

# Australian Classics and the Price of Books: The Puzzle of the 1890s

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Feminist accounts of literary canon formation in which male authors typically predominated tend to stress the ideological pressures that marginalised female aspirants for critical attention, both at first publication and in ongoing critical debates within influential literary coteries. Nathaniel Hawthorne, as Jane Tompkins has shown, received consistent support from his New England religious and cultural milieu, whose values he reflected back. Only two years after the publication of *The Scarlet Letter* in 1850, he was being described as a classic American writer, whereas Elizabeth Wetherell's [Susan Warner's] best-selling *The Wide, Wide World* (also 1850) did not so qualify her. Later, Hawthorne's writings were routinely discussed in the leading periodicals (some of them descendants of the same ones as had praised his writing originally) in the arguments that raged over realism in the 1880s and 1890s in the USA.<sup>1</sup>

From this point of view, traditional definitions of classic or canonical status are suddenly suspect. Classics are supposed to have a capacity to resist strong or didactic readings, or to possess intrinsic aesthetic value, or only (as the literary historian might see it) to be able to withstand the test of time via publication over many decades. These qualities, according to Tompkins, can be redefined: a classic is a work, she argues, that is amenable to recasting by successive generations of critics according to their newly prevailing standards. As all players in the cultural field are interested parties not impartial ones, a work's canonical or classic status is *no* indicator of worth. Subtle ideological pressure on the social and commercial networks that sustain writing, publishing and reviewing emerges from this line of argument as the crucial foundation of classic status. It was one that edged women out.<sup>2</sup>

Tompkins was writing in the 1980s. At much the same time in Australia one of the abiding puzzles of late nineteenth-century Australian literature was receiving a decisive twist. The question was why the novels of the more important women writers were overlooked when a proto-canon of that literature was erected during and after the 1890s. This 1980s feminist approach rejected earlier celebrations, dating from the 1950s, of an emerging

nationalist consciousness that could be traced in the writings of the 1890s, especially associated with the *Bulletin* magazine in Sydney.

However, textual and book-historical research carried out for various scholarly editing projects since the 1980s has opened up an approach very different from Tompkins's and from the Australian feminist explanations. It concentrates on the operations of the colonial bookselling marketplace and finds a surprising explanatory potential there.

Crucial factors in the stunting of the women novelists' reputations appear to have included the availability of cheap fiction in Colonial Library series and the commercial arrangements of Richard Bentley & Son in comparison with those of Macmillan & Co. Unfortunate choice of publisher seems to have affected the fortunes of the women writers at what I shall argue was a crucial formative moment for the proto-canonising push—the couple of years at and just after the 1888 centenary of European settlement. These women seem also to have fallen victim to international shifts in taste not centrally related to the emerging 1890s beliefs about Australian identity, beliefs revived in the late 1940s and 1950s, and which were the focus of the later feminist attack. An implication of the book-historical argument proposed here is that only a modelling of the marketplace forces that acknowledged the competing agencies of authors, publishers, booksellers, libraries and reviewers could allow the tale of shifting tastes to be fully told and a fuller understanding of the puzzle to emerge. This essay gathers materials and makes a start.

The aim is not to undermine the feminist exposure of a masculinist ideology inherent in the 1890s *Bulletin* school of writers, but merely to show that the exposure was itself insulated from certain empirical realities that can now be seen to have been relevant and important. Neither is my aim to discard subsequent postcolonialist analysis of a hybridising ideological impulse in the colonies that could absorb Imperial adventure fiction at the expense of the women's domestic realism. Literary critical arguments about aesthetic objects, discursive analyses of conflicting and hybridised ideological formations, and bibliographical—editorial explanations compete, fiercely sometimes, for rights of exploration of much the same ground. My argument suggests that all are necessary, only that we have not yet learned how to meld them.

#### IMPERIAL ROMANCE AND REALISM

In his influential postcolonial analysis of late-century popular Imperial adventure fiction in Australia published in 1995, Robert Dixon takes into account

the differently positioned nature of the Australian colonies, as opposed say to the Indian and the African, in the British imagination. Australia had long been exotic: known for its strange landscape and animals, the convict basis of its original settlement, and its abundant opportunities to get rich quick through gold or large land holdings. But Australia was only partially exotic. Its near-duplication of British affiliations to race, gender and class—which the newspaper, magazine and book trade channelled and naturalised—meant it could not be the passive or uncomplicated site for the available repertoire of Imperial romance and adventure fiction. The emergent new Imperialism from 1870, with its attendant anxiety about the virility of the British race, meant this new genre would be gendered as male adventure fiction. Dixon witnesses three manifestos for it written by important literary critics in London in 1887,<sup>3</sup> and points to the flood of fictional accounts of derring-do and heroism that would be published up until World War I. Imperial romance was a masculine affair.

In Australia the emergent nationalism of the late 1880s and 1890s meant that realism, particularly if of a vigorous outdoor character and if egalitarian and democratic in temperament, would be gendered as male, as against domestic romance, particularly if anglophile and class-based, seen in contrast as female. These binaries come from Susan Sheridan's schema in an essay of 1985 ("Temper Romantic") and reflect a consensus of feminist opinion that grew up in the 1980s.<sup>4</sup> However, Dixon shows that the inheritance of Boldrewood's historical romance of bushranging set in the 1850s but published in 1888, *Robbery Under Arms*, left room for Australian writers to evade this schema and to hybridise the narrative conventions of Imperial romance—rather than merely duplicating them—with "lost worlds, the occult, lost treasure caves, mysterious islands and, increasingly in the Commonwealth [post-1901] period, narratives of invasion, espionage and crime" (Dixon 8).

Feminist accounts of the 1980s and early 1990s had ignored Dixon's subject matter in their attempt to explain what, in the 1970s and 1980s, was seen as more pressing. The problem was to explain why fine novels written by Australian women writers of the 1880s and 1890s who had achieved publication in London (Ada Cambridge, Tasma, Catherine Martin and Rosa Praed) were overlooked by critics, and indeed virtually forgotten, as a consensus about the classics of Australian literature began to settle down during the 1920s and 1930s and solidified after the Second World War, particularly from the 1960s when courses in Australian literature began to be taught in the universities. Cambridge's novel *A Woman's Friendship* had

escaped the attention even of bibliographers because it had never appeared in book form. Elizabeth Morrison, the editor of this novel, the first title in the Colonial Texts Series published in 1988, literally rediscovered it as she turned the pages of the Melbourne *Age* newspaper for 1888–89 and was able to identify its author, given there only by her initials and as having also written the serial “A Black Sheep”.

The 1890s Australian male bush realists of the *Bulletin* school came to the fore and the domestic fiction of the women slipped into the background. Their imaginative world was a very different one in which the modalities of family, social and intellectual life played a large part—and often in the urban world in which most Australians were in fact living, even as the 1890s myth of the bush was being erected. Cambridge had, as we shall see, claimed for domestic fiction the guerdon of realism as early as 1879. Nevertheless, the getting of husbands and questions of inheritance linked the women with less talented novelists, so that the line between romance and realism was never a firm one.

Understandably, then, feminist critics cast the new 1890s bush canon as an ideological creation. From the 1980s the case was extended in postcolonial, Lacanian and more philosophical feminist thinking. Men’s relation with the bush and the outback, whether as explorers making maps or pioneers establishing pastoral holdings on the edges of known territory, was revealed by the language used to describe the activities as phallogentric and racist. Land was gendered as female in the male urge to dominate, know and map it.<sup>5</sup> A dislodging of the *Bulletin* school of bush realists was carried out in order that, so to speak, the books could be balanced.

