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'Finding Gold In a Gully': Nineteenth-Century Australia in Constructions of British Domesticity From Sensation Fiction to Realism

Lisa Vandebossche
Clemson University, lmvanden@gmail.com

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‘FINDING GOLD IN A GULLY’: NINETEENTH-CENTURY AUSTRALIA IN
CONSTRUCTIONS OF BRISITH DOMESTICITY FROM SENSATION
FICTION TO REALISM

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
English

by
Lisa Vandebossche
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Accepted by:
Kimberly Manganelli, Committee Chair
Cameron Bushnell
Angela Naimou

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates nineteenth-century Australia as a frequently disregarded site of colonial discourse where men and women were able to create wealth but unable to transform economic gains into social currency upon return to England and irrevocably weakened English patriarchal authority when they attempted to do so. Unlike many of the other British colonies such as India and Africa, due to its demographics the Australian colonies by and large remained absent from nineteenth-century racial violence, thus allowing greater possibilities for economic advancement and social rehabilitation of disenfranchised English populations. By combining travel narratives with the sensation fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1861), the sensational realism of Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1861), and the realism of Anthony Trollope's *John Caldigate* (1879), this thesis examines both the real and imagined influence that the Australian colonies had on the breakdown of patriarchal power in late nineteenth-century England and the subversion of traditional economic and social structures that life in the homeland was based upon.

By examining disparate nineteenth-century works, this thesis explores the role that literary genre played in the nineteenth century portrayal of Australia in order to build a better understanding of how English sensation novels reflected, and perhaps in some cases provoked, Victorian imperial fears. While much remains to be done in terms of recovering the aboriginal voices of Australia's

native people and the creation of an Australian literary cannon, by studying English perspectives of the colonies and their people, we open up the discussion of Australian colonization and begin to understand the impact that colony had upon the homeland in order to then investigate the impact that homeland had upon the colony.

DEDICATION

For my parents, whose support has made all the difference.

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INTRODUCTION

The Australian colonies, Anthony Trollope writes, “are probably the most important of colonial possessions, as they are certainly the most interesting” (*Australia* 47). In his 1844 travel narrative *Australia*, Trollope promotes Australia as a space with the potential to absorb the undesirable classes of English society and at the same time restore “England’s fading glory” (53), as it was clear in the mid nineteenth century that England needed a place to send its most dangerous criminals and poorest citizens. When the social and economic structures of the homeland made it difficult for England to take care of all of the citizens who were living within its borders, England decided to transport criminals to some of its colonial holdings. After the loss of the American colonies, due to the independence gained from the 1776 Revolution, the British government and its citizens needed a replacement destination for deportation. Trollope was not alone in thinking that Australia offered hope for both England and the men and women who were either deported or freely immigrated from there, as at the time his sentiments were being echoed by prominent figures, such as Lord John Russell and Lord Grey in their 1838 Report from the Select Committee on Transportation (Dickens 604).

Unlike many of the other British colonial possessions in the nineteenth-century, such as India and Africa, due to its demographics the Australian colonies by and large avoided the issue of nineteenth-century colonial uprisings. This is

not to say that the aboriginal people in Australia were better received by English settlers than natives in other British colonies. Instead the lack of colonial discord in Australia was due, in part, to the fact that many of the Aborigines were either exterminated by the English or delegated to communities independent from British settlers. As Meyers explains, “first occupied by the British as penal colony in 1788, Australia was opened to free migration beginning in the 1830s and it became home to millions of British and Irish emigrants throughout the century” (4). As convicts were transported by force and emigrants began to seek out farming opportunities, the number of settlers quickly outnumbered the number of aboriginal peoples, which made Australia a settler colony along the lines of Canada and the United States. Popular opinion in the homeland was that the lack of colonial resistance from the natives allowed greater possibilities for economic advancement and social rehabilitation of disenfranchised English populations. Trollope makes clear the distinction between Australia and the more “normal” colonial experience of India when he writes, “when we make mention of ‘colonies; we should be understood to signify countries outside our own, which by our energies we have made fit for the occupation of our multiplying race.... India is in no respect a colony... [as] we do not hold it for the direct welfare of our own race” (Trollope, *Australia* 48). This notion was disseminated by government propaganda and supported by travel narratives of the period and literary representations of the Australian colonies, as writers encouraged English citizens to view Australia as a place for emigration, where citizens could better

themselves but in doing so had little hope of the possibility for a successful return to the homeland.

This thesis investigates nineteenth-century Australia as a colonial space where men and women were able to create wealth but often unable to transform these economic gains into social currency upon their return to England and irrevocably weakened English patriarchal authority when they attempted to do so. Australia was envisioned by many in the nineteenth century as a place of rehabilitation for convicts and lower class British citizens; however, while these men and women were persuaded to better themselves through relocation to the Australian colonies, they were by no means encouraged to contemplate a return to the homeland once they had done so. It was clear to those in power in the homeland that, while the emigration of undesirable classes helped stabilize the homeland and rid it of those citizens who drained resources, the return of these citizens to England from the colonies only served to destabilize the hierarchal systems and patriarchal authority of the mother country, no matter what their economic success had been abroad and what wealth they were bringing home. Colonial expansion into Australia opened up economic and social structures in England to influences that would irrevocably change them. As the English moved into the Empire, the Empire also moved into the homeland, because as Edward Said argues, “one of imperialism’s achievements was to bring the world closer together” (Said xxi). By the mid to late nineteenth century, literature was

beginning to explore the impact that Empire was having on the homeland offering proof that upper class British citizens were feeling its influence.

By combining travel narratives with the sensation fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1861), the sensational realism of Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1861), and the realism of Anthony Trollope's *John Caldigate* (1879), this thesis examines both the real and imagined influence that the Australian colonies had on the breakdown of patriarchal power in late nineteenth-century England and the subversion of traditional economic and social structures that life in the homeland was based upon. These texts engage with Australia as a set of penal colonies, while also exploring the role that the gold rush played in changing the British perception of its Australian holdings. The promise of new wealth in the colonies in the second half of the nineteenth century transformed Australia in the English imagination from a place to harbor violent criminals to a rough wilderness that contained the possibility of economic transformation. By examining disparate nineteenth-century works, this thesis explores the role that literary genre played in the nineteenth century portrayal of Australia in order to build a better understanding of how English sensation novels reflected, and perhaps in some cases provoked, Victorian imperial fears. In the nineteenth-century there was a concern that elements from the growing Empire would infiltrate English society and permanently change social and gender structures in the homeland. In midcentury sensation novels, authors played upon these fears to create mystery and suspense, which furthered the sensational impact

that their works had upon their Victorian audiences. By the end of the century, however, many of the English concerns about the colonies impacting life in the homeland were beginning to be realized and the discussion of Empire that was delegated to the periphery of earlier texts became the main focus of works of realism. This thesis traces changing views of Empire across the century and from sensation to realism in order to investigate issues of genre in the literary representation of the British colonies, while simultaneously exploring the changing perception in England of those same colonies.

As a site of colonial discourse the Australian colonies and their place in the Victorian novel has been frequently disregarded in the emergence of criticism stemming from the postcolonial discussion of the late twentieth-century. Until fairly recently, the Australian colonies have remained conspicuously absent from much of twentieth-century postcolonial theory, which has contributed to the limited work that has been done on the Victorian novel and Australia in terms of literary criticism. Edward Said's brief mention of Australia and *Great Expectations* in the 1993 introduction to his seminal postcolonial text *Culture and Imperialism* has offered a theoretical starting point for recent criticism that attempts to engage with Australia and nineteenth-century literature. In his text, Said implores his audience to connect Victorian novels "not only with... pleasure and profit but also with the imperial process of which they were manifestly and unconcealedly a part" (Said xiv), which has encouraged much of the discussion of nineteenth-century literary representations of Australia. Janet Meyers's work

Antipodal England: Emigration and Portable Domesticity in the Victorian

Imagination offers the most recent and inclusive literary analysis of Australia.

Like other works that endeavor to engage with discussions of Australia and the homeland, Meyers's text attempts to continue the "conversation that was initiated more than a decade ago by Edward Said's landmark study *Culture and Imperialism*" (Meyers 2). In her work Meyers presents a compelling look at domesticity in various Victorian texts, while offering insight into the Victorian relationship with Australia as it develops throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Unlike the discussion of domesticity that Meyers begins in her text, this thesis focuses on English patriarchal authority and class structures and looks specifically at the role that genre plays in understanding the changing relationship between the homeland and the Australian colonies. Meyers argues that "just as ideals of home were of central importance to emigrants... the Australian settler experience similarly helped to shape British conceptions of home and national identity" (Meyers 3). I contend the settler experience in Australia more than shaped the conception of home in that it changed the very structures that defined "home" for those living in Victorian England.

Two other texts that, in addition to *Culture and Imperialism*, have become the foundation for current discussions of the Australian colonies are Robert Hughes *The Fatal Shore* (1987) and Paul Carter's *The Road to Botany Bay* (1989). Hughes's text has a direct impact on chapter two of this thesis and, while not referenced directly, Carter's work deserves recognition for its part in the

development of the current body of academic inquiry surrounding the relationship between Australia and England. *The Fatal Shore* is one of the first modern histories of the Australian colonies and provides historical grounding for literary discussions of nineteenth-century Australia. This text uses primary materials to develop a discussion of Australia both as an English colony and a physical space that deserves to be discussed independently of the English homeland and its colonial beginnings. Carter's *The Road to Botany Bay* is a bit more "speculative" (to borrow a word from Said) in terms of understanding the colonial beginnings of the colony, yet at the same time is an early attempt to engage with the both the English settlers and the native population of Australia in a way that had not been previously considered. Both of these texts make impressive efforts to better understand and articulate what happened to the native populations of Australia as English settlers moved into the colonies at a time when few people were discussing the plight of the Aborigines. While great strides have been made since *The Fatal Shore* and *The Road to Botany Bay*, these two texts still serve as a starting point for anyone who hopes to understand the complexity of the relationship between Australia and England, or more specifically the brutality that occurred against aboriginal populations at the hands of the English settlers.

In addition to Janet Meyers's book, more recent criticism concerning Australia and its representation in Victorian literature has vacillated between trying to understand the relationship between settlers and natives and trying to understand how the literary representation of Australia is different from that of

other British colonies. Keith Pescod's *A Place to Lay My Head* engages with Australia from the vantage point of the English settler, while Elaine Freedgood's less representative *The Ideas in Things* explores the impact that English settlement had on Aborigines. In her work Freedgood considers the relationship between aboriginal genocide in Australia and its seeming absence in Victorian novels, a troublesome fact that many critics have struggled to comprehend. Through her extensive study of Victorian newspaper accounts, Freedgood demonstrates clearly that many nineteenth-century English writers, and citizens, were aware of the atrocities that were occurring against the natives in Australia and labors to find some acknowledgment of this fact in Victorian novels, specifically *Great Expectations*. Freedgood's work is admirable, but she is unable to find as strong of an acknowledgement of the Australian genocide in *Great Expectations* as one might have hoped and it is the absence of colonial acknowledgement that is indicative of the relationship between colonial subject and English homeland and is noteworthy, not the inclusion. While there is much yet to be written about the absence of an aboriginal voice in nineteenth-century literature and the relationship between England and the Australian colonies, that is not an argument that this work engages closely with. It is imperative that attempts to recover the voices of native Australians and mark them as distinct from the English perspective of the colonial project in Australia, such as chapter three in Freedgood's *The Ideas in Things*, be continued. This thesis, however, is concerned with the impact that the developing Australian colonies had on the

homeland, rather than the impact the homeland and settlers had on the colonies. As such, I focus my discussion on works produced for public consumption in England by nineteenth-century British writers in order to understand the perception of the colonies in the homeland and how this perception was both reflected and furthered by literary accounts of Australia. Tracing the changing representations of Australia across time and genre, gives one a better understanding of how the view of Empire in general, and Australia in particular, changed throughout the second half of the nineteenth-century and the implications this had for British patriarchal structures.

Written in the wake the first Australian Gold Rush, Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* introduces George Talboys who chooses to travel to Australia to seek his fortune with the intention of then returning to the homeland to better his life and the lives of the wife and son who depend upon him. Unlike the transported convicts discussed in chapter two, the men who went voluntarily to the Australian colonies left open the possibility for eventual return to England. While once deported convicts were not allowed to return to England under penalty of death, those who voluntarily went to Australia could not be prevented from returning. It is George's leaving for Australia that opens the English patriarchal system up to corruption and allows his wife Helen to transcend social and gender norms. By combining this text with Trollope's travel narrative, *Australia*, and Lousisa Anne Meredith's depictions of the journey from England to the colonies, the first chapter of this thesis explores the role that the

Australian Gold Rush played in the ability for lower and middle class Victorian men to make their fortunes abroad in hopes of elevating their social class and family life upon return to the homeland.

Formally claimed by Britain in 1829, many of the Australian colonies were first settled as penal colonies until the mid nineteenth-century when the settlers began to formally campaign against convicts being resettled in the western colonies. According to an 1838 report from the Select Committee on Transportation “seventy five thousand two hundred convicts have been transported to New South Wales since its settlement in 1787” and “the number of assigned convicts... in South Wales in 1835... was 20,207” (Dickens 604). The second chapter of this thesis looks specifically at New South Wales, the larger and better known of the penal colonies, and the impact that forced, rather than voluntary, emigration had relations between Australia and England. Indeed, Graham Law and Adrian Pinnington observe in their introduction to *Great Expectations*, “the transportation of convicts to the Australian colony of New South Wales, originally initiated in 1786 as a substitute for the death penalty under the Bloody Code, had peaked in the 1820s” (Dickens 10). While Dickens’s *Great Expectations* began its serialization in 1860, the same year as *Lady Audley’s Secret*, the “main action [of the text] takes place between 1807-10 and 1823-6” (Dickens 9) appropriately situating it with the ongoing discussion of convict transportation to New South Wales when Dickens’s transports Magwitch to Australia. As Law and Pinnington acknowledge, Dickens’s text engages with a

period earlier than the time in which he is writing and thus “Australia itself, by Dickens’s time could evoke two contrasting images” (Dickens 24). Given the period between the action of the text and the year of the texts serialization, Dickens’s audience would have seen Australia both as a “barren and remote land that was especially suitable as a place of punishment” and as a place where there was a “chance-albeit remote- of convicts like Magwitch becoming wealthy” (Dickens 24). In the 1820s transportation to Australia would have been viewed as severe punishment, while by 1862 that view was slowly changing into a concern that Australia might be a place of newfound wealth for transported convicts and the implications this might have for the homeland were great.

