted a ‘civilization-first’ approach. As a result of his influence, a greater emphasis was placed on the civilizing process as a physical transformation through the provision of boarding facilities at Piltawodli, the facilitation of sewing classes for girls, and the introduction of English into the curriculum. The government school he established at Walkerville was residential, English-only, and located in a centre of European population. It placed a greater focus on the teaching of

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231 Thomas, 1994, p. 40
232 Register, 6/2/1841, p. 3
‘civilized’ habits, and on cleanliness and dress, and on preparing children for the gender and class roles of nineteenth-century British society. In Grey’s approach a major emphasis was placed on remaking children’s bodies, as well as their hearts and minds.

These changes were applauded by some colonists who had sought physical evidence of progress in the civilizing mission, and who had criticised the missionary approach for its failure to change the children’s appearance, as discussed in the previous chapter. However, anxiety generated by the presence of a large and uncontrolled Indigenous population, and the disturbing spectre of a small emerging class of ‘civilized’ Christian Aboriginal men and women, led to renewed calls for a civilizing project that would remake Aborigines as a subordinate class of menial labourers and domestic servants, and thus preserve colonial hegemony and an existing social order.

The school at Walkerville seems to have been established as a temporary measure, possibly enabling Grey to assess the capability of the Murray River children, the effectiveness of an alternative approach, and to determine the extent to which Christian colonists would interest and involve themselves in a government school. The success, from Grey’s point of view, of the Walkerville experiment, I suggest, was a contributing factor in his decision, in 1845, to merge the two existing schools into one central institution in Adelaide. It was at this central school that he intended to fully implement the means he believed necessary for the effective ‘civilization’ of Aboriginal people.

The shift in approach in Aboriginal education that was instigated by Grey in 1843 and 1844 represented a movement away from missionary control of the education process, a movement that would lead to the education being removed entirely from missionary hands over the following year. The failure of the mission-government collaboration raises the issue of the nature of the mission-government relationships in the project to ‘civilize’ indigenous peoples; this relationship is the focus of the next chapter.
Governor George Grey
Reproduced from Dutton, 1967, facing p. 273

Anthony Forster
SLSA B5966
Chapter 5: Mission-state relationships

Through an investigation of the experiences of the German Lutheran missionaries in mid-century colonial South Australia, I explore in this chapter the complex and varied relationships that existed between two participants in the colonial civilizing mission; colonial administrations on one hand, and missionaries on the other. A premise I use in this discussion is that, although both missionaries and colonial administrators were agents of the civilizing mission, with the shared goal of achieving the Christianization and ‘civilization’ of colonized people, their priorities were different. For colonial administrators such as Governor George Grey, the primary object to be achieved was colonization, with the ‘civilizing’ project existing to facilitate and justify this process. For missionaries, the primary aim was the civilizing/Christianizing mission. They supported colonization to the extent that it enabled and facilitated this project, but it was not their primary objective. A similarity of goals and values led to relationships that were symbiotic in some colonial situations. But contested agendas and contested ideas about the means of achieving apparently compatible goals ensured that relationships between missions and colonial administrations were rarely simple.

At the heart of the dissonance that existed between governments and missionaries lay the profound incompatibility of the colonial project and the civilizing mission. As a part of the process of creating a settler colony, and as a major justification for doing so, the civilizing mission was fraught with tensions and contradictions. The two propositions; to dispossess a people of its land and livelihood on the one hand, and the intention to bestow on those people the values and high ideals of ‘civilization’ on the other, were, at heart, incompatible. It was what Leela Gandhi has referred to as the “central paradox at the heart of imperialism: namely, the profound discrepancy between the inflated claims of the civilizing mission and the harsh reality of colonial violence”.¹ Contradictions and paradoxes were, according to Michael Mann “not simply irregularities but an integral part of the civilizing mission ideology”.²

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¹ Gandhi, 1998, p. 134
² Mann, 2004, p. 24
The variety, complexity, and ambivalence of colonial discourse which Nicholas Thomas has identified was in part a product of attempts by missionaries and humanitarians to reconcile these two conflicting projects. The tension and conflict that resulted existed both between and within agents of the civilizing mission. Although missionaries sometimes saw themselves as separate from the colonizing process that was taking place, as agents of the civilizing mission they found themselves unable to dissociate themselves from it. When Clamor Schürmann, en route to South Australia in 1838, learned that he and his brother missionary Christian Teichelmann were to be under the direction of the Protector of Aborigines he wrote in his diary that “[m]y plans had nothing to do with politics”. Whatever the young missionary’s plans might have been, he was naïve to expect that the work he was to carry out in South Australia would be beyond politics. He was to discover, as other missionaries throughout the world before and after him had and would discover, that his work was intimately bound up with politics.

I will argue in the next chapter that Grey’s response to the inherent contradictions was to favour the colonizing process over the humanitarian concerns of the civilizing mission, paying little more than lip-service to protecting and compensating Aboriginal people. On the other hand the mission’s prioritizing of the ‘civilizing’/Christianizing agenda over the colonizing project frequently caused them to struggle with colonialism’s conflicting agendas. How the German Lutheran missionaries who attempted to undertake the Christianization of Aboriginal people in South Australia in the 1840s dealt with the dilemmas presented by these contradictions is a focus of this chapter.

A second focus of this chapter is the responses of the missionaries to dilemmas arising from their own unique situation in South Australia. Three particular characteristics of the South Australian Lutheran Mission impacted on the kind of relationship that developed between itself and the colonial administration. The first of these was the poverty of the mission, which prevented it from operating independently of the colonial administration. Related to this was the missionaries’ lack of influence and authority, arising not only from their poverty, but from their position as German Lutherans in a

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3 Thomas, 1994, p. 17
4 E. Schürmann (ed), 1987, p. 26
British colony. Thirdly, having been trained and sent to South Australia by the Dresden Mission Society, they were under an obligation to consult the Society before making any decisions, being required even to obtain permission from the Society before marrying. Because of the distances involved, the time taken for mail to reach Germany and an answer returned could be as much as a year. At the same time, having been invited to South Australia as part of the colonial administration’s civilizing mission, they were also under the direction of the administration. Although both the colonial government and the Dresden Mission Society exercised authority over the missionaries, neither of them were under any obligation to provide the mission with the funding required to carry out their objectives.

‘pecuniary distress’ and ‘the unfortunate position of being foreigners’: the material and social position of the Lutheran Mission

During the years that the Evangelical Lutheran Mission operated in South Australia, the missionaries struggled under constant financial hardship. The four missionaries, Teichelmann, Schürmann, Klosé and Meyer, received only small and irregular sums of money from Germany, the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society of Dresden preferring to use its funds to train and place missionaries, rather than to support its missionaries in the field. Instructions issued to the missionaries Meyer and Klosé before their departure from Dresden advised them that:

As regards salary and the means of subsistence, you will have to trust more in providence and the goodness of God than in the treasury of the Mission Society. We shall do all we can, but you may also have to seek the necessities of life by other means.5

That they should accept to work under such conditions, and live in poverty, was, according to the missionary Clamor Schürmann, incomprehensible to the English colonists. Describing the English, “even the pious among them,” as “a cold-blooded calculating people” he wrote that they could not “comprehend the attitude of the

5 Graetz (ed), 2002, Afterword to the Klose Letters ‘Klosé’s later years’, p. 46
Society to support us only as far as its means permit. Many, therefore, who know our situation consider us, if not exactly as adventurers, but certainly a trifle strange”.

The missionaries were always dependent on funding from sources outside their mission, and therefore were never independent. Schürmann wrote that without the promise of financial support of George Fife Angas, they would not have come. It was Angas, one of the founding Colonial Commissioners and a financial backer of the new colonial enterprise, who had invited the Dresden Mission Society to send missionaries to South Australia, and he had promised Teichelmann and Schürmann £50 per annum for the first five years of their operation in South Australia. This subsidy soon ceased, however, when Angas found himself in personal financial difficulties. The missionaries were also dependent on an annual gratuity from the colonial government, the first being £50 made to them by Governor Gawler in 1839. After the Queen’s Birthday celebration the following year, Gawler gave a further gratuity of the same amount with a promise that the payment would be made to them on the Queen’s birthday every year. No government subsidy was received by the missionaries in 1841, however, when George Grey succeeded Gawler as governor and set about cutting government spending. Grey recommenced payment in 1842, increasing the sum to £100 on condition that Schürmann remain as missionary at Port Lincoln. This payment, and the gratuity of £100 made over the following two years, were made to the Lutheran missionaries as a group, but in 1845, leading up to his removal of the Location school from missionary hands, Grey altered the way this payment was made. Significantly, he chose to name those to whom the payment was being made, dividing the £100 gratuity equally between Schürmann “in consideration of his being stationed at Port Lincoln”, Klosé, “in consideration of his acting as Schoolmaster at the Location”, and Meyer, who started a school at Encounter Bay in December, 1844. Although this was a minor change in the way the gratuity was granted, it was a significant in that it occurred at a time when, as we shall see in the next chapter, the ownership of the missionary-run school was being contested. Grey would later use the fact of government payment to individual

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6 Schürmann to the Dresden Mission society, 22/8/1842  
7 Schürmann, diary, cited in, E. Schurmann (ed), 1987, p. 26  
8 Brauer, 1929, p. 44  
9 Moorhouse to Col Sec, 7/10/1841, Letterbook p. 31  
10 Moorhouse to Col Sec, 10/9/1842, Letterbook p. 61  
11 Moorhouse to Col Sec, 19/10/1844, Letterbook p. 111
missionaries, rather than to the Lutheran Mission, to support his contention that the school was, in fact, government owned.

Receiving no financial assistance from the government from May 1840 to October 1842, the missionaries found themselves in severe financial difficulties. As a result of this a group of colonists, made up largely of clergymen, formed the South Australian Missionary Society in June 1842, with the intention of providing financial support to the mission. “The cause of the large committee being formed”, the Colonial Chaplain, James Farrell, told a Select Committee in 1860:

arose from the circumstances of four German missionaries to the natives having got into a state of pecuniary distress. ... The occurrence of their being destitute was brought forward at a public meeting, and a committee was appointed ... to raise funds to take them out of their difficulty.\(^{12}\)

With Grey’s reinstatement of an annual gratuity to the mission four months later, the financial circumstances of the missionaries which prompted to Society’s formation became less urgent, and the Society was to provide little financial support to the missionaries over the two years of its existence. Moreover, any funds that were raised were not offered to the missionaries unconditionally. As we saw in Chapter 3, the Society hoped “to see that instruction was given to the natives in a more comprehensive way, and in a way that would be most available to them”.\(^{13}\) Its committees came up with recommendations urging more coercive measures to be taken in obtaining and retaining Indigenous children for schooling. The Society also opposed the missionaries’ use of Kaurna as the language of instruction in its school at Piltawodli, and called on the missionaries to adopt the teaching of English. “[I]t places such demands and conditions on its contributions”, Schürmann wrote a few months after the Society’s formation, “that they can appeal to no one, and have led me to the decision to accept not a penny from it, unless driven by need”\(^{14}\).

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\(^{12}\) S.A. Select Committee Report, p. 72
\(^{13}\) S.A. Select Committee Report, p. 72
\(^{14}\) Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 22/8/1842
Schürmann predicted that the Society would “just as quickly and unnoticed come to an end as with so many other initially vigorously undertaken projects in the Colony”.\(^\text{15}\)

Indeed, less than two years after its formation, Teichelmann noted in his diary that the contribution he was preparing for the Society’s annual conference would probably be his last, because “they are forming themselves into an independent society and, as some colleagues on the Committee have expressed it, want to have one of their own missionaries”.\(^\text{16}\)

The fact of their being German in a British colony also impacted on the missionaries’ standing, reducing the influence they might have had over the treatment of Indigenous people and the course of the civilizing mission. Schürmann expressed his frustration at his powerless position as a German in an English colony, writing that:

> it would be so much easier for [England’s] children than for foreigners, the more so as the native people are so helpless: as so often and so patently is evident here. We would be able to make many suggestions, and many of our suggestions would carry far more weight if we were not in the unfortunate position of being foreigners.\(^\text{17}\)

As a result of the material impoverishment of the Lutheran Mission, and their marginal status as Germans and Lutherans, the partnership that existed between the government and mission as joint agencies of the South Australian civilizing mission was an unequal one. When it came to a difference of opinion regarding the form the civilizing mission should take, the missionaries were at a distinct disadvantage, lacking both the power and the resources needed to implement the project independently. As a result the mission was entirely dependent on maintaining a good working relationship with the government for its continued involvement in the project. Under Gawler’s governorship the relationship had been largely unproblematic. Gawler had given them status as partners in the civilizing mission and had concurred with them in their firm belief in a Christianization-first approach. Further, he had been willing to be guided by them when their ideas differed from his own, in relation to the use and preservation of

\(^{15}\) Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 22/8/1842  
\(^{16}\) Teichelmann diaries, p. 29, 2/4/1844  
\(^{17}\) Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 3/7/1843
Indigenous languages, for example. Gawler had initially favoured the teaching of English to Aboriginal people, but had accepted the missionaires’ argument regarding the importance of retaining Indigenous languages.\(^\text{18}\) He had, during his governorship, accorded a degree of status to Kaurna, the language of the Aboriginal people of the Adelaide plains. He had a number of his speeches translated into Kaurna,\(^\text{19}\) and encouraged the retention and use of Indigenous place names.\(^\text{20}\) Grey’s arrival as Gawler’s replacement in 1841 required a renegotiation of the relationship, as the missionaires attempted to balance their own views and convictions against the need to develop working relationships with the colonial administration.

**Missionaries and colonization**

The relationship between missionaires and colonial administrations has been the subject of a good deal of scholarly research. It has been argued by historians that as agents of the civilizing project, missionaires such as the German Lutherans were political agents, not just because their mission was used as a justification for the dispossession of indigenous peoples, but also because their objective of the acculturation of indigenous peoples served the colonizers’ agenda. John Marriott makes reference to the body of opinion which argues that “missionaires were agents in the spread of colonial power, not the least as bearers of its underpinning values”.\(^\text{21}\) He writes of the civilizing mission in India that, even if it “was not always thought of in terms of the maintenance of political and cultural authority, in practice that was how it tended to operate”.\(^\text{22}\) The Christianity that missionaires sought to impart to indigenous people was intricately bound up with European culture. They saw the adoption of some aspects of European culture, such as agriculture and monogamous marriage, as essentially linked to their Christian message. Their actions were strongly influenced by their assumption that indigenous beliefs and ways of living were inferior, and that the lives of indigenous people would improve if they accepted the beliefs and lifestyle of Europeans. Whereas this was accepted as generally the case, the position of indigenous people in colonial

\(^{18}\) Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, written between 10 and 21 December 1838; E. Schurmann, (ed) 1987, p. 21  
\(^{19}\) Amery, 2000, p. 55-6  
\(^{21}\) Marriott, 2003, p. 83.  
\(^{22}\) Marriott, 2003, p. 83
situations, such as that which existed in South Australia in the 1840s, made their adoption of a European lifestyle seem even more imperative. The Lutheran missionaries in South Australia approached their task of evangelisation and cultural retraining by ridiculing Indigenous beliefs, and by attempting to convince Aboriginal people of the sinfulness of the Indigenous way of life. A study of nineteenth century missionary activity in North Queensland by Noel Loos concluded that “Christianity has been an intrinsic part of the colonization process”, and David Trigger’s research into the operation of the Christianity taught by missionaries at Doomadgee led him to conclude that it “has partly operated as a powerful legitimating ideology for non-Aboriginal authority”.

The assertion that missionaries facilitated the subjugation of indigenous peoples by breaking down structures which might otherwise have enabled them to resist the impact of colonization, has been widely contested. Writers such as Andrew Porter oppose this position, presenting arguments in support of “an increasing body of historical literature which has done much to show that [views regarding the “intimate, inevitable connection between missionaries and ‘cultural imperialism’”] are seriously exaggerated”. Positions taken on this question often reflect the ideological position of the historian. Church histories, particularly, as Noel Pearson has noted, frequently emphasise the role of missions in protecting indigenous people from the violence of colonization. The overview of Catholic mission activity written from a Catholic viewpoint by Toby O’Connor, for example, argues that far from facilitating the oppression of Aborigines, Catholic missions instead tried to protect them from White society through isolation. A similar defence of missionaries against accusations of cultural imperialism has also been mounted by Arthur Schlesinger, though he does admit the possibility that “from time to time the missionary effort facilitated the capitalist
effort”. He argues, however, that the central missionary motive, to save souls, was distinct from the desire to extend power, and that “the missionaries themselves remained a force independent of, and often at odds with, both the white trader and even more the white settler”.

A position in defence of missionary activity has also been taken by writers who have not taken an overtly Christian perspective, such as Peggy Brock and James Axtell. Brock contends that in the case of the Adnyamathanha people of the Flinders Ranges in South Australia, the presence of missionaries actually saved Adnyamathanha culture and identity. She asserts that:

[o]f the 14,000 people in the state who identify as Aboriginal today, the vast majority have experienced institutionalisation [on missions] or are descended from people who have. One must conclude from this that institutionalisation, while discriminatory and often harsh, has been a major factor in the survival of Aboriginal communities.

Axtell has similarly argued that missions provided Native Americans with a strategy for preserving their communities on their own land with native leaders.

The maintenance of cultural identity which has resulted from mission policies of segregating Indigenous people in isolated communities was an unintended outcome of missionary activity. Indeed, Alroe has highlighted the paradox of missionaries today using the preservation of Aboriginal culture as a justification for mission activities, arguing that since “missionary activity was specifically aimed at eradication of Aboriginal culture it is a bit much to claim credit for having failed.”

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Relatively ineffectual as it was in its efforts to influence the lives of Indigenous people, the role of the German Lutheran Mission in either facilitating the colonizing process in South Australia or protecting Aboriginal people from its effects was somewhat muted. Certainly it played a legitimising role in the colonial project as an agent of a civilizing mission that served to justify colonial rule. The missionaries were not, in principle, opposed to colonization, as it enabled them to have contact with the heathen they sought to convert. On the other hand they believed that Indigenous people were degraded by their contact with the sinful elements of British society. Ideally they would have liked to precede European settlement, to work “beyond the frontier” in Evans’ terms.33 The ‘heathen’ that lived beyond the frontier were thought to be ‘uncontaminated’: degraded as a result of their own lifestyle, but not further degraded by the immorality of ‘low whites’. The missionaries felt they needed to protect Aboriginal people from the contaminating influence of the British migrants who were part of the colonizing process. Their attitude to colonization was therefore one of ambivalence; while they saw it as enabling their evangelisation project, they also believed that it presented an impediment to its successful implementation.

While missionary activities frequently served the purposes of the colonial enterprise, many missionaries were not averse to using the force of colonial domination to facilitate their own agendas. In some situations, while colonial administrations used missionaries to both justify and facilitate the colonizing process, missionaries looked to colonial administrations to enable their operations. Colonial force, or the threat of force, could be used to persuade Aboriginal people to behave in ways that missionaries believed would facilitate their conversion. As Schlesinger has written, “[i]f force broke the ground, religion could plant the seed”.34

The extent to which missionaries used colonization to serve their own agendas has been examined by some historians. In The Bible and the Flag, Brian Stanley explored the relationship between the missionary movement and imperialism through a number of case studies of British missionary activity in British colonial contexts in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He concluded from these that in their concern both to be able to undertake the work of conversion, and to see ‘native interests’ defended,

33 Evans, 2001, pp 151-172
34 Schlesinger 1974, p. 350
missionaries frequently turned to “explicitly imperial solutions”. Nor
man Etherington has drawn similar conclusions from his study of missionary activity in Africa. He argues that missionaries there were initially anti-imperial, believing that their work had a better chance of success if African groups retained their independence, but as they became frustrated by their lack of success, they became increasingly supportive of imperialist intervention. In his research on missionary-state relationships in Uganda between 1890 and 1925, Holger Bernt Hansen found, again, that over time missionaries of the Church Mission Society shifted from a position of opposition to secular colonial rule, to one of co-operation and basic agreement.

Patricia Grimshaw and Elizabeth Nelson have recently argued that the degree of mission-government collusion depended on the degree of decimation and level of dependence of the Indigenous people. They write of a situation in which there occurred in Victoria an “unprecedented congruence of local church missionary goals and state agendas” which resulted in missions and reserves becoming “institutions that bordered on ... prison[s], where Aboriginal people were submitted to a regime of “surveillance, coercion and punishment”.

While the literature does suggest that missionaries tended to move from a position of opposition to one of co-operation with secular colonial rule, it also reveals the existence of a wide variation in missionary responses to colonial rule and the colonizing process. Hansen noted that the Church Mission Society in Uganda was faced with options “ranging along a continuum running between the two polar concepts of dissociation and cooperation, involving a critical, challenging role, and a supportive legitimizing role respectively”. I suggest that responses varied both as a result of the different personalities of the missionaries concerned, and as a result of the different political

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35 Stanley, 1990, p. 132
36 Stanley, 1990, p. 110
37 Norman Etherington, 1982, ‘South African Missionary Ideologies 1880-1920; Retrospect and Prospect’ in Christensen and Hutchison (eds), pp 191-199
40 Hansen, 1984, p. 473
environments in which missionaries attempted to carry out their evangelisation. Even within the brotherhood of the German Lutheran Mission in South Australia, differences in the personality of individual missionaries, and differences in the colonial situation in which they found themselves in different parts of the colony, led to quite different responses. Teichelmann and Schurmann provide interesting examples of these varying responses.

“If they did not settle like the Europeans they would be driven out”: supporting and using colonial authority

Being primarily concerned with the Christianization and ‘civilization’ project, missionaries were frequently less concerned about the protection of indigenous rights in the colonizing process than they were about saving their souls. As a result they were sometimes prepared to tolerate treatment of indigenous people they felt to be unjust for the greater goal of eternal salvation. Any injustice suffered by Aborigines in the process of colonization would be amply compensated by the salvation of their eternal souls. In Stanley’s words, their belief in “the eternal perdition of the ‘heathen’ imparted a sense of absolute urgency and priority to the missionary imperative, besides which political considerations appeared ultimately secondary”.