What has emerged from the various editorial projects undertaken over the last twenty years for the Colonial Texts Series and the Academy Editions of Australian Literature is the need to complicate both this feminist account and Dixon’s revisionary picture with some of the more workaday contingencies of the Imperial book trade. I have to emphasise “Imperial book trade” because the colonial was never independent of it. Nor were reviewing attitudes and tastes independent of those in Britain. Looking at this wider perspective (rather than the more limited one of the Australian literary-nationalist project of the 1890s), the payoff is immediate, for those workaday contingencies serve to expose a wider cultural debate that was being conducted by reviewers in public (and publishers’ readers in private), all of whom were seeking to establish their influence on readers and writers. There was a competition for definition of “the real” as against “the romantic” going on, a would-be annexation of the cultural ground occupied by these

contested terms. Australian works were always being read against the much larger and influential background of contemporaneous British works. Thus, once one strays from the gritty or dour realism of a George Gissing or an Arnold Bennett it is difficult to gain or retain a firm footing in relation to the Australian counterparts: the meaning of realism shifted as it was contested, and the allure of Imperial fiction made competition for rights of ownership of it all the more charged.

#### CHEAP BOOKS AND AUSTRALIAN CLASSICS

The feminist case about the Australian 1890s overlooked a significant fact about *Robbery Under Arms* uncovered by research undertaken for the Academy Edition: that it was in the second wave of discussions of the novel in 1890 and 1891, following the initial Australian reviews in 1889 of the Macmillan colonial edition, that consensus about the Australian classics to date suddenly emerged,<sup>6</sup> only to be entrenched by a series of much longer commentaries later in the 1890s. Although Cambridge, Tasma, Martin and Praed were included in some of the 1890s discussions of Australian literature on significant writers (most importantly in Desmond Byrne's *Australian Writers* of 1896), they were not usually granted the respect accorded to the three classics first nominated in the reviews of *Robbery Under Arms*: Henry Kingsley's *The Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn* (1859), Marcus Clarke's *His Natural Life* (1874) and *Robbery Under Arms* itself.<sup>7</sup>

Whether praised for their historical veracity or their function as romance, these works seemed powerfully to validate what was already slipping into the past—the colonial experience in Australia, the first hundred years of European settlement. A new, shared sense of what was most important in Australian literature was born where there had been none before.<sup>8</sup> All by male authors, the nominated classics, it is usually assumed, helped prepare the way for the *Bulletin* school of writers of the 1890s—such writers as Banjo Paterson, Ernest Favenc, Steele Rudd, Victor Daley and, above all, Henry Lawson. In their poems and short stories of life in the bush, the harshness of the outback environment is typically depicted as bringing out qualities of stoic endurance, mateship and dry humour. But the supposed boundary between realism and romance was in fact porous: Favenc's short stories for instance fit into both camps (realism and romance) as did—in different ways—the fiction of Boldrewood and Kingsley before him.

Susan Sheridan's feminist case depends partly on indicative examples of reception. Furphy's sarcastic treatment in *Such Is Life* of the conventions of romance in *The Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn* is the most famous example.

*Such Is Life* was first published in abridged form in 1903 but Furphy had sent the first, long version to J. F. Archibald in 1897. Furphy's sarcasm, which created room for his own new form of fiction, ought to be put next to the bibliographic facts of Kingsley's novel having been frequently reissued in cheap formats, both single- and double-column, in the years leading up to and immediately after Furphy's calculated ironies about it. At the same time, another kind of romance, *Robbery Under Arms* was at the very peak of its sales: 90 000 copies between 1898 and 1903, the year in which *Such Is Life* appeared to little acclaim and even smaller sales. The recognition of *Such Is Life* was delayed until the late 1940s. In other words, a book-historical perspective cautions against any simple acceptance of the binary of male realism and feminine romance. In Helene Cixous's schema, which Sheridan adapts, the suppressed "Other" that male realism supposedly requires for the binary to operate—i.e. romance—turns out not to have been, in any literal sense in the 1890s, suppressed at all.

So the gendering of literary sub-genres turns out not to be as clear-cut as it has been argued to be. An empirical base is needed. One way to expose that base is to try to answer the question why, suddenly around 1890, the consensus about Australian classics began to emerge. The account offered here turns on the availability of cheap books of Australian fiction. My contention is that contemporary taste in the colonies was influenced by availability, not just ideology. Availability is a dimension of textuality that historians of reading and of library collection policies are apt to overlook. They tend to analyse holdings or borrowings by title—that is to say, at the level of the work. The crucial discriminator turns out to be at the level of bibliographical format.

Despite their original date of publication, the trio—*The Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn* (1859), *His Natural Life* (1874) and *Robbery Under Arms* (1888)—all became readily and cheaply available for the first time, and more or less simultaneously, in the second half of the 1880s. Special colonial marketing arrangements are the key. In most cases, colonial issues were run-ons of printings primarily intended for the Home market in Britain. This practice reduced the unit cost of the overall print run. So publishers could afford to drop the prices of books especially in the colonies and to a lesser extent in the Home market.

Although a few circulating libraries in Australia would probably have had copies of the very expensive three-volume first edition of *Geoffry Hamlyn* of 1859, and although the one-volume second edition of 1860 at 7s. 6d. had definitely been on sale from Walch and Son in Tasmania, easy availability of the novel probably dates from only about 1872. By this time Chapman and

Hall and also Routledge had secured rights to publish new impressions and issues of the second edition at 2s. 6d., and these cheap issues then began to appear in Australian booksellers' catalogues.<sup>9</sup>

But the crucial date for this novel's availability is 1886 when Ward, Lock (whose Melbourne office had opened in 1884) purchased the rights and began a campaign over the next few years of energetic distribution of what is advertised on the back cover as a "Special Australian Edition".<sup>10</sup> (See Figure 1.)



Figure 1: "Special Australian Edition" of *The Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn* (London, New York and Melbourne: Ward, Lock, 1886)

In fact this was not a new edition in the sense of a new typesetting, but one or more new impressions of the 1860 second edition—whose stereotype plates were, by 1886, doing yeoman's service. Stereotype plates coupled with large print runs, or frequently repeated small ones, enabled cheap retail prices to be achieved and helped either a profit to be turned, or the publisher at least to stay in business in a competitive late-century marketplace. Ward, Lock entered into a series of agreements with Australian booksellers allowing special issues of the novel to appear with their title-pages. E. W. Cole of Melbourne, J. Walch and Sons of Hobart and Walch Bros and Birchall of Launceston in Tasmania, Ellis and Lake of Melbourne and Sydney, and S. Cowan and Co. of Perth all issued the novel in this way.

Another crucial date is 1885 when Bentley released *His Natural Life* at 2s. 6d. for circulation in Australia only, as part of Bentley's second attempt at a Colonial library. It was a special issue of the firm's one-volume second edition of 1878, which, until then, had sold at 6s. both in the Home market and in the colonies.<sup>11</sup> Some Australian booksellers and book-trade importers had attempted to create such series themselves by coming to special arrangements with British firms from the 1870s; but it is difficult to gauge their success. In Melbourne, George Robertson and Mullens created their own series by binding the sheets of other publishers,<sup>12</sup> and in London in the late 1880s until 1894 when he went bankrupt the colonial trade supplier E. A. Petherick would do the same. Evidence of this is found in abundance in Petherick's *Torch and Colonial Circular* and in the advertisements and circulars of Mullens and Robertson in Melbourne.

The ground had been laid: with Bentley's second Colonial series from 1885 and then Macmillan's from 1886, the net result was that by 1889 when Macmillan released *Robbery Under Arms* in its Colonial Library at 2s. 6d. (see Figure 2), the three titles that would soon become the classic trio were in wide circulation in Australia at affordable prices and all at the same time.