By pairing the travel writings published by Louisa Anne Meredith in her 1844 *Notes and Sketches of New South Wales* with Dickens’s *Great Expectations*, one is able to investigate what life would have really been like in the Australian colonies for Dickens’s fictional convict Magwitch and better understand why it was impossible for Magwitch to improve his social standing both in Australia and in England. In her work, Meredith chronicles her experiences when she first moves to Australia and thus gives her readers insight into her initial reactions to the country. The second chapter of this thesis focuses on Meredith’s commentary concerning the social structures that she found in place when she arrived in New South Wales as a way of understanding why Magwitch was forced to concentrate his wealth and ideas of social improvement upon Pip, rather than enjoy the fruits of his labor himself. Meredith writes that in Australia “a large portion of the

population are emancipists (convicts who have served their allotted years of transportation), and their families or decedents” and that in the colonies there is “a strong line of demarcation is in most instances observed between them and the free emigrant settlers. Wealth, all-powerful though it be,- and many of these emancipists are the richest men in the colony,- cannot wholly overcome the prejudice against them” (51). As a convict Magwitch’s emigration to Australia was forced upon him by the state and his return to England was strictly forbidden. Therefore, Magwitch was able to make money in Australia but his criminal past kept him from returning with that fortune and the mimicry of English patriarchal structures and prejudice against convicts in Australian cities kept him from moving up in social standing. As Meredith notes, in Australia “English customs and fashions are carefully followed, and frequently outdone by the more wealthy and (if I may be allowed the phrase in speaking of commoners) aristocratic of the colonists” (52). Instead of fighting against a system he cannot change, Magwitch uses Pip to mold his own English gentleman and gain power over the English patriarchy. As much as he is dressed for the part, however, when Pip finds out that the money comes from Magwitch, and by extension Australia, he finally understands that he will never be a fully legitimate English gentleman because the means he used to obtain his status is not sanctioned by English patriarchal authority.

The third chapter of this thesis compares issues raised by *Lady Audley’s Secret* in chapter one and discusses them within the genre of nineteenth-century

realism. Like *Lady Audley's Secret*, Anthony Trollope's *John Caldigate* engages in a discussion of bigamy, but does so in a much different way than Braddon's novel. By exploring these texts side by side, this thesis is able to explain the role that genre plays in the development of the imperial discussion about the Australian colonies and, at the same time, explore how the role of Australia changes in Victorian literature by the end of the nineteenth century. In both these works, the male gold seekers have been disinherited from the class in which they were born and use the wealth that they are able to accumulate in the colonies to regain the social standing that was taken from them, but do so at the expense of traditional class structures in England and force their respective wives to deviate from traditional gender roles in the homeland. I argue that in *Lady Audley's Secret* it is George Talboys's leaving for the homeland that complicates the relationship between homeland and Empire whereas in *John Caldigate* it is John's return from Australia, and the accusations of Mrs. Smith that follow him back to England, which corrupts his position as the patriarchal figure in his home and destroys the innocence of the novel's angel of the house, his wife Hester.

Given that Trollope's description of John's time onboard the *Goldfinder* (the ship takes him to Australia) matches up nicely with Meredith's description of her travels to Australia and Braddon's scene onboard the *Angus* in *Lady Audley's Secret*, in this chapter I use Meredith's narrative to explore the difference between sensation novels and other travel novels of the period by comparing the limited discussion of George's travels with the extended discussion given to John

Caldigate's time in the Empire. Trollope's own experience in Australia, as illustrated in his travel narrative, makes him better able to articulate life in the colonies and the emigrant experience, which is reflected in his choice of genre. Braddon's limited travel experience and genre restrain her from discussing George's time in the colonies and the mystery created by George and Australia creates a feeling of sensation for her readers, much like it does in *Great Expectations*. Trollope's experience and genre, however, paint a more realistic portrait of both Australia and its growing influence in England. While in 1860 Braddon and Dickens were not ready to expose their audiences to the physical space of Australia, even in the fictional realm, Trollope engages with the representation that their works shun and exposes his audience to a realistic realization of their imperial fears. As the idea of the Empire became increasingly influential in the homeland, it also increases its influence in the literature of the late Victorian period as evidenced in the shift between its representations in differing genres.

Economic advancement in Australia often resulted in the attempted subversion of social hierarchies when colonists tried to return to the homeland, leaving the late nineteenth-century domestic space susceptible to imperial influence, which resulted in the dismantling of strict class and gender structures that were a hallmark of Victorian life. My thesis explores the role that the Australian colonies play, first as penal colonies, then as a place to find gold, and finally as a place for English emigration, in the transformation of patriarchal class

and gender structures by the end of the nineteenth century. By combining travel narratives with prominent novels of the period, my project will illuminate the difference between real and fictional representations of the colonies and limitations they posed to the Australian colonial experience in relation to the homeland.

CHAPTER ONE
GEORGE TALBOY'S IMPERIAL SECRET: AUSTRALIA IN MARY
ELIZABETH BRADDON'S *LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET*

In an 1864 review of Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Aurora Floyd*, Henry James ascribes "to Mr. Collins ... the credit for having introduced into fiction the most mysterious of mysteries, the mysteries which are at our own doors" (James 119). Unlike the Gothic fiction that came before it, Collins's work explored "the terrors of the cheerful country-house and the busy London lodgings" (James 119) rather than the unseen terrors of the supernatural. The fear for readers of popular late eighteenth-century Gothic novels, such as Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* and Anne Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, was that the Victorian home might be attacked by an unknown foreign presence. Therefore, these novels were often set in homes that had a connection to the supernatural or history of mysterious events. Collins's novels, however, were set in "stern reality... [and] g[a]ve new impetus to the literature of horrors" (James 119). The themes of Collins's work served as a template for the sensation novel genre and writers like Mary Elizabeth Braddon took up Collins's notion that the Victorian home had already been infiltrated by unknown foreign bodies, but those affected did not know it yet. Once in the home, characters are often no longer able to tell the difference between a pure English citizen and foreign "other," like they are in the public space, thus, characters in Collins and Braddon's novels are typically unaware that the domestic space has been compromised.

Braddon's work draws upon the sensation tradition that Collins creates in his domestic mysteries but her work transforms these themes in a way that earns her (in James's estimation) the title of the "founder of the sensation novel" (James 120). In her novel *Lady Audley's Secret*, Mary Elizabeth Braddon explores the idea of the Victorian "other," as embodied by the lower class daughter of a sea captain, hiding within the walls of a respectable English home (Audley Court) and slowly polluting the domestic space. In nineteenth-century English society there were clear distinctions between the public and private spheres, and private space, given that it was connected with the domestic realm, was considered a pure place to be protected from corruption. The public space, which included the growing English Empire, was to be kept strictly separate from this private domestic space as there was a great anxiety that the domestic space might become contaminated with taboo elements of the public space, thus placing the position of the female angel of the house in jeopardy. This anxiety, which led to an even stricter separation of public and private spheres, permeated all aspects of Victorian life and was explored extensively in fiction of the period. As Natalie and Ronald Schroeder point out, "sensation fiction itself was both symptom and evidence of widening fissures in the Victorian domestic ideal, and it defiantly challenged patriarchal hegemony" (16). As a genre, sensation fiction explored issues that were brought about by the changing Victorian society and reflected anxieties about the effect of the increasing territorial expansion on traditional English values.

True to the sensation fiction genre that she writes in, Braddon in *Lady Audley's Secret* creates a novel that makes it difficult to know exactly who or what is upsetting the culture of the homeland and how it has entered the domestic space. This leaves the novel's reading open to a multitude of interpretations. Many critics, such as Lynn Voskuil, Richard Nemesvari and Chiara Briganti, have argued that the corruption of social norms enters the domestic space in the novel through the actions of Lady and Robert Audley. More than any other characters in the novel, Lady Audley (Helen Talboys/ Lucy Graham) and Robert have been accused of thwarting their traditional Victorian roles at the expense of domestic structure and tranquility. While both of these characters play a role in the pollution of the traditional domestic sphere and add to the break down of the patriarchal structures of gender and class hierarchies in the novel, I contend that it is their connection to George Talboys that pushes them to deviate from Victorian social norms. As Elizabeth Lee Steere suggests, class mixing, both in the novel and on the part of the audiences that are reading Braddon's work, is one of the hidden villains of Braddon's work. While Steere's work focuses on Lucy Audley as the catalyst of this class mixing, I argue that George Talboys's journey to Australia and Braddon's sensation genre contribute significantly to the subversion of the class structures in the novel. By leaving England to find wealth in Australia, George embraces both the Empire and the exotic. Upon his return to England, George brings the Empire and such exotic elements as gold out of the

public sphere and into the Victorian home, thus polluting the domestic space and causing other characters, such as Lucy and Robert Audley, to resist social norms.

George is forced to leave for Australia because his father disinherits him when he marries “a penniless little girl, the daughter of a tipsy old half-pay lieutenant” (Braddon 23). George is the first son (and heir) of an English gentleman, and Helen is the daughter of a poor, lower rank military man. By upsetting the rules of his class and marrying a woman who is not his social equal, George defies the patriarchal society in which he lives as he attempts to elevate Helen’s position within the social hierarchy. His displeased father then punishes him for his transgression by disinheriting George when he cuts him off without any communication and on the understanding that his “yearly allowance will stop from [his] wedding day” (Braddon 23). With the loss of his inheritance, George is left to fend for himself, his young wife, and their new child in a Victorian homeland that offers him few options. In nineteenth-century English society, which functioned on a system of social hierarchy and inherited wealth, this loss of inheritance removes George from his economic means and permanently distances him from the patriarchal role he was born to one day fulfill. He attempts to “get a situation as a clerk in a merchant’s office, or as an accountant, or book keeper, or something of that kind” (Braddon 24) but finds that there is little chance of employment for an educated English gentleman who has never had to work for his keep because he “couldn’t get anyone to believe in [his] capacity” (Braddon 24). When he hears of “Australian gold digging and the great things that were to

be done over there” (Braddon 24), George catches the fever of the Empire and Australian gold rush. George views Australia as a place that is beyond English social rules, where he can regain the status that has been taken from him. Indeed, Braddon represents Australia as a space that has a great impact on the British homeland even though it is never visible in the novel. Unlike travel narratives and other works about Australia from the period, the sensation novel genre allows Braddon the freedom to send George to Australia and bring him back to England without ever narrating her novel away from England.

Settled first as penal colonies for British convicts, by the time that *Lady Audley's Secret* was published in 1861 the Australian colonies had grown considerably and were predominantly composed of emigrated English citizens and transported British criminals. Thus, unlike many of the other new colonies, the gold found in Australia and the majority white population made it a colonial space where fortunes could be made with little resistance from the native people. Living in England, in the wake of the Australian gold rush of 1850, Braddon would have been well aware of the role that Australia was beginning to play in both Britain's cultural imagination and the colonial project. The idea that “a stalwart young fellow such as [George] could hardly fail to do well in the diggings” (Braddon 25) would not have been foreign either to Braddon or her English audience. Travel writing that came out of the Australian colonies, such as Louisa Anne Meredith's *Notes and Sketches of New South Wales*, described the colonies as being a place whose “size appearance and population are truly

wonderful” (Meredith 39) and where “the good people of Sydney have yet many wise things to learn and many silly ones to unlearn, before they can attain that resemblance to the higher middle class at home” (Meredith 52). While Australia certainly represented a place where the lower elements of British society could escape (and possibly be rehabilitated), class prejudices were still present and adherence to English social norms were promoted. It is clear that travel narratives of the period represent a strikingly different view of the colonies. Although he published *Australia* thirteen years after *Lady Audley’s Secret*, as one of Braddon’s literary contemporaries Anthony Trollope was a writer who Braddon would have been familiar with and whose travel narratives echo the prevailing British opinion of the colonies as a “means of redemption for a portion of our poor from that grinding poverty that which we are unable to cure at home” and claims that “the Englishman who emigrates... has everything in his favor” (Trollope, *Australia* 61). This sentiment reflects both Trollope’s own understanding of the Australian colonies and speaks to the representation of those colonies that was being projected in literary works like *Lady Audley’s Secret* and Dickens’s *Great Expectations*.

Lillian Nayder is one of few critics to offer a postcolonial reading of Braddon’s work as she argues that Braddon positions her novel within the colonial discussion of the India Mutiny (Nayder 33) in order to illuminate the controversy of women’s rights and marriage reform. By sending George to Australia, however, Braddon seems to intentionally position her work away from

the recent colonial violence of India that Nayder sees in the work and instead situates him within the colonial discussion of the time that was centered upon Australia. While Nayder offers a thorough reading of Braddon's work and its relation to the India Mutiny, by focusing exclusively on the references to India in the work she discounts any other colonial discourse from the period and ignores a key detail: George makes his fortune in Australia not India. George's connection with Australia allows Braddon to participate in a new colonial discussion independent of the ones surrounding India and Africa that were playing out in such works of sensation fiction as Collins's *The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White*. It is this connection to Australia, and the perceived promise of peaceful prosperity that the Australian colonies offer, which allows Braddon to align her work with a different colonial experience that still manages to corrupt the English domestic space even without the threat of colonial violence and blending of races.

The closest that the narration of Braddon's novel gets to the physical space of the British Empire is a snapshot of George onboard the *Angus* on his return to the homeland. The exclusion of any details of George's time in Australia, beyond what George chooses to share with us, suspends a reader's knowledge of events and violence that occur in the Empire, which cultivates the "sensation" of unknown imperial corruption that permeates the novel and genre. George returns from Australia a wealthy man who is able to live the leisurely life of the upper class; however, he gains his independence at the expense of social and economic hierarchies that support the power of the English patriarchy. In the patriarchal

system George's father, as the head of the household, holds the position of absolute authority. When he disinherits George, Mr. Talboys dooms his son to a life of poverty. George defies his father by earning enough money to restore himself to his rightful class without his father's help, thus undermining patriarchal authority in the text. The only way that George is able to do this is by embracing the Empire. While he was born an English gentleman, George's new wealth comes in the form of a "monster nugget turned up under [his] spade" (Braddon 26) rather than the inherited wealth that was considered the only legitimate wealth for the English aristocracy.