The letters of Christian Teichelmann to his Mission Society in Dresden give the reader the impression of a particularly severe and dour Christian, for whom the urgency of saving souls from the torments of eternal damnation far outweighed any thought of earthly comfort or happiness. Although he sometimes felt the injustice of government action with regard to the Aborigines, he used the hardships suffered by Kaurna people to impress upon them the importance of their accepting his teaching. He supported colonization by encouraging Aboriginal people to accept the discriminatory laws and restrictions imposed on them by the colonial government, rather than interceding on their behalf. The unjust treatment of Indigenous people, and the infringement of their rights, could, he believed, have the positive effect of forcing people to accept his advice to change their way of life. In 1839, for example, when Kaurna people expressed to Teichelmann their distress at being forbidden to cut firewood in the parklands, he neither expressed to them his sympathy at their situation, nor did he represent their

41 Stanley, 1990, p. 67
distress to the colonial authorities, although he understood the importance of fire in their lives. Rather, he took the opportunity to lecture the people who had brought their concerns to him, exhorting them to settle at the Location where wood and woodcutting equipment were available, and to occupy houses built for them there. He wrote that “now they had to learn for themselves what we had already told them, namely if they did not settle like the Europeans they would be driven out”.\textsuperscript{42} He told them that if they were not prepared to accept the colonizers’ standards, by remaining quiet on the Sabbath, for example, they should leave the town, to which they replied that “this country is ours, not yours”.\textsuperscript{43}

Teichelmann was prepared to see the force of colonial domination used as a means by which the civilizing/Christianizing mission could be achieved. He was critical of the release, due to the non-appearance of a plaintiff, of four Kaurna men arrested and brought before a magistrate for stealing potatoes. Although it was legally required that the men be released, Teichelmann argued that they should have been punished as deterrence against stealing, and to teach respect for colonial law. He thus opposed the equal treatment of Aboriginal people by the law, advocating a more paternalistic approach, by which Aboriginal people would be treated as children, who must be taught right from wrong.\textsuperscript{44} In 1842 he complained to the Protector of Aborigines, Matthew Moorhouse, about the fact that Indigenous people were moving about Adelaide in a state of nudity, asking that some means be taken to prevent this.\textsuperscript{45} As a result of his complaint the police were instructed to arrest and imprison for twenty-four hours anyone who was not clothed. Moorhouse believed this measure to be “good and lenient enough” and that it would serve “greatly to check the indecent exposure which Mr Teichelmann mentioned in his letter”.\textsuperscript{46}

A further example of Teichelmann’s willingness to use the threat of punishment and imprisonment by English law to achieve his own objectives in the civilizing mission occurred in 1844, when Kaurna people sought his assistance in the case of a Kaurna man accused of assaulting a European. They believed the man to be innocent, and

\textsuperscript{42} Teichelmann diaries, p. 2, 24/11/1839
\textsuperscript{43} Teichelmann diaries, p. 22, 12/12/1841
\textsuperscript{44} Teichelmann diaries, p. 4, 24/11/1839
\textsuperscript{45} Moorhouse to Col Sec, 3/3/1842, Letterbook p. 43
\textsuperscript{46} Moorhouse to Col. Sec, 14/3/1842, Letterbook p. 44
asked Teichelmann to secure his release. Instead of taking their concerns to the
colonial authorities, Teichelmann told them that if the arrested man had followed his
sermons, he would not have been taken into custody, and that they, too, could avoid
imprisonment by heeding his advice. “I had already been advising them for 5 years and
they still followed their old ways”, he wrote. Reflecting the powerlessness of the
Kaurna to negotiate in such cases, they told Teichelmann that if the man was not
released they would withdraw their children from school. Teichelmann told them they
could take them, “we would not force them to come”.47

In 1845 Kaurna people complained to Teichelmann that while Gawler had been kindly
disposed to them, Grey was “just the opposite”. They complained that Grey had
demolished the houses they had built at the Location with the help of Schurmann and
Teichelmann during the early stage of the civilizing project. Teichelmann, too, had been
angered by the demolition of the houses, writing in his diary that their complaints
against Grey were true. But instead of supporting the Kaurna people in their protest
about this, he, as always, used the occasion to blame them for injustices perpetrated
against them, because of their refusal to accept the civilizing agenda. He wrote that he
considered “it necessary to point out to them that their own behaviour had brought
things to this point”.48 His message to them was that if they did not accept the
‘civilizing’ and Christianizing agenda of the government, then they had no right to
complain about unjust treatment. Justice could only be expected if Aboriginal people
accepted their part of the bargain: to forsake their own world view and way of life and
accept the religion and lifestyle of the colonizers.

“So heinous are the Whites!”: the critical, challenging position

Although they did not question “the fact of British rule”, missionaries sometimes did
question “the way it operated”.49 Some missionaries believed that colonization was
justified only if the interests of colonized people were protected, and they sometimes
did speak out against the means by which colonization was achieved.

47 Teichelmann diaries, p. 28, 24/3/1844
48 Teichelmann diaries, p. 6, 6/4/1845
49 Stanley, 1990, p. 100
The letters and diaries of Clamor Schürmann indicate that he had a tendency, from his first arrival in the colony, to be much more critical than Teichelmann of government policy towards the Aboriginal people, and particularly of government inaction in the civilizing mission. He strongly believed that it was the duty of the administration to provide for the material needs of the Indigenous people, and to compensate them for the loss of their land and livelihood. In his letters to his Mission Society in Germany he criticized, for example, the administration’s failure to reserve land for Aborigines, writing that, according to the law, all land in South Australia had to be sold, leaving hardly enough for government use, and least of all any for Aboriginal use. He added “this is one of the bragged about fruits of a self-supporting colony”.

Missionaries and other civilizers saw compensation very much in terms of the civilizing mission, since they saw ‘civilization’ and Christianity as benefits to be gained by colonized peoples in exchange for their land. Those who criticized colonial administrations for failing to provide adequate compensation frequently sought forms of compensation that would enable the civilizing mission to be successfully implemented. Schürmann’s anxiety to see land reserved for Indigenous people was as much to do with his belief that land was essential to the successful operation of his own mission, as with the Indigenous rights. He wrote to Angas that “[t]he Government ought to give them land, ... and cattle, that they might learn agriculture, the natural transition from a wandering life of hunting and fishing”. He wrote elsewhere that “it is foreseeable that through continuous denial of land for the native our effective activity amongst them must be minimal and without duration”. It was land for settling and converting Aborigines that he was urging, rather than land for Indigenous people to use for their own purposes.

Like Teichelmann, Schürmann wished to see colonial law used to facilitate the civilizing mission. He criticised the government’s failure to legislate to control the activities of Aboriginal people, writing that:

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\[\text{Schürmann, ‘Natives of South Australia’}
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\[\text{\underline{\text{51}}}
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\[\text{Schürmann to Angas, 12/6/1839, cited in E. Schurmann (ed), 1987, p. 49-50}
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\[\text{\underline{\text{52}}}
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\[\text{Schürmann to Dresden Mission Society, 8/3/1839}
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the present policy of the government to give them a feast every now and then, but otherwise to allow them to roam, to beg and to steal as they like, can only bring ruin; there is much real evidence of this. It is said that the English law does not permit any subject to be forced to work, nor to have his place of living prescribed but if they only gave the necessary materials for an orderly settlement and did not allow the natives to beg at all, that would surely be sufficient persuasion. Without such intervention the tribes close to Adelaide will be a prey to all the social burdens like vile diseases (which have already taken off so many or made others crippled or wretched) and within 10-20 years will exist only in the memory or in minute remnants.\footnote{Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 3/7/1843}

However, Schurmann’s criticism of the colonial government was not levelled only at its failure to facilitate the civilizing mission, but also at its failure to treat Indigenous people with justice. He was highly critical, for example, of the legal situation of Aboriginal people in the colony. As an interpreter in a number of court cases, he was disturbed by the judiciary’s treatment of Aboriginal people. He believed that the court was heavily biased against them. He was outraged when a jury found that a European station owner and his workers had acted in self defence when they shot dead an Aboriginal woman, although she was armed with nothing more than a digging stick. He heard members of the jury say outside court that “if they found the sheep-owners guilty on charges like that, soon nobody would want to stay in the bush and the sheep-owners would be finished”.\footnote{Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 3/7/1843} He also wrote of an Indigenous man named Kungka, who, after being shot and wounded by a European, reported the incident to Schürmann. Schürmann reported the matter to the police, and the offender was arrested but not tried because there were no European witnesses, and Aboriginal evidence was not admissible in court.\footnote{Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 22/8/1842} Schürmann was highly critical of this sort of injustice, writing that “the protection and privileges that are supposed to come to natives as subjects of the famous English rule, are actually very dubious”.\footnote{Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 22/8/1842} “Very little is said about such happenings here,” he wrote, “because of the almost superstitious adulation of the English for their system of justice. All of their expressions about it are made as if they were speaking of eternal justice”.\footnote{Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 3/7/1843}
While these criticisms of the treatment of Indigenous people were expressed in letters to Germany, and in the early years to the missionaries’ benefactor, Angas, there is little evidence that they were widely expressed in the colony itself, a reflection, perhaps, of Schürmann’s sense of having a marginal status in the colony as a poor man, and as a German.

The continuum of missionary association with secular rule described by Hansen in his study of missionary-state relationships in Uganda ranged from a position of dissociation from secular rule, “involving a critical, challenging role” at one pole, to co-operation, involving “a supportive legitimizing role” at the other. Schürmann’s belief that it was the responsibility of the colonial administration to provide for the needs of the Indigenous people led him to be critical of government policy on the one hand, but willing to enter into a relationship with the government on the other. His willingness to do so arose from his belief in government responsibility to provide the mission with the material means to carry out their ‘civilizing’ and Christianizing agenda. Teichelmann wrote that “Bro. Schürmann’s opinion was ... that it was the obligation of the Government to care for the aborigines etc. etc. because they had taken away the land and sources of sustenance”. Schürmann thus had “a critical, challenging role” with regard to secular rule, but did not take a position of dissociation.

At the end of 1840, when Schürmann had been in Adelaide for two years, Governor Gawler offered him a position as Deputy Protector of Aborigines at Port Lincoln “with free dwelling and an annual salary of £50 sterling”. Schürmann was preparing to set up a mission in Encounter Bay at that time, but he accepted Gawler’s offer. Explaining his decision in a letter to Germany, he wrote that, although he suffered “much doubt and unrest” in coming to this decision, he was more concerned about the suitability of Port Lincoln as a mission post, rather than about the appropriateness of a missionary accepting a government position. He did not, “even for a moment, consider ... such a position unbecoming for a missionary”. Indeed, he believed that the development of such a relationship with the government would increase the status and influence of the

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58 Hansen, 1984, p. 473
59 Teichelmann diaries, p. 80-1, 21/1/1846
60 Schürmann to Pastor Wermelskirch, 7/8/1840; See also Moorhouse, Protector’s report, 20/2/1840 Papers Relative to South Australia
mission in the colony. He believed further that the development of a co-operative relationship with the government was necessary for the mission, which lacked both the material means and “the necessary connections” to achieve its aims. Offered a position which he believed would provide him with both the material means and the necessary connections, by which he presumably meant the authority of a government position, he believed that “the opportunity should not unnecessarily be neglected”.  

Schürmann moved to the remote settlement of Port Lincoln in the joint role of Deputy Protector and missionary in September 1840. There he met with a very different political environment from that which he had experienced in Adelaide. The attitudes to Indigenous people and the frontier violence he encountered at Port Lincoln would lead him to adopt a stronger oppositional stance in relation to the colonizing process, and a more critical attitude to the colonial administration. The small settlement had been established for less than a year when Schürmann arrived, and the relationship between the Indigenous people and the colonizers was a very different one from that which existed in the Adelaide area, where Teichelmann continued to work. Whereas the arrival of Europeans in the Adelaide area had been accompanied by speeches promising the protection of Indigenous people, there had been no such ceremonies at Port Lincoln. Rather, the relationship that existed between the Aborigines and the settlers was one of mutual fear and mistrust. Shortly after Shürmann’s arrival a 12-year-old European boy was speared by Aboriginal men, and a state of warfare developed over the next few years during which the killing of European settlers was responded to with brutal retaliation.  

Schürmann’s position as missionary and Protector at Port Lincoln was an invidious one. The settlers there had adopted a policy of “keeping out” the Aborigines in an attempt to protect their small settlement from the perceived threat from a larger, unpredictable, Indigenous population. In frontier communities such as Port Lincoln, as Andrew Markus has noted, “settlers who befriended Aborigines were seen as endangering not only their own lives but those of others by undermining the necessary distance between races and the Aboriginal sense of fear that was a prerequisite for safety”.  

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61 Schürmann to Pastor Wermelskirch, 7/8/1840  
62 Markus, 1994, p. 52
conciliatory approach to the Barngarla—63 and Nauo-speaking people of the region, and his attempts to draw them into the settlement so that he could undertake his work of evangelisation, put him at odds with many of the residents of the settlement.64 When three Europeans in the district were killed by Aboriginal people in 1842, the Police Sergeant told Schürmann that the settlement would be better off without him.65

Quite early in his residence at Port Lincoln Schürmann spoke out against the violence perpetrated against Aboriginal people, reporting to Governor Gawler a case of police brutality against the first group of Aboriginal men who had entered the settlement since his arrival. Unprovoked, the police had taken the men into custody and beaten them.66 In his position as Assistant Protector he was confronted directly by the reality of frontier violence. In 1842, accompanying a party searching for the Aboriginal people responsible for the death of three Europeans, he witnessed the shooting of unarmed men by members the party. One of the victims, a man well known to him, he knew to be innocent. Schürmann wrote that “it was like a knife in my heart to see this innocent man shot, and I could not hold back the tears”.67 He left the search party and returned to Port Lincoln, believing his involvement to be inconsistent with his position as missionary. Later he learned from Indigenous people captured by the search party that five other innocent people had been killed, including two children. He wrote, “[s]o heinous are the Whites!”68 He also witnessed the severed head of a man he knew displayed on a pigsty with a clay pipe forced between its teeth, an act carried out by a later search party consisting of the Port Lincoln police force and volunteers.69

Schürmann also drew public attention to the killing of a Nauo man, Padlalta, by police at Port Lincoln in 1844, writing a letter “to friends in Adelaide” according to his biographer Edwin Schurmann. He was highly critical of the colonial press for their sensationalism in reporting on the killing of Europeans by Aborigines:

63 spelt ‘Parnkalla’ by Schürmann
64 Encouraging Aboriginal people to come into the town also seemed to Schürmann to be detrimental to their own interests; he recorded incidents of police brutality towards Aboriginal people who entered the settlement, and believed that they were confronted with evil temptations in the town. Yet unless people to come into the settlement, he was unable to establish the contact necessary to carry out his Christianization agenda.
66 E. Schurmann (ed), 1987, p. 117
68 Schürmann, diary entry for 17/4/1842, cited in E. Schurmann (ed), 1987, p. 150
69 Schürmann, diary entry for 17/4/1842, cited in E. Schurmann (ed), 1987, p. 150-4
entertain[ing] their readers week after week with details of the bloody massacre, heaping a profusion of epithets upon the perpetrators. But of the slaughter of the soldiers ... among the tribes who had nothing to do with the murders - of the treachery of attacking in the darkness of night, a tribe who had the day before been hunting kangaroos with their informers, ... of the wanton outrage on the mutilated body of one of the victims; of these things the press was as silent as the grave.\textsuperscript{70}

For Schürmann, the contradictions that existed between the process of colonization and the promises of the civilizing mission became irreconcilable. He had arrived in South Australia in 1838, a young man full of hope and sure of the rightness of his mission. After he witnessed the horrors of the violence of colonization, however, his letters to his mission society give evidence of a man weighed down by despondency and depression. They suggest that Schürmann, then still only in his mid-twenties, isolated from his brother missionaries in a remote frontier settlement, was severely affected by the events he had witnessed. Writing of his despair at the possibility of the mission ever achieving success, he begged the Dresden Society to remove him from Australia to another field of mission. He wrote of “the hopeless prospects for the mission which depress the spirit”.\textsuperscript{71} The Mission Society refused his request, and Schürmann remained in Port Lincoln, but Teichelmann noted a few years later that “it was very detrimental to pastor Schürmann’s personal health for him to continue to alone working [sic] among the black and white heathens in Port Lincoln”.\textsuperscript{72} “Nothing is left”, Schürmann wrote, “but a cold feeling of uselessness which constantly oppresses me, and which I shall never lose in South Australia”.\textsuperscript{73}

Such opposition to the means by which colonization was taking place led missionaries, in some cases, to attempt to distance themselves from the process of colonization, and from colonial administrations for which colonization was the primary goal. After witnessing the violence perpetrated during police expeditions to apprehend Aboriginal people, Schürmann, for example, attempted to exclude himself from participation in

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
  \bibitem{70} E. Schurmann (ed), 1987, p. 170
  \bibitem{71} Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 22/8/1842
  \bibitem{72} Teichelmann diaries, p. 78, 9-10/12/1845
  \bibitem{73} Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 22/8/1842
\end{thebibliography}
later expeditions, claiming that such involvement hindered his work as a missionary. But missionaries frequently faced the dilemma of wanting to be independent from colonial administrations, but requiring the resources of the colonial administration to enable them to carry out their activities. As Anna Johnson noted of the London Missionary Society in the South Pacific and Australia, although the mission:

theoretically sought to distance itself from the often less than humanitarian policies and practices of British imperialism, the reliance of the missionaries in the field upon colonial administrative, civil and transport systems ensured that the practices of the missionaries were inextricably bound in with the expansion of colonial states and imperial policies.\(^\text{74}\)

For the missionaries of the Lutheran Mission in South Australia, their poverty increased their entanglement with politics, as they weighed their desire to remain apart from a colonizing process increasingly at odds with their humanitarian ideals, against their need for government support and assistance.

The missionary’s dilemma

There is evidence that a more than usually stark dilemma presented itself to Clamor Schürmann in 1842. His attempts to evangelise to the Indigenous people at Port Lincoln, and to fulfil his role as Protector of Aborigines there, was frustrated by his poverty and lack of resources. His inability to survive on an annual income of £70 in Port Lincoln, where the cost of living was much higher than in Adelaide, had forced him to undertake farming to provide food for himself. Without a supply of food to give to Aboriginal people, he had no means by which to attract them to come to him. If he attempted to seek out Indigenous people away from the settlement, his house would frequently be raided and his food stolen. When he first moved to Port Lincoln he had taken with him as servant a German boy who was able to protect his house when he was away, but he had not been able to afford to keep him. He was simply unable to have the contact with Aboriginal people he required to enable him to carry out his duties.

\(^{74}\) Johnston, 2001, p. 68-9
In April 1842, following the murder of three Europeans by Aboriginal people, he was required by Charles Driver, the Government Resident and magistrate in Port Lincoln, to accompany a party which set out to apprehend the killers. Aboriginal trackers led them to a group of Aboriginal people, but as the party approached all but “four men and a few women” fled. Schürmann records that Driver ordered one of men in the party:

> to shoot the native nearest to us. He repeatedly called: ‘knock him over’. I asked Driver why he ordered the man shot, when he was unarmed and could have been taken prisoner. He said that he didn’t want any prisoners, since they were useless.

Shots were fired at three of the fleeing natives, but none fell. However, our trackers told us that Nalta and Mulya were wounded. On top of the hill we found a woman who was in advanced stages of pregnancy, trying to hide in the hollow of a tree, and I asked the Sergeant if he was going to shoot her.  

Schürmann recorded this event in a report to Moorhouse. Three months later, recalled to Adelaide to act as a court interpreter, he was required to discuss these allegations with Grey. Following their interview, Grey asked Schürmann to confirm his verbal answer in writing. Accordingly, on 14 July, Schürmann qualified his account of the events of that day with three fairly disconnected statements. While his original account of what happened on that day is clear and unequivocal, his retraction of the allegation of the shooting of an unarmed man is far less coherent, and less convincing. He wrote:

> His Excellency the Governor having at a late interview enquired of me whether the Natives had made no resistance when pursued by Mr Driver’s party on April 2 of which no mention had been made in my report dated May 18th, I beg leave to state the fact that two spears having been thrown at one of the party was communicated to me by the individual at whom they were thrown and I fully believe his statement. I saw a shot fired at a native before any spear was thrown, but I do not know that the native was killed. The Europeans were

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75 Schürmann, diary entry for 2/4/1842, cited in E. Schurmann (ed), 1987, p. 149
naturally in a high state of excitement and at seeing the natives in possession of the spoils fired almost involuntarily.\(^{76}\)

My suspicion that Grey put pressure on Schürmann to change his original statement is deepened by another letter that was written on the same day as this retraction. On 14 July, the day that Schürmann wrote his letter of retraction, he wrote a letter submitted to the governor through the office of the Protector of Aborigines, setting out a list of his requirements for his continued work in Port Lincoln. The letter stated that:

“[s]hould His Excellency conclude that is is desirable for Mr Schurmann to continue in the Port Lincoln district, Mr Schurmann wishes me respectfully to communicate to His Excellency the following suggestions which at present appear to Mr Schurmann to be essential in getting into contact with the Natives, in bringing about any amicable relations between them and the Europeans, & in prosecuting the study of the language, which alone is calculated to qualify him for the prime object of his mission, namely, to impart Christian instruction.\(^{77}\)

Schürmann’s requirements if he were to return to Port Lincoln, the letter said, were “[i]n the first place a supply of food for the natives ... & unless he be allowed some, he can obtain no interview with the natives at Port Lincoln for some time to come”. The letter outlined the necessity of Schürmann keeping a boy “to act more as a hut keeper than a servant” to protect his house when his duties required him to be away from Port Lincoln, and requested an increase in salary. A salary of seventy pounds per annum, the letter argued, may have been a sufficient income in Adelaide, but in Port Lincoln, where the cost of living was higher, it would “not support him & a boy”. “Mr Schurmann wishes distinctly to impress upon His Excellency”, the letter continued, “that these statements are not forwarded to obtain a sum of money in order to accumulate, but he is anxious to have a fair subsistence, that he may be able to donate his time exclusively to the claims of the Natives”.\(^{78}\)

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\(^{76}\) E. Schurmann (ed), 1987 p. 155-6

\(^{77}\) Moorhouse to Col Sec, 14/7/1842, Letterbook pp. 55-6

\(^{78}\) Moorhouse to Col Sec, 14/7/1842, Letterbook p. 56
While this letter is not direct evidence that Grey made a deal with Schürmann to provide him with the resources he believed necessary to carry out his work in Port Lincoln in return for the withdrawal of his accusation, I suggest it does provide circumstantial evidence. At a time of economic belt-tightening by the government, why else should the missionary feel he was in a position to make such demands?

Schürmann’s letters indicate that he was deeply distressed by the violence he witnessed being perpetrated against Aboriginal people. The decision to withdraw his accusation against Driver in order to obtain the means of carrying out his evangelising and civilizing agenda must have been a difficult and depressing one. How much more depressing when, a month after Schürmann made these demands, the Government Estimates for the following year revealed that his salary had not been increased to £100, but reduced to £50. It was following the release of these Estimates that Schürmann wrote to the Dresden Mission Society asking to be removed from the colony. He wrote in this letter of his intention “to sever my connection with the Government”, and made comments such as “[t]he Government does, and will do, nothing as long as Grey is at the helm”. He signed the letter “Your unworthy Brother in the Lord”. I believe, as I have argued, that Schürmann’s depression at this time arose from his realization of the harsh reality of the violence of colonization, and of his inability to prevent it. But I suggest that if he had indeed withdrawn his allegations of brutality towards Aboriginal people on the understanding that by doing so he would gain the resources he needed to carry out his activities, then this would have been a strong contributing factor to his depression. Schürmann’s plea to be removed from the colony arose, I suggest, from his recognition of the irreconcilable contradictions of the ‘civilizing’ and colonizing projects, compounded by his position of dependence on the financial support of a government whose colonizing methods he opposed.

**Government-mission collaboration in the civilizing mission**

In general the two types of assistance which the Lutheran missionaries attempted to obtain from the government to facilitate their civilizing/evangelising agenda were, firstly, the provision of land for teaching agriculture and for the creation of Aboriginal settlements, and, secondly, the provision of funding for the operation of schools.

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79 Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 22/8/1842
Although sections of land had been reserved for Aboriginal usage, applications by the missionaries to use land reserves were frequently rejected. In 1843 the Lutheran missionary August Meyer unsuccessfully applied to be allowed to settle on “Section 14 reserved for the Aborigines” at Encounter Bay. He hoped that use of the Aboriginal reserve land would enable him:

> to make an attempt at locating the Natives and inducing them to practice habits of industry, & if His Excellency the Governor would permit him to have that section granted on the following conditions he would at once commence without soliciting any immediate aid from the Government.\textsuperscript{80}

Schürmann also made repeated but unsuccessful applications, not only for permission to use Aboriginal land reserves, but also for the funding required to establish a settlement. Some land near Port Lincoln was made available for his use in 1843, but this fell short of what he believed was required for the civilizing mission to be seriously undertaken.