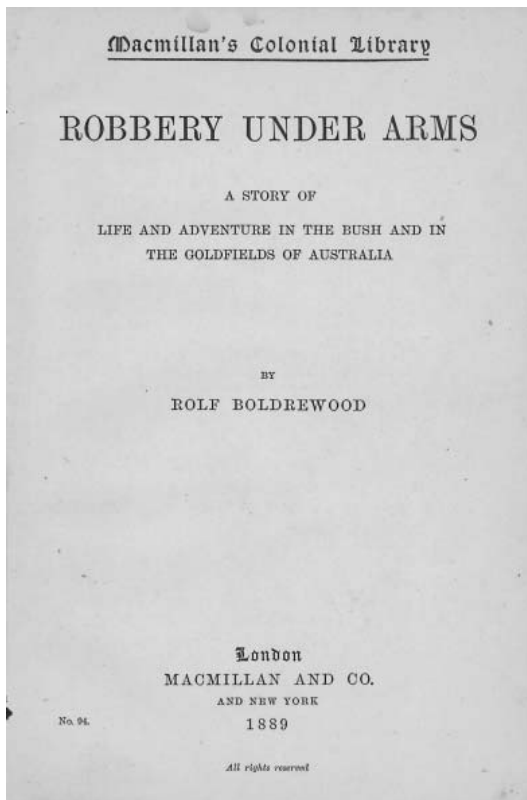


Figure 2: *Robbery Under Arms*, second edition, Colonial Library issue (London: Macmillan, 1889), title page



In 1896 the librarian of the Brighton Free Library in Melbourne would refer to “the bourgeoisie 6s. editions as luxuries” and to “the democratic 3s. 6d”.<sup>13</sup> Price and availability must have been significant, perhaps even crucial, factors in the establishment of an Australian proto-canon. Certainly Australian booksellers stood to gain by cheaper fiction, and indeed pressure from Melbourne was, as I have argued elsewhere, a factor in helping to bring about the demise of the very expensive three-volume form of the novel in 1894 (Eggert, “Colonial Market”).

#### WOMEN’S NOVELS AND THEIR AVAILABILITY

In 1890–91 when the classic trio was emerging as such there were relatively few Australian contenders for the honour actually available in book form. The real economic underpinning of locally produced novels in Australia during the 1880s was provided by newspapers and magazines, which needed novels to serialise. Relatively few of them moved on to production in book form (Morrison). This transition was important because in general the serialised tale was assumed to be for instant consumption, the published novel for reading and more leisured reflection.

Earlier novels that might have been considered for classic status in 1890 were no longer available or forgotten. Charles de Boos’s *Fifty Years Ago* of 1867 was, like Louisa Atkinson’s *Gertrude the Emigrant* of 1857, published in parts, never republished in London, nor taken up by the Colonial Libraries.<sup>14</sup> Mary Theresa Vidal’s *Bengala, Or, Some Time Ago* (1860) and Catherine Helen Spence’s *Clara Morison* (1854) were both published by the religious firm of John Parker in an expensive two-volume format. One-volume rights to the Spence novel must have been sold to Ward, Lock who published a new edition in 1862, but it apparently was not sold in any Colonial cheap-format series; and *Bengala* was not issued in either one-volume format, even after Longman purchased Parker in 1863.

No Australian private library before 1850 lists Australian titles in its catalogue<sup>15</sup> and many later titles were published before most public libraries in the colonies had been established. Public libraries would have had, in any case, a prejudice against collecting novels because they were not considered to be as elevating as works of non-fiction.<sup>16</sup> But with relatively few public libraries in nineteenth-century Australia until the 1860s, and with circulating libraries in the Mechanics Institutes, Athenaeums, churches and clubs often being supplied by firms such as Mudies in London (who would not have had easy access to novels being printed in Australia), the chances were high of previous Australian novels being forgotten by 1890 simply because not collected.<sup>17</sup>

In the 1890s the publishing situation improved for Australian women authors, but the slight delay in availability (i.e. the delay after the appearance of *Robbery Under Arms* in its Colonial Library edition of 1889 and its subsequent reviews) meant their reputations could not immediately be propelled by the new wave of interest, right after the centenary, in charting what had been achieved in the literary field in the first hundred years. Two novels by Cambridge had been published in England by Bentley during 1878–82, but not in cheap editions. Her next London publication, the novel *A Marked Man*, did not appear until 1890 and then at first, as was the norm, in three expensive volumes. Heinemann sold one-volume colonial-issue rights to E. A. Petherick and it appeared in 1891, along with the corresponding Home issue (see Figure 3).

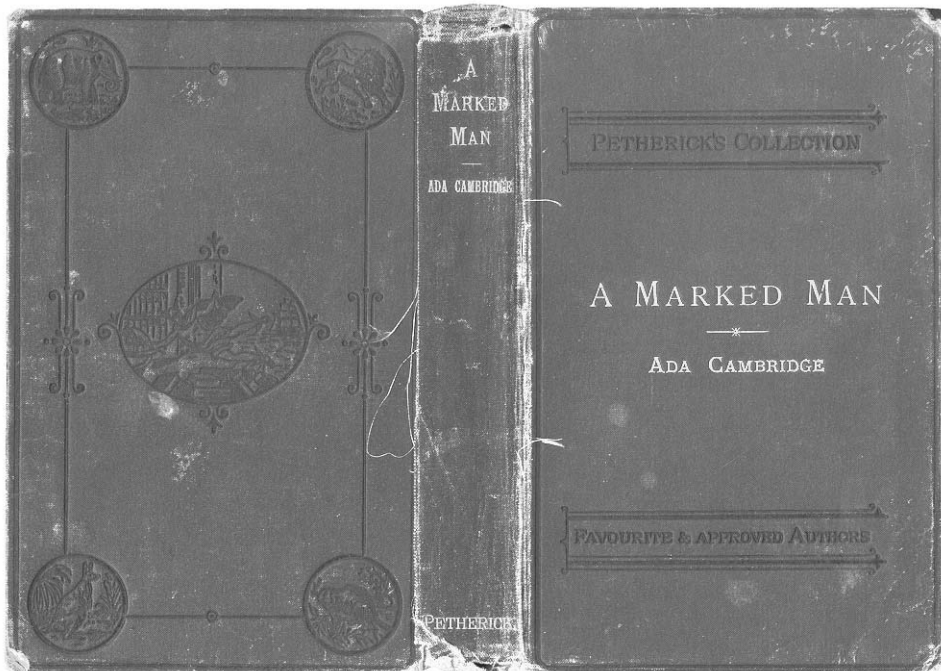


Figure 3: *A Marked Man* (Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide: Petherick, 1891), covers with embossed animals emblematising the different regions of the Imperial market.

The front-endpaper advertisements (see Figure 4) show a near absence of Australian authors. I note only Benjamin Leopold Farjeon who was in the Australian colonies in the 1850s at the same time as Kingsley, and also a visitor in 1889 David Christie Murray.<sup>18</sup>