Like Trollope's title character in his novel *John Caldigate*, George returns from Australia to an English society that he no longer fully fits into because his wealth was created outside of the accepted economic and social systems. The friction between John and his neighbor Mr. Bolton in Trollope's novel illustrates the Victorian middle-class opinion that "money was to be sought [and] it should be done in a gradual, industrious manner, in accordance with recognized forms" (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 122) rather than "by the luck of finding gold in a gully" (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 121). It is for this reason that Louisa Anne Meredith writes in her 1844 travel narrative about the "many instances [that] occur of individuals... returning to, or perhaps for the first time visiting England, with the purpose of remaining there to enjoy their accumulated wealth, and after a short trail, coming back to the colony, heartily disgusted with the result of their experiment" (Meredith 51). This is certainly true for George who believes he is

“going straight home to the woman [he] love[s]; to a girl whose heart is as true as the light of heaven; and in whom [he] no more expect[s] to find any change than [he] do[es] to see another sun rise in tomorrow’s sky” (Braddon 23) but returns to a drastically different reality.

Unlike the perfect home that he remembers and dreams of, George returns to a dead wife, a son who does not know him and a rigid English society that (like John Caldigate and countless others who make their fortune in the Empire) he no longer fits into, even with his newfound wealth. George’s ability to quickly make money in Australia regains him the economic independence that his father took from him when he was disinherited, but this economic independence also breaks down the structure and absolute authority of the English patriarchy. Because George’s wealth is earned and not inherited, and because this wealth was earned outside of England by working a job that is unfit for a man of his station, George can no longer be considered a true Victorian gentleman. George is tainted by his connection to the Empire, which causes his identity to shift from that of the English gentleman to the Victorian “other,” leaving a vacuum in patriarchal power that Robert Audley is forced to fill. George then becomes a vehicle for Braddon to explore the implications that the Empire might have for Victorian life and the danger of introducing aspects of the Empire into the domestic space.

It is George’s connection to the Empire that first attracts Robert’s interest in him as Robert is intrigued by the exotic. Not only is Robert often found “smoking his German pipe and reading French novels” (Braddon 35), he also has

developed such a dependence upon “smoking Mild Turkish” (Braddon 401) that he has to bring it with him when he visits Audley Court. Given Robert’s attraction to products from the Empire, it is no wonder that this fascination (or infatuation) extends to his relationship with George Talboys upon George’s return from Australia. While Robert and George knew each other in school, their friendship becomes much stronger when George returns from Australia and Robert learns that he has been in the Australian colonies, after which he “receive[s] him with open arms” (Braddon 50). Both Richard Nemesvari and Jennifer Kushnier have argued that the closeness of Robert and George’s relationship results from their childhood relationship in school at Eton where “homosexuality and homoeroticism were condoned among the boys who were later expected to ‘become’ heterosexual upon graduation” (Kushnier 61). While Nemesvari maintains that a homosocial relationship develops between the two men in the novel, Kushnier pushes this argument a step further and contends that Robert’s attraction to George is in part an attempt to “understand his own sexual identity” (Kushnier 62) in order to validate the homosexual desires he developed in school but did not outgrow in adulthood. There are certainly elements of fascination that can be construed as homosocial in the novel; however, it is more Robert’s attraction to the exotic, rather than his attraction to George, that draws George and Robert into a closer relationship after George has been to Australia. The first thing that Robert says when he is reintroduced to his old friend is “and now George tell us all about it” (Braddon 38), the “it” of course being Australia. When George

disappears Robert becomes obsessed with finding out what happened to him, in part because Robert wants to uncover the mystery of the exotic that George represents, and in order to do so he needs George.

This obsession forces Robert out of his natural disposition of a “generous-hearted fellow” (Braddon 35) and into the “office of spy, the collector of damning facts” (Braddon 197). Braddon initially presents Robert as a character for whom her audience would have had very little sympathy. She describes him as “a handsome, lazy care-for-nothing fellow, of about seven-and-twenty” who at the bidding of his friends had been trained to be a barrister “but he had never either had a brief, or tried to get a brief, or even wished to have a brief in all those five years during which his name has been painted upon on of the doors in Fig-tree Court” (Braddon 35). The “only son of a younger brother of Sir Michael Audley” (Braddon 35), Robert is born on the fringes of the aristocracy, but certainly lives like a member of the upper classes. On “£400 a year” (Braddon 35) Robert should have been practicing as a barrister rather than living an aristocrat’s life of idleness. Braddon’s audience would have understood that by not practicing a profession, Robert was turning his back on the station that he was born into and presuming to live well above his means. At the beginning of the novel Robert is not living up to the social responsibilities that, as a potentially productive male citizen, are placed upon him by the English patriarchal system. England needs Robert to assume his rightful place in the patriarchal scheme in order to maintain

order in the economic and social hierarchies and preserve the purity of the domestic space.

By living above his station, Robert lives above English social constraints and, as a result, corrupts the patriarchal system much in the same way that George does when he leaves for Australia. Without George as the patriarchal figure of the family, his wife Helen is unable to maintain her role as the pure Victorian female in the home and her position as the angel of the house when she is forced out of the domestic space into the male dominated public sphere to find employment. George leaves Helen (soon to be Lucy Graham and then Lady Audley) “with no protector but a weak, tipsy father and a child to support” (Braddon 347). Based on past experiences George knows that Helen’s “poor papa” is a drain of the family situation as he quickly “made away with [the] little stock on money” that was left over from George’s selling of his commission “in no time” which makes it necessary for George to “look about for something” (Braddon 24). Not only is Helen’s father incapable of aiding the family situation, his propensity for drinking makes it harder for Helen to provide for the family because Mr. Maldon uses the money she earns to pay for his habit. This is evidenced by the fact that later in the novel not even the liberal allowance that Helen’s father receives from his son-in-law can sustain his habit and provide for his grandson.

When George leaves his family he is so caught up in the future Australia offers that he is blind to the hardships his family will have to endure without a strong male provider. After Helen marries George, Mr. Maldon is no longer

required to support his daughter because, as George acknowledges, with her husband alive Helen has “no claim on [her father]” (Braddon 24). Upon her marriage, Helen belongs to George, and in the English patriarchal society that they live it is George’s responsibility to care for her and their child, not Mr. Maldon’s. George forsakes this responsibility when he leaves his wife and son in the hands of a father who is neither responsible for nor able to sustain the family. To some degree Helen is justified for “hating the man who had left [her] with no protector” (Braddon 347). While Helen can work, as a female she is unable to find a position that will provide for the family and allow her to raise her child at the same time because “the ideal [Victorian] woman-wife was the ornamental Angel in the House. Her duties were to obey her husband, manage the household, bear and rear children, and be a paragon of virtue” (Schroeder 11). Helen, however, cannot fulfill these duties without a husband, and George’s abandonment leaves her without a defined role in the English domestic space.

When Helen later describes to Robert the options that were open to her during George’s absence, she borrows from the language of colonial discourse comparing herself to a “slave” who was “allied forever to beggary and obscurity” as she had to “work hard for her living” (Braddon 347), which created resentment between Helen and the child she had to provide for. Helen’s main role as a Victorian wife is to care for her child, but George’s abandonment pushes her out of the domestic space, which corrupts her position as the angel of the house. Her resentment of her husband, and the poverty in which he had left her, so drastically

removes Helen from her natural female disposition that it renders her unable to form an attachment to her own child. She admits that she “did not love the child; for he had been left a burden upon [her] hands” (Braddon 347). The Empire has had such an influence on the domestic space that the angel of the house has been tainted to the extent where she cannot bear to care for her own child. George’s desertion allows his wife to create a new identity independent from her assigned female roles but, when the female figure of the home is divorced from her role of mother, the entire domestic sphere becomes unstable.

This instability becomes even more apparent in the domestic space of Audley Court, as it is George’s departure that enables Helen to lead her double life as Lucy Audley. Without George’s patriarchal gaze upon her, Helen becomes “determined to leave [her] wretched home” (Braddon 348) and eventually she takes employment under an assumed persona. With George in Australia there is no male figure watching over Helen, which leaves her free to move through the English private and public spaces without censure thus becoming, as Michael Mallory observes, a woman who “readers had never before encountered... in literature” (Mallory 22). Through George’s connection to the Empire, Helen gains a degree of independence that she could not have otherwise obtained. Once she loses her position as the Victorian wife, and turns her back on the traditional role of mother, Helen is able to live above the laws of society much in the same way that Robert Audley is at the novel’s beginning. She no longer has a fixed place in the domestic space and uses her newfound independence to her advantage by

bettering her social standing in her second marriage. When talking to Robert at the end of the novel Lucy Audley freely admits that in school she “learned that [her] ultimate fate in life depended on [her] marriage, and [she] concluded that if [she] was indeed prettier than [her] schoolfellows, [she] ought to marry better than any of them” (Braddon 345). Thus, when Helen marries Sir Michael she finally gains the position that her “ambition had pointed [her to] ever since [she] was a school girl and heard for the first time that [she] was pretty” (Braddon 348). While George is forced to voyage to Australia to gain his fortune, his absence allows Helen (now Lucy) to capitalize on the only commodity that she has at her disposal, her looks.

While her second marriage reestablishes Helen (now Lucy) in the domestic sphere, Sir Michael does not hold the same absolute power over her that George does as her legitimate husband. With George still alive, Sir Michael is unable to truly fill the role of the patriarch because Lucy knows that their marriage is a sham. Also, Lucy’s character has been liberated by George’s connection to the Empire and she will not voluntarily surrender herself to the Victorian patriarchy once George’s abandonment has freed her from it. When George returns from the Australian colonies, he would be able once again to assume control over Lucy as her rightful husband, thus restoring the patriarchal structure that was in place before his departure. When Helen learns of his arrival she immediately runs from the power of the male gaze that George represents. Once George thwarts Lucy’s schemes to avoid him and they finally meet at

Audley Court, in an attempt to retain her autonomy, Lucy “drew the loose iron spindle from the shrunken wood and saw her first husband sink with on horrible cry into the black mouth of the well” (Braddon 386) where she leaves him to die.

George’s initial departure from England to Australia leaves a hole in the patriarchal system that is supposed to protect (and control) Helen, which allows her to rise within the English economic and social hierarchies. Once the influence of Australia creeps into the domestic space, even George’s return to the homeland is not enough to reinstitute the strict social codes that were in place prior to his departure. Lucy (formerly Helen), who has been transformed by her husband’s connection to the Empire and subsequent absence, removes the authority that George represents by throwing him down the well. Against his nature and previous disposition Robert is forced to fill the role of the patriarch when George disappears, and Robert supplants both Sir Michael and George as the protector of the domestic sphere at Audley Court. Robert’s suspicion of Lucy results in his constant observation of her actions and the reassertion a male gaze upon her in the form of Robert’s watchfulness. His connection to George (which is strengthened by George’s connection to the Empire and the exotic) gives him the strength to assume the role of the man of the house and protector of domestic purity.

Many lower class young men and the second born sons of upper class couples were sent to Australia in hopes that the Empire would mature them and turn them into proper English men. Robert, however, does not need to leave England for the Empire to make a man out of him because George brings the

dangers of the Empire into Robert's adopted home at Audley Court, where Robert is able to accept his social responsibility and conquer them. By the end of the novel Robert Audley is no longer the idle barrister that we are first introduced to, but rather the custodian of patriarchal power to whom Sir Michael entrusts "the duty of providing for the safety and comfort of Lady Audley" (Braddon 352) and for cleaning up the mess that she has left in her wake. Robert fills his role well and purifies the domestic space by removing Lucy from Audley Court. If we view Lucy Audley's transgressions as a byproduct of Empire clashing with homeland, which we are encouraged to do given the fact that George's departure for Australia allows her deviation, then by conquering Lady Audley Robert is accepting his social responsibility and conquering the social and class transgressions that the Empire enabled.

Robert successfully eliminates the threat that Lucy poses to the English patriarchy and traditional female values when he removes her from both her position of power at Audley Court and from England entirely. While many critics, most notably Elaine Showalter, Judy Cornes and Lynn Voskuil, have chosen to focus on the role that female madness plays at the end of the novel and whether or not Lucy is mad, Lucy's actual mental health is irrelevant to my study of how Empire functions in the work. What is relevant is the power that men are able to exert over Lucy Audley and the affirmation of the patriarchal system under Robert Audley that is made possible under the guise of this madness. Chiara Briganti notes that Lady Audley "can impersonate her mad mother when madness

proves useful” (190), which seems appropriate given that Lucy only mentions her mental health history once her independence and social position are in jeopardy. While the excuse of familial madness conveniently serves to keep Lucy from prosecution, it also gives Robert ammunition to “prove that she is mad and therefore irresponsible for her actions” (Braddon 369). The men in the novel, under Robert’s guidance, are able to use the guise of madness to commit Lucy Audley (now Madam Taylor) to the care of a physician in “a house for mad people” (Braddon 380) in Belgium and completely remove her presence from the domestic space of the homeland, leaving it open for Robert to regain absolute control of the patriarchy.

By novel’s end, order and patriarchal authority are restored to the Victorian domestic sphere. George’s wife (Helen/Lucy/Madame Taylor) is locked up in Belgium, where she eventually dies, because of her refusal to submit to the female’s legitimate place in the newly reestablished patriarchal society under Robert. The last we see of her is “black-edged letter” which announces “the death of a certain Madame Taylor, who had expired peacefully at Villebrumeuse” (Braddon 436). George loses his connection to the Empire, and his status as the Victorian “other,” when he grows weary of his exile in New York and voluntarily returns to England. Unlike the time that George comes back from Australia at the beginning of the novel and immediately longs to return to the Empire, when George returns from New York at the end of the novel he is no longer drawn to life abroad and happy to remain “with his sister and his friend” (Braddon 436).

With Helen's banishment from Victorian society, George is no longer forced to suffer punishment for the transgression he committed against his social class by marrying below him. He is reinstated into the patriarchal system and social hierarchy as his father's heir and takes his legitimate place in English society.