In their attempts to establish schools, too, they sought government assistance. Both Schürmann and Meyer had made early attempts to establish schools without government funding, but had found that without the means of supplying food to scholars, and without a school building, their attempts were unsuccessful. Before the establishment of the Piltawodli school Schürmann had attempted to conduct a small school in the open air, but was unable to maintain it without the means of feeding the children.\textsuperscript{81} August Meyer similarly found that he was unable to operate a school without financial support. Arriving in South Australia with Samuel Klosé in May 1840, Meyer had established a mission station at Encounter Bay. Shortly after his arrival he began gathering Ramindjeri children in the open air, attempting both to teach them and to learn the Ngarrindjeri language from them. “The sand was our seat, and the heavens our ceiling”, he later told a public meeting at Encounter Bay.\textsuperscript{82} His attempts to teach the children were hindered, however, by “want of a School Room in which to assemble them, and the inconvenience of gathering them together without having an inducement

\textsuperscript{80} Moorhouse to Col Sec, 31/1/1843, Letterbook p. 66
\textsuperscript{81} Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 5/11/1839, entry for September 5
\textsuperscript{82} Register, 9/12/1843, p. 3
in the way of food”, as Moorhouse reported to Governor Gawler just five weeks after Meyer’s arrival in the colony.\(^{83}\) Gawler apparently promised to have a schoolhouse erected, but this had not been carried into effect by the time he left the colony, and Meyer’s school was discontinued.\(^{84}\) In September 1841, however, Grey granted Meyer permission to use one of the rooms of a government building, called Government House because it was used to accommodate government officials occasionally visiting Encounter Bay.\(^{85}\) Meyer again commenced the school in the Government House room but “soon found it was not in his power to feed every day even six or eight children”, and the school again closed.\(^{86}\)

It was clear that without financial assistance, the missionaries were unable to undertake that component of the civilizing mission they felt offered greatest hope of success, the education of children. The school at Piltawodli was evidence that this aspect of the civilizing mission could be successfully undertaken through collaboration, with the mission providing cheap and dedicated labour, and the colonial authority providing the material resources. Such a collaborative relationship was similarly sought by Schürmann and Meyer, who offered their services as educators if the administration would supply the material requirements for a school, thus making the education of Indigenous children a joint operation.

It was in the field of education that collaborative relationships between missions and colonial authorities were most frequently established. Through such relationships missionaries obtained the funding necessary for the running of mission schools, the cost of which was cheaper for governments than the establishment of their own school systems. Writing of the education of Native American children in Canada, Elizabeth Furniss notes that in the latter part of the nineteenth century:

> Indian education became a joint venture of church and state. While the federal government provided financial assistance and the legislative and bureaucratic apparatus for the establishment of Indian schools, various church denominations

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\(^{83}\) Moorhouse to Gawler, 28/10/1840, Letterbook p. 2  
\(^{84}\) Brauer, 1956, p. 161  
\(^{85}\) Brauer, 1956, p. 161; Colonial Secretary to Moorhouse, 28/9/1841, SRSA GRG 24/6 E 24/4/1841/117  
\(^{86}\) Register, 9/12/1843, p. 3
... eagerly took on the responsibility for the management and day-to-day operation of the schools.  

Hansen's research on mission-government relationships in Uganda found that the Church Mission Society, moving from an initial relationship of opposition to secular rule to one of increasing co-operation, eventually became little more than an educational agency of the colonial administration, “subsidized by the state and subject to certain conditions”. Such a relationship served the common objective of missions and colonial administrations in bringing about the 'civilization' of indigenous peoples, although, as we saw in Chapter 4, this notion could be highly contested at a deeper level, and tensions and conflicts frequently characterised such relationships. Missions dependent on government support were often required to provide a form of schooling that best served government agendas. Drawing on her research into the mission education of Native American children, Karen McKillips argues that many missionary educators played an assimilatory role that supported government agendas, or were pressured by government agents to do so. She cites congressman and Secretary of War John Calhoun, who told the United States Congress in 1822 that the role of missionaries was to “impress on the minds of the Indian the friendly and benevolent views of the Government. ... A contrary course of conduct cannot fail to incur the displeasure of the government”. McKillips outlines the history of one mission day school, the Whirlwind School, which operated between 1904 and 1917 on Cheyenne-Arapaho land in Indian Territory (Oklahoma). This school resisted government pressure to teach in English, rather than Cheyenne, and to place greater focus on the teaching of manual trades. McKillips argues that the school was opposed throughout its history by government agents who finally caused its closure because of its failure to support the government's assimilation agenda.

It has been argued that in the field of education missions did serve the government agenda. Although Clayton McKenzie contends that “missionary educators were more the

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87 Furniss, 1995, p. 24  
88 Hansen, 1984, pp. 475-6  
90 McKillips 1993, p. 18
pawns of colonial regimes than the agents of imperial conquest”,\textsuperscript{91} their need for
government funding and support frequently necessitated their compliance with the
government agenda. Evans, Grimshaw, Philips and Swain have recently asserted that
missionary schooling served colonial ends in British settler colonies “by endeavoring to
train compliant subjects”.\textsuperscript{92} Judith Simon, too, has argued that the agenda of the
colonial administration in New Zealand was indirectly supported by missionaries through
mission education.\textsuperscript{93} It is Simon’s contention that in the mid-nineteenth century the
New Zealand government’s funding of mission schools was part of a ‘native policy’, a
major concern of which was the acquisition of Maori land. She argues that the
conditions under which funding was provided, such as the teaching of English and
industrial training, and the preference given to boarding schools over day schools in
funding arrangements, indicate an assimilationist approach intended to support the
government and settlers’ interests in the struggle over land.\textsuperscript{94} In support of this she
cites reports made by school inspectors, such as the 1862 report which identified the
Maori custom of collective land ownership as the “most serious impediment to
progress” in “carrying out the work of civilization” within the schools.\textsuperscript{95} The inspector
recommended that “the ideas of individual ownership … be developed within the
classroom.” Simon notes that this report “was made in the same year as the \textit{Native
Land Act}, intended to encourage Maori to individualize their titles to land holdings in
order to make it easier for Europeans to purchase them”.\textsuperscript{96} She argues that such
reports make it clear that:

\begin{quote}
  at a time when the government and Maori were locked in a power struggle,
government aid to the mission schools was directed towards the establishment
of British law in order to strengthen the power of the government, to facilitate
alienation of Maori land and to secure social control.\textsuperscript{97}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{91} Clayton G Mckenzie, 1993, ‘Demythologising the missionaries: A reassessment of the
functions and relationships of Christian education under colonialism’, \textit{Comparative Education},
29:1, p. 45
\textsuperscript{92} Evans et al., 2003, p. 8
\textsuperscript{93} Simon, 1992, pp. 31-43
\textsuperscript{94} Simon, 1992, p. 35
\textsuperscript{95} Simon, 1992, p. 35
\textsuperscript{96} Simon, 1992, p. 36
\textsuperscript{97} Simon, 1992, p. 36
If education was an area in which government and missionary collaboration occurred, this was especially so in the area of child removal and residential schooling. In many colonial and post-colonial contexts governments put structures in place to enable the removal of children from their families, often providing funding required to meet the expenses of boarding establishments, while missions undertook the education and day-to-day operation of the institutions. Government action in separating children from their parents was frequently supported by missionaries because it provided them with a ‘captive audience’ for their evangelisation. It was often the aim of missionaries that children raised by them in mission institutions should grow up to form a Christian mission community. Furniss highlights the collaboration between missions and government agents in the institutionalisation of Native children in Canada, arguing that it was:

an arrangement that suited both missions and government: subcontracting the responsibility for Indian education to church denominations represented a considerable cost saving for the government, and the apparatus of the state provided missions with a literally captive audience to educate and convert to their particular faith without competition from other religious denominations.\(^98\)

Missionaries often supported legislation that would facilitate their evangelisation by giving them greater access to indigenous children, even when that legislation restricted the freedom of indigenous peoples. Researchers have argued, indeed, that they were at times instrumental in bringing about legislation to facilitate the removal of children. The Spanish Benedictine monk, Salvado, who established the Western Australian New Norcia Mission in 1847, used his influence to effect such legislative change. In 1871, the Elementary Education Act made attendance at school compulsory, but Salvado believed this would have no effect. He campaigned to have greater control over Aboriginal children. According to his biographer, George Russo, his campaigning resulted in the Industrial Schools Act, passed in 1874, which made principals of schools the guardian of Aboriginal children attending them.\(^99\)

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98 Furniss, 1995, p. 26-7
99 George Russo, 1980, *Lord Abbot of the Wilderness The Life and Times of Bishop Salvado*, Polding Press, Melbourne. Russo’s description of this reveals that as late as 1980, it was still seen as quite justified and humanitarian for Europeans deny Aboriginal people the right to make decisions regarding their own children. He wrote: “Holding out for liberty to educate the
Christine Choo has researched the relationship between government officials and Catholic missionaries of the Beagle Bay Mission in the northwest of Western Australia, with regard to policies and practices in the removal of Aboriginal children from their families. The relationship was, she writes, “tenuous and sometimes antagonistic ... each party remaining suspicious of the other yet needing to work together in ‘handling’ Aboriginal affairs”. It was, at the same time, a symbiotic relationship, in that missionaries and government officials colluded in a programme of child removal. Moreover Choo argues that the missionaries’ involvement in child removal was not simply a response to government policy; rather, they actively campaigned for legislation to enable children to be removed from families to the mission. In Choo’s words, they “persistently pressed government authorities to formalize the State’s power to remove ... children.” “[T]he State could not have legislated for the removal of children in the Aborigines Act 1905 and subsequent legislation without the encouragement and compliance of Church agencies”.

**Mission-government collaboration in Aboriginal education in South Australia**

During 1843 and 1844 there is no indication that Grey intended to do other than continue to work through the agency of the Lutheran Mission in Indigenous education. Arriving in South Australia in May 1841 with a mandate to rescue the colony from financial crisis, the first two years of his governorship were focused on reducing government spending. On his arrival conflict on the Murray River between Aborigines and Europeans attempting to bring livestock from New South Wales required immediate action to be taken. His response was the establishment of a ration depot at Moorundie, forgotten aborigines and raise them to the status of useful colonists, Salvado wanted to strike a better balance between the school influence and parental control”, p. 189

100 Choo, 1997, ‘The Role of Catholic Missionaries at Beagle Bay in the removal of Aboriginal Children from their Families in the Kimberley Region from the 1890s’, Aboriginal History, vol 21, pp. 14-29

101 Choo, 1997, p. 15

102 Missionary resistance to government attempts to remove children from their families is documented, but these seem to be exceptional cases. Karen Mckillips records that the teacher of the Whirlwind school for Cheyenne children spoke out against the removal of children to government boarding schools, arguing that residential schools were detrimental to the health of the children. The teacher defended day school saying that “[l]iving in this way, the Indian mothers can see their little children every day; they can take care of them and give them a mother’s love, just as white mothers do; and they love their children just the same as other mothers do”. (Mckillips, 1993, p. 20)
and the appointment of Edward John Eyre as Resident Magistrate and Deputy Protector there. But it was not until 1843 that he began to turn his attention to the civilizing mission.

In early 1843 Grey received directions from the Home Government that money from the sale of land in the colony be specifically set aside for use in protecting and ‘civilizing’ Aborigines. The *Waste Land Act* of 1842 stipulated that one half of the revenue raised from the sale of land should be used to finance immigration, and the other half be used for public works within the colony. A letter from the Treasury which accompanied the copy of the bill sent to Grey stipulated that fifteen percent of the moiety designated for public works should be expended on Aborigines.¹⁰³

The Secretary of State for the colonies, Lord Stanley, followed this up with instructions to expend “such sums and in such a manner as you may judge most expedient not exceeding in the whole 15 percent of the gross proceeds of the Land Sales, for the benefit, civilization and protection of the Aborigines”.¹⁰⁴

When Grey received this dispatch early in 1843 the state of the economy in the colony was such that little was available for use in the civilizing mission. Schürmann wrote:

> the English Government has recently directed that fifteen per cent of the receipts from crown land are to be used to improve the conditions of the aborigines; but because very little land is being sold at present the fund this established is not significant.¹⁰⁵

Grey wrote to Stanley in April 1843 claiming that due to “the financial difficulties of the colony” he did not have the means “of affording to the native population those benefits which they appear to be justly entitled to”. He requested “a small annual grant, to be expended in the payment of the salaries of Protectors of Aborigines, and other

¹⁰⁴ Stanley to Grey, 15/9/1842, Dispatches from Secretary of State, cited in Jenkin, 1979, p. 40
¹⁰⁵ Schürmann to Dresden Mission Society, 27/11/1843
expenses connected with the natives to be used on the Aborigines”. The request was not successful.

Nevertheless, Grey did begin to turn his attention to the civilizing mission at this stage. He had always seen schools as a component, at least, of any approach to ‘civilizing’ the Aborigines, having written in a report in 1841 to Lord Russell, Secretary of State for the colonies, that the impediments to the civilizing process posed by Aboriginal laws and the authority of the old men over the young “might all either be removed or modified in some districts by the establishment of native institutions and schools”.

Before considering what changes he might implement in the civilizing mission he directed Moorhouse to prepare a report on “the state of education amongst the Aborigines, since the period of commencing a system of instruction up to December 31st 1842”. Moorhouse’s report, dated 3 March, included information on the form of schooling provided at Piltawodli and a rationale for teaching in Kaurna. It was following this report that Grey engaged with the civilizing mission in South Australia for the first time, providing the Piltawodli School with facilities to enable children to be boarded, and the girls to be taught sewing, as discussed in Chapter 4.

Probably influenced by financial constraints, Grey seems to have been uncertain about how he should proceed with the civilizing mission. He does seem to have contemplated providing funding to Schürmann to establish a school at Port Lincoln in 1843. Rejecting an application by Schürmann to provide funding for the establishment of an Aboriginal settlement there, he instead discussed with the missionary the possibility of his establishing a school. He requested that Schürmann make up an estimate for the expected cost of such an undertaking, but did not follow the matter up further than this. At the same time he failed to approve applications from Meyer for support for a school at Encounter Bay. In February 1843, reporting that Meyer had made considerable progress in learning the Ngarrindjeri language and was “preparing materials for a plan of instructing the young”, Moorhouse applied cautiously to Grey for government assistance in the form of a supply of food for the school, writing that “if His Excellency the Governor could at any time grant an allowance of provisions to

106 Grey to Stanley, 21/4/1843, AJCP reel no 594
107 Grey, 1841, p. 382
108 Moorhouse, 3/3/1843, SRSA, GRG 24/6/1843/315
109 Moorhouse to Col Sec, 19/8/1845, Letterbook p. 142
children attending School as at the Location in Adelaide, Mr. Meyer would thankfully receive them”.110 Moorhouse raised the subject with Grey again the following month, writing that “in conversation with Mr. Meyer of Encounter Bay I find that as soon as he can obtain a supply of provisions he intends to commence a regular School”.111

With government support not forthcoming, Meyer looked for other means of obtaining financial support for the establishment of a school. In December 1843 he called a public meeting at Encounter Bay at which he asked settlers in the area to support his efforts in Aboriginal education. At this meeting, he successfully obtained from colonists promises to provide wheat to feed Aboriginal children attending school, and assistance in building a schoolhouse. One of the settlers wrote in a letter to the editor of the Register that “[c]ontributions of about one hundred bushels of wheat, &c. are promised to supply the native children while receiving instruction from the Missionary during the next year”,112 The South Australian Mission Society in Support of the German Missionaries also promised £5 towards the erection of a school building.113

Having gained these promises, Meyer then applied to the government, through Moorhouse, for funding to make up the balance required to board an average of seven children for twelve months.114 The Register put pressure on Grey to support Meyer’s efforts:

The Rev. Mr Meyer, Missionary to the natives at Encounter Bay, is about to commence a school for the children. The settlers in that district are aiding his project by supplying provisions; 100 bushels of wheat and nine sheep have already been promised, and if his Excellency the Governor would be pleased to grant the sum of £20 per annum in addition for meat, sugar and blankets, Mr Meyer thinks he would be able to board and instruct an average of seven children during the twelve months. The effort on the part of the settlers there

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110 Moorhouse to Col Sec, 8/2/1843, Letterbook p. 67
111 Moorhouse to Col Sec, 4/4/1843, Letterbook p. 70
112 R.W. Newland, Letter to the editor of the Register, 30/12/43, p. 2
113 Moorhouse to Col Sec, 9/12/1843, Letterbook p. 91
114 Moorhouse to Col Sec, 9/12/1843, Letterbook p. 90
is a laudable one, and is deserving of every support his Excellency may feel justified in giving.\textsuperscript{115}

Grey seems at this time to have been moving towards a co-operative relationship with the Lutheran Mission. He did promise £20 towards the running of Meyer’s Encounter Bay school, and by April, Moorhouse was able to report that:

\[\text{at Encounter Bay a school-house is in the course of building; the funds for it have been supplied by the colonists. It is intended to adopt the plan of boarding and lodging the children, under the superintendence of the Rev. Edward Meyer.}\textsuperscript{116}\]

At the same time Grey was making rapid arrangements for the establishment of the government school at Walkerville. By April he was able to report to Lord Stanley that the civilizing mission in South Australia was well on track. He wrote that although:

\[\text{the relations existing between the European and aboriginal populations still continue to be of a very satisfactory nature the most gratifying circumstance connected with the aborigines of this colony, is the progress which is making in the education and civilization of the children.}\textsuperscript{117}\]

He reported on the “very great success” which had attended the introduction of boarding facilities at Piltawodli, the progress of the children showing that they were “in all points relating to acquired knowledge, upon an equality with the average of European children of their own age”. Additionally, the Walkerville school would shortly be opened, and plans were underway for the establishment of Meyer’s school at Encounter Bay.\textsuperscript{118} By October it seemed that a degree of co-operation between mission and government in the education of Indigenous children was being achieved, even if Grey failed to mention the involvement of the mission in dispatches to London. Meyer’s school was due to begin, with a school building, promises of wheat and mutton from local people,

\begin{itemize}
  \item[\textsuperscript{115}] Register, 17/1/1844, p. 2
  \item[\textsuperscript{116}] Moorhouse, Protector’s report, 10/4/1844, enclosure to dispatch no. 49 from Grey to Stanley, AJCP Reel no 597
  \item[\textsuperscript{117}] Grey to Stanley, dispatch no 49, 10/4/1844, AJCP Reel no 597
  \item[\textsuperscript{118}] Grey to Stanley, dispatch no 49, 10/4/1844, AJPC Reel no 597
\end{itemize}
and the promise of £20 from the government to assist with running costs. The government was providing adequate support for the school at Piltawodli, and the missionary teacher there, Samuel Klosé, was teaching English in accordance with government wishes. Klosé felt confident of the government’s continued support; in January of that year Grey had visited the school and commended Klosé on the work he was doing there. Klosé wrote that Grey had shaken his hand and said “[i]f there is anything you need for your school, let me know and I’ll do everything in my power to supply it for you”,119 The boarding facilities provided by the government had enabled the more consistent attendance of a core group of fifteen Kaurna children, and for the first time Klosé was expressing a degree of optimism at the possibility of achieving conversion to Christianity among his students.

Grey’s promise to support Meyer’s school when it was opened, together with comments made by Grey to the Legislative Council regarding his commitment to the education and ‘civilization’ of the Aborigines, encouraged Schürmann to make another application to Grey for funding for a school at Port Lincoln. To add weight to his application he made the voyage from Port Lincoln to Adelaide on 4 October to present his application in person. His reception in Adelaide further increased his optimism that his application would be successful. Moorhouse told him that Grey would provide funding for him to establish a school, and indeed would have done so even if Schürmann had not made the trip to Adelaide. Grey, too, told Schürmann that he wished to see a school at Port Lincoln, and asked Schürmann and Moorhouse to “calculate the annual maintenance costs for twenty children”.120 Clearly Grey was at this time intending to establish schools throughout the colony, and to use the agency of the Lutheran Mission where he could.

Grey, however, considered Schürmann and Moorhouse’s estimate of the cost of running the school too high. Schürmann explained they had “presented the highest prices”, but that “a lot could be achieved with 100 pounds per annum”. Grey “wanted to know more precisely what and how much could be achieved with that”.121 He finally rejected

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119 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 31, Klosé Letter 13, 10/2/1844
120 Schürmann to Dresden Mission Society, 11/12/1844
121 Schürmann to Dresden Mission Society, 11/12/1844
the proposal of a school in Port Lincoln as an inefficient use of resources. Schürmann wrote “[h]ereby all hope is temporarily crushed”.122

Grey’s rejection of Schürmann’s proposal was a turning point for the mission in its relationship with the government, just at the time when it was most hopeful of receiving the financial support needed to undertake the project of ‘civilizing’ through education. At the same time as he rejected Schürmann’s proposal, Grey also backed away from his promise to support Meyer’s Encounter Bay school. Although Meyer’s school was officially opened at a public church service on 27 October, a week after Schürmann’s costing estimate was submitted, Meyer travelled into Adelaide to talk to Grey about his decision not to provide the promised subsidy.123 It is clear that in the few weeks between his intimation to Schürmann and Moorhouse of his willingness to support a school at Port Lincoln and the opening of Meyer’s school, Grey’s plan for the education of Indigenous children had shifted from one involving a collaboration with the Lutheran Mission in running number of small schools, to one which excluded such cooperation. In this new scheme, the missionaries, if they were to be involved at all, would be involved only in the capacity of government employees.

Although officially opened, the commencement of the Encounter Bay school was delayed as a result of negotiations with Grey over the promised subsidy. Meyer did, however, manage to persuade Grey to recommit the government to the £20 subsidy,124 and the school began operations in December.125 Thirteen Ramindjeri children attended the school at its inception, and were taught “a little scriptural history” as well as literacy.126 The school was conducted in English, although Moorhouse had previously reported that Meyer was preparing teaching materials in Ngarrindjeri. It is likely that Grey stipulated the use of English as the language of instruction in return for the promise of a subsidy.

122 Schürmann to Dresden Mission Society, 11/12/1844
123 Teichelmann diaries, p. 48, 5/11/1844
124 Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 11/12/1844. Schürmann, in discussing the Encounter Bay school, expressed the fear that “the subsidy from the Government could stop”.
125 Moorhouse, Protector’s report, 10/1/1845, p. 11, SRSA, GRG 24/6/1845/35
126 Moorhouse, Protector’s report, 10/1/1845, p. 11, SRSA, GRG 24/6/1845/35
Grey’s motivation for the change of approach is discussed in the next chapter, although why his plans for the civilizing mission changed so quickly at that point of time remains unclear. It may have been that the high cost of Schürmann’s estimates, arising from the high cost of living at Port Lincoln, caused him to look for an alternative, more cost efficient means of carrying out the civilizing mission. A fairly rough proposal, in Moorhouse’s handwriting, for a central Aboriginal school, including an estimate of the cost of running such an institution is extant in the South Australian government archives, but is unfortunately undated. It seems likely, however, that Moorhouse drew up this proposal in October 1844, causing Grey to reject Schürmann’s proposal in favour of a more cost effective central institution. His response to Schürmann suggests that this is the case. This letter was cited by Schürmann in a letter to Germany, presumably in German, and has since been translated back into English.

His excellency regrets that the Government has no funds at its disposal for the establishment of a school in Port Lincoln, after more practically [sic] viewed plans are considered and since such an institution on an insufficient and impractical basis would lessen the means necessary for the aborigines which the Government here (i.e. in Adelaide) has at its disposal, without establishing a comparable need in Port Lincoln, the Governor considers the erection of a school there as not advisable at present.\(^{127}\)

These “more practically viewed plans” were probably the plans drawn up by Moorhouse for a central government school. That Grey decided at this time to concentrate resources on one central institution is further supported by his continued reluctance to provide the promised £20 subsidy to the Encounter Bay school. By August of the following year it had still not been paid. When Meyer reminded him of his promise, he responded in a memorandum to Moorhouse that “[i]f the £20 has been promised it must be paid. But if Meyer cannot support his school the children should come to Adelaide”.\(^{128}\)

Teichelmann believed that Grey had decided to only provide funding for schools directly under government control. He wrote that Grey had backed away from his commitment

\(^{127}\) Schürmann to Dresden Mission Society, 11/12/1844  
\(^{128}\) Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 44 –5, Klosé letter 18, 29/8/1845
to subsidize the Encounter Bay school “because the school is not to belong to the government”. It was at this point that the question of ownership of Aboriginal schools became significant. The Piltawodli school was particularly vulnerable on this issue; did it belong to the Lutheran Mission, or to the government? It is notable that it was at this time that Grey stopped paying the annual gratuity to the Lutheran Mission, instead nominating the individual members who would receive the subsidy, and stipulating a specific reason for the payment of each. By directly providing the subsidy to the teacher at Piltawodli, rather than to the mission, he neatly weakened the mission’s claim that the school was theirs.