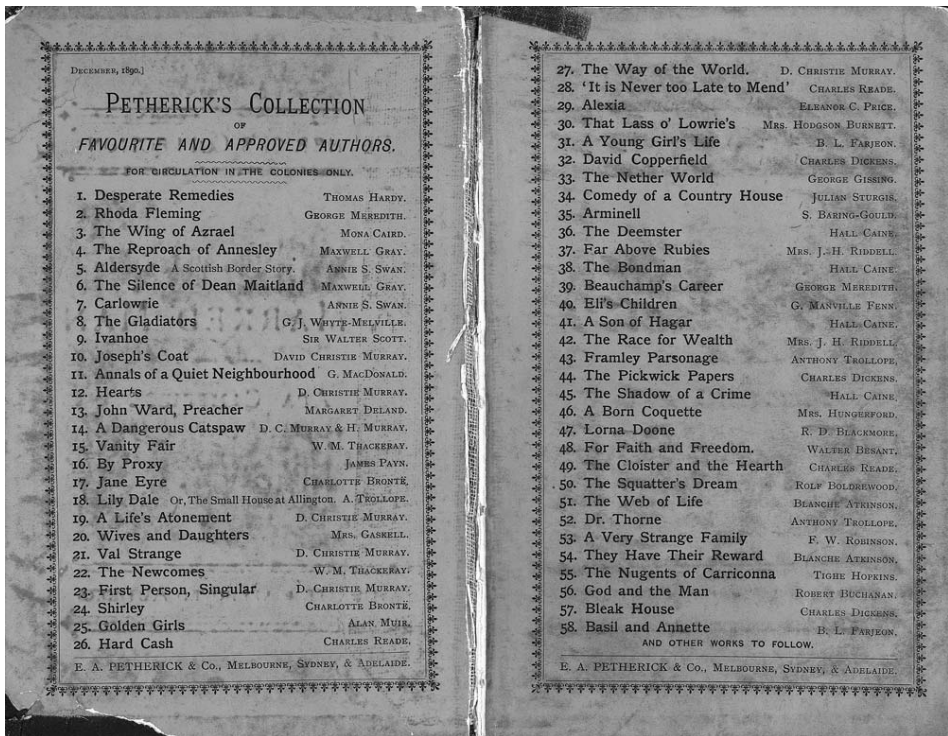


Figure 4: *A Marked Man* (Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide: Petherick, 1891), front-endpapers.

Cambridge's *The Three Miss Kings* also appeared in 1891, as did Heinemann's reprinting of Tasma's *Uncle Piper of Piper's Hill* in cheap format at 2s. 6d. as a joint "Colonial Edition" with Petherick, as against its original price in 1889 from Trübner at 6s. But Heinemann had only just gone into business on his own account and the firm's distribution arrangements can only have been provisional at first.<sup>19</sup> There was only one Heinemann reprint (in 1892), and Petherick, as we have seen, went bankrupt in 1894. Purchasing sheets for binding, as Petherick did, was an undercapitalised business in comparison to Macmillan's taking full responsibility for Boldrewood: in this situation, where availability was the key, his reputation was more likely to prosper.

#### BENTLEY, MACMILLAN AND COLONIAL AUTHORS

In 1886 Caroline Leakey's novel of 1859 *The Broad Arrow* joined *His Natural Life*, though in abridged form, in Bentley's Kangaroo sub-series of the firm's Colonial Library at 2s. 6d. (see Figure 5).

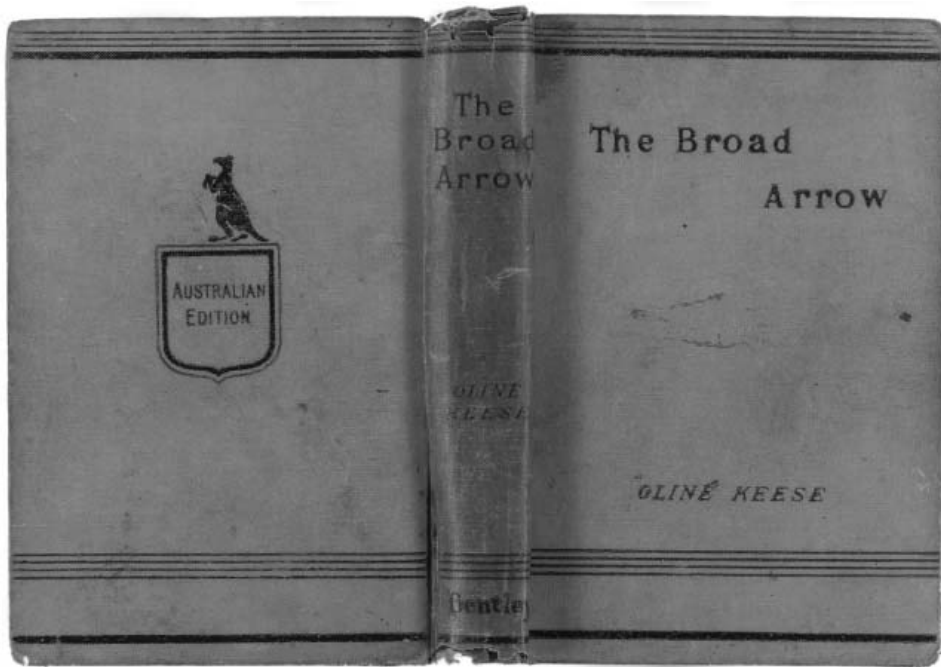


Figure 5: *The Broad Arrow* abridgement (London: Bentley, 1886), covers.

It was reprinted in 1887 and September 1892, and then not again until 1900 but this time with illustrations.<sup>20</sup> It was a cheaply available contender for classic status, but it had the far stronger and less creakily melodramatic *His Natural Life* to compete with as a convict novel and in a period when the appetite for mid-century melodramatic prose had fallen away. Its abridgement had been aimed at reducing this flavour, but in many ways the eclipse of Leakey's reputation in comparison to Clarke's parallels that of Susan Warner in comparison to Hawthorne.<sup>21</sup>

Martin's *An Australian Girl* (three volumes, 1890) came out in a one-volume format from Bentley in 1891 at 6s.; it was reprinted later in the same year but failed to sell. The large remainder still in sheets was bound up as a so-called Australian edition but not until 1894. It sold at 2s. 6d. but with no further reprints.

Macmillan was the Imperial powerhouse in publishing. Boldwood did very well by the firm.<sup>22</sup> Its selection of Australian writers was narrow, but Macmillan had good pricing and real market penetration. Although the firm retained a small 6s. series until at least 1891, it did not rigidly maintain the so-called standard one-volume price of 6s. in the Home market as Bentley stubbornly continued to do. Macmillan sold the same title printed on heavier stock and with true hardback binding at 3s. 6d. in the Home market and for

2s. 6d. on lighter stock and in limp binding in the colonial. And Macmillan managed to add about 30 titles a year to the series. In 1889 *Robbery Under Arms* was the 94th title in the firm's Colonial Library series, which had only started in 1886. By 1906 the series had reached its 528th title.<sup>23</sup> Macmillan released titles simultaneously in London, New York and around the Empire, usually with pre-advertisements and advance copies (Johanson 109).

Bentley had the name but seems to have been a low risk-taker in comparison. The profit-and-loss calculations in the Bentley ledgers for the three-volume *An Australian Girl* in 1890 reveal a healthy profit: a sell-out of 500-odd copies, although, significantly, only 7 direct to the colonies.<sup>24</sup> Total costs were £291, including the copyright payment, which was £50. Sales amounted to £418: thus a 44 per cent return on investment was achieved, ignoring the cost of overheads. With the one-volume edition at 6s. in 1891, mentioned above, Bentley sold most of the first 1500, reprinted but did not bind. Sales had evidently slowed. Bentley must have come to the conclusion that Martin would appeal, as he said in a letter to her, mainly to "the cultivated classes".<sup>25</sup> She was evidently a safe risk as a 3-volume novelist but not for a broader, popular readership. The drying-up of orders for the second 1891 reprint is probably what doomed Martin's next novel *The Silent Sea*, issued in three volumes in 1892 and never reissued by Bentley in one-volume format, cheap or otherwise.

When in 1894 the firm finally issued the so-called Australian edition of *An Australian Girl* at 2s. 6d., the already-printed 1001 copies were bound with a new title-page; 869 sold by 1898. Bentley's costs for the two reprintings and bindings were £281. If the standard colonial 50% discount on the Australian edition (869 at 2s. 6d.) and 40% on the Home sales (1500 at 6s.) were given then returns were £324. A slim profit of £43 before overheads, and nearly all of it made on the 6s. edition (£270). Oddly, this same amount, £43, was precisely what Bentley had made out of the less successful three-volume *His Natural Life*. Yet, in a cheap, one-volume format it sold steadily and well for Bentley during the period 1882–98: eleven printings of the Australian edition, 41 376 copies in all. Significantly, the years 1885–87 saw the largest volume of sales, but with still substantial sales into the 1890s.<sup>26</sup>

The point is, colonial editions made sense if initial sales were high or, better still, continuous over an extended period. To achieve this required organisation and considerable investment in a big list. Book buyers desire choice and colonial booksellers badly wanted to be able to provide it. They welcomed the advent of the Colonial Libraries from the mid-1880s, and looked forward to their continuance and extension (Walch & Sons). Yet only

ten titles appeared in Bentley's Kangaroo series in the firm's Colonial Library. The division into series—the ostrich series for India (three titles in all), elephant for Africa (one title) and beaver for Canada (none)—was perhaps an attractive or convenient badging for London stockkeepers but would probably have been counterproductive in terms of selling one series into territories other than the intended one.<sup>27</sup> With Bentley, caution prevailed.