When his father dies George will become the next male head of his family, thus reestablishing the patriarchal system. The money and the estate that George will inherit from his father make the fortune that George acquires in the Empire unnecessary for his survival as he regains wealth that is considered legitimate in the economic hierarchy of the homeland. George is once again the proper English gentleman who does not have to work to make his way in the world. Once George loses his connection to the exotic, Robert is released from his infatuation with George and marries George's sister Clara. Upon his marriage Robert becomes the patriarch of his own family, a distinction Braddon makes even clearer with her use of language as "Robert" becomes "Mr. Audley" to readers. Unlike the Robert that we meet at the beginning of the novel, the Mr. Audley that we are left with has assumed his social responsibilities and "is a rising man upon the home circuit... [who] has distinguished himself in the great breach of promise case of *Hobbs v. Nobbs*" (Braddon 435). Tranquility is restored to the Victorian domestic sphere when the threat of the Empire in the domestic space is removed and Clara and Alicia restore purity to the position of the angel of the house when Lady Audley is "sen[t] away to some place of exile" (Braddon 375) and dies.

Despite the obvious threat that both Robert Audley and Lucy Audley pose to Victorian patriarchal society and the domestic sphere, it is George Talboys's connection to the Empire that alters the social possibilities of these characters and, unbeknownst to them, shape their decisions in the novel. In *Lady Audley's Secret* the Victorian anxiety of the Empire is realized as the domestic space and patriarchal structure have been disrupted without the knowledge of those affected. George's marriage to Helen (Lucy) and his leaving for Australia go against the customs of the patriarchal society in which he lives and opens up the domestic sphere to the influence of the Empire. Without George as a catalyst, Lucy and Robert would remain within the acceptable parameters of their gender and class. Eventually, order is restored to the patriarchal system in the novel; however, the threat that the Australia poses to English domestic stability is so great that its influence can never be completely erased. As Judy Cornes explains, "a writer such as Willkie Collins would have carefully tied up all of the loose ends of the narrative, but Mary Elizabeth Braddon leaves some puzzling and frustrating ambiguities" (176). While the imperial corruption that George brings into the domestic space seems to be eradicated and order restored, Sir Michael had "no fancy to return to the familiar dwelling-place in which he once dreamed a brief dream of impossible happiness" (Braddon 436) and Robert's "dream of a fairy cottage has been realized between Teddington Lock and Hampton Bridge," (Braddon 435) not at Audley Court. Order in the domestic space is restored, however, the influence of the Empire that George introduces to the private sphere

has changed English society forever. Braddon's text recognizes that the English colonial project in Australia has opened up the homeland to imperial influences, which make social mobility possible, and the inflexible ideals of the aristocracy have been irrevocably impacted. This is evidenced by the fact that Audley Court, the physical symbol of wealth and domestic ideals in the text, "is shut up, and a grim old housekeeper reigns paramount in the mansion which [Lady Audley's] ringing laughter once made musical" (Braddon 436). The empty house at Audley Court "is often shown to inquisitive visitors" (Braddon 436) and remains as a hollow reminder of what once was and might still be had the Empire not disrupted the domestic space.

CHAPTER TWO
'ALMOST THE SAME, BUT NOT QUITE': SENSATIONAL
MIMICRY IN *GREAT EXPECTATIONS*

“Of course a large portion of the population are emancipists (convicts who have served their allotted years of transportation), and their families or descendents; and a strong line of demarcation is in most instances observed between them and the free emigrant settlers. Wealth, all-powerful though it be,- and many of these emancipists are the richest men in the colony,- cannot wholly overcome the prejudice against them, though policy, in some instances, greatly modifies it”-
Louisa Anne Meredith (1844)

While prior to the 1980's, *Great Expectations* was often read as a coming of age novel for Dickens's orphaned protagonist Pip, its featured place at the beginning of Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* raised renewed interest in Dickens's work as a colonial text and inspired subsequent postcolonial readings. In his introduction, Said initiates a postcolonial conversation about Dickens's novel by encouraging readers to view *Great Expectations* both as an enjoyable text and a “cultural form... immensely important in the formation of imperial attitudes, references, and experiences” (Said xii). In the wake of *Culture and Imperialism* many of the postcolonial readings of *Great Expectations*, such as those done by Julie M. Barst and Jennifer Gribble, naturally view the work through the lens of Said's theories of nationality and empire. Reading Dickens's novel through Said's criticism raises provocative questions about the possibility of successful colonial return for British emigrants and the structures in the homeland that prohibit this return. In his text Said asserts, “the prohibition placed on Magwitch's return is not only penal but imperial: subjects can be taken to places like Australia but they cannot be allowed a return to metropolitan space...

which is meticulously charted, spoken for, inhabited by a hierarchy of metropolitan personages” (Said xvi). As a way of expanding postcolonial readings of *Great Expectations*, in this chapter I purpose studying Dickens’s work within the framework of Homi Bhabha’s theories of mimicry. By exploring mimicry in Dickens’s text we are better able understand Pip’s connection to Australia and why Magwitch is able to impact the “metropolitan space” of the homeland even though his return from the colonies is by no means successful. Bhabha’s theories of colonial mimicry provide readers with a clearer understanding of life in Australia for deported British convicts and how the mimicry that begins in colonial Australia then pervades class structures in nineteenth-century England. Even though mimicry eventually fails for those who employ it in the novel, its limited success foreshadows the influence that the Empire in general, and Australia in particular, will have on patriarchal authority and class structure as the nineteenth century progresses.

Bhabha defines colonial mimicry as “the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as *a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite* [emphasis original]” (Bhabha 126). In trying to colonize natives in the British territories, English colonizers only recognize a reformed “other” if the “other” is able to appear to be “*almost the same, but not quite*” the same as the English. In his “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” Bhabha argues that colonizers desire the people they colonize to conform to the social norms and patriarchal structures of the colonizing power, yet still need to

be able to tell the difference between themselves and the people whom they are colonizing. In order to control those who they are colonizing, British colonizers want the colonized to mimic white men as long as they remain “*almost the same but not white*,” (Bhabha, 384), which is an important distinction that is blurred in the Australian colonies as “otherness” is often not based upon racial differences. When discussing nineteenth-century Australian society, Bhabha’s notion of colonial mimicry needs to be adapted as it is clear from travel writing of the period that the Australian colonies are distinct from Britain’s other colonies. In her writings from Australia, Louisa Anne Meredith uses the term “natives” to refer “not to the aborigines, but the ‘currency’ as they are termed, in distinction from the ‘sterling,’ of British-born residents” (50). In the Australian colonies the aboriginal people were so beneath the notice of English settlers and writers, that in the English consciousness “natives” are not Aborigines but rather Australian-born decedents of European settlers. While Bhabha may not have conceived of “native” in the same way, his theories of mimicry are still applicable to nineteenth-century colonial Australia even though the colonized and those being colonized in this particular situation are both English. As Meredith notices on her first trip to New South Wales, in the capital city of Sydney “English customs and fashions are carefully followed, and frequently outdone by the more wealthy and... aristocratic of the colonists” (Meredith 52). Society in nineteenth-century Australia mimics the upper class aristocratic society of England, but is comprised of transported English convicts and lower and middle class British emigrants.

Meredith recognizes that Australian society in New South Wales at the beginning of the nineteenth century is a colonial mimicry of upper class London society consisting of former lower-class English citizens who do their best to appear the same as their upper-class English counterparts. Meredith's reference to the mimicry shows that, as a true upper class citizen from the homeland, she is able to distinguish the difference between the reality and the mimic: the wealthy Australian colonists are *almost the same but not quite* the same as the upper class British citizens living in England.

Just as Bhabha argues that the colonizers force the colonized into a system of mimicry, in Australia the mimicry of British class systems forces Magwitch to create his own mimicry. The danger is that Magwitch is not a colonial subject mimicking the colonizer, but rather the wealth that he gains in Australia allows him to engage in a form of "colonial mimicry" at home on English soil, which is a far more dangerous place. While the colonizer encourages the colonized to mimic them in the colony, mimicry brought into the homeland has the ability to disrupt patriarchal authority and allows for social transgressions in *Great Expectations* that would have otherwise been impossible. In the colony, the colonizer is often able to tell the difference between the real and the mimic because they are able to discern the physical differences between themselves and the natives and thus the colonizer is able to control "authorized versions of otherness" (Bhabha 383). When Australian "natives" return "to, or perhaps for the first time [visit] England, with the purpose of remaining there to enjoy their accumulated wealth... after a

short trial [they] come back to the colony heartily disgusted” (Meredith 51) because it is clear from their “nasal twang” (Meredith 50) that they are not English-born citizens. The physical difference between Australian-born citizens and English-born citizens prevents the Australians’ unauthorized mimic from being entirely successful, and the Australians are unable to integrate into English society, as they have no fixed place in social and economic hierarchies in the homeland. When colonial mimicry is transported into the homeland, as it is in Dickens’s novel, it becomes almost impossible to tell the difference between the real and the mimic because those mimicking are physically the same as those who are being mimicked. As a boy who is born and raised in England, Pip does not have a “nasal twang” or any other physical difference that enables those around him to distinguish the difference between a real English gentleman and Pip’s mimic of one. It is this element of mimicry that sensationalizes Dickens’s plot and connects *Great Expectations* to the emerging sensation fiction genre, as the reader does not know for most of the work whether or not mimicry will be successful. For a Victorian audience the success of lower-class characters being able to mimic the upper classes without anyone the wiser would have created great anxiety. If the mimic that Magwitch puts in motion through his connection to the emerging Empire in Australia is successful, it creates the possibility that emerging imperial interests could easily compromise English patriarchal authority.

In *Great Expectations* mimicry is enabled both by wealth gained in Australia and by the physical distance that exists between Australia and England.

The money that Magwitch gains enables him to set Pip up as a gentleman and the distance between the homeland and the Australian colonies allows secrets to be more easily established and maintained. Australia allows the means for Pip and Estella to mimic the life of upper class citizens without knowing that they were performing the mimic and without those around them being on to the game as well. While not normally considered a nineteenth-century sensation writer, in *Great Expectations* Dickens is clearly influenced by sensation novelists, such as his protégée Wilkie Collins and Mary Elizabeth Braddon, who employed mimicry in order to explore “the most mysterious of mysteries, the mysteries which are at our own doors” (James 119). In sensation novels, mimicry became a convention that enabled “the most mysterious of mysteries” to infiltrate the nineteenth-century homeland. It is the elements of mimicry and secrecy in *Great Expectations* that links Dickens’s work with the sensation fiction of the nineteenth-century, while much of the work remains rooted in realism. Without the novel’s relationship to Australia, Dickens could not have created the sensational plot that made *Great Expectations* so popular with his audience. While compelling arguments have been made for why *Great Expectations* should only be considered a sensation novel and Eliane Freedgood wants us to view the work as a realist text with an “imperial fetish” (Freedgood 84), the term “sensational realism” set forth by Jerome Meckier seems more appropriate given that Meckier’s definition views Dickens’s work as a mix of both genres. Freedgood is right to point out that Dickens’s work remains rooted in literary

realism. I argue, however, that Dickens's references to Empire in the text are not a fetish, but rather help him employ the sensational convention of mimicry in order to further his plot and excite his Victorian audience to buy the serialized work. If the mimicry that Magwitch attempts in the novel is successful his adopted "son" Pip will get all of the benefits of the Australian colonies with none of the hard work. He benefits monetarily and socially without ever having to leave the homeland and Magwitch's desire for absolute secrecy combined with the distance between England and Australia keeps the taint of the empire away from Pip's financial gain, so that he can improve his class standing without the prejudice of English society. Pip's success would be an issue of anxiety for Dickens's Victorian audience and the sensational aspect of not knowing if the mimic will succeed or not until the end of the work extends the anxiety throughout the novel.

Mimicry is able to flourish secretly in *Great Expectations* through Magwitch's connection to colonial Australia, but is first established by the criminal activity in the novel as Magwitch learns the art of mimicry through his connections with Compeyson before he is deported. According to Magawitch, not only is Compeyson's business "the swindling, handwriting forging, stolen bank-note passing, and suchlike" (Dickens 372), he is also able to pass for a gentleman so well that he easily fits into the upper class world of Miss Havisham in order to trick her out of a considerable sum of money. As a counterfeiter and forger, Compeyson is the ultimate mimic. Marie McAllister points out the power that writing has in Dickens's work as she discusses the passage near the end of the

novel when Orlick threatens Pip in the marsh. McAllister offers an appealing commentary on the role that handwriting plays in the work, but I believe it is not writing itself, rather the power that writing has to further mimicry of those who employ it, that is truly powerful in the tale. When Orlick holds Pip captive and brags to him that Compeyson and his new friends are able to “to writes fifty hands, and that’s not like sneaking you as writes but one” (Dickens 450), he openly shows admiration for a man who is able to trick those around him into believing he is something that he is not. Compeyson is not only able to read and write, but, more importantly, he is able to mimic the handwriting of at least fifty other men, which gives him the power to be someone that he is not, and gives Orlick the power to trick Pip into the marsh.

Compeyson’s influence over Magwitch is pervasive throughout the novel, even though in an effort to sensationalize Magwitch in the tale, readers do not find out the story of Magwitch and Compeyson until over halfway through the text. When Magwitch recounts the tale of his criminal exploits to Herbert and Pip he explains that Compeyson’s mimicry is made possible by the fact that “he’d been to a public boarding-school and had learning,” which Magwitch then connects with the fact that Compeyson is “a smooth one to talk, and was a dab at the ways of gentlefolks” (Dickens 371). When Magwitch becomes Pip’s benefactor one of the first order of business is that Pip “must be better educated, in accordance with [his] altered position” (Dickens 171) much like the education that enabled Compeyson to live undetected amongst members of the gentility, like

Miss Havisham. Through his relationship with Compeyson, Magwitch, who views himself as Compeyson's "black slave" (Dickens 374), learns the ways of the master, ways that he later uses to create Pip's mimic. Like Lucy in *Lady Audley's Secret*, Magwitch links himself with the colonized when he refers to himself as the "black slave." Later, when he is forced into Australia Magwitch will find that "Aborigines, convicts, gold diggers, and free settlers... were classified according to race, ethnicity, economic status, and... reason for emigration" (Meyers 5). Even though Magwitch is not an Aborigine, his criminal status marks him much in the same way being non-English marks the native populations of British colonies. When Magwitch learns the secrets of English mimicry from Compeyson he is much like a colonial slave always "in debt to him, under his thumb, always a working" (Dickens 374), but once he is in Australia he finds a way to use the ideas of mimicry that he learned from his master (ie the English colonizer) against other English colonizers in the homeland.