Schüermann believed that his proposal had been rejected because of Grey’s intention to make a showpiece of the Piltawodli and Walkerville schools, and to direct resources to these projects rather than establish further schools. He wrote that Grey’s pet project was to make the two schools his hobby-horse, and to make them “an experiment to show the world what can be done with the aborigines, with the result that he spares no expense there, while he cuts and limits everywhere [sic] else”. Schüermann wrote this early in December 1844; later that month it became known to the missionaries that Grey was planning to combine the schools to form the Native School Establishment. Teichelmann recorded on New Year’s Eve that he had recently “heard from the Protector that the Governor wants to combine ours and the Murraylanders’ schools and close the one in the city Location”. The plan to establish a combined central school close to Government House and directly under the guidance of the governor supported Schüermann’s contention that all funds available for Aboriginal education would be channelled into one project which would enhance Grey’s reputation as an administrator serious about finding solutions to ‘the native problem’. This idea will be further explored in the next chapter.

The central government institution which was to be established by Grey in 1845 was an undertaking in which the Evangelical Lutheran Mission would play no part. No longer a partner with the administration in the civilizing project, the missionaries continued for three more years to attempt to carry out their activities in the colony. In the rest of

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129 Teichelmann diaries, p. 48, 5/11/1844
130 Schüermann to the Dresden Mission Society, 11/12/1844
131 Teichelmann diaries, p. 53, 31/12/1844
this chapter, I will continue my focus on the mission and its relationship with the administration after the establishment of the central school until the mission ceased its activities in 1848. During this time, the tensions in the relationship continued, as the missionaries continued to try to achieve their goals without compromising their convictions.

“I too have my conscientious convictions”

Although the government had moved away from a co-operative relationship with the mission during these years, Grey was willing to use in the civilizing mission the experience and commitment of the missionaries as individuals, offering them positions in government schools as government employees. Such offers posed further dilemmas for missionaries struggling with poverty and insufficient resources. In February 1844, Grey had offered Schürmann the position of teacher at the Walkerville school. The salary was attractive to Schürmann, but he declined to accept the offer, in part because he would be required to adopt the teaching approach directed by the government. Although he sought funding from the government to enable him to establish his own school in Port Lincoln, he was not prepared to take a government teaching position which would not allow him to teach according to his own beliefs and convictions.132 When Grey rejected his proposal to establish a school at Port Lincoln later that year, however, he wrote that he “almost regret[ted]” that he had not accepted the government appointment.133

During 1845 Schürmann continued to lobby Grey for funding for a school despite the fact that, with plans for a central government institution well underway, his chances seemed increasingly remote. In May, Moorhouse promised Schürmann that he would raise the matter again with Grey, although he thought the proposal had little hope of success.134 When Moorhouse wrote to Grey on the subject he suggested the establishment of a school at Port Lincoln as a kind of preparatory institution, at which children would receive initial instruction in their own district before being sent to the central institution in Adelaide. He wrote that:

132 Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 15/4/1844
133 Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 11/12/1844
134 Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 28/5/1845
There is always a missionary stationed there, who would conduct the school. The expense of supplying a number of children with food would not be great; the children by this means would be gradually advancing and becoming more fit to be received into a more advanced stage of institution, which His Excellency contemplates establishing.\textsuperscript{135}

This request was unsuccessful, but later that year Schürmann made a further attempt to obtain funding. Having completed an ethnographic description in German of the Indigenous people of the Port Lincoln region, he wrote an English version for Grey in the hope that it would interest him enough for him to reconsider his proposal to establish a school.\textsuperscript{136} However, Grey was transferred to New Zealand at the same time as he received Schürmann’s ethnography, and gave no further consideration to the proposal.\textsuperscript{137} Schürmann moved from Port Lincoln to work with Meyer in Encounter Bay early in the following year.\textsuperscript{138} Moorhouse, reporting his move from Port Lincoln, noted that he had failed to achieve any sort of success in the civilizing mission during his time there. “He was not able to commence a School”, he wrote, “as he had never funds at his command, sufficiently ample to justify the undertaking”.\textsuperscript{139}

Despite his challenging and critical position with regard to the colonizing process, Schürmann had consistently refused to take part in Aboriginal education without financial support from the colonial administration. Within the South Australian Lutheran Mission there was sometimes disagreement regarding the appropriate level of cooperation with government. In the field of education, particularly, the degree to which they should co-operate with the administration was a contentious issue among them, especially during the middle years of the 1840s, when their involvement in the schooling of Indigenous children was under threat. To what degree should they compromise on their convictions in the approach they took in the schooling of Aboriginal children, in exchange for resources?

\textsuperscript{135} Moorhouse to Col Sec, 5/5/1845, letterbook, p. 130
\textsuperscript{137} Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 2/2/1846
\textsuperscript{138} Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 2/2/1846
\textsuperscript{139} Moorhouse, Protector’s report, 15/4/1846, p.5 SASR, GRG 24/6/1846/434
Moorhouse’s “Estimate and Plan for the Establishment and conduct of a Central Government School for Native Children” proposed that the teachers at the new government school would be “the German Missionaries” whom he intended “Might continue such regular Instruction as they now afford”.\textsuperscript{140} It seems rather overly optimistic of Moorhouse to assume the missionaries’ willingness to participate in a government school established in place of schools under their own control. There is no indication that Teichelmann, Meyer, or Schürmann were ever approached to work at the school, however. Samuel Klosé, on the other hand, was given to understand from the time he first heard about the proposal to establish the government institution that he was to be offered a teaching position there, and faced the question of whether employment at a government institution was consistent with his position as a missionary.

With the running of the Piltawodli school having been the focus of his activity since his arrival in the colony, Klosé had tended towards a co-operative position with the colonial government, prepared to make concessions with regard to the form of schooling he provided in return for the provision of resources to facilitate his educational endeavours. He had welcomed the interventions of the government into the running of the school, discussed in Chapter 4. He was glad to have the facilities to board children at the school, as the attendance of the children was thereby improved. Although he continued to hold the conviction that the children could most effectively be taught in their own language,\textsuperscript{141} he had been prepared to accept the governor’s intervention in this aspect of his teaching approach, and he adopted the teaching of English as the Governor directed. When the Dresden Mission Society recommended in 1843 that the missionaries all work together at Ebenezer, thus reducing their dependence on the government, Klosé had argued against the suggestion on the grounds that to do so would be to lose the government funding for their school. The school, he wrote, “costs the government £60-70 sterling annually for food, clothing and school materials reckoning on 12 children per day. Why should we subject ourselves to costs like this when the government still willingly bears these expenses?”\textsuperscript{142}

\textsuperscript{140} SRSA GRG 24/90/374
\textsuperscript{141} Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 39, Klose letter 15
\textsuperscript{142} Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 32, Klose letter 13, 10/2/1844
In 1845, Klosé again rejected the option of attempting to run the school without government funding. With plans underway for the establishment of the central government school, he told the Mission Society in Germany that “[i]f I insist on keeping the school I am convinced that His Excellency will not take it from me, but will withdraw all subsidies. From where shall I obtain food and clothing for 20 children?” Employment at the government school would enable him to continue his teaching, and to maintain a relationship with the Kaurna children from Piltawodli, but the degree to which employment at a government school was consistent with his role as a missionary bothered him. Teichelmann recorded that “Br. Klose felt the insidiousness of this situation”, and in June, shortly before the two schools were due to be amalgamated, the missionaries gathered to discuss “what Br. Klose should do if the Governor offered him a teaching position in the combined school”.

The main concern the missionaries had about Klosé’s acceptance of such a position was their belief that to do so would put Klosé under the authority of “the English bishopric church”. Although a central principle on which the colony was founded was that there would be no established church, Grey, himself a Churchman, intended that one of the new buildings being constructed for the new institution would be used as a chapel, where the Anglican colonial chaplain would conduct services. It was also intended that prayers of the “English High Church” be read at the institution each morning and evening.

Schürmann, always convinced that the government should undertake the cost of educating Indigenous children, indicated in a letter from Port Lincoln that he believed that Klosé should accept such an appointment. Meyer agreed, stating that although Klosé’s acceptance of a position in the government school would involve his “actually entering into the service of the English bishopric church” he should accept it on “condition that he would teach only according to his convictions and would at the same time have to keep open the possibility of a return to the Society”. Klosé felt

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143 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 40, Klose letter 16, 1/2/1845
144 Teichelmann diaries, p. 64, 10/6/1845
145 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 45, Klose letter 18, 29/8/1845; Moorhouse to Col Sec, 19/12/1845, letterbook pp. 153-4
146 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 45, Klose letter 18, 29/8/1845
147 Teichelmann diaries, p. 64, 10/6/1845
however that teaching at the school would make him “a servant of the English church” and that he would, “to be honest, have to accept it on its basic rules”.\textsuperscript{148} The situation presented the kind of dilemma consistently faced by the missionaries; to accept a position which they felt placed them under the authority of the English church was clearly against their convictions, but their poverty and powerlessness simply gave them no choice if they were to continue their involvement in the civilizing mission. The ambivalence of the missionaries in the face of such dilemmas is evident in Teichelmann’s response to the question. He wrote that he believed:

that Br. Klose as an evangelical lutheran missionary would have to reject such a position, or, because of the current need for support, could accept it but should keep open his return path to the Society; that he would have to remain in the service of the English church until the Society had decided to provide effective support for the Mission here.\textsuperscript{149}

No formal offer of employment was made, however, and on 4 July 1845, when the students were removed from the Piltawodli school to the new institution, Klose’s position as a teacher there was still unconfirmed. A few days later, however, he was informed by Moorhouse that he could resume teaching the following week, when children had finished cleaning their new accommodation. Klosé felt himself in a difficult position. The success he had achieved in teaching literacy and numeracy to children at Piltawodli had come about as a result of his own dedication, and he believed, possibly correctly, that it had been this success which had motivated the Government to undertake this project to educate and ‘civilize’ Aboriginal children on a larger scale.\textsuperscript{150} The consequence of that success was the loss of his own school at a time when he felt his efforts were about to bear fruit in the form of Christian conversion. It irked Klosé that Moorhouse should request his attendance as a teacher at the new establishment in a casual and off-hand manner. The schoolmaster from the Walkerville school, William Smith, had received a contract of employment as well as three rooms in the new institution “with a salary of £100, free rations, wood and water”.\textsuperscript{151} The provision of

\textsuperscript{148} Teichelmann diaries, p. 64, 10/6/1845
\textsuperscript{149} Teichelmann diaries, p. 64, 10/6/1845
\textsuperscript{150} Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 45, Klose letter 18, 29/8/1845
\textsuperscript{151} Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 45, Klose letter 18, 29/8/1845
Free water was important “[b]ecause the wells in South Australia contain only salt water it must be fetched from the river and costs at least a shilling a week”. Klosé represented the assumption that as a missionary he represented a cheap and exploitable worker in the civilizing mission, and decided not to co-operate with Moorhouse’s request that he resume teaching in the government school. He wrote that he “did not feel obliged to teach in this school at the request of the Protector, when an actual teacher, paid by the Government and living in the schoolhouse, has the actual contract to teach there.” “Since the Government has taken the school out of my hands”, he told Moorhouse, “I will wait until the Government has made a plan as to how the school is to be conducted and as to what position I shall take in the school”. It was not an easy decision however; while not prepared to be used by the government, he had a sense of responsibility towards, and affection for, the Kaurna children he had been teaching.

Klosé spoke to Grey about his employment at the school on 21 July. Grey’s personal involvement in the school is indicated by his informing Klosé that he should teach the senior classes of both boys and girls, who were able to read the Bible. He promised that Klosé would be paid for his work. However, he wanted to discuss Klosé’s employment with Moorhouse before confirming his appointment as a teacher.

A few days after Klosé’s conversation with Grey, he was again asked by Moorhouse for his assistance at the school as a teacher. Moorhouse insisted that his services were needed, relying, perhaps, on Klosé’s sense of duty towards the children. This time Klosé agreed to attend, possibly feeling, after talking to Grey, that he would have a definite role to play in the school, even though his position had not yet been confirmed. He told the Dresden Mission Society that he had decided to work at the school “out of affection for the children, and also because in this way I could again become active in my vocation”. He began teaching New Testament History to a class of fourteen girls, the first and second classes. He had to do so in English, which must have been difficult for him because his training and belief was that religion should be taught in the language of the people.

152 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 45, Klose letter 18, 29/8/1845
154 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 44, Klose letter 18, 29/8/1845
155 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 44, Klose letter 18, 29/8/1845
At the time of his undertaking employment at the school, Klosé expressed his disquiet at his situation in a letter requesting guidance from his mission society:

Dear Brothers in the Lord, through you I was sent out by the Lutheran Church to which I have also given my word to remain faithful by God’s grace until my death since I am convinced that it contains the purest teaching according to God’s Word. The purpose of my commissioning was to spread the teaching of this Church. Now the teachers of that Church (the English High Church) know well that we differ in important points which I will not detail here. Even though this confession is decisive and frees me from obligation, I will still desire definite instructions from you as soon as possible so that I know how I am to conduct myself.\(^{156}\)

Klosé remained teaching at the Native School Establishment for as long as it took for his letter informing the Dresden Mission Society of the changes in the schooling arrangements to reach Germany, and for the reply to return. The reply that Klosé received in February 1846 signalled the end of his involvement in Aboriginal education in South Australia. The Society gave him permission to continue teaching there, but only on condition that all religious instruction at the school be entirely entrusted to his hands. Klosé wrote to Governor Fredrick Holt Robe, who had replaced Grey, requesting to know “if His Excellency the Governor is willing to entertain this proposal”, but he must have known what the response would be. Robe’s minute on the back of Klosé’s letter reads, “[a]s this is impossible Mr. Klose’s attendance must of course be dispensed with – and the [allowance] received by him in consideration therefore must be discontinued”. He added “I regret this decision of the Missionary Society of Dresden”.\(^{157}\)

Unable to continue operating without government financial support or the financial support of their Mission Society, the missionaries petitioned the Society to allow them to discontinue their work among the Aborigines. The Lutheran Mission ceased its operations early in 1848 when a reply from the society granting their request reached

\(^{156}\) Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 45, Klose letter 18, 29/8/1845
\(^{157}\) Klosé to Robe, 6/2/1846, SRSA GRG 24/6/1846/96; The letter to Klose informing him of the Government’s decision is GRG L 24/4/1846/200
In a letter to the governor, Samuel Klosé summed up the reasons for the Mission’s closure in one long, rather breathless sentence:

I with the rest of the Mission Brethren find after 9 years experience in the Colony labouring amongst the Natives, and using every means which we have been able to think of as the best both for their Conversion to Christianity and Civilization that the Mission is in so unfavourable a position and we cannot see any probable means at the present of its becoming more favourable and particularly as Government have taken the School from me and have taken it entirely under their superintendence, and the Adelaide Natives (whose Language alone I understand and with whom I can speak) are driven away entirely from town and neighbourhood and scattered about by the Murrey [sic] Natives having come to Adelaide as they have such a terror of them, that we have unitedly come to the decision not to receive any more support from the Dresden Society as we cannot conscientiously receive it as we do not consider the Mission is worth taking it, we have all therefore come to the conclusion that we will do some thing for our own livelihood and likewise do what we can amongst the Natives, and if ever a more favourable opportunity presents itself of working more efficiently amongst them we shall feel ourselves ready to do it, and therefore shall not give up my Office as Missionary and Minister.159

With the closure of the Mission, Teichelmann, Klosé and Meyer took up appointments as pastors to Lutheran congregations in the colony,160 and Schürmann returned to Port Lincoln with a government salary as an interpreter for the Barngarla language.161 Although their mission had failed, they took comfort in the fact that they had not compromised their religious beliefs. Their own determination to remain true to their denominational beliefs, and to refuse to compromise their convictions, was perhaps as much a cause of the failure of their project as was the determination of the Indigenous people to be true to their own. They had been surprised by the tenacity with which

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158 Graetz (ed), 2002, After-word to the Klose Letters, ‘Klosé’s later years’, p. 46
159 Klosé to Robe, 15/2/1848, SRSA, GRG 24/6/1848/207
160 Schürmann, letter addressed to “Honoured, dear Brother in Office!”, from Hochkirch, Victoria, 30/12/1892E.
161 E. Schurmann (ed), 1987, p. 182-3
Aboriginal people adhered to their own belief system, “to which” Teichelmann wrote, “they stick as closely, as the Mohommedan to his Koran”.  

If they are asked "why do you do such and such a thing? – “they reply, [sic] thus our forefathers have done, thus we do and live;" certainly a principle which shows great stubbornness.

“Particularly they defended their silly superstition with a stubbornness that one should not have expected from them”, Schürmann wrote.

Yet the missionaries' own stubborn refusal to compromise their convictions they saw as strength. Even after the mission’s closure, Schürmann found himself faced with the choice of participation in the civilizing mission, or remaining true to his Lutheran convictions. In 1848 Schürmann returned from Encounter Bay to Port Lincoln where he received a government salary as an interpreter. In 1850, under the governorship of Henry Fox Young, he finally received the funding he had for so long sought to establish a school for Aboriginal children there. But he continued to be disadvantaged by his position as a poor and powerless non-Briton in a British colony. Ever since his arrival in Port Lincoln he had applied to the government for funding to establish an Aboriginal settlement near Port Lincoln, suggesting at one stage an area known as “Punindi”. In 1850 the Poonindie Aboriginal Mission was established to take graduates from the central Aboriginal Institution in Adelaide. It was not the impoverished and powerless German who undertook this project, however, but an Englishman with the wealth and authority that Schürmann lacked. The mission was established for the Church of England by Archdeacon Matthew Hale, who used his own inherited wealth to ensure that the institution had enough land to be economically viable as a farm. Hale approached Schürmann on a number of occasions, inviting him to join the Church of England and the Poonindie Mission, pointing out, according to Schürmann, “the fact that I had no church-backing for my work and also my ‘comparative uselessness' in Port Lincoln.”

162 Southern Australian, 26/1/1841, p. 3  
163 Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 5/11/1839  
165 Schürmann and Herrmann Kook to Grey, requesting money and land to settle the Aborigines, 7/9/1844, SRSA, GRG 24/6/1844/488  
166 Schürmann to Meyer, August 1851, cited in E. Schurmann (ed), 1987, p. 193
Schürmann found it humiliating “that a strange church community should try to
denigrate our work!” 167 Although he believed that if he did not join the English church
his Port Lincoln school would be taken away from him, he refused the offer. “I too have
my conscientious convictions”, he wrote. 168 Accordingly, just three years after
Schürmann’s school opened, the government decided to save money by transferring
Schürmann’s students to the Church of England mission at Poonindie, and the
involvement of the German Lutherans in the education of Aboriginal children in South
Australia was, finally, ended.

But, like the Indigenous people they had come to South Australia to convert to
Christianity, they had remained true to their convictions, “to which they [stuck] as
closely, as the Mohommedan to his Koran”. 169

**Conclusion**

The missionaries came to South Australia with a specific set of beliefs, including
religious beliefs, ideas about the nature of human difference, and ideas about how the
‘civilizing’ mission might be achieved. They did not operate in a vacuum however. They
were forced to respond to the colonizing process that was taking place around them.
They were forced, too, into a relationship with the colonial government by their need
for financial assistance to carry out their objectives, particularly with regard to the
education of Aboriginal children. Their responses, governed as much by their own
personalities and the political situation in which they attempted to undertake their
mission, as by ideology, were varied and frequently ambivalent. Their position with
regard to the colonial administration and the colonizing process being undertaken was
both supportive and oppositional. Through their denigration of Indigenous social and
religious systems they served colonial agendas and they sought to use colonial power in
the service of their own. They also opposed the means by which colonization was being
achieved. But as marginal men, non-Britons in a British colony, members of an under-
resourced mission, they lacked the means of either ensuring the protection of
Indigenous people when they believed it was required, or of bringing about the level of
control and coercion over the lives of Indigenous people they believed necessary for the

169 *Southern Australian*, 26/1/1841, p.3
success of their project. For their continued involvement in the civilizing mission they were dependent on the maintenance of the kind of relationship they had established with Gawler, a man they described as “a pious and Jesus-loving Governor”\textsuperscript{170} and “a true Christian in the highest sense of the word”.\textsuperscript{171} Their dependence on the financial support of the administration frequently created a dilemma for missionaries forced to choose between making compromises with the government in return for material support, and maintaining their independence but having inadequate resources to achieve their purpose, particularly with regard to their involvement in Aboriginal education. As a result of its dependence on financial aid, their mission was extremely vulnerable to shifts in the political climate, and to schemes put in place to bolster the reputation of a politically ambitious governor. The politics of the civilizing mission is the focus of the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{170} Teichelmann diaries, p. 31, 24/5/1844
\textsuperscript{171} Brauer 1929, p. 62, quotes Schürmann saying this in Brauer’s own hearing
Clamor Schürmann in later life
reproduced from E. Schurmann (ed) 1987, p. 14

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SLSA B8236
Chapter 6: The politics of the civilizing mission, 1843-45

Taking issue with the notion of colonialism as a unitary project, Nicholas Thomas has highlighted the fractured nature of the colonizing project, which he describes as “riddled with contradictions and exhausted ... by its own internal debates”.¹ That component of the colonizing project which is the focus of this study, the civilizing mission, was, I argue, itself a fractured enterprise, its contested nature arising in part from ideological differences regarding the nature of ‘civilization’ and of human difference, as we have seen. But conflict also arose from the civilizing mission’s potential to serve the different agendas of those who undertook it. In early 1845 the project to ‘civilize’ through the schooling of children in South Australia became the focus of conflict between two alternative agendas which in reality had little to do with the civilizing mission itself. For the Lutheran missionaries, and in this chapter I focus particularly on Christian Teichelmann, the ability to conduct Aboriginal schools represented the most promising means by which the objective of creating an Aboriginal Lutheran community in South Australia might be achieved. For Governor George Grey, the project represented a means of achieving personal ambitions, and building a reputation as a man with a vision for the ‘civilization’ of indigenous peoples. The Lutherans’ loss of influence in the civilizing mission and control of the schooling of Indigenous children in Adelaide in the years of Grey’s governorship was, we have seen, in part the result of ideological differences. I argue in this chapter, however, that the sidelining of the Lutheran Mission in the civilizing project was politically, as well as ideologically, motivated.

The conflict that resulted from attempts to use the schooling of Indigenous children as the means of achieving divergent objectives occurred not only between the mission and the colonial administration, but between individual members of the mission itself, as they struggled to maintain some degree of influence in the civilizing project.

¹ Thomas, 1994, p. 51
The secularization of colonial education

Although missionaries and the colonial administration disagreed on the means by which South Australia’s civilizing mission could best be achieved, as discussed in previous chapters, the successful implementation of Grey’s ideas at the little mission school at Piltawodli suggests the viability of a successful collaboration between the Lutheran Mission and the government in providing a ‘civilizing’ education to Indigenous children. But by the end of 1844 that collaboration came under threat, as Grey moved to place the civilizing mission fully under government control through the concentration of resources in a central government institution for Aboriginal children.

It was not uncommon in the history of colonial education for a process of secularization to take place following a period of mission-state collaboration in the education of indigenous children. In Canada, the United States of America, and New Zealand, colonial governments undertook the process of ‘civilizing’ by means of the education of children through the agency of missionaries for a period of time. In each of these colonial situations, a period of mission-government collaboration was followed by a government system. Maori education in New Zealand was initially provided by missions but became a mission-government collaboration from 1847 to the 1860s. During this time the government, under George Grey, who became Governor of New Zealand after his term of office in South Australia, provided funding on condition that certain requirements were met. When the mission system collapsed during the Maori-Pakeha wars, secular village day schools referred to simply as ‘Native Schools’ were set up by the government under the Native Schools Act of 1867.²

The education of indigenous children followed a similar path in North America. In the United States an “experiment in federal-missionary co-operation for the ‘uplift’ in Indian people” took place during the nineteenth century.³ From the 1870s, however, “the government began to dominate the educational effort, quickly pushing the missionary

² Simon, 1992, p.38
³ Michael C. Coleman 1993, American Indian Children at School, 1850-1930, University Press of Mississippi, Jackson, p. 2
societies ... to the margins”. The period in which missions and government co-operated in the education of indigenous children was longer in the case of Canada, where a federal department created to deal with ‘Indian Affairs’ was given authority to deal with Aboriginal education following Confederation. However, education continued to be run by church missionary societies with the sanction of the government, a collaboration which continued until the 1940s when the government took over direct responsibility for indigenous education.