Bentley's belated issuing of the cheap Australian edition of Martin's *An Australian Girl* came three to four years after the first reviews—a wasteful, indeed unconscionable, delay in the lead-up to the final demise of the three-volume novel. Bentley was unwilling or unable to read the writing on the wall. Royal Gettmann describes George Bentley as floundering after the famous announcement by Mudie and W. H. Smith in 1894 that, in effect, they were no longer interested in purchasing that format for their circulating libraries. He died in 1895 and his son Richard Bentley II “seemed to lack the will to meet the new conditions and prosper under them” (260–3 [262]). Macmillan in comparison was off and running in what was now, virtually, the only new-fiction game in town: the one-volume novel market.

Cambridge had earned little by her earlier Bentley titles and now in the 1890s when she was able to bring a number of novels to the marketplace her fortunes definitely lifted, assisted by the growing dominance of the one-volume form.<sup>28</sup> On 11 April 1891 the Sydney *Daily Telegraph* and *Illustrated Sydney News* ranged Cambridge alongside the already established trio of Clarke, Kingsley and Boldrewood; and Cambridge received, as we have seen, respectful attention in some more extended studies of Australian literature published in the 1890s. But the claim to classic status would not be borne out with time. In a letter to her on 12 April 1923, George Robertson (of the Sydney publishers Angus & Robertson) declined her request to publish a revised version of her best-known novel *A Marked Man*. Such a reprinting, even if revised to assist sales, would have been, implicitly, a claim for, even a statement of, its classic status. Evidently the commercial judgement was that, in the 1920s, the market for Cambridge's style of fiction no longer existed.

The distribution of Cambridge's works may be part of the explanation for the drop-off in sales that would have occasioned this rejection; further research may clarify this. Evidence of occasional advertisements of her titles in booksellers' circulars in the 1890s shows that some effort was being made, but the appearance of her works under different imprints in this period suggests that arrangements were not ideal.<sup>29</sup>

Our limited evidence is harder to assess than in the case of Martin. But what does seem clear is that Martin was with the wrong publisher, as Cambridge had been at first (around 1880) and to a lesser extent may still have been, if either was to achieve real market penetration.

#### THE TASTE FOR THINGS AUSTRALIAN, AND “DOMESTIC” REALISM

Such success can materialise only if there is demand and availability. Distribution is key to the latter, as we have seen, especially as regards cheap colonial and Home editions. Equally important are the prior commercial decisions as to whether to print in the first place, when to reprint and whether to issue or license popular and cheap editions. Such decisions respond to what the publisher can make of shifting fashions and appetites and the advice of publishers' readers, within a cost structure that offers various possible directions. Cost and availability of colonial editions is itself a function of this prior decision-making. But cause-and-effect was a two-way street. Publishers were reading the reviews too, studying sales figures, deciding on who their profitable authors were. Reception fed back into production, into decision-making about it. But it was not a purely circular process, since the system was never in a steady state. Reviews often reveal a push for influence on the cultural agendas of the day, and fashions shifted.

The women novelists were trying to ride a wave of contemporary taste that was apparently receding by the late 1880s. In 1879 Cambridge had written to Bentley offering the firm her novel *In Two Years' Time*, serialised earlier that year in the *Australasian* in Melbourne. (In the letter she refers to herself in the third person by her married name Mrs Cross.)

It is a general opinion that at this time, when Australian colonies have a more European interest than usual, the perfectly accurate details of modern colonial social life and colonial characteristics generally, which Mrs Cross has incidentally given will have an especial interest for English readers who have so few opportunities of becoming acquainted with them in the pages of light (or indeed any) literature.<sup>30</sup>

This was an attempt to appropriate colonial subject matter for an established taste for domestic realism, to extend its geographical reach and simultaneously satisfy a contemporary curiosity about the Australian colonies, which had evidently begun to take a more sophisticated form than in the days of the gold rushes in the 1850s and 1860s. The novel duly appeared in 1879.

In 1881 Bentley accepted Praed's suggestion that her soon-to-be-published novel *Policy and Passion* should have a subtitle such as “A Tale of Australian

Life”.<sup>31</sup> Similar subtitles were used for Praed novels in 1885 and 1886, but then there is a gap until 1895.<sup>32</sup> Had the desire for “the perfectly accurate details of modern colonial social life” run its course? It is difficult to be confident since the evidence is elusive, but William Sharp’s review of Martin’s *An Australian Girl* in 1890 suggests that at least in one of its forms it had. He complained that the Australian inflection of the ill-matched couple plot of many Victorian novels was itself become a stereotype: “the supremely civilised, intellectually *blasé* young girl of the Antipodes, is beginning to pall upon one”, he complained, and her male counterpart “with his mind and soul centred upon horse-racing and split brandy-and-sodas” likewise.<sup>33</sup>

Shifting tastes in London, rapidly communicated to Australia, together with the availability of cheap fiction via Colonial Libraries from the mid-1880s, point to a very differently based account than the feminist argument of the 1980s. Dixon’s argument about the spreading popular taste for adventure fiction supports it. Hybridised by Australian writers, this form of romance was melded with bush realism by writers such as Boldrewood and Favenc in a way that bridged popular and refined tastes, especially in the colonies. If Australian readers in 1888–1890 wanted to see their past reclaimed in fiction, then clearly domestic realism set in the present was going to struggle for attention.

#### COUNTER-EVIDENCE?

There is some counter-evidence to this general line of argument. The Queensland-born Praed produced fourteen novels between 1880 and 1890. Five are set in Australia and first appeared in London as two- or three-volume novels. The best of them, *Policy and Passion* was reissued by Bentley for the Australian colonies in June 1887 in the Kangaroo series under its original title in manuscript *Longleat of Kooralbyn*, produced from stereotype plates of Bentley’s one-volume Home-market edition of 1881. The latter sold for 6s.; what the back cover calls an “Australian Edition” sold for 2s. 6d. But no later reprint is listed in Chris Tiffin’s bibliography of Praed’s writings.

The Bentley Publications ledgers show why. Although 1500 copies were printed in June 1887 only 761 of them, all of them for the colonial market, sold in the annual accounting period April 1887–March 1888. The following year (1888), 33 sold to the colonial market and 35 to the Home; in 1889, it was 35 and 1; and thereafter the sales were tiny.<sup>34</sup>

In comparison, Caroline Leakey’s *The Broad Arrow* sold 883 and 69 (1887), 137 and 38 (1888), and 59 and 19 (1889), with some revival in sales in 1890



and especially 1891 (308 and 13). These figures far surpassed the situation in 1859–60 when sales of the original two volumes had only reached 234 before remaindering, leaving Bentley with a loss of £87.<sup>35</sup> Because, from 1887, Bentley was simultaneously selling *Longleat of Kooralbyn*, *The Broad Arrow* and *His Natural Life*, the question of their availability alone, which I have been arguing is a crucial matter, cannot discriminate between them. For *His Natural Life*, however, the sales figures are 3353 colonials and 116 Home (1887); 1810 and 99 (1888); 2051 and 83 (1889), rising to 2832 and 29 in 1891 and then falling away. The two convict novels were touching a popular nerve, or at least a fascination with the recent Australian past, now seen *as* past. Of them, *His Natural Life* was far and away the more popular. But the Praed novel was out of the running entirely.