In Dickens's novel the mimicry of English patriarchal class structures that Louisa Anne Meredith writes of in her travel narrative make it impossible for Magwitch to become a true English gentleman either in England or in Australia, even with his increased wealth. Dickens sums up the Victorian English view of the Australian colonies when Wemmick describes it to Pip as "a certain part of the world where a good many people go, not always in gratification of their own inclinations, and not quite irrespective of the government expense" (Dickens 393). In *The Fatal Shore*, Robert Hughes notes, "the colonial elite after 1800 had arrived

at an idea of gentility... that was distinguished by its inability to relax” and that “all colonial standards-of rank, etiquette, taste and the ‘interesting’- were English” (Hughes 124-125). When the Australian emigrants mimicked “an idea of gentility that was already becoming, if not obsolete, at the certainly old fashioned in England” (Hughes 324), they created class structures in the new world that were even more rigid than those that had been left behind in the homeland. It is this description that allows J.J. Healy to describe nineteenth century “Australia as the cellar of Great Britain... an overlap society which derived its institutions and its social behaviour from Great Britain” (Healy 5). In order to preserve their social standing, upper class emigrants in Australia used the presence of ex convicts to assure their own social standing and uphold English institutions and acceptable social behaviors that had been authorized by patriarchal authority in the homeland. As a convicted criminal Magwitch was able to financially better himself in Australia in a way that was not possible for him in his homeland, but his conviction and transportation would have prevented him from ever being a true gentleman in the new colony given the stigma attached. Magwitch tells Pip that in Australia, even with his wealth, people used to look down on him when they said to each other, “He was a convict, a few years ago and is a ignorant common fellow now, for all he’s lucky” and that “the blood horses of them colonists might fling up the dust over [him] as [he] was walking” (Dickens 348). The English class structures in the Australian colonies might have only been a mimicry of those in the homeland, but they were enough of a hindrance in the

early nineteenth century that, according to Magwitch, he was unable to overcome the prejudices that existed in Australia against convicts. Meredith supports Dickens's depiction of Australia when she writes of the convicts who have served their time, but are still strongly discriminated against in the colonies.

Magwitch understands that, due to his criminal conviction, he will never be a true gentleman in Australia or England, so instead he focuses his dreams of class transgression and upward mobility upon Pip and uses ideas that he has learned from Compeyson. Magwitch is able to persevere in Australia because when people look down upon him he knows "in secret that [he] was making a gentleman" (Dickens 348). Rather than rail against the hierarchal class structures that limit his own mobility, Magwitch devises a plan that allows him to subvert these class structures by creating "his own gentleman" (Dickens 348). Magwitch uses the wealth that he gained through hard work in Australia to help the poor orphan Pip to forgo the blacksmith apprenticeship that he is meant for in order to lead the leisurely life of an English gentleman in London. It is Magwitch's wealth from Australia that allows Pip to take lodging with Herbert in London and receive a gentleman's education from Mr. Pocket. Magwitch does not create Pip's discontent with his lower class station in life or his dream for learning, as Miss Havisham and Estella create his dissatisfaction with his life, but Magwitch's connection with Australia does make it possible for Pip to climb the social ladder and gain an education that will serve him well, even when the wealth is gone.

As the stepbrother of the local blacksmith, when Pip's parents die he becomes the natural choice for Joe's eventual apprentice with the expectation that he will one day fill Joe's role and occupation in the Grange. Content with his place in the social hierarchy, and the position that Joe believes is "calculated to lead to larks" (Dickens 134), Pip looks forward to the life that has been marked out for him. It is not until Pip meets Estella that he dreams of anything beyond his home at the Grange. Pip's connection to Miss Havisham allows the idea of expectations to touch not only Pip but his sister and Uncle Pumblechook as well. In Miss Havisham's home Pip is exposed to a world outside the one that he was born into and begins to dream that he too can one day lead the life of the upper classes even though he tells Biddy that he knows "he never shall be" (Dickens 162) a gentleman. After having his eyes opened to the fact that his life was "all coarse and common" (Dickens 140), the forge that Pip had believed to be "the glowing road to manhood and independence" (Dickens 140) becomes a place that he is ashamed of and "would not have Miss Havisham or Estella see... on any account" (Dickens 140). The apprenticeship to Joe, and likewise the life at the Grange that Pip should have been content with, becomes everything that Pip hopes to one-day escape and, like Jude in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, Pip becomes miserable for he learns that "it is a most miserable thing to be ashamed of home" (Dickens 140) but a thing that could not be helped when "the change was made in him" (Dickens 140). Once Pip's eyes are open to the realization of his social standing relative to others around him, he can no longer be the innocent

child who was content with the life of a blacksmith's apprentice and the hopes of being a blacksmith.

While Miss Havisham creates a desire for class transgression within Pip, it is Magwitch and Australia that provide the means for his mimicry in England. Magwitch's wealth, and Pip's kindness to him as a child, allows the means for Pip to assume the guise of an English gentleman for most of Dickens's novel. Magwitch's money provides Pip with the means to look and act that part of an English gentleman. Through his new found expectations Pip is able to dress himself in "an outfit that required the services of so many trades" (Dickens 183-184), take rooms in both London and at the Pockets, and acquire an education. Though he "is not designed for any profession" yet it is expected that Pip will need to "hold [his] own with the average of young men in prosperous circumstances" (Dickens 227). Unlike the young Herbert Pocket who is eager to join the middle class and work for his living, which is why he is constantly "looking about" (Dickens 214) in order to find a profession, Pip is meant to live the life of an upper class gentleman who is not expected to earn his keep. Magwitch tells himself that he is "making a better gentleman nor [those in Australia] will ever be" (Dickens 348) and in doing so needs to create a gentleman who is above a profession or working for his living. In Dickens's novel, Magwitch sets Pip up with an education that befits a young man of expectations, but at the same time makes it clear that Pip will not have to ruin his higher-class reputation by ever working for the money that he has been given. If

Pip were to be trained for a profession, as Herbert hopes to be, he would become a member of the middle class gentry rather than the upper class gentleman that Magwitch dreams he will be.

Unlike the mimicry that Bhabha sees occurring in the English colonies where the colonized is able to tell the difference between themselves and the colonizer, in *Great Expectations* the people who surround Pip are unable, for the most part, to tell the difference between reality and the mimic. Even as the one who is performing the mimic, Pip remains unconscious of himself as the mimicker, until he discovers the true nature of his benefactor. For Bhabha, a key component in keeping control over mimicry in the colonies is knowing what is real and what is a mimic, in *Great Expectations* those around Pip forget what is real and what is the mimic, which is one of the dangers that Pip's mimicry poses to patriarchal authority in the homeland. As soon as Pip's expectations are known, people's attitudes towards him change as evidenced by his first trip to town after he comes into his property. Pip finds that when he mentions his expectations "a change passed over Mr. Trabb" (Dickens 182) as he becomes increasingly helpful and the other vendors and townsmen follow suit. During his first trip into town "Pip" becomes "Mr. Pip" as slowly those around him join the mimicry.

Performance is apparent as those men who had previously ignored him, bend over backward to sell him their wares and go out of their way to shake his hand.

The relationship between language and mimicry in the text is furthered when Joe visits Pip in London for the first time. Pip observes that "whenever

[Joe] subsided into affection, he called me Pip, and whenever he relapsed into politeness he called me Sir” (Dickens 253). Later in the text Orlick points out the connection between handwriting and mimicry, but the language in the text also adds to the mimic that Pip is performing and that those around him are participating in. As one of the most genuine characters in the novel Joe is not intentionally putting on an act for Pip, but he is unsure of how he is meant to treat him because of the mimic that Pip is enacting. When Joe slips into moments of familiar affection he remembers the lower class boy whom he loved. When Joe regains control of himself, he seems to be conscious that the boy he loved is not the same as the upper class gentleman in front of him and thus acts in the way that he assumes he is expected to. The simple, lower class Joe is content with his social standing and as such cannot seem to understand Pip’s desire to be an English gentleman at the expense of who he really is. Joe is often unable to read the social cues that have become second nature to Pip and forgets the mimic at times, which is illustrated in his language. When he has time to think before speaking, Joe remembers that he is to address Pip as the more formal “sir,” but when he speaks without thinking he reverts back to the more affectionate “Pip.” Joe’s conversations with Pip also move back and forth between formal addresses, such as Joe thanking Pip for “the honour of breaking wittles in the company and abode of gentlemen” when he remembers Pip’s station, to less formal discussions of events at the Grange in which a clear lower class dialect enters Joe’s speech (Dickens 253). Joe enacts a mimic in speaking with Pip that parallels Pip’s

mimicry in the novel; however, Joe is unable to maintain the same performance that Pip does, as Joe is content with his social class and never successful in his mimicry. When Joe dresses up, it is painfully obvious that he is not comfortable in the clothes that he has assumed and thus enacts a persona as well. Pip on the other hand is comfortable as the mimicker and for the most part those around him support his new role.

When Pip returns to the “quiet old town” on a later trip “one or two of the tradespeople even darted out of their shops and went a little way down the street before [him], that they might turn, as if they had forgotten something, and pass [him] face to face” (Dickens 274). Speaking in retrospect, Pip acknowledges the mimicry that was occurring when he says that on these “occasions [he] didn’t know whether they or [him] made the worse pretence” (Dickens 274), but it is only in retrospect that he is able to see the performance. Trabb’s boy brings Pip’s mimicry to everyone’s attention when he exaggerates Pip’s performance as a gentleman. As Pip passes him on the street, “the knees of Trabb’s boy smote together, his hair uprose, his cap fell off, he trembled violently in every limb, staggered out into the road, and crying to the populace, ‘Hold me! I’m so frightened!’ feigned to be in a paroxysm of terror and contrition, occasioned by the dignity of Pip’s appearance” (Dickens 274). At the time Pip is annoyed that the lower class boy has the courage to openly mock him on the street. Even though they come from similar backgrounds, Pip understands himself to be Trabb’s boy’s superior, and is angered by the fact that Trabb’s boy refuses to play

the role of the subservient. As Trabb's boy continues to run ahead in order to double back and repeat his performance, he parodies the act that the townspeople and Pip are performing in earnest. The young Pip is unable to see the similarities between what is happening with him and the townspeople and what is happening between him and Trabb's boy, however, looking back on the moment, the adult Pip better understands both forms of mimicry.

As much as Pip wants to be an English gentleman, the Grange and Joe serve as a constant reminder of where he is from and make him feel guilty about the decisions that he makes. To mask his uneasiness with his new status and to strengthen the mimic, Pip employs a small boy who he refers to as the "Avenger" as his servant. Pip takes the boy from his washwoman's family and "clothed him with a blue coat, canary waistcoat, white cravat, creamy breeches, and ... boots" in order to assure that boy will remain in "bondage and slavery" to him (Dickens 248). The only way that Pip is able to assure himself that he is in fact the gentleman he wants to be is by comparing himself with someone who is lower on the social ladder. By employing the young Avenger, Pip creates someone who is lower in the social hierarchy and who must do whatever Pip demands, which reaffirms his upper class standing and position of gentleman. As Robert Hughes points out, "English gentility defined itself in relation to an aristocracy above and a peasantry and serving classes below" (Hughes 324) Given Pip's confusion with his new position, in order for him to know where his place is in the social ladder of English class structure he must employ someone that is below him, as Pip is

always sure to be higher than the lowest class if he is able to employ someone in a class lower than his. A mark of the gentry in England was that they were able to afford those of the servant class. Pip uses the Avenger to further establish and define his new position, both for himself and those around him because “acceptance by peers required fluent participation in a core of beliefs and rituals” (Young 15). Pip demonstrates his willingness to participate in upper class rituals by hiring the Avenger, thus hoping to ensure to acceptance of his new upper class peers, such as the men of the Finch Club.

Much like the middle class English emigrants in Australia, Pip realizes that there can be no upper classes if there are no lower classes. In Australia emigrants create class barriers by differentiating between those who emigrate of their own free will and those who are forced to Australia due to criminal conviction. By setting themselves against the convicts, Australian settlers who are of the lower classes in England are able to elevate their class standing and at the same time keep convicts on the same social standing as native aboriginal citizens. In order to mimic the class structures of Britain, there have to be low born and highborn members of society; when that distinction fails in Australia an artificial class structure is put into place that creates levels of society based on the nationality of one’s birth and reason for emigration. Unlike the Aborigines, convicts were better off in terms of wealth in the colonies. Like the free men and women who emigrated, convicts were often able to better themselves financially, but in order to make free men feel better about their place in the social order, they

were stigmatized socially. As Penelope Hetherington observes, “there is considerable evidence that... the colonists of the south viewed the Aboriginal people, both adults and children, as potential sources of labor” (Hetherington 101). By using the native people as servants and workers, English settlers are able to make themselves distinct from those who need to work to earn a living, much like Pip does in his relationship with the Avenger.

Pip’s uneasiness with his new social position, however, is reflected in the awkwardness of his relationship with the Avenger. Pip knows that he needs to find something for the Avenger to do in order for the boy to truly be his servant, yet at the same time he lacks any concrete need for a servant and struggles to find things that he needs done. He laments, “I had to find him a little to do and a great deal to eat; and with both of these requirements he haunted my existence” (Dickens 248). Rather than make Pip’s life easier, the Avenger is constantly in need of both food and supplies, which are expensive, and work to do, which is not readily found. If, as previously established, it is necessary for Pip to have a servant in order to continue the mimicry, the failure of the relationship between Pip and the Avenger sheds light on Pip’s own mimicry and illustrates how uncomfortable he is in his new station. Pip subconsciously seems to understand the Avenger’s position when he is tempted to bring him on his visit home so that the town can see “the Mercenary publicly airing his boots in the archway of the Blue Boar’s posting yard” but decides not to let Trabb’s boy “worm himself into his intimacy and tell him things” (Dickens 255). Pip fears that Trabb’s boy has the

power to tell his servant the truth of Pip's upbringing and fortune, which would ruin the authority he has over his servant. The fact that Pip does not take the Avenger with him when he goes back to the Grange and wishes he had sent the Avenger away when Joe comes to visit, indicate the tension he feels between his new position as English gentleman and his old position as Blacksmith's apprentice at the Grange. He feels that his position can be undone at any time if someone like his servant were to know the truth of his past.