In South Australia, the initial period of government-missionary collaboration in the education of Aboriginal children lasted less than a decade. Why did the colonial administration move, after so short a period of time, to take full control of Aboriginal education?

Grey’s removal of the schools from the hands of the missionaries and his setting up of a separate government institution suggests more than simply an ideological conflict. He could have continued to work through the missionaries, providing funding on the condition that their schools were structured according to his ideas. In years to come, as Governor of New Zealand and, later, South Africa, he would in fact implement his educational ideas through the agency of missionary educators. In New Zealand, he would, according to his biographer, gladly employ “the missionary schools as his principal educational agency”. In order to receive government funding, however, missionary schools were required to teach English rather than the Maori language, be boarding rather than day schools, and provide children with industrial training. By making funding conditional, Grey would use the inexpensive and committed labour of missionaries to achieve his objective of ensuring that the education given to indigenous children was trades-based, English-only, and residential. The changes instituted at the Piltawodli school in 1843 and 1844 indicate that the missionary teacher Samuel Klosé

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4 Coleman, 1993, p. 2
was willing to work co-operatively with the government, making changes in the form of schooling offered in exchange for government financial assistance, despite ideological differences over issues such as the language of instruction.

Creating a labour force: a motive for secularization?

In New Zealand, and later in South Africa where Grey also undertook a term of governorship, Grey’s collaboration with missions in indigenous schooling carried the proviso that mission schools carry out industrial education. Preparing boys for employment in trades and girls for domestic service was a consistent feature of his educational approach. Older boys attending the government school he established in 1845 on North Terrace in Adelaide learnt trade skills at workshops throughout the town, and girls were taught skills in domestic service. The South African historian, J. B. Peires, writes that the establishment of industrial schools there was part of Grey’s plan for the incorporation of the Xhosa into the colonial economy as ‘useful servants’. This raises the question of whether labour needs were a motivating factor in his approach to schooling.

Labour needs have indeed been a major consideration in educational decision-making in many colonial situations. The education of Aboriginal children of mixed descent in the Northern Territory in the twentieth century was influenced to a large extent by labour needs, according to Tony Austin. The high demand for domestic servants in Darwin in the first half of the twentieth century particularly influenced education decision-making. In 1923, for example, an inquiry into the Kahlin Compound in Darwin, which invited Darwin residents to give evidence, particularly asked “Ladies ... to give information on the question of domestic help in relation to the compound”. In 1931 moves to put

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9 As late as 1970 C. D. Rowley referred to the northern and central areas of Australia as the 'colonial' areas in that they maintained many aspects "in the relations between the two races which are typical of industrial colonialism" (cited in Mervyn Hartwig, 1978, ‘Capitalism and Aborigines: the Theory of Internal Colonialism and its Rivals’, in E.L. Wheelwright & K. Buckley (eds), *Essays in the Political Economy of Australian Capitalism, Vol 3*, Australia and New Zealand Book Company, Sydney, p. 121)
children of mixed descent into the care of an offshore mission were opposed principally on the grounds that “the girls are practically the only efficient domestic help available to the white women of Darwin”.11

Where differences existed between government and missionary approaches in colonial schools, they were often related to the desire of colonial administrations to have children prepared for work. In their analysis of colonial education Altbach and Kelly have argued that:

[m]issionaries and administrators, both part of the colonial effort, did not always agree on the lines along which education should develop. Missionaries did not necessarily emphasize the vocational training that government administrators urged them to. They preferred, instead, to stress moral education.12

With reference to nineteenth century Australian colonies, it has been argued that the need to redress problems of labour shortage was indeed the major motivating factor behind the civilizing mission. Mervyn Hartwig has argued from a Marxist perspective that “a labour shortage in the capitalist sector virtually throughout the period when the land was expropriated from most Aborigines” gave rise to retraining schemes such as the South Australian civilizing mission in an attempt to resocialise Aborigines for capitalist exploitation “as wage-labourers or petty commodity producers”.13

I think it is unlikely, however, that labour needs were a motivating factor in the South Australian case. South Australia was established on the Wakefieldian scheme, under which provisions were made for the importation of free labour from Britain. As Robert Foster has pointed out with regard to the South Australian situation, “[i]t was Aboriginal land that the colonists wanted; if Aboriginal labour proved valuable, then this

13 Hartwig, 1978, pp .132-34
would be a bonus, but it was not an expectation”.\textsuperscript{14} Rowley, too, contends that the Wakefield system of bringing a British labour force into the colony excluded the need for Aboriginal labour.\textsuperscript{15} Indeed, South Australia’s economic collapse in the early 1840s led to severe unemployment problems, and although the situation had improved by 1845 when Grey established his central government school, there is little likelihood that it was ever envisaged that the Adelaide schools would serve to meet any form of labour need. The training of Aboriginal children for employment in trades and as domestic servants had, in Foster’s terms, “more symbolic than practical worth”.\textsuperscript{16}

Why then did Grey not choose to use the German Lutheran Mission in South Australia as an agency for implementing his ideas on the education on Indigenous children? He certainly had at his disposal a group of missionaries prepared to undertake the work of teaching Indigenous children. In 1844 Samuel Klosé was already successfully running the school for Kaurna children at the Native location in Adelaide. At Encounter Bay and Port Lincoln, missionaries were stationed who would eagerly have undertaken the schooling of Indigenous children if government funding had been provided. The missionary August Meyer’s attempt to establish a school for Ramindjeri children at Encounter Bay was greatly hampered by his lack of resources, while Clamor Schürmann repeatedly applied to Grey for funding to establish a school at Port Lincoln.

**Grey’s motivation**

In understanding the motivation for Grey’s change of mind about undertaking the civilizing mission through the agency of mission schools, I suggest that there is more than a grain of truth in Schürmann’s accusation that Grey planned to channel all funds into the Adelaide schools in order to make them a showpiece of his commitment to the civilizing mission. Grey’s rejection of Schürmann’s proposal for a school in Port Lincoln was, Schürmann believed:

\textsuperscript{14} Robert Foster, 2000, ‘Rations, Coexistence, and the Colonisation of Aboriginal labour in the South Australian Pastoral Industry, 1860-1911’, *Aboriginal History* 24:1, p. 1
\textsuperscript{15} Rowley, 1970, p. 75
\textsuperscript{16} Foster, 2000, p. 1
based on nothing but the Governor’s pet projects, which make the two Adelaide schools his hobby-horse and making them an experiment to show the world what can be done with the aborigines with the result that he spares no expense there, while he cuts and limits everwhere [sic] else.\textsuperscript{17}

As Schürmann wrote this, although he didn’t know it, plans were already being put into place for the amalgamation of the “two Adelaide schools” into one institution in Adelaide which would, according to Moorhouse, “supersede any Australian Establishment of its kind.”\textsuperscript{18} If Schürmann’s understanding of Grey’s motivation was right, this really would be a visible symbol of his commitment to the civilizing project.

Just twenty-nine years old when he became governor, Grey was at the beginning of a long career in colonial administration in New Zealand and South Africa. It was a career which he would build, to a large extent, on a reputation for dealing with indigenous peoples in a humanitarian and visionary manner. Following his two exploratory trips to the north western region of Australia, as noted previously, he had spent three months working as government resident at Albany in southern Western Australia, where he recorded ethnographic information on the Aboriginal people of the region. He also wrote a report to the Secretary of State for the colonies, Lord John Russell, in which he set out his ideas for “the best means of promoting the civilization of the aboriginal inhabitants of Australia”. It was through these two written works, both of which he included in his published \textit{Journals of Two Expeditions of Discovery},\textsuperscript{19} that he had come to the notice of the Colonial Office in London as a candidate for a position as a colonial administrator. Historian Jeff Peires has noted that Permanent Secretary Stephen was attracted to Grey’s recommendations for amalgamating Aborigines into colonial society, an approach which contrasted the segregationist approach that had been favoured by the Colonial Office, and that it was on this basis that he received his appointment as governor of South Australia.\textsuperscript{20} Grey therefore needed to live up to expectations in

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\textsuperscript{17} Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 11/12/1844  \\
\textsuperscript{18} Moorhouse, Protector’s report 15/10/1845, SRSA GRG 24/6/1845/1217  \\
\textsuperscript{19} Grey, 1841  \\
\textsuperscript{20} Peires, 1989, p. 50
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England that he was a man with a vision for the ‘civilization’ of Aborigines, and to stamp his own mark on the civilizing mission in South Australia.

**Grey: a liberal humanitarian?**

Grey’s “reputation in official circles in England”, according to his biographer, Rutherford, “depended principally upon his apparent success in handling native problems”.\(^{21}\) South African historian Jeffrey Peires has noted that in later years the Colonial Office in London became “mesmerized by Grey’s image as a man uniquely able to deal with natives”.\(^{22}\) Just as Grey had initially attracted the attention of the Colonial Office through a display of his knowledge of Indigenous people, and of his ability to formulate solutions for their ‘civilization’, he would build his reputation in England firstly through the collection and description of indigenous artifacts, mythology, language, and culture, and secondly through the creation of visible evidence of his ‘civilizing’ efforts. He would use, in Peires’ terms, “visionary language and grand visible symbols” to construct for himself a reputation for liberal humanitarianism which would continue to be attributed to him many years after his death.

“In much of the liberal historiography of the twentieth century”, Grey has been, according to Andrew Banks, “invoked as a symbol of humanitarian liberalism”.\(^{23}\) In biographies and histories he has been widely painted as a ‘friend of the native’. Rutherford described him as having an idealism which “carried him along to a conception of a mixed society of whites and blacks harmoniously blended together to their mutual benefit.”\(^{24}\) Another biographer, Cyril Hamshere, describing Grey as a ‘Maori-lover’,\(^ {25}\) depicted him as a man concerned to protect indigenous rights in the face of criticism from colonists who felt threatened by his liberalism. George Stocking, too, wrote that “he pursued liberal humanitarian policies with resolute dogmatic zeal”.\(^ {26}\)

\(^{21}\) Rutherford, 1961, p. 204  
\(^{22}\) Peires, 1989, p. 56  
\(^{23}\) Banks, 1999, p. 378  
\(^{24}\) Rutherford, 1961, p.304  
\(^{25}\) Hamshere, 1979, p. 242  
\(^{26}\) Stocking, 1987, p. 81
But more rigorous analyses of his ‘native’ policy in South Africa and New Zealand has produced a much more critical assessment of his treatment of indigenous peoples, accusing him of distorting and perverting the truth in his dispatches to London to conceal in some cases and justify in others a brutality in his dealings with Maori and African peoples that belies his liberal reputation. The image of Grey that emerges from this research is of a man for whom the successful accomplishment of the colonizing project far outweighed his concern to protect the rights of colonized peoples.

Jeff Peires’ account of the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement in South Africa in 1856 and 1857 is particularly scathing of Grey’s treatment of Xhosa people. A millenarian response by the Xhosa to colonial occupation, the movement resulted in a devastating famine in which thousands of people died. Peires claims that Grey cynically used these events to achieve his stated goal of bringing the Xhosa into the Cape Colony as a cheap labour force. Not only did Grey do nothing to prevent starvation, he actively prevented Cape colonists from undertaking humanitarian action to alleviate Xhosa suffering. The famine devastated the Xhosa population, forcing the survivors to seek employment in the colony. Grey thus achieved his objectives of gaining access to both the fertile land of the Xhosa, and the cheap labour force needed if the population of the colony was to increase. The callous way in which he was prepared to turn his back on the death by starvation of thousands of men, women and children to achieve this end has led Peires to label him a “fake humanitarian” with an “extraordinary capacity for crushing and subjugating indigenous peoples, while loudly and sincerely proclaiming that he was doing so in their own best interests”.

Faced with the profound incompatibility between the humanitarian sentiments of the civilizing mission and the imperatives of the colonizing project, Grey used the rhetoric of the civilizing mission but subordinated its humanitarian ideals to the greater goal of colonization. He was “less a humanitarian liberal”, Peires argues, “than a ruthless opportunist, and essentially a man for whom the primary objective was imperialism”. Despite constructing himself as a great friend of the native he was “first and foremost a

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27 Peires, 1989
28 Peires, 1989, p. 51, 47
colonial Governor, and like all colonial Governors his primary aim was to serve the British Empire”.²⁹ He was also a great proponent of colonization as “a practical remedy for Britain’s social ills”.³⁰ In South Africa he would use the rhetoric of the civilizing mission to conceal the brutality of his subjugation of the Xhosa, in New Zealand the Maori “lost six million acres of the disputed North Island and all the South Island’s thirty million acres”³¹ during the decade of his first governorship there. “At the Cape, as in New Zealand”, Banks observes, “the dispossession of indigenous peoples and the destruction of traditional culture formed the cornerstone of Grey’s programme of assimilation”.³²

Such analyses of Grey’s policies indicate that success in undertaking the colonizing project in New Zealand and the Cape had little to do with the humanitarian concerns that were central to the rhetoric of the civilizing mission. Yet, in order to gain his reputation in London as a great colonial administrator, Grey needed to convince a distant Colonial Office that the colonizing process was being achieved to the mutual benefit of both colonizers and colonized. The humanitarian reputation he built for himself was achieved firstly by his policy of expending effort and resources in ‘native affairs’ only when that expenditure would achieve results which would reflect well upon himself. Secondly, I argue that he built his reputation on skewed and selective reporting of the effects of colonization and the civilizing mission on Indigenous people.

Grey’s response to Indigenous need in South Australia

It is my contention that Grey’s decision to establish a central Aboriginal institution in Adelaide was less a humanitarian attempt to bring a colonized people into the fold of colonial society, than an attempt to bring credit on himself as a great colonial administrator. At a time when Indigenous people in the colony were suffering disease, destitution and frontier violence, there was very little action taken by Grey during his governorship that would have served to alleviate their effects. While a full investigation of Grey’s policy regarding Aboriginal people in South Australia is outside the scope of this thesis, I highlight two instances in which Grey failed to act in situations in which

²⁹ Peires, 1989, p. 318
³⁰ Rutherford, 1961, p. 581
³¹ Banks, 1999, p. 378
³² Banks, 1999, p. 378
genuine humanitarian issues were at stake, and which show, I believe, that he was more concerned to protect and enhance his own reputation in London than to protect and benefit people adversely affected by colonization. The first of these is his failure to adequately respond to requests made by a doctor at Encounter Bay for medicine to enable him to treat Aboriginal people suffering from disease.

In 1842 Grey received a letter from Dr David Wark in which he detailed the plight of Aboriginal people living in the Encounter Bay area, where Wark resided. Wark explained that he frequently provided free medical treatment to Aboriginal people, but that he was unable to treat those with venereal disease “without the assistance of the Government, as, besides medicine, slop articles of clothing, and in many cases food would be required to give them”. He wrote that there were many cases of venereal disease in the area, “of which there are some deplorable examples at present”. He offered his services free of charge, but requested that the government provide for the cost of medicine, clothing, and food. He argued that:

> [n]atives labouring under this disease have a double claim on the resources of the Colony, as the disease is unquestionably of European introduction, and, already, many in the prime of life have been cut off by it, others are fast following, the greater part of the females are rendered either sterile or abortive by it, and the prospect at present, is the rapid extinction of the tribe, unless something be done actively for their benefit.\(^{33}\)

Grey asked Moorhouse to investigate Wark’s claims and report to him on the situation at Encounter Bay,\(^ {34}\) but in the end responded that the government was unable to provide the supplies requested. Certainly it was a time of economic hardship in the colony, but in a colony that prided itself on its fair treatment of Aboriginal people it seemed an opportunity to alleviate suffering caused by colonization “at such a cheap rate!” in Wark’s terms. The economic crisis had eased the following year when Wark again applied for assistance to enable him to continue providing medical treatment to

\(^{33}\) Register, 17/5/1843, p. 3  
\(^{34}\) Jenkin, 1979, p. 49
Aboriginal people. He had been providing treatment at his own cost for eighteen months, he wrote, but the expense of the medicine prohibited him from continuing to do so. He again asked for medicine and dressing material, offering again to provide his services free of charge.\textsuperscript{35}

This time Grey did acquiesce to Wark’s request. His reply to Wark included a list of medicines and dressing to be supplied. These had been recommended by Moorhouse, himself a medical doctor, who wrote that “I cannot say that my experience suggests an extensive assortment of drugs”.\textsuperscript{36} He recommended such small quantities of medical supplies, including a pound of Blue pill, half a pound of Carbonate of Soda and half a pound of rhubarb, that Wark, who must have been offended by such a response, declined them as useless to his purposes.\textsuperscript{37} Although the supplies were recommended by Moorhouse, the responsibility for this failure to adequately respond to the medical needs of the Ramindjeri people at Encounter Bay rests with Grey.

There is evidence, too, that Grey ignored evidence that physical violence was being perpetrated against Indigenous people in frontier regions. In the last chapter I have provided evidence suggesting that in 1842 Grey persuaded Clamor Schürmann to withdraw an accusation of violence against an Aboriginal man near Port Lincoln. Schürmann had reported an incident, on April 2, in which Charles Driver, the Government Resident and magistrate in Port Lincoln, ordered the shooting of an unarmed Aboriginal man. On the same day that Schürmann wrote his qualification of his account of the incident, he submitted to the governor, through Moorhouse, a list of requirements for his continued work in Port Lincoln.

Rather than provide Schürmann with the resources he requested, Grey abolished his position as Assistant Protector. Although the missionary’s reports of violence towards Aborigines must have alerted Grey to the need for a Protector to be stationed in the area, Grey decided that it was “no longer expedient for the Government to maintain a

\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Register}, 17/5/1843, p. 3
\textsuperscript{36} Moorhouse to Grey, 25/4/1843, Letterbook p. 73
\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Register}, 17/5/1843, p. 3
salaried officer as Deputy Protector (of Aborigines) at the Port Lincoln station”.  

Schürmann’s descendent and biographer, Edwin Schurmann, has claimed that the position was axed as part of Grey’s cost-cutting regime, but no saving was actually made, the £50 earmarked for the Assistant Protector’s salary being diverted, instead, to “the estimates of miscellaneous expenditure for the Aborigines’ Department, to be appropriated to the aid of missionaries to the aborigines, upon such conditions as the Governor may direct”.  

If not to reduce government spending at a time of economic crisis, why then did Grey abolish the Deputy Protector’s position in Port Lincoln?

**Selective and Skewed reporting**

One of the ways in which Grey built his reputation as a humanitarian visionary was his highly selective accounts of the reality of colonial occupation in his reports to the Colonial Office, and his willingness to distort the truth. Historians who have challenged Grey’s reputation as a humanitarian have highlighted the discrepancy between what was actually happening in the colonies, and what Grey reported to London. His reports were full of claims of the positive benefits brought to indigenous peoples; efforts made to redress the distress caused to Aborigines through disease, loss of livelihood, or settler violence, were at best neutral advantages, and at worst would alert the Colonial Office to the negative effects of colonization. Grey had limited financial resources in South Australia, which could have been quickly used up in any real attempt to compensate and protect Aborigines from the effects of the colonizing process. Investing these resources instead in a grand ‘civilizing’ scheme enabled him to report positively on the benefits colonization was bringing, even if the success of the scheme needed to be exaggerated a little. The deleterious effects on the Aboriginal population on the other hand could be kept, for the most part, out of sight and out of mind. What Grey did not need was a missionary making public the unsavoury facts.

38 Moorhouse to Col Sec, 10/9/1842, Letterbook p. 61
39 Brauer, 1929, p. 53
As a man “ever with an eye on London”, his propensity to hide damaging information and to twist the truth to his own favour has been noted by historians. Peires wrote that “inasmuch as Grey had a peculiar genius, it lay in the field of rhetoric and self-advertisement”. Jim Cameron, too, discussing Grey’s explorations in Australia, refers to the “selective reporting from an ambitious young officer anxious to embark on a colonial career”. James Bellich has described him as a “[master] of propaganda with an eye to [his] place in history”. In his history of the New Zealand Wars, Bellich provided evidence that Grey succeeded in convincing the world of a British victory in the Northern War of 1845-6, despite the fact that the war was won by Maori.

The propensity was, indeed, noted by his contemporaries. Edward John Eyre, who served under Grey both as Resident Magistrate and Deputy Protector in South Australia, and later as Lieutenant Governor in New Zealand, wrote that Grey operated “with much distortion, some absolute untruths, great rancour, malicious insinuations, sinister suggestions—all calculated to impress a person at a great distance unacquainted or only partially acquainted with the facts”.

The one hundred pound subsidy which was made to the Lutheran Mission when Schürmann’s position of Deputy Protector was terminated was conditional on the Mission retaining a missionary in Port Lincoln. Significantly, Grey placed the missionary under the direction of the Government Resident in Port Lincoln, Charles Driver, the very man whom Schürmann had accused of ordering the shooting of an unarmed man on April 2. It was a clever sleight of hand on Grey’s part. In accordance with the original and unusual arrangement whereby the missionaries were invited to the colony to carry out their work under the direction of the Protector, Grey likewise placed Schürmann under the direction of a government official who was not under any illusions about the

41 Peires, 1984, p. 150
42 Cameron, 1995, p. 30
means that were necessary for the colonizing process to be successfully achieved. As a pasto-
ralist himself, and as the events of April 2 demonstrated, Driver’s concern was not the pro-
tection and just treatment of Indigenous people, but their subjugation. Further, the police and military in Port Lincoln, whose aggression towards the Indigenous population had been the subject of Schürmann’s reports, were both under Driver’s control. The requirement that Schürmann submit reports through the Government Resident therefore ensured that further reports so potentially damaging to Grey’s reputation would not be made. The violent dispossession of the Barngarla and Nauo people could be continued as before, ensuring the uninterrupted march of ‘civilization’ throughout the colony, without the danger of its awkward details coming to the attention of the Colonial Office through a protectorate whose duties included the reporting of violence towards Aborigines and the bringing to justice of its perpetrators.

Deprived of the authority that the position of Protector gave him, those “necessary connections” which had motivated him to accept the Port Lincoln appointment two years earlier,45 and yet still without the resources to form the settlement he believed essential to the success of his missionary activity, it was no wonder that Schürmann returned to his “hopeless work situation” in Port Lincoln “with a heavy heart”.46 The hundred pound subsidy provided by the government to the mission effectively kept him under government control. “What use is money”, he asked the Mission Society in Germany, “if the door remains locked-?”47

Schürmann made no further official reports of the violent treatment of Barngarla and Nauo people, although he did continue to relate instances of police aggression against Aborigines in letters “to friends in Adelaide”, one of which is cited in his biography I’d Rather Dig Potatoes.48 That Grey’s move of stripping Schürmann of the authority inherent in the position of Protector, and placing him under the direction of Driver served to silence him is suggested by an attempt made by Schürmann in 1844 to

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45 Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 7/8/1840
46 Schürmann, postscript dated 29 August to a letter to the Dresden Mission Society, 22/8/1842
47 Schürmann, postscript dated 29 August to a letter to the Dresden Mission Society, 22/8/1842E.
48 E. Schürmann (ed), 1987, pp. 167-170
appeal the case of two Aboriginal men on trial in Adelaide. Although he made the appeal verbally to Grey, the governor told him that the appeal should be made in writing and submitted to him through Driver in his role as magistrate at Port Lincoln. Schürmann wrote to Germany that “the appeal will scarcely be granted through this course because the inhabitants there [in Port Lincoln] are united against the liberation of imprisoned natives”.