Colonial rights to three other of Praed's novels, *An Australian Heroine* (1880), *The Head Station* (1885) and *Miss Jacobsen's Chance* (2 vols, Bentley, 1886) were sought by the London firm of Ward and Downey in 1889. The titles appeared at 2s. or 2s. 6d. in 1890.<sup>36</sup> I have so far found nothing about the distribution capacity of this firm among the colonial booksellers; the firm is little known. It was not an avatar of Ward, Lock. In addition, the London publisher Trischler, which published *The Romance of a Station* in two volumes in 1889, sold one-volume colonial rights (and presumably sheets from its one-volume edition of the same year) to the Sydney bookseller Edwards, Dunlop and Co.<sup>37</sup> It may be that Praed's having lived in England since 1875 worked against her in some colonial literary circles. It may also be that *ad hoc* distribution arrangements in the colonies were of their nature likely to be less persistent, less supported by promotion and reliable supply than the properly organised methods of Macmillan and Ward, Lock.

Cheap American editions of some works of the women novelists were circulating in the 1890s (indeed, the potential of such editions to seize the market was one reason that cheap colonial issues made sense to London publishers). But Empire loyalties were strong, and such sales were frowned upon in some sections of the trade (Hubber 21). But by then the die had been cast as regards the emerging Australian classics, and as the *Bulletin* school of writers came into the ascendant during the 1890s and as opportunities of earning a living from writing opened up with the rise of Angus & Robertson in Sydney, the argument was about the depiction of bush living and the truth-telling capacity of realism as against romance. The fiction of both the male and female authors had elements of romance, whether of adventure or of courtship. Given the new interest in the colonial past and the emerging nationalist push, the domestic fiction of the female authors was not likely to

gain the cultural warrant, however many novels they might produce and even if they became cheaply available.<sup>38</sup>

Although my argument does not bear directly upon *which* male writers were becoming recognised as classics, Fergus Hume's *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* (1886) was into its fourth printing in Melbourne (Kemp & Boyce) by 1887 and went on to claim sales of 559 000 copies ("popular edition"; London: Jarolds, n.d.); and Nat Gould's *The Double Event: A Tale of the Melbourne Cup* (London: Routledge, 1891) was immensely popular. But neither a detective story nor a turf tale was going to compete seriously with the Kingsley–Clarke–Boldrewood trio. Even though all three have popular elements, the appeal of their historical fiction mixed with romance was all too powerful and lent them a dignity that popular fiction lacked.

The salient fact remains, therefore, the same: that in the year after the 1888 centenary the three novels were available, cheaply, in the bookshops and therefore in the libraries and mechanics institutes, and all at the same time, despite their varying original dates of publication.

\* \* \*

The rash of stage adaptations of *His Natural Life* upon the Australian and, later, the British, stage from 1885—the year of the novel's cheap edition—cannot have failed to popularise it. Indeed, a great many readers probably came to the novel *after* having seen the play, in a sort of bibliographic feedback loop, which we would have to take as another part of the model of textuality mentioned above. The same reinforcement was to befall *Robbery Under Arms* from 1890, and then with a further big push when chosen as the first title in Macmillan's double-column sixpenny series in 1898. Nearly one hundred thousand copies were printed within twelve months.<sup>39</sup> A further feedback loop for sales of *Robbery Under Arms* would have been the popularity of the Kelly Gang plays from about 1899 and then the film adaptations from 1906. Stage versions of the story had been banned after Kelly's hanging in 1880 and in due course the films would be. But *Robbery Under Arms* offered a conservative inflection of the same folkloric tale-type. In fact, as I have argued elsewhere, story elements wove backwards and forwards between the two accounts. They were one another's conservative/radical yin and yang (Eggert, "Textual Criticism"). A study of the dust-jacket designs and the commissioned illustrations would link the bibliographical history of the Kingsley–Clarke–Boldrewood trio to shifts in popular culture, and that too would be part of the conceptual model of their classic status.<sup>40</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

In Britain, fiction from Australia that stressed the otherness of the colonial experience, the convict heritage, the bushranger past and the challenges of the outback life could be absorbed as the supplement of its British cousin, related to if not always as exciting as Imperial romantic adventure fiction. Jaded palates needed the constant stimulation of the strange and new, and so it is no surprise to find new printings of *Geoffry Hamlyn* from around the turn of the century gaining illustrations of an exciting battle with Aborigines and other dangerous situations. (See Figures 6 and 7.)



Figure 6: *The Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn*: Illustration from 1909 reprint of the Ward, Lock edition of 1894.

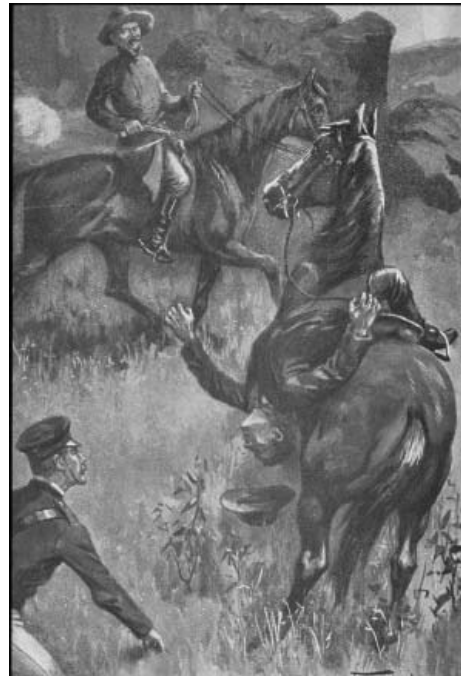


Figure 7: *The Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn*: Illustration from 1909 reprint of the Ward, Lock edition of 1894.

These and other illustrations gave *Geoffry Hamlyn*—a mid-Victorian novel of 1859—a Boys' Own Imperial excitement that we now look at with different eyes. But it was one that Kingsley could never have foreseen and did not write.<sup>41</sup>

Clarke's novel experienced what turned out to be its natural life in one-volume colonial form; Martin's did not. And Boldrewood sold happily in both Home and colonial markets, though in fact a little better in the colonial. None of the 1890s male *Bulletin* fiction writers mentioned earlier, who emerged in

the 1890s, would prove especially successful in London, although Favenc and Lawson both achieved publication there.<sup>42</sup>

The conclusion of this line of argument is plain. The classic three—*Geoffrey Hamlyn*, *His Natural Life* and *Robbery Under Arms*—were the precursors of, helped to define and claimed first rights on, the next literary wave in Australia; and they continued to sell in London. They fed a contemporary appetite for historical fiction and realism laced with romance, but could only feed it because they were available cheaply, readily and simultaneously.<sup>43</sup> The principal women novelists were probably with the wrong publishers if they wanted to make the maximum impact in late-colonial Australia. And it seems that they were just one or two years too late. So the proto-canon was formed without them, and then it did not provide a foundation for their kind of fiction—against which taste seems to have been shifting internationally. The disconnect worked against them in Australia as the new cultural nationalism, based on ideas of the bush, developed during the 1890s.

What light does this empirical context shed on the larger questions about the status and nature of classics? If Tompkins's argument is correct then the so-called intrinsic value of a classic is not ahistorical and therefore not intrinsic, since it depends on readings that are always compromised by their proponents' positioning. Indeed, can the question of intrinsic value be grasped as meaningful at all when, in the marketplace, all is in a state of continuous change?