Mimicry in the novel is not limited to Pip and his expectations. In addition to being the catalyst for Pip's mimicry and class elevation, Australia also allows for Estella to become the ideal English lady who Pip longs for and other upper class young men chase after. Unbeknownst to Pip and the audience for most of the novel, Estella is born to poor lower class parents, both of whom, in the natural cycle of poverty at this time, end up in the English penal system under the protection of Mr. Jaggers. Like George Talboys in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret*, Magwitch abandons his family and goes and makes his fortune in colonial Australia. While Magwitch's criminal deportation is not voluntary, as George's abandonment of his wife and child is, the outcomes are still the same. Magwitch's daughter and wife are left without a strong male provider in an English patriarchal system that offers little options for abandoned families. Thus, Jaggers and the justice system are forced to intercede in the family in order to protect the English domestic space from corruption and patriarchal authority from being undermined. Estella's father is well on his way to

deportation and her mother is in prison waiting for her capital trial, while Estella is taken by Jaggers to live with Miss Havisham in the hopes that she might overcome her early disadvantages. Jaggers attempts to end the cycle of poverty for Estella, when he sets her up in an upper class home to be adopted by a lonely woman, yet instead he simply puts into motion a system of performance and mimicry much like the one he engineers between Magwitch and Pip.

When the English judicial system forces Magwitch's deportation to Australia and his wife is left in the protection of Jaggers, the low born child Estella finds herself in the new world of Miss Havisham's home, much like the young Aborigines of the Stolen Generation who found themselves in the homes of white settlers when they were taken from their parents in order to be educated in the culture of the homeland by the colonizers. The argument for forced conversion of the aboriginal children in Australia, "that sustained contact with white culture... could improve the home life, education, and future opportunities available to indigenous children" (Meyers 142) is employed by Jaggers when he explains to Pip that in taking Estella from her lower class parents, he hoped to save her from "certain destruction" (Dickens 435). While in Dickens's novel the reason for removing Estella is class based, as Jaggers hopes that her contact with the upper class Miss Havisham will improve her chances "to be saved" (Dickens 435), in Australia conversion of the aboriginal children appears to have been more racially motivated as part of the English "civilizing mission" (Meyers 142). In both the real history of the Stolen Generation and Dickens's fictional narrative,

however, the outcome is the same as a child is forcibly removed from a birth family in order to be raised in an adopted home that has been deemed “better” by a patriarchal authority or institution. Like the aboriginal children who are stolen from their parents are subjected to colonization in their new white homes, at Miss Havisham’s Estella is placed under the dominating influence of Miss Havisham who has complete and total control over Estella’s upbringing and teaches her to “wreck [Miss Havisham’s] revenge on men” (Dickens 329). Miss Havisham uses Estella to avenge herself upon the entire male population who she holds accountable for her broken heart. Not only is Estella taught to mimic upper class women and be the perfect lady, a position she is not born into but rather adopted into, she is also taught how to attract men so that she might cause them pain. Rather than develop her own understanding of love and the world, Estella is subjected to the twisted understanding that Miss Havisham has of a world that she has not seen in quite some time. Like Pip, Estella is given an education that prepares her for the mimicry she is expected to perform. She is taught to appear as the angel of the house figure and, consequently, she has “admirers without end” (Dickens 327), who are unable to see through the act that she is performing. Pip understands that he is being “made use of... to tease other admirers” (Dickens 327) but prides himself that, like Trabb’s boy and himself, he alone can see through Estella’s mimic.

While Magwitch seems to understand why he can never successfully rise above his station, he fails to recognize why Pip cannot. It is true that through

Magwitch's hard work Pip gets all of the benefits of the Australian colonies, but does not have to do any of the work himself. Like other upper class young men, Pip has the expectation of inheriting a fortune that he does not need to work for. A significant mark of difference between the established upper classes and emerging middle classes of English society was that middle class men had to work for their wealth, while upper class men inherited their wealth through family connections. The money that Magwitch gains in the Australian colonies, allows Pip to inherit wealth like a true upper class gentleman, which makes him distinct from those who have to work for a living. Magwitch, however, does not seem to understand English society as well as he thinks he does. In elevating Pip beyond the means that he is born into at the Grange, Pip is able to mimic the life of the English gentleman but due to his low birth he is never a true gentleman, a fact that is clearly illustrated when the "portable property" is gone and Pip sinks to the middle class.

Ultimately, the mimic fails in *Great Expectations*, which alleviates the anxiety that Dickens's audience would have felt over the possibilities of successful class transgression. The fact that Compeyson is caught and convicted means that he is unable to sustain his criminal mimicry, even if the judge fails to see him as the true mastermind of the operation and Magwitch receives the harsher sentence. Magwitch refuses to stay in Australia and is unable to survive in England. His death marks the end of his secret colonial intrusion and of Pip's higher-class expectations and dreams. Kirsty Reid argues that when published

“Magwitch would have been read by some as a symbolic reaffirmation of the horrors unleashed when the monstrous convict came ‘home’” (Reid 59), but Magwitch’s return in the novel does not seem to mark the return of the monster as much as it marks the end of the mystery of Pip’s benefactor. Once readers know that Pip’s wealth comes from the criminal Magwitch and his success in Australia, Pip and those around him are suddenly able to better see through the mimicry that he has been performing and the absolute power of patriarchal authority is reestablished.

While Dickens was eventually convinced to write two different endings to his novel (one more conventional than the other), it is telling that in both endings readers are left with a Pip and an Estella who are decidedly middle class and the mimicry that Magwitch and Miss Havisham have put in motion, with the help of Jaggers, is at an end. In Dickens’s original 1861 ending, Pip encounters a married Estella who confuses Joe’s child for his, a mistake he does not correct, thus signaling an end to their relationship. Convinced by his friend Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton that his Victorian audience required a happier ending to the novel, Dickens rewrote his original ending to hint at the possibility of reconciliation and a future relationship between the middle class Pip and Estella (Dickens 510). In both endings, neither Magwitch nor Miss Havisham are able to exist in England and end up dead, while the property that Estella inherits from Miss Havisham has been squandered by Estella’s first husband and the portable property that Magwitch brings into the England from the Empire is seized by the crown upon

his arrest. Readers are then left with either the allusion of a renewed connection between Estella and the middle class Pip or Estella's marriage to an English doctor, thus firmly establishing her middle class position. Pip, due to the large debts left over from his days mimicking the life of an English gentleman, is forced to join Herbert in the East where the role between colonizer and colonized is clearer than in Australia, and he and Herbert are able to make their fortunes as imperial traders.

Pip struggles with his mimicry throughout the novel because he is attempting to subvert hierarchical class structures that are the foundation of the Victorian patriarchal authority and economic and social structures. Herbert on the other hand sees what pining over lost social standing has done to his family, particularly his mother, and is content with finding himself in the middle class and working for a living. The money that Magwitch gives to Pip is unable to make Pip a true upper class gentleman because of its connection to criminal enterprise and the Empire, however, it is successful in establishing Herbert's career as he has middle class ambitions that will eventually land him in the heart of the British Empire. Herbert understands that "when you have once made your capital, you have nothing to do but employ it" (Dickens 215) and the fact that his capital originally comes from a convict in Australia does not matter. Ironically, the "portable property" that Pip finds so objectionable when he hears his expectations come from Magwitch and not Miss Havisham, is the same money that makes it possible for both him and Herbert to end the novel as middle class imperial

adventurists. Pip's mimicry of upper class English life, enabled by Magwitch and Australia, creates instability in the homeland, as it is an unauthorized representation that cannot be allowed to succeed by those with legitimate authority. The imperial enterprises that Pip and Herbert end the novel employed with are distinct from Magwitch's imperial enterprise in that Pip and Herbert's activities are authorized by the state. Thus, unlike Magwitch, Pip and Herbert have legitimate authority to bring the wealth of the Empire back into the homeland and in doing so participate in the English economy without destabilizing patriarchal authority or disrupting social structures.

CHAPTER THREE
DESENSATIONALIZING THE SENSATIONAL: BIGAMY IN ANTHONY
TROLLOPE'S REALISM AND MARY ELIZABETH BRADDON'S
SENSATION FICTION

While there were clear differences between nineteenth-century realists and Victorian sensation fiction writers in the early half of the nineteenth-century, by midcentury differences between English realists were also being marked out and divisions were beginning to form that would shape the late century works of both schools. "By 1860, Victorian realists were choosing sides: adherents of George Eliot's homely realism in one corner; in the other, sensational realists such as Dickens and Wilkie Collins" (Meckier, "The Three..." 166). As discussed in the previous chapter, the influence that editing Wilkie Collins's work had on the later works of Dickens produced works of realism with sensational elements that left novels like *Great Expectations* straddling the line between genres. As a novel, *Great Expectations* is rooted in nineteenth-century realism, much like his earlier works. At the same time, however, in *Great Expectations* Dickens appears eager to explore the possibilities and dangers that forced immigration and colonial return might pose both for the convicts who are deported to Australia and for the people and social structures in the homeland that they leave behind. In order for Dickens to open his realistic text up to a discussion of Australia he employs the sensational convention of mimicry thus blending genres. Unlike Dickens, and in part in reaction to him, Anthony Trollope adhered strictly to the "homely realism"

of George Eliot, yet by the second half of the nineteenth century Trollope also seemed willing to explore issues of Empire and colonialism that took his realism out of the homeland. This willingness to engage in literary discussions of Empire in his later works reflected the growing changes in the way that Empire, and Australia in particular, was being perceived by English citizens in the homeland by the end of the nineteenth century.

While Mary Elizabeth Braddon's character George moves from the homeland to Australia, the colonies function more as a plot device to further the element of sensation in the novel, as she never actually shifts the plot of the text to the Empire. Given his experiences in the Australian colonies and the travel narratives that he wrote as a consequence of these experiences, unlike Braddon and Dickens, Trollope is not afraid to narrate the plot of his text away from England and does so for multiple chapters of the novel. Like George, John Caldigate leaves England to better his fortune in order to support the woman he loves; however, unlike George and *Lady Audley's Secret*, the narrative of Trollope's novel and thus the readers, travel into the Australian colonies with John. Unlike *Lady Audley's Secret* and *Great Expectations*, where Australia emerges as a convenient place to rehabilitate a character who is then able to gain wealth as well, in *John Caldigate* readers get a first hand account of the colonies from the point of view of Trollope's main character and are better able to judge for themselves what life is like outside of the homeland. The sensation fiction genre relies upon mystery and suspense to sensationalize the plot of its texts, but

nineteenth-century realism allows the audience to know everything about the characters and plot as it is unfolding. Readers never see Magwitch or George in the colonies because colonial Australia was an unknown place for most of Dickens and Braddon's midcentury readers and a literary representation of Australia in these works would have eliminated some of the mystery that the novels attempted to create around their characters imperial connections. By 1879, however, newspaper accounts and travel narratives of Australia were quite popular in the homeland. Therefore, both Trollope and his audience would have been more familiar with daily life in the colonies, making Australia less of a mysterious destination. While a midcentury audience might not have been ready for a literary depiction of Australia, by later in the century transportation of convicts had ceased and "assisted immigration, paid for from colonial land revenues, began and continued" (Richards 78), making Australia a popular place for English emigration. Unlike earlier readers, Trollope's audience would have been more than ready for the realistic portrayal of the colonies that his text presents. Even though much of Trollope's text is set in the homeland, and there is little doubt that his title character will return to England once he makes his fortune in the gold mines, the novel clearly engages with the Australian colonies as a physical space that extends beyond a simple plot device.

Bigamy is an issue that was often sensationalized in early and midcentury British novels, but by the end of the century had found its way into the nineteenth-century realism. Often enabled by British colonialism and the increase in travel to

and from the colonies, bigamy was an issue that threatened the very nature of Victorian life and stability, yet at the same time was not entirely uncommon, and by late century was perhaps not even sensational, which is reflected in the evolution of its literary representation. In a patriarchal social system of primogeniture that relied upon female purity and marriage to ensure a legitimate male child would inherit the family estate and replace the father in the hierarchy of social responsibility, bigamy disrupted the fabric of English political and social systems. As daughters, women were to be protected by their fathers and as wives, that responsibility was passed to their husbands who were responsible for supporting and watching over them. Diane Archibald acknowledges “in the nineteenth century, bigamy was not uncommon, especially since divorce for most couples, was prohibitively expensive and all but impossible” (Archibald 101), while Janet Meyers refutes this argument in her work by engaging with the transcripts of actual nineteenth-century bigamy cases in England (Meyers 78). Archibald argues that the widespread presence of bigamy in England made it so common that its occurrence was rarely given much thought by the end of the century; however, Meyers quotes journal articles and court transcripts from the period to argue that bigamy cases were often prosecuted and their presence in court was sensationalized in the newspapers of the time. The difference between Archibald and Meyers’s arguments goes to the heart of the difference between bigamy’s literary representations in works nineteenth-century realism as opposed to works of sensation fiction from the same period. In *John Caldigate*, Anthony

Trollope takes up the topic of bigamy in an attempt to desensationalize the issue through his realistic exploration of the Australian colonies and English homeland. The plot of Trollope's text follows John Calidgate from disinheritance and ruin at Cambridge, to success in the goldmines of Australia and back to England to be accused, tried, imprisoned, and finally pardoned for bigamy. By examining Trollope's text along side the sensational fiction work of Mary Elizabeth Braddon, we are able to see the role that genre plays in nineteenth-century literary depictions of the Australian colonies and the changing relationship between England and her colonies at the end of the century.

Given the dangers that bigamy posed to the structured class and gender hierarchies in England, its presence in society produced great anxiety for both male and female citizens, which made it a popular topic in sensation fiction, such as *Lady Audley's Secret*, because it was an evasion of social structures that naturally invited secrecy and intrigue. While the act of bigamy may have been commonplace in Victorian England, as Archibald argues, its presence certainly was sensational, as proven by journalistic accounts of popular bigamy cases in period. As discussed in chapter one, Lady Audley's first husband leaving for Australia makes bigamy possible in the text, however, the social transgression on the part of Lucy Audley is not discovered until George returns to the homeland, which puts into motion a plot that enables Robert Audley to expose her duplicity. In *Lady Audley's Secret*, Mary Elizabeth Braddon investigates the sensational aspects of both bigamy and Empire, by exploring female class and gender

transgressions that result from the influence of imperialism upon the all-important Victorian institution of marriage. In *John Caldigate*, John's leaving for the colonies weakens the patriarchy that relies on a system of primogeniture to ensure its authority. It is not until he returns, however, that the domestic space is compromised, the institution of marriage, upon which the domestic space relied, is threatened and Hester Bolton's position of angel of the house is put in jeopardy. When George leaves for the colonies he forces his wife out of her angel of the house position. Since many men were leaving for the colonies by the time that Trollope writes his text, it is not John's departure but rather his return from the colonies that opens the domestic space up to imperial corruption in the novel.