Grey’s reports to London gave no hint of the devastation that colonization was bringing to the Indigenous people of South Australia. Despite the high mortality rate caused by disease, destitution, and violence, Grey’s dispatches described a civilizing mission that was on track and proceeding according to plan. Although quarterly reports of the Protector of Aborigines were forwarded through Grey to the Colonial Office in London, Grey withheld reports potentially damaging to his reputation as a humanitarian. One Protector’s report that was not forwarded was that of April 1843, in which Moorhouse discussed the conflict that was taking place between settlers and Aborigines in the Port Lincoln area. “The whole history of the Port Lincoln settlement”, Moorhouse wrote:

has been one of misfortune and collision, between the white and black populations, and it may be asked, how such a position has been induced, and especially as there are settlements in New Holland where the two populations have lived upon terms of peace and confidence. King George’s Sound [in Western Australia] is an instance where active collision between the Europeans and natives has not been known...

Such a report would not have enhanced Grey’s reputation as a man with a unique ability to achieve harmonious relationships between white and black. Later Protector’s reports did not contain such information. When Moorhouse visited a northern sheep station in 1844, for example, his report, including an account of an pregnant woman being cut

49 Schürmann to Dresden Mission Society, 15/4/1844 (However, in 1843, while in Adelaide, he was able to petition the government, through Moorhouse, to spare the life of a young Barngarla man, Ngarbi, convicted of the murder of Europeans near Port Lincoln, Moorhouse to Grey, 27/7/1843, Letterbook p. 80-1)

50 Moorhouse, protector’s report, 12/4/1843, SRSA, GRG 24/6/1843/495
open and her unborn infant fed to a bulldog\textsuperscript{51} was not included in quarterly reports destined for England, but was for Grey’s eyes only. Meanwhile Grey continued to report the “very satisfactory” nature of Aboriginal-European relationships in the colony.

**Visible demonstrations of a commitment to the civilizing mission**

What Grey did send to the Colonial office were reports which confirmed his image as a man with the knowledge and vision to achieve success in the civilizing mission. Until the end of 1844 he secured his reputation on both of these counts by drawing to a large extent on the work of the Lutheran Mission.

Before his appointment as governor of South Australia, Grey had produced a grammar of the Nyungar language of south-western Western Australia, and during his governorship he encouraged the Lutheran missionaries and the Protector to record descriptions of the Indigenous languages they learnt. He also provided government funding for their printing. Passing through Adelaide in 1840 en route from Western Australia to England, Grey had persuaded Teichelmann and Schürmann to publish their description of Kaurna\textsuperscript{52}. In 1843 Meyer completed a description of the Ngarrindjeri language of the Encounter Bay region\textsuperscript{53} and the following year Moorhouse completed a vocabulary and grammar of the Ngaiawang language spoken along the Murray\textsuperscript{54}. That year Schürmann’s vocabulary of the Parnkalla (Barngarla) language of the Port Lincoln district was printed at government expense\textsuperscript{55}. Grey sent all these works to the Colonial Office as they were completed as evidence of his continued interest in colonized peoples.

\textsuperscript{51} Moorhouse, to Col Sec, 7/10/1844, Letterbook pp. 109-10
\textsuperscript{52} Teichelmann and Schurmann, 1840; Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 16/3/1840
\textsuperscript{53} H. A. E. Meyer, 1843, *Vocabulary of the Language Spoken by the Aborigines of the Southern and Eastern Portions of the Settled Districts of South Australia*, James Allen, Adelaide. The whole of Meyer’s grammar is contained in AJCP reel 594
\textsuperscript{54} Moorhouse, Protector’s report, 10/4/1844, enclosure to dispatch no. 49 from Grey to Stanley, AJCP reel no 597; This was published in 1846 as *A Vocabulary and Outline of the Grammatical Structure of the Murray River Language*, Andrew Murray, Adelaide
\textsuperscript{55} C. W. Schurmann, 1844, *A Vocabulary of the Parnkalla Language Spoken By the Natives Inhabiting the Western Shores of Spencers Gulf*, George Dehane, Adelaide; Schürmann to Dresden Mission Society, 19/8/1844
Grey’s encouragement to the missionaries to study and record Indigenous languages may seem at odds with his insistence that English be the only language used in Aboriginal schools, and the only language of communication with Aboriginal people. Teichelmann described this English-only policy as Grey’s “favourite idea”. But unlike the missionaries, who learnt the language as a means of communication with Indigenous people, Grey was interested in preserving the languages only as text. What John Marriott has called the “immense project to gather, classify, categorize and order information” on the indigenous people of British colonies was an essential component of the colonization project. Marriott argues that “the knowledge field was constituted by and cohered around [the] articulating principle” of progress. It was through the creation of such knowledge that colonized people were “incorporated hierarchically into the European human order”. Thus Grey wrote to Stanley that he believed the information contained within the descriptions of South Australian languages would, “be extremely valuable to any person engaged in studying the history of the human race”. The missionary Meyer expressed a similar rationale for recording Indigenous languages in the introduction to his description of Ngarridjeri, which he hoped would “be interesting to the philosopher and philologist, as exhibiting the peculiar structure of a language spoken by a people generally considered the lowest on the scale of civilization”. Meyer’s views on Aboriginal languages differed from those of his brother missionaries, and caused tension within the Lutheran Mission, as we shall see later in this chapter.

In June 1844 Grey sent further copies of works on the four South Australian languages, Kaurna, Parnkalla, Ngaiawang, and Ngarrindjeri, to Lord Stanley in the Colonial Office. He wrote in an accompanying letter that “your Lordship might think it desirable that copies of these works should be presented to the Library of the British museum, as well as to the libraries of the Asiatic and Ethnological Societies”. The works, duly forwarded by Stanley to the Libraries of Paris, Vienna and Berlin, and to the secretaries

56 Teichelmann diaries, p. 52-3, 31/12/1844
57 Marriott, 2003, p. 5
58 Marriott, 2003, p. 6
59 Stanley to Grey, dispatch no. 70, AJCP reel no 598
60 AJCP reel no 594
61 Stanley to Grey, dispatch no. 70, AJCP reel no 598
of the British Museum, the Asiatic Society, and the Ethnological Society, represented tangible evidence of Grey's interest and expertise in indigenous peoples.

From 1843, when Grey began first to engage with the project to educate Aboriginal children, Protector’s reports forwarded to the Colonial Office reported optimistically on the system being adopted, and the prospects of its bringing success in the civilizing mission. The Protector’s report of July 8 1843, following the initial changes made by Grey to the Piltawodli school, announced that:

> [a]s an improved system of education has now been adopted, I may state over what extent of territory the influence of the former has reached; there is not a child between the age of five and ten years, 60 miles to the north or 60 miles to the south, with an average breadth from east to west of 10 miles, that does not know the alphabet, and some more advanced reading, writing, and arithmetic, as given in my report upon education in March last. It is our intention to progress with those so far advanced, to the other rules of simple arithmetic, and at the same time offer to the mind other branches of knowledge as opportunely as the exercise of its power will suggest.⁶²

Grey may have been spurred to take more active steps in the civilizing mission during the year 1844 by a dispatch he received from the Colonial Office which called his attention to steps being taken towards civilizing the ‘natives’ in Western Australia by the governor of that colony, John Hutt. Grey was clearly peeved by this dispatch. Having received his appointment on the basis of his knowledge and ideas on the ‘Aboriginal question’, Grey clearly disliked having the civilizing mission of another colony held up to him as an example. He replied tersely to Stanley:

> that I have, for a long period of time, been in the habit of communicating privately with Governor Hutt, regarding the measures he was pursing for the civilization of the aborigines; that I was well aware of the successful results of

⁶² Moorhouse, Protector’s report, 8/7/1843, AJCP reel no 594
those measures, and that I feel much gratified that Governor Hutt's exertions in the cause of the aborigines have been so fully appreciated by your Lordship.\footnote{Grey to Stanley, 2/1/1844, AJCP reel no 590}

Grey took more active steps to undertake the civilizing mission following this exchange, and his dispatches to London gave glowing reports of his success in the civilizing mission. His dispatch of 10 April 1844 is a typical example of his selective and skewed reporting, designed to convince the reader that there was no inconsistency between the projects of colonization and the civilizing mission. He described Aboriginal-European relations as continuing to be “very satisfactory” but it was the “the progress which is making in the education and civilization of the children”, he said, which was proving to be “most gratifying”.

A system of keeping the native children at a regular boarding-school was introduced by the Government nearly twelve months since, and the introduction of this system has been attended with very great success. There are now 18 native children educated at this school who have been voluntarily placed there by their parents. The conduct of these children is extremely satisfactory, and they are certainly, in all points relating to acquired knowledge, upon an equality with the average of European children of their own age.

Another school, conducted upon the same principles, will be opened in a few days, at which, I trust, above 30 native children will be regularly boarded, and thus, in the town of Adelaide alone, about 50 native children will not only be instructed and supported, but will be kept under the constant control and supervision of competent persons, whose attention is directed to every portion of their conduct.

Another school upon similar principles, the funds for the support of which have been contributed by the colonists themselves, will shortly be opened at Encounter Bay; and I anticipate with some degree of confidence, that very important changes in the condition of the aborigines will, in the course of a few
years, have been produced by the system of education which is now pursued with the native children of this province.  

Although there had been little government involvement in the civilizing mission since his arrival in the colony, Grey’s report suggests that the establishment of a system of schools was his own initiative, and no mention is made of the involvement of the Lutheran Mission. The “extremely satisfactory” results being attained at the Location school, although facilitated by the boarding arrangements instituted by the government, were in large part the accomplishment of Klosé, and the success of this school made it a model for other schools being established. The mission school that Meyer was struggling to establish at Encounter Bay, with no government assistance, is included as if it were a part of a government initiative in the civilizing mission. Grey further highlights his own personal involvement in the schools in the following paragraph:

The subject being one of great interest and importance, and the results which have been produced here having surpassed expectations, I propose, as soon as the second school has been some time in operation, to address to your Lordship a detailed report upon the system of education adopted in these schools, and explanatory of the control and supervision which is exercised over the children.

In other dispatches he used the first person singular in discussing the mission to ‘civilize’ through education. He wrote in January 1844 that “the improved system which I lately introduced into the native school, appears also to be producing very beneficial effects in that establishment”.

His statement, quoted above, that the eighteen children boarded at the Piltawodli school had “been voluntarily placed there by their parents”, is highly dubious. He wrote this in April, just three months after Moorhouse had reported that four children newly taken into the school had, for the first time, been voluntarily placed there by their parents.

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64 Grey to Stanley, dispatch no. 49, 10/11/1844, AJCP reel no 597
65 Grey to Stanley, dispatch no. 49, 10/4/1844, AJCP reel no 597
66 Grey to Stanley, 4/1/1844, AJCP reel no 596
parents. Moorhouse wrote that prior to this “all the children ... received had to be taken almost in direct opposition to the wish of the parents”. 67 Since Klosé reported in February that “from May '43 to today” fifteen children had been in constant attendance at the school, 68 there is a clear discrepancy between Grey’s claim that all children attended with the consent of their parents, and Moorhouse’s claim that until December 1843 the school took children against the parents’ wishes. I suggest that this is an instance of Grey’s willingness to distort the facts, in this case in order to forestall any objections in London to notions of children forcibly removed from their families to undergo the civilizing process.

His report had the desired effect; Stanley was impressed. He noted on Grey’s dispatch that ‘[t]his dispatch is a remarkable exception to almost every account which we receive of Aborigines”, and replied to Grey that he had read the report “with much satisfaction,” particularly “the success which appears to have attended the establishment of schools for the education and civilization of the native children”. He suggested that Grey “should impart to the Governors of New South Wales and Western Australia, the results of this new experiment”. 69 Although the necessity of reining in government spending had prevented Grey from really engaging with the civilizing mission since his appointment as governor, although he had apparently turned a blind eye to frontier violence towards Indigenous people and to the prevalence of disease amongst them, he was making a name for himself as a visionary civilizer. The project to ‘civilize’ Aborigines through the education of children, until then largely undertaken by the Lutheran Mission, was the means of his doing so.

A “grand visible symbol”

In order to really secure his reputation, though, Grey needed to take possession of the project to ‘civilize’ Aborigines through the education of their children. The establishment of government schools, in place of the mission schools approach taken by his predecessor Gawler, would make the project his own. His recent experiment in

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67 Register, 17/1/1844, p. 2
68 Graetz (ed), 2002, Klosé letter 13, p. 31 10/2/1844
69 Stanley to Grey, dispatch no. 80, AJCP reel no 597
government schooling for Indigenous children had been successful at Walkerville, where an average of 70 children from the Murray region were under instruction in English. One of the most successful aspects of the school, from Grey’s point of view, as we saw in Chapter 4, was the interest and involvement it attracted from Christian colonists who taught Sunday school there. These Sunday school teachers wrote enthusiastically of the progress of the Walkerville children and approvingly of Grey’s approach to the civilizing mission. The reports were sent by Grey to Stanley, who forwarded them to the Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society. If Schürmann was right in his belief that Grey wanted to make the two Adelaide schools “an experiment to show the world what can be done with the aborigines,” the involvement of colonists in the project helped him to achieve this end. In the spirit of religious tolerance in which the colony was founded, the Sunday school, although established by members of the Methodist New Connexion Church, involved the participation of people from a number of denominations. Such involvement in the civilizing project was not possible in mission schools, where religious teaching was carried out by the missionaries according to their own denominational beliefs.

Although he had, during 1843 and 1844, used the work of the Lutheran Mission to reflect credit on himself, Grey now moved to differentiate his approach to the civilizing mission from that of Gawler by replacing the mission school with his own government school, at which interdenominational religious teaching would be provided by middle-class colonists. This would be his “grand visible symbol” in South Australia, on which he could establish his humanitarian reputation, as he would later do through schools and hospitals in South Africa, according to Peires. Until the end of 1844 he had not had the financial capacity to create such a symbol in South Australia, but the economic recovery now provided him with the means to do so. The 1842 Waste Lands Act, mentioned in the previous chapter, had stipulated that fifteen percent of the moiety of the revenue from the sale of land designated for public works in the colony by set aside for the protection and ‘civilization’ of Aborigines, but with the economy in recession the

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70 Memo, dated 8/5/1845, on dispatch no. 134 from Grey to Stanley, dated 2/12/1844, AJCP Reel no 599
71 Schürmann to Dresden Mission Society, 11/12/1844
72 Thanks to Jane Simpson for making this point to me.
money made available by this Act had been negligible. However Grey’s economic measures, together with the commencement of copper mining at Kapunda in 1844, and the consequent increase in revenue from land sales, ensured that Grey now had the funding he needed to stamp his own mark on the civilizing mission.

Grey’s intention to place Aboriginal education entirely under government control signaled the end of the government-mission collaboration in the schooling of Aboriginal children that had begun six years earlier. This process gave rise to the question of who owned the school at Piltawodli which had until now operated as a joint venture, financed by the government but run by the mission.

“One can expect no conversion of the natives”

Just as the education of Aboriginal children came to represent, for Grey, a means by which his reputation might be enhanced, it came to represent, for the Lutheran Missionaries, the survival of their Mission in South Australia. By the end of 1844, it had become clear to the missionaries that it was only by having Aboriginal education under their own control that they could have any hope of achieving their own agenda of establishing an Aboriginal Lutheran community in the colony. The divergent agendas of the missionaries and Grey brought them into conflict over control of Aboriginal education, as each sought to use the project for their own particular ends.

It was a time of crisis for the Mission. Although the education of children was only one component of their approach, it was, by this time, the only aspect of their work that showed any chance of success. The resistance of Aboriginal men and women to their evangelisation, and their lack of resources to enable consistent contact with the people they sought to convert, had given rise to a profound pessimism in the prospect of

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73 Moorhouse gave confusing evidence on this to a Select Committee on Aborigines in 1860. He stated that ”In 1841 or 1842 we exacted one-tenth; when the North Kapunda Mine was sold for £2,000. One-tenth of this was £200, and the Government built a school-room at the cost of £400 or £500”. (S.A. Select Committee Report, p. 96). However, mining did not commence at Kapunda until 1844; by the sale of the North Kapunda mine Moorhouse presumably meant the sale of land now considered valuable where mining would take place. The ”£400 or £500” was the cost of new buildings at the Grey’s Aboriginal institution.

74 Schürmann to the Dresden Mission Society, 28/5/1845
success in their mission to christianise Indigenous adults. Forced to undertake farming to supporting themselves and their families, they regretted their inability to commit their time fully to their evangelisation work. Schürmann, Teichelmann and Klosé had all learnt the Kaurna language in order to evangelise to the Indigenous people of the Adelaide area, but few Kaurna people remained in Adelaide, the population having diminishing as a result of a high death rate from disease, particularly venereal disease, and displacement resulting from the migration of Indigenous people from the Murray River.

In 1842, Teichelmann had used money provided by the Dresden Mission Society to purchase a section of land, called Ebenezer, twelve miles from Adelaide, where he attempted to establish an agricultural settlement of Kaurna people. He had hoped that by establishing such a settlement he would have a permanently settled community among whom he could preach. But Kaurna people did not want to settle there. Teichelmann paid them for their labour at a higher rate than other colonists and offered them land to cultivate for themselves, welcoming them warmly when they visited and inviting them into his house to share meals with himself and his family. But motivated by a strong sense of urgency to save these people from the torment of everlasting damnation, the style of evangelising he adopted had the effect of driving them away. He constantly lectured Aboriginal people about their immortal souls, scolded them for their way of life, and harangued them about their beliefs. He offended people with his constant talk about death, a topic vital to the missionary concerned with their immortal souls. Some people stayed for a time and worked with him, but no-one wanted to remain with him for long. Teichelmann expressed bewilderment at the preference of Kaurna people to work for his neighbours for less money than he would provide them with himself, but immediately provided the answer to his own question. “I do not know of any reason for their not wanting to work with me”, he wrote:

except that when they are with me they have to participate in the morning devotion and that I preach the gospel to them and oppose their aimless and

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75 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 24, Klosé letter 11, 7/7/1843
76 Teichelmann diaries, p. 78, 10/12/1845
77 Teichelmann diaries, p. 52, 23/3/1845; also p. 63-4, 1/6/1845
roaming life-style strongly, because I am too well acquainted with their tricks and also never indulge their rude jokes or stories, reasons which do not apply to the other colonists; so that they naturally prefer them.\textsuperscript{78}

There is unintended humour in Teichelmann’s comment; it seems obvious to the reader today that Teichelmann’s severity and his constant berating and lecturing the Kaurna, must surely have driven them away. But Teichelmann would not have seen any humour in this. His sincere belief that eternal torment awaited the souls of those who did not convert made it imperative that he never miss an opportunity to warn and remind them of the absolute necessity of conversion. But the people left him, and he found himself struggling to farm Ebenezer on his own, “cultivating the primaeval land of the natives” instead of cultivating “their primitive hearts with the godly agricultural equipment of God’s Word”.\textsuperscript{79}

While living at Ebenezer, Teichelmann travelled regularly to Adelaide to preach on Sundays to the Kaurna in the Piltawodli schoolhouse. He would also visit people camped in the parklands to reiterate his message. His attempts to convince Indigenous men and women to accept his message for the sake of their eternal souls met with laughter, ridicule, and other forms of resistance, as discussed in Chapter 2. A consistent strategy used by Indigenous people to resist his evangelisation was to speak with him only when he spoke of mundane subjects, but to refuse to listen to him, and to change the subject, when his conversation turned to religion. A diary entry in which he recorded walking with Klosé to the place where Aborigines were camped “with a heavy heart, tears in my eyes, sighing to the Lord that he would open my mouth”\textsuperscript{80} gives one a sense of the hopelessness and sense of failure that he experienced.

Lacking the means to effectively evangelise to the adult Indigenous population, and faced with the tenacity of Indigenous people in the retention of their own beliefs and practices, the missionaries despaired of converting Aboriginal men and women, and increasingly placed their hopes on achieving success in their mission through the

\textsuperscript{78} Teichelmann diaries, p. 78-9, 10/12/1845
\textsuperscript{79} Teichelmann diaries, p. 68, 28/7/1845
\textsuperscript{80} Teichelmann diaries, p. 69, 24/8/1845
schooling of children. By October 1844, in an atmosphere of increasing pessimism at the possibility of influencing the beliefs or behaviour of adults, the school at Piltawodli provided a glimmer of hope that their project might indeed be successful. As mentioned earlier, Klosé wrote optimistically that that religious teaching of the school was having a strong influence on some of his students, and expressed hope that conversions to Christianity might be achieved among them. Moreover, there were, as we have seen, indications that the government would support further schools in Encounter Bay and Port Lincoln. When Grey made the decision to move away from a co-operative approach with the Lutheran Mission, the project to ‘civilize’ Aborigines by educating children became contested ground, in a contest in which the colonial administration held all the power and resources.

Teichelmann and the struggle for control in the civilizing mission

When Teichelmann learnt that the little mission school at Piltawodli was to be removed from the mission’s control, it came as one in a series of events which all seemed to be aimed at undermining and destroying the fragile entity of the Lutheran Mission in South Australia. His response was to erupt in a frustrated and angry outburst against the colonial administration and, to a lesser extent, against his brother missionaries whom he believed were selling out to the government in return for financial support. His outburst was criticised by the other missionaries; Klosé believed it was the cause of the school at Piltawodli being taken from him. It is clear, however, that Grey had already decided to form a central government school when the conflict with Teichelmann took place, and that this decision was more a cause than a result of the missionary’s angry confrontation with the governor. It did, however, bring the collaboration between the mission and the government in the civilizing mission to a final and irrevocable conclusion.

It seemed to Teichelmann that the government’s undermining of the mission’s authority over the Piltawodli school had begun in April 1844, when Klosé had bowed to government pressure to introduce the English language. But later that year the question of ownership of the school became an issue when Teichelmann proposed that
three of the older schoolboys accompany him to Ebenezer. Having failed to establish an agricultural settlement of Kaurna people there, and struggling under the burden of operating the farm alone, it seemed to him a reasonable request for schoolboys approaching the age of initiation to graduate from the school to Ebenezer where they could be kept under the influence of Christian instruction, be taught agricultural skills, and provide much needed assistance on the farm. In Teichelmann’s mind the school and the Ebenezer Farm were different sectors of a single mission. But Grey and Moorhouse rejected the proposal, and Teichelmann was informed that if the boys were found to be at Ebenezer, the governor would have them returned to school by the police. What made the matter more galling for Teichelmann was that Klosé supported the government position on the matter.

To make matters worse, Teichelmann learnt from a Kaurna parent in mid-December that the government had permitted Edward John Eyre to take a schoolchild, a nine-year old boy called Kour, from the Piltawodli school to England. That Moorhouse and Grey should allow a man unconnected with the mission to take the child enraged Teichelmann, particularly when he learned that Klosé had approved the decision. Since the school belonged to the Lutheran Mission, Teichelmann believed that the decision should not have been made without consultation with the missionary brothers.81 Teichelmann confronted Klosé about this, angry words were exchanged, and Klosé agreed to allow Teichelmann to take the two oldest boys, Maitlyi and Pailya, from the school to help with the harvest at Ebenezer.82

It was just a few days after this that Teichelmann read a newspaper report, shown to him in a material shop in Adelaide, that the Piltawodli school had joined the children of the Walkerville School in participating in a tea meeting in a marquee at the home of William Peacock, one of the Sunday school teachers at Walkerville. The meeting was held to farewell Anthony Forster, the Wesleyan supporter of Aboriginal education and advocate of the use of English only in schools. It was at this meeting that children at the Piltawodli school presented Forster with a farewell address which created an angry

81 Teichelmann diaries, pp. 50 –1, 14/12/1844
response from colonists, as described in Chapter 4. At the meeting children of both schools were called on to demonstrate their scholastic achievements, the Walkerville children in English and the Location children in Kaurna. The *Southern Australian* reported that the demonstrations “served principally to demonstrate the superior advantages of teaching in the English language.” Teichelmann was angered that he, as a member of the Lutheran Mission, should have learnt about the mission school’s involvement in such a function in a newspaper report. He wrote angrily in his diary that he believed the school:

> to belong to our Mission as from God and by right. Is the school ours? or is it the Government’s? or to whom does it belong? or to the wild dissenting dissenters?\(^84\)

For Klosé to have failed to consult his brother missionaries in both agreeing to the removal of Kour from the colony, and his decision to attend a function given by members of other Christian denominations, seemed to Teichelmann to be acts of betrayal to their mission.