Certainly something can be said about taste that is neither ideological nor utterly discounted by its place in history. Literary qualities can be sensed and discussed, just as that of wines literally can. It is a fact of experience that agreement about the relative worth of two or more novels can form and be shared. Reviewers in their columns like to conduct the cultural accords and discords that this process produces. As this necessarily happens in a time and place there will always be a trade-off between claims about the intrinsic and the historical. The comparison of the three Bentley titles available from 1887, discussed above, and particularly the two convict novels, *His Natural Life* and *The Broad Arrow*, where historical factors can be largely discounted, tip the balance away from the historical and therefore the ideological explanation. The (pragmatic) reaffirmation of an aesthetic perspective, of an evaluative domain, is beyond the scope of this paper: yet it must form some part of the answer to the puzzle I am addressing. Recent work on the phenomenology of literary works and of reading, such as that by Paul Armstrong, may yet prove productive.

What can be affirmed with confidence, however, and what amounts to the only constant in this state of transience and malleability, is the dual necessity of the reading act itself and the thing being read. The latter, the bibliographic object, is closer to a state of object-hood than another term still sometimes used when critics try to conceptualise works of art: the so-called aesthetic object. Literary works have passage through time (and therefore can begin to be nominated for classic status by interested parties) only because they have material embodiments. Linguistic conventions that are brought to bear by readers in the act of reading do not stabilise them into object-hood since the conventions themselves are also gradually shifting. The meanings raised from documents by readers (their texts) are negotiated by higher-level protocols of reading by reviewers and literary critics. But even this appeal does not exempt the question from the subjective, since taste notoriously does not stand still.

This is why an explanation based upon availability of the document—the book itself—in the marketplace and in library collections must be a fundamental matter in explanations of why some works become classics and others do not. Such fundamentals mostly do not jostle for our attention. We may feel they can be assumed, effectively ignored: this essay has, I hope, shown the cost of this assumption in relation to the Australian 1890s. The wider lesson is that the ideological or discursive explanation of literary-cultural shifts cannot safely operate as a truth-telling vector in an empirical vacuum.

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> For a differently focussed, yet related argument about canons, based on Pierre Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital, see Guillory, who argues that the non-canonical works of subordinate social groups, whenever the syllabus enlarges to embrace them, have much the same effect as the canonical, and that contest is of the nature of the canon, which is only ever accessed through institutional settings. Revising the canon only confirms its institutional effects (30–56).
- <sup>2</sup> The phrase echoes the title of Tuchman's book, which argues more conventionally that prejudice played its part by showing, from an inspection of publishers' ledgers that, in the second half of the nineteenth century, women authors tended to be paid less.
- <sup>3</sup> George Saintsbury, Rider Haggard and Andrew Lang (see Dixon 4).
- <sup>4</sup> See also Sheridan ("Ada Cambridge") and Schaffer.
- <sup>5</sup> Cf. Schaffer: "Within the tradition, however, women *are* the frontier". The desire arises "because masculine identity is not secure. The bush threatens to reduce men to exhibiting characteristics which Western culture assumes are feminine: that is passivity, weakness, depression, despair and, finally, madness or death" (122, 123); and also Ryan.

- <sup>6</sup> Although none of the commentators uses the word *canon*, the word *classic* begins to be employed, and although the creation in *Robbery Under Arms* of an authentically Australian working-class voice would not be fully articulated as the source of the novel's achievement until 1950, the first Australian reviewers saw the novel's verisimilitude and therefore its historical value. The *Age* lifted the stakes by describing its author as "the Homer of the Bush" (28 September 1889, p. 4 by David Christie Murray in an article "Australian Verse and Fiction"). "Telemachus" [Francis Myers] claimed on 18 January 1890 that "it ranks as an Australian classic" along with *His Natural Life* and *Geoffry Hamlyn* (*Argus*, p. 4). See other citations in the Introduction to Boldrewood (lxxiv–lxxviii and nn. 139 and 142).
- <sup>7</sup> Commentaries include Barton in 1889, who first learned of *Robbery Under Arms* via an "article in the London *Spectator* as one of the three good novels that had been written in Australia" (90). Also Byrne in 1896, Farrell in 1897, A. P. Martin in 1898, and Turner and Sutherland in 1898.
- <sup>8</sup> Cf. Tiffin's commentary on the enabling factor of the centenary for Douglas Sladen's entrepreneurial success in achieving the publication in London of three volumes of Australasian poetry:

The moment was certainly right for the Australian volumes. The Australian centenary focussed interest which had been building from quite different directions. In 1878 the first All Australian cricket team had visited and had thrashed the English. In 1884 a second tour had taken place, and a third tour was due in 1888. Debate about Imperial Federation had been sharpened by inevitable comparisons with Irish Home Rule. Australian singers and actors like Nellie Melba and Garnet Walch were appearing on the English stage. Without Sladen, William Sharp would still have done a Canterbury Poets volume; it took a shameless opportunist like Sladen to turn it into three volumes. ("Douglas Sladen" 47)

The volumes were: *Australian Ballads and Rhymes: Poems Inspired by Life and Scenery in Australia and New Zealand* (London: Walter Scott, 1888); *Australian Poets, 1788–1888: Being a Selection of Poems upon all Subjects Written in Australia and New Zealand during the First Century of the British Colonization with Brief Notes on their Authors and an Introduction by Patchett Martin* (London: Griffith, Farran, Okeden & Welsh, 1888); and *A Century of Australian Song* (London: Walter Scott, 1888).

- <sup>9</sup> See Introduction to Kingsley (xxi).
- <sup>10</sup> This was part of a deal with W. H. Smith who had been marketing the novel as one title of Chapman and Hall's Select Library of Fiction at railway stations in Britain: see Introduction to Kingsley (xxi).
- <sup>11</sup> It had not been included in Bentley's Empire Library, which began in 1878 but was terminated in 1881 after only sixteen titles.

- <sup>12</sup> In 1873 George Robertson of Melbourne negotiated with Bentley the right to reprint Mrs Henry Woods's novels in Australia at 1s. In 1874 Robertson published the first edition of *His Natural Life* and evidently came to an arrangement with Bentley that allowed that firm to bring out the novel in London in 1875 in 3 volumes. Robertson would not have considered the three-volume format to be competition for his one-volume at 7s. 6d. Bentley held back with a one-volume edition until 1878 when it appeared with Bentley's own title-page and, in another issue (for Australia), as a joint Bentley–Robertson production. Presumably Robertson had sold stock of his own edition by this time. See further, Introduction to Clarke (xl, xlii–xliii and xlix).
- <sup>13</sup> Quoted in Johanson (99) from J. P. Wilson, "Fiction in Public Libraries", in *Account of the Proceedings of the First Australasian Library Conference* (Melbourne, 1896), pp. 54–5.
- <sup>14</sup> In 1864, William Walker commented that *Gertrude the Emigrant* "was published in numbers, and it is difficult now to obtain a bound copy of the whole" (20): this continued to be true until the appearance of the Colonial Texts Series edition in 1998 (Atkinson). The publisher in 1857 in Sydney was Jacob Richard Clark, who specialised in the publication of music.
- <sup>15</sup> Information from Elizabeth Webby.
- <sup>16</sup> Mungo MacCallum, Professor of English at Sydney University, had to argue in 1898 for the inclusion in library collections, particularly for Australian literature, of "every scrap of print or MS": Library Association of Australia, *Proceedings of the Sydney Meeting, October 1898* (Sydney: The Association, 1898), 75–81 [76]. He pointed out that the policy of the Sydney Public Library "to admit novels only when the author is dead" was defensible as novels are often read "only for desultory amusement" but that he would want to go further "without diverting [the collecting policy] from its true function and letting it occupy ground more proper to the Book Club and the Circulating Library" (80–1).
- <sup>17</sup> For example, the handwritten catalogue and ledger of the library of the Beechworth Athenaeum in Victoria is, I have discovered, extant on-site for c. 1864–82. While some volumes were purchased from local bookseller J. Ingram (in 2005, still a newsagency) the bulk of the several thousand volumes were supplied from Mudies in London (the correspondence with Mudies is also extant on-site). A copy of the Robertson *His Natural Life* was purchased (presumably locally, or direct from Melbourne) and later repaired, so it must have been avidly read. *Geoffry Hamlyn* was not purchased.
- <sup>18</sup> This battered copy from the ADFA Library was H. M. Green's. He bought it secondhand in the early 1930s. It bears Dorothy Green's marginalia and notes. Against the last paragraph she has inscribed: "But what does it all *mean*?"
- <sup>19</sup> He left Trübner's employ in February 1890, taking *A Marked Man* with him: the novel is a revised version of "A Black Sheep", serialised in the *Age*, 1888–89. Heinemann sold serial rights to the *Manchester Weekly Times* (serialised 1890)