Hester Bolton is the model English female who serves as John's tie to the homeland when abroad. When John first encounters Hester before leaving for Australia he thinks she is "the most lovely human being that he had ever beheld... [with] her bright brown hair simple brushed from off her forehead and tied in a knot behind her head" (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 16). John is instantly drawn to Hester's beauty and innocence as he often compares the simplicity of her dress and manner to that of a child. After meeting her only once John decides, "it would lend a fine romance to his life if he could resolve to come back, when he should be laden with gold, and make Hester Bolton his wife" (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 18) and does just that. John clings to his memories of Hester much like Pip clings to his relationship with Estella and George clings to his memories of his wife, as all of them see in the acquisition of these women a recognition of the success of

their hopes and dreams. In Australia, John acknowledges, “there had been something in the thought of Hester Bolton which has taken him back from the roughness of his new life, from the doubtful respectability of Mrs. Smith, from the squalor of the second-class, from the whiskey laden snores of Dick Shand, to a sweeter, brighter, cleaner world” (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 75). While Mrs. Smith’s duplicity is instantly recognizable by the fact that she “talks a great deal better than her gown” (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 40), Hester’s purity is only reinforced in John’s memories of her contrasted against his impressions of Mrs. Smith in Australia. Hester (who John leaves behind in England and vows he will return to marry once he has made his fortune in Australia) is presented as the antithesis of the sexually promiscuous widow, Mrs. Smith.

John returns to England with the intention of seeking out the woman whose memory had sustained him while abroad as long as the reality lives up to his expectations of her and she still is the figure of domestic virtue that he remembers: “He had come back quite fortified in his resolution of making Hester Bolton his wife, if he should find Hester Bolton willing, and if she should have at all into that form and manner, into those ways of look, of speech, and of gait, which he had pictured to himself when thinking of her” (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 123). When John returns a wealthy man who has been reestablished as the heir to Folking and reunited with his father, all that is left for him to assume his place in the British patriarchy is to marry a pure, innocent woman who will provide him with legitimate male heirs. John “possessed a certain aptitude for romance which

told him continually that Hester Bolton was the dream of his life... now he had come back resolved to attempt the reality, - unless he should find that the Hester Bolton of Chesterton was altogether different from the Hester Bolton of his dreams” (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 125). After his relationship with Mrs. Smith in Australia, John is careful to make sure that she is the same innocent young lady who he remembers and has not been tainted in his absence. As the newly established heir, John’s responsibility is to find an angel of the house figure to create the perfect family and he relies upon Hester Bolton to fill this role.

When John visits Chesterton and determines for himself that “the gold was real gold” (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 134), meaning that Hester Bolton was a real English lady who could fill the lady of house role in Folking, he quickly makes her his wife and she fulfills the angel of the house role in reality. Hester’s upbringing prepares her to be the perfect English wife. She is raised in seclusion where she “does not see people often enough to forget them” (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 132) and her mother instills upon her the absolute rules of religion and social protocol. When John marries her, Hester Bolton clearly is the angel of the house figure of Trollope’s text whose memory protects John from the evil temptations that his fellow miners fall victim to in Australia and reminds him of the goodness of England. Given her mother’s religious fanaticism, Hester is an innocent bride who has rarely left the protection of her parents’ home. The qualities of purity and innocence that are so important to John when he marries

Helen are the very traits that are tainted by his connection to Australia and Mrs. Smith's allegations of bigamy.

The patriarchy is weakened before John leaves for Australia, when he gives up his rightful inheritance for ready cash; however, the domestic space remains pure until, upon his return, John brings the Empire into the homeland, which forces his wife Hester out of her traditional role and her angel of the house position is corrupted. The blackmail and bigamy allegations are only possible because of John's connections to Australia and the people who he interacted with on the boat and in the gold mines there. In their travel narratives both Louisa Ann Meredith and Trollope comment on the fact that the boat is a place that operates outside the normal rules of English society because for four months the boat is its own floating society. The length of the boat trip and the cramped space made the boat a place where different social classes are forced to interact in ways that they might not have at home. In his fiction Trollope points out, "there is no peculiar life more thoroughly apart from life in general, more unlike our usual life, more completely a life of itself, governed by its own rules and having its own roughness and amenities than life on board ship" (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 38). On board the ship there is a clear divide between the first and second-class passengers but as the journey lengthens this separation becomes less concrete, as illustrated in Trollope's fictional representation. It is understood that on board a ship "most pathetic secrets are told with the consciousness that they will be forgotten as soon as the ship is left" (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 39). This social

contradiction allows George, in *Lady Audley's Secret*, to converse at length with Miss Morris, the governess that he meets on board the *Angus* on his way home from Australia, and allows John to become close with Mrs. Smith on his way to Australia.

While many social rules are flexible on board a ship to the colonies, John's relationship with Mrs. Smith reminds Trollope's audience that there are boundaries that cannot be crossed without consequences and that there are those around them on board who are paying attention to make sure that these boundaries are not crossed. In the case of George and Miss Morris, fellow passengers interact with Miss Morris and George and both are popular figures on board the *Angus*. Conversely, John and Mrs. Smith's fellow passengers are clearly against their fraternization and several attempt to warn John away from the connection. Relationships on the boat ride to the Australian colonies are temporary and made necessary by the close proximity that passengers share for four months. The boat becomes an "insular space in which the immigrant grows and transforms" (Meyers 37) without the strict eyes of the homeland upon him or her. What happens on the boat is intended to stay on the boat, unless a major breach of social protocol is made. John's fellow passengers fear that such a breach of etiquette might have been made between him and Mrs. Smith and are concerned that he may make promises on board the ship that he will have to honor once on land. John is not careful enough on board the ship and the vague promises that he makes known to the mysterious woman who he has no knowledge of apart

from the time spent on the boat come back to ruin the life that he builds for himself and Hester upon his return from Australia. The groundwork for Mrs. Smith's bigamy accusations is laid on the trip from England to Australia and only becomes stronger as they continue to interact once in the colonies.

The fact that John overreaches acceptable social transgressions is an important element in Trollope's text and the bigamy trial itself. While there are those, like John's Uncle Babbington who think that "young men, when they go out to those places, are not quite so particular as they ought to be" and even though John "was a little wild out there... that is a very different thing as bigamy" (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 304), the guilty verdict that is passed upon John makes it clear that one's actions in the colonies can only go so far without ramifications upon one's return. John's uncle argues that life in the colonies is not the same as life in the homeland and men who make their way in that part of the world should not be subjected to the strict social rules of England. In fact many people in the community think that "it might be possible that he should escape" the charges, but "general opinion went on to declare that there was no reason for supposing that he had not married the woman" (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 384). The strong belief that John married Mrs. Smith in Australia and then returned home to marry Hester Bolton, but will not be convicted of bigamy resonates with Uncle Babbington's sentiments that the things men do in the colonies should not (and will not) be held to the same standards once they are home.

The idea that one's actions in the colonies have no bearing on their life in the homeland was one that would be explored in many of the novels that follow *John Caldigate*. In his novel *Jude the Obscure* (1895), Thomas Hardy explores the distance between life in the colonies and the homeland when Arabella successfully meets and marries a man in Australia, but upon her and her husband's return to England he refuses to remarry her on English soil. While women and men who had been married in Australia were not required to remarry in England, the lack of access to marriage records in the colonies made it hard for a woman to prove that she had been legally married. Unlike Mrs. Smith who successfully brings legal action against the man she says married her abroad, Arabella still has her looks. Thus, when Arabella finds herself no longer to prove that she has been previously married in Australia she simply finds an English man who will marry her in the homeland and obtains a legitimate marriage she can prove. In Trollope's text Mrs. Smith "lost all her comeliness... she was much aged; and her face was coarse, as though she had taken to drinking" (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 377), which leaves her without the feminine wiles to attract a new husband and ties her to John's partner Crinkett and the lawsuit. John does not actually marry Mrs. Smith in Australia but he does cross the line of acceptable social behavior and these social transgressions are then used to convict him. It is his actions in Australia that make it possible for the charges to be brought in the first place, thus the line between what is acceptable in the colonies and what actions one can later be held accountable for in the homeland remains unclear to

the reader. As the judge argues, “no doubt the accusation had been false... no doubt the verdict had been erroneous... but the man has brought it upon himself by his own egregious folly” (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 615). The fact that John is convicted for a crime he did not commit based on social indiscretions in Australia serves as a caution for Trollope’s readers and illustrates the danger that the Australian colonies might present for an English gentleman who cannot prove his actions abroad were above reproach.

John’s actions and those who he deals with in Australia are what makes him susceptible to the bigamy charge. John is first accused of bigamy when Mrs. Smith joins Crinkett, his old business partner, in an attempt to blackmail John into returning some of the money that they paid for his mine. By the time of the blackmail, John has returned to England and is happily married to Hester who is expecting their first child. John’s connection to Australia makes it possible for Mrs. Smith and Crinkett to infiltrate England, as even though they “come to this country as conspirators with a fraudulent purpose” (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 404) they are still able to gain access to the homeland where they threaten the very economic and social structures that support English society. The blackmail and bigamy trial tears apart the happy home that John, as the male patriarch and reestablished heir of Folking, has built for his English wife and their son. Hester and John are the English ideal, an ideal that is shattered by John’s connections to Australia. Hester’s brother Robert instantly recognizes the threat the bigamy allegations hold for his sister as she will fall from innocent, protected wife to

illegitimate mistress upon John's conviction and her son will become a bastard. Robert and those in the community are concerned about the social implications that John's conviction will have for the "dear innocent young mother and her child" (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 406), but they fail to understand that the very allegation of bigamy has already pushed Hester out of her angel of the house role.

When Hester's family and the community at large find out about the accusations of bigamy that are being made against John, they implore Hester to leave her husband and return to her parents' home, where she will be able to ride out the scandal. Unlike Hester, those around her believe that John had been previously married which means "the man was not her husband" and that "she and her child must be taken away from Folking" (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 282) as "public opinion will compel it" (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 275). Even if Hester's family is not certain John will be convicted, they argue "her continued residence [at Folking] would be a continuation of the horror" (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 282) and that it will be better for both Hester and her child if they distance themselves from John until after the trial. Rather than give in to the demands of society and her family, like a proper English lady, Hester is forced out of the role of proper English gentlewoman and stands up to the world outside of Folking. She does not heed the cries of her family or care about what the rules of society dictate and stands by her husband in defiance of those around her. The accusation of bigamy empowers Hester to disregard the rules that she has been raised with and forces her out of her angel of the house position, for as John's

cousin says, “if she had any feelings of feminine propriety she would shut herself up and call herself Miss Bolton” (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 496). Instead she continues to live at Folking and uses his name. Like the New Woman figure that was emerging in other literature of the period, such as *The Tale of an African Farm*, *The Odd Woman* and *Jude the Obscure*, the Empire enables Hester’s independence as she is forced to find her own moral code rather than rely on the religious and social ones she has been taught since birth.

Like Hester, in *Lady Audley’s Secret* Australia enables Lucy Audley to break out of her traditional female role. The British Empire, and the great distance between England and Australia, allows Braddon to remove Lady Audley’s first husband, George, from the English homeland, which permits Lucy Audley to reinvent herself as an eligible, single governess who Sir Audley then makes his wife. Australia is a useful colonial setting for Braddon to employ in the novel in that George is easily able to remake his fortune in the gold mines there and, at the same time, the distance between Australia and the homeland helps her leave both the audience and the novel’s other characters in suspense about the true nature of Lady Audley for most of the text. The distance of the Australian colonies allows for the actions of Lady Audley to be kept from her husband and the actions of George to be kept from those connected to him at home. Thus, the actions of both George and Lady Audley are revealed to the novel’s readers at the same time they are discovered by the novel’s characters, and the distance between Australia and England creates a distance between what is true and what is known, which

sensationalizes the action of the novel, most notably the bigamy that takes place with no one the wiser. In *Lady Audley's Secret*, *Great Expectations* and *John Caldigate* the distance between England and Australia make secrecy possible, which enables mimicry and bigamy in the texts. In Braddon and Dickens's sensational works this distance allows for characters to reinvent themselves without anyone knowing the truth whereas in Trollope's work the distance between Australia and England works against his main character and prevents him from being able to prove his innocence. In all three novels secrecy is enabled by distance and contributes to the breakdown of patriarchal authority and the corruption of the domestic space. In *John Caldigate*, this distance also prevents him from being able to reestablish his authority and purify his home of imperial influence.

Mary Elizabeth Braddon and her audience would have been aware of newspaper accounts of nineteenth-century bigamy trials and would have understood the reluctance of Victorians to acknowledge the occurrence of bigamy, as its presence illuminated the limitations of patriarchal authority in England. As respectable male patriarchs both Robert Audley and Sir Audley recognize the sensational scandal that Lady Audley's bigamy will produce if it is discovered and prosecuted, which is why they secretly move her out of the country and into a private facility. In opposition to Mary Elizabeth Braddon's work, and the sensation genre in general, in 1879 Anthony Trollope takes up the issue of bigamy that was so sensational at mid century. Rather than delegate

bigamy to the mysterious periphery of the text and shy away from the scandalous trial that would result from the accusation as Braddon does, bigamy is a focal point in Trollope's text as he traces John's relationship with Mrs. Smith from the colonies to the homeland. Not only does Trollope's text explore the scandal that John's bigamy trial creates, it also looks at how newspaper accounts perpetuate the scandal as "it had been impossible to keep the question, - whether John Caldigate's recent marriage has been true or fraudulent, - out of the newspapers" (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 349). Trollope does not attempt to shield his characters from the scandal that public trials create, but instead includes all the elements that contribute to the scandal in his work. Despite the threat that bigamy poses to English society and Hester's position as angel of the house, the text presents the accusation, the trial and the conviction in great detail as Trollope explores the implications that bigamy has for the homeland within a more realistic genre.