A further ‘betrayal’ occurred the following week when the missionaries attended a government function to celebrate the founding of the colony. Teichelmann was used to hearing Grey speak of “his favourite idea”: the importance of speaking to Aborigines only in the English language, but he was shocked to hear Meyer speak in support of Grey’s position. To Teichelmann’s “no small amazement”, Meyer expressed the opinion that Aboriginal languages were “so lacking in abstract concepts that it would be more advisable to use the English language even in religious instruction because one could never express anything in their language.”\(^85\) The issue of language was one that was central to the approach taken by the Lutheran missionaries, and was a point of disagreement between themselves and Grey and the majority of colonists. It appalled him that Meyer should have sided with Grey and the English colonists on this issue, especially when he believed that Meyer took this position “only because it fits into the

\(^{83}\) *Southern Australian*, 17/12/1844, p. 3
\(^{84}\) Teichelmann diaries, p. 52, 17/12/1844
\(^{85}\) Teichelmann diaries, p. 52-3, 31/12/1844
Governor's plans”. He believed that Grey would use Meyer’s opinion to support his own position to the detriment of the Lutheran Mission.  

As if to confirm his expectations, Teichelmann also learned about this time of the Governor’s intention to combine the Piltawodli and Walkerville school to form one government school, “and thus that in the future the school for aboriginal children, founded by the missionaries of the Luth. Church for the Luth. Mission will no longer exist”. He wrote that “I have long expected and anticipated this and the Luth. Mission Society itself has contributed to this”.  

As a result of these events, Teichelmann felt himself to be in a position of having to defend the Lutheran Mission in South Australia from threats by the government to end its involvement in Aboriginal education, and from acts of betrayal from brother missionaries who appeared to be siding with the government against it. On 2 January 1845, when children of Meyer’s Encounter Bay school were in Adelaide to visit the Piltawodli school, children of both mission schools visited the Walkerville school at the invitation of Grey. There, Grey noticed the absence of the two boys that Teichelmann had taken to Ebenezer, but was assured by Klosé that they would return to school after the harvest. However, Teichelmann was in no hurry to return the boys. He believed they would soon be taken by their families from the school for initiation, and felt besides that the Lutheran Mission in South Australia, for which he had worked and suffered poverty for six years, was under threat of being taken over by the government. His reluctance to return the boys may be seen as a last hopeless and rather sad attempt to hold on to something of the Mission that was rapidly slipping from his control.  

In mid-January, Grey again visited the school at Piltawodli, and asked Moorhouse if Maitlyi and Pailya had been returned. Moorhouse told him that it was his understanding that Teichelmann did not intend returning them. At this point some form of agreement might have been negotiated between Teichelmann, Klose and the government about the
boys, but Grey was not a man to negotiate in such a situation. His response to Moorhouse was, according to Klosé, “[y]ou had best write a letter”.\textsuperscript{89}

It was clear that from the government point of view the ‘civilizing’ project was now to be undertaken by the government itself, and that the collaboration of the government and Lutheran missionaries in the education of Aboriginal children was ending. The letter written by Moorhouse to Teichelmann made the matter clear, and indicated that he was willing to follow the governor’s position on this. Since taking up his position as Protector of Aborigines, Moorhouse had worked collaboratively with the missionaries on the civilizing project, and there is no evidence that up until this time their relationship had not been harmonious. Moorhouse had actively supported applications made by the missionaries for government financial and other assistance, and his correspondence and reports give the impression of a non-problematic collaboration in the ‘civilizing' project, with consistent reference made to the activities and plans of “the missionaries and I”. Moorhouse must have known Teichelmann well, but the letter he wrote in January 1845 was coldly formal. He wrote:

\begin{quote}
I have been requested by His Excellency the Governor to apply to you to send back the two native boys Maitlyi and Pailya to the school, at the Location, which is under the charge of the Rev. Mr Klosé. Early attention to the request is desirable as I wish to report the results.\textsuperscript{90}
\end{quote}

From this time on, Moorhouse took a more cautious approach in his relationship with the missionaries.

The letter must have come as a final and not unexpected blow to Teichelmann. Klosé records that he felt offended.\textsuperscript{91} Teichelmann returned the boys to school, recording the events simply in his diary:

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{89} Graetz (ed), 2002, pp. 39-40, Klosé letter 16, 1/2/1845
\textsuperscript{90} Moorhouse to Col Sec, 27/1/1845, Letterbook p. 118
\textsuperscript{91} Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 39-40, Klosé letter 16, 1/2/1845
\end{quote}
Monday the 27\textsuperscript{th}: … Received a government order to send the two boys back to school. 28\textsuperscript{th}: wrote an answer to the Protector; … 29\textsuperscript{th} … Sent the boys to the city.\textsuperscript{92}

But the letter he wrote to the Protector was an angry one. I argued in the previous chapter that Teichelmann took a supportive, rather than oppositional position with regard to the colonial administration and the colonizing process, exhorting Kaurna people to accept discriminatory laws and to change their way of life, rather than advocating their cause in the face of injustice. Significantly, Teichelmann’s confrontation with the administration which occurred early in 1845 was not made in defense of the rights of Aboriginal people but in defense of the Lutheran Mission. He wrote to the Protector that even if he, Moorhouse:

had any right to interfere with our missionary actions amongst the natives, even there where they do not fall into the province of your Protectorship, the proper way would have been, before you made any complaint against me with His Excellency, first to ascertain from myself what I intended to do with those two boys, and then to report, and so on.

However, the truth is, that you have no authority over our school whatever, being established by us as Clergymen of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and agents of a Missionary Society of that Church, from which follows that this School is under the superintendence of that body or their appointed agents, and not under yours, which you yourself admit in your communication by saying, that the school is under the charge of the Rev\textsuperscript{d} Mr. Klose, who as a Missionary of that Society, from which he has received all along his salary not from the local Government, and which salary he enjoys till this very moment.\textsuperscript{93}

Food and clothing for the school, and a salary for the matron, were all paid from the government purse, but Teichelmann declared that this fact in no way gave the

\textsuperscript{92} Teichelmann diaries, p. 53-4, 20/1/1845
\textsuperscript{93} SRSA, GRG 24/6/1845/115
government any right to declare ownership of the school. He claimed that the
missionaries had been willing to co-operate with the government “as far as our clerical
obligations permit”, agreeing, for example, to instruct the children in English in
opposition to their own beliefs. He wrote:

we have been ..., all along endeavouring to accommodate our operations as far
as compatible to His Excellency’s wishes, looking upon the support given to our
schoolchildren & the mission as a mark of approbation & sanction of our efforts
amongst the aboriginal population, a sentiment which His Excellency hath
expressed both in writing and in public.94

He requested a personal interview with Grey.95 Moorhouse forwarded Teichelmann’s
letter to Grey,96 with a covering letter saying that he had not responded to
Teichelmann, and did not intend to unless instructed to do so by Grey.97 Grey agreed,
believing that to do so would “only provoke a long and useless controversy”. However,
he made the position of the Lutheran Mission in regard to the school on the Location
unmistakably clear. Through the Colonial Secretary, Moorhouse was advised that Grey
considered:

the whole of the native schools which are upon Government property, and which
are supported at the Government expense, as Government Schools, and are
under your [Moorhouse’s] immediate control and supervision;— and that His
Excellency will hold you responsible for everything connected with the discipline,
morality and expenditure of these establishments.98

Teichelmann’s letter is understandable but must have sealed the fate of the Lutheran
Mission. With that letter, the school at the Location became a government school.
Klosé was informed of the change in his position by Moorhouse, who gave him a copy of

94 SRSA, GRG 24/6/1845/115
95 SRSA, GRG 24/6/1845/115
97 Moorhouse to Col Sec, 30/1/1845, Letterbook p. 118
98 Colonial Secretary to Moorhouse, 31/1/1845, included in Graetz (ed), 2002 p. 40, Klosé
letter 16, 1/2/1845
Grey’s declaration. He wrote to his Mission Society in Germany of the “proposed alterations to my school”:

Up to now we have all believed that the school was the property of the Mission and was only subsidised by the Government. But from the letter which the Protector received from the Government yesterday we see that they consider the school on the Location as well as the one in Walkerville as theirs and that as long as I am the teacher here I am under their supervision.

He believed that “Brother Teichelmann was the reason for this letter from the Government”.99

Nevertheless, Grey still required clarification of Teichelmann’s relationship with the school. Although Teichelmann was not involved in the operation of the school, he believed himself to be closely connected with it as a member of the mission to which the school belonged. Moorhouse must have understood this through his close working relationship with the mission over more than five years, but, provoked perhaps by the antagonistic nature of Teichelmann’s letter, he denied Teichelmann’s right to have any say in matters involving the school. In his response to Grey he wrote of Teichelmann as an individual, and not as a part of the mission.

Since May 1841 Mr Teichelmann has taken no active part whatever in the School; not having given the children a days instruction except assembling them with the adults on a Sabbath. He claims connection with the School from belonging to the same society, to which Mr Klosé belongs.100

On the basis of his own account of Teichelmann’s connection to the school, Moorhouse wrote a response to Teichelmann’s angry letter, informing him that “since the month of November 1842, when you left Adelaide for the country, the Government has not, considered you to be in any way connected with the Native School, which, His

100 Moorhouse to Col Sec, 6/2/1845, Letterbook p. 119
Excellency understands, you only occasionally visit on Sundays”. Responding to Teichelmann’s argument that Klosé had “received all along his salary” from the Mission Society and “not from the local Government, and which salary he enjoys till this very moment”, Moorhouse asserted that:

With respect to Mr Klosé, whose attendance at the school has been most indefatigable, I am directed to observe that His Excellency has always regarded him as conducting the religious and moral education of the children, in performance of which duties he has always carried out his own views; and in consideration of the really useful services which he renders, the Government have allowed him a small salary of £33.6.0 per annum.

This assertion was not strictly accurate. Until that time, no salaries had been directly paid to individual missionaries. Rather, a gratuity of £100 per annum had been paid to the mission as a whole. Teichelmann’s contention that the mission paid Klosé as schoolmaster at Piltawodli was therefore correct. Grey’s decision in the second half of 1844 to make payments to individual missionaries and not to the mission suggests an intention to move away from a co-operative arrangement with the mission as an entity, and possibly a presentiment that the ownership of the Piltawodli school would become an issue.

In April 1845, Teichelmann prepared a proposal “for the foundation of a South Australian Mission Station”, which set out a plan to use Aboriginal children as the nucleus around which to form an Indigenous Christian community. It is noteworthy that in putting this forward Teichelmann does not argue that his proposal would serve the interests of Aboriginal people, but rather that it would serve the interests of the Lutheran church. He urged acceptance of his proposal:

[to strive for the lutheran church with success and to operate in its interests, to firmly establish the South Australian Mission for the lutheran church so that it is

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101 SRSA, GRG 24/6/1845/115
102 SRSA, GRG G 24/4/1845/734, 8/2/1845
no longer merely a plaything of the government or a conglomeration here of various professions.

He proposed that they move the Location school ("still to be rescued from the hands of the Government") to Ebenezer, where the children would be provided with two or three hours of instruction per day, and spend the rest of their time being instructed:

in all kinds of handicrafts such as straw-plaiting, stitching straw hats, weaving baskets, etc. The girls in addition to this in sewing, laundering and other housework; the bigger boys in shoemaking carpentry etc. The stronger children to be used in the garden and agriculture.\textsuperscript{103}

The school would constitute “the groundwork for the formation of a congregation” as children raised in the school would remain on the settlement “closer to their teachers”. It was through the children that Teichelmann planned to gain access to the adults, as the presence of the children at Ebenezer would draw the parents there “because even a wild native has in him the natural drive to visit his living relatives and, even more so, his children from time to time”, and their visits would give the missionaries the opportunity to both evangelise and employ them, “and gradually to make the place comfortable and home-like to them”.\textsuperscript{104}

The plan envisaged the continued involvement of government agencies in the project of Christianizing and ‘civilizing’ Indigenous people, with control of the programme firmly in the hands of the Lutheran Mission.

For Teichelmann, the plan he proposed was the last hope for the survival of the Lutheran Mission in South Australia. He concluded his proposal by writing that unless his suggestions were adopted, or “unless the Lord quite unexpectedly and in an unusual way opens the hearts of the natives” he did not believe the “time, powers and means”

\textsuperscript{103} Teichelmann diaries, p. 59, ‘Plan for the foundation of a South Australian Mission Station’, Ebenezer Farm, 4/4/1845
\textsuperscript{104} Teichelmann diaries, p. 59, ‘Plan for the foundation of a South Australian Mission Station’ Ebenezer Farm, 4/4/1845
expended on the South Australian field could be justified. He believed that unless this final attempt was made to rescue the mission, then the mission should be abandoned altogether.

There was another plan drawn up at about this time for the establishment of an educational institution for Aboriginal children, but it was government control over the lives of Aboriginal children that this other plan was designed to ensure. The copy of a plan written by Moorhouse and held today at State Records of South Australian is rough and undated, but it is clearly a plan for the Native School Establishment which was to be set up in mid 1845, and it was probably drawn up at about the same time as Teichelmann’s. Just as Teichelmann’s plan was to have government involvement in the operation, but Lutheran control, Moorhouse’s planned to have the Lutheran missionaries involved in the new institution as classroom teachers, under Government control.

Teichelmann’s plans came to nothing; Grey and Moorhouse had already clearly articulated their position on the Location school, and there was no way that the school could be “rescued from the hands of the government”. Nor was there money to fund his scheme. It was the plans of the colonial government that would be put into action with the formation of the Native School Establishment.

**The closure of Piltawodli**

Once Grey had decided to create his ‘grand visible symbol’ plans were put into place very quickly, and the new institution was ready to take the children by July 1845. Indeed, by the early months of 1845 the government was faced with the need to find alternative accommodation for the children of the Walkerville School as a matter of urgency. The rented building which housed the children was falling down. Within months of the school’s opening Moorhouse alerted Grey to the condition of the rented building, writing early in 1845 that the front wall was “falling outwards, and [had] already gone from three to four inches from the perpendicular and the wall plates in
consequence are being left without support”\textsuperscript{106}. By the end of March it was clear that the building was unlikely to remain standing during the winter, and the building was rented for only the following three months.\textsuperscript{107} In May, Moorhouse prepared estimates for the cost of converting a building on the Park Lands, on what is now Kintore Avenue, for use as a ‘native school’.\textsuperscript{108} This building was at that time occupied by the Surveyor General, Frome, and used as barracks for part of the detachment of Sappers and Miners.\textsuperscript{109} It was ideally suited to Grey’s purpose, being located in the town on North Terrace, and close to Government House. Arrangements were made for the Sappers and Miners to vacate that building, and establish their barracks at the Native Location at Piltawodli.

The establishment of the Aboriginal institution on North Terrace, referred to as the “Native School Establishment”, was very much Grey’s own project, although the degree to which Moorhouse instigated plans for its formation is unclear. The colony’s Legislative Council, formed in 1842, had no involvement in decision-making regarding the school’s formation. The source of funding Grey used for the costs involved in converting a barracks into a residential school and constructing new buildings needed to accommodate a large number of children, was the fifteen percent of the moiety of the Land Fund to be set aside for Aborigines. In the use of these funds Grey had full control, the approval of the Legislative Council in determining how it was to be spent not being required. On 5 July 1845, the day after the children of the Piltawodli school were moved into the buildings on North Terrace, the \textit{Register} reported on a sitting of the Council at which Grey was questioned on how £1000 arising from the fifteen percent had been used. Grey replied that “no part of it had been expended; but the Government had intended laying out £500 in the erection of native a school \textit{[sic]} at the barracks of the Sappers and Miners”. Council members complained that on some issues, “such as the school question, and the like, they were not consulted”. They expressed concern at Grey’s decision to locate the school in the town, a decision they believed to

\textsuperscript{106} Moorhouse to Col Sec, 31/1/1845, Letterbook pp.118-9
\textsuperscript{107} Moorhouse to John Morphett, 31/3/1845, Letterbook p. 125
\textsuperscript{108} Moorhouse to Col Sec, 31/1/1849, Letterbook p. 225, refers to this building as being on the Park Lands, North Terrace
\textsuperscript{109} Moorhouse to Col Sec, 29/5/1845, Letterbook p. 133; also Moorhouse, Protector’s report 15/10/1845, SRSA GRG 24/6/1845/1217
be “highly disadvantageous”. Grey responded by explaining his plans for the school, being, he said, “always anxious to give information”, but it was clear that he intended to accept no counsel on the matter.110

By the middle of June, with the Walkerville School building in a very dilapidated state, Moorhouse wrote that it was “very desirable to have the Walkerville children removed at the end of the month, to that part of the Sapper’s Barracks occupied by Captain Frome”.111 Two weeks later he arranged with Captain Frome for the Sappers to take over the Native Location as their barracks on the following Friday, and for the children of both schools to occupy the buildings on North Terrace.112 Teichelmann, arriving in town from Ebenezer on that day, recorded in his diary that he “heard from the Protector that during the course of this week our former school is to be moved to the new site, whereby our six year long activity and work with the children for our church appears over”.113

Klosé prepared the eighteen children at his school for their move to the new government institution. For the Kaurna children who attended the Piltawodli school, the prospect of their removal to a large institution must have been disturbing. There is evidence that a close relationship had developed between the children and the German missionary. Throughout the five years of his teaching at Piltawodli, Klosé had developed an appreciation of the children’s intelligence and ability. Five months after his arrival in the colony he had written that the children were:

not so lacking in intelligence, as is generally believed, .... Not at all! I find no difference whether I am among European children or among these, other than they are black and not clothed. Often, as a matter of fact, their faces appear so familiar, as if I had seen them as white children in Europe.114

110 Register, 5/7/1845, p. 2
111 Moorhouse to Grey, 14/6/1845, Letterbook p. 135
112 Moorhouse to Colonial Secretary, 30/6/1845, Letterbook p. 136
113 Teichelmann diaries, p. 66, 30/6/1845
This last sentence is interesting because it suggests that Klosé found that he was no longer seeing the children as black children, as savage children, or as heathen children, but had begun to see them simply as children, and as such their human familiarity surprised him.

In 1843, when children asked to be allowed to join their families who were preparing to travel into the countryside, Klosé had negotiated with them an arrangement whereby they would attend school consistently for five months, and he would allow them a holiday on the sixth month to travel with their families. That the children accepted such an agreement, attending constantly for five months, and returning to school after their holiday, suggests that a relationship of trust and respect had been developed. In June 1845, shortly before the schools were amalgamated, all the children left the school and joined their families. Klosé recorded that “[t]hey had never before done this.” The next day he managed to persuade most to return with him to the school, but the three oldest boys refused to join him until “compelled” to do so by Moorhouse. One of them, Munritye, disappeared from the school the following day. He was a boy that Klosé hoped “would very soon convert to Christ, as I had personally heard him in his bedroom praying in his own language”.

On 2 July Klosé learnt that “within a few days the children would leave the Location to go to the new school”. He recorded in his diary that at the school on that day he:

spent considerable time on the first three verses of the chapter in order to make Christianity really clear and sweet to them, because I did not know what influences they would be exposed to there, for I still had not heard whether or not the Government would offer me a position as a teacher. The children sensed my affection for them and asked why I was not going with them etc.

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116 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 43, Klosé letter 18, 29/8/1845
117 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 43, Klosé letter 18, 29/8/1845
118 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 43, Klosé letter 18, 29/8/1845
The next day he wrote that:

[t]oday I spoke to the children about the next three verses of chapter 8, when I made clear to them the results here on this earth and in the future of being a Christian or a non-Christian and urged them to pray sincerely and to read God’s Word. With that I ended school instruction here on the Location.\textsuperscript{119}

Rob Amery records that with the closing of the school at the Location, Kaurna ceased “to play any role whatsoever in public life”.

Grey, … forbade Teichelmann to preach in Kaurna and there is no further references to singing and praying in Kaurna, which were previously a frequent occurrence. All the newly developed language functions, the speeches, hymns, sermons, prayers and literacy had been abandoned or prohibited.\textsuperscript{120}

The removal of the children from the Piltawodli school to the new institution marked not only the end of the mission-government collaboration in the education of Aboriginal children, but also the end of the Adelaide Native Location at Piltawodli. Established on the Adelaide parklands in 1839 as the locus of the project to ‘civilize’ Aborigines, the Location had been envisaged as the site on which the Kaurna would settle and gain the skills they needed to achieve ‘civilization’. But the Kaurna had not settled there, continuing a way of life in which they travelled frequently for social, religious and economic purposes. Their failure to use the Location in the manner intended by the colonizers had led to the focus of the civilizing project shifting away from the attempt to retrain adults, towards an increasing focus on the education of children. As discussed in Chapter 2, the colonial administration had abandoned its project of retraining Kaurna people at Piltawoldi by 1843.

\textsuperscript{119} Graetz (ed), 2002, pp. 43-4, Klosé letter 18, 29/8/1845

\textsuperscript{120} Amery, 2000, p. 63
Nevertheless, the Kaurna had continued to use the Location. It had been an area they used when visiting Adelaide before the Location was established, and they continued to use the area and the houses there in their own way and for their own purposes. They considered the area and the houses their own, and complained to Teichelmann when Grey had their houses demolished. Now, the establishment of the institution on North Terrace meant that the area originally set aside for their use was to be used as barracks for the sappers and miners, and it was intended that they should no longer have access to it. On the day that Klosé taught school at Piltawodli for the last time, sappers arrived to begin removing the roofs from the only two Aboriginal-owned houses that remained standing there. In one of the houses seven old people and two small children were living, forced now to leave the house and lie down under a tree. Klosé records that he:

> told the soldiers that they should leave at least one house with a roof; that I would hand in a request to the Governor. The answer was: “No! It is the Governor’s order that no native still remain any longer within the fence”. They climbed up and tore it down.