- and American rights to Lovell in New York, where an edition appeared in 1890: see further, the Introduction to Cambridge (xxxii–xxxix, xlvii–li). *Uncle Piper* had been first serialised in the *Australasian* as “The Pipers of Piper’s Hill” in 1888 (Tasma xxiv).
- <sup>20</sup> Details from copyright page of an issue of 1900 with a title-page of J. Walch & Sons, Hobart, and with photographic illustrations tipped in and on the boards. *The Broad Arrow* by “Oliné Keese” was abridged by Mrs (Gertrude) Townshend Mayer. Bentley published without informing the author’s estate: after an enquiry by Emily Leakey, Bentley paid her £30 on 4 February 1887 for her remaining half-share of the copyright. The original agreement in 1859 specified a half-share in the profits (and envisaged more than one edition); but, as Bentley lost money, nothing came to Caroline Leakey herself: Richard Bentley and Son Archive, Letterbooks, vol. 86, pp. 134 and 331, and Agreement memorandum books, vol. 58, p. 195, British Library. Rights were acquired by Macmillan in August 1898 upon the firm’s purchase of Bentleys.
- <sup>21</sup> Cf. Tompkins:  
 Novels which had previously appeared to contain superb renditions of American character and homely scenes imbued with universal human truths, now seemed to be full of idealized characters, authorial didacticism, and an overt religiosity that marked them as morally false and artistically naive. Warner’s work became identified with an outmoded piety and a discredited Romanticism that assured its swift disappearance from the critical scene. It is not that critics suddenly discovered limitations they had previously failed to notice, but that the context within which the work appeared had changed the nature of the work itself. (342)
- <sup>22</sup> Boldrewood at his peak was earning £1600 p.a. in royalties, with the average figure for the 1890s being well under £1000: see Introduction to Boldrewood (lxx).
- <sup>23</sup> Printed catalogue of Macmillan’s Colonial Library of Copyrighted Books, dated “10.9.06” bound into a copy of *Robbery Under Arms* itself dated 1898.
- <sup>24</sup> Sales to colonial suppliers in London may be additional to this number.
- <sup>25</sup> 8 January 1891: quoted in the Introduction to C. Martin (xxxix–xli).
- <sup>26</sup> Some 4002 copies were transferred for binding with English title-pages. For details and a tabulation of printings and sales from the Bentley ledgers, see McLaren.
- <sup>27</sup> See *A List of the Principal Publications Issued from New Burlington Street during the Year 1888 (Being Leap Year)*, (London: Bentley, 1917): despite the title the listing is apparently complete for the colonial series (“Restricted Editions”, n. pag.).
- <sup>28</sup> See Introduction to Cambridge (xli and n. 132). Cambridge reworked seven serialised novels for publication during 1890–98, duplicating Boldrewood’s



practice. On 15 April 1897 the Melbourne *Punch* would claim that she was making £1000 p.a. At a royalty of 4*d.* per copy this would indicate 60 000 copies sold p.a. (or, 40 000 at 6*d.*). But the reported income is suspiciously rounded. (Cf. n. 22 above for Boldrewood's income.) The *Punch* article confirms that Cambridge's peak period was a few years after the proto-canonising moment that I have described.

- <sup>29</sup> The October 1891 issue of *Bookman* advertised Ada Cambridge titles at 3*s.* 6*d.* Petherick issued *A Marked Man* and Melville, Mullen and Slade issued *Three Miss Kings*, probably at the same price or cheaper. One copy seen (Collection: Chris Tiffin, Brisbane) has a Heinemann title-page with Melville, Mullen & Slade on the spine. On the front cover (grey cloth) is "Library of Australian Authors". The colophon (p. 314) has "Cowan & Co., Limited, Printers, Perth". In 1896 Ward, Lock's Lily series issued Ada Cambridge's *A Humble Enterprise* at 1*s.* 6*d.*
- <sup>30</sup> Richard Bentley and Son Archive, Correspondence, University of Illinois.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>32</sup> See Tiffin (*Rosa Praed*): the novels were entitled *Policy and Passion: A Novel of Australian Life* (1881), *The Head Station: A Novel of Australian Life* (1885), *Miss Jacobsen's Chance: A Story of Australian Life* (1886) and *Mrs Tregaskiss: A Novel of Australian Life* (1895).
- <sup>33</sup> Quoted in the Introduction to C. Martin (xxxiv).
- <sup>34</sup> Figures in this and the next paragraph are derived from the Richard Bentley and Son Archive, Publication ledgers, British Library: (*Longleat of Kooralbyn*) vol. 41, p. [i.e. opening] 188; (*The Broad Arrow* 1886) vol. 41, p. 186; vol. 42, p. 456 and (1859) vol. 40, p. 107; (*His Natural Life*) vol. 41, p. 187, vol. 42, p. 456. These figures ignore presentation copies and the small number of cash sales not through the trade.
- <sup>35</sup> See n. 20, above.
- <sup>36</sup> On 14 June 1889, Ward and Downey had inquired whether any of the three had had cheap publication in Australia: "They have a good market there" (Tiffin and Baer, items 1084, 1086, 1091).
- <sup>37</sup> The firm had been established c. 1873 by William Philip Dunlop (d. 1906) and Frederick Lewis Edwards (1828–1906) as a paper merchant and wholesale stationer, but Edwards had a background in bookselling: see *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, entry for James Matthew Dunlop (VIII. 370). This colonial issue dated 1889 claims on its title-page the novel had reached its "Tenth Thousand" in sales, but Praed's bibliographer, Chris Tiffin, suspects that this merely indicates a brave print-run. He has never seen a copy without this claim. The title was also issued in Toronto by Macmillan in 1910—as had been Boldrewood's *Robbery Under Arms* both in 1909 and in another undated Toronto issue.

- <sup>38</sup> Maud Jeanne Franc (pseud. of Matilda Evans) who published 14 novels, mostly in London from 1861 and whose collection of tales appeared in 13 volumes in 1888, is an apparent further exception: but her writing was for young people. Sampson, Low was her London publisher. It is possible that some of her novels appeared in Sampson, Low's yellowback series (from 1887). Mary Gaunt's first novel appeared in 1894, as did Ethel Turner's *Seven Little Australians*, with which the Ward, Lock agency in Melbourne had very considerable success. But both novels were just a little too late for the proto-canonising moment, and the latter is a work of children's fiction.
- <sup>39</sup> For details, see Introduction to Boldrewood (lxxii–lxxiii).
- <sup>40</sup> For a study of the post-World War II editions of *Robbery Under Arms* and their dust-jackets, see Eggert ("Bibliographic Life").
- <sup>41</sup> For a discussion, see Eggert ("Canonical Works").
- <sup>42</sup> See Introduction to Favenc (xxxii–xxxiii); and Zinkhan.
- <sup>43</sup> Here I agree with Tompkins when, having outlined the succession of posthumous editions of *The Scarlet Letter* to 1884, she comments: "Consequently, Hawthorne's texts were 'there' to be drawn upon for ammunition in the debates over the question of realism that raged during the 1880s" (341).

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