Unlike the sensational representation of bigamy in *Lady Audley's Secret*, in Anthony Trollope's *John Caldigate* bigamy is openly discussed and explored in a pragmatic, matter of fact way that would have been preferred by the more serious literary critics of the nineteenth-century, specifically those in George Eliot's school of thought. Despite the difference in genres of the works, there are striking similarities between the main characters and underlying plot lines of Braddon and Trollope's novels. In his article "The Three Clerks and Rachel Ray: Trollope's Reevaluation of Dickens Continued," Jerome Meckier presents an argument for why Trollope's works could be read as the reworking of Dickens's

larger, more sensational works, such as *Great Expectations*. This argument presents compelling evidence of Trollope's aversion to sensation fiction, which encourages us to read *John Caldigate* as a more realistic reworking of Mary Elizabeth Braddon's sensational novel about the corruption that the Empire can create in the all powerful English institution of marriage. Both George Talboys and John Caldigate set out for the Australian gold mines after being disowned by fathers who are strong family patriarchs with the power to prevent their sons from taking over the family land and estate. Both characters are upper class first born sons who anger their fathers and fall from their aristocratic heritage. Thus, both men leave for the colonies fallen from the stations in which they were born and with the hope that they will return to England with enough wealth to return themselves to their former stations in life. John's hopes appear to be even more futile than George's, as he still needs to win the blessing of Hester's father to marry her, while George has already married the woman he considers to be the paragon of English goodness.

Both novels explore what happens when patriarchal structures break down in the homeland as their respective plots follow characters who are forced into the Empire to regain the wealth and social standing that they have lost at home. Wealthy born first sons were expected to inherit their fathers' estates in nineteenth-century England, yet both George and John are cast out by their respective patriarchs, which throws the whole Victorian social system into disarray. The fact that "John himself, who has all the world and all his life before

him... had got into his head a notion that he would prefer to face his fortune with a sum of ready money, than to wait in absolute poverty for the reversion of the family estate” (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 9), a notion that his father gratifies, illustrates the delicate balance that English patriarchal social structures relied upon to survive. The danger that a weak patriarchal figure who produces a “natural heir [who] had shown himself to be irrevocably bad” (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 9) poses to British social structures is great. The fact that John is willing to give up his place in the social structure and forfeit the estate that is rightfully his for the sake of quick and ready money, undermines the British system of inheritance that correlates social standing with landed wealth rather than capital.

A difference between the upper class and the emerging middle class was created by the system of primogeniture in which landed estates were passed down from upper class men to their sons as “there is a comfort in the feeling of property- not simply in its money comfort, but in the stability and reputation of a recognized home “ (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 20). The tenant farmer Holt sums up the English patriarchal attitude toward land inheritance when he says that “sons should come after their fathers, specially where there’s land” as “it was clear that, to his thinking, the stability of this world was undermined and destroyed by the very contemplation” of John’s father buying him out of his inheritance (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 24). The tenants of John’s father are quick to show their displeasure when they discover John will not be their future squire.

As lower class farmers they are concerned with who will eventually take over the land that they live on because their wellbeing depends upon it and, like John's family who has owned the same land for generations, they have been farming the same land for generations. When John decides to be bought out of his inheritance, he gives up his rights to the land, which means that the land will eventually be passed down to someone other than him. The farmers are concerned that the land might be passed down to someone who is not in the family and that without a legitimate heir drastic changes are possible that will affect the land that their livelihoods rely upon. Trollope justifies these concerns when after buying out his son, John's father Daniel considers "whether it would not be better for the community at large and for the Caldigate family in particular, that [the estate] should be cut up and sold into parcels" (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 116). As the first-born son, John is the person who should be groomed to take over the land and provide for the farmers, neither of which will happen when he takes the money and leaves for Australia.

While the system of primogeniture and patriarchal authority that rests upon it are upset with John leaving for Australia, they are thrown into further disarray when John returns and is accused and then convicted of bigamy. As is discussed time and time again by both the Bolton's and those in the community, there is a danger that, once convicted, John and Hester's marriage might be considered null and void, seeing as a conviction would mean that John already had a wife when he married Hester, and thus there would be merit for someone to

legally challenge their son's inheritance of Folking. Not only does the bigamy verdict effect Hester's position as the angel of the house figure, it also creates the possibility that the rightful heir to Folkings might be kept from inheriting the land, which dismantles the all powerful patriarchal system of primogeniture. In a land inheritance system in which people's livelihoods depend upon the land that they live on and the care of the land they live on is provided by whomever owns the estate, the fact that the land might pass into the hands of someone who was not born and raised for the position threatens the fabric of English life. The false accusations and unjust verdict threaten the very nature of English society in that they corrupt the domestic space, as well as the economic and social structures upon which all classes of English citizens rely.

Family land and the promise of inheritance without having to work for a living was also a clear distinction between nineteenth-century social classes. Once he no longer has an estate to inherit, John realizes that, like George who is unable to find employment upon disinheritance and Pip who is being educated without a profession in mind, "there was no career for him. No profession has as yet even been proposed" (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 9). In Braddon's work the loss of inheritance forces George to forsake his family for the colonies because there is no possibility of employment for an upper class gentleman who "do what [he] would [he] couldn't get anybody to believe in [his] capacity" (Braddon 24), which further weakens a patriarchal system that is supposed to protect the domestic space from any and all outside forces. Upon receiving the money from of his

inheritance John, like George, also opts to try his luck in the Australian gold mines because he acknowledges, “he must do something; and, upon the whole, he thought that gold mining in the colonies was the most congenial pursuit to which he could put his hand” (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 15). This presumably leaves his father’s estate to his cousin and reroutes the primogeniture system and proper line of inheritance. The estate will then pass to someone who, unlike John, has not been trained from birth for the duties he will have to assume as landlord and squire. George and John both strike it rich in the gold fields and return to England with the intention of setting right patriarchal structures that have broken down due to their respective disinheritances and decisions to leave. In *Lady Audley’s Secret*, George’s attempts to reassert his patriarchal power as husband and father are thwarted from the moment he returns to England, but in *John Caldigate* it seems for a brief time that John will succeed in righting the wrongs that have been committed and reestablishing order to both his home and homeland.

Even before John’s return home from Australia, he is reinstated as his father’s son and legitimate heir for “as soon as he could he felt that he could base the expression of his desires as to Folking on the foundation of substantial remittances, he was not slow to say that he should like to keep the place” (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 120). Upon his return to England, John also succeeds in making the English woman who he has dreamt of the entire time he was away (Hester), his wife. While most Victorian imperial adventurers, such as George Talboys, Magwitch and Arabella, are disheartened upon their return to the

homeland from abroad and the lack of social mobility that the wealth they acquired in the colonies affords them, John quickly transitions from a disinherited, treasure seeker to an influential man of means who is both a beloved son and husband. The wealth that he gains in Australia, the promise of future land and the reinstatement in his upper class family, reestablishes John within the English patriarchy that he had been displaced from and provides him with the social standing and monetary power to marry Hester, despite her mother's protests. However, being convicted of bigamy threatens to undo all the order that is reestablished upon his return and throws the domestic space into chaos when the pure and innocent Hester becomes a woman without a husband and their child becomes an illegitimate bastard in the eyes of society.

Trollope's willingness to include the emerging Empire in his later works, and to actually narrate parts of his novels in the Empire itself, might have been the sole result of his personal travels to Australia, as argued by Diana Archibald, but also reflects the changing perception of Empire in the homeland at the end of the century. The danger that the British colonies posed to traditional economic and social structures in the English homeland was beginning to be recognized in England by the end of the nineteenth century as more and more citizens were leaving for and returning from the British colonies. As evidenced in Trollope's text, things that happened in the colonies could now follow you back to the homeland and it became easier for people and goods to be transported. By the end of the century not only are many of Trollope's characters able to travel to and

from Australia, but the plot of the text also bounces back and forth between the colonies in a way that earlier texts do not. This ability to narrate one's work from both England and Australia removes the mystery of the Empire and helps Trollope's text remain within the genre of realism.

In Trollope's text Australia is treated like any other setting as Sydney and the goldmines are given the same attention as Cambridge and London. The colonies are a physical space, just like the other physical spaces in the novel and described in details so realistic that readers have no reason to question its accuracy. Australia is not a vague, mysterious destination that simply keeps characters away and lets them remake their fortune, but rather an important destination that impacts Trollope's plot significantly. After John's pardon, his Uncle Babington asks "why shouldn't there be a wicked lie told in one place as well as another?" (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 562) and the answer is that it is easier to tell a lie about something that happened, or didn't happen, in Australia than it is to tell that same lie about an event that supposedly occurred in the homeland. In *Great Expectations* the distance between Australia and the mainland allows the mystery surrounding Pip's benefactor to remain and in *Lady Audley's Secret* that same distance prevents Robert from knowing what happens to his friend George, which allows Lady Audley to continue her deception. In *John Caldigate* the distance between England and Australia allows Mrs. Smith and Crinkett to perpetuate a lie that cannot be disproven by John. The distance between colonies and homeland does not sensationalize Trollope's novel, as it does in the other two

texts, because readers are transported to the colonies and back again. While secrets are enabled by Australia in all three texts, it is only in Dickens and Braddon's work that the audience is not in on these secrets. In Trollope's work, like Hester, readers have no cause to doubt Trollope's character when he says that he did not marry Mrs. Smith because readers know what John's experiences in the colonies were and nothing has been kept from them.

While at the end of the text John receives a pardon from the Queen for his conviction, because that is the only way to overcome an erroneous verdict, her Majesty's pardon cannot undo the verdict and John will forever be stained by the conviction. Even more clearly illustrated than in *Lady Audley's Secret*, once the Empire infiltrates the domestic space in *John Caldigate*, domesticity in the homeland is forever changed. Hester remains always the dutiful, obedient wife, but the independence that she gains when her husband is accused and then imprisoned does not disappear and the novel ends with a much stronger female character than with which it began. While the Queen's pardon restores "his house, his property, his farm, his garden, and the free air" (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 585) it cannot eliminate the verdict and some relationships, like those between John and Hester's family, will never be the same. The verdict will still stand and the Queen's pardon only forgives John for his actions and restores his position in society, it does not say that he was innocent or that the judicial process made a mistake. John's actions in Australia open the domestic space to corruption and undermine the authority of the English patriarchy, neither of which he is able to

fully restore upon the novel's conclusion, even after he returned to his wife and child.

CONCLUSION

In 1844 Anthony Trollope argues, “there are still many in England who have to learn whether Australia is becoming a fitting home for them and their children and the well-being of Australia still depends a great degree on the tidings which may reach them” (Trollope, *Australia* 63). The stakes were high for both those who were writing the English story of the Australian colonies and those who were trying to encourage emigration there, because the failure to entice people to immigrate to Australia could mean the failure of the entire colonial project there. Thus, there was a tension between wanting to promote emigration for the betterment of the state in order to further “England’s glory” (Trollope, *Australia* 58) and accurately reflecting what was occurring in the homeland and abroad. While travel writers, such as those discussed in this thesis, were eager to represent Australia as they found it, they were also concerned with promoting additional emigration in order to secure the colonies. By combining genres, however, one is able to develop a fuller picture of the Australian colonies and better comprehend the relationship between emigrant and homeland. Trollope attributes the fate of the Australian colonies to the power of literary representation and the importance it has on the British imagination, which is why this study of that representation is so important for our own understanding of the nineteenth-century English perception of Australia.

In *Lady Audley’s Secret*, *Great Expectations*, and *John Caldigate*, nineteenth-century authors explore the impact the Australian colonies were

having on life in the English homeland. These novels are less concerned with promoting Australia as a place for English emigration and more concerned with the effect that emigration and colonial return was having on England. Though each text offers a unique view of the colonies, they all manage to reflect and inform the Victorian anxieties concerning the increasing influence of Empire in the homeland and by examining these texts we get a sense of the role that genre plays in the development and abatement of those anxieties. While literature often reflects the cultural climate that it is produced in, in some cases literature also impacts that culture. Midcentury sensation novels explored the “most mysterious of mysteries, those that are at our own front door” (James 119) in order to incite fear and anxiety of social corruption in their reader. In *Lady Audley’s Secret* Braddon uses Australia as a vehicle for her female character’s class transgression, while in Dickens’s *Great Expectations* Australia is a means of enabling the mimicry of social advancement. Later in the century, however, *John Caldigate’s* realism seeks to demystify these mysteries when Trollope acknowledges that the Empire no longer exists as a mystery at the periphery of life in the homeland, but rather is central to changes that are occurring to the economic and social structures in England. As Australia moves from plot device to physical space in these texts, the possibilities it holds for economic advancement and colonial return become less a source of mystery and anxiety and more an exploration of the inevitable impact they will have upon the homeland.

That is not to say that the English government ever encouraged the colonial return of its Australian emigrants in the nineteenth century, but after forced transportation ceased in the 1830s (Richards 78) the government was little able to stop travel back and forth between colonies and homeland, as illustrated by Braddon and Trollope. Edward Said contends, “other colonies offer a sort of normality that Australia never could” (Said xvi), as the relationship between homeland and colony in Australia was far different than the relationship that England had with its other colonies. Its history as a penal colony, the ready wealth created by gold and the little acknowledged genocide of the native population and Stolen Generation made nineteenth-century Australia both a land of opportunity and a dangerous place for English citizens and Aborigines alike. This double view of the Australian colonies contributed to its function as an intriguing destination for fictional characters and an interesting study for travel writers who attempted to positively shape the opinion of the colonies in the homeland.

By the end of the nineteenth-century the future of the Australian colonies had been determined. Colonial structures and policies that were put in place during this century, in regards to relationships between Aborigines and settlers and the development of economic and social structures, would remain well into the twentieth century and shape the way we see modern Australia. Emigration that had steadily increased over the course of the nineteenth century boomed during the First and Second World Wars as emigrants fled persecution in their home countries and sought refuge in Australia and New Zealand. The literary

representations that had been so important in sustaining the colonies in the mid nineteenth-century, slowly gave way in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to postcolonial reworkings, such as Lloyd Jones's *Mister Pip* and Albert Wendt's *Black Rainbow*, which seek to understand both the lands and colonial texts they reference and the colonial practices they critique. While much remains to be done in terms of recovering the aboriginal voices of Australia's native people and the creation of an Australian literary canon, by studying English perspectives of the colonies and their people, we open up the discussion of Australian colonization and begin to understand the impact that colony had upon the homeland in order to then investigate the impact that homeland had upon the colony.

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