On the following day the Miners and Sappers moved into the remaining buildings at Piltawodli: the school building, the house of Jane Russell, the matron, where the schoolgirls had been boarded, and Teichelmann’s house. Kaurna men and women still continued to camp in the area, however. The Sappers and Miners complained to Moorhouse in 1846 that Aboriginal people “appear[ed] still to consider that spot as their particular property”, pulling down a portion of the fence to make their “whirleys” and “lounging about the Building”. Established to instil in the Kaurna notions of place

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121 Schürmann to Dresden Mission Society, begun 19/1/1839
122 Teichelmann diaries, p. 61, 6/4/1845
123 “Brick sheds” were built for Aboriginal use at or near Piltawodli the following year. SRSA, GRG 24/6/1846/107; GRG 24/6/1846/1164; Moorhouse to Col Sec, 23/9/1846, Letterbook p. 180
124 Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 44, Klosé letter 18, 29/8/1845
125 SRSA, GRG 24/6/1846/520
as “property and fixity”, the Native Location was neither the property of the Kaurna, nor a place that would be permanently available for their use. The ironies of this process, common in the experience of colonized peoples, has been noted by Jean O’Brien in the context of the history of Native Americans in Massachusetts, initially settled in “Praying Towns” and then dispossessed of the land on which they were settled. She notes:

the deep ironies of a project that began by imposing a construction of place as property and fixity upon Indians, and then dispossessing Indians of their property and defining them as rootless in order to establish themselves in their place.\(^{127}\)

It was a process that was to take place throughout Australia. Concentrated into missions, reserves and settlements, Indigenous people frequently developed a strong sense of connection to places in which they had been forced to settle, suffering a further dispossession when that land was required for European settlement. This has been documented in South Australia by Peggy Brock.\(^{128}\)

On the evening of the day that Klosé taught school at Piltawodli for the last time, he gave the children a farewell tea, with a cake baked by his wife. The conversation, he wrote,

was largely about past times and the impending separation. A few said they would cry; others that they would come and visit me. They could not understand why I could not go along with them, since the teacher at Walkerville was moving with his children.\(^{129}\)

\(^{126}\) Jean O’Brien, 1999, ‘’They are So Frequently Shifting Their Place of Residence’: Land and the Construction of Social Place of Indians in Colonial Massachusetts’, in Dauntion and Halpern (eds), p. 212

\(^{127}\) Brien 1999, p. 212

\(^{128}\) Brock, 1993

\(^{129}\) Graetz (ed), 2002, p. 44, Klosé letter 18, 29/8/1845
The next day, 4 July, the children cleared out the schoolhouse, and moved to the new schoolhouse on North Terrace accompanied by Moorhouse and Jane Russell, the matron at Piltawodli who was taking up the position of matron and new quarters in the new institution. Klosé later wrote in a letter to Grey’s successor, Robe, that while his school had operated, the children “out of School … were constantly at my house either with me in the garden or in the house I was always happy when I had them with me, I assure your Excellency it was a hard thing when they were taken from me”.\textsuperscript{130}

The following week the Kaurna children from Piltawoldi were joined at the old Sappers barracks by Murray River children and their teacher from the Walkerville school, and the Native School Establishment, Grey’s “showpiece to the world”, began operating. In accordance with Grey’s views, the institution had a strong focus on inculcating skills and habits of ‘civilized’ living, remaking Aboriginal children’s bodies, as well as their hearts and minds. Although Grey located the new institution near Government House in order that he would himself be able to oversee and direct its operation, he was recalled from the colony three months after its establishment. It continued to operate according to his ideas, however, under the governorship of his successor, Lieutenant-Colonel Fredrick Holt Robe, and under the direction of Matthew Moorhouse, referred to by one critic as “the devoted civilizer of savages”.\textsuperscript{131} During the years of its operation, authorities attempted to remake Aboriginal people by raising children away from the influence of their family and society, and creating within the institution new family and social networks to replace the relationships of Indigenous society. They sought to teach Aboriginal children skills in ‘civilized’ living and to win them over to ‘civilization’ by habituating them to the apparent comforts of ‘civilized’ living within the institution. They sought to prepare children for a life within colonial society, the boys as educated skilled artisans, and the girls as wives and good domestic servants. Their objective was the creation of a class of English-speaking, Christian Aboriginal people, fully capable of operating within colonial society.

\textsuperscript{130} Klosé to Col Sec, 15/2/1848, SRSA GRG 24/6/1848/207
\textsuperscript{131} Register, 9/5/1849, p. 3
Conclusion

In the period of a few months, between the end of 1844 and the beginning of 1845, the project to educate of Aboriginal children became contested ground. For the missionary Teichelmann, the little school at Piltawodli represented hope for the survival of the Lutheran mission in South Australia, the children who attended it representing an Aboriginal Lutheran community in embryonic form. For Grey, Aboriginal education provided material for positive and optimistic reports to London on the benefits being brought to Aboriginal people by the colonizing project, and a screen behind which the negative impacts of the colonizing project might be hidden, proof of his capacity as a colonial civilizer.

Ideological differences that existed between Grey and the Lutheran Mission could have been overcome through a system of funding granted under stipulated conditions, as Grey would do just two years later in New Zealand. However, at a time when it was politically expedient for Grey to be seen to be undertaking projects aimed at the ‘civilization’ of Aboriginal people, he chose instead to concentrate funds in South Australia on the establishment of a “grand visible symbol”, the Native School Establishment.
Aboriginal schoolgirls walking to Trinity Church from Grey’s North Terrace institution

W. A. Cawthorne artist. Mitchell Library, a928104r
Epilogue

The institution established by George Grey in 1845 would represent the final stage of the colonial administrations ‘civilizing’ efforts in South Australia. By the time Sir Henry Fox Young replaced Robe as Governor in August 1848, there was a sense that the project was failing. The criteria by which the school was judged was not its success in the teaching of literacy and numeracy, but its efficacy as an instrument of the civilizing mission. In 1849 Moorhouse confessed to George Augustus Robinson, then Chief Protector in Port Phillip, that the results of the experiment in the schooling of Aboriginal children in Adelaide had “not been very satisfactory”. This was despite that fact that, as he informed Robinson, “a total of 74 children had been educated since the establishment of the first school at Piltawodli”. By ‘educated’, he meant that they had been “taught to read the Bible, to write, to go through the common rules of Arithmetic as well as to sew and dig”. Despite this success, Moorhouse saw the experiment as having failed because children thus educated did not adopt a European lifestyle when they left school, but returned to fulfill the obligations of Aboriginal society. “[E]very child on arriving at puberty”, he told Robinson, “went into the bush – the boys to be initiated into the secrets of manhood and the girls to live with their husbands”.1 This is similar to the assessment of the results of earlier experiments in ‘civilizing’ Aborigines through schooling. Jim Fletcher has noted, for example, that the Native Institution established in New South Wales in 1815 was “a successful school”, but was considered to have failed “because its graduates were not regenerated, resocialised or different to their parents”.2

The mission school at Piltawodli had attempted to disrupt Aboriginal sociality and spirituality by offering children an alternative morality and an alternative religion. The school’s failure to achieve this led to children being boarded at the school, in order to limit the contact with their families. The removal of Indigenous children from their own localities into a central school in Adelaide and the use in school of the language of the colonizer represented an intensification of efforts to disrupt Indigenous sociality and religious life, while the increased focus on the teaching of trades and European

1 Moorhouse to Robinson, Chief Protector at Port Phillip, 12/1/1849, Letterbook p. 233
2 Fletcher, 1989, p. 21
domestic skills had the intention of replacing Indigenous economic practices with those of Europeans. This, too, failed. While the response of many of the colonists was simply to state the impossibility of 'civilizing' Aborigines, and the inevitability of their demise, religious humanitarians argued that rather than abandon the ‘civilization’ project, efforts should be intensified. They argued that “further means - over and above those at present in use- are required to accomplish anything permanently beneficial". The solution that was proposed was the complete physical separation of Aboriginal children and young people from their families to remove them “from the influence of evil advisers”. It was argued that if young people educated at the institution were taken to another part of the colony on graduation, the ‘civilizing’ process begun at the school could be continued without interference. Then, surely, the transmission of an Indigenous social, religious and economic reality could be permanently disrupted. By 1850 Moorhouse had come to the conclusion that every attempt at ‘civilizing’ Aboriginal people would fail “unless the children are removed from parents and friends”. He wrote that it was “very disheartening and somewhat humiliating to see all our attempts at improving the natives assume the aspect of failure. All legitimate means have been used but this one of separation and it is very desirable that it should be tried”.

Plans for this final stage of South Australia’s civilizing mission were put forward by the Anglican Archdeacon, Matthew Hale, who proposed the removal of graduates of the Adelaide school to a Training Institution at Poonindie, fifteen kilometers north of Port Lincoln. The Port Lincoln area was chosen because it was accessible from Adelaide only by sea, effectively prevented Indigenous families making contact with the young people, while the young people themselves would be prevented from returning to their families by “the fear which they have of the Port Lincoln natives on account of their wilder and more daring character”. Hale intended “to draft from time to time the elder boys and girls” from the Adelaide school to Poonindie. “Thus isolated from native

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3 Hale, ‘Prospectus of an Institution about to be formed at Port Lincoln for the Religious Instruction and Moral training of Aboriginal Natives’, Letter to the editors of the Register, 28/8/1850, p. 4
4 Moorhouse, ‘Report upon the Suggestion of Archdeacon Hale to establish a Training Institution for the Native Children (at Port Lincoln), who have been some time in School’, undated – written June or July 1850, Letterbook p. 265
5 Moorhouse, ‘Report upon the Suggestion of Archdeacon Hale…’, Letterbook p. 265
6 Brock, 1987, p. 117
7 Hale, ‘Prospectus’, Register, 28/8/1850, p. 4
pollution and temptations to vice in Adelaide”, Bishop Short wrote, “he proposed to educate, to employ, and to Christianize them”. It was envisaged that Aboriginal graduates from the Adelaide school would form a settled, Christian, agrarian community there. Groups of children were taken from the school to Poonindie during 1850 and 1851, Hale claiming that he took students at a faster rate than initially planned because the enthusiasm of the children to join him at Poonindie was so great that he could not bear to refuse them.

Designed though it was as a means by which the schooling of Aboriginal children in Adelaide could be rendered more effective in the civilizing mission, the establishment of Poonindie served rather to cause the project to be abandoned. Strong parental resistance to the removal of children from the school to Poonindie led to children being withdrawn from the school by their families. In 1851 Hale wrote that while the young people themselves showed “the greatest readiness to emigrate to our little colony”, authorities had great difficulty “in getting them away on account of the determined opposition of the older men”, opposition he described as being “of the most energetic character”. After the removal of the first group of young people to Poonindie, girls were withdrawn from the school by their families. Moorhouse wrote that Aboriginal adults were “remarkably vigilant in keeping the girls out of our reach”.

At the beginning of 1852, when school numbers were low as they usually were in summer, the removal by Hale of a final group eighteen children, all boys, to Poonindie, left the school empty except for seven “rough and unbroken” children newly arrived from Yorke Peninsula. The school continued to operate with a handful of children and reduced staff until the middle of the following year, when the decision was made to refit the institution buildings to enable their use as an asylum for the destitute poor. There were too few Aboriginal children in Adelaide to warrant the operation of the

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8 Bishop Short to the Secretary of the Society for the Propogation of the Gospel, reprinted in the *Register*, 14/3/1853, p. 3
9 Hale to the Native Missionary Society (in connection with the Trinity Church Sunday School), 27/1/1854, cited in the *Register*, 16/2/1854, p. 3
10 *Register*, 26/7/1851, p. 3
11 Moorhouse to Pastor Kavel, 5/4/185, Letterbook p. 275
12 Moorhouse to Col Sec, 23/1/1852, Letterbook, pp. 298-9
13 *Register*, 25/5/1852; Moorhouse to Col Sec, 23/1/1852, Letterbook pp. 298-9; also 7/2/52, p. 300
14 *Register*, 7/6/1853, p. 3
school, Moorhouse claimed, adding that in future Aboriginal children would be sent directly to Poonindie instead of being first educated in Adelaide. He attributed the low number of children in Adelaide to the high demand for their labour, as shepherds for example, in country areas. The increased demand for Aboriginal labour at this time, arising from the exodus of European men from the colony to the Victorian goldfields, coincided with the removal of children to Poonindie, and the two factors probably operated together to bring about the school’s closure. Aboriginal resistance to the removal of children to Poonindie, evidenced by the withdrawal of the children from the school, and the determined efforts of Aboriginal people to keep their children out of the reach of colonial authorities, was undoubtedly a strong contributing factor. There seems, too, to have been little enthusiasm generally for the civilizing mission by this stage. Although Hale and his supporters continued to carry out a civilizing programme at Poonindie, they did so against a rising belief in the futility and folly of attempting to ‘civilize’ so ‘primitive’ a people, destined by God or nature to fall back before the advance of a more robust race. Moreover, even those commentators who supported the civilizing mission, such as Anglican Bishop Augustus Short, were vocal in their criticism of the location of the school in town. In this climate the colonial administration appears to have lost interest in the civilizing mission, and once numbers of students fell away there was little enthusiasm for the school’s reestablishment. Moorhouse described the decision not to reopen the school, but to have children sent instead to Poonindie, as “steps in the right direction.”

The closure of the school reinforced the general belief in the futility of the project to ‘civilize’ Aborigines. Not only was it “generally admitted [that] the school was a total failure”, it was claimed that the generation of people educated there was “far worse than the last - that the vices of civilization [had] been grafted on the vices of barbarism, while the virtues of the savage [had] been altogether unaided by the virtues

15 Register, 7/6/1853, p. 3
16 Foster, 1993, p. 144
17 The editor of the South Australian Advertiser wrote in 1860 that it was "no 'melancholy fact' but a most glorious fact, that, obedient to the laws of nature, and in conformity with the wise purpose of the Creator, inferior races [are] everywhere giving place to races of higher qualities and loftier destinies". 31/10/1860, p. 2
18 Register, 7/6/1853, p. 3
19 Register, 10/3/1856, p. 3
of Christianity”. In 1860, when a Select Committee of the Legislative Council enquired into the state of South Australia’s Indigenous people, the pessimistic tone of the proceedings was heightened by the retelling of the failure of earlier ‘civilizing’ efforts, and even Moorhouse, that “devoted civilizer of savages”, stated his belief that the best that could be done for Indigenous people was to render their passing as comfortable as possible. In a climate of rising racism, the failure of the project was construed as Aboriginal incapacity. A newspaper editorial on the committee’s report concluded that, despite the “most strenuous and persevering efforts” in the civilizing mission, Aboriginal people had proven “either incapable of being civilized, or [that they had] an irradicable distaste of civilized habits”.

Despite the fact that the Adelaide schools were successful in teaching literacy and numeracy to Aboriginal children, the perception that they were “a total failure” fed a growing perception of Aboriginal people as ineducable. Welch has argued that the “myth of the ineducability of Australian Aborigines has been a most pervasive one which, in defiance of evidence, has continually licensed second rate education or none at all”. According to John Henry and Wendy Brabham, “[t]he legacy of the early nineteenth century experiments in Koorie education bequeathed later experiments with an imposed, oppressive and disempowering form of schooling, and an ideology which readily explained its limited achievements as to-be-expected natural outcomes”.

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20 Register, 5/7/1861, cited in Foster, 1993, p. 199
21 South Australian Advertiser, 31/10/1860, p. 2
23 Henry and Brabham, 1991, p. 12
Conclusion

The history of civilizing projects that were carried out in South Australia in the early 1840s demonstrates that the civilizing mission, formulated in Britain to legitimate and justify colonial expansion, underwent a reformulation in the colony, giving rise to conflict, controversy and debate over the meaning of ‘civilization’ and the means that were required to achieve its objects. Whereas the history outlined in this thesis is specific to a particular time and place, I suggest that it may serve to illuminate the nature of the civilizing mission of the first half of the nineteenth century as it was applied generally throughout British colonies, and in settler colonies in particular.

The primary causes of the project’s reformulation were the responses of the colonized to the project’s ‘civilizing’ agenda, and the contradictions that existed within the project to civilize, and between it and the realities of colonization. The failure of initial experiments, and the early evidence of Indigenous tenacity in retaining their own modes of behaviour and world view, caused colonizers to rethink original assumptions about how the civilizing mission should proceed. Moreover, contradictions inherent in the project as it was originally formulated gave rise to a reassessment of these assumptions. The intention to provide compensation to the colonized in the form of food, shelter and instruction, for example, conflicted with the intention to have the colonized settle in identified locations and produce their own food through agriculture. In addition, certainties regarding the means and the propriety of the civilizing mission and the means by which its objectives could be achieved were challenged by the harsh realities of colonization. Although early colonial settlers reiterated the idealistic rhetoric of the civilizing mission, such sentiments were challenged by the realities of attempting to establish themselves in the new colony in the midst of a dispossessed, dislocated and destitute people whose presence and conduct they found increasingly intolerable. Colonial administrators, also faced with the dilemmas presented by the expectations of the civilizing mission and their primary task of bringing about the process of colonization, either abandoned or perverted the project as it was initially conceived, in order to ensure the success of the colonizing endeavour. Missionaries, too, were confronted with the need to reconcile the humanitarian sentiments of the civilizing mission with a colonizing project which, although on one hand serving to facilitate the
civilizing mission, operated to dispossess, decimate and demoralise the very populations they sought to ‘civilize’.

In the face of Indigenous resistance to the project’s objectives, the reformulation of the civilizing mission included a shift in emphasis from the evangelisation and retraining of Indigenous men and women to the education of children in schools. Although this shift in focus was a necessary response to the refusal of Indigenous people to acquiesce to the programme’s objectives, the degree to which school education represented an effective means of achieving the objectives of the civilizing mission was questioned and debated. While some colonists argued that schools did not serve the purposes of the civilizing project, supporters of an approach which focused on the education of children expressed opposing views regarding the form of schooling that was most appropriate in bringing about the project’s objectives.

In its reformulation, then, the project became the subject of contention and debate. In part, this was a product of the propensity of the civilizing mission to serve the various agenda of its proponents. For many settlers the civilizing mission was the means whereby Indigenous people could be brought to behave in a manner they found more acceptable. The existence within the colony of a group of people with different codes of conduct, who were unable to be fitted into the new colonial social structure, gave rise to an anxiety over an apparent failure to attain a total hegemonic control over the colonial territory. Colonists hoped that a reformulated civilizing mission could remedy this situation of partial colonization to enable the establishment of more effective control. For missionaries, the civilizing mission represented the means by which an Aboriginal Christian community of their own particular denominational persuasion could be established. For colonial administrators, the civilizing mission could serve political ends. In the 1840s, when men in powerful positions in Britain evinced a humanitarian concern for the welfare of colonized peoples, reports to London which displayed evidence of initiative in undertaking civilizing projects won approval in London, and served to further careers in colonial administration. In such circumstances, the civilizing project could be reduced to a degree of posturing, intended to convince others that colonization could operate to the benefit of the colonized. It could be used, as I have
argued it was used by Grey, to cover over the disastrous effects that colonization was having on Indigenous populations.

While debate and contestation arose from the divergent agendas of interest groups, it arose also from different constructions of the notion of ‘civilization’ and the different ideas about the conditions required for an ‘uncivilized’ people to progress towards a ‘civilized’ state. A construction of the process of ‘civilization’ as essentially one of the development of agriculture gave rise to calls for one sort of approach to the ‘civilizing’ mission, while an understanding of the process of becoming ‘civilized’ as the attainment of bodily habits such as the wearing of clothing, of cleanliness, of use of knives and forks and so on, gave rise to another. Yet another sort of approach was espoused by those who believed that ‘civilization’ was essentially an outcome of a moral development brought about by Christian conversion, while those who saw ‘civilization’ as exemplified by British society believed that other means were necessary for bringing the objectives of the mission to fruition. Central to this debate was a discussion over the priorities that should be given to the two main components of the civilizing mission, civilization on the one hand and Christianity on the other, and positions taken in this debate had a clear impact on approaches taken in the civilizing mission. In Aboriginal education, the priority placed on these components impacted on the form of schooling that developed. A belief that Christian conversion was an essential precursor to any permanent adoption of a ‘civilized’ lifestyle gave rise to a pedagogical approach which placed a greater emphasis on teaching Christian beliefs and morality than on ensuring that children looked and acted ‘civilized’. Whereas proponents of this approach saw residential schooling as beneficial in this process, the provision of boarding facilities was not seen as essential. They believed that the teaching of children in day schools was an adequate, if not optimal, avenue for achieving Christian conversion, and for bringing about that process of ‘civilization’ that was conversion’s natural corollary. Proponents of a ‘civilization-first’ approach, on the other hand, were critical of an approach to Aboriginal education which did not produce immediate changes in the appearance and behaviour of Aboriginal children. The remaking of children’s bodies which was emphasised in a ‘civilization-first’ approach depended on the inculcation of ‘civilized’ habits in residential institutions.
The issue of the language of the civilizing mission was a central feature of the debate. In South Australia, the missionaries’ use of the vernacular in schools was widely criticised within the colony. This is of particular interest today in the light of the current debate over bilingual education which has followed Northern Territory’s decision to shift away from a bilingual approach in Aboriginal schools to a greater emphasis on the teaching of English.

A further layer of complexity giving rise to conflict and debate surrounding the civilizing mission was added by interdependencies that existed between different interest groups. However critical they were of government and missionary approaches, colonial settlers depended upon colonial administrations and missionary bodies to undertake the project. Governments used the services of missionaries, especially when financial constraints prevented a more direct implementation of the government agenda. The necessity of obtaining government assistance, through the provision of financial resources, land, or other forms of support, forced missionaries, too, to compromise with government approaches and agendas, despite differences of opinion regarding the priorities of the project and the means necessary for its successful implementation. The responses of missionaries were frequently contradictory and ambiguous, as they took positions that were sometimes oppositional and sometimes supportive of the colonial administration, and of a colonial undertaking which frequently stood in sharp contradiction to the humanitarian sentiments they espoused.

As one aspect of the “variable, complex and ambivalent” ideologies that comprised the colonial enterprise, the civilizing mission was itself a fraught and fractured undertaking, riddled with contradictions and with tension even among its proponents. It was a shortlived undertaking, quickly becoming, in Thomas’ terms, “exhausted ... by its own internal debates”.¹ Then, abandoned as a futile exercise in mainstream ideology, its implementation among Aboriginal people of full descent was relegated to the margins of society as Christian organisations attempted to pursue its agenda of religious conversion on Christian missions. Meanwhile, children of mixed descent would be subjected to a ‘civilizing’ programme through removal, institutionalisation, and adoption. It was not until the middle years of the twentieth century that Australian

¹ Thomas, 1994, p. 51
governments sought again to bring about the ‘civilization’ of the Aboriginal population as a whole, the project’s central proposition of bringing to Indigenous people the benefits of a Christian European civilization now expressed in terms of ‘citizenship’, under a government policy of assimilation.
Appendix

This object lesson is taken from the Handy Book of Object Lessons (1875) and is apparently intended for use with children of about ten years old. Cited in Anne Digby and Peter Searby, 1981, Children, School and Society in Nineteenth-Century England, MacMillan Press, London and Basingstoke, pp. 159-60

The Elephant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matter</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I Locality</strong></td>
<td>There is a very large animal which is generally to be seen in a wild beast show: What is its name? The elephant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elephants are found in Asia, Hindostan, and parts of Further India, or India beyond the Ganges¹ but they are most frequently met with, in a wild state, in Africa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>II Description of the elephant</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) <strong>size</strong> The elephant is the largest animal we have seen. It varies in height from 7 to 10 feet.²</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) <strong>Body</strong> Very bulky- sometimes weighs several tons and is covered with short bristles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) <strong>Head</strong> Very heavy – sometimes weighs 300 lbs³</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) <strong>Neck</strong> Very thick and short⁴</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) <strong>Trunk.</strong> Serves both as a nose and also as hands. It consists of a number of elastic rings, and is so made that it combines great strength with the utmost delicacy of touch. ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) <strong>Ears</strong> Pendent⁵ and very large.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) <strong>Tusks</strong> Common to both sexes. They are generally from 4 to 6 feet long, and are composed of solid ivory.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(h) <strong>Legs.</strong> Very thick and straight, like pillars.⁶</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>III Habits</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When wild, elephants wander in vast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Show these countries on the map. |

²Compare with objects in or near the school to give the children an idea of the size of an elephant. |

³Considerably above two cwts. (The upper classes might work the sum on the Bk. Bd.) |

⁴Why? Shew the result if the elephant had a long neck. |

⁵What does this word mean? Elicit other animals having pendent ears. |

⁶Why? To support the body. |

⁷Why? It cools them: the countries in which they are found being very hot.
herds. They are very fond of bathing, and are therefore often found in or near the water, where they frequently wallow in the mud and afterwards repose beneath the shade of some forest trees. There food consists of vegetables, shrubs, and the branches of trees. 

*When tame,* they are fed on hay, roots, &c., but will eat cakes, fruit, nuts, &c., and are often taught to perform a variety of tricks, such as ringing a bell, untying a knot, &c.

Elephants are docile, but they are also very revengeful of injuries (illus.: the tailor of Surat.)

IV  How Captured

A herd is surrounded by hunters, who drive the elephants into an enclosure. Here they are bound to trees, beaten often by tame elephants, called ‘decoys’ kept without food for a week or a fortnight, after which they generally become docile.

V  Uses

(1) As beasts of burden or draught, especially in time of war, when they are made to pull heavy cannon along the rough roads of their native country.

(2) To assist in launching vessels. (Give the story of one which was reproached by its master as a ‘lazy beast’) 

(3) The ivory of their tusks is made into a variety of useful and ornamental objects.

(Comp: boys bathing in summer)

8 why? Because they ‘decoy’ or entrap the wild ones.

What are beasts of burden? Elicit names of such animals in this country.
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